Factsheet

Atherstone Q&As

Grand Union Canal Transfer
Moving water together

Why do you need to take the water from this area and put it into the canal?

This scheme is one of many across the whole country that is designed to give everyone in England water security right the way through to the 2080s and beyond.

Affinity Water are running out of the amount of water they can abstract from the chalk streams and groundwater in aquifers and so they need to find a new source of water.

Affinity Water does not have a sewer system and so cannot treat their own. Sewage in that area is controlled by Anglian water and they take all the treated water for either protecting the local environment, or their customers.

It is Affinity Water and their customers who are paying for this scheme.

Severn Trent customers will in no way be paying for any of this project. In fact, by selling the water that we have available, we can use the money to keep bills low in our area and invest to protect our own customers. Severn Trent is not allowed to send water out of their area to sell unless they have enough to supply their customers first.

Why can the treated water not go into the canal at Minworth? Why does it need to be at Atherstone?

We looked at several potential routes for getting the treated water into the canal. Only one was realistically viable - to take the water into the Coventry Canal at Atherstone. Reasons that the other options would not work included:

- hydraulics meant we couldn't get enough water down the canal from the other options
- we would increase the flood risk to areas and/or taking water from a flooded area would leave us with water quality issues
- using the canals through Birmingham was difficult due to it being so urban and many more upgrades to the canal system would be needed – being difficult and costly
- a pipeline route would have to avoid HS2, Birmingham airport, the NEC, M6, M6 Toll, M42, A452, A446 and the A45 – all of which would make it extremely difficult to find a possible route to the canal

What will happen to the Outwoods?

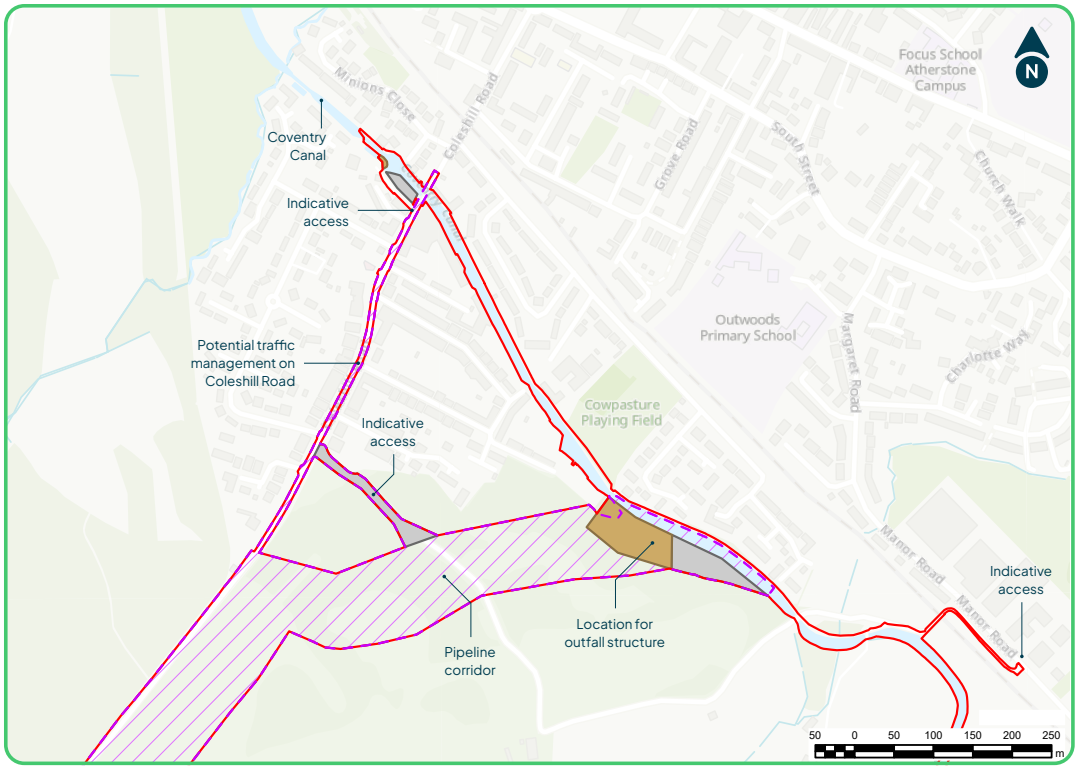
Our experts are looking at the trees in the Outwoods in order to determine a route for the pipeline that does not disturb the veteran trees and requires us to cut down as few as possible.

We understand how important access to this area is for the local community and so as far as safety allows, we will keep as much public access during the works as possible.

After the initial construction is finished, we will work with the appropriate experts to restore the area as best as can possibly be done.

This is the plan of where the pipeline will go – the corridor/work area is still very wide on this map so that we can work out the best route through the Outwoods – we won't need all of that space and it will be much narrower when we start work.

Indicative pipeline corridor and site location for the outfall structure at Atherstone



Legend

- Indicative Work Area
- Indicative Non-Work Area
- Preliminary Order Limits
- Indicative Construction Compound
- Indicative Permanent Works Area (Likely Maximum Extent)

This map illustrates the maximum working area for the new pipeline route across Atherstone Golf Course, to the outfall location

How will you protect the ecosystem of the water in the canal?

The treatment plant at Minworth uses bacteria, not chemicals, to treat the wastewater to a standard that can currently be safely entered into the River Tame. This is checked by the Environment Agency to make sure the standard is as it should be.

That treated water is what will be treated *again* at the new Advanced Water Treatment Plant being built at Minworth. It is absolutely not sewage which will go into the new treatment works. The raw sewage system is not physically connected to the new system and so there is no physical way that sewage can enter the canal.

Our scientists are currently working on exactly what processes we need to build into the new treatment plant to make sure that the double treated water matches the ecosystem of the canal at Atherstone. The water entering the canal will also be checked by the Environment Agency to ensure it meets the right standards here too.

How will you make the water go in the direction you want it to?

Our engineers have been working on the exact angle, length and depth of the underwater weir that will send the water on its journey towards Hartshill. The structure above the weir is designed to put oxygen back into the water at the right level and also to match the temperature of the water as it goes into the canal.

How will you stop too much water entering into the canal?

First of all, we will only be putting the largest flows of 115 million litres a day down the canal in times of drought, when the canal would be at its lowest.

During the winter months, we would expect the average flow to be around 23 million litres per day, while during summer, or drier periods, we may need to transfer water flows in the region of 50 to 80 million litres per day to accommodate for the greater demand in water.

The whole system will be monitored with sensors throughout to make sure everything is running as it should and if it looks like there is too much water going in, or for example if a storm is expected, the supply can simply be shut off at Minworth and no water will enter the canal.

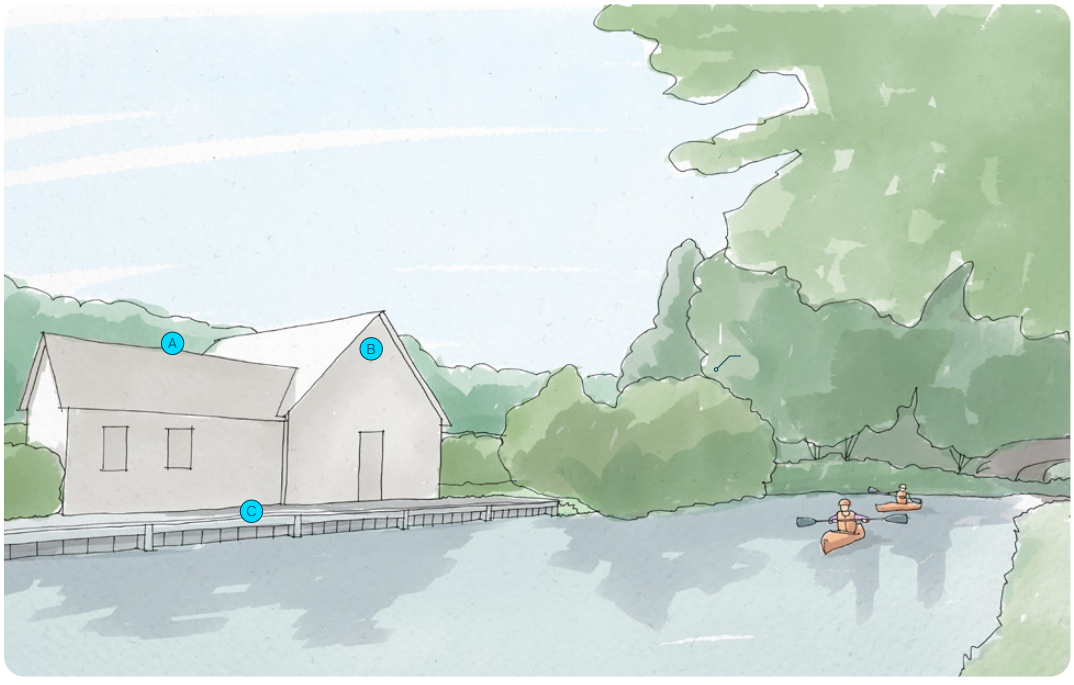
What will the water entering the canal look and sound like?

There won't be a big noisy pipe pouring water into the canal. The water will be pumped up to the "break pressure tank", which is currently proposed to be in a field on the corner of Twenty One Oaks and Coleshill Road. This will serve two purposes - one is to depressurise the water from the pumped system and the other is to allow us to regulate the flow of water into the gravity fed system ending at the canal.

In the new structure next to the canal, the water will flow over a series of small "cascades" – like small steps or a staircase - this slows the water down and adds oxygen to the water. It essentially makes the water "ripple" down. The water then enters the canal itself via a 25 meter wide grid in the side of the footpath. There should be no loud noise from this at all.

Below is what the outfall structure might look like and you can see the grill along the edge of the footpath – this is the actual outlet where the water will enter the canal.

A visualisation of the outfall structure at Atherstone



Legend

- A Building housing tanks with cascade structure
- B Control and operations building
- C Outlet

This image shows what the outfall building at Atherstone could look like once completed, as seen from the opposite canal bank.

Why do you need to close Coleshill Road for so long?

The route of the pipeline has been very carefully designed, and many different options were taken into account. The best option is to bring the pipeline along Coleshill Road, and due to the ancient woodland and high walls along the side of the road, the pipe will need to be installed underneath the road itself. As it is such a narrow road, unfortunately we will need to close the road, albeit in sections so that we can maintain access to those who live along that section.

This is to enable us to dig down and put the pipe in, but also to make sure we can keep everyone safe.

Our estimate right now is that we expect the road closure to be for around 22 weeks, although that could change slightly.

If we had continued down Coleshill Road, rather than turning through the golf course, it would have been more like a year, so this option has cut the time the road will be closed significantly.

What guarantees can you offer the people of Atherstone that the canal and the pipeline will be maintained into the future?

Affinity Water customers will be paying for this scheme to be built and paying for the Canal & River Trust to operate it. And in return they will expect the water to get from Birmingham to Luton – they're not going to pay for that not to happen – they need the water.

Part of the scheme is to upgrade sections of the canal – be that locks, weirs and towpaths – to make sure the water can get from Birmingham to Luton, and there will be significant investment in the canal assets.

Frankly, it is not in our interests for us to neglect the inspection and maintenance of the pipeline or the canal as we need that water to be delivered.

How do the people of Atherstone stand to gain or be compensated for the disruption from this scheme?

We are very aware that the Atherstone community will be impacted by the construction phase of the scheme, with no direct benefits from the new pipeline. With this in mind, we do have a 'social value' workstream, where funds will be available to give something back to the community.

As part of the Phase 2 consultation, we're asking for suggestions of what the community would want us to do, and we will look at all ideas that come through the consultation replies. However the time to send in ideas and suggestions is not limited to the consultation dates – you can send us suggestions at *any* time and they will be considered.

We will work with any of the groups affected by the scheme - this could include the canoe club, fishing groups, youth groups and representatives of the narrowboat community.

But any ideas at all are welcome.

When is the consultation period and when can I speak to the project team experts face to face?

The public consultation runs from Wednesday 11 February to Thursday 2 April 2026 (11.59pm)

To respond to the consultation, you can complete and submit a feedback form

- Online at: www.guctransfer.co.uk/consultation
- You can email a response to: contact@guctransfer.co.uk
- Or you can write a response to:
  Freepost GRAND UNION CANAL TRANSFER
  (no stamp needed)

Events

There are a number of in person events you can attend and talk to members of the GUCT team. Locally these are:

- **Hurley** - Hurley Village Hall, 41 Knowle Hill, Hurley, Atherstone, CV9 2JD
  Wednesday 4 March from 4pm – 8pm
- **Atherstone** - St Mary's Church, Sheepy Road, Atherstone CV9 1HJ - In the Youth HQ Hall at the back of the church car park
  Saturday 14 March from 11am – 3pm
- **Mancetter** - Mancetter Memorial Hall, Old Farm Road, Atherstone, CV9 1QN
  Tuesday 17 March from 11am – 3pm

There is also an **online event** on Tuesday 24 March, 6pm-7:30pm you can register for this via the website.

Can I still ask questions after the consultation period?

You can indeed speak to the project team at *any* time during the project. Just because the consultation period is over, doesn't mean you can't speak to us. The stakeholder team is available any time you'd like to chat or ask a question.

Just email us at contact@guctransfer.co.uk and we'll get back to you.

We're more than happy to chat and we will tell you anything you want to know – we want to be totally open about the whole project and we won't hide anything – we promise.

Grand Union Canal Transfer

Moving water together

Speak to the team

If you would like to ask any questions about the scheme, please feel free to get in touch with our engagement team:

contact@guctransfer.co.uk
0121 270 5920