



**Canal &  
River Trust**

Making life better by water



**Grand Union  
Canal Transfer**

# Grand Union Canal Transfer

Restoration Conference

26 April 2025

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**Strategic Overview – Sarah-Jayne**

**Project Overview – Peter**

**Programme – Peter**

**Water Quality – Sarah-Jayne**

**Public Consultations – Sarah-Jayne**

**Restoration and new canal projects – Peter**

**Summary – Peter**

**Q&As**



Water is essential to our everyday life, wellbeing, and environment. It is a precious resource and considering how we manage our water is vital to securing sustainable water supplies for the future.

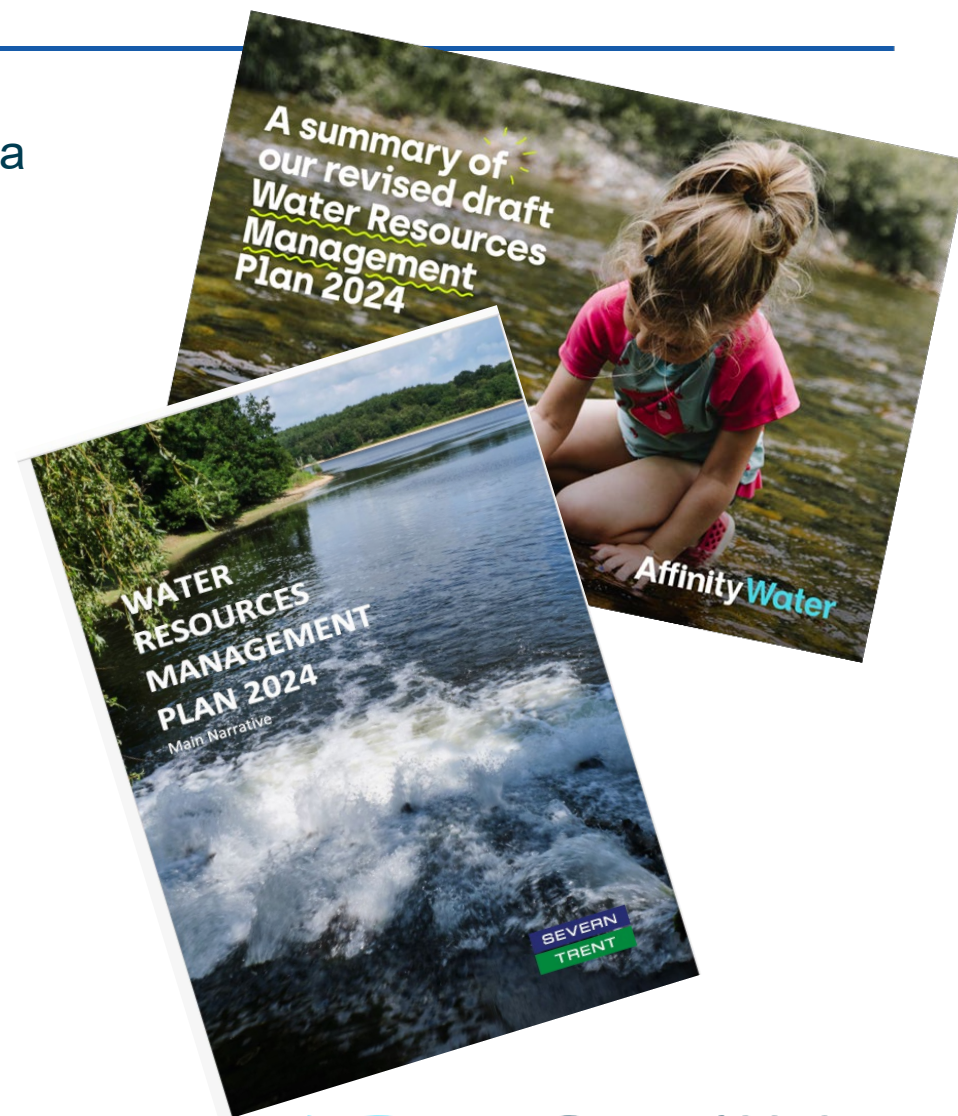
We achieve a resilient water supply by:

- Reducing leaks
- Promoting household water efficiency
- Providing extra water from new sources such as reservoirs, transfer schemes such as this one, and water recycling

The Southeast region faces a significant water shortage in the coming years. Increasing demand is placing pressure on the current supply

Almost as many businesses are based in the Southeast region as there are in the rest of England and Wales combined. The current population of 19 million people is set to swell by 4 million in the coming years

The Southeast region could potentially account for 50% of the UK's future water demand



## What is the Grand Union Canal Transfer Project?

- A vital new scheme to bring water from the Midlands to the Southeast. It's a joint water transfer project between the Trust and two water companies - Severn Trent and Affinity Water.
- It is one of several Strategic Resource Options (SROs) being developed by the water companies, to secure future supplies of drinking water for customers – looking as far ahead as the 2080s

### Major water projects in our final determinations

Solid line = water transfers

Dotted line = connection

Circle = source





## Why is it needed?

- Climate change – hotter drier summers
- Population growth in the South East - >50% growth in Affinity Water Customers forecast between 2019 and 2080
- Environmental regulation - abstraction reductions from groundwater to reduce environmental impact – particularly on precious chalk streams



## Why is the Trust involved?

- Water for navigation – between 25 and 115 Million litres per day will be transferred
- Investment in the Trust – a commercial agreement relating to operation of the transfer
- Investment in our assets along the route and creation of new assets
- Plus – boater, environmental and community benefits – still to be determined





## Summary of works

### Minworth to Atherstone

- New advanced water treatment plant
- Pipeline
- Discharge structure

### Atherstone to Leighton Buzzard area

- Coventry, Oxford and Grand Union Canals
- Up to seven pumping stations
- Daventry & Drayton reservoir works
- Gravity bypasses
- Bank raising
- Weir works
- Bridge works

### Leighton Buzzard area to Luton

- Abstraction structure
- Water storage site
- Water treatment plant
- Pipeline







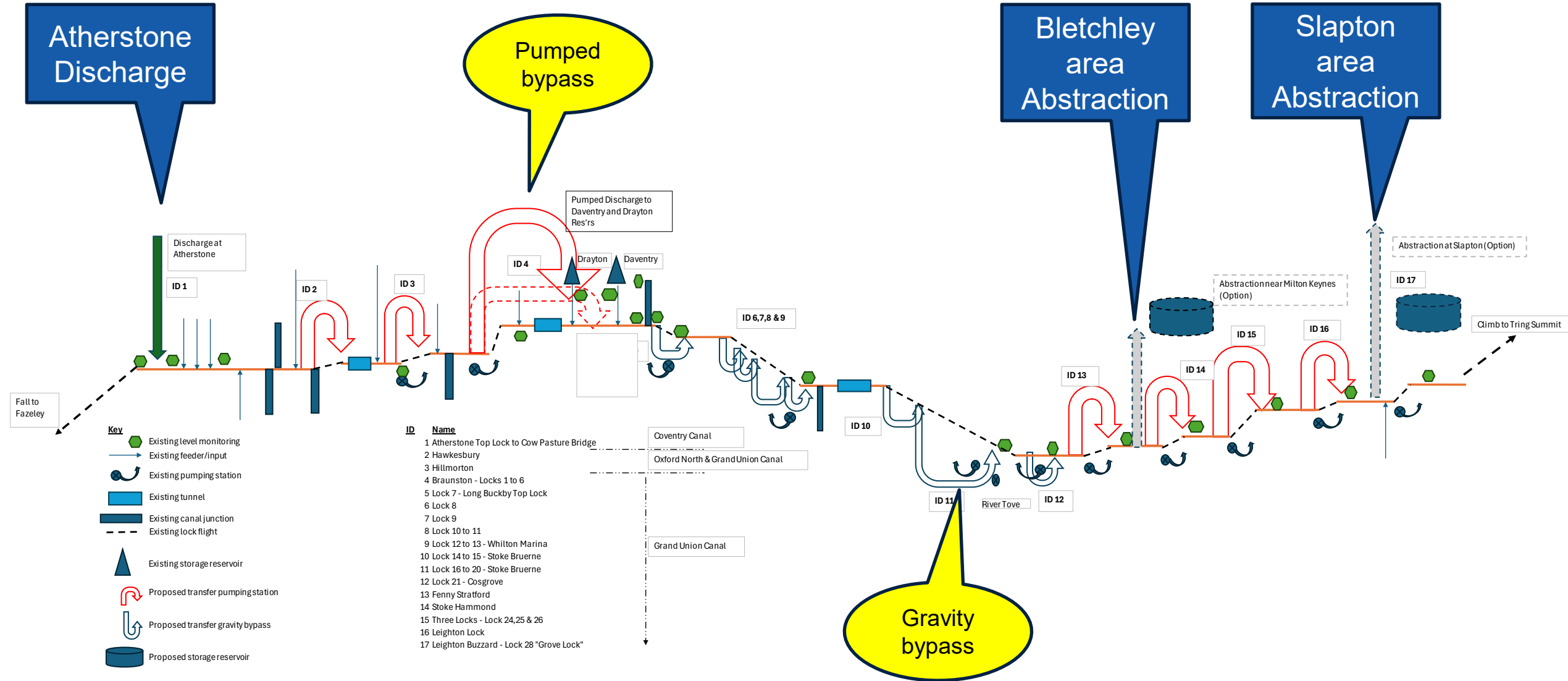


Atherstone  
Discharge

Pumped  
bypass

Bletchley  
area  
Abstraction

Slapton  
area  
Abstraction





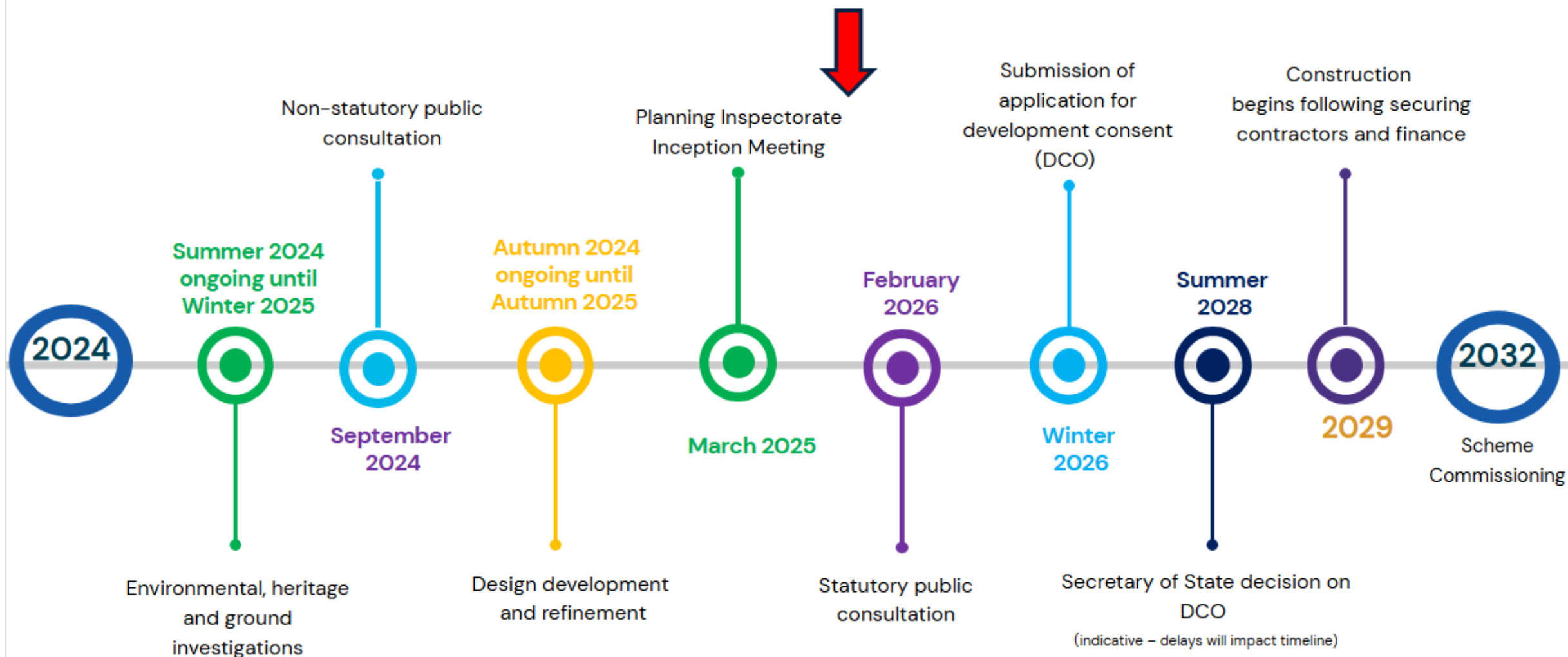
## Who is paying for the transfer

- Ultimately Affinity Water's customers will pay through their water bills
- During the development and planning phases, the Trusts costs are being funded by the water companies. Spend has been agreed via Ofwat through the 5-year price review and the cost and delivery are monitored by RAPID (Regulators Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development) which includes representation from Ofwat, Environment Agency and the Drinking Water Inspectorate

## How is it being delivered?

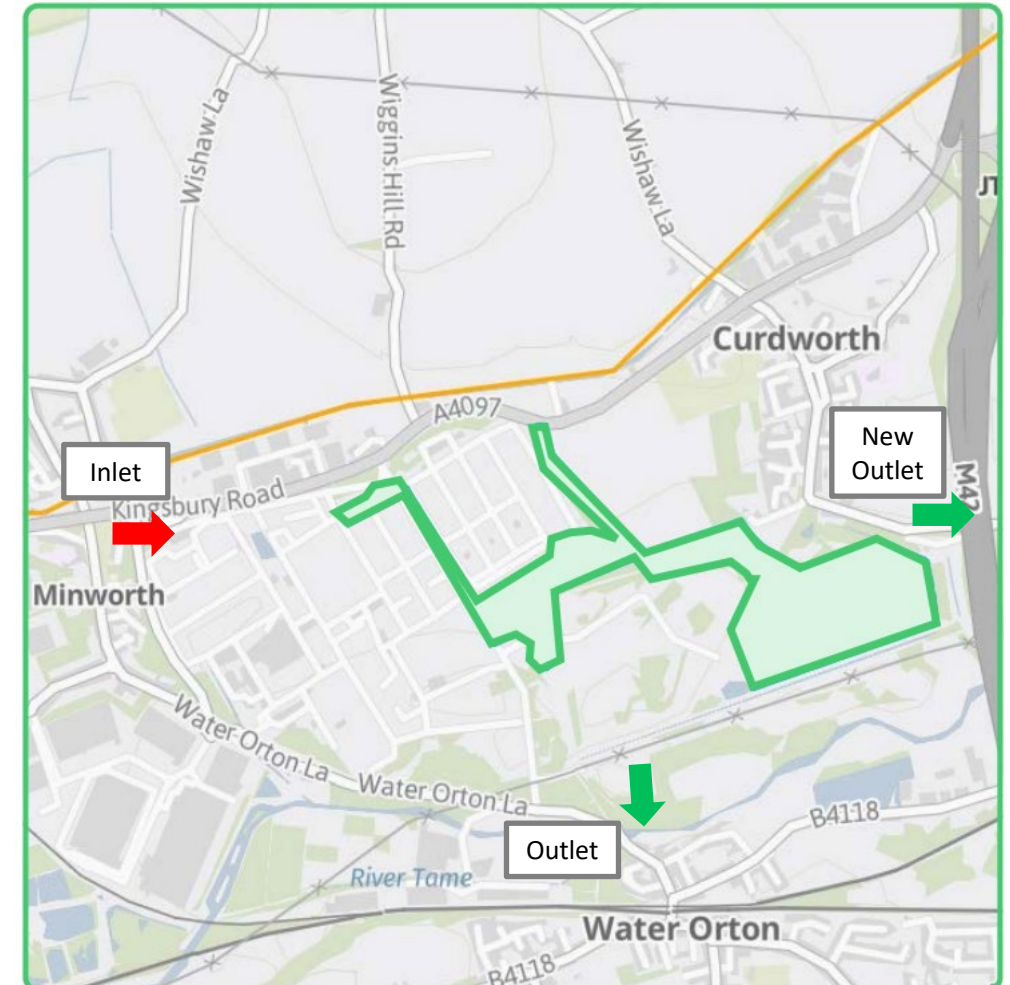
- The Secretary of State has confirmed that the project will involve a Development Consent Order (DCO) application due to its national significance. A DCO grants planning permission and provides other rights needed to deliver projects that are nationally significant
- The construction phase delivery mechanism is still to be confirmed – likely to be delivered by a Competitively Appointed Provider

# Programme timeline





- The recycled water currently produced at Minworth is of a high enough quality to be sent to the River Teme and River Trent
- This already treated water will then undergo additional treatment before going to the canal
- Wastewater comes into the Minworth site at the very western side and it gets cleaner as it follows the process and travels eastwards
- There is no physical connection of the wastewater process to the canal so there is no way it can contaminate
- Even if extreme weather means that site overflows are in use, these are at the western side of the site and cannot reach or ingress to the pipeline to the canal
- In extreme circumstances, the process can be shut off and water held back at site





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# Public (Non Statutory) Consultation Sept / Oct 2024



# First Public Consultation

- 11 September 2024 - Launch event at Stoke Bruerne
- 21 September to 5 October - Consultation Events, with 780 attendees in total
  - 8 village hall events
  - 6 pop up canalside events – 255 attendees
    - Hawkesbury Junction,
    - Hillmorton
    - Braunston,
    - Stoke Bruerne
    - Fenny Stratford,
    - Grove Lock (Leighton Buzzard)



Consultation Brochure – Front cover



Postcard



# “Pop Up” Consultation Events



Fenny Stratford – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2024



Hawkesbury Junction – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2024




# “Main” Consultation Events





Hurley Village Hall - 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024



 December 2024

## Community Update

 Grand Union Canal Transfer








Welcome to our first Community Update for the Grand Union Canal Transfer, which will bring water from the Midlands to the Southeast, using the existing canal network.






We completed our first public consultation on 25 October, after 6 weeks of talking and listening to people across the region about our proposals. We'd like to thank all of you who came to our consultation events or outdoor pop-up events along the canal.


The feedback we received is a vital part of our understanding of the views of local communities, canal users, stakeholders and businesses and it will shape the early development of our plans. Our first consultation ran from 11 Sep to 25 Oct. We held nine consultation events and six pop-up events with a total of 780 attendees.

**Publicity:**

-  **14,000+** postcards to local residents
-  **Posters** across local communities
-  **Press releases** issued and consultation through local and trade media
-  **250** stakeholders emailed
-  **7,000+** boating customers contacted

**Responses:**

-  **475** responses in total
-  **297** returned via online feedback forms
-  **40** returned to our Freepost address
-  **138** email responses to our dedicated email address
-  **200+** phone and email enquiries



### What did we learn from your feedback?

Most people who responded live locally or are regular visitors to and/or users of the canal. We also received feedback from landowners, business owners and local community and specialist interest groups. In general, we received positive support for the scheme, and we also received comments that will help us understand and manage the potential impacts of our work. People have asked us to look closely at the environment, particularly where we're proposing new infrastructure and to make sure our construction plans are managed appropriately.

 April 2025

## Community Update

 Grand Union Canal Transfer



Welcome to the **Spring** edition of our Community Update for the Grand Union Canal Transfer. In this issue, we're focusing on the work we're doing to progress the scheme through its planning process. This includes extensive environmental and site surveys, and our ongoing development of the scheme design informed by the invaluable feedback we received from our public consultation last year.

### We're out and about conducting extensive surveys

Our environmental surveys help us understand more about the area we're working in so we can consider this as we design the scheme. This will help with our aim to minimise our impact as far as we can.

These surveys are part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) we are undertaking. Identifying and assessing those potential significant impacts and taking steps to avoid, reduce or mitigate them forms a crucial part of our application for planning consent.

We're already carrying out a huge amount of survey work as part of our assessments and you might have seen our ecologists out and about investigating wildlife on and near to the canals, along our pipeline routes and in places where we might build new infrastructure.

We've been looking at a variety of existing habitats of badgers, water voles, bats, reptiles and a wide range of bird species. We're carefully considering how we avoid, reduce and manage our work in those areas.

Our aim is to minimise our impact wherever possible. We'll assess traffic on local roads, consider local heritage and conduct tree surveys to ensure we minimise tree and vegetation loss wherever we can, particularly in those areas where trees are listed as being particularly important or where our potential pipeline might affect existing woodland. For example, near Atherstone, in the northern section of the scheme.

At our next public consultation, we'll publish an initial assessment of the potential environmental impacts in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report. You'll be able to view and comment on this report and our updated proposals for the scheme. We'll use your feedback to finalise our assessments before we apply to the government for a Development Consent Order for permission to build the scheme.




Regulators visiting Minworth pilot plant



Event at Great Brickhill

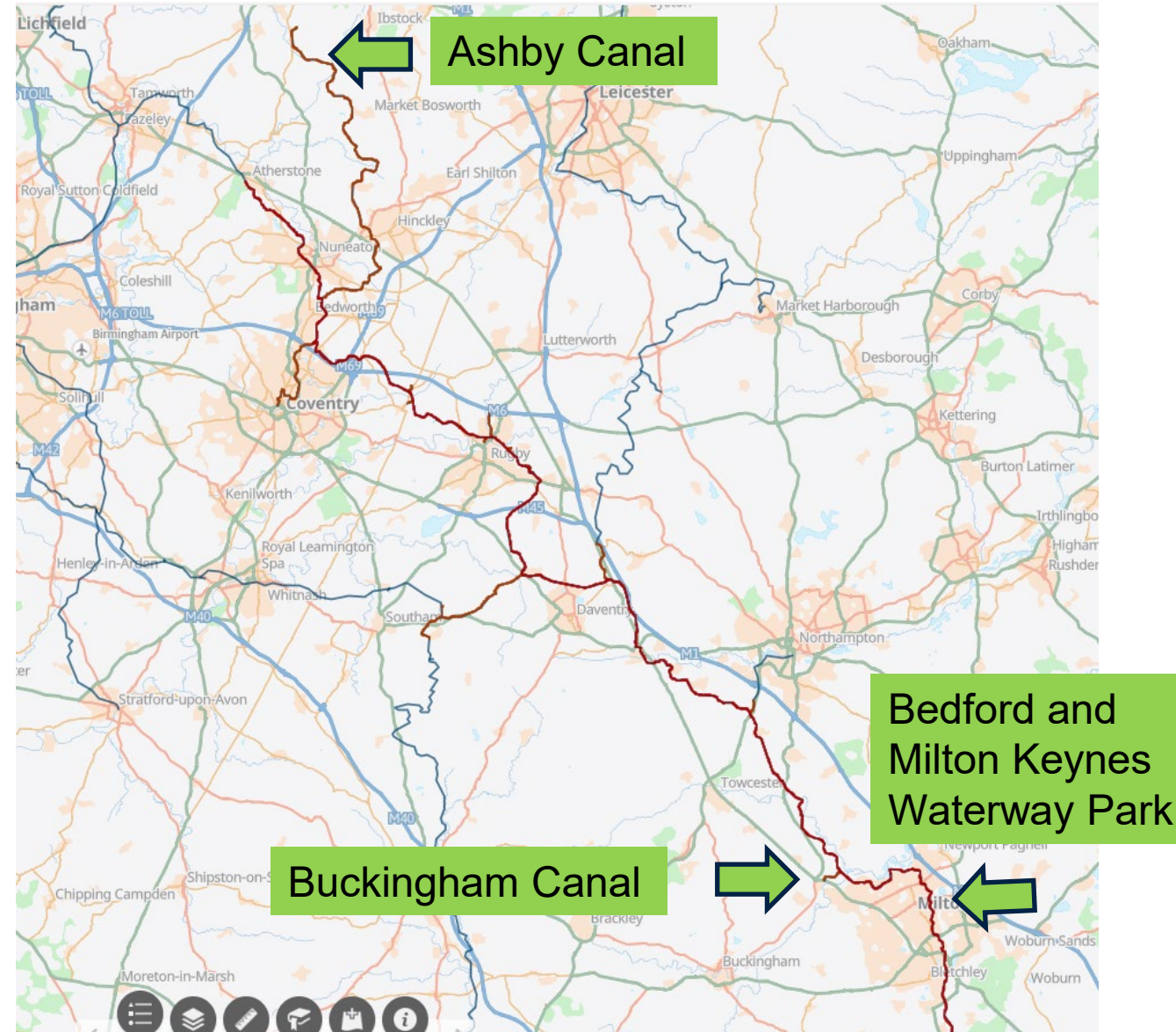
- Next public consultation (Statutory Consultation) will be in early 2026
- Details are to be finalised but it is likely to follow a similar format to the previous consultation with canalside events as well as village halls/community centres etc
- Please respond to the consultation so we can ensure we hear from as broad a range of stakeholders as possible.





# Restorations and Proposed New Canals Along The Transfer Route

- We have started engagement with Ashby Canal Association, Buckingham Canal Society and the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park teams to understand their objectives, timetable, water demands etc





- [illegible]

<https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/regulated-companies/price-review/2024-price-review/final-determinations/>

- The GUC Transfer project is a partnership between the Trust, Severn Trent and Affinity Water, bringing water from the Midlands to the South East
- The Trust will benefit via water for navigation, a long term operation contract and investment in its infrastructure
- Look out for the Statutory Consultation in late 2025/early 2026
- A DCO will be submitted in December 2026
- Site works – 2029 to 2032
- Can your restoration/new canal support the wider SRO agenda?



Atherstone – Coventry  
Canal





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# Questions