

Stoke Bruerne Parish Council - Briefing

18 June 2024





Agenda

- The need for the scheme
- What the scheme involves
- Engagement going forwards
- Questions



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The need for the scheme

Planning for the future

- Water is essential to our everyday life, wellbeing, and environment. It is a precious resource and considering how we manage our water is vital to securing sustainable water supply for the future.
- We achieve a resilient water supply by:
 - Reducing leaks
 - Promoting household water efficiency
 - Providing extra water from new sources such as reservoirs, transfer schemes such as this one, and water recycling
- The Southeast region faces a significant water shortage in the coming years. Increasing demand is placing pressure on the current supply
- Almost as many businesses are based in the Southeast region as there are in the rest of England and Wales combined. The current population of 19 million people is set to swell by 4 million in the coming years
- The Southeast region could potentially account for 50% of the UK's future water demand



Water Resources Management Plan

- Every five years, water companies produce a Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). This plan sets out how each company will manage water supply in the future. We are waiting for the Secretary of State to approve the WRMP for each company.
- The scale of the challenge in the coming years means we need bold new ideas and ways of working. One step-change has been water companies working together in groups to solve the challenges. These groups are called Water Resources South East (WRSE) and Water Resources East (WRE) for Affinity Water, and Water Resources West (WRW) for Severn Trent
- The key focus for the supply side in the WRMP is demonstrating the **case of need** for new infrastructure; the GUCT is one of the main schemes selected by the WRSE regional plan for delivery by 2032



Helping to secure the future for our canals

- We need to preserve our canals for future generations
- We are investing in the resilience of the canal network for the benefit of communities, today and for the future
- By transferring water through the canal network, we will improve water availability, asset resilience and biodiversity – helping to keep the canals alive and open for navigation





Background

- England's canals were built to connect cities, towns and villages. Over 200 years ago they solved the challenge of moving goods and people to different places. This ready-made network could now be used to solve a 21st century problem.
- This scheme is key to delivering a sustainable and reliable water supply for the future and reducing our reliance on water from other sources, including unique chalk stream habitats
- The scheme involves three parties: Affinity Water, Severn Trent and the Canal & River Trust
- We're still at a very early stage in the scheme's development. Listening to and understanding the views of people living and working alongside the Grand Union Canal Transfer will be fundamental to how the scheme will be designed, built, and maintained



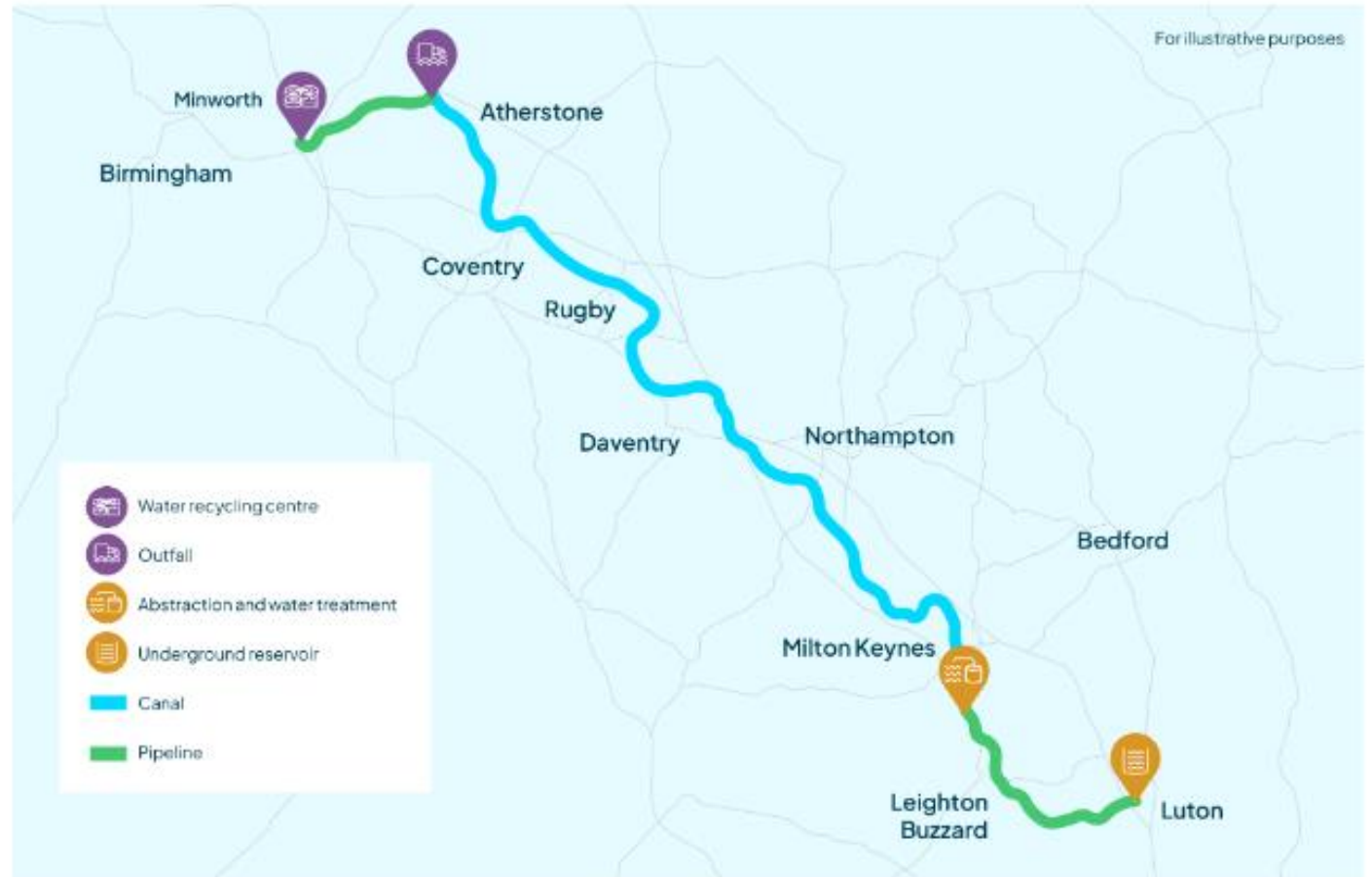
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What the scheme involves



The route

- **Starting the journey** - Starting at the water recycling centre in Birmingham, water will flow via a new pipeline into the Coventry Canal at Atherstone, where it'll begin a 131-kilometre journey along the Oxford and then the Grand Union Canal
- **On its way** - Water will be helped on its way by using the existing canal network. In addition to investing in some new pumps and pipes, we'll explore ways to unlock benefits for the canals, the local community, and the environment
- **Where it ends up** - The water will then be channelled into a new water treatment works near Milton Keynes /Leighton Buzzard, before being transferred as clean drinking water into Affinity Water's supply for customers



Scale of infrastructure required

- New Advanced Water Treatment Plant at existing Minworth works (115MI/d)
- Pumping station and approx 20km pipeline to new discharge structure into canal
- Approx 131km transfer through canal network, requiring:
 - 7 new pumping stations and pipelines to bypass lock rises
 - 8 new gravity bypasses at lock falls
 - 5 existing bridges to be modified to maintain air draft
 - pipe bypasses to maintain low speed of flow
 - 57 existing weirs to be modified for new water levels
 - Bank raising along five pounds of the canals
- New abstraction structure and pumping station
- Water storage pond (up to 575MI)
- New Water Treatment Works
- Approx 15-20km of pipeline to take drinking water to an underground storage reservoir before it goes into supply



Water treatment works location



- For our original early scoping we identified a site near the Grovebury Road quarry just south of Leighton Buzzard
- We have been having detailed discussions with the Central Bedfordshire planning team as well as other groups such as the Ouzel Valley Park group as it was highlighted that the original location was designated as a SANG
- We have explored whether we could use original site for the storage element and alternative site for Water Treatment Works – fitting around the SANG
- We looked at + 10 alternative sites – assessing engineering, environmental, land and planning.
- We are currently down to final short listing of sites, and these are now being reviewed with the associated pipelines, one is south of Leighton Buzzard and one north
- We will be promoting a single site in the non-statutory consultation and will set out the logic for its selection

Engagement going forward

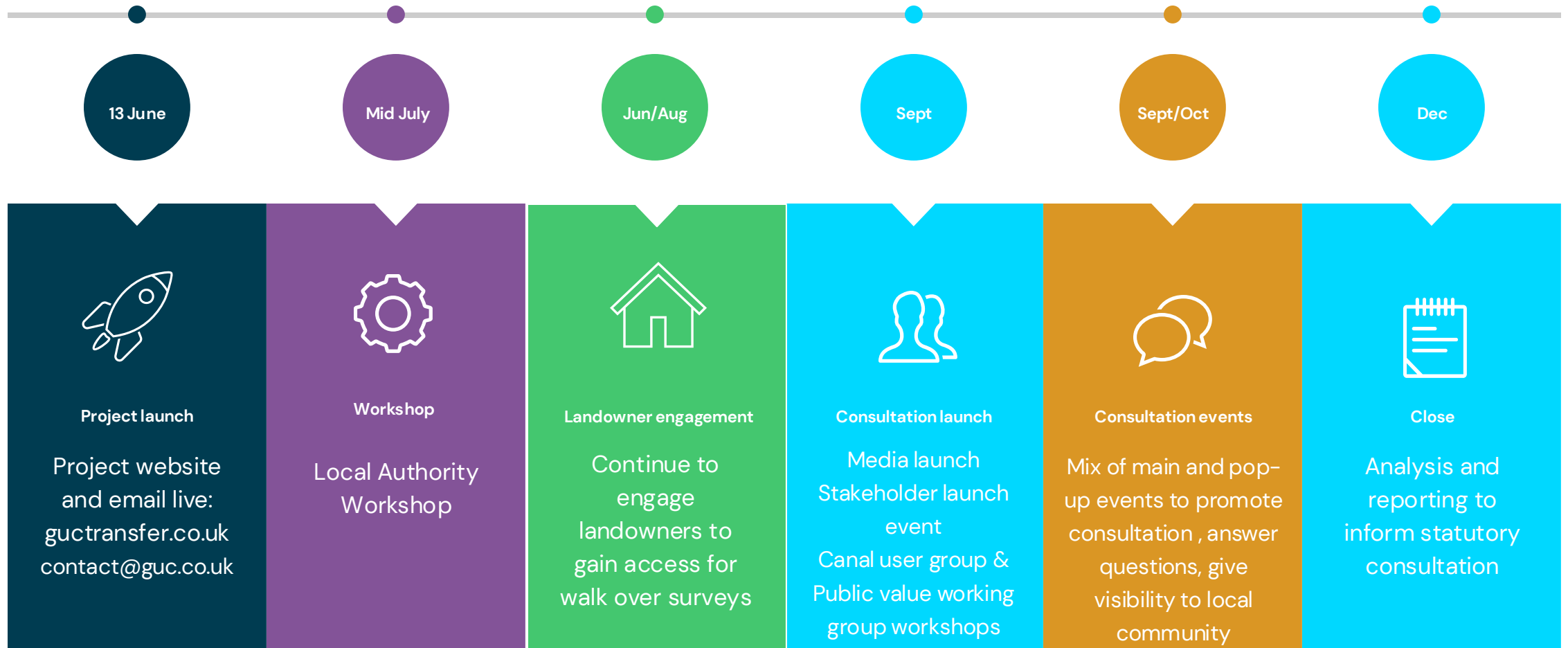


Land and planning



- We have sent letters to landowners along the scheme – notifying them of the project and requesting access to conduct environmental and habitat surveys
- We are in the process of submitting a Section 35 request to confirm the schemes status as National Significant Infrastructure
- We believe the scheme will be consented via a Development Consent Order (DCO) application, under the Planning Act (2008). This means that a consultation report will be produced, summarising the project's approach to stakeholder engagement and consultation, and outlining how the project has complied with pre-application consultation requirements
- The project application will be examined by the Planning Inspectorate, who will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to determine whether the project should be granted Development Consent. The Secretary of State takes this final decision as to whether to grant the scheme Development Consent

Non-statutory consultation



Consultation Events

Main consultation events

- 6/7 key locations along route
- Widely advertised in local media, website etc
- Set up in village hall/ local community venue
- Lots of stands, information, video, brochures, maps
- Technical mix discipline team available
- Land team available for 121 discussions.
- Timed for afternoon/ early evening

Pop-up events

- 6 or so locations along canal route
- Widely advertised in local media, via canal user group and will also attract visitor footfall
- Gazebo, few banners on or near tow path
- Manned by small engagement team
- Timed to coincide with highest footfall



Local Authority Workshop

Objective:

Align LAs requirements for DCO

Identify communication channels for their communities

Identify opportunities for cross organisational working



Canal User Group

Objective:

Understand key areas of concern to inform technical team

Identify key communication channels

Identify opportunities for betterment



Public Value Working Group

Objective:

Understand key areas of concern

Identify opportunities for, BNG, decarbonisation, public value gains etc

Identify third party working opportunities



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Project Timeline

