

Ashby Canal Restoration Snarestone to Measham

BUSINESS PLAN SUMMARY



Leicestershire County Council
Community Services Department
May 2006





The proposed canal - Measham Station

The Ashby Canal Restoration Project

This project is to restore the Ashby Canal from its current terminus at Snarestone northwards for a distance of 4.5 km to a new canal wharf at Measham (Map 1). The power to acquire the necessary land and to construct and maintain the canal was provided in October 2005 when the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs confirmed the Leicestershire County Council (Ashby de la Zouch Extension) Order made under the powers of the Transport and Works Act 1992. In making the Order the Secretary of State noted that the scheme is consistent with national, regional and local policies, would contribute significantly to regeneration objectives and would produce considerable economic, environmental and social benefits.

History

The Ashby Canal was completed in 1804 and connected Moira in north western Leicestershire to the Coventry Canal at Bedworth. It was used primarily to carry coal from the Ashby Woulds mines to markets in the Midlands and the South. The northern reaches of the canal were closed between 1944 and 1966 due to mining subsidence but in recent years the feasibility of restoration has been established and is strongly supported by local communities as a means of regeneration.

The project will follow on from the successful restoration (1999 – 2005) of over 2km of the Ashby Canal between Donisthorpe and Moira at 'The Heart of the National Forest'. This award-winning length hosts the annual Moira Canal Festival, and in conjunction



Left: Moira Furnace before restoration (c.1950)

Below: Moira Furnace after restoration (May 2006)



with the adjacent Moira Furnace Museum and Conkers (the National Forest Discovery Centre) is a popular leisure destination throughout the year.

Aims

Measham has suffered serious economic, social and environmental problems as a result of the closure of the local deep mining industry. The village and its environs are in the process of recovery from these problems and restoration of the Ashby Canal will build on this and further develop the progress that has been made. Restoring the Ashby Canal from its present low-key terminus at Snarestone to a high profile destination in Measham will create a sustainable future for the village and surrounding area. The key objectives of the project are to:

- Advance and accelerate continuing economic regeneration of the area and contribute to rural diversification and social inclusion through opportunities for leisure, recreation, learning and skills.
- Provide a green gateway to the National Forest and develop and link the recreational tourism facilities.
- Improve the environmental quality of the area.
- Provide a recreational, cultural and social resource for the local community.
- Connect Measham, and ultimately Moira, to the national waterways network.



Moira Canal Festival

Impact

The project will give rise to the following impacts:

- The attraction of 150,000 visitors per annum into the area boosting spending within the local economy by some £2.7m.
- The stimulation of £6.45m of inward investment from the private sector to develop 5,300 square metres of mixed-use residential, retail and business units.
- The creation of over 160 temporary jobs and over 70 permanent jobs.
- Reclamation of derelict and under-used land to create a recreational and wildlife corridor acting as a gateway into the National Forest: It will leave a valuable and sustainable legacy for future generations.
- The strengthening of the local community through the restoration of heritage and cultural pride.
- Improved health by enabling access to a safe and accessible walking and cycling route and by providing employment for the local community that has suffered from high levels of unemployment and associated ill health.



Boatbuilding at Measham

- A more environmentally and culturally educated and aware community through provision of a valuable educational resource with a wide range of learning opportunities.

Above all the canal will enable Measham and the surrounding area to secure a vibrant, confident and sustainable future that will bring lasting improvements to the quality of life of the whole community.

Community Involvement, Control and Partnerships

The project has been initiated and strongly supported by the local community in recognition of the benefits that restoration will bring. It utilises local community strengths by encouraging participation through voluntary activity and will be continued, sustained and made to work by the local community. The sophistication and commitment of the community is reflected in the work of the Measham Development Trust, the key vehicle driving the sustainable regeneration of the village.

Preparation of an adopted Project Strategy together with accompanying impact assessments is complete and a Project Steering Group has been established.

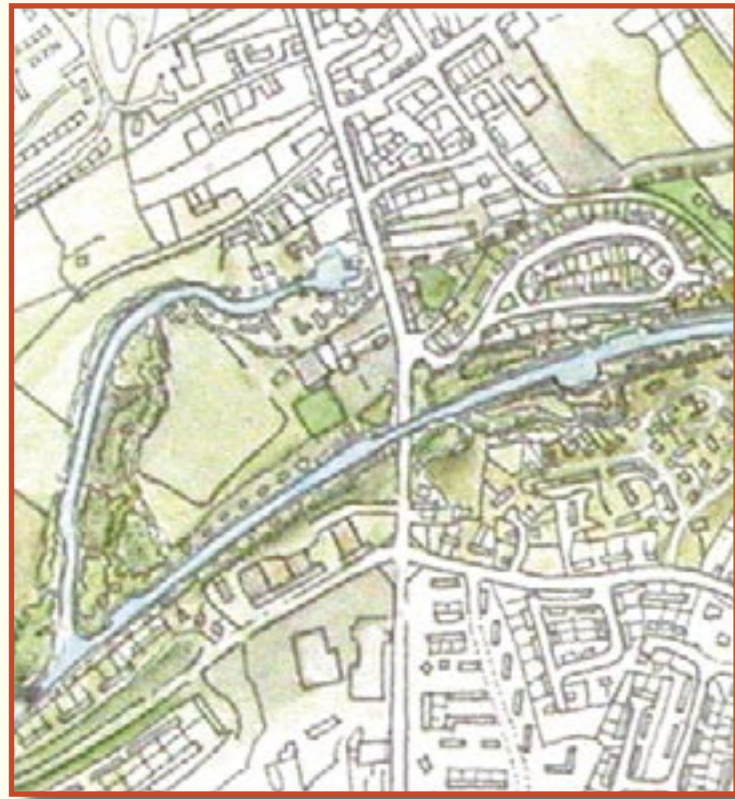
Strategy

The scheme has been identified as a top priority for restoration by the Government's advisor on waterway priorities, the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council. It has also been given top priority by British Waterways in recognition of its status as one of the schemes that will "... deliver the greatest benefits to the network and have the greatest chance of funding."



Proposed High Street Aqueduct, Measham

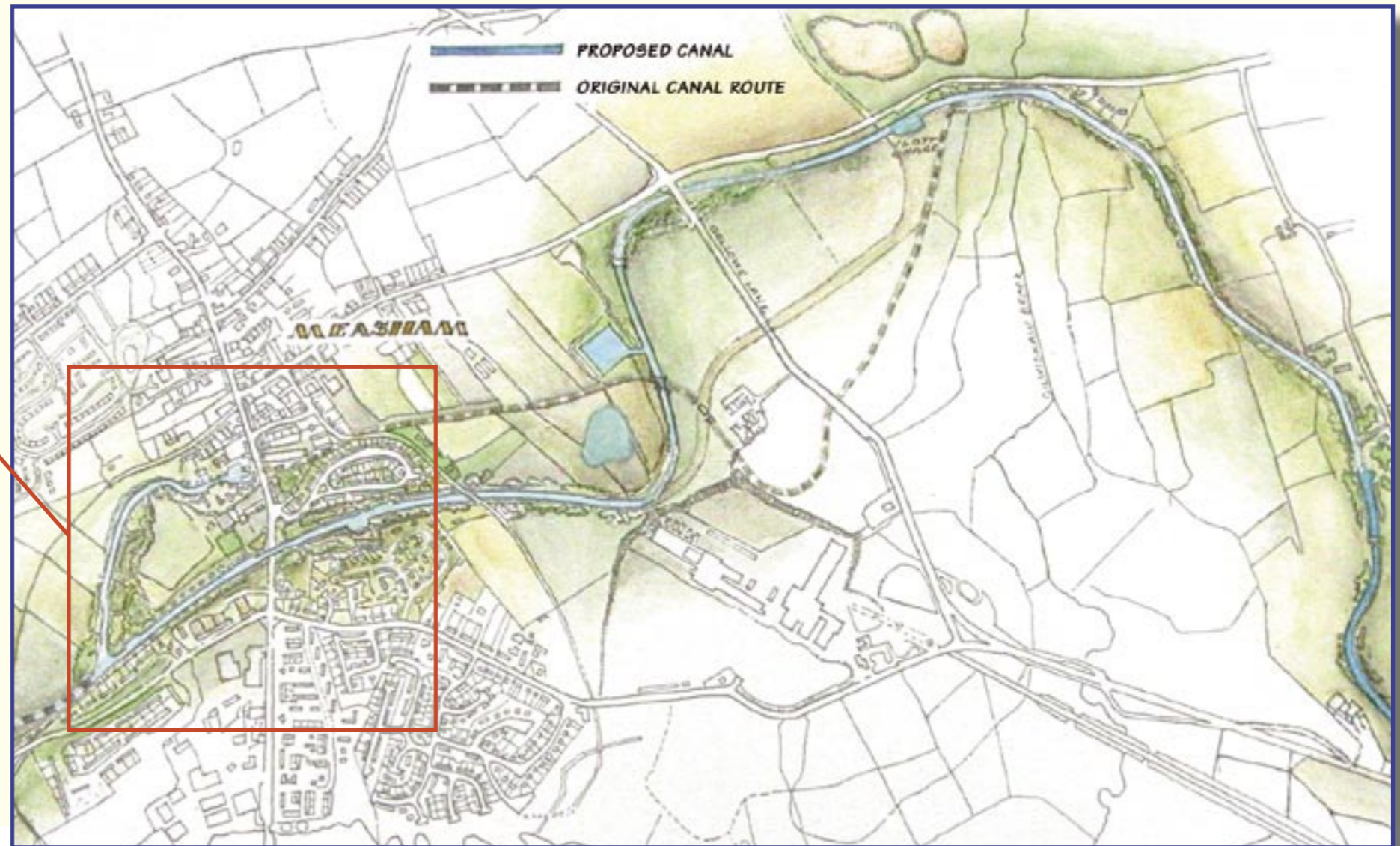
Ashby Canal Route



Measham Station & Wharf ▲

Restoration from Snarestone to Measham ▶

Ashby Canal, Snarestone to Moira ▼



Innovation

The Ashby Canal restoration is an innovative scheme providing a creative approach to progressing tourism-led regeneration. The proposal to re-water the Canal stems from the local community and has been enthusiastically adopted by a broad coalition of interests as a realistic opportunity to facilitate positive change.

The re-watering of the canal will be perceived by the residents of the area as a new development, and as an innovation in itself. The waterside development at Measham Wharf will transfer the predominantly urban concept of waterside regeneration to an inland village setting. The Ashby Canal project is a demonstration of how a recreational development can provide a catalyst for wider economic, social and environmental regeneration. As such, the project provides an opportunity for a positive response to the Government's developing agenda for Rural England.

The concepts embodied in the Ashby Canal project could be widely replicated in other rural areas using a diverse range of recreational, sporting and tourism development opportunities as a catalyst for economic and social renewal.



Volunteers at work



Canal construction at Donisthorpe

Finance

The project is estimated to cost £13.1million including canal construction, land acquisition and fees. Details of works and cost are set out below.

Annual Cost Projection

Activity	Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Site investigations, surveys, design and preliminary works		100,000				
Land acquisition			500,000		500,000	
Canal construction and supervision			1,300,000	3,600,000	2,950,000	3,050,000
Fees		200,000	200,000	200,000	250,000	250,000
TOTAL		300,000	2,000,000	3,800,000	3,700,000	3,300,000

Project Works and Costings (mid 2006)

Canal construction	£10,000,000
Land acquisition	£1,000,000
Compensatory habitat	£1,000,000
Fees @10 % (Engineering and Landscape Design, Admin.)	£1,100,000
TOTAL	£13,100,000

Indicative running costs and income for the restored canal are set out below. It is likely that the level of costs could be less than the level of income by some £9,000 per annum, allowing the accumulation of a contingency fund for future maintenance/development. Once restoration has been completed it is envisaged that the canal will be passed to British Waterways to manage as part of the national network.



Proposed High Street Aqueduct, Measham



Indicative Running Costs

Feature	Cost per annum (£)
Dredging	None for 20 years
Maintenance (bank and towpath)	9,000
Pumping Station	4,000
Operational Management	10,000
TOTAL	23,000

Indicative Income

Source	Income per annum (£)
Licences (private boats)	None
Moorings, etc.	30,000
Angling	2,000
Licences (hire boats)	None
TOTAL	32,000

Conclusions

The restoration of the Ashby Canal to Measham will secure a vibrant, confident and sustainable future that will bring lasting improvements to the quality of life of the local community and wider economic and tourism benefits for the region and the National Forest.

The key features of the project are:

- **fundamental community involvement**
- **improved quality of life**
- **high employment generation**
- **widespread environmental impact**
- **excellent sustainability**
- **strong and committed local partnerships**
- **exceptional added value**

The overall theme linking the above elements is one of renewal: It will bring the disused back into use, create real and lasting opportunities for change and restore pride and confidence to the local community.



The proposed canal - Measham Wharf



MEASHAM

GALLOWAY LANE



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Further details available on the web:

www.leics.gov.uk