



National Waterways Museum Development Plan 2010-2020 Consultation Draft



Derelict and often forgotten waterways have been rediscovered and are used today more than at the height of the industrial revolution..... Our waterways make a significant contribution to the visitor economy and a key part of their success has been their ability to adapt and embrace a 21st century mix of leisure, business and cultural uses.

England's Historic Waterways: A Working Heritage - Promoting High Quality Waterside Development, British Waterways and English Heritage Joint Publication 2009.

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National Waterways Museum Development Plan 2010-2020

INTRODUCTION

The Museum

The 200-year-old canal dock complex at Ellesmere Port comprises the original Shropshire Union Canal docks, locks and buildings from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is the most complete inland dock complex in the country.

One of Britain's greatest engineers, Thomas Telford, was involved in the early development of the site which owes its existence to the network of inland waterways which stretched from the Mersey and Humber estuaries in the north to the Severn and Thames in the south.

This point, where the canal network connected with the Mersey estuary, was a key node in the country's transport system. The products of industry from the Midlands and Potteries were brought by canal to Ellesmere Port and then sent on to Liverpool Docks to be exported to all parts of the world.

The National Waterways Museum now occupies a major part of the old dock system, and new uses have been found for the historic buildings. The site is part of a designated Conservation Area, and the significant buildings and structures are statutorily listed.

The Museum's main exhibition halls are in the two-storey Island Warehouse which is surrounded by the Upper Basin canal quays. The stables survive from the days of horsedrawn boats, and the toll-house recalls the commercial ownership and financing of the canals. A large complex of original buildings has been converted to provide a conference centre, archive facilities and exhibition space as well as preserving and displaying the impressive iron-working foundry. The hydraulic power installation – a feat of Victorian ingenuity – survives complete with its restored steam engines, boiler house and accumulator tower.

A popular attraction for visitors is the preserved terrace of dock workers' cottages which have been restored to illustrate the way of life of local people at different time periods during the history of the site.

Other original parts of the dock complex and its structures have been found new uses with the creation of the Heritage Boatyard conservation and skills training operation.

The Museum is easily accessible with the entrance, gift shop and waterside cafe approached from the M53 motorway at junction 9, leading directly to the car park. Close by are Ellesmere Port town centre and rail station with trains to and from Wirral and Liverpool.

The National Collection

The comprehensive collection reflects the full range of working canal boats with horsedrawn narrowboats, heavy goods barges, estuarial craft, canal icebreakers, tugs, and early pleasure craft.

The once ubiquitous working boats of the canals disappeared almost overnight in the 1960s, and these exhibits are now irreplaceable.

A complementary collection of artefacts illustrates the history and operation of the waterways and gives a picture of the traditional way of life of the boat people.

The collections are officially designated as being of national importance, and this includes the growing archive collection of books, documents and maps.

The "Virtual Archive" project is enhancing the accessibility of the archives, and there is scope to consolidate the currently dispersed National Waterways Archives at Ellesmere Port.

The collections are brought to life by education programmes and demonstrations of craft skills.

An important curatorial initiative has been the structured review of the boat collection to ensure that its scope is appropriate, and that priorities for conservation are clearly identified within the available resources. The review highlighted the need for some of the most important vessels to be preserved out of the water and under cover.

The Development Plan

Since 2008, a strong basis has been laid for a positive future for the Museum through the actions of the Museum and its partners.

These include a radical review and reduction in the cost base of the Museum facilitated by a refreshed partnership between The Waterways Trust, the Boat Museum Society, the Museum volunteers and British Waterways, establishing a strong working commitment to improvements at the Museum. The review allowed the creation of key posts to oversee the site and the collections.

Externally, good working relations have been established with local partners including Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&CC), West Cheshire College (WCC) and Peel Holdings. CW&CC have plans for a major regeneration programme in Ellesmere Port and Peel Holdings have major development plans on dockland adjacent to the museum. These are being brought together in plans for the Ellesmere Port Waterfront.

Together these changes provide a very positive basis for the role of the National Waterways Museum as a jewel in the regeneration of Ellesmere Port - a nationally significant museum, housed in nationally important buildings within a site of great significance to the story of waterways.

Given this exciting and rapidly changing context, this Development Plan has been prepared to capture and distil the aspirations for the National Waterways Museum as agreed by the Waterways Museum community including the Boat Museum Society (BMS) and volunteers, The Waterways Trust and British Waterways (with its responsibility for the canal itself) into one agreed Development Plan to feed into wider plans for Ellesmere Port and guide investment, activities, initiatives and developments at the National Waterways Museum over the next ten years.

The Development Plan acknowledges the need to conserve and enhance the Museum's important architectural and engineering heritage and preserve the collections whilst ensuring that the Museum

develops and plays its role in the community locally, regionally and nationally.

The Vision & Aims

Set out below are the vision and aims on which this Development Plan is based.

National Waterways Museum Vision

'To establish the premier national centre for Britain's waterways heritage'

National Waterways Museum Aims

By 2020 at the latest the National Waterways Museum will be:

- **recognised as the leading Waterways Museum in the UK**
- **a high quality centre for those wishing to enjoy, study and experience the waterways, their history, boats, people, buildings and artefacts**
- **a major focus to enable young people to develop through experiencing the waterways**
- **a well-loved local facility for people where they can relax, learn and develop**
- **an exemplar of a forward-looking partnership of volunteers, staff agencies and companies**
- **a nationally important visitor destination**

CHAPTER 1 - THE LEADING WATERWAYS MUSEUM IN THE UK

Aim

By 2020 at the latest, the National Waterways Museum will be recognised as:

- the leading Waterways Museum in the UK, and
- a high quality centre for those wishing to enjoy, study and experience the waterways, their history, boats, people, buildings and artefacts

1.1 Defining the physical boundaries of 'the Museum'.

There are various properties and facilities that are not currently managed as part of the Museum that are key parts of the historic context. These are:



➔ The Dock Offices (Century House)

'The architectural focal point for the port is the former Dock Office Building with its walls of crisp Ruabon brick dressed with stone decoration and Tuscan order window surrounds. The tall, octagonal clock tower on the Dock Office is the highest structure in the port, reflecting the economic and social importance of the Ship Canal Company to the early town.'
Ellesmere Port Docks Conservation Area Appraisal



➔ The Lighthouse

'Two buildings provide tall focal points: the former lighthouse on Lower Mersey Street and the clock tower of the Dock Office.'
Ellesmere Port Docks Conservation Area Appraisal

➔ The Gauging Dock

➔ The Craft Workshops

➔ The Lower Dock Basin

➔ Navigable access to the Ship Canal

All these are part of the Ellesmere Port Docks Conservation Area (see map on the next page). The conservation area also includes new buildings, part of the motorway roundabout and some buildings of no historic or architectural merit.

The inclusion of all of these properties within the conservation area indicates their relevance to either the history or the setting of the historic port. These should therefore be considered as part of 'the Museum'.

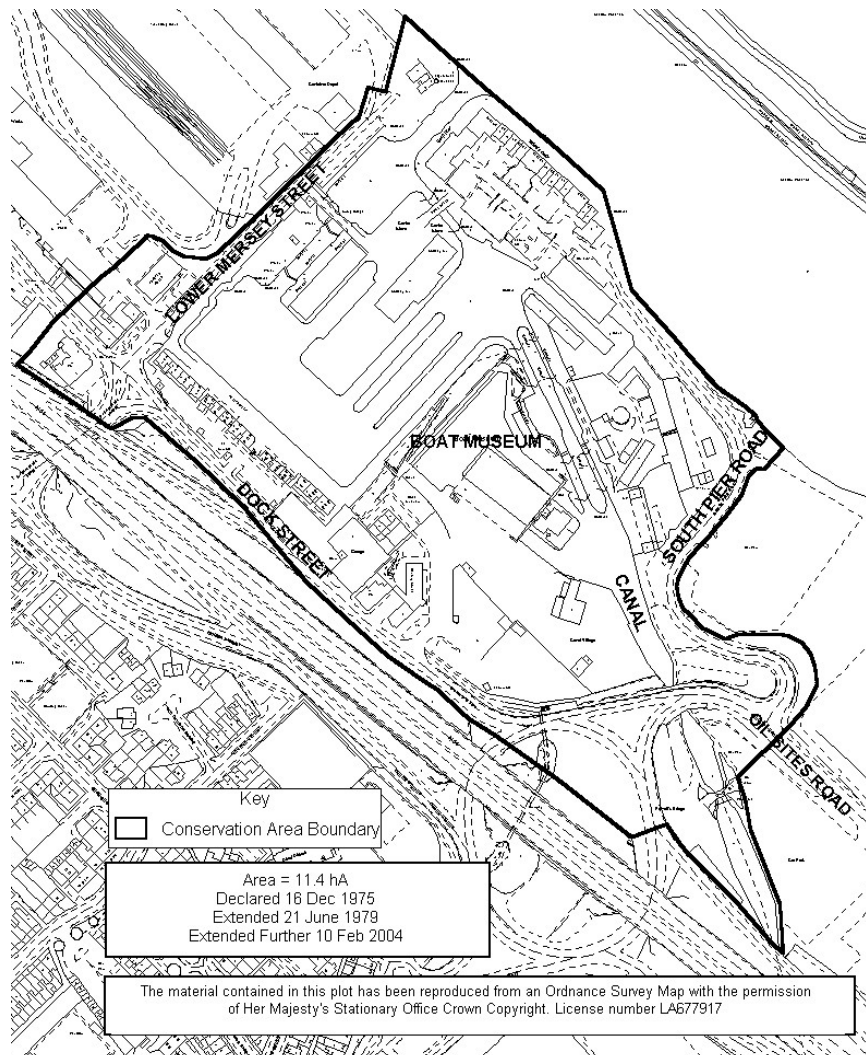
The defined conservation area does not, however, include the Museum car park up to the banks of the Ship Canal or the Powells Bridge site owned by the Council and, in order to fully reflect and exploit the waterways and the historic links to the Ship Canal, these should be included within 'the Museum'.

The National Waterways Museum

It is therefore concluded for the purpose of this Development Plan that:

In the period up to 2020, and setting aside ownership and management issues at this stage, the entire conservation area (but excluding currently residential buildings), the Museum car park area up to the Ship Canal, and adjacent industrial land and the Powells Bridge site will be considered as part of the National Waterways Museum complex.

Ellesmere Port Docks Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Extract)



Action Plan

Plan period	Defining the physical boundaries of the Museum (notes)
2010-2012	Discuss with CW&CC and Peel in drawing up their plans
2013-2015	Try to get all relevant properties in ownership of TWT, CW&CC or Peel
2015-2020	Bring all the properties into management as part of the Museum

1.2 Completing the Historic Docks.

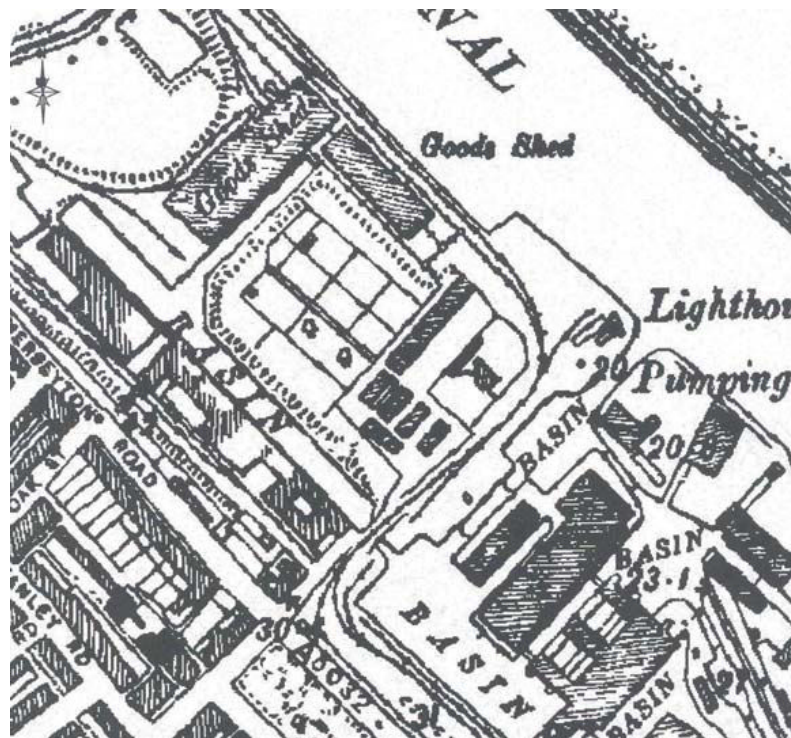
As well as the properties and facilities referred to in Section 1.1, there are valuable parts of the Historic Docks that have disappeared or been badly altered – most notably the former Flour Mills site and the ‘Mill Arm’ from the Lower Basin. These are within the Peel redevelopment site of ‘Ellesmere Quays’. A 2008 EP&NBC document points out the risks from an unsympathetic development of this site:

‘The mill site forms part of a wider development site owned by Peel Homes Ltd. This site is likely to form phase 1 of the development, which means that items of significance are at risk of being lost. The above-ground features (particularly the mill) are at risk of being demolished and any archaeology risks being lost as the ground is dug for foundations.

The setting of the historic docks conservation area and the nearby grade II listed buildings are also at risk. Development that is not in keeping with the existing buildings in terms of design, scale, layout and materials may harm the historic character of this sensitive area.’

July 2008 Ellesmere Port Flour Mills Site Conservation Management Plan EPNBC

Map showing the Mill Arm (marked ‘Basin’ to the left of the map)



In view of the aspiration for the Museum, this risk cannot be ignored. The redevelopment of this area should be in sympathy with the 2020 vision for the Museum (development of the large Peel site is likely to extend up to 2020).

Key elements that should be supported are:

- The digging-out of and recreating the old Mill Arm (line now taken by the road)
- Re-establishing the link between the Mill Arm and the Lower Dock Basin
- Retention, restoration and re-use of the remaining King Mill building as part of the redevelopment of the site

“Property located at an attractive waterside location attracts a premium. Independent research found that when compared to similar property in a non-waterside location, canal and riverside properties enjoy an uplift in value of nearly 20%.

Separate studies by English Heritage show that places with a rich history and perceived importance enjoy enhanced residential and commercial value and have a strong sense of identity.

Heritage matters because people enjoy it; it enriches their lives. Surveys show that 98% of British Waterways’ visitors view the inland waterways as part of the nation’s heritage.”

England’s Historic Waterways: A Working Heritage, British Waterways and English Heritage joint publication 2009

Action Plan

Plan period	Action – Completing the historic docks
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with CW&CC and Peel in drawing-up their plans • Reinstating the canal arm could provide more of a ‘destination’ to draw boats up the canal and also possibly a marina location for modern boats (with the Lower Basin/Museum area reserved for traditional craft) • Comment on any planning applications submitted
2013-2015	Comment on any planning applications submitted
2015-2020	Comment on any planning applications submitted

1.3 Conserving, Managing & Developing the National Waterways Collection and Archive

National Waterways Archive at Ellesmere Port

The National Waterways Archive comprises records held at The National Waterways Museum and the Gloucester Waterways Museum.

In 2009 the archive team undertook a complete review of the archive at the National Waterways Museum (under the Kingfisher project). This project had the following benefits:

- It gave a clear way forward for the future care, management and accessibility of the archives
- Those working in the archive learnt the different documentation systems used in the management of the collections – allowing all documentation to be brought into line with professional standards
- It allowed physical access to the collections to be improved
- It allowed the collections to be made more widely available via online resources and outreach activities
- It included the production of a 5-year action plan to continue the archive improvement work

The five-year action plan runs from April 2009 to March 2014. It is providing the basis for future collections management and contributes to the museum’s strategic objectives.

The aims of the action plan are to:

- upgrade collection quality
- improve preservation
- further improve access to collections
- integrate the archive into museum activities

- upgrade the visitor experience
- exploit secondary resources, and
- access further funding resources

The large amount of secondary material that emerged in the review has been arranged in the newly created library next to the actual archive, which is run by volunteers. This provides the friendly face to the resources available and frees-up further space for the remaining archive material. The opening hours of the library extend beyond those of the archive, making many of the resources more accessible, whilst enabling the archive team to deal with enquiries and open-up the archives to more people.

The National Waterways Archive at Gloucester

Much of the material held at Gloucester is owned by British Waterways and on loan to the National Waterways Museum. Current storage and access arrangements are not ideal and there is a commitment on the part of The Waterways Trust and British Waterways to bring all the records together at the National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port. Having the Museum as the major location for the national archive is a key element of becoming 'the leading Waterways Museum in the UK'.

The location and requirements for the move of the archive from Gloucester have already been identified and it will require financing from British Waterways, currently under consideration.

In the longer term – and depending on other aspects of the Plan – the archive could be relocated to a less prominent location within the Museum – because it is less likely to be a focus for the casual visitor. The Dock Offices have potential for this use in the longer term.

The Boat Collection

The Boat Collection lies at the heart of the National Waterways Museum, physically and symbolically. The collection has been analysed and a programme of improvements and potential disposals set-out. Repairs to the Collection are being carried out as part of the Heritage Boatyard project described below.

As part of the ongoing programme of maintenance, interpretation and improved public access, a need has been identified for a covered area to store and display boats. This was the subject of a thorough and detailed report in February 2008 which described how the process of analysing the requirements for preservation, conservation, display and interpretation of all the boats in the collection had determined that a number of particularly fragile and historic boats would need to be preserved intact, under cover and protected from the weather.

The report pointed out that at the same time these boats can be displayed and interpreted for the public ('the hull, bow, stern, deck and superstructure, hold engine and cabins') which may require two-level access. The report stated that the building(s) should be accessible to all, with scope to accommodate at least two wide boats and four narrowboats plus interpretation material and room for groups, including school parties, to be taken around the exhibits.

As well as being important for the Collection, the creation of a covered area of this type could have value in making the Museum an attractive location to visit even in bad weather and hence increase the number of visitors and make it even more attractive for school visits.

Twelve different options were assessed in the original 2008 report.

In the light of a new focus on the regeneration of the whole Waterfront area (described in Chapter 5) and a more recent review of the status of boats in the collection it is felt that the findings of this 2008 study should be taken into account in the overall plans for future uses in and around the Museum.

Covered Boat Storage

There is a need for a large covered area for the storage and display of restored boats from the Collection. This needs to be taken into account in future work on new uses in and around the Museum.

Heritage Boatyard

This is a key development at the National Waterways Museum in the period 2010–2012. A business plan has been prepared.

The Heritage Boatyard Partnership has four aims:

- The conservation of the National Historic Collection held by the Museum
- The establishment of a training and skills centre involving young people, centred on the Collection and in the future working on other non-collection historical boats
- To deliver increased credibility, vibrancy and profile for the Museum (and in doing so become a National Centre of Excellence for Historical Boat renovation and conservation)
- To deliver an enhanced exhibition and experience for the visitor by displaying and interpreting the restoration work

Collections Plan

The National Waterways Collection is designated as nationally important. British Waterways owns much of the collection at Gloucester and Stoke Bruerne, whilst the Boat Museum Trust owns the collection at Ellesmere Port. The National Waterways Archive forms part of the Designated collection. As noted previously British Waterways owns the archive records held in Gloucester and the Boat Museum Trust owns records in Ellesmere Port. All the British Waterways and Boat Museum Trust owned material is on long term loan.

This disparate ownership makes it important that there is a clear and coherent approach to the collection. The appointment of the Collections Manager is a reflection of the importance of this area to the Museum as a whole. The Collections manager is drawing-up a plan for the Collection. This should ensure that:

- the Museum secures and retains accreditation
- the Museum's collections are of the scale, quality and diversity appropriate to a 'national' Museum
- the presentation and interpretation of the Collection is in line with the vision for the Museum
- the maintenance and development of the Collection is built into the Museum's operational and volunteer plans
- the Collection is marketed as part of the coherent National Waterways Museum marketing

Action Plans

Plan period	Action – securing and improving the Archive
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the five-year action plan (2009-2014) for the Museum archive Continue with plans to move the archive from Gloucester
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the five-year action plan (2009-2014) for the Museum archive Continue with plans to move the archive from Gloucester (if not achieved by 2012) Draw-up plans to move archive to Dock offices (if available)
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move archive to permanent location in Dock offices (if available)

Plan period	Action – site for the display of restored boats
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the 2008 study to ensure that the needs remain as expressed at that time Support the review of uses in and around the Museum area to ensure that the needs of the Boat collection are met Determine a suitable location in agreement with partners
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If viable, take implementation plan forward
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete implementation and open new facility to the public (if not complete by 2015)

Plan period	Action – conserving, managing and developing the Museum's collections
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collections Manager develops a plan for the Collection and prioritises work for years 1-3 Plan rolled forward each year to give an annual work programme
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collections Plan implemented
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collections Plan implemented

1.4 Promoting increased navigation to and through the Museum.

- Provide better facilities for boats coming to the Museum – showers, increased visitor moorings, leaflet explaining where local shops and facilities are and other initiatives to support boat use
- Improve security for boats moored at the Museum
- Improve the attractiveness of the route between Ellesmere Port and Chester through improvements to and alongside the towpath
- Secure repair of the Ship Gate Lock and improve arrangements for opening of Swing bridge (CW&CC responsibility)
- Consider arranging Cheshire Ring weekend(s) with arranged convoys down Ship Canal on particular weekends and through Anderton lift. Promote/support horseboating
- Create a marina in Lower Dock Basin (possibly as a first stage using the Island adjacent to Holiday Inn before full development of Marina)

1.5 Promoting the history of the National Waterways Museum and Waterways.

Exhibitions, exhibits and talks on the physical, economic and social history of the site, the town and waterways generally (particularly the Manchester Ship Canal).

The Boat Museum Society currently provides speakers to a large variety of organisations explaining about the Museum, its collections and the activities of the volunteers. This is regarded as an important facet of the Museum's 'community links' strategy.

1.6 Promoting the use of the waterways.

- Experience/training for new boaters
- Activities for visitors to teach them about waterways and give them confidence to try for themselves (for example going through the locks, manoeuvring in Lower Basin)
- Experience/training for those wishing to improve boating skills
- Training in Maintenance for boat owners including where appropriate tool hire for specialist tools
- Information on different historic boats for owner enthusiasts restoring their own
- Promoting routes, trips, knowledge and information spread around the locality, including through use of boats going out from the Museum to events

(See also Chapter 2 in respect of the involvement of young people).

1.7 Facilitating the use and study of the waterways.

- Through promoting easy use of the archive (described above)
- Best bookshop on waterways
- Best map shop on waterways
- Waterways DVDs and audio information for sale
- Online presence as an authoritative source of information on waterways with links to relevant sites and online book and map shop

1.8 Leadership on waterways matters.

Local leadership in respect of:

- environmental and boating improvement of routes around the Museum
- improved access on routes around the Museum (locks & bridge Lower Basin, Ship Canal and Cheshire Ring)

National leadership in respect of:

- the role as the National Waterways Museum
- the expertise of the volunteers and paid employees on waterways matters
- the expertise on Boat repair being built-up through the Heritage Boatyard
- the expertise on running a canal-based site and museum with volunteers and Trust workers working together

1.9 Education on waterways matters.

- For schools, visitors, waterways users and enthusiasts

There is a need to further develop the formal learning offer for KS1 and KS2 as well as developing new offers for other key stages. This development will be helped considerably by strengthening the Museum's relationship with the Ellesmere Port Education Improvement Partnership.

By 2020, there should be a well-established and vibrant informal learning programme for adults and children. This will comprise a wide range of activities from self-guided trails to structured group sessions delivered by specialist tutors. Building on recent successful projects, the Museum will

work with West Cheshire College to develop the programme, to secure funding to support their delivery and accreditation where this is appropriate. Other relevant partners should also be considered, eg, other colleges, Cheshire West & Chester's Extended Services, museums/attractions.

The Museum would also like to continue to work with Let's Go Outdoor Learning and Adventure to develop and deliver packages of activities for schools and other groups which include water sports and other adventure activities on and off site.

In order to develop the potential for learning at the Museum, it will be necessary to develop the resources. Exact requirements will depend on the scale of the programmes but at a minimum, a full-time Learning Officer will be needed.

Action Plan

Plan period	
2010-2012	Learning Plan developed and agreed with prioritised three-year Action Plan. Reviewed each year
2013-2015	Learning Plan implemented
2015-2020	Learning Plan implemented

1.10 Training on waterways matters.

In the period up to 2020, the Museum will continue to develop the training role it has created through the Heritage Boatyard.

External funding will be used where possible to support the creation of training placements. Trainees on these placements, and students from other courses, such as those provided by West Cheshire College, will be provided with work and skills training through a programme of work on traditional canal craft. Where appropriate training will be accredited.

In the first instance, the work is focused on the restoration of the Museum's own internationally important collection of historic canal craft but it is planned that the Boatyard will be able to provide specialist expertise to other boatyards and boat owners as well as some commercial boat repair in the period up to 2020.

The detailed planning and management of the Heritage Boatyard has been set-up through a specific business planning process. A partnership and a management group oversee the strategy for the Boatyard which involves the Collections Manager and the Boatyard Supervisor as well as a great deal of input from volunteers.

The Heritage Boatyard provides an important area of interest for visitors to the Museum with activity and scope for explaining more about the craft. This contribution to the whole Museum experience (set out in more detail in Chapter 5) will be an important facet of the development of the Historic Boatyard up to 2020.

Action Plan

Plan period	
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw up business plan and strategy for the Heritage Boatyard• Secure funding to support the development of the Heritage Boatyard and trainee placements. Project start-up and business planning• Establish working practices under stewardship of boatyard supervisor and in association with West Cheshire College• Draw-up a Phase 2 plan for the operation of the Boatyard (possibly including: improved welfare and other facilities? Commercial boat repairs? Even greater involvement of young people? Donors/sponsors of materials?)
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the Heritage Boatyard Strategy• Ensure the contribution of the Boatyard to the visitor experience is exploited
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the Heritage Boatyard Strategy• Heritage boatyard meeting its objectives

CHAPTER 2 - THE MUSEUM AS A FOCUS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Aim

By 2020 at the latest, the National Waterways Museum will be a major focus for young people meeting their needs and aspirations through experiencing the waterways

The National Waterways Museum has several reasons to consider how its activities can meet the needs of young people:

- Waterways generally and the National Waterways Museum in particular are under-used resources in terms of the opportunities they provide for activity, learning, development and leisure opportunities for young people
- The National Waterways Museum is located in an area where many communities suffer economic and social need with consequent impacts on local young people
- The Museum, canal and towpath all suffer to some extent from the impact of anti-social behaviour and there are concerns about young people 'hanging around'
- The volunteer force on which waterways, and the National Waterways Museum in particular, relies is ageing. Attracting new young volunteers will ensure a sustainable future. Involving young people can bring multiple benefits and this can be developed through the Youth Involvement Strategy
- The scope for involving young people has been demonstrated by the success of the Waterways Action Squad which has engaged over 350 young people since July 2009. This has shown that there is real interest among young people; the Museum can build on this and continue to develop provision

Given this important background in the period up to 2020, a key strand of the National Waterways Museum Development Plan will be to create a Youth Activity Centre at the National Waterways Museum. It is intended that this venture will be named by the young people involved in it so that they feel ownership from the outset.

The Youth Activity Centre seeks to build on the successful work to date of the Waterways Action Squad youth volunteering project, develop the role of the National Waterways Museum within the local community and increase activity on the site. This youth-led programme of activities based at the Museum is in line with the Youth Involvement Strategy currently under development through the Waterways Action Squad for The Waterways Trust and British Waterways. This strategy proposes a shift in focus for future youth involvement work from youth participation to youth leadership.

The Youth Activity Centre will build on and further develop relationships with a range of partners including the local authority and Primary Care Trust, voluntary sector organisations, young people's services and existing volunteers. The exact name and structure of the new Centre will be decided in consultation with young people.

The Centre aims to empower young people (initially 16-25 year olds) to take a lead on the creation and delivery of diverse opportunities for themselves and their peers to enjoy, explore and engage with waterways. They will be trained and supported to lead community consultations – to identify need and inform the development of the Centre.

This Centre will focus on the needs and aspirations of young people with the aim of inspiring them and making waterways relevant to their lives. The Centre will enable/empower young people to get involved in waterways through an approach that puts them in the driving seat, is open, welcoming and provides multiple opportunities for their enjoyment, fulfilment, progression and leadership.

Through their participation in the Centre and the experiences it offers young people will have the opportunity to:

- enjoy the outdoors and new opportunities
- discover and value the waterways
- learn about history, heritage and the natural environment
- develop new life skills
- participate in flexible informal learning experiences
- experience inter-generational working
- share their new skills with other young people
- help other young people to benefit from the waterways
- lead in the development of their own centre

The planning of the work of the Centre will ensure that it provides a high quality consistent experience for young people, with a clear development pathway (if they wish to take up that opportunity), linking wherever possible with accredited training.

Young people will play a major role in the creation, development, delivery and evaluation of the Centre.

The experiences we see as the initial offer through the Youth Activity Centre, could include (depending on what emerges from community consultations):

Getting on the waterways – a journey which provides a progression of experience from taster to more substantial experience

- Travelling on the canal in a visitor trip boat
- Assisting with a canal boat trip
- Independent experiences on the water in canoes
- Travelling in a supervised group for a camping boating trip
- Learning the full range of skills to manage a canal boat
- Gaining qualifications in canal boat navigation
- Taking out the Museum's trip boat with visitors
- Taking out other young people (eg, young carers) on a camping boating trip

Life on the Waterways

- Restoring and maintaining boats
- Restoring, maintaining and improving the Museum's buildings and artefacts

- Crochet, rag-rugging, ropework and fender-making
- Painting and the arts
- Understanding and interpreting waterways to others

Shaping up around the waterways

- Activity on the towpath – cycling, running, trailing
- Healthy eating

Having events around the Waterways

- Creating new experiences for the enjoyment of all – music and the performing arts, celebrations of the waterway environment and heritage

These activities are not mutually exclusive – for example, canoeing will also contribute to health and fitness – and hopefully all the activities will be good fun.

They will need new resources and new participants to develop and deliver a sustainable programme. The existing Museum team is already at capacity and needs to be nurtured in its early stages.

The steps in creating a Youth Activity Centre are:

- to create a partnership to develop and deliver the youth centre and its experiences
- to determine appropriate specialist partner providers to become part of the partnership who can deliver the more challenging parts of the experiences with appropriate quality and security
- through the Waterways Action Squad and other local routes, to engage and draw-in young people to deliver leadership and governance
- to create and fund a co-ordinator post to ensure delivery of activity at the Centre. (Now recruited, started September 2010)
- to identify, prepare and equip suitable space within the Museum complex to provide a base for the Youth Activity Centre
- to create a capital budget for the equipment for the experiences (for example, a camping boat)
- to create a small revenue budget to pump prime grant-funded and other day-to-day activity
- to make contact with other organisations and agencies who may wish to support the Youth Activity Centre as a means of helping young people with issues such as health, economic and social development
- develop a full funding strategy and three-year plan

Action Plan

Plan period	Creating a Youth Activity Centre
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a co-ordinator to support a core group of young people to develop the Youth Activity Centre • Recruit a body of young people to lead community consultations to identify the needs of local people and inform the development of the Centre • Establish the Youth Activity Centre partnership • Identify and procure specialist providers to deliver experiences for the centre • Identify a location for the Youth Activity Centre • Seek funding to develop the centre and create budgets

Action Plan (continued)

2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue the development of the range of experiences and the numbers of young people involved and benefitting• Seek funding to enhance the development of the Centre• Establish robust training and development plans for participants seeking further development• Establish links with similar facilities in the region• Produce a five-year development plan
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement development plan

CHAPTER 3 – A FACILITY FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Aim

By 2020 at the latest, the National Waterways Museum will be a well-loved facility for local people where they can relax, learn and develop

The National Waterways Museum provides a location and venue for local people from the town, Wirral, Chester and further afield to enjoy the open air, to have social events, to learn skills, history and technical skills, and volunteer to enhance the Museum and its collections.

The scope for developing greater familiarity with the waterways, and for education and training, is covered in Chapter 1. Volunteering is covered in Section 4.

Public access across the Museum site

The town of Ellesmere Port, despite its name, does not really recognise its key location where the inland waterways meet the Mersey (now via the Ship Canal).

The motorway embankment visually and physically separates the residential areas of the town, the town centre and the major public transport nodes from the waterfront.

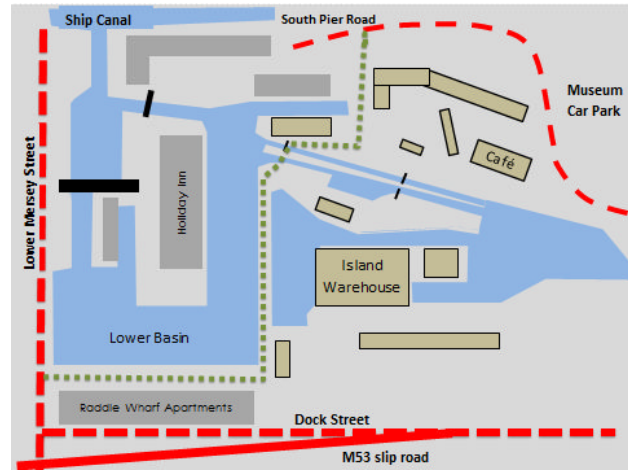
Local people are not readily able to enjoy the views and shipping interest around the Museum site, along the Ship Canal and across the Mersey because of the limited access routes in the area. The Museum's pay barrier is a major obstacle to improving public access around this area.

The Museum aspires to improve public access around and across the Museum site and its environs but there are a number of considerations in doing so:

- The current limitations on public access are due to the Museum's pay barrier. Securing payment from the public wishing to enter this area provides a very significant contribution to the Museum's running costs. The existing and anticipated income from visitors paying to come into the current Museum would need to be replaced from other sources if this barrier to public access were to be removed
- The security of the Museum buildings and the boats would need to be ensured for example by closing the site at night
- The legal status of the opened walkways, including responsibility for their cleaning, maintenance and any injury to pedestrians, would need to be clear

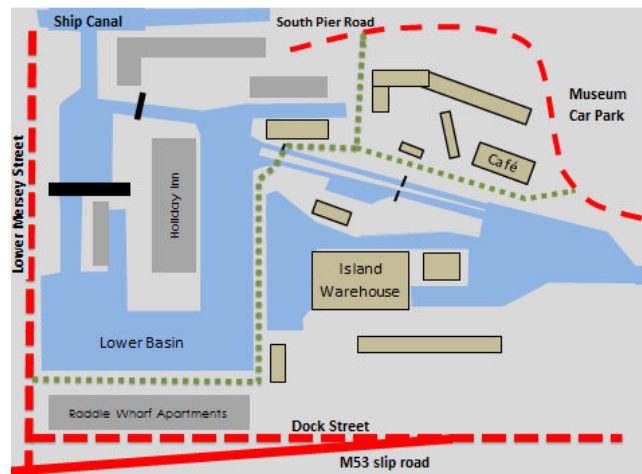
If these issues can be resolved there could be a staged approach to the increasing public access. This could run alongside a changed approach to charging visitors (for example charging to enter particular buildings only) or the replacement of income from entry fees with funding/income from other sources.

Potential stages in improving public pedestrian access across the site are illustrated below:



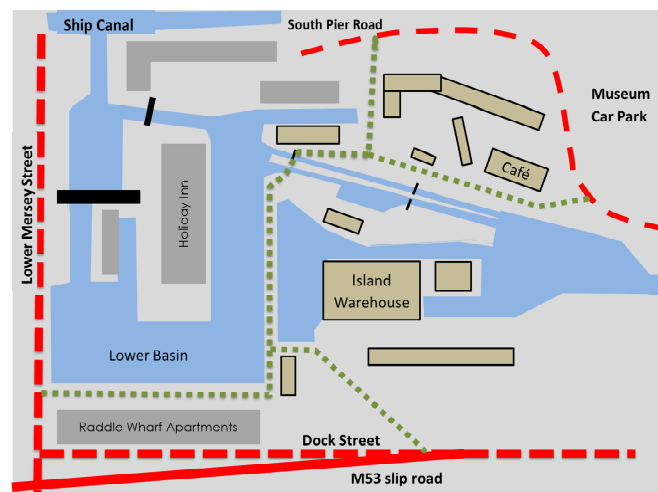
Stage 1

Stage 1. Provide a routeway along Raddles Wharf – along edge of Lower Basin – across new bridge by locks and out of the gate by the Craft Workshops on to South Pier Road.



Stage 2

Stage 2. Add to Stage 1 route the option of going alongside the locks and the front of the café and out of the gate onto the approach road.



Stage 3

Stage 3. Public access across whole site opened-up except for Island Warehouse and routes through the Boatyard.

Stage 4. Complete public access to the areas around the buildings during day time (safety and security permitting).

In all cases, access to particular specialist Museum areas (e.g., Island Warehouse) may require payment and bar coded ticket but these will be set in an area of public access.

Action Plan

Plan period	
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Peel Holdings to draw up a strategy for the whole Ellesmere Port Waterfront area to include plans for the creation of free access across the Museum site
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the strategy to allow free access through the suggested stage approach if necessary
2015- 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise free access across the Museum site

Walkway along the Ship Canal

As well as the Museum site, the Ship Canal offers a great deal of interest and an attractive location for walks for local people and visitors.

Enhanced by access across the Museum facilitating circular walks, the banks of the Ship Canal can be developed into an attractive walkway to see the views, the birdlife, the industry and the shipping.

Action Plan

Plan period	
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Peel Holdings to draw-up a strategy for the whole Ellesmere Port Waterfront area to include plans for the creation of a walkway along the Ship Canal frontage
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the strategy to create the walkway
2015- 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the walkway in the environs of the Museum

CHAPTER 4 – A MUSEUM BUILT ON AN INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP

Aim

By 2020 at the latest, the National Waterways Museum will be an exemplar of a forward-looking partnership of volunteers, staff agencies and companies.

Background

The Waterways Trust took over operation of the Ellesmere Port Museum in 1999 with the original bodies – the Boat Museum Trust and the Boat Museum Society – continuing to play an active role in the museum.

L&R Consulting carried out a strategic review of the operation of The Waterways Trust in 2006. One of its key recommendations was to move away from the existing model with conventional static text-based displays and work in partnership across the waterways network through outreach, learning programmes and loans to encourage active participation and engage with a wide range of new audiences. It called this approach a 'Museum without Walls'.

In recent years, this new approach has started to come to fruition.

The Museum aspires to develop and grow in the ways set-out in this Development Plan but to do so in an economically secure and sustainable way. The recent trends for the Museum have been positive but it remains fragile in economic terms and subject to any impacts arising from recession and reduced public sector support as well as the impact on visitor numbers of bad weather in the visitor season.

Volunteering

Volunteers have always been at the centre of the Museum's existence and successes. It was the volunteers who, through sheer hard work and determination, established the Museum in the 1970's. Today there is an effective partnership between volunteers and staff to promote, support, manage and deliver the Museum's aims and objectives.

Volunteering opportunities range from boat restoration to research in the archives, from day-to-day gardening and maintenance, to interpreting history.

Volunteers are also represented and play a very active role in the management of the Museum through committees ranging from the Museums Management Board to Health and Safety committees.

The core of the Museum's volunteers are members of the Boat Museum Society but it also has community groups playing an active part at the Museum as well as younger volunteers through the Waterways Action Squad and volunteers who may be looking for the opportunity to enhance their CVs to assist them in finding permanent paid work.

In the last year, the Museum has had over 100 local people volunteering and the intention is to exceed 200 volunteers in the future. To ensure the museum develops volunteering opportunities effectively, recruitment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator is being treated as an urgent priority.

Action Plan

Plan period	
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with 100+ volunteers, develop volunteer partnership further and fund/recruit Volunteer Co-ordinator
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand volunteer numbers to 200+ and develop further quality volunteering opportunities
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain volunteer numbers at 200+

Operating the Museum

The preparation of this Development Plan has revealed a keen sense amongst many at the Museum to 'pull together' to improve the Museum and secure the future of its collection – staff and volunteers, different interest groups and different agencies.

This new partnership approach, which integrates volunteers with employees in strategic and operational issues, is widely regarded as the key to securing the future of the Museum and its collections.

As described in the section on volunteering above, there is an effective partnership between volunteers and staff to promote, support, manage and deliver the Museum's aims and objectives. There is a joint commitment to establishing and creating high standards of operation, safety and visitor experience whilst making the Museum an enjoyable place to be for volunteers and employees.

Action Plan

Plan period	
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify and streamline the internal planning and information processes to allow volunteers to be informed and involved whilst avoiding excessive meetings Continue the development and integration of induction and training programmes to secure motivated and well-informed employees and volunteers Use the volunteer co-ordinator (see action plan for Volunteering above) to work with General Manager to draw-up integrated operational plans
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement agreed operational plans
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement agreed operational plans

Marketing, Promotion and Communications

The National Waterways Museum is in an enviable location – nearly 20 million people live within a two-hour car journey of the Museum. Transport links are excellent, with a motorway junction and railway station within half a mile and broader rail and air links within easy reach. The nearest cities of Liverpool and Chester are important holiday and weekend break destinations and, of course, the Museum's location on the Shropshire Union Canal makes it ideal for boaters to visit. Therefore, tapping into the potential markets and building on the current visitor levels of around 30,000 per year, is the main objective of Marketing, Promotions and Communications over the coming years.

General Marketing Activity

Marketing activity over the next few years of the Museum's development will be focused on cementing the brand in the mind of the public. The current National Waterways Museum brand has been in existence for a number of years but the Museum lacks public profile and as a result many visitors, media, key partners and local residents are not clear about the name and brand. Therefore, marketing activity over the next few years of the Museum's development, will concentrate on the basic brand and offer.

Brand, logo and image

The current National Waterways Museum brand, logo and image will be subject to one update and one larger re-interpretation during the scope of this development plan. It is generally advisable in marketing to undertake regular refreshment of a brand image and therefore a similar process will be undertaken for the Museum for the 2012 or 2013 season which will give a refreshed logo and colour palette. Towards the end of the scope of this Plan, the Museum will undertake extensive research and commission a more significant change to the look and image of the museum – the timing and scope of this will depend on the overall museum situation at the time.

Communications and PR

Regular press releases to local, regional, national, specialist and trade press to ensure that the Museum's messages are communicated widely. To general interest readers, the Museum will present itself as an authentic family day out whereas to the more specialist audience it will highlight its status as a centre of excellence for canal history and conservation. The Museum will also continue working with tourism partners such as Visit Chester and Cheshire, Favourite Days Out in Cheshire and the Mersey Partnership, in order to ensure that it is part of all national PR campaigns which draw visitors to the North West.

In the short-term, this strategy will be focused on branding its brand and core values when communicating to its wider partners but in time the focus will shift onto explaining other sections of its development agenda.

Websites and social media

The pace of change on the internet is fast and without constant work websites soon become outdated. The current National Waterways Museum website, while well-written and stylish, will soon require a significant structural update in order to remain competitive.

Therefore, redesigning and remaking this site is a priority for the next two years. Facebook and Twitter sites have already been created and are gaining momentum, with online videos to be uploaded in the next few months.

In the longer-term, there is much that can be done with videos and podcasting and the Museum will take steps to ensure that it has the skills and technology to help it take advantage of these developments.

Web development and the use of new technology will become an increasingly key area of marketing activity in the period up to 2020 and such is the pace of development, it is difficult to predict what will have changed by then. However, what the Museum can and will commit to is being skilled and flexible so that it is able to understand and take advantage of new technology when it becomes possible.

Events

The events calendar will be enhanced and streamlined in order to enhance the visitor experience on regular weekends. A consistent series and standard of events will be established which can be marketed and promoted throughout the year with confidence and will help create a core of regular visitors to the museum. Within the scope of this development plan is the aspiration to become a free museum and a range of high quality special events for which visitors can be charged admission will become a vital revenue stream.

Action Plan

Plan period	
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased brand awareness through advertising and PR work• Establish a regular customer newsletter and consistent events• Develop new Marketing Strategy to run to 2015
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revitalise website and expand web presence• Diversify and boost quality of events and everyday activities at the museum• Cement new partnerships
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise brand and image and develop marketing strategy to account for museum development

The Museum Experience

Improvements are constantly being made to interpretation and signing around the Museum. In addition, staff and volunteers provide personal contact for visitors by explaining the site, the Collection and exhibits. Improved written information is also being made available in terms of site plans for visitors and a guide book.

It is acknowledged that increased animation in and around the site is an attraction to visitors, as well as reflecting the fact that volunteers, trainees and/or visitors or school trips are enjoying the Museum through their activities.

Volunteers run boats up and down the locks, the engines in the Power Hall are run, volunteers in custom interpret Porters Row cottages and the work going on in the Heritage Boatyard all provides interest for the visitor.

In the period up to 2020 it is planned that further animation and interpretation can be provided to enhance the visitor experience.

Action Plan

Plan period	
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an interpretation plan for the Museum• Use the operational planning process under 'Operating the Museum' above to further develop and resource regular activity and interpretation around the site
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the plans for interpretation and activity
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the plans for interpretation and activity

Finances

The National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port is part of The Waterways Trust. The Waterways Trust itself is supported in part by a grant from British Waterways and is vulnerable to reductions in, or loss of that grant. The Waterways Trust seeks external grant and sponsorship support for the Museum.

Particular projects and initiatives carried out by volunteers within the Museum are periodically supported financially by contributions from the Boat Museum Society.

The Museum, including curatorial expenses, ended the financial year 2009/10 with a deficit of £244.7k which was £102.7k greater than that expected in the overall Waterways Trust budget for the year. Trading and admissions income contributed a total of £146.4k to the running costs of the Museum activity. However these figures do not reflect a steady state operation which should include, amongst other things, a provision for long term cyclical maintenance liabilities. The Museum also has a backlog of maintenance which has developed over many years. Work is needed to assess these as a base for an improvement plan.

Given this background, establishing a financially-sustainable museum will in itself require a significant injection of reliable year-on-year revenue funding in addition to continuing to take every opportunity to reduce costs through greater efficiencies or innovative new approaches (for example reviewing the scope for on-site power generation).

The Waterways Trust three-year Business Plan for 2010-2013, has as an objective 'to establish a re-energised, sustainable National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port ... we aspire for the museum to be free to visit'. If public access to all parts of the site without payment is introduced the loss of admissions income would apparently make the financial situation even worse. However, if alternative revenue-generating activities can be created on the site to support the Museum whilst enhancing the visitor experience, then a financially-sustainable model could be established.

In order to further explore these opportunities, the Museum is working with Cheshire West and Chester Council to develop a business plan for the Museum. This business plan will explore new activities and potential for commercial uses in and around the current Museum site to support the Museum and explore the scope for free access.

Action Plan

Plan period	
2010-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw in more visitors through improvement of the Museum as an attraction• Extensive marketing both locally and nationally• Review the retail, catering and conference facilities and improve spend per visitor
2013-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of new opportunities on site, including a marina• Potential for staged removal of pay barrier to commence, subject to alternative funding being secured
2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay barrier removal through increased trading income generation and external financial support

CHAPTER 5 – A MAJOR VISITOR ATTRACTION

Aim

By 2020, the National Waterways Museum will be a nationally important visitor destination

Canals and rivers are a tourist attraction in their own right as well as connecting other attractions. The waterway heritage forms a significant part of the tourism offer within the UK, attracting more than 270 million visits to the British Waterways' network per annum and contributing up to £1.2bn to the visitor economy (with potential for growth to £2bn by 2012)'.

England's Historic Waterways: A Working Heritage - Promoting High Quality Waterside Development, British Waterways and English Heritage Joint Publication 2009

At its peak in 1985, the museum attracted 105,000 visitors, whilst in 2006/7 this had fallen to 25,000. In 2009/10 the Museum attracted 31,488 visitors.

In the context of the current operation the Museum Business Plan aims for incremental growth in visitors to 32,050 by 2012/13. However, the aspirations set-out in the Development Plan for 2020 require a step change in visitor growth. Public access will clearly provide the opportunity for more visitors to move around the site and enjoy current and planned attractions.

This Development Plan therefore aspires to reach once again the peak of visitor numbers of the mid-1980s with over 100,000 visitors per annum by 2020.

In the context of the proposed regeneration of Ellesmere Port town and the Waterfront the National Waterways Museum is a strategic asset and the jewel in the crown of the Ellesmere Port Waterfront which is the focus of the early stages of a major regeneration strategy for Ellesmere Port.

The Museum has a concentration of listed buildings in a waterfront setting which together provide a unique historic environment and the most complete canal port in the country.

Located between Liverpool, Cheshire and Chester and with immediate motorway access onto the M53, the Museum has a vast potential catchment of visitors.

The Museum and its water and buildings, together with the adjacent Peel housing site and vacant and under-used land in the Council's ownership, provide scope for a transformation development which will kick start an image changing revival of Ellesmere Port and the whole M53 corridor.

“Using historic buildings as a catalyst for regeneration creates wealth and jobs and adds further value to a waterside location. It can also reinvigorate a place with a fresh sense of purpose and occasion.”

England's Historic Waterways: A Working Heritage - Promoting High Quality Waterside Development, British Waterways and English Heritage Joint Publication 2009

The Museum is part of a partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council, Peel Holdings and Visit Chester and Cheshire to see a visitor-led regeneration of the Ellesmere Port Waterfront area within the context of a major regeneration plan for the whole of Ellesmere Port. The partnership has prepared a draft vision for the area.

Ellesmere Port Waterfront Vision

The vision for the Ellesmere Port Waterfront will be....

- A leisure destination and location of regional significance
- A catalyst for the regeneration of the whole town
- An exciting and high quality waterside environment
- Historic buildings of outstanding quality conserved
- Excellent modern architecture

...building on its history and heritage around the canal port.

The Museum is seen by all parties as a key part of the regeneration vision.

In order to secure a stable economic future for the Museum with enhanced visitor experience and complementing the plans for the Waterfront area, a planning process is underway with the Council and Peel Holdings (with further specialist advice where necessary). This will examine how improved public access, new visitor attractions and greater commercial uses can be accommodated within the conservation area (i.e., the current Museum site and wider area) to the benefit of the Museum, the Waterfront and the town.

The purpose of this joint planning process on the regeneration of the Waterfront is to:

- Take forward the recommendations of the Amion *'Regeneration Scoping Report'* for Ellesmere Port August 2009 which recommended the commissioning of a Business Plan for the Museum to guide its transformation to a sustainable financial position and help its integration with the proposed Peel development. The report noted that the Plan should show the steps needed to achieve this, the financial consequences that arise and how the necessary investment might be funded. The report also highlighted the weakness of the Museum's current financial position and dependency on British Waterways funding which was at risk in the short-term.
- Embrace the Vision for the Ellesmere Port Waterfront, the Vision and Aims of the National Waterways Museum Development Plan and the aspirations of all partners

- Encompass the opportunities presented by the Museum, Conservation Area, Car Park and related areas, whether within or outside the Museum's current lease area
- Develop a revised operating model for the National Waterways Museum that builds on all that has been achieved in the last two or three years in partnership with the volunteers
- Identify how new income can be generated from developments on and around the National Waterways Museum's current lease area to secure the economic future of the museum, e.g., a marina, commercial uses for property associated with the historic dock, appropriate development opportunities for the car park site
- Set-out a plan for opening-up the waterfront and the National Waterways Museum site for greater public access, consistent with running the Museum as a viable attraction, including progression to free admission on all or most of the site and buildings
- Set-out the wider regenerative benefits for the town and area from carrying out the recommended actions
- Develop a sustainable business model for the Museum to operate on a financially-secure basis with adequate reserves to cope with seasonal and weather-related variations in visitor numbers without subsidy from British Waterways (which is at risk)
- Set-out an implementation plan including recommendations for securing any transition funding needed to for the Museum to move from its current position to the new operating model

The findings of this work will be incorporated into an updated version of this Development Plan.