

Press Release

Embargo: Immediate

Major Boost for Waterway Park Plan

The Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust welcomes proposals for a series of new communities in the Marston Vale to be built around a Waterway Park between Brogborough and Stewartby lakes. Landowners O&H Properties Ltd has begun a community engagement programme on plans for a series of new villages in the Marston Vale. The Waterway is a key part of the proposals and is supported by policies in the latest version of Central Bedfordshire's Local Plan

Jane Hamilton, Chair of the Trust said

"We are delighted by the proposal to put the Waterway Park at the heart of new development. Meeting the demand for new homes is a big challenge for local authorities but we believe that Central Bedfordshire Council has taken the right steps in its local plan to ensure that, where there are plans for new villages, there are also major benefits in the form of new open space, waterside parks and cycleways, somewhere for everyone to enjoy. The proposed Waterway Park will help ensure that development is sustainable and of a high quality with a real sense of place. We look forward to working with the developers to help ensure this proposal becomes a reality."

The Trust is promoting the Waterway Park as an important piece of green infrastructure which can positively transform the area, bringing a sense of identity to new housing as well as social, economic, environmental, leisure and health benefits. The Trust also believes that the Waterway can help with water and flood management and will help increase local biodiversity. It will be the first new Waterway in over 100 years.

In its recent study into the infrastructure needs of the Oxford/Milton Keynes/Cambridge corridor the National Infrastructure Commission recognised the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park as an "opportunity to create a green infrastructure asset" for the area. If development in the Marston Vale does go ahead then it would deliver the first significant section of the Waterway between Bedford and Milton Keynes.

Notes to editors

The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust was established in 1995 to promote and assist in the provision and maintenance of a new 16 mile long Waterway Park connecting the Grand Union Canal in Milton Keynes to the River Great Ouse in Bedford.

The Waterway Park will provide significant and wide-ranging benefits to the immediate locality and the region as a whole. It will create the missing link in the wider Anglian water network, boosting major tourism opportunities for the local and regional economy. In addition, the new link will bring potential benefits for regional water management such as improved water storage and transfer as well as improved flood defences. The Waterway Park will increase biodiversity.

The Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Trust (BMKWT) is a charitable organisation driving the project with a Consortium of local authorities and other agencies.

More information on the Trust can be viewed at

<http://www.b-mkwaterway.org.uk/>

Central Bedfordshire Council is currently consulting on its Pre-submission local plan which includes policies for new villages in the Marston Vale

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/policy/local-plan/pre-submission.aspx>

More information on O&H Properties' Marston Valley proposals are at www.marstonvalley.co.uk

Websites:

Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust www.b-mkwaterway.org.uk

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