

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Waterways for Tomorrow

Overview

This document follows up the White Paper *A New Deal for Transport; Better for Everyone* by setting out proposals for the future of our inland waterways - the canals and navigable rivers of England and Wales. The Scottish Executive will consider whether to issue a separate document covering the inland waterways of Scotland.

The Government wants to promote the inland waterways, encouraging a modern, integrated and sustainable approach to their use. We want to protect and conserve an important part of our national heritage. At the same time, we want to maximise the opportunities the waterways offer for leisure and recreation; as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration; for education; and for freight transport. We want to encourage innovative uses such as water transfer and telecommunications.

The last major review of the inland waterways was carried out more than thirty years ago. This led to the Transport Act 1968 which recognised that the main role of the nationalised waterways was shifting from transport to amenity and recreational use. Today, all our waterways are more widely appreciated than ever. As well as their recreational and transport roles, the waterways also supply water and have become part of the land drainage system. The system is rich in heritage value and is an important environmental and ecological resource. The waterways stimulate regeneration and are increasingly being used in innovative ways. The system is undergoing a renaissance as more derelict waterways are restored, greater resources are devoted to maintaining the existing system and increased effort is put into maximising the benefits the waterways offer.

The inland waterways are an important asset for future generations to enjoy and the Government is keen to see them maintained and developed in a sustainable way so that they fulfil their social, economic and environmental potential. We share the vision of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC), the Government's statutory advisory body on waterways which, in its report *Britain's Inland Waterways - An Undervalued Asset*, called for the inland waterways to be retained, conserved and developed sustainably to encourage their best use and the contribution they can make to national, regional and local goals.

We are determined to increase the contribution that the inland waterways can make to the life of the country. We plan to do this by encouraging uses and initiatives which make the most suitable and sympathetic use of the waterways in their evolving role. These will be built on the principles of sustainable development including partnership. We will encourage partnerships with the public, private and voluntary sectors which can offer new skills and sources of funding.

Our aims for the inland waterways are to see an improving quality of infrastructure; a better experience for users through more co-operation between navigation authorities; and increased opportunities for all through sustainable development. We will seek to achieve these aims in three ways.

- In February 1999 we increased public investment in British Waterways and created a new framework to help it to care for and develop its assets. British Waterways has built on this framework in developing its own strategy and is taking forward initiatives to develop a closer relationship with its users; to work with the voluntary sector; and to establish new public/private partnerships. We will reinforce our call to British Waterways to harness public, private and voluntary sector skills and enthusiasm to unlock the full potential of its waterways.
- We will continue to encourage navigation authorities to work together on issues of mutual interest to provide a higher quality and more joined-up experience for users. We will continue to support the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA); encourage a wider advisory role for IWAAC; and promote joint working between British Waterways and the Environment Agency.
- We will continue to integrate the waterways more effectively into other Government policies as described below.

The Government wants to encourage people to make use of the inland waterways for leisure and recreation, tourism and sport. Many waterways are well used for pleasure boating; and rowing, canoeing and sailing are widespread. Angling is very popular. Much larger numbers of people use the waterways for informal recreation such as walking, cycling and exploring the waterway heritage. The waterways are an important tourism resource, supporting a large holiday hire-boat industry. We will encourage their greater use for recreation; increased access for the young, disabled and disadvantaged; and better communication with the widest possible range of users.

The inland waterways are rich in historic buildings and civil engineering, and form an important part of the country's industrial heritage. They are also a valuable environmental resource, providing a sanctuary for a wide variety of plants and animals, some of which have become rare elsewhere. The waterways provide opportunities for study at all levels in subjects as diverse as natural history, engineering, architecture, industrial archaeology, and economic and social history. We will support the conservation and enhancement of the waterways' heritage, their built and natural environment, and their biological diversity. We will encourage the use of the waterways as an educational resource.

The improvement and restoration of the inland waterways and the development of adjoining land contributes to regeneration. It creates a pleasant place in which to live, work and play; and attracts private sector investment creating jobs and income. New development, particularly housing, exploits a waterfront location. The Government will seek to increase these benefits by promoting the waterways as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration. We will encourage the Regional Development Agencies to support proposals for improving, restoring and maintaining waterways. And we will issue guidance to ensure that new road and other development proposals take proper account of waterway restoration.

Local Transport Plans will help ensure that the inland waterways are fully integrated with other transport-related policies such as those for freight, public transport, cycling and walking. There is more scope for the waterways to be used for public transport and we will support the introduction of passenger boat services.

There is scope to increase the amount of freight carried on the inland waterways. Most canals have not changed since they were built and cannot play a significant role in freight carrying though they are suitable for niche markets. However, some of the larger river navigations and canals still carry some freight and could take more traffic. The Government wants to encourage the transfer of freight from roads to waterborne transport. We are considering enhancements to the Freight Facilities Grant scheme which can help companies proposing to move freight by water rather than by road; we will sponsor an inland waterways freight study group; and we will support research.

The Government thinks that it would be helpful to bring planning policy advice on the inland waterways together. We are summarising in this document the Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) relevant to the waterways and providing a commentary to improve the understanding of planning guidance as it applies to the waterways. We will also invite IWAAC to prepare a good practice document with a view to it being published jointly with DETR. This will explain the contribution that inland waterways can make to regeneration and other projects, and highlight examples of good planning. We will continue to review relevant PPGs as each is revised, so that the potential of the inland waterways can be developed through the planning system.

The Government believes that the measures set out in this document will pave the way for a new, revitalised inland waterways system which can be fully, imaginatively and adventurously used by all. We will take our initiatives forward together with all those interested in the waterways, starting with a national conference to discuss the proposals in this document.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The White Paper on the Future of Transport *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone*¹, published in July 1998, described the Government's plans for developing an integrated and sustainable transport system. This document follows up the White Paper by setting out the Government's proposals for the inland waterways. These cover the entire range of waterway activities and follow the guiding principles set out in the Government's White Paper on Sustainable Development *A Better Quality of Life*², published in May 1999.

1.2 The Government wants to promote the inland waterways, encouraging a modern, integrated and sustainable approach to their use. We want to protect and conserve a vital part of our national heritage. At the same time, we want to encourage their best and, where appropriate, innovative use, maximising the opportunities they offer for leisure and recreation; urban and rural regeneration; education; and freight transport.

1.3 The document explains how we plan to do this. It is in three main parts.

1.4 The first part (Chapter 2) outlines the changing face of the inland waterways and the system today. It summarises the many uses and benefits of the waterways, and describes how the navigation authorities responsible for their management go about their business.

1.5 The second part (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) explains how the Government proposes to take forward its plans for the waterways, building on the principles of sustainable development including partnership. It also responds to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council's reports *Britain's Inland Waterways: An Undervalued Asset*⁴.

1.6 The third part (Chapter 6) describes how the Government intends to integrate its policies for the waterways with other, related, policies to maximise the contribution the waterways can make to the life of the country.

The scope of this document

1.7 This document is about the inland waterways - that is the canals and navigable rivers - of England and Wales. Most of the inland waterways are non tidal and the document concentrates on these waterways. However much of its contents apply also to tidal inland waterways. For brevity we often refer to the inland waterways in the document simply as *waterways*.

1.8 The Scottish Executive will consider whether to issue a separate document covering the inland waterways of Scotland.

Chapter 2

The Changing Face of the Inland Waterways

What are the inland waterways?

2.1The inland waterways are extraordinarily diverse. They include the canals - narrow, broad and ship; the rivers which have been made navigable; the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads; and the navigable drains of the Fens. They also include the naturally navigable parts of rivers such as the Thames, Severn and Trent, as well as many smaller rivers around the country. Each type of waterway has its own special characteristics and historical background.

A new role for the waterways

2.2From the Middle Ages onwards, natural rivers were made navigable to provide arteries for trade. But it was the construction of the canals between the mid 18th and the early 19th Centuries which enabled the waterways to play a leading role in serving the country's transport needs during the Industrial Revolution.

2.3The secret of the waterways' success was their ability to move goods cheaply in bulk. However, they found it difficult to compete with the railways and lost much of their traffic as the railway network grew. While leisure traffic developed on the Broads and some rivers, many canals became unviable. Some were taken over by railway companies and often allowed to decline: others, particularly in rural areas, were abandoned or simply fell into disuse. The decline accelerated after the First World War as modern road transport developed. Even so, some waterways continued to handle considerable quantities of freight, making a valuable contribution to the Second World War effort.

2.4The waterways were still thought of as primarily a freight transport system when, in 1948, about half the system was nationalised and brought under the control of the British Transport Commission, the forerunner of British Waterways. However, with the Government giving priority to modernising the railways and improving the road network, freight carrying continued to decline in the face of competition from more modern and flexible forms of transport.

2.5The decline in post-War freight carrying on the waterways was matched by efforts by dedicated enthusiasts to save the system from decay and closure, and to bring disused waterways back into use. However, their message that the waterways had great historical value and enormous potential for leisure was slow to be accepted.

2.6The waterways' future was still in doubt in the mid 1960s when the Government considered the way ahead for the nationalised system in the light of a detailed report prepared by the newly-created British Waterways under the term of the Transport Act 1962.

2.7The Government's final conclusions published in the 1967 White Paper *British Waterways: Recreation and Amenity*⁵ reflected the decline in freight traffic and the increasing value placed on amenity and recreational use. The White Paper envisaged that the bulk of the system should be kept for pleasure cruising, and that British Waterways should be given a new remit allowing it to develop its waterways' potential for leisure. These proposals were put into effect by the Transport Act 1968.

2.8The 1968 Transport Act marked a turning point in the history of the waterways by recognising for the first time the recreational purpose of the nationalised waterways. In the 30 years since it was passed, this new role has become a reality, not just for British Waterways' canals and rivers but for the waterways as a whole.

2.9Today, the waterways provide not only a major leisure and recreational resource: they act as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration; they form an important part of our heritage; and they make a valuable contribution to the environment. After so many years of decline, the system is now undergoing a renaissance as more derelict waterways are restored, greater resources are devoted to maintaining the historic existing system, and increased effort is put into exploiting the wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits the waterways offer.

The system today

2.10There are approximately 5,090 kms (3,160 miles) of fully navigable inland waterways in England and Wales⁷. For many bodies, navigation is not the prime concern.

2.19The difference between the navigation authorities is illustrated by the three largest.

- British Waterways is a public corporation which runs its affairs on a commercial basis consistent with its statutory powers and obligations for navigation and the environment; and its objectives agreed by the Government. It is expected to promote the use of its waterways for leisure and recreation, tourism, regeneration, and transport while also conserving their built and natural heritage.
- the Environment Agency is primarily an environmental regulatory body which manages its waterways as an integral part of its other water management functions. It has a duty generally to promote the recreational use of waterways and an obligation to operate those for which it is responsible in an efficient and business-like manner.
- the Broads Authority manages its waterspace together with surrounding land on national park lines, combining its responsibility for navigation with conservation and recreation. It has a duty to manage the Broads for three specific and equally important purposes - to conserve and enhance the Broads' natural beauty; to promote their enjoyment by the public; and to protect navigation interests.

2.20The identity of the navigation authority responsible for a particular waterway is often a matter of historical accident. British Waterways' system consists largely of canals and river navigations which were nationalised in 1948, many as part of the railway companies which had earlier acquired them. The Environment Agency's navigations were passed to it from the former National Rivers Authority which in turn had inherited them from the former water authorities when the industry was privatised in 1989: previously most were controlled by river boards or conservancies mainly concerned with land drainage. The Broads Authority was made the navigation authority for the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads when it was created in 1988.

2.21 Other waterways have stayed in the hands of, or have passed into the control of, a wide variety of bodies. These include property development companies (the Manchester Ship Canal); drainage commissioners (the Middle Level Navigation); the National Trust (the River Wey Navigations); port authorities (the tidal Thames); charitable trusts (the Upper Avon Navigation); local authorities (the Basingstoke Canal); and even original canal companies (the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation).

2.22 The position is not static. For example, British Waterways has taken or is taking over a number of waterways including the south Stratford-upon-Avon Canal, the Yorkshire Ouse, the Linton Lock Navigation, and the Tees Navigation. The Environment Agency has powers to take over the management of waterways without an active navigation authority, and to make byelaws for "unadopted" waterways. It has applied to be the navigation authority for the River Wye.

2.23 Each navigation authority deals with the day to day operation and management of its waterways according to the statutory rights of navigation and other governing legislation. The methods used and standards applied vary from authority to authority.

2.24 British Waterways must observe the requirements of the Transport Act 1968 which divides its waterways into three categories, each with its own maintenance standard:

- *Commercial waterways*, which must be kept in a condition suitable for use by commercial freight-carrying vessels;
- *Cruising waterways*, which must be kept in a condition suitable for use by cruising craft, that is vessels constructed or adapted for the carriage of passengers and driven by mechanical power; and
- *the Remainder*, which must be dealt with in the most economical manner possible, consistent in the case of waterways which are retained with the requirements of public health and the preservation of amenity and safety.

2.25 Other navigation authorities' standards are defined differently, for example by reference to the minimum depth of water to be retained throughout the system or at a particular point, rather than by the main type of user. In some cases there may be no statutory requirement to maintain standards. The Upper Avon Navigation Trust is such a case but it applies the standards of the original navigation before it became derelict.

Finance

2.26 The waterways, particularly the canals, involve heavy liabilities and are expensive to maintain. Subject to the legislation in force, many people who use the waterways can be charged but others in the wider community who enjoy their benefits do not pay directly towards the cost of their upkeep.

2.27 Income for the upkeep of the waterways comes from a variety of sources. Depending on the navigation authority involved these include craft licences, tolls, mooring charges, drainage rates, angling charges or rents, and water sales. The development of waterside land and property, where available, can bring in significant additional proceeds. Grants from Europe, Government, regeneration agencies and lottery bodies; and contributions from local authorities and other bodies towards specific projects also help. British Waterways augments its income by exploiting its non-operational estate, feeding the proceeds back into waterway upkeep, improved facilities and development projects.

2.28 British Waterways and the Environment Agency both receive Government grant towards the cost of meeting their navigation obligations, currently about £59 million and £3 million per annum respectively. The Broads Authority receives grant aid from central and local government for its conservation work and recreational management but finances its navigation responsibilities entirely from tolls totalling about £1 million a year.

2.29 The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) oversees the activities of British Waterways in England and Wales⁸, and the Environment Agency, setting grant levels according to planned expenditure and forecasts of income likely to be raised from other sources. DETR satisfies itself that the organisations perform efficiently and meet their waterway responsibilities and Government policies in the most cost-effective way. The Department does not control the other navigation authorities in the same way because they do not receive Government grant for their more limited navigation responsibilities.

Chapter 3 The Government's Approach

A vision for the inland waterways

3.1 The inland waterways are an important asset for future generations to enjoy and the Government is keen to see them maintained and developed in a sustainable way so that they fulfil their social, economic and environmental potential. We want to ensure that the many benefits and opportunities they provide are used to the full.

The Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council

3.2 The Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC) was created by the Transport Act 1968 to advise the Government and British Waterways about the use and development of the latter's waterways for recreation and amenity purposes. In 1993 IWAAC was asked by the then Government to concentrate on providing strategic policy advice on issues such as widening the customer base, balancing the needs of conservation and greater use, and development and regeneration. IWAAC has since published two important reports, each covering the entire inland waterways system.

Britain's Inland Waterways: An Undervalued Asset

3.3 In 1996 IWAAC published its consultative report on Great Britain's waterways - *Britain's Inland Waterways: An Undervalued Asset*.⁹ The Government is grateful to IWAAC for a comprehensive and well-considered examination of the inland waterways. Although the Council's remit does not cover freight, the report and its subsequent Final Recommendations¹⁰ to Government have made a valuable contribution to Government thinking about the future of the waterways.

3.4 The central message of IWAAC's report was that

"Britain's inland waterways are a national asset and should be retained and conserved for their built heritage and environmental qualities and sustainably developed to encourage best use and maximise the contribution they can make to national, regional and local goals."

3.5 IWAAC saw the waterways as still the *"Cinderella among our heritage and conservation assets"* and said *"the system is not a museum but a useable asset and its heritage a living one"*. It pointed to the diverse and important, sometimes vital, functions it plays and concluded that not nearly enough was being done to give waterways the support they need.

3.6 IWAAC called for action on three related fronts, broadly seeking

- a higher status at local, national and international level, in order to
- promote more money coming into the system so as to
- preserve its long-term value, by shaping its future development and uses to conservation-based objectives through sustainable partnership management.

3.7 IWAAC considered that while the publicly financed waterways needed more resources, so too the other navigations required a means of securing their future. The Council recognised that not all the money could or should come from Government which already contributed significant sums each year, or the direct users. The income from these sources would have to be augmented from other sources such as local authorities and national and regional funding agencies.

3.8 The Government has carefully considered the report. We endorse its overall conclusion that the waterways are a major national asset which must be conserved and developed in a sustainable way for future generations to use and enjoy. We recognise the benefits of a well maintained and vibrant waterway system and the important benefits it can bring to public enjoyment and recreation, and to local economies and communities.

3.9 We have also considered the ten key final recommendations derived from the report's 31 conclusions. Appendix 1 contains our response to each recommendation addressed to the Government. Some of the issues raised are also referred to in the body of this document.

Waterway Restoration Priorities

3.10 The restoration of derelict and disused waterways has become an important part of the waterways scene. Inspired by the voluntary sector, more than 400 miles (640 kms) of inland waterways have been restored to navigation since the 1950s. At the outset, work was carried out mostly by volunteers but voluntary bodies have increasingly formed partnerships with British Waterways, local authorities and other public bodies, opening the door to large grants from European, national regeneration, and lottery funding sources.

3.11 The increased availability of funding for viable and beneficial projects has boosted waterway restoration activity and given rise to hopes that many derelict waterways will be restored. However competition for funds is fierce and project development complex. To help funding agencies assess the merits of individual schemes, and to highlight good practice for restoration bodies, IWAAC produced in 1998 its report *Waterway Restoration Priorities*¹¹.

3.12 The report was the first to consider waterway restoration systematically on a national basis. It provided a comprehensive account of the restoration scene in the United Kingdom and reviewed 80 current restoration projects. The review considered the objectives and significance of each project; the benefits it would bring; the stage it had reached; and what remained to be done. On the basis of this information, the report identified each project as being likely to be ready for main funding in the short term (one to five years); medium term (five to ten years) or longer term (beyond ten years).

3.13 The report was widely welcomed by funding agencies and restoration bodies and IWAAC is currently updating its findings.

3.14 The report made a number of recommendations to Government and others about funding for waterway restoration and also repeated calls in the *Undervalued Asset* report for comprehensive revised planning guidance for waterways, and on new roads affecting disused waterways. We have considered these recommendations and our responses are set out in Appendix 2. Some of the issues raised are also referred to in the body of this document.

The way forward

3.15 The Government is determined to increase the contribution the inland waterways can make to the life of the country. We will do this by encouraging initiatives and uses which make the most suitable and sympathetic use of the waterways in their evolving role. These will be built on the principles of sustainable development including partnership.

3.16 The waterways contribute directly to the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Development in a number of ways. These include the conservation of the waterway environment and heritage; social and economic development through urban and rural

regeneration; integrated transport; and educational opportunities.

3.17 In practice, sustainable development is an issue that affects all aspects of the waterways and their use. The need to strike a balance between diverse and sometimes potentially conflicting requirements is found at all levels and presents a challenge which must be overcome if the system is to deliver all the benefits of which it is capable.

3.18 All navigation authorities should ensure that the principles of sustainable development underpin their actions, and that they employ management processes to support this approach. They should aim to apply high standards of conservation and care for the waterway environment and heritage; seek to enhance biodiversity; and make the best use of natural resources. They should continue to identify new ways of working, and new opportunities to help sustain the waterways. And they should form strong partnerships with the public, private and voluntary sectors. In this way they will safeguard the environmental, social and economic value of the waterways for this generation and the next.

3.19 It is of course vital to protect and conserve the waterways as an environmental and heritage asset but, as IWAAC have pointed out, the system is not a museum. Navigation authorities should explore and develop new ideas and uses which, applied sensitively, can help secure the future of the system.

3.20 Partnership is fundamental to the future of the waterways. Management of the existing system is fragmented and the different navigation authorities must therefore work together and harmonise their working practices. By extending partnerships to the public, private and voluntary sectors they will be able to increase the benefits the waterways can provide for everyone.

3.21 The Government's overall aims for the waterways are to see an improving quality of infrastructure; a better experience for users through more co-operation between navigation authorities; and increased opportunities for all through sustainable development.

3.22 We will seek to achieve these aims in three main ways.

- In February 1999 we increased public investment in British Waterways and created a new framework to help it to care for and develop its assets. British Waterways is taking forward initiatives to develop a closer relationship with its users, to work with the voluntary sector, and to establish new public/private partnerships. We will reinforce our call to British Waterways to harness public, private and voluntary sector skills and enthusiasm to unlock the full potential of its waterways. Chapter 4 contains more details.
- We will continue to encourage navigation authorities to work together on issues of mutual interest to provide a higher quality and more consistent experience for users. We will continue to support the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA), encourage a wider advisory role for IWAAC, and promote joint working between British Waterways and the Environment Agency. Chapter 5 describes the way forward.
- We will continue to integrate the waterways more effectively with other areas of Government policy. Chapter 6 reviews each subject area and describes the progress being made.

Chapter 4 A New British Waterways

Unlocking the potential

4.1 Our February 1999 announcement about the future of British Waterways recognised that its waterways were a valuable public asset. It announced an increase in Government funding to enable British Waterways to make faster progress in reducing the substantial maintenance backlog resulting from decades of under-investment. And it set out a package of measures, founded on partnership, to enable the full potential of British Waterways' canals and rivers to be realised and to allow as many people as possible to enjoy and benefit from them. These measures are described in the document *Unlocking the potential - a new future for British Waterways*¹².

4.2 British Waterways has developed its own strategy, building on its new framework of aims and objectives described in *Unlocking the potential*. It is pursuing its tasks enthusiastically and imaginatively. It is drawing up in consultation with users a new set of standards for the operation and maintenance of its waterways. And it is giving priority to tackling the maintenance backlog. We support its aim to eliminate the backlog as quickly as possible.

Public/private partnerships

4.3 We want British Waterways to take full advantage of the skills, expertise, innovation and funding opportunities offered by the private sector. British Waterways is therefore exploring a number of public/private partnerships.

Property

4.4 British Waterways has an extensive property estate with an estimated total market value of over £280 million¹³. Of this, operational land, that is property needed to operate the waterways system such as workshops and land needed for access to operational sites, is worth more than £50 million. Non-operational land, for example former warehouses and stores, is valued at over £230 million.

4.5 British Waterways uses income from its non-operational estate to boost waterway maintenance, and capital proceeds from sales of its non-operational property to reinvest in development and regeneration. These sales often form part of joint venture

developments with public and private sector partners regenerating run-down locations in urban areas, and generating further income.

4.6 Despite its success in forming successful partnerships with the private sector, British Waterways has frequently been unable to take advantage of opportunities to enhance its estate. For example, lack of investment funds may delay the preparation of sites for marketing or the acquisition of land to assemble an attractive site for partnership development. This has prevented British Waterways from maximising the development potential of waterside opportunities.

4.7 British Waterways is seeking to overcome this difficulty by setting up a long-term partnership with a private sector partner who would be able to bring additional funds and expertise to take forward selected development opportunities. In turn, British Waterways would identify suitable land holdings and contribute its skills in water management, and water-related development and regeneration.

4.8 British Waterways has held initial discussions with potential partners which have revealed considerable interest. It has appointed financial advisers to help develop the commercial case; to advise on the best corporate structure for the partnership; and to identify and secure a private sector partner.

Water transfer

4.9 The demand for water frequently does not coincide geographically with plentiful resources so it is often necessary to meet the shortfall by transferring water, often over long distances, using rivers, aqueducts and pipelines.

4.10 It is possible that accelerating development, accentuated by climate change, may give rise to more imbalances between demand and local availability particularly in the south east of England. Water companies can take steps to keep supply and demand in balance in a variety of ways, notably by reducing leakage and encouraging efficient use of water by households and industry. But additional supplies may still be necessary. Where these are not available locally, transferring water may be an option.

4.11 British Waterways' canal network offers the potential for transfers of water particularly in the direction of the relatively more stressed south and east of England, with relatively little need for engineering works in comparison with the construction of new pipelines or reservoirs. Parts of the system are already used to move untreated water to serve individual water companies: for example Bristol receives up to 60% of its water from the Gloucester & Sharpness Ship Canal, and the Llangollen Canal is used to supply North West Water.

4.12 Studies and pilot schemes have shown that water transfer on a wider scale than at present is technically and environmentally feasible but investment is likely to be needed to enable the infrastructure to serve its new function. For example it may be necessary in some places to reverse the flow of water; to provide back-pumping at locks; to lower the canal bed; to raise banks; or to install lengths of pipeline to avoid excessive water flows through narrow bridges.

4.13 Although canals transfer water from one catchment area to another, the environmental impact of water transfer proposals would also need to be evaluated carefully. It would be necessary to preserve water quality and avoid harm to wildlife by putting in place safeguards at both the source and destination of the water and along the transfer route.

4.14 British Waterways is currently examining ways in which it can implement its ideas for water transfer in joint ventures with private sector organisations. It is envisaged that any partnership will be based on the transfer of raw, and the distribution and sale of treated water which, where cost effective, will be of potable quality. British Waterways will continue to own and manage the waterway network while the private sector partner will bring finance, expertise in water treatment, distribution, sales and marketing, and customer management to the partnership.

Maintenance

4.15 British Waterways already puts out to tender most maintenance work on the thousands of structures on its system, and the work is often carried out in partnership with contractors to get better value for money. However, new forms of long term public/private partnership for the maintenance of structures are being developed. British Waterways is considering whether there is an example which might form a suitable model for its waterways.

Telecommunications

4.16 British Waterways, in partnership with Fibreway Ltd, has laid fibre optic cables in its towpaths to provide a network service for data, pictures and voice communications. The system links London and the south east with Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Gloucester and Bristol. The system has been so successful that the partners have restructured the joint venture to expand business. This will provide additional income for British Waterways to bring forward investment in much-needed repairs and improvements to its waterways.

Partnerships with the public sector

4.17 British Waterways is making good progress in forming long term partnerships with local authorities and other public sector bodies to provide local environmental, economic and social benefits. For example, in Northamptonshire, British Waterways, the County and District Councils, the parish councils, and local canal user groups are carrying out a jointly-funded regeneration strategy and action plan for the County's canals. The Partnership is providing improved access points and towpath surfaces, interpretation materials explaining the importance of the canal environment and built heritage, and hedgerow and tree management schemes designed to encourage greater wildlife diversity in the canal corridor.

Partnership with the people

4.18 There is scope for British Waterways to develop a closer relationship with the millions of people who use its facilities, only a small proportion of whom own boats or take holidays on the waterways. Last year we asked British Waterways to consult on

options for a membership scheme which would give members a range of benefits in return for an annual fee. These included being able to nominate a person for appointment as a Board Member if membership reached 100,000.

4.19 The consultation exercise also sought views on a proposal to create a charitable trust which would operate in parallel to, but independently of, British Waterways. The trust would have had similar aims and objectives to The Waterways Trust described in Chapter 5 of this document. Like the Trust, it would have been concerned with all the inland waterways in Britain, not solely those managed by British Waterways. Its objectives would have been to help conserve the natural and built environment of the inland waterways; promote their restoration, development and use for navigation and commerce; provide facilities for leisure and recreational use; and educate the public about the waterways and their history.

4.20 The consultation exercise coupled with market research carried out by British Waterways revealed great interest in the waterways, a strong desire for more information at a local level, and a perception of the waterways as a good cause worthy of donation (though not in substitution for Government funding). On the other hand, consultees were uncertain about the merits of a membership scheme, whether it could offer sufficiently attractive benefits, and its viability. They did not see the chance to nominate someone for appointment to the Board as a particularly valuable benefit. Some existing waterways groups feared a membership scheme could draw members away from them.

4.21 Consultees strongly supported the proposed charitable trust, provided it was fully accountable and independent of British Waterways. Many saw The Waterways Trust as an appropriate vehicle, if these conditions were met.

4.22 We have considered the views expressed by those taking part in the consultation exercise and the market research in the light of British Waterways' recommendations and the views of The Waterways Trust. We agree that the best way forward is for British Waterways and The Waterways Trust to form a partnership to deliver the following proposals.

4.23 British Waterways will introduce improved consultation procedures at national and local levels representing a wider range of users more effectively: it will also set up a subscription service to provide regular information about the waterways. At the same time The Waterways Trust will launch a scheme to give people the opportunity to contribute to the waterways. The Trust will include the offer of the British Waterways subscription service in its fundraising material which British Waterways will disseminate through its contacts with the millions of waterways users.

4.24 British Waterways will continue to help the Trust establish itself as a separate and accountable body. The Trust will, in turn, take steps to increase the number of its trustees to reflect its interest in all of Britain's inland waterways.

4.25 We are grateful to all those who took part in the consultation exercise and the market research. The steps that British Waterways and The Waterways Trust now plan to take offer the prospect of a fruitful partnership involving the voluntary sector which will lead to increased support for, and investment in, the waterways, so helping to secure their future.

Chapter 5 Waterways Partnerships

Waterways management

5.1 The inland waterways system has its origins in local initiatives and has never formed a fully integrated national network. Individual navigation authorities have historically managed their waterways in different ways depending on the nature of the authority and its wider responsibilities. This fragmented approach has created difficulties for users and has held back the development of the system as a whole.

5.2 In recent years navigation authorities have increasingly accepted that they should discuss common approaches to issues of mutual interest and harmonise their working practices where possible. The Government welcomes this approach. We want to foster partnership among all navigation authorities to promote a higher profile for the waterways, and to provide a higher quality, safe, and more joined-up experience for users. Safety on the inland waterways is important and we want the highest standards to be achieved.

The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities

5.3 The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) was formed in 1996 with the support of the then Government to bring together navigation authorities and provide a single voice on waterway management issues.

5.4 AINA's objectives are to:

- provide a forum for the sharing of best practice advice and expertise;
- represent members' views to Government and other bodies;
- develop links with its European neighbours;
- secure adequate investment in the waterways;
- promote public awareness of the value and potential of the waterways and support for their development and

conservation; and

- enhance the amenity and environmental quality of the waterways.

5.5 In early 1999 AINA produced a national strategy for the inland waterways *Steering a Fresh Course*¹⁴. The Association has since drawn up an action plan to take the strategy forward. This includes:

- developing an environmental framework plan acceptable to all navigation authorities;
- issuing best practice guidance on waterway corridor studies, cost benefit analysis of waterways, and waterway standards;
- developing a common approach to the conservation of historic structures and identifying their investment needs;
- researching the environmental impact of different uses of the waterways; and
- developing a water resource management plan for member authorities' waterways.

5.6 AINA also proposes to draw up a strategic plan for the waterways. It believes that it would be appropriate to consider how the present system which has grown in an uncoordinated way can best meet future needs. There may, for instance, be a case for constructing new, or enhancing existing navigations to exploit the full potential of the system. A national strategy would allow individual navigation authorities to develop their own plans in co-operation with each other, creating a logical system and consistent standards. The plan would also provide a framework within which proposals for restoration, enhancement, or new navigations could be assessed.

5.7 AINA wishes to forge a closer relationship with IWAAC, drawing on its help and advice in preparing the strategic plan for the waterways and taking forward its other tasks. The Government welcomes this proposal which, although falling outside IWAAC's statutory remit, would help to harmonise the management of the waterways.

5.8 The Government sees a positive and developing role for AINA as a representative body for navigation authorities, and for IWAAC as an advisory resource for waterways generally. We wish to see both bodies foster partnership among navigation authorities to help harmonise management of the waterways.

- We will help fund AINA's future work including its action plan to take forward its national navigation strategy.
- We will encourage AINA to draw on IWAAC's help and advice in carrying out its work.
- We will encourage IWAAC to provide advice on waterways generally.

British Waterways and the Environment Agency

5.9 The Government has asked British Waterways and the Environment Agency to work closely together to provide a more integrated and safe service for users of their waterways. The two bodies have already introduced a joint national licensing and registration scheme and have now drawn up a Collaboration Agreement setting out a framework under which the two bodies can work to mutual advantage. This covers a wide range of functions and responsibilities including specific tasks such as

- introducing the waterway standards now adopted as good practice by AINA, and providing common access to waterway services for boaters, wherever practical and economic;
- encouraging good and safe navigation practice;
- sharing technical knowledge, carrying out joint research and exchanging experience;
- collaborating on land use, planning policy and sustainable development; and
- maximising the potential for recreation, conservation, and restoration and regeneration.

5.10 The Government welcomes the progress British Waterways and the Environment Agency have made in developing joint working arrangements and we look to the two bodies to implement the full provisions of their Collaboration Agreement as quickly as possible.

- We will review the progress made in implementing the Collaboration Agreement as part of the quinquennial review of the Environment Agency to be carried out later this year.
- We will also look at the Agency's navigation responsibilities as part of this review.

The Waterways Trust

5.11 In March 1999 British Waterways and the trustees of the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum created a new charitable body, The Waterways Trust, to conserve and promote all the country's inland waterways. The Trust's objectives were to preserve and protect the natural and built environment of the inland waterways; promote their restoration, development and use; provide facilities for leisure and recreational use; and educate the public about the waterways and their history.

5.12 The Trust's initial task was to secure the future of the waterway museums at Ellesmere Port, Gloucester Docks, and Stoke Bruerne. Since then, it has followed up its wider remit by supporting a number of restoration and development projects which will generate worthwhile regeneration benefits.

5.13 The Government welcomes the creation of the Waterways Trust and the steps it is taking to establish itself as a separate and accountable body with trustees reflecting its interest in all of Britain's inland waterways. Its work will make a significant contribution to our policies for the waterways set out in this document.

Chapter 6 Integrating Other Policies

Leisure and recreation, tourism and sport

Leisure and recreation

6.1 The inland waterways are now used predominantly for leisure and recreation. There are about 100,000 licensed boats on the waterways and the system supports a holiday hire-boat industry of about 3,000 craft. Rowing, canoeing and sailing are widespread. Angling is very popular - some 300,000 people fish British Waterways' canals, 100,000 of them regularly.

6.2 Much larger numbers of people use the waterways for informal recreation activities such as walking, cycling, bird watching and exploring the waterway heritage. It is estimated that 165 million leisure visits are made each year to British Waterways' canals and rivers alone.

6.3 Waterway bodies are keen to help all sectors of society to enjoy the waterways. British Waterways is working with the Fieldfare Trust and Community Boat Association to encourage access to the waterways for children and young adults, and people with disabilities. The Environment Agency and the Broads Authority are also supporting groups promoting access to the waterways. IWAAC is looking at ways of improving access to the waterways for the disadvantaged.

6.4 The recreational use of the towpaths and other waterside paths has grown dramatically in the last 20 years. They provide access to open countryside from towns and villages and many people use them as pleasant traffic-free routes to walk or go by bike to and from work or school. Sometimes these paths form a part of a much larger network of routes or sections of long distance cycle and walking routes, for example the Sustrans National Cycle Network project.

6.5 Towpaths can form an important resource for walkers and cyclists but it is essential for them to be properly managed to avoid conflict between different kinds of user. Some towpaths may be unsuitable for unrestricted multi-purpose use for reasons of safety, or the risk of damage to the waterway fabric or the natural environment. Navigation authorities' operational requirements also need to be taken into account.

6.6 British Waterways has a duty under the British Waterways Act 1995 to have regard to the desirability of preserving public access to towpaths and works successfully with a wide range of public, private and voluntary partners to provide such access and to attract funding for facilities for users. The Environment Agency has also formed partnerships with other agencies and local authorities to improve access to rivers including the Medway and the Severn. The Agency supports the Thames Path National Trail created by a partnership led by the Countryside Agency and has installed tourist information points at some locks.

6.7 The Broads Authority is working with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils to integrate the management of public rights of way in the Broads area. The Broads Bike Hire Network was launched in 1996 and is proving popular with holidaymakers. Around 3,000 people hired bikes during 1997/98. With help from the Broads Authority, the Network has bought tandems so that people with disabilities can enjoy cycling too.

6.8 The Countryside Agency's Greenways initiative aims to develop a network of largely car-free routes connecting people to the countryside and linked with towpaths and waterside walks. People of all abilities will share these routes on foot, bike or horseback, for commuting, play or leisure.

6.9 The Government is committed to giving people greater access to open countryside and to improving the network of public rights of way especially for equestrians and cyclists. Our plans to introduce a new statutory right of access on foot to mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land, and for improvements to the rights of way system, are included in the Countryside and Rights of Way Bill. Last year we asked the Countryside Agency, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Forestry Commission to report on the case for extending public access to other types of open countryside. Their recommendations included proposals for a more vigorous use of existing mechanisms for extending access to land adjoining canals and rivers. We are considering their views carefully taking into account the access already provided by British Waterways and other navigation authorities. We will consult interested bodies before deciding how to proceed.

Tourism

6.10 Tourism is of enormous importance to the economy and can bring great benefits to local communities, particularly in areas where traditional industries or agriculture are in decline. It is a key aim of the Government's tourism strategy, Tomorrow's Tourism15 that everyone should be able to share in the benefits tourism can bring, while ensuring that future generations can enjoy the same experience.

6.11 The waterways are an important national tourism resource - they enhance the attractiveness of both urban and rural areas, they link places of interest, and they generate tourism in their own right. The Broads have long been synonymous with sailing and cruising, and the holiday industry based on this activity forms an important part of the local economy. Across the country, the holiday boat business alone is estimated to attract more than 250,000 customers per year (10% from overseas), creating and sustaining jobs, and contributing more than £40 million to local economies.

6.12 The Government wants to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to take holidays or breaks involving the waterways so long as this does not lead to congestion, destroying their intrinsically attractive qualities. Navigation, tourist and local authorities should work in partnership with the inland waterways industry to encourage activity in the areas with the greatest ability to benefit from, and to cope with, increased tourism.

6.13 The British Tourist Authority has been working with the inland waterway industry for the last seven years, offering financial and marketing support. It has produced two publications. Waterway Britain and Ireland features destinations along the waterways and gives details of the major holiday hire boat companies. The Waterfront Britain and Ireland brochure features harbours, marinas and destinations around the coast. Waterway Britain and Ireland also appears on the Authority's Internet site. The site contains images of the inland waterways together with details of local attractions, tour operators, useful tips, and last minute holiday offers. The industry will now be taking forward this initiative with local authorities, a large number of whom have financially supported the British Tourist Authority's campaigns.

6.14 The holiday boat industry needs to respond effectively to changing customer expectations and competition from other forms of holiday. For example, there is a growing demand for short break boating holidays with the emphasis on comfort and convenience. The industry could explore other avenues such as setting up efficient overseas operations to market high quality holidays, and introducing specialist forms of holiday such as heritage waterway cruises or sailing holidays.

Sport

6.15 The Government is committed to encouraging sport and recreation on the waterways. Sport England is continuing to work with partners to ensure that outdoor sport is actively encouraged and that facilities are available. To date it has provided more than £22 million for waterway sports such as angling, canoeing, sailing and rowing. Funds have been used to provide changing facilities and boathouses, and to buy canoes and rowing equipment. Sport England requires projects they help fund to be sustainable and not have an adverse impact on the environment.

6.16 The Government wants to encourage people to make use of the inland waterways for leisure and recreation, tourism and sport.

- We will support the greater recreational use of the waterways for all, including the towpaths and waterside paths, where practicable.
- We will encourage British Waterways and the Environment Agency to enter into long term voluntary arrangements with public, private and voluntary sector partners to improve facilities on the towpath for walking and cycling, and for other recreational users, where practicable.
- We will encourage navigation authorities to increase access to the waterways for the young, disabled and disadvantaged.
- We will look to holiday hire-boat operators to respond to customer demands and help contribute to the development of tourism on the waterways.

Heritage, the natural environment and education

Heritage

6.17 The inland waterways have great heritage value, ranging from the river navigations created from the Middle Ages onwards, to the artificial canals of the Industrial Revolution period.

6.18 The canals were, for the most part, constructed to service an industrialising society and did much to enable Britain to become the world's first industrial nation. They helped to determine where industries developed, and hence where settlements grew. Many of these industries have now disappeared or have changed radically, but the canals have survived. Although their role has altered and commercial traffic has ceased on much of the system, the canals - and many other waterways - remain a living reminder of our industrial heritage.

6.19 The building of the canals changed the face of the countryside. Yet because they were built to a human scale using natural and locally-found materials, they have, over the last 200 years, blended harmoniously into the landscape. In towns and cities, they have become part of the built environment, the industrial buildings lining the canal creating a unique sense of enclosure. Since, unlike many continental waterways, most canals have never been modernised, they still have an individual identity and character. It is still possible to see and appreciate many of the remarkable achievements of their builders.

6.20 The waterways system is rich in historic buildings and examples of innovative civil engineering: British Waterways' estate alone contains 130 scheduled ancient monuments and 2800 listed structures, second only in number to those managed by the

National Trust. There are also many historically important waterside buildings such as mills, maltings, warehouses and depots which form a vital part of the historic fabric of the waterway and contribute much to its character. Over 500 miles of waterways have been designated as conservation areas in recognition of their historic quality and local distinctiveness.

6.21 Because the historic buildings and structures on the waterways are irreplaceable, high standards of protection and conservation must be applied to prevent the character of the system from being eroded. It is particularly important that new waterside development, as well as improvement or restoration of the waterway itself, respects the historic fabric, and conserves and, if possible, enhances the waterway scene creating a worthwhile legacy. British Waterways has used architectural surveys of its waterways carried out jointly with English Heritage to develop training in conservation techniques to maintain the distinctive visual qualities of traditional materials and craftsmanship which contribute so much to the special character of the waterways.

6.22 Some of the former working boats survive in British Waterways' ownership or in the hands of museums, private individuals and trusts as tangible reminders of the days when the waterways played a leading role in moving the country's freight. Examples can be seen at the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port and the National Waterways Museum at Gloucester Docks.

6.23 These museums, together with the Canal Museum at Stoke Bruerne, are operated by The Waterways Trust which is doing much to conserve the waterway heritage. The Trust is actively promoting the restoration and development of the waterways. It is helping to raise funds to enable the Anderton Boat Lift to be returned to working order, and it is also overseeing the completion of the restoration of the Rochdale Canal and the construction of the Ribble Link.

6.24 In 1998, IWAAC together with British Waterways and the Inland Waterways Association proposed that a significant part of the inland waterways system should be given World Heritage status in recognition of its crucial contribution to the world's first industrial revolution.

6.25 The Government did not accept this proposal because it believed that, despite the undoubted merits of the waterways, the proposal would not meet UNESCO's stringent criteria of outstanding universal value. However the UK's new Tentative List of potential World Heritage Sites announced on 6 April 1999 included specific sites with historic canal connections. These included Manchester and Salford (Ancoats, Castlefield and Worsley) which uses the Bridgewater and Rochdale Canals as a linking theme, and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct on the Llangollen Canal, one of the most dramatic civil engineering feats of the early Industrial Revolution.

6.26 Subject to UNESCO's requirements for new nominations, there will be another opportunity to consider the inland waterways for World Heritage status when the Tentative List is reviewed in five years' time. IWAAC has decided to consider whether there is a case for making a further bid and, if so, how it could best be presented. The Government and British Waterways will study IWAAC's findings carefully.

The natural environment

6.27 The inland waterways make a valuable contribution to the quality of the landscape and provide a rich and diverse environmental resource. British Waterways' canals include over 100 sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) and 800 more sites designated of local nature conservation interest.

6.28 The waterways provide a sanctuary for a wide variety of plants and animals, some of which have become rare elsewhere due to loss of their more natural habitats. Much of their wildlife value is due to the combination of different habitats within a narrow strip of land. This gives waterways a unique biodiversity while strongly influencing the character of areas adjacent to the corridor. Waterway corridors often form the most important linear wildlife habitat in urban areas and also in intensively- farmed countryside.

6.29 The waterways must be managed in a way that conserves and, if possible, enhances their environmental value. Some waterways pass through areas which have been severely damaged as a result of past industrial activity and offer great scope for habitat improvement and wildlife gain using the waterway as an axis for rehabilitation.

6.30 British Waterways has introduced an environmental code of practice to help ensure that both environmental and heritage issues are fully considered before any work is carried out. It has also prepared a Biodiversity Action Plan in partnership with DETR, English Nature, the Countryside Council for Wales, local authorities and the voluntary sector. This sets standards and targets for habitats and species that British Waterways will have to achieve through its waterway maintenance and renewal programme.

6.31 The Environment Agency also operates a stringent environmental code of practice. It must have regard to the *Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation*¹⁶ which provides advice on measures to protect wildlife from harmful effects of bankside or navigation activities. The Agency has prepared separate guidance for bodies proposing to restore or create new navigations, setting out the Agency's policy on restoration and describing the steps the promoters of restoration projects need to take to appraise a project's impact on the environment.

6.32 The long-term restoration of water quality is a key priority for the Broads Authority. It has pioneered an innovative programme on wetland restoration and has won over £4 million in external funding and sponsorship for this work.

6.33 Electrically-powered craft can be energy-efficient and less harmful to the environment than conventionally powered craft. They are quieter and do not produce exhaust fumes or give rise to the risk of diesel spillage. Their hulls are often designed to create less wash, resulting in less bank erosion. British Waterways, the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority have all installed charging points at sites on their waterways to encourage the use of electric boats.

6.34 The Government plans to publish a draft Bill later this year which will include proposals to alter the existing water abstraction licensing system to ensure that water resources are used sustainably. Under these proposals, described in the paper *Taking Water Responsibly*¹⁷, controllable abstractions for navigation will require a form of licence, referred to in the paper as a consent. Consents will not be required for abstractions which transfer water without intervening use, solely within a

water system operated by a navigation authority. British Waterways has already concluded a number of operating agreements with the Environment Agency setting out how their canals should be managed to protect navigation and the environment. These will be extended and linked to the new consents to provide an efficient system of control.

6.35 On most of the waterways, protecting the natural environment and maintaining navigation goes hand in hand. A moderate amount of boat traffic is, in fact, generally helpful in sustaining biodiversity on canals¹⁹. In a small number of cases there has been conflict between navigation and environmental objectives, mainly when disused canals are being restored. The Government believes that the different parties should work together constructively to resolve these difficulties - the waterways serve many purposes and it is in everyone's interest to co-operate in using them to the full. We will be issuing guidance on the notification and management of SSSIs which we hope will help to minimise difficulties of this kind. English Nature is willing to consult the Inland Waterways Association - in addition to owners and occupiers - before it notifies new SSSIs affecting waterways.

Education

6.36 The waterways provide many opportunities for study in subjects as diverse as natural history, landscape, engineering, environmental science, architecture, industrial archaeology, and economic and social history.

6.37 The three museums operated by The Waterways Trust are devoted to the history of the waterways. The Trust has gained national designation by the Museums and Galleries Agency and cares for and interprets to the public the collections lent to it by British Waterways and other bodies and individuals. The Trust also looks after British Waterways' own archives. It has received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable it to create a cyber archive which will catalogue British Waterways' archives and make them accessible through the World Wide Web.

6.38 There are many other museums throughout the country with a waterway theme or containing historic waterway artefacts. One of the newest is the River and Rowing Museum at Henley-on-Thames which celebrates the cultural, sporting and natural heritage of the River Thames.

6.39 A major role of the museums is to introduce children and young people to the history of the waterways and so enable them to understand and appreciate their changing role. It is vital that today's generation of young people grow up valuing the waterways if the system is to have a safe future.

6.40 British Waterways operates educational programmes, tailored to the needs of local schools, to increase young people's understanding of the historic, present and future importance of the waterways, and to promote waterside safety. As part of the London Waterway Partnership, British Waterways plans to create a fleet of floating classrooms each capable of accommodating 35 children. These will be operated by local education and training trusts, who will teach subjects such as heritage and ecology.

6.41 Measures such as these are already helping to reduce vandalism and increase safety by the water. But, they will also bring invaluable long-term benefits in terms of encouraging young people to care for and provide a secure future for the waterways.

6.42 The Government supports the protection, conservation and enhancement of the waterways' heritage and their built and natural environment, and the use of the waterways as an educational resource.

- We expect new waterside development and waterway improvement and restoration to respect, conserve and, if possible, enhance the waterway scene creating a worthwhile legacy.
- We will encourage navigation authorities to manage their waterways so as to maintain and, if possible, enhance their environmental and heritage value.
- We will support action planning to conserve and enhance the biological diversity of the waterways.
- We will encourage navigation authorities to provide and promote facilities for electric boats where practical and economic.

Regeneration

Improvement and development

6.43 The Government is committed to urban and rural regeneration as the key to tackling the causes of socio-economic decline, exclusion and deprivation. The waterways can make a major contribution to this by acting as a catalyst for economic and social regeneration.

6.44 The improvement of waterways and the redevelopment of disused and derelict waterside land produces many benefits: it removes a potentially dangerous eyesore; it creates a pleasant place in which to live, work and play; and it attracts private sector investment. Waterside businesses such as marinas, shops, pubs and restaurants create jobs and generate income from tourists and other visitors. Waterway-related property development can also provide additional income to support the publicly-financed waterways.

6.45 Waterway improvements foster good design. Once buildings turned their blind side to the waterway. Now with access to towpaths encouraged, new development takes advantage of the presence of the waterway and integrates it, often imaginatively, into the design, exploiting the waterfront situation.

6.46 This is particularly the case with new housing. People like to live by water and there are many examples of new development exploiting the added value offered by the waterfront location. The historic urban waterways are especially suitable for high-density waterside residential development both new, and created by the conversion of redundant existing buildings such as warehouses and mills, many of which are also converted for commercial use. Elsewhere there may be scope for mixed-use developments possibly incorporating a marina. The most successful and safe developments are those with buildings and spaces overlooking the waterway, with pedestrian and cyclist access from the towpath, so ensuring natural surveillance and policing.

6.47 The waterways are increasingly forming an integral part of wider regeneration initiatives which are bringing new life back to towns and cities, and former industrial areas. Birmingham's new waterfront has been particularly successful in integrating the canals into city life and has won international tourism and environmental awards. Other good examples of urban waterfront regeneration can be seen in Manchester, Salford, Leeds, London, Sheffield and Gloucester.

British Waterways has been working in partnership with Leeds City Council, private developers and others to revitalise the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and Aire & Calder Navigation corridor which passes through the city centre. The Leeds Waterfront initiative is the flagship project in the regeneration of the city and involves the construction of new offices, housing, hotels, and waterside walks. It is also the home of the Royal Armouries Museum. The project has stimulated development alongside the waterways for business, leisure and residential purposes and strengthened the city's role as Yorkshire's administrative centre. Leeds Waterfront is now one of the most desirable residential areas in the north of England.

6.48 The inland waterways also contribute to rural regeneration by offering opportunities for the development of small, localised industries and the encouragement of tourism and recreation. In particular they provide scope for rural enterprises focused on the waterways in market towns and at focal points along waterway corridors.

Union Wharf, at Market Harborough, is a good example of the waterways being used to promote rural regeneration and enhance the environment. The former under-used and partly derelict canal basin has been redeveloped over the last four years for a mixture of uses. A public house has been refurbished as a hotel/restaurant; the waterspace has been extended and sanitary facilities provided to facilitate water-based leisure activities; waterside buildings have been converted into craft units and for residential use; and new waterside residential apartments have been built.

The Middle Level Commissioners have enlarged Ashline Lock, Whittlesey as part of the Fens Waterways Regeneration Strategy. This aims to increase tourism based on the Fens waterways, their corridors and settlements, to increase local spending and job creation. Enlargement of the lock has allowed full-length narrowboats to cruise from the Great Ouse via the Nene to the main canal system. Restoration

6.49 Restoring disused waterways to full navigation also produces many benefits. IWAAC's Waterway Restoration Priorities report revealed that waterway restoration over the last 40 years had revitalised key parts of the country's transport and industrial heritage, generated jobs and development, and increased opportunities for leisure, recreation and tourism. Many projects are currently underway including major projects to complete the restoration of the Kennet & Avon Canal, the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the Rochdale Canal. New navigations linking existing waterways, for example the Ribble Link, are also being planned and implemented.

6.50 The IWAAC report highlighted how much potential for restoration exists and how effective it can be when promoters, navigation authorities and local authorities form partnerships to carry it out. The Government supports this approach and looks to the Regional Development Agencies and local authorities to support worthwhile projects. Local authorities can help not only with funding but also by adopting appropriate policies and land use allocations in development plans.

6.51 The Government wants to see new road and other development proposals take proper account of waterway restoration. We will publish guidance for local planning authorities, and for those preparing new development proposals, to ensure in particular that the effect of new road schemes on waterways earmarked for restoration is considered fully from the outset.

6.52 The revised Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG13 will encourage local authorities to identify and, where appropriate, protect disused waterways where there is a realistic likelihood of a restoration project proceeding in whole or in part within the development plan period, by allocating the land in development plans and ensuring the sites and routes are not severed by other uses. Restoration projects will need to be assessed on a case by case basis taking into account criteria including whether the project is credible in concept and capable of delivering economic, environmental or social benefits.

6.53 We will also issue guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges encouraging Highways Agency road designers to consider waterway restoration projects at the outset and to provide navigable crossings where appropriate. This guidance will apply formally to road schemes taken forward by the Highways Agency but will influence other road designers who refer to the Design Manual when drawing up their proposals.

6.54 The Government wants to increase the economic and social benefits offered by the waterways by encouraging their improvement, development and restoration, wherever possible in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sectors.

- We will promote the waterways as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration.
- We will encourage navigation authorities to work with the Regional Development Agencies and local authorities in conserving and developing the waterways.
- We look to the Regional Development Agencies to take account of the waterways in their strategies and to support worthwhile proposals for their improvement, development and restoration.
- We will issue guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges dealing with new road proposals which affect

waterway restoration projects.

Transport

Local Transport Plans

6.55 A key commitment of the Transport White Paper was the introduction of Local Transport Plans (LTPs). These are local integrated transport strategies, running for five years and covering all forms of transport. The LTP sets the context for local policies on inland waterways, and helps ensure that they are fully integrated with other transport-related policies such as those for freight, public transport, cycling and walking.

6.56 Guidance on the new LTPs requires all local authorities with waterways in their areas to show how their plans will maximise the potential of waterways in their area for freight and public transport, cycling, walking and public access. The Government will consider local authorities' commitment to improving facilities for these activities when allocating capital resources.

6.57 The Guidance also advocates new partnership structures between navigation authorities and local authorities under which the latter will fund waterway services which the partnerships have decided are necessary to meet local needs.

Water transport

6.58 The waterways can be used for passenger transport services. Services already operate on London's Regent's Canal and British Waterways is looking into the potential for increasing the numbers travelling on other parts of London's waterways under the London Waterways Partnership and other initiatives. British Waterways has recently promoted a passenger boat service on the waterways in the centre of Birmingham designed to carry commuters as well as visitors

6.59 The Thames 2000 initiative is using the demand for transport to the New Millennium Experience at Greenwich as a catalyst for revitalising passenger services on the river. The first of the new services, the Central London Fast Ferry, a hopper style service, began on 1 June 1999. The Dome is being served by an express riverliner service from central London and a shuttle from Greenwich. These services will continue once the New Millennium Experience has finished.

6.60 The Government supports the provision of passenger boat services on the inland waterways, wherever practicable and economic.

Freight

6.61 Freight traffic on the inland waterways has been falling for many years. In terms of tonne km, it now accounts for less than 1% of domestic freight moved. Partly this is because of the increasing competitiveness of other forms of transport, partly the decline in markets suited to waterborne transport.

6.62 Unlike continental Europe, much of the countrys inland waterways system is unsuited to carrying significant volumes of freight. Most canals have not changed significantly from when they were built around 200 years ago and cannot take boats wider than seven feet (2.13 metres) in the case of narrow canals or about 14 feet (4.26 metres) in the case of historic broad canals. The amount of freight carried by these canals is negligible and in todays world they cannot be expected to play a significant role in freight carrying, though they remain suitable for niche markets such as coal distribution.

6.63 In contrast, the larger river navigations and canals still carry some freight and could take more traffic. They are particularly suited to bulk cargoes such as coal, fuel oil, aggregates, steel, and timber whose origins and destinations are directly accessible by water.

6.64 Commercial traffic is still an important source of income for British Waterways which aims to increase the amount of freight carried on its waterways. For example, it has worked with Associated British Ports to re-open the Caldaire terminal at Goole to provide storage facilities for freight brought in by sea-going vessels, offering potential for increased onward shipment by inland waterway. British Waterways has also carried out, together with private and public sector partners, a pilot study of the demand for freight on the Trent, Aire and Ouse.

British Waterways is evaluating the feasibility of transporting waste on the River Lee Navigation in London. The Waste by Water initiative, a proposed partnership between British Waterways, local authorities and private waste management businesses, would use the river to carry waste in 12-tonne sealed containers on a specially-converted barge to the Energy From Waste plant at Edmonton. The initiative could save up to 45,000 lorry journeys per year.

6.65 There is a close interdependency between tidal and non-tidal waterways in terms of freight transport. Most of the freight carried on the inland waterways is to be found on the major tidal rivers and a large proportion of freight on the non-tidal waterways moves to and from tidal waters. Facilitating the movement of freight between the two types of waterway is crucial to increase the level of freight movements.

6.66 Freight Facilities Grants (FFGs) can help to stimulate growth in waterborne freight by assisting with the additional capital costs faced by companies proposing to move freight by water rather than by road.

A recent freight facility grant to fuel suppliers Bayford & Co Ltd towards the cost of reinstating barge handling facilities on the Aire & Calder Navigation at Woodlesford, Leeds will enable 200,000 tonnes of distillate oil to be moved by water from East Coast refineries over the next five years, saving up over 16,000 lorry trips. Another grant to KD Marine Ltd towards the cost of purchasing a barge and handling equipment to carry grain from Seaforth to Rank Hovis Old Trafford mill via the Manchester Ship Canal, will spare the Liverpool - Manchester corridor around 5,000 extra lorry trips a year.

6.67 The Government is keen to encourage a greater take-up of FFGs and has already announced its intention to extend the

scheme to coastal and short sea shipping. As part of the consultation process, we will seek views on further changes to the regime to encourage more applications for inland waterways projects.

6.68 The Government wishes to encourage the transfer of freight from roads to water-borne transport where this is practical, economic and environmentally desirable.

- We will consult about extending the FFG scheme to encourage additional applications for inland waterways projects. Options will include grants for waterway projects covering non-capital as well as capital costs (as for rail) and the opportunity for grant to be paid directly to navigation authorities for the provision of freight infrastructure.
- We will sponsor an inland waterways freight study group including representatives of British Waterways, other members of AINA, commercial operators, waterway user groups, local authorities and the private sector.
- We will invite the freight study group to examine cost-effective and practical ways in which freight transport on the inland waterways can be increased, and whether there is a need for further studies examining issues such as whether the niche market for freight carrying on the historic narrow and broad canals can be expanded.

Planning

6.69 In its *Undervalued Asset* Report, IWAAC expressed concern that Government planning policy paid little attention to the inland waterways. It called on the Government to review existing guidance so that it provided an effective framework for conservation, development and restoration. The report also called on the Government to consider issuing a co-ordinated planning policy guidance document covering waterways and waterway-related issues.

6.70 The Government fully accepts the need to support the development of the inland waterways through the planning system. We have been reviewing our planning policy in the light of the Transport White Paper and we will review the Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) when they are revised to ensure that they contribute to this aim. So far, we have concentrated on PPGs 11,12 and 13 and we will continue the process with the other PPGs relevant to the waterways.

6.71 The Government recognises that it would be helpful to bring policy advice together to promote the best use of the inland waterways. We have therefore set out in Appendix 3 a summary of each PPG which may be relevant to the waterways, and a commentary intended to improve the understanding of planning guidance as it applies to the waterways. In our view it would not be appropriate to issue a new planning policy guidance document devoted exclusively to the inland waterways because PPGs are intended to apply to broad strategic issues.

6.72 We are also inviting IWAAC to prepare a good practice document with a view to it being published jointly with DETR. This will explain the contribution that inland waterways can make to regeneration and other projects, and will highlight examples of good planning.

6.73 The Government will support the development of the inland waterways through the planning system.

- We will continue to review each PPG when it is revised with the aim of developing the potential of the inland waterways through the planning system.
- We will invite IWAAC to prepare a good practice document with a view to it being published jointly with DETR, explaining the contribution that inland waterways can make to regeneration and other projects, and highlighting examples of good planning.

Chapter 7 The Next Steps

7.1 The Government believes that the measures set out in this document will pave the way for a new, revitalised inland waterways system which can be fully, imaginatively and adventurously used by all. We want to maintain the momentum by involving others in developing our proposals, forming a real partnership among those who care about the waterways.

7.2 As a first step, we propose to organise a national conference on inland waterways to discuss the contents of this document. It will bring together all those with an interest in the waterways and will form part of the continuing dialogue between DETR and those connected with the waterways about maximising the opportunities the waterways offer.

Chapter 8 Summary of policy measures

8.1 The measures contained in this document will help to achieve the Government's aim for the Sustainable Development Indicators set out in *Quality of Life Counts*¹⁹ published in December 1999, to move in the right direction over time, or, where a satisfactory level has been reached, to prevent a reversal.

8.2 The measures are as follows (the paragraph numbers correspond to those in the main document).

5.8 The Government sees a positive and developing role for AINA as a representative body for navigation authorities, and for IWAAC as an advisory resource for waterways generally. We wish to see both bodies foster partnership among navigation authorities to help harmonise management of the waterways.

We will help fund AINA's future work including its action plan to take forward its national navigation strategy.

We will encourage AINA to draw on IWAAC's help and advice in carrying out its work.

We will encourage IWAAC to provide advice on waterways generally.

5.10 The Government welcomes the progress British Waterways and the Environment Agency have made in developing joint working arrangements and we look to the two bodies to implement the full provisions of their Collaboration Agreement as quickly as possible.

We will review the progress made in implementing the Collaboration Agreement as part of the quinquennial review of the Environment Agency to be carried out later this year.

We will also look at the Agency's navigation responsibilities as part of this review.

6.16 The Government wants to encourage people to make use of the inland waterways for leisure and recreation, tourism and sport.

We will support the greater recreational use of the waterways for all, including the towpaths and waterside paths, where practicable.

We will encourage British Waterways and the Environment Agency to enter into long term voluntary arrangements with public, private and voluntary sector partners to improve facilities on the towpath for walking and cycling, and for other recreational users, where practicable.

We will encourage navigation authorities to increase access to the waterways for the young, disabled and disadvantaged.

We will look to holiday hire-boat operators to respond to customer demands and help contribute to the development of tourism on the waterways.

6.42 The Government supports the protection, conservation and enhancement of the waterways' heritage and their built and natural environment, and the use of the waterways as an educational resource.

We expect new waterside development and waterside improvement and restoration to respect, conserve and, if possible, enhance the waterway scene creating a worthwhile legacy.

We will encourage navigation authorities to manage their waterways so as to maintain and, if possible, enhance their environmental and heritage value.

We will support action planning to conserve and enhance the biological diversity of the waterways.

We will encourage navigation authorities to provide and promote facilities for electric boats where practical and economic.

6.54 The Government wants to increase the economic and social benefits offered by the waterways by encouraging their improvement, development and restoration, wherever possible in partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors.

We will promote the waterways as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration.

We will encourage navigation authorities to work with the Regional Development Agencies and local authorities in conserving and developing the waterways.

We look to the Regional Development Agencies to take account of the waterways in their strategies and to support worthwhile proposals for their improvement, development and restoration.

We will issue guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges dealing with new road proposals which affect waterway restoration projects.

6.60 The Government supports the provision of passenger boat services on the inland waterways, wherever practicable and economic.

6.68 The Government wishes to encourage the transfer of freight from roads to water-borne transport where this is practical, economic and environmentally desirable.

We will consult about extending the FFG scheme to encourage additional applications for inland waterways projects. Options will include grants for waterway projects covering non-capital as well as capital costs (as for rail) and the opportunity for grant to be paid directly to navigation authorities for the provision of freight infrastructure.

We will sponsor an inland waterways freight study group including representatives of British Waterways, other members of AINA, commercial operators, waterway user groups, local authorities and the private sector.

We will invite the freight study group to examine cost-effective and practical ways in which freight transport on the inland waterways can be increased, and whether there is a need for further studies examining issues such as whether the niche

market for freight carrying on the historic narrow and broad canals can be expanded.

6.73 The Government will support the development of the inland waterways through the planning system.

We will continue to review each PPG when it is revised with the aim of developing the potential of the inland waterways through the planning system.

We will invite IWAAC to prepare a good practice document with a view to it being published jointly with DETR, explaining the contribution that inland waterways can make to regeneration and other projects, and highlighting examples of good planning.

Footnotes

- 1 A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone: Cm3950. The Stationery Office July 1998
- 2 A Better Quality of Life: Cm4345. The Stationery Office May 1999
- 3 Britain's Inland Waterways: An Undervalued Asset: IWAAC March 1996
- 4 Waterway Restoration Priorities: IWAAC June 1998
- 5 British Waterways: Recreation and Amenity: Cmnd. 3401 HMSO September 1967
- 6 excluding the navigable lakes of the Lake District
- 7 some bodies managing waterways are not statutory navigation authorities
- 8 responsibility for British Waterways' activities in Scotland lies with the Scottish Executive
- 9 Britain's Inland Waterways: An Undervalued Asset: IWAAC March 1996
- 10 Britain's Inland Waterways: An Undervalued Asset: Final Recommendations: IWAAC June 1997
- 11 Waterway Restoration Priorities: IWAAC June 1998
- 12 Unlocking the potential: a new future for British Waterways: DETR 1999
- 13 as at 31 March 1999
- 14 Steering a Fresh Course: A Strategy for the Inland Navigations of the United Kingdom: AINA 1999
- 16 Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation: DETR 2000
- 17 Taking Water Responsibly: DETR March 1999
- 18 Murphy, K.J., Willby, N.J. and Eaton, J.W. 1995 Ecological Impacts and Management of Boat Traffic on Navigable Inland Waterways. Pp 427-442 in D.M. Harper and A.J.D. Ferguson, editors, The Ecological Basis for River Management. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester and New York.
- 19 Quality of Life Counts: Indicators for a strategy of sustainable development for the United Kingdom: a baseline assessment: DETR December 1999

Appendix 1

Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council Report *Britain's Inland Waterways: An Undervalued Asset* Recommendations and responses

The Government's response to each Recommendation addressed to it is highlighted in **bold**.

BW funding and future organisation

The Council recommended that:

1.1 to meet the timescales and objectives set out in the Council's Report and these Recommendations and to maximise the opportunities for joint funding initiatives, Government should review the level of funding to BW to ensure that it is able to deal effectively with identified problems, implement substantiated expenditure plans and so make progress in a positive manner;

1.2 Government and BW consider how best to replace the existing 1968 Transport Act-based BW, which now reflects neither what BW is nor what it is trying to do, by a new national body with:

- a. responsibility for the long-term conservation and maintenance, regulation and sustainable management, development and promotion of BW waterways and any other waterways which could with advantage be transferred to BW and/or its successor;
- b. a status, organisation and objectives commensurate with its fundamental purpose of ensuring the conservation of a unique national heritage, environmental and recreational asset;
- c. a strong local character, within its national management framework, by devolving management responsibilities as far as practicable to local units working in creative partnership with local government, business and the voluntary sector;
- d. funding possibly by way of:
 - contract with Government for services which beneficiaries cannot be charged for directly
 - charges to users and income from waterway uses;
 - grants for specific projects from Government and European bodies;
 - greater commercial freedom to generate income and attract investment from business partnerships and joint ventures;
 - local authority support in return for community benefits;
 - monetary and practical benefits, including donations and bequests, which would accrue voluntarily to a new national body with the status and profile commensurate with its custodianship of a national heritage and recreation resource;
- e. open and meaningful consultation procedures;
- f. co-operative arrangements with the independent navigation bodies, allowing them to integrate with, or contract management to the new body, both entirely on a voluntary basis.

1.3 Government then issue a Green Paper to allow for full debate by all waterway interests with a view to securing legislation to establish the new national body as soon as practicable; such legislation to include:

- a. a statutory waterways ombudsman and a revised remit for the Council, in terms of strategic and consumer-oriented advice relating to all waterways, both to be funded directly by Government;
- b. a variety of other issues including highways legislation affecting disused waterways, BW liabilities for highway bridges across canals and an equitable solution to the problem of ancient rights.

The Government has accepted Recommendation 1.1. We announced a significant increase in the annual grant to British Waterways in our February 1999 statement on the future of British Waterways. The Government considers that most of the positive characteristics of the new body suggested by IWAAC in recommendation 1.2 can be achieved by the new policy framework agreed for British Waterways in Unlocking the potential (see Chapter 4), coupled with improved collaboration with the Environment Agency, and co-operation with other navigation authorities and waterway bodies (see Chapter 5).

National policy

National policy framework for the waterways

The Council recommended that:

2.1 Work on the main aims and priorities (for inland waterways) should be developed (by BW and EA in consultation with AINA) within the next 12 months into an integrated 3-5 year strategic policy framework for the waterways with realistic targets for achievement;

2.2 To provide a firm basis, Government should contribute a brief on the legislative and financial framework and range of departmental interests to be covered;

2.3 The framework should consider the state of the system including water supply issues, indicate priorities for sustainable conservation, use and development, and restoration, and assess resource/funding issues;

2.3 The framework should be published to help to mobilise support for waterway investment from Government, national bodies, funding agencies, local authorities, business, the voluntary sector and the wider community.

The AINA Strategy for Inland Navigation, Steering a New Course published in April 1999, provides the basis for a new national policy framework for the waterways. The Government will help AINA to implement the strategy. The Government sees a positive and developing role for AINA as a representative body for navigation authorities, and for IWAAC as an advisory resource for waterways generally. We wish to see both bodies foster partnership between navigation authorities to help harmonise management of the waterways (see paras. 5.3-5.8).

Waterways profile within the planning system

The Council recommended that:

3.1 Within the next 2 years, the Department of the Environment (with the Scottish and Welsh Offices), in consultation with the Department of National Heritage, AINA members and the Council, reviews existing planning policy guidance in England, Scotland and Wales to ensure that it provides an effective framework for conservation, development and restoration and considers the issue of a co-ordinated planning policy guidance document embracing waterways and waterway-related issues in each planning regime;

3.2 AINA, within the same period, promulgate advice on the effective use of the planning system by navigation bodies, including the importance of promoting the value and potential of waterways in government regional planning guidance and subsequently in structure and local plans;

3.3 For consistency of treatment, the Department of the Environment (DoE) extends the BW arrangements (for statutory consultation) to other navigation bodies in England;

The Government fully accepts the need to support the development of the inland waterways through the planning system. We will review the Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) when they are revised to ensure that they contribute to this aim (see para. 6.73).

The Government recognises that it would be helpful to bring policy advice together to promote the best use of the inland waterways. We have therefore compiled a summary of each PPG which may be relevant to the waterways, accompanied by a commentary intended to improve the understanding of planning guidance as it applies to the waterways (see Appendix 3). In our view it would not be appropriate to issue a new planning policy guidance document devoted exclusively to the inland waterways because PPGs are intended to apply to broad strategic issues.

We will invite IWAAC to prepare a good practice document with a view to it being published jointly with DETR. This will explain the contribution that inland waterways can make to regeneration and other projects, and will highlight examples of good planning (see para. 6.73).

The Government does not wish to extend the list of statutory consultees for structure plans. However, PPG12 (December 1999) lists recommended consultees for all development plans. These include British Waterways, canal owners and navigation authorities who should be consulted on all matters relating to inland waterways and land adjacent to inland waterways (see Appendix 3, para. 18).

Waterways priority in the policies, plans and programmes of Government departments

The Council recommended that:

4.1 The DoE, as lead department in Government for waterways, promote them throughout its own policy functions and draws the attention of other relevant departments, including the Scottish and Welsh Offices, to the value and potential of the inland waterway system to contribute to the range of national policies and programmes identified in the Council's report;

4.2 The DoE further, when AINA members and the Council have identified areas for action under Recommendation 2, encourage Government departments and their sponsored public bodies to respond accordingly and where necessary secure review of Ministerial objectives to ensure that appropriate action be taken.

The Government accepts this Recommendation. We intend to integrate our policies for the waterways with other, related, policies to maximise the contribution the waterways can make to the life of the country (see Chapter 6).

National and local heritage designations

The Council recommended that:

5.1 National heritage and environmental agencies, local authorities, BW and other navigation bodies make the fullest use of appropriate designations (listing, scheduling, conservation areas, SSSIs etc);

5.2 Investigation of "World Heritage" status for the system as a whole be pursued by the appropriate Government Departments and agencies over the next 2 years;

5.3 Recognition of the European status of former freight waterways be pursued over the next 2 years by BW and the EA in collaboration with their European counterparts.

The Government did not accept the proposal made in 1998 that a significant part of the inland waterways system should be given World Heritage status because it believed that, despite the undoubted merits of the waterways, the proposal would not meet UNESCO's stringent criteria of outstanding universal value. However the UK's new Tentative List of potential World Heritage Sites announced on 6 April 1999 included several specific sites with historic canal connections.

Subject to UNESCO's requirements for new nominations, there will be another opportunity to consider the inland waterways for World Heritage status when the Tentative List is reviewed in five years' time. IWAAC is to consider whether there is a case for making a further bid, and, if so, how such a bid could best be presented. The Government will study IWAAC's findings carefully (see para. 6.26).

Management, conservation and restoration

Conservation

The Council recommended that:

6.1 The future of all waterways should be secured by management on a long-term, comprehensive, integrated and sustainable basis, each waterway having an individual management plan developed by open consultation and with special regard to its historical and ecological character, its wider corridor and measures to balance user demands upon it;

6.2 BW progresses its current efforts to develop the skills and culture necessary to achieve even higher standards of care of the built and natural components of its waterways;

6.3 The DoE encourages other waterway authorities to draw upon the conservation and management expertise within BW;

6.4 Consideration be given to establishing a *Waterways Heritage Trust* to assist BW (if Recommendation 1 is not acted upon) and other navigation bodies, with the conservation and appropriate re-use of redundant heritage buildings and to provide additional finance for high quality conservation work;

6.5 Waterway restoration by public, private and voluntary sector bodies be designed and executed in a manner which conserves historical and ecological character and ensures that subsequent management can be in accordance with the first part of this Recommendation. Traditional craft skills and materials should be used wherever appropriate.

The Government agrees with Recommendations 6.1-6.3 and looks to AINA to promote them among navigation authorities.

Last year the Government asked British Waterways to consult on a proposal for a British Waterways membership scheme, allied to a new independent charitable trust which would include among its objectives, restoring and conserving the waterways heritage and environment. We have considered the outcome of this exercise and have agreed that The Waterways Trust which has similar objectives to those described in Recommendation 6.4 should be the new trust (see paras. 4.18-25).

The Government commends Recommendation 6.5 to navigation authorities and the voluntary sector.

Waterway restoration and road schemes

The Council recommended that:

7.1 The DoE, as the lead department for waterways, should ensure that the discussions with the DTp/Highways Agency (and, where necessary, with the Scottish and Welsh Offices) are brought to a speedy conclusion and aim, in consultation with the Council and other interests, to have procedures devised and agreed by the end of 1997 to ensure adequate co-ordination between DoE and DTp on road proposals affecting waterways and vice versa.

The revised Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG13 will encourage local authorities to identify and, where appropriate, protect disused waterways where there is a realistic likelihood of a restoration project proceeding in whole or in part within the development plan period, by allocating the land in development plans and ensuring the sites and routes are not severed by other uses. We will also issue guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges encouraging Highways Agency road designers to consider waterway restoration projects at the outset and to provide navigable crossings where appropriate (see paras. 6.51 - 53).

Economic, environmental and social value of waterway restoration

The Council recommended that:

8.1 BW with the support of AINA should press strongly for the establishment of a waterways category in the funding programmes of European, national, regional and local bodies, not least to maximise matching funding possibilities for projects supported by national lottery funding;

8.2 UK navigation authorities, in partnership with their European counterparts, seek government support for an EU funding programme for heritage, leisure and tourism projects on former freight waterways;

8.3 The priority list for restoration projects (see Recommendation 2) be reviewed annually by the Council and discussed by BW and others with key funding agencies;

8.4 All waterway authorities and other bodies involved in waterway restoration should make maximum use of funding opportunities from Government unemployment and training initiatives;

8.5 BW, EA and AINA consider how practical advice and representation from the centre for the waterways voluntary sector in England, Scotland and Wales in dealing with such matters as the use of unemployment and training initiatives, funding, contract management, long-term maintenance issues and so on, could be improved;

8.6 Progress on the measures set out in this Recommendation be reviewed by UK navigation authorities every two years.

The Government commends these Recommendations although we suggest that IWAAC may wish to reconsider the frequency with which it reviews the priority list for restoration projects (Recommendation 8.3). We would not want to stand in the way of navigation authorities seeking the establishment of a European funding programme (Recommendation 8.2) but we would wish to reserve our position on supporting such a move.

Use and development

The Council recommended:

- 9.1** Continuing and developing promotion by BW, EA (and relevant Scottish and Welsh organisations), in partnership with the tourism authorities and the trade, of cruising and other leisure opportunities with particular emphasis on the international marketing of UK waterway heritage holidays;
- 9.2** An investigation of what incentives might be given to the private sector to invest in waterway facilities such as off-line moorings and marinas;
- 9.3** The further development, wherever feasible, of waterways and their towpaths for water sales and transfer, angling, telecommunications etc, the testing of income-earning possibilities of activities such as licensed cycling, and a more pro-active approach to providing spending opportunities where there are large flows of casual visitors to specific waterway locations;
- 9.4** Government support for BW's business strategy in view of the crucial benefits for income generation, capital proceeds for reinvestment and waterway enhancement, and, subject to the need for public accountability and conservation objectives, maximum commercial freedom in the use of its assets;
- 9.5** More partnership packages with local authorities to open up access points and improve facilities and services for visitors, including the disabled;
- 9.6** Joint public/private/local authority initiatives to develop and support visitor attractions and other leisure opportunities of a wide range of types and scale appropriate to the character and qualities of each waterway location and, wherever appropriate, linked into local education networks;
- 9.7** Further urban regeneration partnership projects focussed on waterways, in particular in smaller and medium sized urban centres, on the lines of the very successful initiatives already taken and underway in the major cities;
- 9.8** A BW demonstration project for a rural or semi-rural waterway, in partnership with relevant countryside, local authority and other interests, to identify practical ways in which, within national policies, waterways can contribute to sustainable leisure use and rural diversification and rural areas can accommodate increased use and development on their waterways;
- 9.9** Progress on the measures suggested in this Recommendation be reviewed by UK navigation authorities every two years.

The Government commends these Recommendations to AINA and individual navigation authorities. The new policy framework for British Waterways will enable it to develop more longer-term partnerships with the private sector, with Regional Development Agencies and local authorities and with the voluntary sector and users, as recommended by 9.4.

Consultation

The Council recommended that:

- 10.1** BW consider publishing material on its longer-term strategy, priorities and targets in order to inform the debate on the future of the waterways, promote its management task and assist the consultation processes on more detailed user issues;
- 10.2** Waterway user, trade and restoration organisations consider developing a body (or limited series of bodies) complementary to that of AINA with a view to providing a more effective focus on waterway issues in dialogue with AINA and Government.

The Government has implemented Recommendation 10.1 in its new policy framework for British Waterways: British Waterways publishes its five-year plans annually.

Appendix 2

Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council Report *Waterway Restoration Priorities* Recommendations and responses

The Government's response to each Recommendation addressed to it is highlighted.

A: Government

Government Development Agencies

A1 In England, the DETR to ensure, via strategic guidance to the new Regional Development Agencies, that the economic and social regenerative value of investment in waterway restoration, in both urban and rural areas, is recognised and acted upon.

A2 In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the equivalent Government Development Agencies to maintain, and where possible enhance, their commitment to restoration as a priority in the use of resources.

The Government looks to the Regional Development Agencies to take account of the waterways in their strategies and to support worthwhile proposals for their improvement, development and restoration (see para. 6.54).

National Lottery Funding Bodies

A3 The Heritage Lottery Fund to retain its distributor status of Lottery funds after 2001, in order to preserve a vital source of funding for heritage-led restoration.

The Government has no plans to change the distributor status of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

A4 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport to consider how the gap in Lottery funding for waterways projects which provide environmental improvement and regeneration benefits can best be filled, either by the creation of a new funding distributor or by extending the remit of an existing body.

The Government has no plans to create a new funding distributor or to extend any existing body's remit. However, the New Opportunity Fund's Green Spaces initiative may be able to support waterway projects which provide environmental or regeneration benefits.

A new funding mechanism

A5 Government to consider and respond to the Council's Recommendation in its *Britain's Inland Waterways : An Undervalued Asset ; Final Recommendations 1997* for the establishment of a Waterways Heritage Trust to draw in and disburse funds for waterway restoration.

See response to Recommendation 6.4 of IWAAC's Undervalued Asset Report in Appendix 1.

New roads crossing disused waterways

A6 In view of the long standing nature of this problem, and the most recent decisions in respect of the Lichfield and Hatherton and Derby restoration projects, the DETR and Highways Agency to issue the long-promised guidance as a matter of urgency, after the previously agreed consultation with the Council.

See response to Recommendation 7.1 of IWAAC's Undervalued Asset Report in Appendix 1.

National planning guidance

A7 In England, the DETR to draw together the current advice, spread through a number of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes, into a single waterway PPG (or failing that some other kind of Government advisory document). This should make clear that the PPG13 guidance about the importance of not severing the potential navigability of waterways will also relate to disused waterways pending restoration.

See response to Recommendations 3.1 and 7.1 of IWAAC's Undervalued Asset Report in Appendix 1.

Future Management

A8 The DETR to clarify Government policy with regard to Exchequer-funded navigation authorities taking over management of other waterways, so as to assist those promoting restoration of waterways in other ownerships when they are considering their strategies for future management and maintenance.

It would not be appropriate for the Government to issue formal guidance as each case is treated on its merits.

Appendix 3

Planning policy and the inland waterways

Part 1: Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)

1 There is no dedicated Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) on inland waterways. However, the PPGs outlined below are the ones most likely to be relevant to inland waterways and related developments, though in practice any PPG may be relevant to a particular development.

2 PPG11 and PPG13 are at consultation draft stage. Decision makers must continue to have regard to existing PPGs until the new versions are issued although the existence of a consultation draft may justify decision makers giving less weight to the advice in the current PPG. It is expected that the new PPG11 and PPG13 will be issued later in 2000 and these may differ from the consultation drafts.

PPG1 General Policy and Principles (February 1997)

3 PPG1 sets out the Government's general policy framework for land use planning. It highlights the themes of sustainable development (paras. 4-7), mixed use (paras. 8-12), design (paras. 13-20), and sets out key policy objectives for transport (para. 23), rural areas (paras. 28-31) and conserving the historic environment (para. 32).

4 The PPG notes the importance of urban regeneration in delivering sustainable development (para. 7) and encourages good quality design (para. 13), rural development appropriate to the countryside (para. 28) and effective protection of the historic environment (para. 32). These issues may be relevant to development proposals related to inland waterways.

PPG3 Housing (March 2000)

5 PPG3 sets out the Government's housing policy under the broad themes of widening housing opportunity and choice (paras. 3-20), maintaining a supply of housing (paras. 21-45) and creating sustainable residential environments (paras. 46-75). It identifies in paragraph 2 the objectives local planning authorities should have such as

- planning to meet the housing needs of the whole community;
- providing wider housing opportunity and choice and improving the mix of type, size and location of housing;
- making more efficient use of land;
- creating more sustainable patterns of development; and
- promoting good design.

6 The PPG also sets out government policy on a number of specific issues which may be relevant to development proposals related to inland waterways. These include

- linking development with public transport (paras. 47-48);
- promoting mixed-use development (paras. 49-51);
- greening the residential environment (paras. 52-53);
- designing for quality (paras. 54-56);
- making the best use of land (paras. 57-58); and
- rural housing (paras. 69-71).

PPG7 The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development (February 1997)

7 PPG7 provides advice on managing the countryside in a sustainable way - that is meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. This entails accommodating necessary change in rural areas while maintaining and where possible enhancing the quality of the environment for local people and visitors (para. 1.3).

8 The PPG explains that it is a government priority to find new ways of enriching the quality of the whole countryside whilst accommodating appropriate development (para. 2.14). The main focus of new development should be on existing towns and villages and other areas allocated in development plans where employment, housing and other facilities can be provided close together (para. 2.10). New development should be sensitively related to existing settlements and to historic, wildlife and landscape resources (para. 2.3).

9 The PPG notes that towpaths are one of the resources that increase opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside (para. 3.13). It also acknowledges that the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role to play in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development, as well as for tourism, sport and recreation (para. 3.14).

PPG9 Nature Conservation (October 1994)

10 PPG9 provides advice on the treatment of nature conservation issues in development plans and sets out criteria for development control. It also describes the three main designations under domestic and international law - Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); and also lists other statutory controls and non-statutory local and informal designations.

11 Paragraphs 16 and 23 draw attention to the Habitats Directive which requires Member States to endeavour to encourage the management of landscape features which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. These are features which, because of their linear or continuous structure, or their function as stepping stones, are essential for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange. Rivers and their banks are mentioned as an example.

,b>PPG11 Regional Planning (consultation draft March 1999; final draft due later in 2000)

12 PPG11 provides advice on the preparation, scope and content of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) (Chaps. 1-3). It places greater responsibility on regional planning bodies to resolve planning issues at the regional level through the production of draft RPG; and strengthens the role and effectiveness of RPG by advising on, for example, the need for greater regional focus concentrating on strategic issues, and the incorporation of an integrated regional transport strategy. It makes the process more transparent and subject to rigorous testing through the introduction of a Public Examination conducted by an independent Panel.

13 The PPG also explains how RPG should take account of Regional Development Agencies' work in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the regional economy (paras. 4.3-4.7). It sets out the regional approach to implementing national policy on subjects including housing (Chap. 5), transport (Chap. 6), leisure and sport uses (Chap. 7), rural development (Chap. 8), biodiversity and nature conservation (Chap. 9), and the coast (Chap. 10), all of which could be relevant to development proposals related to inland waterways.

14 Chapter 6 stresses the importance of the regional transport strategy (RTS) as an integral part of RPG. RPBs should consider including in their RTSs the regional priorities for transport investment and management across all modes and offer guidance on measures to increase transport choice (para. 6.3).

PPG12 Development Plans (December 1999)

15 PPG12 sets out government advice on the role, scope, content and preparation of development plans and includes guidance on the importance of integrating sustainable development and transport and land-use policies in development plans. It explains how the planning system can help achieve the objectives of sustainable development in protecting the natural environment and maintaining economic growth and employment (Chap. 4).

16 Chapter 5 advises local authorities when preparing development plans,

- to have regard to regional transport strategies and the local transport plan so that the development plan underpins the land use issues arising from the transport plan (paras. 5.3-5.4);
- to include specific policies and proposals on the overall development of the transport network and related services, including public transport interchange facilities, inland waterways and harbours (para. 5.16); and
- to include an indication of the timescale and priorities for proposed transport developments reflecting the specific priorities and timescale set out in the local transport plan. Plans should only include proposals which are firm and with a reasonable degree of certainty of proceeding within the plan period. They should be identified as such in the local transport plan (para. 5.17).

17 The PPG also states (para. 5.22) that planning authorities wishing to safeguard land for a future transport scheme such as a restored canal should do so through a proposal in the local plan, where there is a reasonable degree of certainty of the scheme proceeding within the plan period. It also makes clear that protective policies can be appropriate for waterway connections to existing or proposed manufacturing, distribution, and warehousing sites adjacent or close to the inland waterway network and to coastal ports and that local authorities may wish to safeguard sites for transport related development which might otherwise be lost to other development, such as wharves alongside waterways and ports (para. 5.23).

18 PPG12 proposes that local authorities should consult relevant organisations and individuals in relation to specific issues early in the plan preparation process (paras. 2.10-2.13). There are no longer statutory consultees for local plans and unitary development plans, although they remain for structure plans. However the PPG lists recommended consultees for development plans, advising local authorities to consider the need to consult British Waterways, canal owners and navigation authorities on all matters relating to inland waterways and adjacent land (Annex C).

PPG13 Transport (consultation draft October 1999; final draft due later in 2000)

19 Draft PPG13 seeks to integrate land use planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level, in order to promote more sustainable transport choices and reduce the need to travel. It advises local authorities to:

- in relation to freight, encourage development which is, or can realistically be, served by water and with good, though where possible indirect, access to trunk roads, and allocate appropriate sites (para. 80);
- identify and where appropriate protect sites and routes, both existing and potential, which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen choices for both freight and passengers (including

water transport) and ensure that any such disused transport sites and routes are not unnecessarily severed by new buildings and non transport land uses (para. 80);

- consider uses related to sustainable transport first for disused transport sites (para. 80);
- identify and, where appropriate protect, realistic opportunities for rail or waterway connections to existing manufacturing, distribution and warehousing sites adjacent or close to the waterways (para. 80); and
- seek to re-develop disused docks and to retain boatyards and other services used in connection with water-based recreation, and protect and enhance the waterway environment, where these are viable options (para. 85); and
- enable the carrying of minerals and spoil by rail or water wherever possible (para. 82);

20 PPG13 encourages local authorities to work with everyone involved in the inland waterways industry to develop the potential of inland waterways. In general, proposals for waterside development should enhance the use, enjoyment and setting of the adjacent waterway. Development proposals, local plan policies, or new and improved infrastructure, such as road proposals, should not affect inland waterways adversely.

PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment (September 1994)

21 PPG15 sets out the Government's policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment (para. 1).

22 Paragraph 2.2 describes the role that development plans play in conserving the historic environment, noting that by including suitable policies in their plans, local authorities can encourage the satisfactory reuse of neglected historic buildings. Paragraph 2.8 advises that plans should also include a strategy for the economic regeneration of rundown areas, and in particular seek to identify the opportunities which the historic fabric of an area can offer as a focus for regeneration. These provisions may be relevant to development proposals related to inland waterways

23 The PPG provides advice on development control, noting in paragraph 2.12 that it is generally preferable if related applications for planning permission and for listed building or conservation area consent are considered concurrently. Paragraph 2.14 emphasises the importance of ensuring that new buildings are well integrated with historic ones. Paragraph 2.15 stresses the importance of assessing the archeological importance of development proposals before applications are determined.

PPG16 Archaeology and Planning (November 1990)

24 PPG16 sets out the Government's policy on archeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside. The PPG provides advice on the handling of archeological remains and discoveries under the development plan and control systems, including the weight to be given to them in planning decisions and in the use of planning conditions; and sets out the separate controls which exist for scheduled monuments under the Ancient Monuments and Archeological Areas Act 1979 (para. 1).

25 The PPG notes that detailed development plans should include policies for the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archeological interest and their settings. The proposals map should define the areas and sites to which the policies and proposals apply (para. 15). Paragraph 16 states that archeological remains identified and scheduled as being of national importance should normally be earmarked in development plans for preservation. Paragraph 18 confirms that the desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether the monument is scheduled or unscheduled.

PPG17 Sport and Recreation (September 1991)

26 PPG17 states that it is part of the function of the planning system to ensure, through the preparation of development plans, that adequate land and water resources are allocated both for organised sport and for informal recreation (para. 3). Paragraph 56 deals with planning aspects of water sports and draws attention to the widespread shortage of mooring facilities for boats on inland waterways. Paragraph 36 considers planning for recreation in the countryside and notes that the enhancement of canals, amongst other things, increases the opportunities to enjoy the countryside.

27 Paragraphs 8-24 on the planning framework explain that local plans provide the appropriate context in which to assess local needs for recreational facilities. Paragraph 15 gives boating facilities as an example of sports facilities which locationally specific policies and proposals should cover in local plans.

28 The Government plans to consult on a revised PPG17, drawing on the recent research report *The Effectiveness of Planning Policy Guidance for Sport and Recreation*.

PPG21 Tourism (November 1993)

29 PPG21 outlines the economic significance of tourism and its environmental impact, and therefore its importance in land use planning (cover page). It states that the planning system should facilitate and encourage development and improvement in tourist provision, while tackling any adverse effects of existing tourist attractions and activity in a constructive and positive manner (para. 2.4).

30 Chapter 4 expects structure plans and local plans to play their part in protecting key tourism assets (paras. 4.11 and 4.12) and to identify ways in which tourism can contribute positively to other objectives such as economic development, conservation and urban regeneration (paras. 4.11 and 4.14).

Part 2: Commentary on planning for the inland waterways

1 The Government believes the inland waterways are a sustainable resource with significant potential for delivering its policies for regenerating urban and rural areas, for leisure, tourism, transport and the environment. Local authorities and other agencies need to make the most of the opportunities the waterways present. The planning system can be a critical factor in enabling their full potential to be realised.

2 Proposals for development affecting the waterways are required to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations such as the planning guidance detailed above and other documents indicate otherwise (section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA), PPG1, para. 2). The following commentary attempts to improve the understanding of planning guidance as it applies to the inland waterways. It is not intended to be additional guidance. It will be supplemented by a good practice guide IWAAC are being asked to prepare which will highlight among other things examples of good land use planning.

Development plans

3 The Government is committed to a development plan-led planning system, which aims to ensure rational and consistent decisions and to give a measure of certainty and predictability (PPG1, paras. 2, 41). An application for planning permission is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. (section 54 TCPA, PPG1, paras. 40, 50-56). The Government encourages consultation, negotiation and public participation in preparing development plans. Local people and interest groups should be able to express their views and participate actively in the preparation of plans from the earliest stages so they can be fully involved in decisions about the pattern of development in their area (PPG12, para. 2.10). Inland waterways interests, including businesses and those concerned with recreation and amenity, have an opportunity to engage in this process. Planning policy guidance advises local authorities to consider the need to consult British Waterways, other navigation authorities and canal owners on all issues relating to inland waterways and land adjacent to them (PPG12, Annex C, page 58).

4 In addition to responding specifically to consultations, waterways interests will have the opportunity to make representations when the draft plan is put on deposit for six weeks. In response to any representations, local planning authorities may negotiate with objectors, and can make changes as a result of those negotiations. Where this does not occur, the Inspector at the Local Plan Inquiry will consider objections, either by hearing witnesses or through written representation (Town and Country Planning (Development Plan) (England) Regulations 1999, PPG12 para. 2.16)

Development control

5 As noted above, applications for planning permission are required to be determined in accordance with any relevant policies of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It will be necessary to decide when an application is in accordance with the plan, and then take into account any other material considerations. These must be capable of being genuine planning considerations; ie they must be related to the use and development of land. Local authorities may sometimes decide to grant planning permission for development which departs from a development plan, if other material considerations indicate that it should proceed. Significant departures must be notified to the Secretary of State so that he can decide whether he wishes to intervene.

6 The planning system is the most effective way of striking the right balance between the demand for development and the protection of the environment. It regulates the development and use of land in the public interest. It is important that the different attributes of the inland waterways are recognised in the planning process. Where, for example, proposals relating to road or other land use development affect recreational or amenity use of waterways, a heritage site or a wild life habitat, a local planning authority may have to consider local and national policies encouraging regeneration and protecting heritage or nature conservation sites. In certain cases these policies may conflict and the local planning authorities will have to decide which policy carries more weight depending on the particular circumstances.

7 The Courts have held that Government statements of planning policy are material considerations which must be taken into account where relevant.

8 Local authorities are under an obligation to publicise certain planning applications, including those for major developments, in the local press (Article 8, Town and Country Planning (General Development Plans) Order 1995). When proposals are put forward which affect waterways interests, there will be opportunities for those affected to make representations to the planning authorities. Planning permission will often be granted subject to conditions or a planning obligation - for example, to retain a public benefit on the land such as a recreational amenity or an historic site (sections 106 and 106A TCPA, Circular 1/97).

Sustainable development

9 A key role of the planning system is to provide for necessary development in a way which is consistent with the Government's objectives for sustainable development ie:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources; and
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

10 The planning system can make a major contribution to the achievement of the Government's objectives for sustainable development. Planning policy for the inland waterways should implement the land use planning aspects of sustainable development, in conjunction with other policies in a plan. So, for example, where development on land adjacent to inland waterways is involved, decision makers may want to take into account environmental and social considerations, such as the need to provide a setting which is safe and attractive to pedestrians.

Leisure and recreation, tourism and sport

11 The inland waterways were originally used mainly for transport purposes, but for most people their importance now is for recreation and amenity use. The Government expects the planning system to ensure that adequate land and water resources are allocated for both formal and informal recreation. It wishes to see the potential of inland waterways developed, including the use of towpaths for walking and cycling. Planning authorities should support viable schemes for enhancing the waterway environment and water-based recreation. Guidance recognises that canals and their towpaths provide opportunities for increased enjoyment of the countryside. The encouragement that it gives to re-use of existing rural buildings for tourism, sport and recreation may be applied to buildings alongside the waterways as to others.

Heritage, environment and education

12 The inland waterways are rich in historic structures and industrial archaeology, as well as wildlife habitat. The land use planning system can play an important role in conserving and enhancing these environments where appropriate, and ensuring that development schemes take proper account of heritage and environmental considerations. Where inland waterways include listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments, or are located within conservation areas, then development proposals affecting them may require separate consents. The Government wishes to ensure that, as elsewhere, new developments respect the historic built heritage, the archaeology, and the natural and landscape character of the inland waterways. Proposals should pay particular attention to the access arrangements of new development and take account of nature conservation considerations.

Regeneration

13 The Government wishes to regenerate urban areas and encourage the reuse of previously developed land. Improvements to, and increased use of, inland waterways can contribute to the revitalisation of urban areas, particularly by enhancing the physical and natural environment. Improvements to the waterway and its immediate surroundings can have a catalytic effect, generating further investment and environmental improvements. In Birmingham, as in many other areas, the waterways initiative has helped to promote areas of mixed development where leisure and tourism co-exist with dwellings and businesses, creating a lively and interesting urban scene.

14 Government policy recognises that new businesses can contribute to rural economic diversification if the location and design of development is handled with sensitivity. There may be scope for locating rural enterprises on or close to waterways if they can contribute to the objective of promoting sustainable development by meeting the economic and social needs of people who live and work in rural areas, maintaining the character of the countryside and improving the viability of existing villages and market towns.

15 Inland waterways can provide a setting for development which promotes mixed use, good quality design and a sense of community. They can encourage vitality and diversity, and improve accessibility, as well as protecting local identity and amenity value. This can help the waterways to play their full role in economic and social regeneration.

16 The Government wishes to meet future housing requirements by making more efficient use of land and by converting existing buildings. It also wishes policies for housing provision to create places and spaces which are attractive, have their own distinctive identity and which respect local character. Urban waterways, with their legacy of redundant buildings such as warehouses and mills, may be suitable locations for such high quality housing or mixed use developments which can contribute to urban renaissance.

Transport and freight

17 Inland waterways can offer a form of sustainable transport both for freight and for passengers. The planning system can help them fulfil their potential by providing a means for sites and routes to be protected, including disused waterways, and encouraging the re-use of infrastructure. It can also help facilitate the transfer of freight by water, taking account of the environmental benefits waterborne transport can provide.

Appendix 4

Inland waterways organisations

Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA)

David Fletcher
c/o British Waterways
Willow Grange
Church Road
WATFORD
WD1 3QA
Tel: 01923 226422

AINA can provide contact points for all member authorities, and most other navigation authorities. It can also supply a wide range of information on British Waterways' canals and rivers.

Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC)

Derek Gowling
City Road Lock
38 Graham Street
LONDON
N1 8JQ
Tel: 020 7253 1745

IWAAC can supply copies of the reports An Undervalued Asset and Waterway Restoration Priorities referred to in this document.

The Waterways Trust (TWT)

Roger Hanbury
The Trust House
Church Road
WATFORD
WD1 3QA
Tel: 01923 201494

TWT can provide information about the waterway museums and fundraising in partnership for restoration projects, as well as specific projects with which it is involved.

Inland Waterways Association (IWA)

Neil Edwards
P O Box 114
RICKMANSWORTH
Herts
WD3 1ZY
Tel: 01923 711114

IWA is a voluntary organisation of about 18,000 members, founded in 1946. IWA can provide contact points for waterway restoration groups and most other voluntary and membership organisations involved with the waterways.

IWA has recently produced, with financial aid from DETR's Environment Action Fund, two handbooks describing nearly every aspect of waterway restoration. Copies of these handbooks can be purchased from IWA.

