

AINA CASE STUDY

HEALTH, WELL-BEING, RECREATION AND SPORT

Erewash Canal Access Strategy and Development Plan



Encouraging the community to make the most of their local under-used waterway

The Erewash Canal runs for 20 kilometres from the River Trent to Langley Mill near Eastwood in Nottinghamshire, and an Access Strategy and Development Plan was produced for the waterway in 2009. This is intended to guide and improve visitor and community access to the canal, and British Waterways is working with a number of partners to deliver the work which is part-funded by the East Midlands Development Agency. The strategy also aims to strengthen the relationship between the canal and surrounding communities, improve access at various gateways and promote increased use and activity.

The towpath was not being used as much as would normally be expected, and poor connectivity, lack of destinations and poor access for wheelchair users were all factors considered to be responsible. Although the Strategy states that “the Erewash Canal corridor has significant potential as a tourist and recreational facility”, lack of directional signage and anti-social behaviour limited use by local people.

Target users are primarily walkers, cyclists, anglers and wildlife enthusiasts, and the project aims to provide a safe and attractive walking and cycling route to work between urban centres, whilst promoting access to rural locations and the wider countryside. Linkages to local places of interest are also important, e.g., the Cromford Canal and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, and the towpath also links to the National Cycle Network.

The Strategy seeks to embed the Erewash Canal in local planning policy and includes development of a design code. This covers signage, interpretation sites and the treatment of boundaries and barriers and aims to ensure consistency of approach. The Strategy also identifies significant opportunities to promote an arts-led approach to help reinforce the distinctive character of the Erewash valley.

It is recognised that partnership working brings collective strength to access funding opportunities, and more than £250,000 has been secured to date. The Strategy and Development Plan won the Strategy and Masterplanning category at the 2010 Waterways Renaissance Awards, when the judges stated: “The aim of the project was to unlock the potential of the Erewash Canal as a fantastic leisure destination in the Midlands. This was achieved through a number of small projects that worked towards increasing access for the community whilst promoting the canal as a leisure and tourism destination.”