

# STROUD CANALS

## VISION & STRATEGY

*Supplementary Planning Document*





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# INTRODUCTION:

## The Purpose of a Strategy for the Canals in Stroud District

The Stroud Canals Strategy has been prepared to provide guidance and further detail to support the delivery of Policy ES11 (Maintaining, restoring and regenerating the District's canals) in both the Adopted Stroud Local Plan and the emerging Stroud Local Plan Review. It reflects the Council's commitment to ensure that the Cotswolds Canals restoration plays a positive role in the district and to take advantage of opportunities to utilise the canal corridor to achieve wider objectives, including improving transport infrastructure, safeguarding heritage assets, extending public access and making public realm improvements.

The Canals Strategy is a wide reaching piece of work, establishing a series of vision themes (in the form of Future Drivers), identifying how this vision is articulated across the corridor in different ways (Canal Strategy Areas & Placemaking Frameworks), and, at its highest level of resolution, outlining the typologies in the built environment, public realm and landscape which enable the vision to be implemented in each location.

The Canals Strategy provides placemaking guidance and advice, for use by those preparing plans and proposals along the canal corridors, and officers making decisions on planning applications. The Strategy provides a whole corridor approach to the canals and identifies opportunities to enhance the canals as a resource to maximise the social, economic and environmental well-being of the District's communities. It sets out how the Council,

our partners, communities and landowners can work together to deliver improvements to make better use of our canals for culture, recreation and leisure, to support the local economy and to enhance our environment and local wildlife. The strategy will also provide the platform to make effective future funding bids to Government and other funding bodies as well as providing guidance and a 'menu' to inform infrastructure improvements that could be delivered through Section 106 agreements for relevant development proposals.

The SPD is not a masterplan for the development of the canal area, nor does it provide site specific guidance, but rather provides guidance and a series of tools to be used when preparing and considering proposals within and adjacent to the canal corridor. The Wallbridge Pilot Study, a supporting document to this SPD, provides a useful worked example that demonstrates how the Canals Strategy can be applied to a site or area.

## What is a Supplementary Planning Document?

Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan although they are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The SPD provides guidance on Policy ES11, Maintaining, restoring and regenerating the District's canals, in both the Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and the emerging Stroud District Local Plan Review. Development proposals affecting the district's canals will need to have regard to the guidance in the SPD, as well as to Policy ES11 and to all other relevant policies in the development plan (including any made neighbourhood plans, as appropriate).

## Relationship to Planning Policy and other Canal Initiatives

Local Plans: The current adopted local plan is the Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015. The Stroud District Local Plan Review will replace the current adopted plan and its preparation is well underway, as it is currently at examination.

The key policy for the SPD in both local plans is Delivery Policy ES11, Maintaining, restoring and regenerating the District's canals. The Local Plan Review policy includes reference to the emerging Canals Strategy at para 6.78. The first paragraph of the policy wording varies slightly between the two plans, with the newer Local Plan Review policy continuing to "support and deliver the restoration of... the District's canals" whereas the Adopted Local Plan policy "encourages the restoration..."

The role and value of the canals is recognised and referenced in a number of places throughout both local plans in terms of their potential to support regeneration, enhance employment and tourism opportunities, provide health and wellbeing benefits to local communities, support active travel, leisure and recreation, and to celebrate the district's historic and natural environment. Any development proposals would need to have regard to all relevant policies in the local plan(s) as well as to the guidance in the SPD.

Neighbourhood Plans: there are a number of made Neighbourhood Plans in Stroud District. Those plans whose areas include parts of the canal corridor are listed below. Made neighbourhood plans form part of

the statutory development plan for the area that they cover. Made Neighbourhood Plans in Stroud District that include canals within their area are:

- Eastington NP, adopted October 2016
- Hardwicke NP, adopted October 2017
- Minchinhampton NP, adopted July 2019
- Stonehouse NP, adopted February 2018
- Stroud Town Centre NP, adopted October 2016

Canal Initiatives: The District Council is a partner in the Cotswold Canals Partnership, whose vision is to restore the Cotswold Canals to full navigation in the interests of conservation, biodiversity and local quality of life. The restoration would act as a catalyst for wider social, economic and environmental regeneration in areas neighbouring the canals. The project was split into three sections, to enable funding sources to support the incremental roll-out of the restoration.

The Cotswold Canals Connected project is Phase 1B of the wider Cotswold Canals restoration project, it will link the Stroudwater Navigation canal with the Gloucester and Sharpness canal at Saul Junction. The Cotswold Canals Connected project is co-led by The Cotswold Canals Trust and Stroud District Council. Its key partners being Gloucestershire County Council, the Canal and River Trust and the Stroud Valleys Canal Company.

## An Evidenced Strategy

A significant evidence base underpins the Strategy. This has been prepared using a range of techniques:

- A comprehensive baseline, desktop document review, including historical research, at a range of scales, from Global/National, through Regional, District and down to local level. The evidence base review resulted in the identification of fifteen themes for the Strategy, these were discussed further in the stakeholder workshop (see below).
- A series of stakeholder and officer evidence gathering clinics, including sessions with the Canal and Rivers Trust, the Cotswold Canals Trust, Gloucestershire County Council, a number of service areas within Stroud District Council, and relevant town and parish councils.
- A stakeholder workshop was held in July 2021 attended by a variety of stakeholders, representatives from statutory bodies, Stroud District Council officers and the client group.
- Public online survey, preceded by a workshop for parish and town councils. The online survey was designed to provide an accessible and quick way for the public to indicate where and how they use the canal and what they perceive the obstacles are to the canal reaching its full potential in the District.
- Formal consultation on the draft Stroud Canals Strategy SPD.

## Engagement and consultation

Stakeholder and public engagement has formed an important part of the development and evidencing of the strategy and has been incorporated in a variety of ways throughout the process as set out above.

The preparation of the strategy over the period between May 2021 and January 2022, coincided with a period of time over which restrictions on in-person meetings and group gatherings were in place to some extent and ever changing due to Covid19. Further to this, assessment of risk at an individual parish level and among the public has varied regardless of legal restrictions being in place or being lifted.

Stroud District Council and its partners have a variety of responsibilities alongside their strategic planning function. Covid19 recovery has required attending to the immediate needs of communities as they emerge from the pandemic. The result has been the need for sensitivity about how to engage the public in the preparation of a Canals Strategy which, while necessary for the long term planning in the District, should not take priority over short term community concerns.

It was necessary to conduct public engagement, as well as other forms of engagement and communication, virtually. Clinics and Group activities were held online using Zoom and breakout groups to discuss a variety of issues and gather views. Direct public engagement was conducted using an online survey. A record and analysis of the public online survey and how it contributed to continuing development of the Canals Strategy is summarised

in the survey summary report (see accompanying summary report supporting the Strategy):



The Canal remains an important asset to the District. It serves a role in securing the health of the district: environmentally, economically and socially. For this reason, the Canals Strategy, while in part concerned with long term planning, is of value in contributing to Covid19 recovery.

A record of clinics and group discussions is provided in the Evidence Base Summary report.

Formal consultation on the draft Stroud Canals Strategy SPD took place from 22nd February to 27th May 2022. 115 individual responses were received from a variety of local residents, civic and community groups, parish councils, the Canal & River Trust and statutory consultees including the Environment Agency and Natural England. Responses included support for the Strategy and its aspirations, as well as objection due to concerns of the impact that the restoration of the canal in the Eastern Upper Valley would have on biodiversity in that location.

Common themes in the responses were:

1. Readability issues and use of jargon concerning the Strategy documents;
2. Objections to development east of Brimscombe, advocating for the protection of the canal in its current state and/or the protection of the natural environment surrounding the canal;
3. Apparent conflict between the Strategy and legislation/planning policy.

The Strategy has been revised to take account of these comments, including changes to the layout and content to improve the readability and navigation of the Strategy.

## Stroud District's Strategy 2030 and the Canals

The Stroud District Council 2030 Strategy Masterplan - Limiting, Adapting, Recovering and Responding in a Changing Climate was adopted in March 2021. Developed with community, business and statutory partners, the Strategy Masterplan sets out a 'one council' approach to responding to the climate and ecological emergency and encouraging others to play their part too.

The council was assessed as carbon neutral in 2015 in respect of its own operations that it has direct control over and the Strategy Masterplan builds on this, providing a framework for how the whole council will achieve carbon neutral by 2030 and setting out how the council can be most effective as:

- An exemplar - as a pathfinder in its own estates and practice
- An enabler - through partnerships, services and as a policy maker
- An encourager - informing, incentivising and supporting community-led action.

The Strategy Masterplan sets out a vision for 2030 over 7 contextual and 7 cross-cutting themes. It addresses a wide range of issues from affordable, healthy homes and nature recovery to low carbon economy and mobility planning while addressing issues of social justice, inclusion and community to help keep a balanced approach that leaves no one behind.

The Strategy Masterplan plays an important role in providing a Stroud district focus to the way that relevant county strategies can be applied and expanded upon.

In having a close relationship with the local plan review and a wide range of other council policies and strategies, The 2030 Strategy Masterplan performs an important and significant cross-cutting strategic document for the Canals Strategy which identifies potential carbon reduction opportunities in the guidance for each of the 14 Canal Strategy Areas.

The Evidence Base summary matrix appendix to the Canal Strategy cross references all other evidence documents against the 7 contextual themes from the Strategy Masterplan informing the longlist of goals for the canals and, ultimately to identify the 3 drivers in the Canals Strategy (Continuity; Clustering; Crossings) which are accountable to the body of evidence and the overarching 2030 Strategy.

## Climate Change and Ecological Emergency

The Canals Strategy was commissioned by Stroud District Council in order to create an overarching direction for the canals throughout Stroud District. The Strategy has been prepared in the context of, and in response to, other wider reaching objectives of the Council and its partners as well as the global challenges faced through climate change.

The Council has declared a climate emergency and the Canals Strategy and its contents have integrated a response to this emergency throughout with climate change and the ecological breakdown of the environment an umbrella to the whole Strategy, rather than being singled out as an individual theme. All of the Strategy content, whether it be environmentally, socially or economically themed, is positioned as a response to the climate emergency.

Contextual themes ▶	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	ENERGY	BUILT ENVIRONMENT	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	MOBILITY	OUR ECONOMY	WASTE & RESOURCES	COMMUNITY
▼ Cross-cutting themes in the Master Plan							
🌿 Food and agriculture	What we choose to eat, how we source and produce food, develop our supply chains and deal with food waste – this cuts across a broad range of actions, including land use, transportation, waste and resources, our economy particularly the farming sector and, community.						
💧 Water	Flooding, water consumption and water stewardship – this topic is touched upon by almost all the themes, but is particularly linked to our actions in built and natural environment, waste and our community.						
🌳 Balancing Carbon	Energy efficiency is largely dealt with in the built environment actions, but this topic is also visible in potential action that can be taken in relation to transport/mobility and community. The potentials for carbon sequestration and offset are also spread across the seven action areas.						
🏠 Social Justice	There is a key thread, running throughout the strategy and master plan and in support of COVID recovery needs that is a focus on climate and ecology to simultaneously raise housing standards, alleviate poverty and hunger, support job creation and strengthen community cohesion, resilience and inclusivity.						
£ Funding and investment	It is crucial to the success of this strategy that the master plan includes a range of actions across each of the themes that can generate, distribute and leverage funds to support the large scale investment needed.						
🌍 County, National and Global Policy	This strategy rightly has a clear and strong local emphasis, but the ambitions will not be achieved without considerable efforts and collaborations locally, nationally and globally						

Emerging Themes

Contextual themes ▶	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	ENERGY	BUILT ENVIRONMENT	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	MOBILITY	OUR ECONOMY	WASTE & RESOURCES	COMMUNITY
▼ Cross-cutting themes in the Master Plan							
🌿 Food and agriculture	What we choose to eat, how we source and produce food, develop our supply chains and deal with food waste – this cuts across a broad range of actions, including land use, transportation, waste and resources, our economy particularly the farming sector and, community.						
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🌍 County, National and Global Policy	This strategy rightly has a clear and strong local emphasis, but the ambitions will not be achieved without considerable efforts and collaborations locally, nationally and globally						

## How to use the Canals Strategy:

The Canals Strategy is designed to be a complementary piece of work to existing and forthcoming planning policy as well as a resource and tool to a variety of participants in the future of the Canals in Stroud District.

The Strategy is not a fixed series of proposals but rather should be approached as a toolkit to be used in guiding a variety of interventions along the whole canal corridor and to ensure these are considered in a coordinated way.

The Strategy can be used as a top down and bottom up tool, helping strategic decision makers to be considerate of the role the canal plays, but also helping individuals and local organisations build a case for their proposals in the context of the wider vision for the Canals in Stroud District.

The Strategy as a whole comprises a series of parts, each part a tool for a particular purpose. Together these tools identify a hierarchy to consideration of the Canals in Stroud District from an overall Vision (The Future Drivers), a description of the contrasting parts of the canal corridor (The Canal Strategy Areas) and the means by which the Vision can be expressed within each area (The Ingredients of the Future Place).

The Strategy is proposed to be used as follows:

1. Consider the Vision for the whole canal corridor, expressed as 3 distinct Drivers for the future function and identity of the canal corridor in the future:

Continuity;  
Crossings;  
Clustering;

2. Consider the 14 contrasting Canal Strategy Areas and how the Strategy outlines how the Vision is relevant to, and varies between, each of these Areas (Canal Strategy Area Profiles);

3. Identify an individually relevant Canal Strategy Area and consult the Placemaking Framework Diagram for that Area.

4. Use the Catalogue of Ingredients to identify the types of interventions which can be used to implement the Vision in that Strategy Area (depending on the priorities, objectives and resources at the given time)

5. The Project Delivery Tool provides a template way for how the Strategy can be applied to primary project implementation scenarios:

- Identified project but funding to be identified;
- Funding identified but project to be identified.

The tool can be used to build a case for project implementation or fund raising according to an identified set of priorities. The Canals Strategy can form the strategic case for individual projects and provide the accountability to the wide variety of evidence base relevant to the whole canal corridor.

What can the Strategy do for you? (User Groups and applications)

Policy makers and decision makers

- guide the development of policies that contribute to the canals vision

Development management

- assist in the assessment of applications and in consideration of how they impact the canals

Landowners & developers

- provide direction in project selection and prioritisation

Consultant planners and designers

- offer a broad and multi-scale context for consideration in developing proposals

Community groups/Parish Councils/Neighbourhood Plan groups

- help to build a picture for how projects can fit into a wider strategy and offer support for appropriate projects

Volunteer groups

- target action to projects that contribute to a long term vision and provide policy support for funding applications

A fold out wall chart has been produced summarising the Canals Strategy and may be a useful reference tool in certain settings.



**Supporting Strategy Documents:**

**Evidence Base Review Summary document**

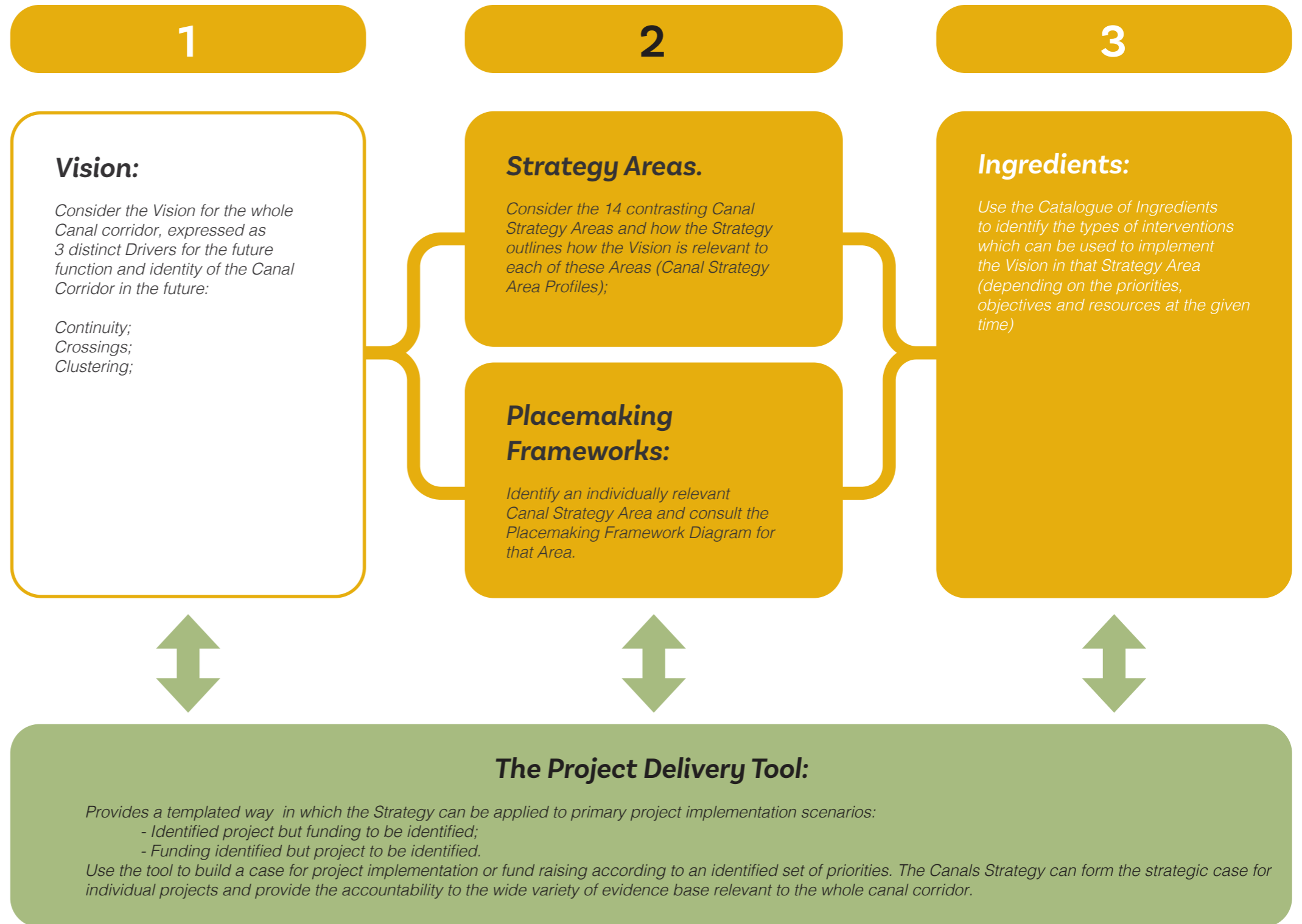
Evidence Summary Matrix  
Record of Stakeholder Clinics  
Record of Stakeholder Workshop  
Goals and Obstacles long & Short Lists  
Development of the Future Drivers

**Canals Strategy Wallchart**

Drivers (A Vision for the function and Identity of the whole canal corridor)  
Canal Strategy Areas, profiles and indicative ingredients  
Catalogue of ingredients with descriptions

**Piloting the Canals Strategy at Wallbridge**

**Summary of online public survey**



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

## Action Plan

A means of managing the process of using the Strategy to guide projects. This will identify the actions required to move from Strategy to delivery. The Canals Strategy includes a Project Delivery Process Tool which Stroud District Council can use to prepare and review an Action Plan for the Canals Strategy.

## Biodiversity

The variety of all life on earth. Biological Diversity is a description of everything that makes up the communities of living things, the ecosystems - forests, oceans, deserts and cities. Biodiversity is necessary to support natural process and to cope with change. Humans are not separate from ecological processes and so we need biodiversity to survive on the earth as well.

## Built form and public realm Typologies

Typologies are used to give a general impression of a design idea or solution. Typologies are used where it would be inappropriate or not possible to prepare a site specific design. Since the Canals Strategy spans the whole district the number of potential projects along the length of the canal could run to thousands. Typologies are a useful way of providing some detailed design guidance.

## Canal Strategy Areas

The Canals Strategy divides the whole canal corridor into 14 Canal Strategy Areas. This is so that more locally specific opportunities can be identified. The canals extend across the whole district and there are many contrasting characteristics. A single vision applied indiscriminately would risk damaging this diversity. The Canal Strategy Areas are a tool to applying the vision more locally.

## Canals Strategy Pilot

In parallel to the preparation of the Canals Strategy a pilot exercise was carried out. This was to test the use of the Strategy in a specific location. The Wallbridge area of Stroud was chosen to test the use of the Strategy since this was an area that Stroud District Council and Stroud Town Council have identified for transformation. The Canals Strategy could help in supporting proposals.

## Canal Restoration

The Strategy does not advocate any proposals either for or against physical restoration anywhere along the length of the canals in Stroud. However, those parties concerned with the restoration of physical canal infrastructure can use the Canals Strategy to represent the multi-faceted opportunities of any proposed restoration, environmental, economic and social.

## Canals Strategy Wallchart

The Canals Strategy has been summarised in a single sheet wall chart as a useful tool in the day to day use of the Canals Strategy. Whether the wallchart is used in a canalside site hut, or in the planning department the Strategy is intended to be used to inform forthcoming project proposals and designs.

## Carbon Footprinting

A description of the impact (measured in tonnes of carbon) made by an individual, organisation or activity. The Canals Strategy calculates the carbon footprint for each Canal Strategy Area in order to identify the relative carbon value of different interventions in the different Canal Strategy Areas.

## Carbon Reduction Opportunities

The Carbon Footprint of each Canal Strategy Area varies and the reasons for a particular carbon footprint can also vary. Some areas have bigger emissions from travel, others because of the consumption of goods and services. The carbon reduction opportunities can be realised by identifying projects which address these areas of high carbon emissions.

## Corridor

Refer to 'Whole Canal Corridor'.

## Drivers

Refer to 'Future Drivers'.

## Evidence Base

A body of information used as the basis of decisions and design proposals. This is often a recognised list of documents, technical studies and background information which is added to or updated periodically. In this case a list of evidence base relevant to the preparation of the Canals Strategy was provided by Stroud District Council at the outset of the commission.

## Evidence Base clinics

In order to understand a wide range of perspectives on the canals in Stroud several 30 minute appointments were made with individuals from a variety of different organisations. These clinics were facilitated by a short preparatory questionnaire and they were very helpful in highlighting the wealth of background information available regarding all aspects of the canal.

## The Future Place Toolkit

A tried and tested methodology for helping imagine, and plot a path towards a, vision of a place in the future. The Future Place Toolkit comprises three Tools (the Future Drivers, Identification of Future Districts (in this case the Canal Strategy Areas, and the Ingredients of the future place) which guide the design of places which are distinctive in their function and identity.

## Future Drivers

The Future Drivers are a tool used to articulate a vision for the canals in Stroud District. Three Future Drivers have been identified and they describe the function and identity of the canals in Stroud District in the future. They are 1.Continuity; 2.Crossings and; 3.Clustering. Together they provide a simple and easy to understand vision of the potential for the canals in Stroud in the future.

## Indicative Ingredient Phasing

The Canals Strategy includes an indicative list of Ingredients for each of the fourteen Canal Strategy Areas as a way of indicating some of the most appropriate ways that the vision may be implemented in each area. This exercise is important in identifying that a district wide strategy like The Canals Strategy cannot be implemented, comprehensively, all in one go.

## Ingredients of the Future Place

A list of design solutions for implementing the vision in each Canal Strategy Area. These solutions range from landscape and public realm measures to ideas for buildings, events and water related projects. They are not restricted to canal engineering or restoration projects and represent a wide range of environmental, social and economic interventions essential to the success of the whole area.

## Legibility

The ability to read, distinguish or anticipate the way forward. In towns and villages, legibility is used to describe how easy it is to find one's way around the place. Legibility can be influenced by the positioning and form of buildings, the design of streets and spaces. Legibility can also be improved by creating contrast such as landmarks, or memorable features.

### Parish workshops

Events designed to involve representatives from the nine Parish Councils along the canal corridor. The Canals Strategy proposed to survey the public about how they use and value the canal. The Parish Councils were asked to help in the design of the public survey. The Parish workshops and the public survey all had to be held online due to COVID19 restrictions in place at the time.

### Pilot

Refer to 'Canals Strategy Pilot'.

### Placemaking

The process of designing which includes the physical elements and the resulting feel and function of a place. Placemaking involves identifying what can strengthen communities and creating the conditions within which these things can happen. It often involves thinking about what's different from one place to another and why people prefer one place to another.

### Project Delivery Process Guide

An identification of a sequence of considerations which are necessary in the process of implementing the vision. The Project Delivery Process Guide allows for a variety of projects and funding opportunities to contribute to the overall vision in the Canals Strategy and it outlines how and when the different parts of the Strategy can be used to support various project processes.

### Public online survey

A tool for understanding how the public use and value the canal. The survey was structured as a quick fire series of themed questions each with an 'agree/disagree/neutral' responses available. The survey included recording the part of the canal people wanted to respond about and the survey analysis was therefore able to identify trends in the use of the canal in different areas.

### Social Value

The value to individuals or communities of experiences or changes which affect equality, wellbeing and environmental sustainability. In the Canals Strategy indicators of Social Value have been used to describe the Ingredients and identify how different ingredients have the ability to delivery different social value.

### Stakeholders

A group of people and organisations identified for having an interest in a project or process. In this case the list of Stakeholders was provided by Stroud District Council to the consultant team at the outset of the commission. It included statutory bodies, parish and community groups and some specialist organisations.

### Stakeholder workshops

Organised events designed to gain knowledge from interested parties. Activities often involve themed discussions and participants are encouraged to express their opinions. It is important that contrasting views are heard so that the full range of issues can be represented in any emerging design. In the case of the Canals Strategy the stakeholder workshop informed the Future Drivers.

### Statutory public consultation

A formal consultation held by the Council for documents which they want to adopt into the Local Plan. The Canals Strategy was published for public consultation between March and May 2022. The feedback received through the consultation has contributed to the amendment and improvement of the Strategy.

### Stroud District Local Plan

Guides the decisions about the future of towns, villages and the countryside. The Local Plan seeks to balance environmental, social and economic objectives relating to the future of the district and indicate the spatial implications of addressing these mixed objectives. A Local Plan should involve everyone who has an interest in the document.

### Stroudwater Navigation

The stretch of canal from the River Severn (at Upper Framilode) to Foundry Lock at Stroud is known as the Stroudwater Navigation although it is incomplete in some locations. SVCC owns or leases the Stroudwater Navigation from Whitminster Lock in the West through to just past Bourne Lock, Brimscombe in the East.

### Typologies

Refer to 'Built form and public realm Typologies'.

### Vision

A representation of the future of a place or process. A vision helps articulate the anticipation of that which is to come. The vision for the Canals Strategy is expressed through three Future Drivers. These Drivers articulate what can be anticipated in the function and identity of the canal. The Canals Strategy has been careful to create a vision which is unique and distinctive to the canals in Stroud.

### Wallchart

Refer to 'Canals Strategy Wallchart'.

### Wallbridge Pilot

Refer to 'Canals Strategy Pilot'.

### Whole Canal Corridor

An umbrella term used to described the canals and the strips of land alongside the canals through Stroud District. There was no defined width to this corridor and the work included exploring how much land around the canal should be included in the Canals Strategy. The term has been useful to describe all of the canals because some parts of the canal have different names.

# METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY:

## **Stroud Canals: Future Place**

The Stroud Canals Strategy has utilised the Future Place methodology to understand and inform the function and identity of the canals corridor throughout Stroud District. This methodology is developed from the Toolkit for Future Placemaking - part of the national Future Place programme (RIBA & partners) - a tried and tested method of visioning and strategic placemaking endorsed by RIBA, MHCLG, Homes England, Historic England, the RTPi and Local Partnerships.

Using the Future Place methodology has helped the Canals Strategy to identify unique and locally distinctive drivers to define an overarching vision for the whole canal corridor; this vision is aligned to a series of individual canal strategy areas - with reference to how the Drivers apply in each area; and goes on to establish a catalogue of ingredients to enable Stroud District Council to implement this vision.

The resulting Canals Strategy is based on an assessment of the ways in which the canal areas can fulfil their potential (socially, economically and environmentally) and identifies each part and the corridor's relationship with its surroundings.

The Future Place methodology brings together a series of top down/bottom up tools into a Toolkit for Future Placemaking, satisfying the need for locally derived, future focussed design. Many visions, strategies, design guides and reports have at their heart an attempt to universally improve design. They bring much needed general awareness of design process and basic principles to be applied everywhere, but few are able to be employed systemically or are suitable for use in the early stages of placemaking and plan formation. Neither do they provide the procedural means by which locally distinctive and place specific strategies can be achieved and remain intact from vision through to delivery.

The methodology used in developing the Stroud District Canals Strategy is built upon four stages of the Future Place methodology which have a successful track record of application in a variety of situations and scales.

In summary the Strategy is structured as follows:

### **1. Vision**

The Strategy identifies a series of Drivers for Change which describe the combination of aspirations for the canal corridor as a whole in the future;

### **2. Canal Strategy Areas**

The Strategy has defined fourteen contrasting areas and the way in which the vision applies differently in each of these areas;

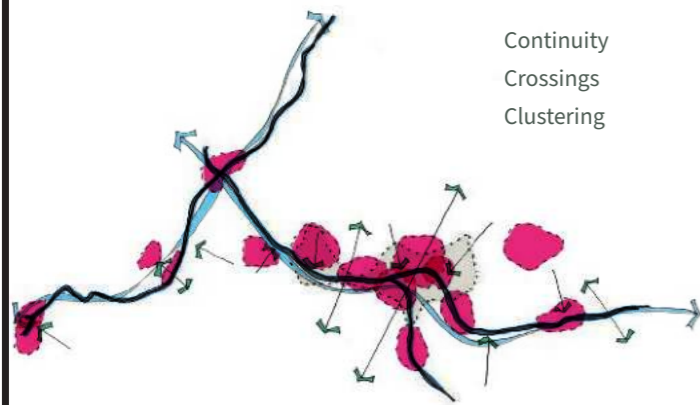
### **3. Ingredients**

The Strategy provides a series of detail design tools for implementing the vision in each Strategy Area and allows for the varied application of these to reflect changing priorities over time and changing opportunities at a local level due to a variety of circumstances;

### **4. Piloting**

In addition to the above structure to the Strategy, a pilot exercise has been carried out in the Wallbridge area of Stroud, to test the credibility and usability of the various aspects of the Strategy, and also to demonstrate the use of the Strategy to help guide future application of the Strategy in other areas.

**1** *Tool 1:  
Drivers for Change*



Continuity  
Crossings  
Clustering

The Drivers for Change establish a thematic characterisation & build a vision of the future place. They ensure placemaking is implemented in a locally distinctive way.

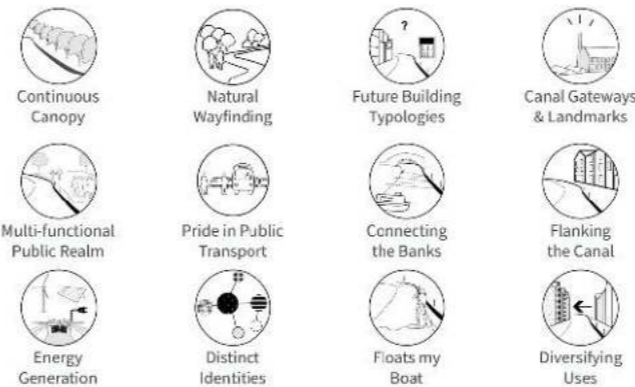
**2** *Tool 2:  
One Place, Many Parts*



Define Strategy Areas    Area Profiles    Placemaking Frameworks

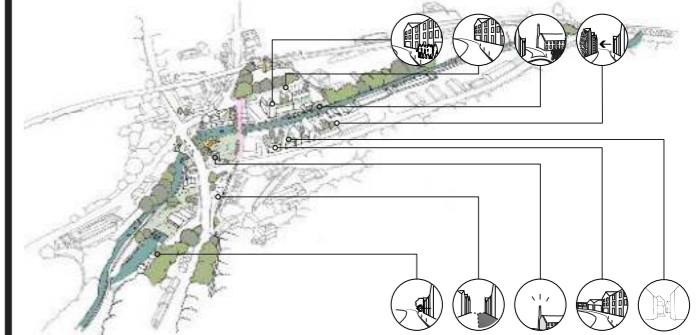
A tool for recognising the opportunity for contrasting areas of the corridor to play their individual role in the overall distinctiveness and performance of the corridor.

**3** *Tool 3:  
Ingredients of the Future Place*



A pick and mix of project typologies which enable the implementation of the Vision in each Strategy Area.

**4** *Tool 4:  
Pilot Application*



The use of the Canals Vision & Strategy has been piloted in the Wallbridge area in order to demonstrate its application. This exercise has fed back into the refinement of the Strategy and how it is applied.

a **TOOLKIT**  
for **FUTURE**  
**PLACEMAKING**



## Drivers of Change

The Future Place methodology identifies a series of Drivers of Change unique to each place: a series of themes which frame the projection of a vision of the canals in Stroud District in the future born out of the canals' distinctive identity and function. These are multi faceted, reflecting climate & ecological emergency and seek to address these global challenges in a variety of ways.

## Canal Strategy Areas

The Stroud District canal corridor does not exist in isolation and very few people will regularly experience it as a single entity. The preparation of a whole corridor vision must acknowledge that people and wildlife interact in occasional ways and with portions of the corridor, there is also interdependence between the various component parts which create an interconnected system (reaching beyond Stroud District) and the lives and ecosystems of the place as a whole.

For this reason the whole canal corridor stretching from Sapperton in the east to Saul Junction in the west and the north and south limits of the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal has been studied carefully to develop an understanding of the different contrasting sections of the corridor.

As places transition to a net-zero-carbon future, the neighbourhoods and districts which people identify with, and function within, will adapt as will the ecological systems around them. The Future Place

methodology facilitates an understanding of how different areas of the canal corridor are influenced by the pressures exerted by this transitioning. The drivers of change provide a bench mark of the future place identity against which each area's role in this future can be established. Applying this methodology helps equip each component part to play its unique role in the overall function and identity of the corridor.

Alongside the evidence base review GIS dataset analysis was carried out to determine a comprehensive and thematic mapping of canal system conditions, both on the ground, in planning terms and with reference to the community and social make up.

A client and consultant collective understanding of multi-functioning systems and the general conditions which many district wide systems such as the canal system experience and how they are influenced from the bottom up by grass roots interventions and the top down by overarching policy and strategic direction helped ensure this mapping exercise was thorough.

A broad understanding of the systems's overall function, morphology, landscape and key characteristics as well as the social and economic profiling of communities along the length of the canal using existing sources of data and interpretation of these (eg. ONS data, Glos JSNA) was established.

Initial hypotheses were formed through the

early stages of the work regarding the future distinctiveness and function of different areas of the canal corridor which later became the basis for more directed enquiry with wider stakeholders.

While reported on as a linear work process, effective integration of existing workstreams and testing of Future Place emerging thinking has in reality come about through an iterative process of hypothesising and counter-evidencing. The richness of understanding gained through early analysis and other activities has contributed to all aspects of the Canals Strategy including the 'Identification of Drivers', the formation of an understanding of 'Canal Strategy Areas' and the design of the catalogue of 'Ingredients of the Future Place'.

The team also undertook an immersive site visit walking and cycling the full length of the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, The Stroud Navigation and the Thames & Severn Canal.

This 'Walking the Bank' exercise coordinated with a series of meetings with key members of the client group along the route, coinciding with key sites, issues and features of concern to different parties.

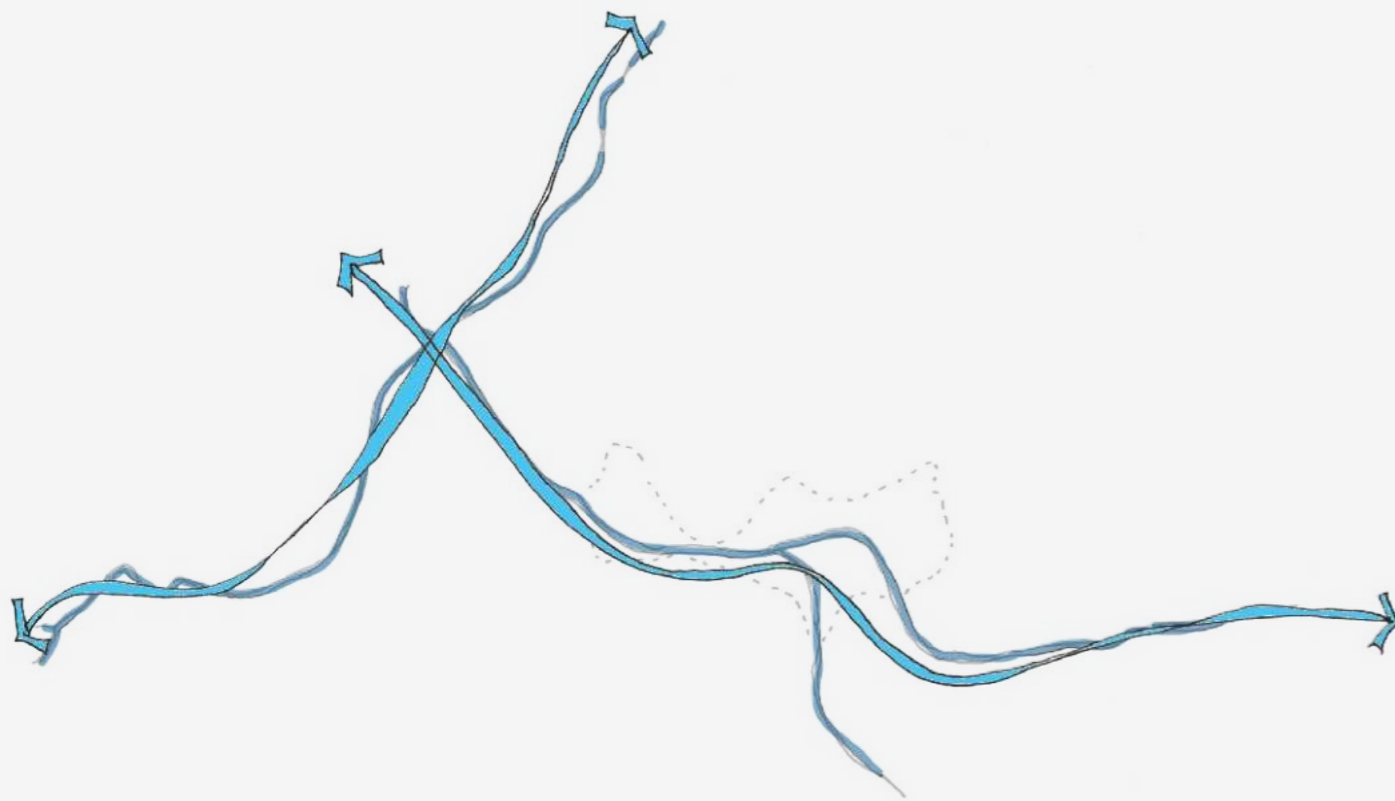
A film record of the 'Walking the Bank' site visit was compiled and the film record has served as a tool as well as an output for a variety of purposes throughout the preparation of the Canals Strategy.

## Defining a Vision for the future of the canals in Stroud District

Three Future Drivers were derived by distilling the review of evidence base, weighing the wealth of information received throughout the engagement process and reflecting on site and professional observations of the place: environmental, social and economic. A more comprehensive record of this process can be found in the Evidence Base Summary document supporting the Strategy:

### 1. CONTINUITY. Key Features:

- A linear connection from east to west as a foundation for function across the district.
- Connecting communities and social groups.
- A diverse and varied condition balancing heritage/industry with nature/wildlife in a fluctuating relationship.
- A layering of journeys: different purposes, distances, means of transport, destinations.
- Potential for overarching policy continuity (planning/ local plan) akin to a town or settlement policy with coherent governance and branding.

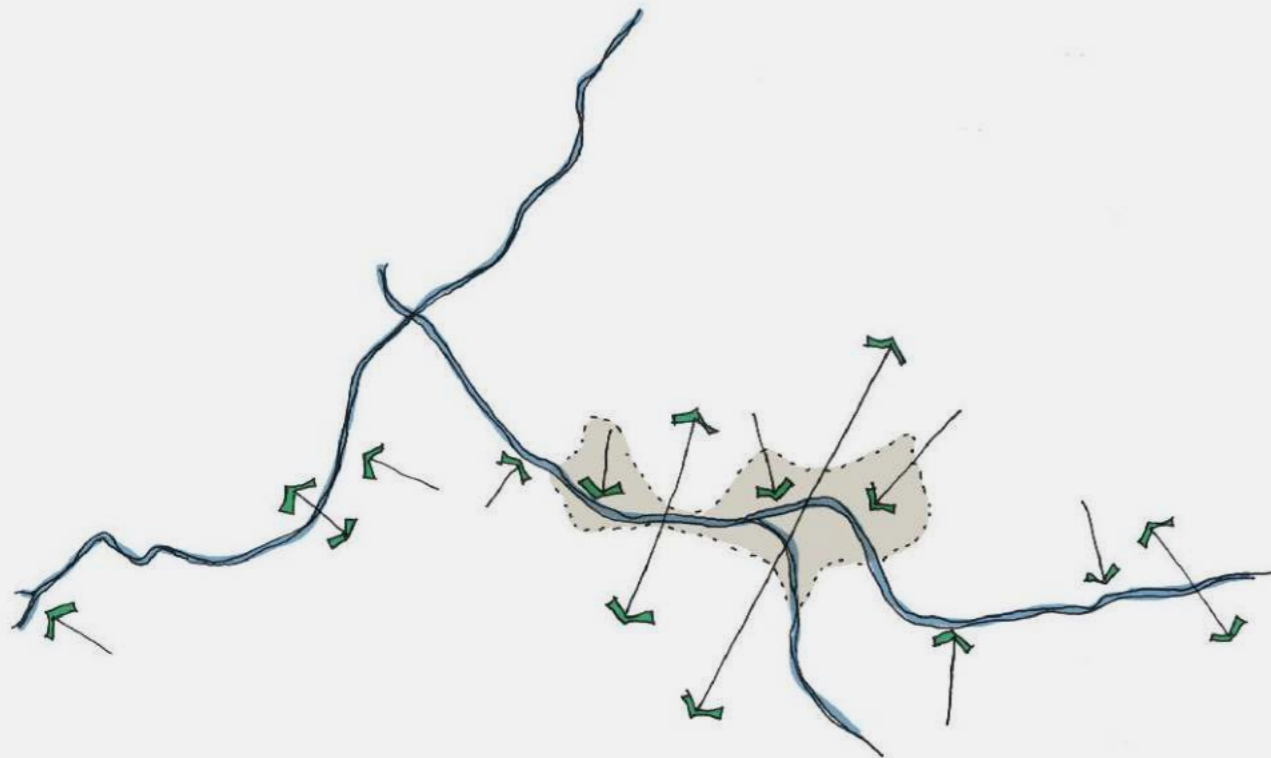


### 7 related Emerging Themes:

- a Dispersed Clusters - Mills, settlements joined by river and canal**
- b Settlement Hierarchy: sustainable locations and targeted growth/improvement**
- c Localising as a way of decarbonising**
- d Continuity & Contrast, mixed personalities of the canal**
- e Canal as a cross cutting catalyst**
- f Local distinctiveness: Parish Clusters**
- g Topography of the District but the flat bottom of the valley**
- h Reconnecting (E-W): Thames to Severn; social groups/district**
- i Connecting (N-S): town/canal relationship**
- j Heritage: industrial 'back corridor' vs fronting and rediscovering recreation**
- k Living Heritage but assets at risk**
- l Engineering restoration and nature restoration**
- m Jobs, lifestyle & innovation; social well being; contrasting use of the canal**
- n Diversity & uniqueness; culture & arts**
- o Tourism and community pride**

## 2. CROSSINGS. Key Features:

- Connecting to and across the canal, the valley and other barriers is essential to making the canal inclusive and accessible.
- Connection east to west does not address all issues.
- With strong connections to the canal all communities and settlements can benefit fully from the canal as a catalyst for future growth.
- These connections maximise the potential of the east to west continuity and the clusters along the canal.



## 8 related Emerging Themes:

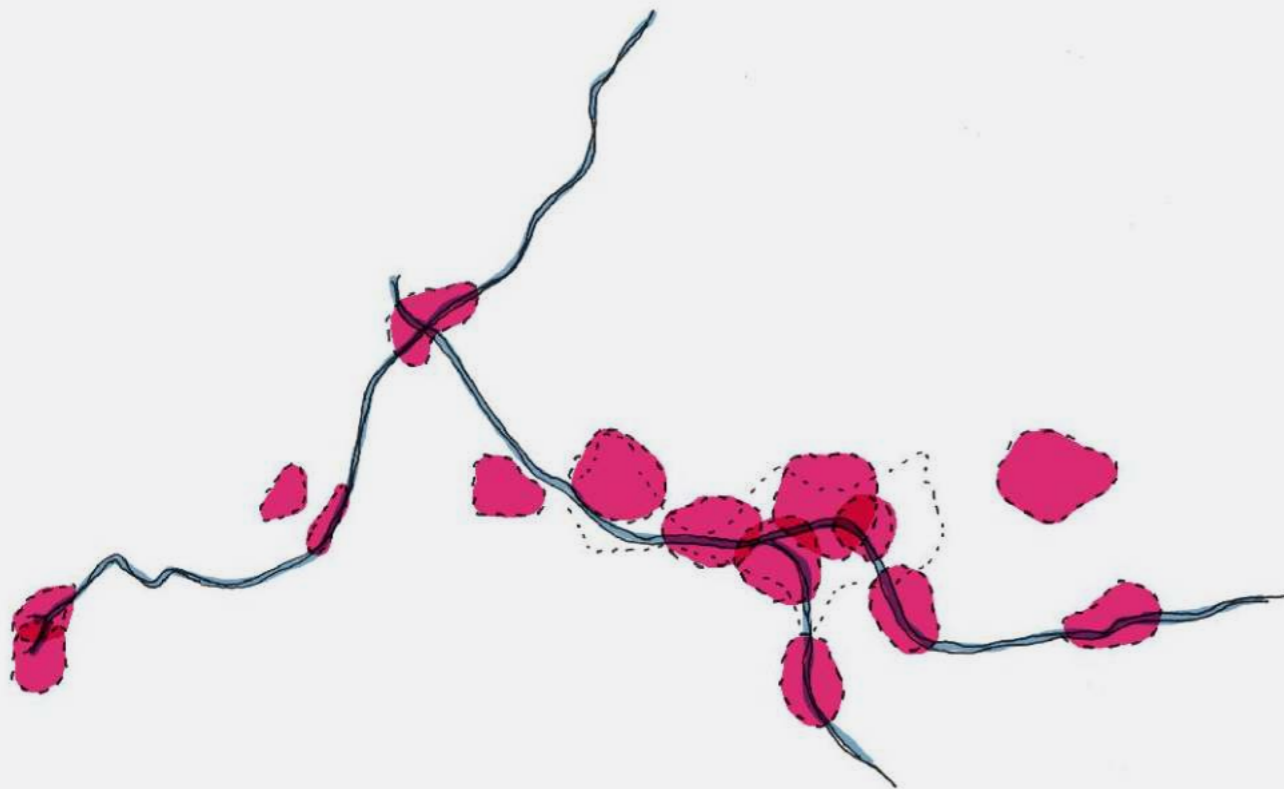
- a Dispersed Clusters - Mills, settlements joined by river and canal
- b Settlement Hierarchy: sustainable locations and targeted growth/improvement
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- d Continuity & Contrast, mixed personalities of the canal
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- m Jobs, lifestyle & innovation; social well being; contrasting use of the canal**
- n Diversity & uniqueness; culture & arts**
- o Tourism and community pride**



### 3. CLUSTERING. Key Features:

Layered spheres of influences of different functions and concerns:

- Historic
- Economic
- Community
- Natural habitats and wildlife
- Intersections/Access Nodes
- Built Form
- Frontages vs Backlands
- Topography



### 11 related Emerging Themes:

- a Dispersed Clusters - Mills, settlements joined by river and canal**
- b Settlement Hierarchy: sustainable locations and targeted growth/improvement**
- c Localising as a way of decarbonising**
- d Continuity & Contrast, mixed personalities of the canal**
- e Canal as a cross cutting catalyst
- f Local distinctiveness: Parish Clusters**
- g Topography of the District but the flat bottom of the valley
- h Reconnecting (E-W): Thames to Severn; social groups/district
- i Connecting (N-S): town/canal relationship
- j Heritage: industrial 'back corridor' vs fronting and rediscovering recreation**
- k Living Heritage but assets at risk**
- l Engineering restoration and nature restoration**
- m Jobs, lifestyle & innovation; social well being; contrasting use of the canal**
- n Diversity & uniqueness; culture & arts**
- o Tourism and community pride**

## Understanding the Canal Strategy Areas

A thorough analysis of the surroundings and context of the canal has been carried out with the following layers contributing to an understanding of the Canal Strategy Areas:

- Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Character Areas
- Conservation areas
- Stroud District Council Local Plan Parish Clusters
- Parish Areas
- Neighbourhood Plan areas: Hardwicke, Stroud, Stonehouse, Eastington, Slimbridge, Brimscombe & Thrupp, Chalford, Minchinhampton.
- Functional walking and cycling catchment analysis
- Accessible local centres
- Public transport hubs, buses and train stations
- Strategic local plan allocations and contribution to sense of place
- Spatial visions for Stroud district from Local Plan 2015 and review
- Settlement hierarchy and retail centres

In addition to compiling these mapping layers, analysis of the District also reflects the input of many participants and stakeholders throughout the Evidence Base review stage of the work. Many of the reference documents reviewed as part of the evidence base review (and highlighted through the clinics and stakeholder workshop) yielded important spatial, demographic, economic and environmental information which has informed the understanding of the Canal Strategy Areas.

These areas are defined primarily for the purpose of the Canals Strategy and while they reflect some of the other structural ways of understanding the District (eg. Local Plan policy areas, or geographic designations) they are a hybrid of many influences on the canal's function and identity.

Overtime, individual communities and/or authorities may wish to describe a, or some, Canal Strategy Areas differently based on additional emerging evidence. The Canals Strategy provides the flexibility to consider the changing futures of neighbourhoods and communities and the methodology described here can be revisited to describe the Canal Strategy Areas in a different way and then to identify how the Vision is expressed within each alternative area.

The Canal Strategy Areas are simply a tool to be able to apply the whole corridor vision in a more localised way which has more meaning to local communities and individuals involved in thinking about how the canals function in their local area.

A single blanket vision for the whole canal corridor which does not take account of the many contrasting conditions along its length would fail as a strategy in its ability to influence the future of the canal near to each town and community or as it changes through the different landscapes across the District.

Once analysis work had progressed to be able to identify a series of contrasting areas along the canal corridor (see page 19: Emerging Canal Strategy Areas), these draft areas were considered in discussion with the client groups to determine a practical list of Canal Strategy Areas which reflected the layers of analysis but which also served a practical tool for the ongoing application of the Vision and identification of implementation opportunities. This refinement process resulted in the Canal Strategy Areas shown on page 20.

The layering of District analysis:

*Historic landscape and settlement analysis including heritage and conservation area appreciation*

*Administrative boundaries*

*Functional walking and cycling catchments, public transport hubs and accessibility and local centre accessibility*

*Planning policy influences, County, District and Neighbourhood Plan,*

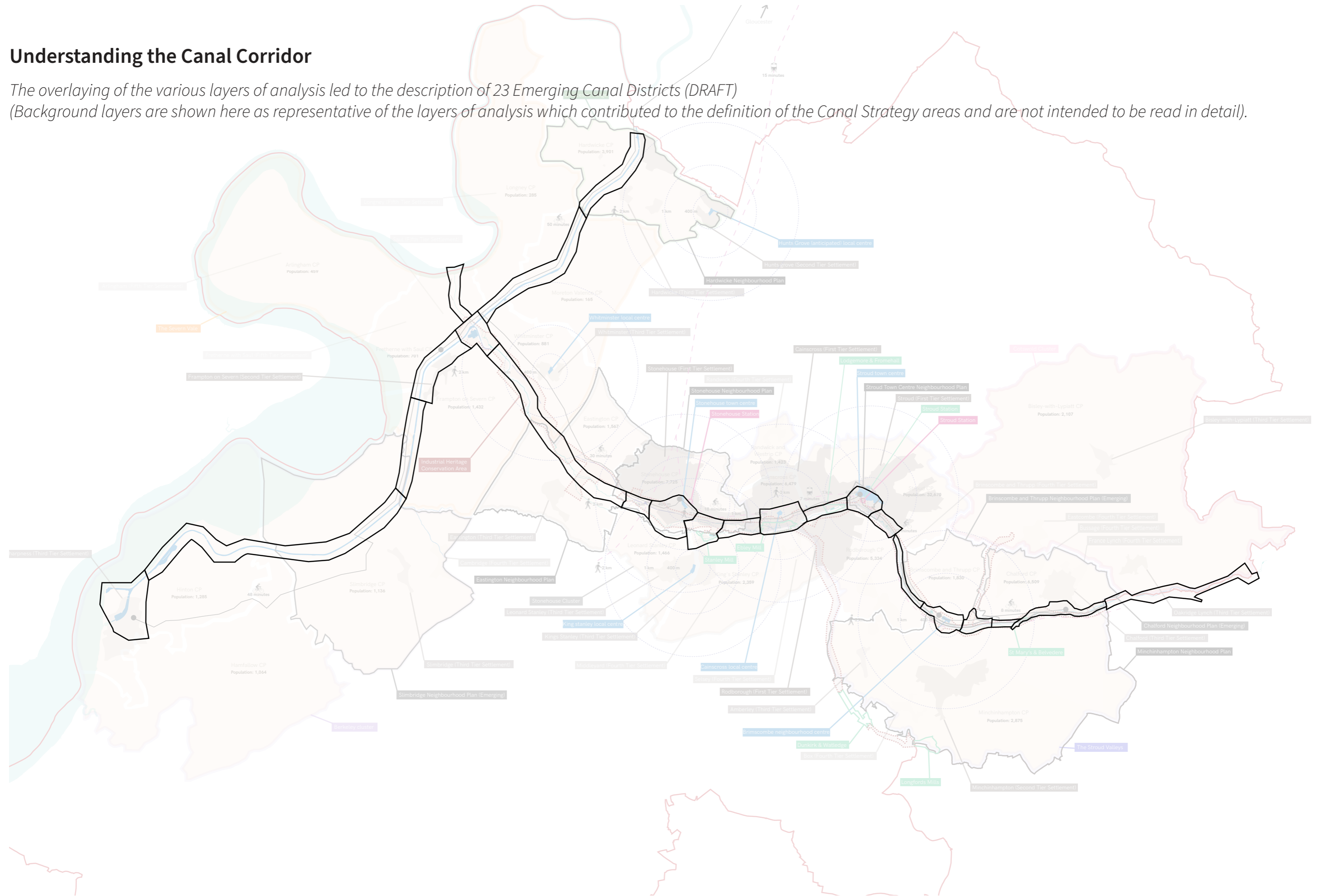
*Settlement hierarchy and distribution of centres*



## Understanding the Canal Corridor

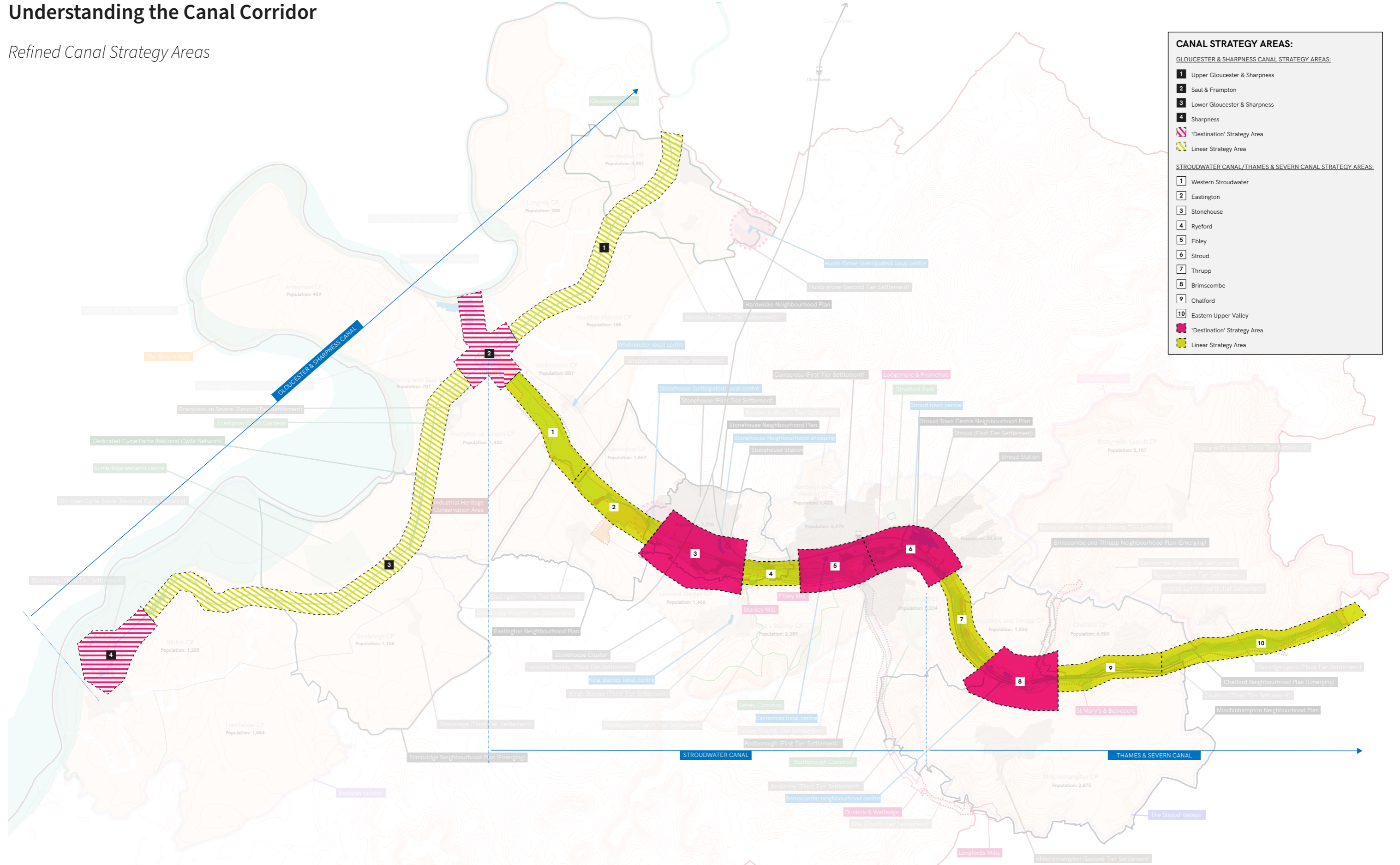
The overlaying of the various layers of analysis led to the description of 23 Emerging Canal Districts (DRAFT)

(Background layers are shown here as representative of the layers of analysis which contributed to the definition of the Canal Strategy areas and are not intended to be read in detail).



# Understanding the Canal Corridor

## Refined Canal Strategy Areas



**CANAL STRATEGY AREAS:**

**GLoucester & SHARPNESS CANAL STRATEGY AREAS:**

- 1 Upper Gloucester & Sharpness
- 2 Saul & Frampton
- 3 Lower Gloucester & Sharpness
- 4 Sharpness
- 5 'Destination' Strategy Area
- 6 Linear Strategy Area

**STROUDWATER CANAL / THAMES & SEVERN CANAL STRATEGY AREAS:**

- 1 Western Stroudwater
- 2 Eastington
- 3 Stonehouse
- 4 Ryeford
- 5 Ebley
- 6 Stroud
- 7 Thrupp
- 8 Brimscombe
- 9 Chalford
- 10 Eastern Upper Valley
- 11 'Destination' Strategy Area
- 12 Linear Strategy Area

## Profiling the Canal Strategy Areas

The Canals Strategy aims to identify how an overarching vision (The Three Future Drivers) for the whole canal corridor can be applied more locally to individual locations along the corridor (the Canal Strategy Areas).

In creating a 'vision profile' for each of the Canal Strategy Areas a vision of the canal's role in each place in the future has been established.

A set of criteria was created for each of the Three Future Drivers which considered how each Future Driver might be manifested. This created a 1 - 10 scale for potential performance against each of the three Future Drivers.

Using the profiling criteria each Strategy Area was scored against the Future Drivers. This process acknowledges 2 important aims of the Canals Strategy:

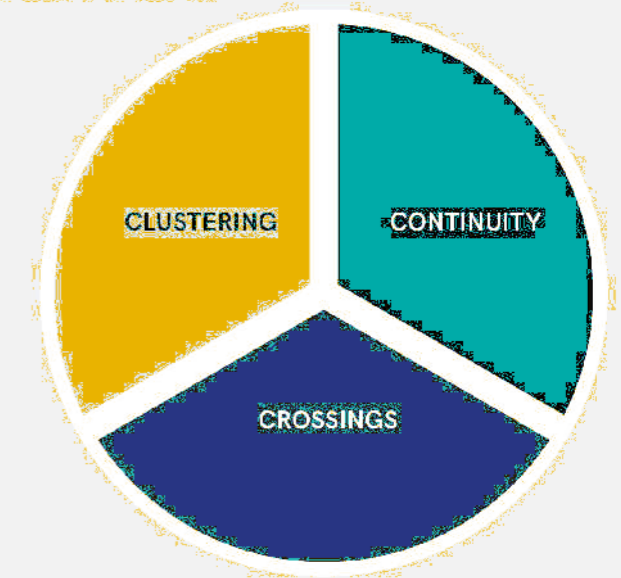
- To identify the future potential of the canal in each location along the corridor and;
- That not every district contributes to the vision in the same way.

In creating a profile of the vision for each place along the canal a generic or meaningless vision is avoided. A single universal vision is difficult to apply or recognise at a local and site level making the delivery of a vision difficult. Instead by identifying the Strategy Areas and profiling the vision for each of these the Strategy establishes the means by which the vision can be implemented and

coordinated along the whole corridor.

The whole canal corridor functions as a body of many parts. The vision profiles established for each of the Canal Strategy Areas recognise the individual way in which each area is best able to contribute to the future vision for the whole canal corridor. Each area will contribute in a unique way to the overall function and identity of the whole canal corridor by fulfilling its own individual potential. The profile established for each area provides the basis for identifying the design priorities and placemaking objectives in each area and forming the basis of delivering the vision in that location.

## CANAL STRATEGY AREAS PROFILING:



## CANAL STRATEGY AREAS:

### GLoucester & SHARPNESS CANAL STRATEGY AREAS:

- 1 Upper Gloucester & Sharpness
- 2 Saul & Frampton
- 3 Lower Gloucester & Sharpness
- 4 Sharpness
-  'Destination' Strategy Area
-  Linear Strategy Area

### STROUDWATER NAVIGATION/ THAMES & SEVERN CANAL STRATEGY AREAS:

- 1 Western Stroudwater
- 2 Eastington
- 3 Stonehouse
- 4 Ryeford
- 5 Ebley
- 6 Stroud
- 7 Thrupp
- 8 Brimscombe
- 9 Chalford
- 10 Eastern Upper Valley
-  'Destination' Strategy Area
-  Linear Strategy Area

## PROFILING CRITERIA

## CONTINUITY

10

The canal is first choice for travel & recreation and a relied upon ecological and engineering resource. It comprises the highest quality, traffic free, designated routes, interlinked habitats and water and energy systems. Now a significant and attractive desire line, activity gravitates to locations within easy reach of the canal. These places are favoured for their connectedness and variety of function.

9

There is good opportunity for travel & recreation along the canal and it offers some ecological and engineering resource. It comprises good shared paths, unique habitats and coordinated historical storytelling. The canal is a significant desire line between locations which are within easy reach of the canal. These places and communities are thriving due to their connectedness and variety of function.

8

Signposting compliments the legibility of buildings/structures and spaces and serves various purposes including travel and recreation. There is localised use of the canal for ecological and engineering purposes. Certain key destinations and communities are connected by the canal and these locations have direct access to the canal. For other wider connections there is a reliance on other modes and routes.

7

Signposting and waymarking to and along the canal helps legibility, mainly serving travel and recreation. There is localised use of the canal for ecological and engineering purposes. Certain key destinations are connected by the canal and these locations have direct access to the canal. For other wider connections other modes and routes are more favourable.

6

Integrated recreational and ecological function provides a rich experience for users of the canal at key locations where the canal functions as a linear park. This multifaceted role facilitates social engagement between communities. There is some direct access to the canal within these areas and to individual destinations when accessed by water, but wider connections are mostly by other modes and routes.

5

Various recreational and ecological functions provide individual experiences for users of the canal at key locations along the canal. There is some direct access to the canal within these areas and to individual destinations when accessed by water, but wider connections are mostly by other modes and routes. The use of the canal for travel conflicts in some cases with its other ecological and engineering functions.

4

Key destinations, pockets of activity and key access points to the canal have become connected by a variety of means (cycle and pedestrian routes/mixed recreation/programmes of activity) and function well together and enabling links between communities to develop. Wider connectivity other than by water for uses alongside the canal is not perceived as possible along the canal corridor.

3

Key destinations, pockets of activity and key access points to the canal have become connected and function well together and this compliments existing links between communities. The canal is not the means by which wider links and associations between places are established and in some cases it frustrates corridor continuity.

2

Use of the canal is localised and generally for single specific purposes (e.g. recreation only). The canal allows for good ecological continuity but access for recreation or travel compromises this. Where the canal provides any greater ecological or engineering resource this interrupts the continuity for other purposes such as travel or recreation.

1

Use of the canal is very localised and limited to single specific uses (e.g. recreation only). The canal is not the most effective connection to adjacent areas and access to the wider corridor is not direct and requires the use of different modes and routes than just the canal. The canal does not contribute to biodiversity and/or water and energy management.

## CROSSINGS

The canal corridor is accessible and used by people from across the district for a variety of reasons and provision of services. Communities and centres of activity are single entities which bridge the canal making connections physically, economically and socially. Unimpeded movement across and along the corridor have allowed the district as a whole to thrive, ecologically, economically and socially.

The canal corridor is accessible and has an influence beyond its immediate banks. By connecting activity across its banks with a combination of bridges and other crossings the canal has brought communities together. A network of connections to the canal corridor coupled with movement along the corridor have helped link locations across the district with activity within the corridor.

A variety of vehicular, pedestrian and cycle, and green infrastructure crossings, are spread along the corridor, corresponding to activity located either side of the canal, the river and the railway. Use of, and activity along, the canal is encouraged by the regular use of crossings. Community's and business's sustainability and biodiversity and ecological networks are improved for being connected to the wider district.

Preferred vehicular, pedestrian and cycle crossings, are located at key settlement locations along the corridor and correspond to and join activity located either side of the canal, the river and the railway. More localised crossings are dedicated ecological and historic canal crossings. Both groups of crossings are limited in their ability to connect outlying areas of the district.

The variety of canal crossings are located mainly at key settlement locations along the corridor. Although these major north-south thoroughfares bypass activity located at the canal/within the corridor, a series of more local crossings, some dedicated pedestrian and cycle crossings provide alternative (but less legible) ways to link north-south. These include dedicated ecological and historic crossings.

A series of primarily vehicular canal crossings are located at key settlement locations along the corridor. These crossings correspond to major north-south thoroughfares and bypass activity located at the canal, or within the corridor. There are few crossings locally, apart from those located in the nearby settlements.

In serving an isolated building/group of buildings, canal crossings catalyse movement to the canal corridor for the public and communities in the wider district. Bridging the canal reduces the perception that rail, river and topography cause a barrier.

Canal crossings serve an isolated building/group of buildings. Most of these are not publicly accessible. In some situations crossings bridge activity either side of the canal but any wider north-south connections are prevented by rail and/or river and topographical constraints.

Stretches of canal extending further than walking distance (400m) have minimal crossings. The need to travel to nearby settlements to cross the canal means activity and communities either side are only linked indirectly. However, due to tree cover and the nature of the canal banks, ecological links and green infrastructure north-south is in tact.

Stretches of canal extending further than walking or cycling distance (800m) are without any crossings. The lack of crossings and additional barriers like the river and railway mean activity and communities either side are divided and have independent economic and social function. The nature of the canal in this location also means that north-south ecological links and green infrastructure are interrupted.

## CLUSTERING

The canal is the heart of the place, stimulating a rich mix of uses and natural habitats, uniting employment and living space, creating walkable, vibrant neighbourhoods uniquely canal focussed as a resource for movement, recreation, community and nature. Buildings and spaces incorporate the canal within their typology embracing it as a catalyst for easily accessible diverse and thriving places. It's obvious when you have arrived and when you are leaving the place.

The canal is located at the heart of the place linking a variety of uses. Buildings and spaces incorporate the canal within their typology. It is obvious when you have arrived and when you are leaving the place. The recipe of the canal and the surrounding buildings and spaces create a distinctive sense of place which is easily accessed as a destination and a focal point for the community.

The canal is an integrated part of the place and easily accessible. It is the reason for a lot of the activity that occurs here but this tends to be for a single specific reason (e.g. tourism, recreation or housing). Planned-for development is pro-active by integrating the canal for a variety of purposes and built form and open spaces respond positively to the canal including natural habitat creation and enhancement.

The canal contributes to the function of the place by linking uses locally. Some of the activity that occurs here is canal focussed but there is limited mix of uses. Planned-for development utilises the canal primarily for recreation or movement. There are specific access points to the canal which have good landmarks. There are distinct areas of natural habitat creation and enhancement.

Occasional pockets of localised activity have given rise to this location becoming a destination or a community focus. A single building, open space or engineering feature acts as a landmark along the canal and within nearby areas. Although separate from other built form/settlement centres locally, this location serves a purpose through its links to the nearby settlement.

A few pockets of localised activity are the focus for the local community and include natural habitat creation and enhancement. A single building, open space or engineering feature acts as a landmark along the canal and within nearby areas. This location serves a purpose on the canal but is remote from other built form/settlement centres locally.

The grouping of buildings and/or spaces at the canal gives rise to localised areas of single use. These can vary from employment clusters, concentrations of houses, to areas of particular natural interest. In some cases a focus of activity is due to features/engineering of the canal itself, such as a lock or mooring location.

The grouping of buildings and/or spaces at the canal gives rise to localised areas of single use. These can vary from employment clusters, concentrations of houses, to areas of particular natural interest. In some cases a focus of activity is due to features/engineering of the canal itself, such as a lock or mooring location.

A mix of canal specific activity (e.g. boating or wildlife interest) occur due to individual buildings or spaces and limited to single use/types of activity. These areas serve a local need but are passed by in favour of larger more attractive destinations. Longer journeys required between different uses (e.g. home/work or work/recreation) are a result of separation between localised pockets of activity. The canal is less able to serve these longer journeys.

A single canal specific activity occurs on or near the canal which primarily exists as a location en-route to larger more attractive destinations. Access to the canal at these localised pockets of activity is only for specific reasons.

### **Preparation of Placemaking Frameworks for each Canal Strategy Area**

For each of the Canal Strategy Areas a high level Placemaking Framework has been prepared which highlights the opportunities to apply the Canals Strategy, at a local level according to the fourteen Canal Strategy Areas and to realise the future vision for each location and in turn the whole corridor as a composite of many individual Canal Strategy Areas.

This work provides the bridge between the whole corridor vision and site implementation by setting in context the expectations of individual sites within their Canal Strategy Area.

Each high level framework diagram comprises a variety of opportunities observed for each Strategy Area: urban design, landscape and architectural components such as gateways, open space function, movement, landmarks, ecological structure, interfaces, canal features, heritage value. How the role and identity defined for each future canal district is realised has been clearly outlined for each Canal Strategy Area. The resolution of framework diagrams varies from area to area. Opportunities differ from relatively small/simple interventions through to major regeneration/macro landscape opportunities and links to wider developments, either new or retrofit and regeneration interventions.

The opportunities do not include the level of detail for comprehensive proposals, for example the detailed application of cycling and walking provision, but bring awareness to those design aspects where appropriate, to consider for future

delivery.

Where the Local Plan already indicates masterplans or area frameworks which affect the realisation of future canal districts, district framework diagrams account for change already underway. Where the delivery of these policies can still be directed to contribute to the whole corridor vision and strategy and the realisation of the role and identity of each of the Canal Strategy Areas then the framework diagram seeks to coordinate existing policy direction and future placemaking guidance.

### **Ingredients of the Future Place**

The Canals Strategy includes a catalogue of more specific ingredients of the future place which provide built form, public realm and landscape typologies for implementing the vision in each strategy area. These ingredients are proposed to be used in accordance with the drivers of change - their selection as design typologies for any given site is justified on the grounds of the contribution they make to realising the reframed vision of the Future Place. A series of Placemaking Frameworks assist in identifying the spatial priorities in each strategy area.

Once a broad understanding of the whole canal corridor and the potential of each canal area had been established and mapped using the placemaking frameworks the process of identifying the range of ingredients began.

In order to identify ingredients which are suitable for shaping the future of the canal corridor reference is made back to the three Future Drivers to focus on more specific design solutions which can support: 1. The Continuity of the canal corridor; 2. Crossings linking either side of the canal corridor; and 3. The Clustering of activity in its various forms.

In focusing on the Future Drivers and the underlying origin of these in the evidence base the identification of ingredients concentrated on design solutions and innovations which were distinctive to the canal corridor in Stroud rather than recycling generic urban design and placemaking principles. This material published elsewhere can still provide a valuable design tool alongside the Ingredients.



The catalogue of ingredients does not seek to replace, or replicate, other more standard or generic design guidance and best practice in canal restoration or broader landscape and urban design guidance. Rather it complements other Development Management tools by augmenting their capacity to promote and deliver the whole corridor vision. Neither is the catalogue solely for Development Management use. The ingredients offer an accessible way for a variety of parties to express the vision for the whole canal corridor at a site scale. Following the selection of suitable Ingredients there may be the need to consult other technical guidance and use this alongside the Ingredients descriptions to refine solutions and ensure their compliance to more specific technical guidance and regulation.

The catalogue structure was explored with the client group and themed according to project type (movement, urban form, uses & activity, infrastructure & utilities, green infrastructure & biodiversity, events, programmes) but also reflects an in depth project search exercise as part of the evidence base review process. The catalogue structure has also therefore been informed by a variety of attributes of initiatives and potential design solutions described within various documents within the evidence base such as: landscape character, location, settlement relationship, Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan project categories etc.

Initially a longlist of future place ingredients was created, at first referencing many of the documents within the evidence which promoted positive

interventions within, or associated with the canal corridor, and secondly using the breadth of urban design, architectural and landscape architectural design expertise within the consultant team in response to the constraints and opportunities identified within each of the Placemaking Frameworks for each of the Canal Strategy Areas.

The variety of engagement activity and the site visit also contributed to this creative process of designing a variety of interventions which were necessary as solutions to the identified constraints and opportunities.

A workshop was held with the client group and key stakeholders to review the long list and consider the structure of the catalogue and following this each short listed ingredient was refined and finalised.

#### **Evidence Base Review**

*The Evidence Base has informed the diversity of the Ingredients, reflecting the wide variety of opportunity and mixed priorities for environmental, social and economic interventions along the whole canal corridor.*

#### **Vision:**

*The Vision identifies three overarching Drivers distinct to the canal corridor in Stroud. The Ingredients have been developed in order to implement these three drivers and they represent the many contrasting ways that this may be achieved throughout the canal corridor.*

#### **Canal Strategy Areas.**

*A description of the contrasting condition and context along the canal corridor. The Canal Strategy Areas are the basis for a local expression of the vision and structure the selection of the Ingredients according to the potential of each area.*

#### **Placemaking Frameworks:**

*An identification of the placemaking opportunities in each Strategy Area and a bridge between the Vision and the Ingredients*

#### **Catalogue of Ingredients:**

*The Catalogue of Ingredients is a series of typological design approaches to the built environment, public realm and the landscape.*

*The Canals Strategy does not have a role in designing individual detailed solutions for the many contrasting locations along the whole canal corridor. The Ingredients are the means by which the Strategy can influence subsequent proposals, detailed design solutions, varying opportunities and priorities at a level of detail suitable to a district scale strategy. The intention is to coordinate the implementation of the vision by guiding individual proposals in a thematic way. In turn the wider objectives represented in the evidence base are attended to.*

*The Ingredients have been prepared in an iterative way, drawing upon the evidence base, stakeholder input, site visits, engagement and consultation as well as professional design input and creativity.*

# SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION:

The preparation of the Canals Strategy has been supported by a wide range of engagement activity.

## Evidence Base clinics

Prior to the site visit 'Walking the Bank', a pro-forma was issued to a list of key officers and contributors (identified with the Stroud District Council at inception). The pro-forma comprised some basic questions about existing workstreams/projects, relevant information and datasets and the potential of the canal system to perform within or influence each individual's area of expertise. The pro-forma was completed in preparation for individual knowledge gathering clinics/conversations. An invite was sent to a comprehensive list of Stakeholders and interested parties as approved by the client group and a series of 30 minute conversations were organised. Although some invitees were unable to attend (including some key statutory bodies) a large number of completed pro-formas were received and representatives from the following organisations were interviewed:

[Active Gloucestershire](#)  
[Barnwood Trust](#)  
[Canal and River Trust](#)  
[Cotswold Canal Trust](#)  
[Eastington Parish Council](#)  
[GFirst LEP](#)  
[Gloucestershire Archaeology](#)  
[Gloucestershire County Council](#)  
[Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust](#)  
[Historic England](#)  
[Museum in the Park](#)  
[Natural England](#)  
[Slimbridge Parish Council](#)

[Stonehouse Town Council](#)  
[Stroud District Council - Biodiversity](#)  
[Stroud District Council - Conservation](#)  
[Stroud District Council - Council Leader](#)  
[Stroud District Council - Flood Management](#)  
[Stroud District Council - Health and Well-being](#)  
[Stroud District Council - Planning](#)  
[Stroud District Council - Property Services](#)  
[Stroud Town Council](#)  
[Visit Gloucestershire](#)

## Stakeholder workshops

Through the evidence base review and the clinics a long-list of Goals was compiled which harnessed and reflected all past influences and future potential. Set against this were a series of obstacles to the canal system as a whole moving towards these goals.

Many of these goals and obstacles were long-standing and acknowledged (as identified through the clinics and stakeholder workshop) and the Evidence Base Summary supporting document outlines the cross referencing to existing resources which corroborate a thematic summary.

Equipped with the long-list of goals and accompanying obstacles a variety of technical and professional stakeholders (identified and agreed with the client group at inception) were engaged in an activity designed to qualify and shortlist these.

The event was shaped around two questions:

How the canal system can function in the future?  
(Goals)

What is preventing it getting there?

(Obstacles)

A range of tools and techniques were used for use in virtual workshops (Covid restrictions were still in place during the summer of 2021 at the time of these events) which assisted people to be future focused in their approach. Using the online tool Jamboard in combination with Zoom various sessions were organised and run which not only enabled people to contribute effectively their perspectives and technical expertise, but also facilitate cumulative goal setting exercises within which individual goals are considered with, and in response to, others to create composite and collective goal setting. In this way the Stakeholder Workshop outputs were multi-dimensional, appreciating the social, economic and environmental opportunities, over time, of the Canals Strategy.

Two templates were successfully used to shape the goal setting exercise in stakeholder group workshop settings:

Template for plotting goals within parameters of human needs and planetary limits - set within this context, one goal could be an improvement to above a minimum standard (eg housing quality & performance), while another goal maybe a reduction to come within planetary limits (eg energy consumption by transport).

Template for joint goal setting. A previously defined set of goals were prefixed with the question 'What if...?'. Each subsequent response began with 'Yes, and...,' creating the basis by which people could

build on each others goals and avoid an 'either-or' mentality to goal setting.

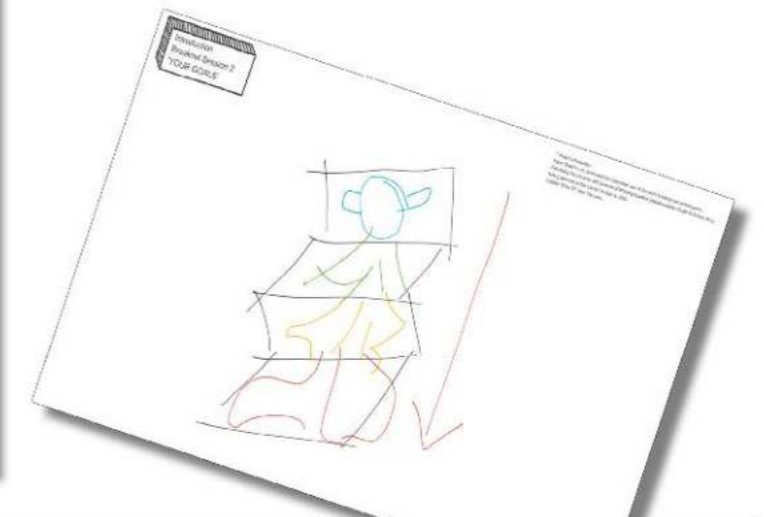
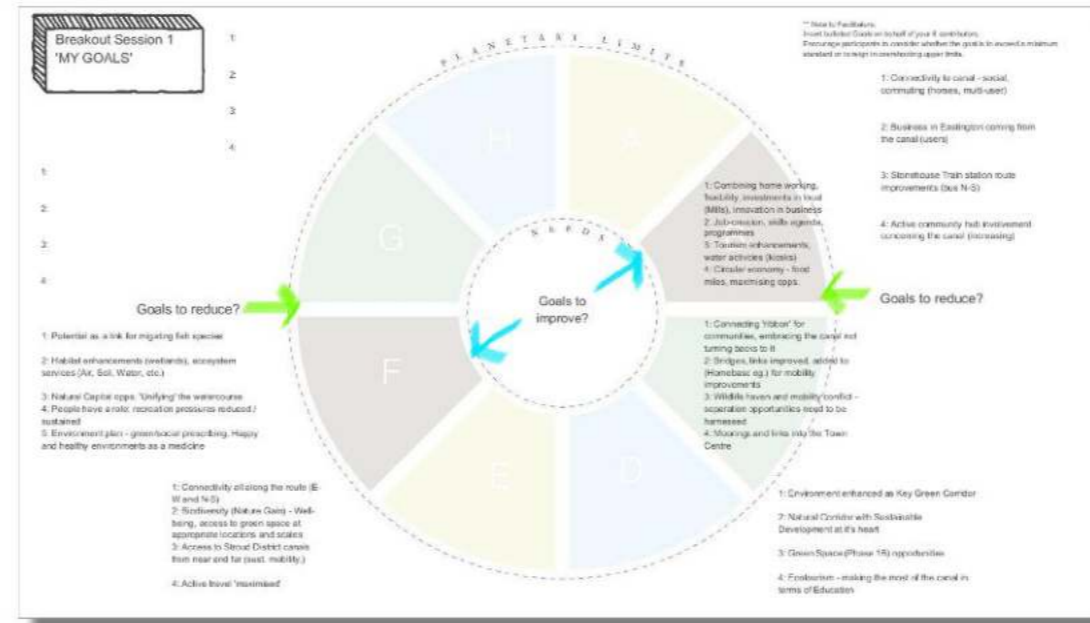
This workshop exercise facilitated the design thinking and work which resulted in the distillation of the three Future Drivers.

### Parish workshops and public online survey

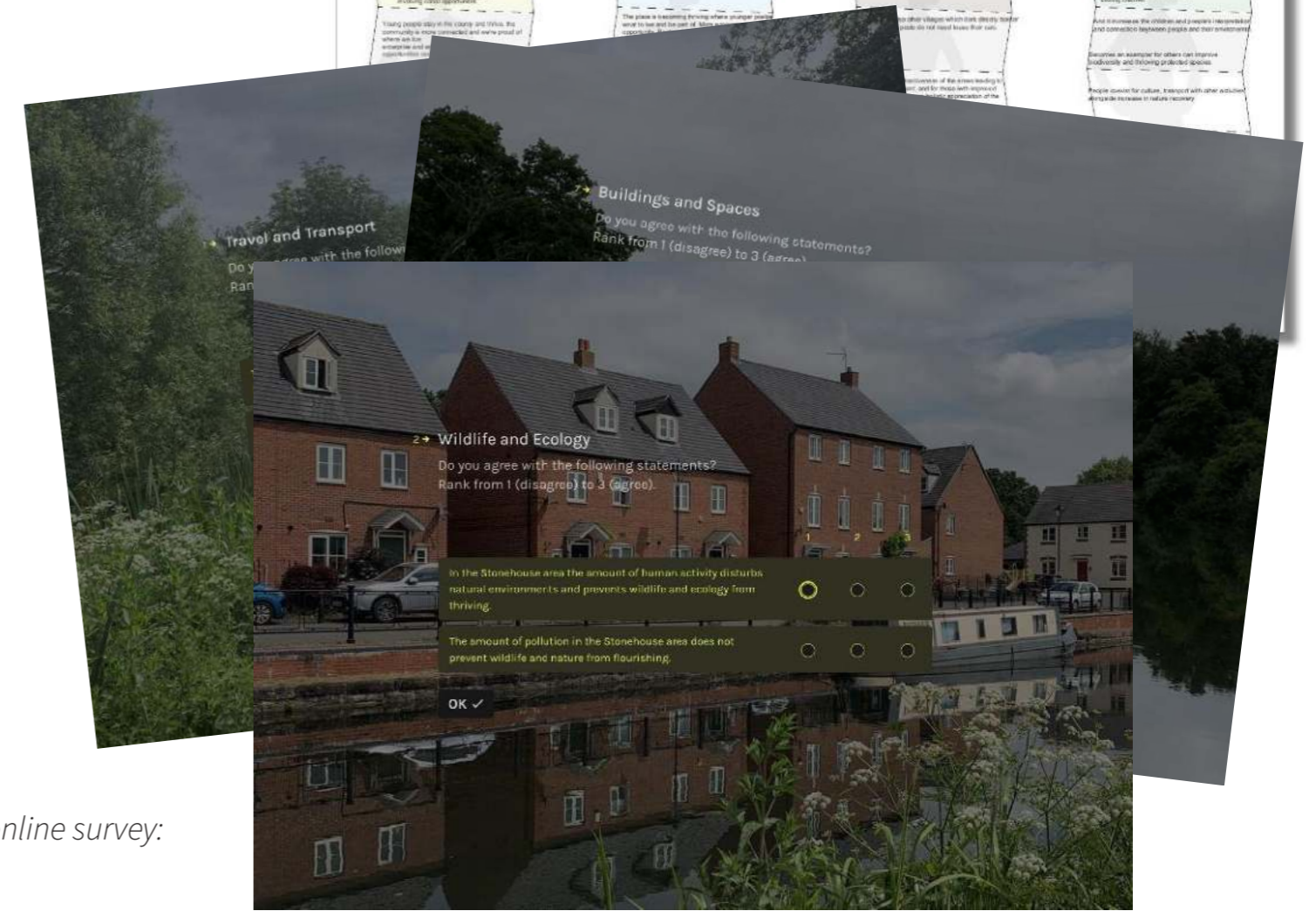
The Canals Strategy includes an overarching Vision for the whole canal corridor and indicates how this Vision can be expressed locally. In order to do this a community engagement exercise was designed to understand how people perceive the potential of the canal in their area.

Due to the COVID19 restrictions in place at the time of the public engagement a decision was made to use an online survey platform. This had the benefit of also being able to reach a more diverse audience that those who are able, and have time, to attend an event in person.

Prior to the online survey being launched it was tested through a series of online Parish workshops. All of the 9 parishes along the canal corridor were invited and representatives from 5 attended. Valuable input was gathered as to how the online survey could be more effective and accessible. The survey received 532 responses which were analysed to identify the priorities for the potential of the canal in various locations. These findings are presented in the report which summarises the public online survey and how it contributed to the understanding of the opportunities in different areas.



Some of the outputs of the stakeholder workshop:



Extracts from the public online survey:

## The Evidence Base Summary Matrix

A rapid review and synthesis of both existing Plan Policy and Evidence Base as well as policy and research that is emerging in response to Canals and Waterways restoration, comparable 'whole corridors' or systems, Green Infrastructure, Social Infrastructure, Active Travel, and other components and strategies of net zero carbon programmes nationally was carried out at the outset of the commission to prepare the Canals Strategy.

Working from lists already identified by the project team and other contributors, a series of themes of enquiry were drafted to guide further research and evidence base review. The lists already captured the breadth of issues and provided direction for further investigation into the challenges and opportunities.

Furthermore where workstreams and working groups were already assembled or being formed to resource work and projects previously identified, the Canals Strategy process was able to quickly draw upon already presentable findings.

The Canals Strategy is designed to be a 'live' document and have the ability to be applied in an ongoing variety of contexts and scenarios. For this reason there was careful thought given to how the Evidence Base review and early analysis contributing to the Strategy could be recorded so that it could be referred to in future in a easy way. As The Canals Strategy covers a large geographic area, and encompasses many contrasting constraints and opportunities it has the potential to influence environmental, economic and social aspects of

variety of projects over time. It will be necessary therefore to be able to demonstrate accountability of decision making and design to the evidence base which forms the foundation of the Strategy.

The Evidence Base review has been summarised in a summary matrix. This matrix is prepared as a digital pdf programmed to highlight different relationships and cross referencing of various layers of the evidence base documentation. This matrix has been used throughout the preparation of the Canals Strategy to guide the identification of various themes and approaches. As the Canals Strategy has taken shape, additional columns have been included within the matrix to demonstrate the origins of certain aspects of the Strategy.

The Evidence Summary Matrix is shown on the following page in static form, but can be appreciated and interrogated more in its digital pdf form. The digital pdf format also contains summary notes and references made from the extensive evidence review process and engagement which was carried out to understand the canals and all of their constraints and opportunities.

The Matrix is designed to be an ongoing tool in the use and application of The Canals Strategy in various scenarios, including development management. It is important therefore that it remains as a live, interactive pdf providing an audit trail of the origins of various aspects of the Canals Strategy. It may not therefore suit all readers and audiences.

Ultimately the Evidence Base Summary Matrix provides the means by which the District Council and other parties can demonstrate how individual projects are accountable to, not only vision and strategic objectives but also, the broad range of evidence base informing the vision and strategy.

Designed in a digital pdf format, the Matrix charts the progress through various stages of the methodology, listing and shortlisting key outputs of different stages of evidence review and various engagement activities to make the process transparent.

The Evidence Base Review Matrix provides the ability to link to documents and sources, allowing easy case building for future feasibility and funding applications for individual projects anticipated to be undertaken in the Action Plan.

Thursday, 10 June 21

Thursday, 10 June 21

Thursday, 10 June 21

Name, Organisation	Address	Phone	Email
Canal & Rivers Trust			
1 Please identify the key issues by the making of your activity			
2 Please call your activity			
3 Please identify your activity			

DH adds: Na 'Waterways & The Gloucester'

DH asks: Outline Call & Rivers Trust Board presence on

4 Please identify any constraints particular to the canal corridor which you are having to address in undertaking your work.

Challenges to community engagement and well being -getting people to the canal and access to it and its spaces. Practical challenge. Funding is a considerable constraint. In Stroud, funding of towpaths surfaces etc. Maintaining visitor presence is difficult with limited infrastructure and facilities. prevents access etc. Not so many constraints relating to water use because the breadth of responsibility for other/all users.

5 The Future Place programme is concerned with equipping an imagination of the future unconstrained by current systems and process. Looking beyond the constraints identified above what would innovation in the canal corridor and addressing net zero carbon targets look like for your area of work? Identifying case studies from elsewhere may be useful.

- Restoration and conservation of our history
- Reopening of the canal network -DH adds: Active travel objective has to be balanced with recreational users -family use.
- Impact on local communities - providing a space for / source of wellbeing
- Growing our youth engagement and education work along the Stroudwater
- Partnership working and volunteering opportunities to improve and secure the care of our shared waterways
- Supporting our environmental ambitions

DH adds: Planning offers opportunities to bring greater awareness of wider patronage of the canals. And to promote the canal to benefit funding of necessary improvements.

6 The Stroud 2030 Strategy, to address the climate and ecological emergency, <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/2030-strategy-limiting-adapting-recovering-and-responding-in-a-changing-climate> considers the role of the authority as 'Exemplar', 'Enabler' or 'Encourager' in respect of addressing carbon reduction. Please indicate whether the activities and innovations you have identified above play a role in being an 'Exemplar', 'Enabler' or 'Encourager'.

Enabler

7 Preferred dates for meeting:

10th July 2021

## Longlisting "Your Goals"

Longlisting "Your Goals" is a process of identifying and prioritising goals that are aligned with the strategic vision and the emerging themes of the Stroud District Canals Strategy. It involves a series of steps, including identifying potential goals, assessing their relevance and impact, and finally selecting the most important ones to focus on.

The process starts with identifying potential goals that are relevant to the canal corridor and the emerging themes. These goals are then assessed against a set of criteria, including their relevance, impact, and feasibility. The most important goals are then selected to form the longlist.

The longlist is a key document that guides the implementation of the strategy. It provides a clear focus for the work and ensures that all activities are aligned with the strategic vision and the emerging themes.

Thursday, 10 June 21

Thursday, 10 June 21

Thursday, 10 June 21

Thursday, 10 June 21

Group 3

Breakout Session 1 MY GOALS

1. Values and priorities to realise some common shared goals for the waterway...  
2. To make the best possible use of the canal corridor...  
3. To ensure the canal corridor is accessible to all...  
4. To ensure the canal corridor is sustainable...  
5. To ensure the canal corridor is resilient...  
6. To ensure the canal corridor is inclusive...

Goals to reduce?

1. Improving life time performance of the canal...  
2. Universal accessibility of canal...  
3. Make the canal corridor more attractive...

Group 1

Breakout Session 2 YOUR GOALS

What if...  
What if...  
What if...  
What if...

'Yes and...'

What if...  
What if...  
What if...  
What if...

## Shortlisting Stakeholder Goals cross-referenced to the emerging themes

This document provides a detailed overview of the shortlisted stakeholder goals, cross-referenced to the emerging themes. The goals are grouped into several categories, each with a corresponding color-coded background.

- Dispersed Clusters, Mills, settlements joined by river and canal:** Focuses on connecting dispersed clusters and promoting local economies.
- Connecting DH-So. towns and relationships:** Aims to improve connectivity and relationships between different parts of the district.
- Heritage, industrial 'back corridor' by housing and recreational recreation:** Emphasizes the importance of heritage and recreational spaces.
- Living Heritage but assets at risk:** Addresses the challenge of preserving heritage assets that are at risk.
- Expanding education and culture, education:** Focuses on expanding educational and cultural opportunities.
- Jobs, lifestyle & innovation, social well-being, contrasting use of the canal:** Aims to create jobs, improve lifestyle, and promote innovation.
- Diversity & uniqueness, culture & arts:** Celebrates the diversity and uniqueness of the canal corridor.
- Topography of the District out the flat bottom of the valley:** Addresses the challenges posed by the valley's topography.
- Reconnecting (E-W) Thames to Severn, social inequalities:** Focuses on reconnecting the Thames to the Severn and addressing social inequalities.

# STROUD CANALS, FUTURE PLACE: DEFINING & EVIDENCING

Sources & Process:

Contextual Themes  
(Stroud 2030 Strategy)

1 Site day

2 Officer interviews & Pro-Forma responses

3 Desktop Document Reviews

4 Historical Research

5 Stakeholder Workshop

6 Public Engagement

Energy

Built Environment

Natural Environment

Mobility

Our Economy

Waste and Resources

Community

	G: GLOBAL & NATIONAL		R: REGIONAL					D: DISTRICT								L: LOCAL
	G1. The Values & Benefits of Waterways	G2. Building with Nature	R1. Active Gloucestershire Strategy 2017-2021	R2. Gloucestershire's Nature Recovery Network and natural capital maps	R3. Draft Gloucestershire Local Industrial Strategy (2019)	R4. Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Strategy (2019)	R5. Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan LTP4 (2021)	D1. Draft Stroud District 2030 Strategy (2020)	D2. Stroud District Local Plan (2015)	D3. Draft Local Plan Review (2021)	D4. SYCC 25-year Business Plan (M&M Plan)	D5. Stroud Settlement role and function study	D6. A Heritage Strategy for Stroud District (2018)	D7. Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Design Guide SPA (2008)	D8. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust Conservation reports for the corridor	L1. Missing Mile Heritage Lottery Bid (2020) Activity Plan
Energy	●●●●		●●●●	●●●●			●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		
Built Environment	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●			●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		●●●●		●●●●
Natural Environment	●●●●	●●●●		●●●●				●●●●			●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		●●●●	●●●●
Mobility	●●●●		●●		●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		●●●●	●●	●●●●	
Our Economy	●●●●							●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		●●●●	●●●●		●●●●
Waste and Resources	●●●●	●●●●		●●●●	●●●●			●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		●●●●		●●●●	●●●●
Community	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		●●●●		●●●●



Evidence Base



Goals & Obstacles



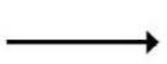
Emerging Canal Vision Themes



Unique Drivers

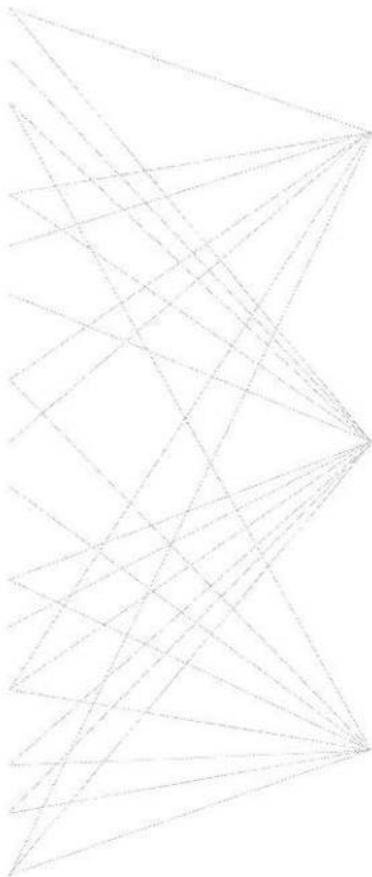
STAKEHOLDER			
L2. Hardwicke Neighbourhood Plan	L3. Eastington 2018 Neighbourhood Plan	L4. Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan	L5. Shaping the Heart of Stroud Neighbourhood Plan

LONGLISTING
[Detailed list of longlisted items with small text and icons]



SHORTLISTING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Dispersed Clusters - Mills, settlements joined by river and canal</li> <li>b Settlement Hierarchy: sustainable locations and targeted growth/improvement</li> <li>c Localising as a way of decarbonising</li> <li>d Continuity &amp; Contrast, mixed personalities of the canal</li> <li>e Canal as a cross cutting catalyst</li> <li>f Local distinctiveness: Parish Clusters</li> <li>g Topography of the District but the flat bottom of the valley</li> <li>h Reconnecting (E-W): Thames to Severn; social groups/district</li> <li>i Connecting (N-S): town/canal relationship</li> <li>j Heritage: industrial 'back corridor' vs fronting and rediscovering recreation</li> <li>k Living Heritage but assets at risk</li> <li>l Engineering restoration and nature restoration</li> <li>m Jobs, lifestyle &amp; innovation; social well being; contrasting use of the canal</li> <li>n Diversity &amp; uniqueness; culture &amp; arts</li> <li>o Tourism and community pride</li> </ul>

CONSOLIDATING
+/- Field
1 Continuity
2 Clustering
3 Crossings



# THE CANALS STRATEGY:

## **The Future Drivers (A Vision for the Whole Canal Corridor):**

The Canals Strategy purpose is to coordinate the many and varied activities, initiatives and active groups and organisations along the whole corridor and to avoid piece meal change which may occur in the interest of only one party.

To do this a collective vision of the potential of the canals across Stroud District must be reached.

Work to prepare a vision as part of the Canals Strategy has involved drawing together many varied aspirations and goals and considering a wide variety of perspectives without bias or prejudice.

The approach taken to do this has attempted to frame a future view of the canals in Stroud, inspiring participants in the process to imagine and describe a successful future of the canal from their perspective.

To build a consensus view participants have also been encouraged, throughout the process, to be considerate of other perspectives and aspirations and by creating a dialogue between different parties within different objectives a clearer idea of the themes which people can unite around has emerged.

The Canals Strategy identifies three Future Drivers to express a vision of the unique function and identity of the canals in Stroud in the future.

These three Future Drivers have emerged through various layers of analysis - mapping and data, the review of an extensive evidence base, gathering of stakeholder input and site visits.

They represent what is distinct about the canals in Stroud (their function and identity) in the past and in the present but they are expressed as a vision such that the canal's future respects its past and builds on the evolution of its function and its identity and that of the settlements, landscape and communities that surround the canal corridor.

All of the three Future Drivers represent a mix of environmental, social and economic potential and they are all designed to contribute to the holistic placemaking of the various locations along the length of the canal corridor.



## The Future Drivers (A Vision for the Whole Canal Corridor):

### Continuity

Activity and movement across the district have been shaped by geology and natural systems resulting in the River Frome valley landscape which has influenced the form of settlements and the relationships between settlements.

From 1783 the vision to connect the Thames to the Severn with a canal looked to utilise the Frome Valley and establish a continuous and accessible route.

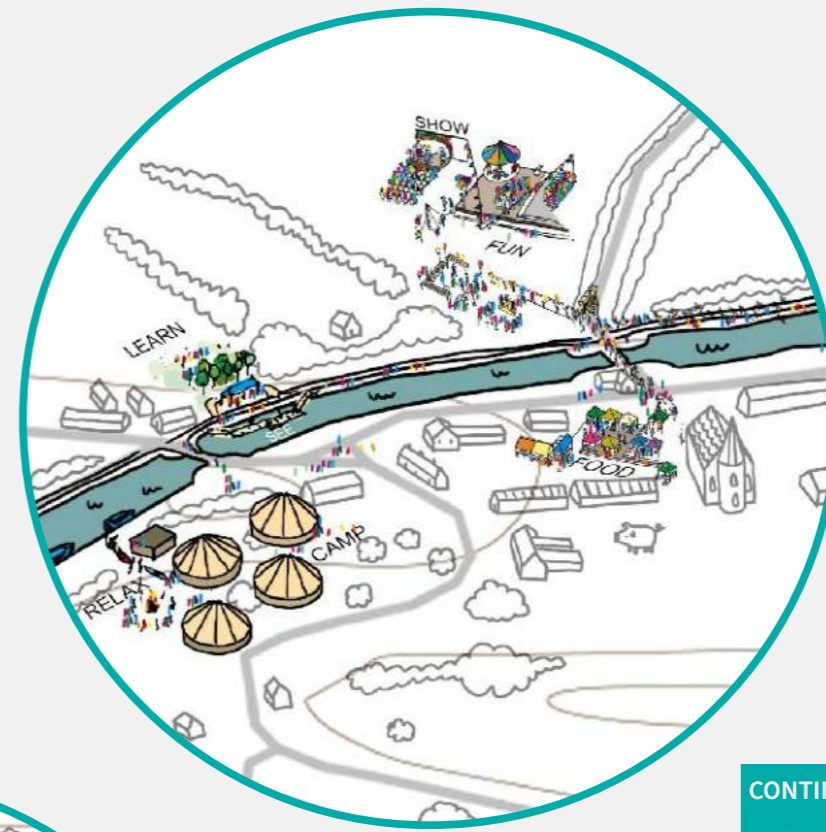
Before being identified as an attractive route for the canal, this continuity through the landscape gave rise to the series of mills which utilised the continuity of the river and the road network along, and to and from, the valley.

Later, the railway also followed this route and the economy and population growth in Stroud has stretched along and out from the valley bottom.

From Sapperton to Saul and then connected to the north and south along the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, the Stroud canals provide the continuity required in a predominantly linear landscape form. By providing access in a variety of ways, the canal can connect communities and create essential links between businesses, services and functions as well as continuous green infrastructure and wildlife corridors as a spine through the District.

#### CONTINUITY: People:

- + continuity along the canal is promoted through a series of different activities and functions along the canal
- + routes along the canal become more diverse and engaging drawing local residents and visitors further along the waterway



#### CONTINUITY: Nature:

- + the canal achieves its full potential as a continuous wildlife corridor
- + wildlife barriers are addressed and new development must have a fundamentally integrated approach to supporting nature



#### CONTINUITY: Places:

- + the canal and its banks help to improve the links between the main towns and destinations
- + development and interventions along the corridor create new relationships with the canal so that it becomes a desirable route



## The Future Drivers (A Vision for the Whole Canal Corridor):

### Crossings

Communities and economies grew up around the locations of the variety of Mills along the valley.

Activity in these locations has been funnelled and concentrated by the topography, influencing patterns of living.

The preference for settlement location and function was first stimulated by demand for resources and the means by which people could access these.

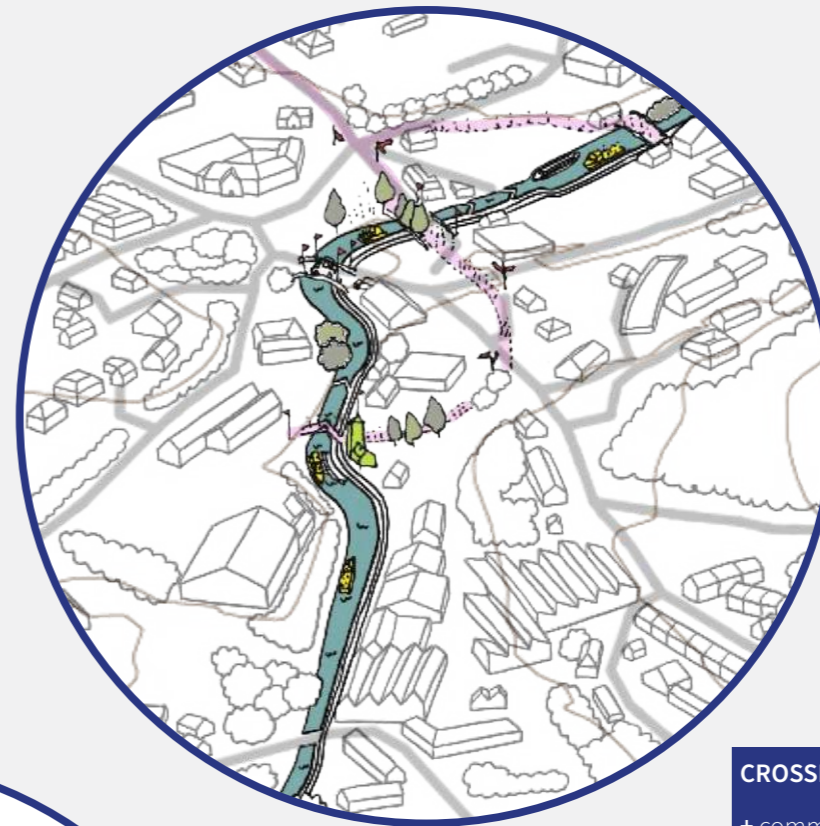
Initially the canal was established as a piece of industrial infrastructure and stopping points, origins and destinations of goods largely hidden as mechanisms of the economy.

Now with the changing role of the canal - people, activities and places can unite around the canal as a thoroughfare, an attraction, a centre of activity, a point for connectivity and a unique recreational space.

In this way the canal can catalyse focussed activity as a new junction of trade and a centre for sociability and community.

#### CROSSINGS: Bridges:

- + a hierarchy of bridges is established with safe routes and connectivity for all users
- + signposting is improved to help navigation to and from the canal with improved access to the water



#### CROSSINGS: Joining Communities:

- + communities are connected to and across the canal with improved permeability
- + a range of building types and mix of uses bring activity to the canal helping to join communities across the water



#### CROSSINGS: District wide:

- + routes, landmarking and wayfinding are improved including the use of green infrastructure to improve legibility
- + bridges across the canal are enhanced to prioritise active travel and reduce the dominance of roads and cars as well as creating connections for wildlife



## The Future Drivers (A Vision for the Whole Canal Corridor):

### Clustering

Unlike the roads, the river and the railway, the canal can become a public space, reuniting the district through access and around mixed utility and identity.

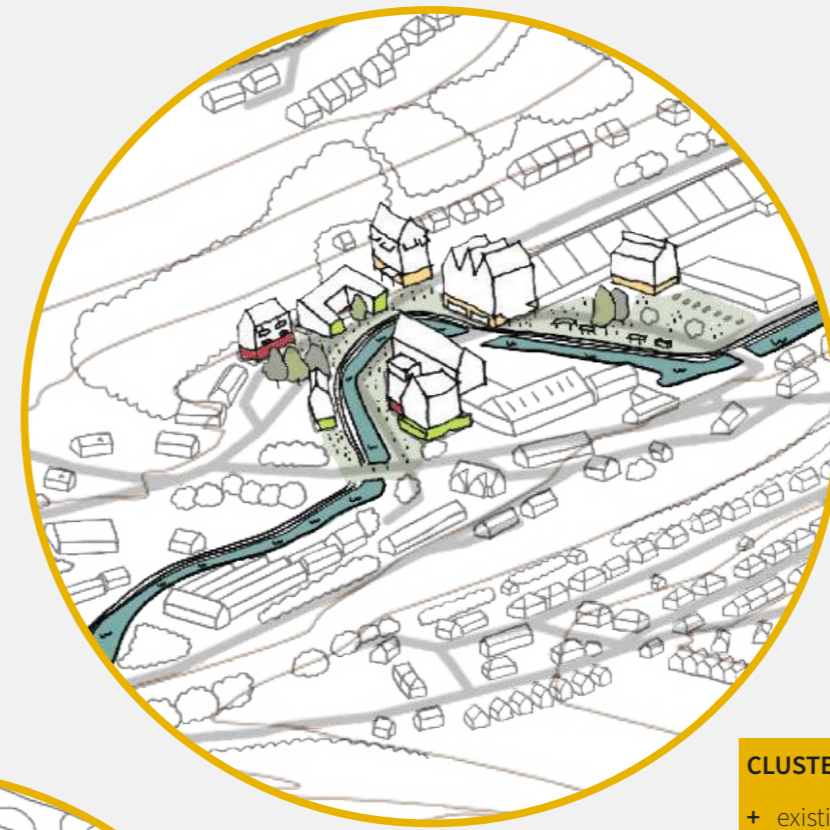
The roads, railways and river form barriers in ways that the canal does not. In being one continuous body of water, the canal joins activities along its banks and connects communities.

The canal is the crossing point between the north and south of the district.

By creating a variety of local crossings and connecting activity on the banks of the canal, more strategic connections and improved natural habitats can be formed at a district level. These enhancements will see people not only accessing the canal corridor but accessing a variety of district-wide opportunities and, in doing so, being enabled to cross socio-economic boundaries as well as physical ones.

#### CLUSTERING: Diversify:

- + active ground floors help to bring life to the public realm and create an active frontage to the canal
- + more diverse buildings create interest and help to accommodate different uses and lifestyles



#### CLUSTERING: Community:

- + barriers created by roads are broken down with a new focus on connectivity and activity on and around the water
- + community buildings and facilities are promoted with an emphasis on active frontages to create vibrant public spaces

#### CLUSTERING: Public Realm:

- + existing public space is enhanced with highway space reclaimed where possible
- + public realm is re-imagined to have an improved connection and relationship with the canal and towpath

