

8 Recommendations

8.1

Introduction

The recommendations for this scheme have been split into three categories, short-term, medium-term and long-term.

The short-term recommendations will be targeted at things that should ideally be undertaken in the next 3 - 12 months in order to keep up the momentum of the project. These include studies that should be undertaken and also tasks the promoters should consider undertaking themselves in order to position themselves for the future.

The medium-term recommendations will be issues that should be addressed in the next one to three years and the long-term recommendations are issues beyond three years.

8.2

Short term

In order to progress this project a more detailed feasibility study will need to be undertaken. This is likely to cost in the region of £50k - £100k. This should assess the engineering, water management and environmental aspects of the project. It is highly likely that a flood risk assessment will be required on the lower sections to demonstrate that the construction of a new canal would not have an adverse impact on the River Dove or Churnet.

It is recommended that the Caldon and Uttoxeter Canals Trust approach the Churnet Valley Railway organisation. The CVR has aspirations to extend their line from Oakamoor down to Alton. This could be in direct competition for space with the Uttoxeter Canal. However, by developing a joint plan for the restoration of both schemes, there may be synergies which benefit both developments.

It is recommended that the Caldon and Uttoxeter Canal Trust approach the Environment Agency to obtain their view of the scheme. The benefits the scheme could have in water management and environmental enhancement should be raised.

It is recommended that the requirement for a Transport and Works Act is investigated and if deemed necessary a plan is developed for what this will involve.

Where access is possible, it is recommended that all existing structures and possible locations of original structures are investigated to determine whether they still exist and where they do, what condition they are in. It may then be possible for future studies to incorporate these structures into the proposed restoration.

It is recommended that the owners of JCB are engaged with. Their cooperation and support for this project could significantly improve the success of the scheme. In addition, it is recommended that a tie in is investigated for the use of the canal works in the training carried out at the new JCB Academy.

The Caldon and Uttoxeter Canal Trust should attempt to obtain the LiDAR survey data for this area from the Environment Agency. This data would be invaluable for any further feasibility study to confirm exact pound levels and extents of cuttings and embankments and would reduce the need to carry out site surveys.

The landowners along the whole route should be identified.

Investigations should be made into whether it will be possible to access the old line of the canal between Froghall and Oakamoor. This study has been based on mapping information for this area, but in order to give confidence to any further feasibility studies, site visits would be highly desirable.

8.3

Medium term

No further recommendations are made here for procured work that will need to be undertaken as this would be influenced and defined by the initial feasibility study. As listed above, it is likely that a flood risk assessment will be required; other studies may include further environmental surveys, geotechnical desk studies and further economic studies.

Where access has previously been limited and is now possible, it is recommended that the locations of possible existing structures, as noted in 'short term' above, is investigated.

It will be necessary to engage with the service companies with assets along the route. It is possible that this may be undertaken as part of the feasibility study.

The promoters of this project need to consider in what form they wish to drive the project forward. Who will take the lead role? It may be worth considering setting up a project partnership.

The issue of ownership and operation of the restored canal needs to be considered. The owners and operators need not necessarily be the same organisation. Discussion should be opened with British Waterways on what part they may wish to play in the restoration and operation of the canal.

Work should be carried out to identify all possible benefits of the scheme. This should not be limited to large regional benefits but should also consider small scale improvements to local communities or villages.

Public engagement/consultation should be carried out within the next year to ensure the backing of all the communities in the local area and to understand their concerns and aspirations.

There are likely to be a large range of tasks that could be undertaken by volunteers. A volunteer action plan should be produced setting out what skills are required for each task and how this should be managed. It should be noted that for any volunteers carrying out clearance or construction work on site, safe systems of work should be developed with method statements and risk assessments signed off by a competent individual.

8.4

Long term

In order to develop a fundable scheme, significant work will be required over the next three years to engage with all the local communities. A key requirement will be their backing.

It is recommended that in the long term, the project promoters engage with these communities and work with them to develop options and designs and keep them fully informed as the project progresses.

An overall restoration plan should be developed with timescales from medium term work and also as funding becomes available, areas to concentrate on as key first bits of restoration should be identified.

Major works to crags near Oakamoor could be required. Equally, dependent on their condition, there may be opportunity to combine these with the canal development for example by incorporating them as part of an organised outdoor activity centre.

Major issues could be involved with the old copper works. Once further investigation has been carried out, these should become clearer, though the option of attempting to avoid this site should not be ruled out.