

EA - Anglian Box 12

The Fens Waterways Tourism Regeneration Project

The Environment Agency, Fens Tourism, East of England Development Agency, East Midland Development Agency, East Anglian Waterways Association, the Inland Waterways Association and all the Local Authorities in the region.

Partnership

Each serve different purposes yet find a shared vision in the Cathedral Cities Route through:

- Rural Regeneration
- Tourism
- Employment and economic diversity
- A valuable, socially inclusive leisure and educational amenity
- Habitat creation
- Potential for commercial water freight traffic



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The Environment Agency's aim is to manage the healthy growth of waterways for leisure, business, local communities and wildlife.

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CATHEDRAL Cities Link



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A new route The creation of a new navigation ring through the cathedral cities of eastern England will be an enormously exciting addition to the waterways of the United Kingdom.

The scheme is measured and considered, and will be delivered in three distinct phases, the first of which is already complete.



Through the construction of just a few kilometres of new channels, and the renewal of some existing systems, an entirely new navigational ring will be formed. The new waterway will also serve in a flood defence role. Two existing linear navigations, previously only linked by attempting a challenging coastal passage (hazardous in boats designed for inland waters) will become part of a circular route. Its attractions will be enhanced by the prospect of visiting some of the finest architecture in Europe, a big draw to the international market.

Broad appeal This scheme uses the existing waterways of the Fens District, compounds their broad appeal through an ambitious construction project, and delivers much needed economic rural regeneration based in new tourism opportunities. Fens communities will also find opportunities to become re-engaged with their waterside amenities. Broader sustainability goals will be assisted through opportunities to develop more water-bourne commercial freight traffic through the region.

The waterway will be enjoyed as much by those accessing the banks and settlements by land as by those afloat. The scheme will bring new tourism, both through waterway users and leisure visitors who are drawn to the natural splendour and special amenity that waterside communities have to offer.



The Cathedral Cities Route linking Fens Rural Regeneration through water based tourism

The three phases

Phase 1

Improve the existing Fens waterway for tourism. £250k in partnership funding. Already delivering rural regeneration.

- New navigational facilities, including moorings and picnic sites at a number of locations on the Fens Waterways.
- A new water based circular trail with interpretation boards, a Fens tourism guide and 'branding' signage across the area.
- A pre-feasibility study for a new waterway. This report gives reassurance that the new waterway, made up of existing waterways and some new channels can be achieved.

Phase 2

Explore the implementation logistics of creating the new waterway linking the rivers via the Nene to the Ouse in Cambridgeshire and Witham in Lincolnshire. £800k in partnership funding.

The Implementation Plan for the Cathedral link will consist of:

- The appointment of a full time Project Manager.
- A full Environmental Impact Assessment.
- An Engineering Feasibility Study.
- A full Consultation Exercise.
- Work upon the funding package for capital work.s
- £600,000 of capital investment in improving the local facilities and to develop the Fens website to meet new marketing challenges.

Phase 3

The final phase is to construct the new waterway links and further improve facilities to meet international visitor expectations. £30m of capital partnership funding.

- The final and construction phase will cost some £30 million over an 8 year period, with a predicted return on investment within a further 8 years.

Start to finish The new waterway begins at Boston in Lincolnshire and ends on the Great Ouse in Cambridgeshire.

It will connect two existing linear routes:

- The Trent to the Fosdyke.
- The Nene Route, which connects to the Ouse system, the Middle Levels, and so on to Nottingham and the Grand Union Canal.

The resultant new ring, which encompasses the cathedral cities of Lincoln, Peterborough, Ely and Cambridge will be part of the Cathedral Cities Route. It will create 87km of extra navigable waterways on the Fens and make a further 160km more accessible to increased numbers of people.

