

Local Plan Policy Team
Luton Borough Council
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Upper George Street
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23rd July 2026

Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd

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Email: _____

Our Ref: _____

AFF/1902

Your Ref: _____

Project No: _____

AFF/1902

Re: Luton Local Plan Review Scoping Consultation – Grand Union Canal Transfer Project

To Whom it may concern,

We write on behalf of Affinity Water, Severn Trent and the Canal & River Trust charity – in their capacity as the Project Partners taking forward the Grand Union Canal Transfer Project (the Project) – in respect of the above consultation.

For the avoidance of doubt, the response is separate from, and does not prejudice, any representation which may be submitted by the partners individually on this matter or any other related consultations.

The Trust is a statutory consultee within the development management process, and the Government has confirmed that it should become a Specific Consultation Body for Local Plan making within the new plan making system as introduced on 25th March 2026. The Trust should continue to be separately consulted, as necessary, and will respond individually on the implications of, and opportunities presented by, the developments proposed and draft policies in the emerging Local Plan.

As will be noted, this consultation response aims to raise awareness of the Project and the strategic importance of it and to ensure that Project details and requirements are appropriately taken account of in the ongoing revision of the Local Plan.

Project Overview

The Project starts at the existing Minworth Wastewater Recycling Centre (WwRC) within the Birmingham City Council area, where water is planned to be transferred via a new pipeline to Atherstone within the North Warwickshire Borough Council area. It will then begin its journey along the Coventry, Oxford and then the Grand Union canals. The water from Minworth's WwRC will be treated recycled water, which would usually be discharged into the River Tame. Under the Project, some of this recycled water will be diverted to a new Advanced Water Treatment Plant within the Minworth WwRC site to bring it to the required quality for transfer through the canal network.

Once it has been transferred through the canal network, the water will be piped from the canal, stored and treated again at a proposed new water treatment works southeast of Milton Keynes, before being transferred via a new buried pipeline as clean drinking water into Affinity Water's supply network for customers through an existing covered reservoir near Luton.

The Project is a central component of both the Water Resources in the South East (WRSE) Regional Plan and Affinity Water's statutory Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) 2024 in respect of providing water resilience for Affinity Water customers in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and North West London. It is also part of the Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development's (RAPID) programme of Strategic Resource Options (SROs) to help meet the water needs set out in the Environment Agency's National Framework, that will benefit customers and wider society and help to protect and enhance the environment.

On 1st October 2024 the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs gave a direction under section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 that the Project is to be treated as a development for which development consent is required because it is of national importance. The Project has been registered with the Planning Inspectorate and is listed on the National Infrastructure Project web pages here <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/WA0210001>.

The Project held its first phase of public consultation in September/October 2024. The Project has recently undertaken its second phase of public consultation, which ran for a six-week period from 11th February to 2nd April 2026, with the consultation materials available here: [Consultation 2026 - Grand Union Canal Transfer](#).

Relevant National & Local Planning Policy

The National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure (July 2025) (NPS) sets out the need and the Government's policies for development of nationally significant infrastructure water resource projects. The NPS provides guidance for applicants and is the primary basis for examination and determining applications for water resources infrastructure under the Planning Act 2008. National Policy Statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy and may be a material consideration in preparing local development plans.

The development plan is not explicitly referenced as part of the decision-making policy framework set out in the Planning Act 2008; however, it may be considered as a relevant matter by the Secretary of State's in terms of deciding the application.

Luton Local Plan Review Scoping Consultation

The project does not currently include any proposals within Luton Borough's administrative boundary. It is intended that the pipeline, which will connect the potable water from the proposed Water Treatment Works to Affinity's supply network, will end at an existing covered reservoir near Luton which is located within Central Bedfordshire, close to but outside of the Luton Borough boundary. At this stage of the design process, there is no intention for the Project to extend into Luton's administrative area.

Notwithstanding this, it is understood that, should any construction or infrastructure matters arise that have the potential to give rise to environmental effects within Luton, the Council would wish to be consulted at the earliest opportunity in order to engage effectively and respond to the project as appropriate.

Yours faithfully

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Suzanne Pidgeon
Technical Director