

Canal wharves and rail sidings – encouraging freight movements by non-road based means

- **Local authority area:** Leeds City Council
- **Stakeholders:** Leeds City Council, Commercial Boat Operators Association (CBOA)

Summary

To improve opportunities for the movement of freight by canal and rail, and thereby reduce HGVs and other road based freight which adds to carbon dioxide emissions. To do this by safeguarding existing wharves and sidings to help protect them from development pressures created by other higher value uses. To encourage further investment in canal and rail.

Key learning points

- Remember that organisations like British Waterways and Network Rail are also land owners and have commercial considerations.
- Speak to freight operators to get a true picture of the demand for wharf and rail based freight.

Background

Minerals Planning Guidance encourages the Mineral Planning Authorities to identify opportunities for promoting movement of minerals by non-road based means. PPG13 also encourages freight by canal and rail and provision for integrated forms of transport.

Method

- This project is part of the Leeds Local Development Framework and therefore the methodology follows the regulations on LDF preparation, including public consultation, sustainability appraisal and Examination in Public. The project involves allocating land and therefore has to be done as part of the statutory development plan.
- Initially we identified the existing canal wharves and rail sidings and looked at the loss of important wharves serving Leeds over recent years.
- We also talked to the CBOA and got an idea of suitability and demand in Leeds.

- At Preferred Options stage we put forward those wharves/ sidings that we wanted to safeguard and the response to that brought out a lot more detailed information. This showed that the operators thought we were not going far enough and demand was such that they wanted us to do more. This led to the identification of two sites as specific new allocations (one canal and one rail). It also brought out that some of the rail sidings were not viable due to size and they were subsequently dropped.
- Barriers to progress included the fact that some land owners did not respond to the Preferred Options consultation but then objected to the Publication Draft. Other landowners have changed their position at different times in the process, making the project more difficult. However, there has been continuous support and encouragement from the CBOA and a lot of interest nationally in what we are doing. Politically it would appear that all parties are in support.
- As this project is part of the Local Development Framework preparation it has had to go through all the regulations on consultation and sustainability appraisal, so has taken about 18 months to date and still has to go to Public Examination before it can be adopted.

Result - Key outcomes and impact

The outcome we expect from this project will be a drop in the number of HGVs travelling in and out of Leeds and subsequent reductions in carbon dioxide and pollution. We also expect to see a reduction in congestion. Additional benefits include support for the local economy by helping to retain key industries and attracting more of them, and helping to create a more diverse employment base in Leeds.

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References / Links

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