

## LOCAL PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE - 8 AUGUST 2019

### PART I – NOT DELEGATED

#### 5. LOCAL PLAN – TOPIC PAPER: WATERWAYS (DCES)

##### 1 Summary

- 1.1 This topic paper sets out the issues which the new Local Plan will need to address in relation to the Grand Union Canal and to a lesser extent development proposals adjacent to other waterways and proposes policy wording to be contained within the new Local Plan.

##### 2 Details

- 2.1 Waterways are important to both the natural environment and human activities. The three rivers that give the District its name (the Rivers Colne, Gade and Chess) and The Grand Union Canal are important resources for the District in terms of landscape, biodiversity and access to open space and form the basis of the District's Green Infrastructure network.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 The Grand Union Canal runs the length of the District and provides a significant Green Infrastructure resource and supports transport, biodiversity, recreation, drainage, water supply and in managing flood risk. It is also an important visual amenity as there are a number of heritage assets on or associated with the Canal.
- 2.3 As well as these functions, the Canal is used by many houseboats and leisure craft. Concentrations of houseboats exist at Batchworth Lock, Rickmansworth and to a lesser extent at Cassiobury in Croxley Green.
- 2.4 It is essential that the Canal is protected as an important resource for the District providing multiple benefits and that these benefits are recognised and enhanced.
- 2.5 Houseboats are a lifestyle choice for some residents, and they contribute to increasing diversity of homes within the District.
- 2.6 A residential mooring<sup>2</sup> is a long-term mooring which may need planning permission for the moored boat to be used as the occupant's sole or primary residence. Such moorings require planning permission as they may constitute a material change of use. Residential moorings are therefore treated by local planning authorities as residential development and are subject to national and local planning policy.
- 2.7 Residential moorings are offered around the country by a mix of private operators and navigation authorities and are becoming increasingly popular.
- 2.8 The proposed Draft Waterways Policy (Appendix 1) aims to ensure that potential residents of houseboats benefit from the same level of access to services and facilities as those living in traditional housing as well as encouraging the provision of

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<sup>1</sup> The Green Infrastructure Network will be the subject of a separate Topic Paper to the Local Plan Sub Committee.

<sup>2</sup> A residential mooring is generally an official mooring provided by a marina or landowner with the approval of the local authority for continuous occupation of the boat whilst on the mooring.

new moorings and facilities for water-based leisure and recreation as part of development proposals.

### **3 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

3.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

### **4 Financial, Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

4.1 None specific.

### **5 Recommendation**

5.1 That the Local Plan Sub Committee note the contents of this report and recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee the Draft Waterways Policy as set out in Appendix 1.

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#### **Background Papers**

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Canal and River Trust

#### **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Draft Waterways Policy

# APPENDIX 1

## DRAFT WATERWAYS POLICY

### Waterways

Waterways are important to both the natural environment and human activities.

The Grand Union Canal runs the length of the District and provides a significant Green and Blue Infrastructure resource and supports transport, biodiversity, recreation, drainage, water supply and in managing flood risk. It is also an important visual amenity and there are a number of heritage assets on or associated with the Canal.

The three rivers that give the District its name (the Rivers Colne, Gade and Chess) are important resources for the District in terms of landscape, biodiversity and access to open space, and form the basis of the District's Green Infrastructure network.

As well as these functions, the Canal is used by many houseboats and leisure craft. Concentrations of houseboats exist at Batchworth Lock, Rickmansworth and to a lesser extent at Cassiobury in Croxley Green.

<b>Policy xx Waterways</b>	
(1)	Development in the vicinity of waterways must protect and enhance waterway infrastructure and should enable water-dependent uses where appropriate.
(2)	Proposals for permanent moorings and marinas will only be permitted on the canal/waterways where adjacent to the existing built-up area and where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Not compromise the ability of leisure boat users to access moorings;</li><li>b) Have no adverse effect on the nature conservation value of the canal or nearby land;</li><li>c) Include sufficient space for essential facilities and landscaping;</li><li>d) Provide adequate pedestrian and service vehicle access;</li><li>e) Cause no harm to the historic or visual character of the canal;</li><li>f) Not increase flood risk;</li><li>g) Provide safe access and egress during a flood;</li><li>h) Not impede navigation.</li></ul>
(3)	Major development schemes adjacent to waterways should consider the provision of new moorings, or facilities for water-based leisure and recreation as part of development proposals. Opportunities to use the canal for transport, including freight during the construction process, or as a renewable energy resource should also be considered.

### *Reasoned Justification*

It is essential that the Canal and waterways are protected as an important resource for the District and area providing multiple benefits, and that these benefits are recognised and enhanced.

Making use of the Canal and waterways, houseboats are a lifestyle choice for some residents, and they contribute to increasing diversity of homes within the District. Residents can also provide valuable assistance to leisure boat users and aid security along the canal.

The Local Plan aims to deliver new development in sustainable locations and so the same principle will be applied to proposals for residential and other moorings. The policy aims to ensure that potential residents of houseboats benefit from the same level of access to services and facilities as those living in traditional housing.

As moorings are not recognised as an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt by national policy, applications for residential and other moorings outside of the urban areas will have to demonstrate 'very special circumstances' sufficient to outweigh harm to the Green Belt.

Major development schemes adjacent to waterways offer an opportunity to consider the provision of new moorings or facilities for water-based leisure and recreation as an integrated part of proposals. Any such proposals will be supported where they address the requirements of all other Policies within the Local Plan.

Development proposals are also encouraged to consider opportunities to use the Canal for transport, including for the transport of freight during construction, or as a renewable energy resource for heating and cooling.