



# Putting the water into waterways

Water Resources Strategy 2015–2020

## 2017 Annual Update

Delivering a secure long-term water supply will help the Canal & River Trust (the Trust) achieve its vision of, *“living waterways that transform places and enrich lives”*. In October 2015 we published our Water Resources Strategy, ‘Putting the water into waterways’. It set out our aspirations for the period 2015–2020 as well as looking as far ahead as 2050 to understand the longer-term pressures and challenges on water supply and use. This document provides an update of our progress over the past year against the strategic actions outlined within the strategy.



Canal &  
River Trust

November 2017



## Consent to new marinas

In the Water Resources Strategy, **strategic action 3** stated that we would only give our consent to new marinas if their impact on water resources does not reduce the level of service below 1 in 20 years, i.e. we will maintain and operate the canal network so that drought closures are implemented, on average, less than once every twenty years.

Since November 2016 we have assessed 9 new marina proposals and twelve Business Boating proposals (such as hire boats or trip boats) to ensure that the additional water demands can be met without reducing the level of service below 1 in 20 years.

## Restorations and new canals

We have continued to produce and contribute to water resource assessments for proposed restorations and new canal developments to ensure there is no net impact on the level of service of our network as stated in **strategic action 4**.

In the past year, we have completed a water resource study on the Pocklington Canal Restoration. We are also currently undertaking a water resource study on the restoration of parts of the Grantham Canal, to be completed in March 2018.

We have established links with the Friends of the Cromford Canal to discuss the water management support we can offer to the restoration of the Cromford Canal.

We have continued to provide support and advice to the following third-party led restorations and new canals: the Wilts & Berks Canal (including the Melksham Link); the Daventry Canal Arm; the Ashby Canal; and the Lapal Canal.

## Modelling our canal network

In the past year, we have continued work on developing new hydrological models (using specialised industry standard software called Aquator) under **strategic action 5** to replace our current water resources model as this is now reaching the end of its functional life. We are aiming to complete the model development of 18 of the 53 hydrological units by 2018.

Our progress so far is shown on page 3. Since November 2016 we have completed models for the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, the Kennet & Avon Canal, the Trent & Mersey Canal and the Pocklington Canal hydrological units. We have nearly completed models on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Grand Union Tring and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

## Future pressures on our water resources

We continue to use the most up to date information available to assess the following pressures on our water resources (as stated in **strategic action 7**): climate change, changes in funding, environmental legislation (likely reduction in abstraction volumes) and increased network usage.

In the Water Resources Strategy, we identified the Water Act 2003 as a significant pressure, with the potential to reduce our water availability in the future. We stated that the main change that will impact on the Trust is the removal of the exemption for surface water transfers into canals. This change is now imminent with the two-year abstraction licence application window opening on 1 January 2018. The Environment Agency (EA) and Natural Resources Wales will then have three years to determine the applications. In doing so, there is a risk that a number of our existing abstractions will have conditions placed upon them that will restrict the quantities of water we can abstract, driven by the Water Framework Directive and other legislation to protect the environment. With over 250 potential licences the Trust is expecting to apply for, this will have a major impact on our future water availability.

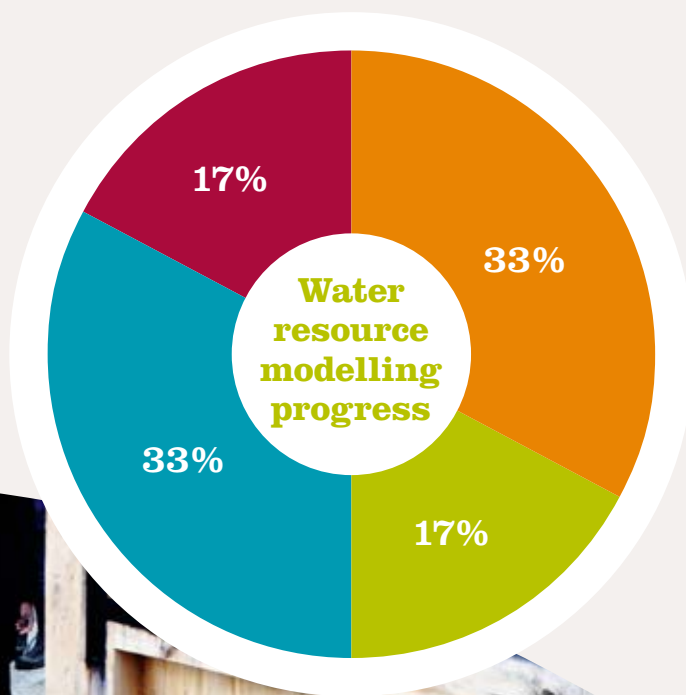
- In Progress
- Near Completion
- Completed
- Not Started

Progress on the application process and licence determination will be provided in future Water Resource Strategy Annual Updates.

We have also made progress in defining a bespoke methodology to assess climate change as a future pressure on our network, and are in the process of establishing a technical group, including both internal and external experts, to advise on this work.

We have contributed to an EA and Affinity Water led research project looking at the sustainability of abstraction within the Bulbourne Brook catchment, in which two of our groundwater supply abstractions (Northchurch and Cowroast, which supply the Grand Union Canal) are located.

We have contributed to the UK Surface and Groundwater Archive committee, highlighting the importance of our hydrometric network in the efficient management and safeguarding of our water resources against future pressures, and in particular, the Water Act 2003.





## Side ponds

We have reviewed side ponds across our network as part of **strategic action 12**. This volunteer led study produced a definitive list of side ponds on our network, to assess the water saving potential of each, and to make recommendations for future use and re-establishment.

The main findings and recommendations of this study will be reported in our next Water Resource Strategy in 2020 and will also inform other work the Trust has recently embarked on to develop a suite of individual asset strategies.

## Lock gate design and leakage

We have contributed to lock gate design improvements to take account of water control, as part of **strategic action 13**, for example, inputting into the design of sacrificial liners to prevent leakage and increase the lifespan of lock gates.

We have also fed into the Trust's draft Lock Gate Strategy, highlighting the importance of lock leakage in the prioritisation of lock gate repairs and replacement.

## What are we planning to do in the next year of the Strategy?

We are going to continue to focus on modelling our hydrological units. In parallel we will continue to identify potential schemes to help address the deficits in water resources against the agreed level of service. We will begin applying for abstraction licences required under the Water Act 2003. We will produce and publish our next annual progress report against our Water Resource Strategy (2015 to 2020) actions in November 2018.



## Links

For more information about the water management of our canals please visit our website [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-work/managing-our-water](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-work/managing-our-water) and read our *Water resources strategy: putting the water into waterways*.

Or, email your comments to [water.information@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:water.information@canalrivertrust.org.uk).

For further details and advice regarding canal restorations please read the *Environmental framework for waterway restoration projects in England and Wales*.