

Council launches New Canal Strategy



The renaissance of the popular Union Canal took a major step forward yesterday with the launch of a new strategy to take it into the 21st Century.

It aims to ensure the maximum use of the 200-year-old waterway by locals and visitors to Edinburgh through a wide range of activities like boating, rowing, walking, cycling and fishing.

The City of Edinburgh Council, in partnership with [British Waterways \(Scotland\)](#), has launched the [strategy](#) which will look at developing seven 'hubs' along the waterway.

The plan looks at developing a new 'canal culture' by encouraging 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 water sports 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 improved 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. A delivery plan has been drawn up to outline the key actions needed to be taken to develop

the strategy.

✘ As part of a joint initiative between the Council and British Waterways (Scotland) banners have been put up along the canal that aim to raise awareness of the area and to animate the Lochrin Basin.

A draft strategy was sent for public consultation last June and after a number of responses from key local community groups and residents the final plan was approved in December 2011.

Councillor Tim McKay, Edinburgh Canal Champion, said: “The Union Canal is still not well known to most Edinburgh residents. We hope this strategy will bring about the development of the canal so that more people from across the city, and beyond, can appreciate and enjoy its many facilities and benefit from its beauty as well as the economic potential it provides.”

Steve Dunlop, Director, British Waterways (Scotland), said: “The publication of the new Edinburgh Canal Strategy is a major milestone in the renaissance of the two hundred year old Union Canal.

“The draft strategy was very well received during the consultation process. It proved what an increasingly important role the canal plays within the capital and the appetite everyone has for making it a vibrant and unique place to work, live or play.

“We now look forward to building on the consultation, working with the City of Edinburgh Council and local waterside communities to bring this exciting vision to life.”