Old Oak Lane Towpath Access improvement project
Frequently Asked Questions

What are you planning?
The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC), in collaboration with Canal & River Trust and the London Borough of Ealing, are designing and delivering the following:

- a new generous access ramp and steps from Old Oak Lane down to the canal towpath, replacing the current muddy path. The new ramp and steps will be fully accessible for pedestrians and cyclists, and compliant with the latest accessibility standards and guidance; and
- improved planting and public realm, providing room for edible plants and wildlife.

What are the aims of the project?
OPDC's plans for the new towpath access and surrounding area will:

1) Be accessible to everyone, including pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities.
2) Enable natural habitats and wildlife to thrive.
3) Be open and welcoming, encouraging people to use and enjoy it.
4) Reflect and celebrate the area's character, be in-keeping with the canal and use materials supplied by local businesses.

Where is the site?
The existing Old Oak Lane towpath ramp and steps are located at Old Oak Lane Bridge, connecting the eastern side of Old Oak Lane with the towpath on the southern side of the Grand Union Canal.

How large is the site?
The site is 235 square metres.

Why are we changing the towpath access?
The existing towpath ramp at Old Oak Lane is old and inaccessible, with the space surrounding it underused by both people and wildlife.

The project was identified as part of OPDC's **Canal Placemaking Study** which sets out a vision for the protection and enhancement of the Grand Union Canal in Old Oak and Park Royal. The Study was developed in partnership with Canal & River Trust and the local community.

Is the ramp accessible for wheelchair users?

The existing ramp is not currently accessible for wheelchair users. We will design and deliver a new ramp and steps that will be fully accessible to all and compliant with the latest standards and guidelines.

Have you consulted disability groups?
Disability groups have been consulted as part of engagement process to inform design development.
If you would like to provide additional feedback, please do so using our online feedback survey or by contacting us directly on info@opdc.london.gov.uk.

How can I influence the plans? How will my feedback be taken into consideration?
We would welcome your views on the new towpath access project to inform our emerging design proposals. Consultation began on Tuesday 11 August 2020 and will last until 10am Monday 24 August 2020.

Please provide feedback by submitting our online feedback survey or emailing info@opdc.london.gov.uk. All comments will be considered by OPDC and our design consultants DK-CM, before we submit our planning application early September 2020.

If you include your contact details as part of the response to the online feedback form, OPDC will contact you when we submit our planning application to provide a summary of feedback received and how we have incorporated it into our plans.

What are the next steps?
We will be applying for planning approval at the beginning of September 2020. If approval is granted, we expect to begin construction from November 2020 until February 2021.

Who is determining the planning application will it go to planning committee?
OPDC is the planning authority for the area and will be determining the planning application. As OPDC's delivery unit is the applicant, the plans will need to be considered by OPDC's Planning Committee, as set out in OPDC's Scheme of Planning Delegation.

Will I have an opportunity to see the final plans?
Plans will be published for consultation as part of the statutory planning application process for 21 days following submission. You will be able to see the plans online and submit final comments. Comments from the public on the planning file will be considered by OPDC as the planning authority in determining the planning application.

How will you protect habitats and nature whilst encouraging people to use the space?
The Grand Union Canal is a key biodiversity corridor within London, providing routes and habitats for a variety of species of plants, animals and insects.

A key principle of our approach is to celebrate wildlife and enhance local biodiversity along the canal. To do this, we propose the walkways are raised to create a little 'nature reserve' beneath. Existing mature trees will be retained, along with new planting using edible and native plants, to create a place to explore for people, animals

and insects. Pockets of shade and damp, along with proposed bird boxes and insect habitats could provide a variety of habitats to protect and enrich the wildlife.

How long will construction work take and when will it take place?
Construction is expected to begin on site in November 2020 and last until February 2021.

Will you have to close the access and the towpath while work is taking place and if you do, how long for?
We will try to minimise any disruption to the canal towpath while construction takes place. Details of the construction management plan are still being developed including any potential access closures. Further detail will be made available soon.

Access to the canal on the other side of Old Oak Lane in front of The Collective will remain open throughout the works, however it should be noted that the nearest step free access to the canal is at Acton Lane (Barretts Green Road) which is 1km away along the towpath or 1.5km away via North Acton Road.

What other improvements is OPDC making to the canal?
The Old Oak Lane towpath access is part of a suite of OPDC's In the Making projects funded through a £1.2m grant from the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund aiming to deliver amongst other projects key elements of OPDC's vision for the canal set out in the Canal Placemaking Study. In addition, the following canalside projects will be delivered with the funding:

- transforming Harlesden canalside;
- delivering wayfinding and interpretation along the canal in Old Oak and Park Royal;
- delivering biodiversity and wildlife improvement along the "off-side" of the canal in Old Oak and Park Royal.

How much will this project cost?
OPDC has secured a budget of £250,000 to design and deliver the Old Oak Lane towpath access from the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund.