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## Summary

Based on this assessment, the restoration of the Uttoxeter Canal is a feasible project, though with some significant issues to address.

The restoration of this canal is likely to have a significant positive social and economic impact on the area as well as being of large environmental benefit.

The project can conveniently be split into two sections, the restoration from Froghall to Denstone and the new cut from Denstone to Uttoxeter. Each of these sections has their own set of challenges to deal with.

The section from Froghall to Denstone is very much constrained by the topography of the Churnet Valley. Due to this topography three competing infrastructure elements are squeezed into the same area for a large section of the route. These are the canal, railway and modern services such as gas and electricity. The restoration of the canal along this section would be much simplified if no allowance was made for the restoration of the railway however this may impact on the plans of the Churnet Valley Railway. No recommendation to this extent is made here as it is for the promoters of this project to decide to what degree they wish to take this into account. It is suggested that appropriate approach is for the Canal Trust and Railway company to work together to develop and promote their schemes to their mutual benefit. If restoration of the Oakamoor to Alton section were to be carried out for both projects as one single design with a single construction contract, there is likely to be significant cost savings.

It should also be noted that the line of the railway is protected in the local plan (LDF clause T6) and the emerging core strategy (clause T2 point 3).

The services running along the Churnet Valley are already in existence and this project must deal with these. As highlighted above, removal or whole-scale diversion of these services is unlikely to be feasible. Identifying the exact location and any wayleaves required by the owners will be a key task of any future studies.

For a large proportion of this section, the canal runs through areas that would be difficult to access. A key aspect of the construction of this scheme will be access for the contractor and how earthworks are handled. A significant amount of

material will be excavated and re-use of this material on site, for example during the restoration of the railway, or in nearby landscaping will greatly reduce the capital cost of the scheme.

The section from Denstone to Uttoxeter is characterised by the large flat floodplain areas of the lower reaches of the River Churnet and the River Dove. Here, access to the site will be relatively easy and a wide area is available through which the canal could run.

The main hard constraints along this section will be roads, beneath which new bridge crossings will be required. In order to avoid producing new trough or summit pounds and the necessity of back pumps to feed them, some road raising is likely to be required. While this will add to the cost of the scheme, it should not pose a significant problem.

A significant complexity of this section will be how the canal interacts with the rivers and floodplain. This is an issue that will need to be addressed in some detail in order to obtain approval from the Environment Agency.

In the short term, significant funding will be required in order to undertake further more detail specific studies. While it can be relatively easy to obtain funding for small capital sums, below say £200k, it can be much harder to obtain funding for studies without being able to demonstrate the benefits the study will bring.

In the longer term a strategy will need to be developed of how capital funding in the order of £90M will be obtained.