

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 February 2022 09:49
To: WEB_Canals Strategy; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Proposed Canal Strategy for Stroud District - Public Consultation to 18 April 2022

Categories: Canal Strategy 2022 response

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.
Good morning [REDACTED], and team; County colleagues.

I trust that you are all well.

The Canal Strategy Team has been thorough in notifying me of this emerging policy document, [REDACTED] It is typical of your diligence and attention to due process that you are progressing this work in this way and I would commend that.

It is certainly a very exciting time for the District as the key elements in long-awaited Stroudwater Canal restoration start to be unlocked and move forward at pace. The role of the Stroudwater canal in the history of the main settlements of the District is pivotal, and certainly we recognise that all this offers real potential for improving local quality of life and substantially boosting the visitor economy. I am well aware of the rail underbridge reinstatement that took place over Christmas, and that the "missing mile" linking this across to Saul junction, taking advantage of the newly created canal crossing of the A38, will soon be "on the ground".

Nor do we underestimate the function of the Sharpness and Gloucester canal as a leisure asset, but also one that has a modest transport function, that could grow in future, especially for some particular kinds of bulk freight, such as aggregates. Evidently there are other even more ambitious possibilities, and following the success of Council efforts to date after many years, in many ways against the odds, I can see that "reaching beyond the moon" makes good sense.

The role of bus is obviously rather less romantic, and we have been around as a mode only about 100 years. However, it bears pointing out that, in practical terms, we currently perform a hugely important role in terms of the District's functional mobility - especially for essential journeys, as well as leisure and discretionary ones. We play a disproportionately important role in connecting the most disadvantaged and marginalised with opportunities and in wider socio-economic inclusion, too. As the Local Plan evidence base makes clear, it is a role that need to grow ahead of the ambitious levels of growth the District is needing to accommodate.

At more than one point in the Local Plan transport evidence base, reference is made to a Stroud District Bus Strategy to support the sustainable execution of the Local Plan development strategy, among other things. As we rapidly approach the start of an Examination in Public, we are not aware that this has even commenced, much less progressed to a point that we and other stakeholders can give the Inspectors confidence regarding the robustness of the public transport strategy across the Plan area, and the Strategic Allocations in particular.

As I am sure you appreciate, given the arithmetic involved with trip demands anticipated by the plan development quantum, such a plan must be seen as achieving a substantial background mode shift towards public transport by existing residents of the District. Accordingly, this will require a substantial improvement in the attractiveness and relevance of the bus network as a whole. Such a strategy, to be effective, must go well beyond simply considering "nipping and tucking" the existing bus network to deliver and extend bus services into some of the larger sites.

It is appropriate, in the context of this consultation, to reflect on what the success of the canal work in the District offers as a lesson. Surely, if the consistency of long-term political support for bus in the District, and the quantum of capital investment that followed from that were at the level of the Stroudwater Canal, one wonders what the bus offer in the District would look like today and in the future.

Naturally, there is also the wider national policy agenda set out in the National Bus Strategy for England, and the Gloucestershire BSIP, that is seeking broadly to secure exactly those objectives as well, and there will be a high level of overlap and alignment with the BSIP, and the supporting Statutory Enhanced Partnership between the County Council and operators. This should provide a good basis on which to build the Stroud District Bus Strategy.

However, once again, it is hard to avoid drawing the conclusion that the Council places a relatively low value on the bus offer, and continues to struggle to recognise its potential. The priority given to the Canal work is understandable. However, it surely cannot eclipse the need to pay a much greater level of attention to the bus network in the District.

By copy of this e-mail, I would be very appreciative of understanding where County colleagues are at regarding this matter as, surely, it would be of great assistance to [REDACTED] and his team at SDC if we had a level of clarity as the EiP commences. From this perhaps we should aim to prepare some Statements of Common Ground, to assist the Inspectorate. Given the level of engagement Stagecoach has had in the formal process of plan preparation - which the Inspectors may well not have seen before - I think this is even more appropriate.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

Head of Strategic Development and the Built Environment

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 22 February 2022 08:56

Subject: Proposed Canal Strategy for Stroud District - Public Consultation to 18 April 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Stroud District Council has prepared a draft long-term vision and strategy for the future use of the canals within the District.

We want your views on its contents to check that we have got it right, before we develop an action plan to deliver it.

What is this about?

The Draft Canals Strategy sets out how the Council, our partners, communities and landowners can work together to deliver improvements to make better use of our canals for culture, recreation and leisure, to support the local economy and to enhance our environment and local wildlife.

The canals include the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal (running from Hardwicke in the north of the District to Sharpness in the south), and the two Cotswold Canals (from Saul Junction in the west, to Chalford in the east).

The intention is to adopt the final canals strategy as design guidance to supplement the canal policy ES11 contained within the adopted District Local Plan.

How can I help?

We want your views on its contents to check that we have got it right, before we develop an action plan to deliver it.

The Draft Canals Strategy sets out specific initiatives to be delivered in the short, medium and long term, to improve the canal network, which we have divided up into 14 canal strategy areas. These initiatives include suggested community uses and activities for certain areas, ideas for improving travel and movement along the canals and projects for wildlife enhancement and for people to connect with nature.

It uses the results of a public survey that invited people to share their experience of using the canals in the district.

What will be the benefits of the Strategy?

The strategy will compliment and support longer term schemes relating to the Heritage Lottery restoration project that is unlocking a lost section of the Cotswold canals corridor between Saul Junction and Eastington.

The Draft Canals Strategy includes, amongst other things, guidance on design, land uses and transport and potential physical projects for all areas of the canal network. When adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, canal users, landowners and developers will need to take account of the strategy if they are preparing any plans within the canal corridors which require planning permission.

An effective canal strategy will also provide the platform to make effective future funding bids to Government and other funding bodies.

Where can I find the Draft Strategy documents?

Please visit the District Council's webpage www.stroud.gov.uk/canalstrategy where you can view the documents and find out more about the subject.

You can also view the documents at the District Council office reception at Ebley Mill, Stroud and at town and parish council offices open to the public and at local libraries within the District during normal opening hours.

A limited number of paper copies of the documents are also available on request for those who cannot access the website or visit local libraries. Please email or write to us if you know someone who may need a copy (email and address below).

What do I need to do?

Please read the Draft Canals Strategy and send us your thoughts by email or by letter by **18 April 2022**.

You can email your responses to: canals.strategy@stroud.gov.uk or send your response to: Planning Strategy, Stroud District Council, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud GL5 4UB.

What happens next?

The District Council will consider your comments and make any necessary changes to the documentation before adopting the Final Canals Strategy at a future meeting of the Council's Environment Committee.

Many thanks in advance for contributing to this consultation process.

Planning Strategy Team

Stroud District Council



Working together to make Stroud District a better place to live, work and visit

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which they are addressed. All messages are scanned for viruses, but we cannot accept liability for any viruses that may be transmitted in or with this email. If you have received this email in error please notify the IT department at [REDACTED]

Company Name: Stagecoach Group plc
Registered Address: 10 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 5TW
Registered Number: 100764 in Scotland
