

New strategy for the Union Canal

The Council has announced today a new draft strategy so that locals and visitors to Edinburgh can enjoy the many benefits of the Union Canal.

The Canal is already popular and is used for a range of activities including boating, rowing, walking, cycling and fishing.

And recently, new canal boat moorings and marinas were approved in the Fountainbridge area.

However, the council believes that more work still needs to be done to make the most of the benefits of the Canal to residents and the environment.

Now, the Council in partnership with British Waterways Scotland is set to launch a new strategy which will look at developing five 'hubs'.

The new plan looks at developing recreational, business and community uses at Ratho, Wester Hailes, Meggetland, Harrison Park and the Lochrin Basin.

Highlights include Meggetland becoming a centre of excellence for watersports on the Canal and the Lochrin Basin becoming an overnight mooring destination in the city.

There are also plans for Harrison Park to improve visitor moorings and picnic facilities.

In the west of the city, there will also be new buildings and better links with the Edinburgh Canal Centre and the Ratho Adventure Centre.

Issues such as access, lighting, moorings, developments,

public art and renewable energy will also be looked at across the length of the 16km Canal.

To get public feedback, the Council will be holding consultation evenings with local community groups. There will be workshops at the Meadows Festival on 4 and 5 June, Edinburgh Bike week on 22 June and the Canal Festival on 9 July.

The public consultation will last from June until the end of August.

Councillor Tim McKay, Edinburgh Canal Champion, said: “The Union Canal is one of Edinburgh’s hidden gems – enjoyed by people from across the city, and beyond, for a variety of uses from walking and cycling to boating and fishing. These plans will now be the basis for a wider public consultation and at the end we hope to promote a vision of the place we wish the Union Canal to be. We would appeal to locals and organisations to tell us what they think of the draft plans and continue to make the Canal an excellent, recreational delight right here in the heart of the capital.”

Steve Dunlop, Director, British Waterways Scotland, says: “The launch of the Draft Edinburgh Canal Strategy represents a huge opportunity for Edinburgh and for those who live by and enjoy visiting the Union Canal. Last year we celebrated ten years since the Millennium Link Project made possible the reopening of the Union Canal. Going forward, a formalised and integrated canal development strategy will cement our partnership with City of Edinburgh Council and waterside communities and allow us to set the future ambition for the canal. It will ensure we can create a dynamic, vibrant canal and surrounding waterspace which will deliver high quality amenities, great opportunities for local businesses and an exciting new tourist destination for the capital.”

The draft strategy, together with the consultation exercise

will be reported back to the Planning Committee in December 2011.

For the consultation exercise log on to [the council website](#). Responses should be returned to the Council by Friday 19 August.