

Public Report
Delegated Officer Decision

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 07 July 2026

Report Title

Feasibility Fund: Master Plan Consultation for the Chesterfield Canal

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Andrew Bramidge, Executive Director, Regeneration & Environment

Report Author(s)

Chris Siddall

Head of Sport, Leisure & Strategic Partnerships

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Ward(s) Affected

Wales Ward

Anston and Woodsetts

Report Summary

This report is to approve the allocation of £10,000 from the Feasibility Fund to support The Chesterfield Canal Trust's Master Plan. The work supports the restoration of the final 14km of canal between Staveley and Kiveton Park, transforming the corridor into a vibrant destination for living, working, and leisure.

Developed by the Chesterfield Canal Partnership, the plan identifies 18 development hubs and focuses on:

- Restoration of canal infrastructure including locks and bridges
- Leisure and recreation through new water sports and improved walking/cycling routes
- Biodiversity via enhanced habitats and new wetlands
- Economic development through tourism, business growth, and job creation
- Connectivity with better access, parking, and public transport links

The development of the canal as a whole is expected to generate:

- £252 million in visitor expenditure
- £132 million in arts and heritage engagement
- £116 million in job creation

Implementation is phased over 10–15 years, with early progress already visible in Staveley and Renishaw.

The Master Plan production has required input from the Chesterfield Canal Partnership Members- i.e Chesterfield, North Notts, Derbyshire CC and Rotherham MBC. Each Authority contributing a total of £10,000 to produce the plan.

Recommendations

Approve the allocation of £10,000 of the Feasibility Fund to support the production of a Master Plan for The Chesterfield Canal.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1: Climate Impact Assessment

Appendix 2: Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 3: Chesterfield Canal Masterplan- Strategic Outline Case.

Background Papers

The Chesterfield Canal [The Canal - Chesterfield Canal Partnership](#)

About The Chesterfield Canal Partnership [The Partnership - Chesterfield Canal Partnership](#)

Rotherham Cultural Strategy [Rotherham Cultural Strategy Final Compressed.pdf](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Name of Committee – Click here to enter a date.

Name of Committee – Click here to enter a date.

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Feasibility Fund: Master Plan Consultation for the Chesterfield Canal

1. Background

- 1.1 A masterplan to complete the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal has been commissioned by the Chesterfield Canal Partnership.

The vision is for the Chesterfield Canal corridor to be reclaimed as a place for the local community to live, enjoy, and be employed; for tourists and visitors to come, play and stay; for new and existing businesses to grow and prosper; and for nature and biodiversity to thrive.

This Strategic Outline Case (Appendix 1) focuses on establishing a strategic framework for the regeneration of the Canal Corridor rather than the restoration of the Canal itself.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The masterplan seeks to restore the final 14km of the historic canal, creating a vibrant corridor for living, working, and leisure. It supports multiple policy objectives, including:

Regeneration and placemaking through the development of 18 distinct hubs, each offering tailored opportunities for investment, community engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Climate resilience and biodiversity via habitat restoration, wetland creation, and green infrastructure.

Active travel and connectivity by enhancing walking and cycling routes, including links to the Trans Pennine Trail and improved access to public transport.

Inclusive growth through job creation, business development, and increased visitor engagement.

2.2 Economic Impact and Return on Investment

The master plan is projecting to deliver substantial economic benefits:

£252 million in visitor expenditure

£132 million in arts and heritage engagement

£116 million in job creation

A 20% increase in visitor numbers to the Staveley area alone

These figures demonstrate a strong return on investment and underline the canal's potential as a catalyst for local and regional economic development.

2.3 **Environmental and Social Value**

The restoration will significantly enhance the ecological value of the corridor, supporting biodiversity and improving access to nature for local communities. The integration of leisure and water-based activities promotes physical and mental wellbeing, while improved connectivity fosters inclusive access for residents and visitors alike.

3. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 There is no funding available to support the masterplan from other sources including Council revenue. The Feasibility Fund is specifically designed for the purposes proposed here and has been approved by the MCA and is therefore considered the best source for this required. **This option is recommended.**

3.2 Alternatively, funding could be allocated from existing revenue budgets within R&E, however no budget lines have been allocated to this work and with The Feasibility Fund designed for this purpose **this option is not recommended.**

4. **Consultation on proposal**

The Chesterfield Canal Restoration project has been ongoing for a number of years, indeed the partnership was formed back in 1996. Each individual Cabinet Member of the years has been aware of the schemes. Local Ward Members have attended meetings to support the delivery of the scheme and have always backed the idea of re-opening the canal for leisure purposes.

The project had a target completion date for 2027, however complications with HS2 has led to the project extending. This latest development is seen as significant progress in supporting the delivery of the final section of the canal in our region.

The Chesterfield Canal project is also referenced in the “Adventures In Rother Valley” Game Changer in Rotherham’s Cultural Strategy.

5. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 Overall accountability for delivery of the commission rests with the Head of Sport, Leisure and Strategic Partnerships, who will ensure the project is delivered within the approved budget allocation of £10,000 and in line with Council procedures. Day-to-day project management has been delegated to a nominated lead Officer within the Chesterfield Canal Trust.

5.2 The implementation of the findings of the master plan will take place over the coming 2-3 years with work commencing to re- establish the Kiveton steering group in June 2026 and to meet quarterly thereafter.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The report proposes using Feasibility Fund grant to cover a contribution towards the Chesterfield Canal Masterplan. The Feasibility Fund is a £3m grant, of which £2,646,999 has been allocated to date. If this decision is approved, £2,656,999 would have been allocated, with £343,001 remaining. As at 31st March 2026, £1,567,560 has been spent.
- 6.2 As the works are being commissioned by the Chesterfield Canal Trust rather than directly by the Council, and will be the contract owners, there are no direct procurement implications with the recommendations detailed in this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

- 7.1 The recommended proposals are in accordance with the conditions of use of the Feasibility Fund. Further, the scheme is consistent with relevant public law principles, in particular it is lawful, fair and rational.
- 7.2 The Council can support this type of local provision under the “Local authority’s general power of competence”, as set out in S.1 of the Localism Act 2011 (c. 20).

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no HR implications in relation to this plan

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There are no implications for CYP and vulnerable adults in producing the Masterplan, however once the canal is/ has been restored the following apply;

Positive Implications

Health & Wellbeing

Towpaths and green spaces encourage active travel (walking, cycling), promoting physical activity.

Access to nature and water can improve mental health and wellbeing.

Education & Skills

Opportunities for environmental education, heritage learning, and STEM projects linked to waterways.

Potential for volunteering and apprenticeships in conservation, engineering, and leisure sectors.

Social Inclusion

Canals can provide safe, inclusive spaces for recreation and community activities.

Engagement in canal-based projects can foster community pride and belonging.

Climate Awareness

Projects can integrate climate resilience education, teaching young people about sustainability and water management.

Potential Negative Implications

Safety Risks

Increased access to water raises drowning risks, especially for younger children.

Towpath congestion or poor lighting could lead to accidents or anti-social behaviour.

Accessibility & Equity

If poorly designed, canal spaces may exclude certain groups (e.g., lack of wheelchair access or safe routes for children).

Risk of gentrification, making areas less affordable for families.

Environmental Impact

Construction works could temporarily disrupt habitats and reduce safe play spaces.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no impacts for the production of the Masterplan. However, once the canal is/ has been restored the following could apply;

Positive Impacts:

Improved Accessibility

Canals can provide inclusive spaces for recreation and travel if designed with accessible towpaths, seating, and facilities.

Opportunities to reduce transport inequality by promoting active travel routes for all ages and abilities.

Community Cohesion

Well-designed canal spaces can foster social inclusion, bringing diverse communities together.

Engagement in planning can empower underrepresented groups and uphold participation rights.

Economic & Social Opportunities

Canal regeneration can create jobs and volunteering opportunities, supporting equal access to employment.

Potential Negative Impact:

Risk of Exclusion

Poor design may exclude disabled people, older adults, or those with mobility challenges.

Lack of multilingual signage or culturally sensitive engagement could marginalize minority groups.

Safety & Security

Vulnerable groups (e.g., women, children, LGBTQ+) may feel unsafe if lighting, surveillance, and design are inadequate.

Displacement & Gentrification

Canal-side development could increase property values, risking indirect discrimination against low-income families.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

There are no impacts upon completing the Masterplan itself. The consultation process does include several “in person” meetings travelling from Rotherham to Chesterfield. Therefore there are some carbon emissions from vehicle travel. The round trip is 40 miles. Car sharing or active travel is a possibility

to help mitigate impact, but the distances involved are either deemed too far or uneconomical in terms of time. The total number of meetings attended/ miles travelled shall be monitored and any opportunity for meetings to be held online to avoid travel shall be identified.

Once the canal is/ has been restored the following apply;

11.1 Potential Positive Implications

Modal Shift to Low-Carbon Transport

Canals can support freight movement by water, which is significantly more energy-efficient than road transport.

Reducing heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic lowers CO₂ emissions and improves air quality.

Active Travel Opportunities

Towpaths can encourage walking and cycling, reducing car dependency and associated emissions.

Carbon Sequestration & Biodiversity

Canal corridors often include green spaces and vegetation, which can absorb CO₂ and enhance biodiversity.

Opportunities for tree planting and habitat restoration along waterways.

Climate Adaptation

Canals can help manage flood risk and urban heat island effects, reducing energy demand for cooling.

11.2 Potential Negative Implications

Construction Emissions

Building or upgrading canal infrastructure involves materials (concrete, steel) and machinery, which generate CO₂.

Embodied carbon in new structures can be significant if not mitigated.

Maintenance & Operational Energy

Pumping water, operating locks, and maintaining towpaths may require energy, depending on design choices.

Induced Travel

If canals attract additional leisure boating (diesel-powered), this could increase emissions unless electrification or biofuels are adopted.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 There are no implications for partners

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 **Risk:** Delay in the progression of the masterplan.

Mitigation: The Chesterfield Canal (CCT) trust have an appointed project manager with authority to drive timelines. The Partnership shall act as a steering group for quick decision-making and issue resolution.

The CCT will define escalation routes for delays or blockers.

The engagement of stakeholders has taken place early and will continue to avoid issues.

Clear communication channels have been established for updates and feedback.

Realistic timelines and transparent reporting have been established.

13.2 **Risk:** Suitability of consultants and contractors

Mitigation: The technical and specialist nature of this project require specialist support. The appointment of a consultant has been led by The Chesterfield Canal Trust on behalf of the Chesterfield Canal Partnership. A competitive procurement process with a clearly defined brief to ensure the right capabilities and expertise are brought on board was written.

14. Accountable Officers

Chris Siddall

Head of Sport, Leisure and Strategic Partnerships

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	Click here to enter a date.

Executive Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Service Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	Click here to enter a date.

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