



LAGAN CANAL TRUST

**Lagan Navigation Re-opening
Power Point Presentation
May 2012**

Operational Area



This material is Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of Land and Property Services under delegated authority from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright and database rights NIMA CS&LA 156

Community and User Group Involvement

This First Consultation Draft Re-opening Plan anticipates proactive community involvement and will seek to identify:

- How the waterway is used and valued, and the key issues, local concerns and aspirations in relation to the Navigations operational area.
- Perceptions of the local landscape character and associations and the significance of the canals ecology and built heritage, history and traditions.
- Existing and potential access arrangements and linkages to local facilities and attractions and a strategy to improve both physical and educational access to the canal heritage and amenities
- Opportunities to enhance the local quality of life by harnessing and extending into the wider community the social, economic and environmental potential of the Trusts Operational Area.

An exhibition and questionnaire will be produced which will be displayed at a series of venues inviting views on the proposals for the Lagan Navigation. A series of public workshops will be held to facilitate local participation in the Navigations future and input to the a Management Plan.

Consultation

On-going consultation will be held with members of the Trust, its partners, individual user groups, the private sector and with local communities through workshops, in particular at key stages in the development of the Final Plan

The draft Final Plan will also be made available to the public for comment through libraries, local Council offices and other appropriate public venues. A three month period of consultation on the draft document is envisaged.

The timetable proposed is

- First draft – 1st June – 31st July 2012
- Final draft – December 2012

Conservation and the re-opening plan

Conservation Principles

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) scoping study reported its first draft in March 2012, which included articulation of the following principles;

- Conserve what is already there

- Review opportunities for enhancement

- Create no negative effect

Research to inform re-opening plan:

- SEA
- Business case
- Engineering, design & costings

Conservation standards

Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment states;

‘Tough choices sometimes have to be made; conservation and sustainable economic growth are complementary objectives and should not generally be seen as in opposition to one another. Most historic buildings can be still put to good economic use in, for example, commercial or residential occupation. They are made valuable material resource and can contribute to the prosperity of the economy, provided that they are properly maintained: the avoidable loss of fabric through neglect is a waste of economic as well as environmental resources’.

The re-opening programme will possibly be subjected to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) scoping study will inform the next steps and address issues such as;

- Landscape Vulnerabilities
- Built Heritage Vulnerabilities
- Biodiversity Vulnerabilities
- Conservation of Local Heritage
- Nature Conservation
- Managing Undesirable Species

Heritage values

Heritage can be valued for many different reasons. In order to look after that heritage, or to change it in any way, it is important first to understand those values. It is easy to damage those values by doing something inappropriate. Understanding each of the different kinds of heritage along the length of the Navigation and why they are important, can help to manage it for future generations. This understanding will come from mapping work already undertaken and on-going consultation and involvement with local groups and communities as well as statutory agencies >

Benefits Research

As part of the on-going Business Case and Funding Strategy the following terms of reference have been agreed to investigate and articulate the benefits of the re-opening including:

- Public health and well-being benefits derived from the provision of recreational activity (walking, cycling, and canoeing etc);
- Creation of a new water based tourism product;
- Economic benefits in terms of business development and entrepreneurship in the areas of new hospitality provision – cafes, restaurants, guest houses; boat sales/hire/repair/boatbuilding;
- Job creation;
- Regeneration and property development;
- Conservation of natural and built heritage;

Economic Benefits

The economic benefits associated with the proposed re-opening of the Lagan Navigation from Belfast Harbour to Ellis Gut' Lough Neagh include:

New business opportunities (catering, boat yards, chandlery, accommodation, arts and crafts, gift shops, camping/caravan sites, cycling, angling and other water-based activity centres).

Re-opening Objectives

Management Issues

The re-opening of the Lagan Navigation, creating an 'active' Lagan, could contribute significant and sustainable economic benefits to the Northern Ireland economy in terms of its tourism development potential. Furthermore, a fully re - opened Lagan and the re-opening of the Ulster Canal would see the significant creation of an integrated east-west waterway system, presenting boat men/women with the opportunity to sail North-South and East West into a network of inland waterways in excess of 600 miles.

Potential Programmes of Work in tandem with re-opening works

As the Final Plan emerges a number of complimentary programmes delivered through community groups will be established, a sample of programmes is;

- Agricultural land boundary treatment – working with landowners and the NFU to identify opportunities
- Boundary enhancement and screening programme – the boundaries which delineate the canal corridor are generally urban and unsightly. The visual appearance of the canal would be significantly improved by replacement and screening
- Canal garden scheme
- Teaching and learning opportunities
- Habitat and landscape enhancement programme – canals are important corridors for wildlife and an opportunity exists to enhance bio-diversity by careful planning and management and integration with the NI Bio-diversity Strategy
- Interpretation and Signage Programme
- Canal corridor Arts and Culture Programme
- Canal Wardening
- Public Transport Connections and Cycleways
- Flood alleviation- natural



The Proposed Lagan Gateway Project Belfast

Management and Maintenance of the Navigation through phased re-opening

The Trusts sphere of works does not currently include the management and maintenance of the re-opened Navigation and an element of development of the Business Case and Funding Strategy recently commissioned seeks to articulate the risks and future benefits of linking the inland waterways of NI: Lagan; Ulster; Newry; Blackwater and Lough Neagh with the waterways of Ireland.

Whole-life costing

Whole-life costing means thinking about all of the costs of the project, how much it will cost to do the work, but also how much will be needed to spend to look after it in the future. If we spend less on materials now, the implication may be that we have to spend more money in the long term maintaining the Navigation and assets. It is important for the Trust to think about the costs of long-term management and maintenance now.

An example of the implications from funders is;

The Heritage Lottery Fund, one of our targeted funders, terms and conditions on management and maintenance require the following;

On a project in receipt of more than £200,000 in funding from HLF for capital works such as building works or conservation, the terms and conditions of grant will require the maintenance and management of the heritage once the project is complete.

For example, if HLF have:

- funded a new building or the conservation of an existing building they will expect you to maintain that building;
- helped to improve the management of land or a species, they will expect you to maintain that improvement;
- funded the conservation of a collection or archive they will expect you to maintain and manage that collection.

HLF will also expect the Trust and its partners to adopt the management and maintenance plan and to integrate it into existing policies for management and care, and to provide financial resources to implement that plan for ten years. If there is split responsibility for maintenance or management – for example, if the landowner or another department maintains any building or structure – HLF need to see that they will implement the management and maintenance plan and that they have set aside the resources to do so

Next Steps

Consultation

The Lagan Canal Trust represents a wide cross section of interests, and will continue to work together to guide the re-opening and enable the future maintenance and management of the Lagan Navigation - as custodians. Successful re-opening will require a cohesive partnership approach at all levels, between Government Departments and agencies, local authorities, the voluntary and private sectors and of course our main driver - communities. In order to meet the wide objectives and proposals in this plan and deliver change for the benefit of all, the Trust will consult and involve on a wide and regular basis which will be fully articulated in our Communication and Marketing Plans.

Economic opportunity

Programmes to maximise the potential of a re-opened canal can bring together and stimulate joint ventures by tourism and social enterprise initiatives, lifestyles and small and medium enterprises. Close working with economic development promoters will identify these opportunities along our operational area. The Trust will drive forward the ambition to gain recognition of its Operational Area as a Regeneration Zone with potential to develop sustainable and appropriate regeneration. This will be explored fully in the Business Case due to complete a First Draft in August 2012