



Community Update



Thank you to everyone who took part in our Phase Two Public Consultation on the Grand Union Canal Transfer, which ran between 11 February and 2 April 2026. We really value the feedback we received, which will continue to help shape our proposals, as we move towards our Development Consent Order application next year.

During our consultation period, we had really insightful conversations and informative discussions about our proposals. We met over 800 people at 15 community and canal side venues along the scheme's route, and at our online event. We also received hundreds of comments and queries direct to our email address and phonenumber.

We answered questions, listened to opinions, and talked about our latest proposals and the scheme's progress. Connecting our communities with our team of experts gave us the opportunity to share our latest proposals in detail and provide an update on the scheme's developments since our first public consultation in autumn 2024.

Publicity:



21,500+

postcards to local residents and businesses



300+

posters to local communities



Press releases

via local and trade media



1,000+

key stakeholders emailed including
175 Parish Councils



3,500+

boating customers and 19,000 recipients
of the 'Boater's Update' contacted



15

in-person and online events



10

Document Inspection Points
across the route

Responses:



323

feedback responses in total including:



128

via online feedback forms



32

via our Freepost address



163

email responses to our dedicated
email address



350+

email and phone enquiries



800+

attendees at our community events

Continuing our conversations

Even though our official consultation period has ended, we've continued conversations with our stakeholders and our communities, answering questions about the scheme and keeping everyone informed about the scheme's progress. In short – we never stop talking about it!

In addition to our official consultation events, we've met with local MPs, local authorities, councillors and parishes to listen and share details about the scheme.

We've also engaged with those organisations who are keen to learn more, including environmental, water industry and business groups.

If you'd like to ask any questions and want to explore more about the scheme, please visit our dedicated Consultation page on our website: guctransfer.co.uk/consultation where you can find all our materials and our contact details.

What did we learn from all your feedback and what are the emerging themes?

We learned that there were a range of views expressed at our Phase Two Public Consultation. Some people who spoke to us were supportive of the scheme's aim and understood its strategic importance in enhancing the resilience of our water supply. There was also an acknowledgement, by some, of the associated benefits of the scheme for canal infrastructure and our regional water security. At the same time, we also recognise that some people do not support the scheme or continue to have concerns over how it will be delivered.

People who gave feedback online, verbally and via posted feedback forms shared that they expect us to consider potential impacts and develop strong mitigation, provide clear information in the future, and maintain connectivity and access while work is taking place. We also know that people want to see the project unlock tangible local benefits across all sections of the scheme's route.

Across the route, people asked us to consider:



Minimising

disruption to the canal and towpaths, footpaths, bridleways and public rights of way along the route



Publishing

detailed maps, construction schedules, and diversion routes, in advance of construction



Communicating

early, clearly, and transparently, throughout design and construction



Delivering

visible local benefits, such as towpath upgrades, education initiatives, and use of a community fund



A scheme design

that seeks to minimise visual and operational impact from new infrastructure



Prioritising

environmental management and mitigation, with strong measures for water quality and local habitats



What we heard from you in each area

We received detailed feedback on a lot of different topics and issues. We are looking carefully at all the comments we received and will provide more information on what we were told in our Consultation Report. Below, we have provided a high level overview of the types of things people told us for each section of the scheme.

In the Northern Section

In summary: Feedback was largely focused on how we'll manage local disruption and whether there would be local benefit.

You told us about:

- Construction-related impacts (extended road closures such as Coleshill Road, traffic safety, noise, dust and prolonged disturbance)
- Environmental and ecological impacts (potential loss of woodland, such as near Outwoods in Atherstone, hedgerows and habitats, effects on protected species, flooding and embankment stability)
- Considering the design of the Advanced Water Treatment Plant at Minworth and the Break Pressure Tank at Baxterley, to minimise impacts on local people
- A need to protect local businesses from disruption
- A commitment to the reinstatement of land and facilities, with clear standards and timescales
- A need for the provision of community benefit solutions that are informed by local views

In the Canal Section

In summary: Feedback was largely focused on how we'll manage important features of the canal and its use as a heritage, recreational and ecological asset.

You told us about:

- The importance of maintaining navigation during construction and managing construction impacts such as noise and dust
- Designing new infrastructure (particularly transfer locks) that is sensitive to the existing setting, minimises navigation disruption and considers ecological disturbance
- A need for clarity on ownership of maintenance responsibility along the canal, once construction is complete
- Safeguarding and enhancing ecological corridors of the canal and adjacent areas, habitats, and biodiversity
- The need to ensure that the canal cannot become a source of flooding
- Concerns over the proximity of construction compounds and infrastructure to homes, particularly around Stoke Bruerne and Milton Keynes
- Keeping towpaths accessible, where safe to do so, and restoring them promptly, post-construction
- Supporting canal dependent businesses and local access/connectivity through clear communications, alternative arrangements, and compensation, where needed

In the Southern Section

In summary: Feedback was focused on how we can refine the route of the pipeline and reduce land take.

You told us about:

- Minimising visual and environmental impacts in high value landscape areas (e.g., Chilterns National Landscape, Dunstable Downs), including careful siting of compounds and the pipeline
- Concerns over the impacts on agricultural land, pastures, hedgerows and biodiversity
- Managing construction traffic: controlling HGV volumes, ensuring rural road suitability and safety, and implementing traffic management and alternative routing
- Addressing flood risk with robust drainage and flood mitigation, especially around Leighton Buzzard and Eaton Bray
- Considering existing and planned development to reduce cost and disruption





What happens next?

We're currently going through all the responses we've received so we can address the issues raised and consider the opportunities people have shared with us. We'll use this feedback, alongside further technical development work and assessments, to refine and shape our plans.

We've now held two rounds of public consultation on the Grand Union Canal Transfer. This forms an important part of our application for permission to build the scheme, known as a Development Consent Order (DCO). We'll publish a summary of all the consultation responses and set out how we've used this feedback, alongside our DCO application.

A DCO is a special form of consent used to authorise infrastructure projects of national significance. It's similar to the kind of planning permission you would seek for a new house, but on a much larger scale. In effect, we're asking for several different permissions in one go – from building a new water treatment works to developing new infrastructure along the canal. This speeds up and simplifies the process, meaning that, if consent is granted, we can construct and realise the benefits of the new scheme, much faster.

Ongoing engagement

A huge part of the DCO process is continuing conversations with, and listening to, our stakeholders and local communities; making sure we're talking to everyone who's interested in the scheme and taking their feedback and views into account. To help us achieve this, we run regular forums and working groups, including, for example, our Canal User Working Group (CUWG), which runs quarterly and consists of canal businesses, canal customers, water users, towpath users and wider canal interest groups.

Our new Legacy Working Group which will begin in the summer, will bring together people, groups and organisations to explore opportunities beneficial to their local communities, and focus on the social value of the scheme. We'll update you on its progress in our next issue.

Thank you again to everyone who took part in our consultation and please continue to talk to us about our scheme. We look forward to telling you more about it in our regular email updates which you can sign up to on our website [here](https://guctransfer.co.uk). Please get in touch with us at any time via the contact details below. We look forward to catching up with you again soon!

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 Freepost GRAND UNION CANAL TRANSFER

