

Getting started

The purpose of this section is to give you early basic guidance about identifying a potential site and some issues to consider. These and other issues are developed in more detail in the [Feasibility](#) page of this website. Here we concentrate on some simple guidelines and actions that could save you time and expense down the line.

Getting to know the waterways leisure market

If you are new to the waterways, familiarise yourself with the sector. Our corporate website www.britishwaterways.co.uk and consumer website www.waterscape.com are a good starting point along with the British Marine Federation, www.britishmarine.co.uk and the monthly specialist consumer press - "Waterways World" and "Canal Boat and Inland Waterways" are available in most newsagents. Waterscape.com includes a searchable database of mooring sites, some of which show mooring prices. You will also find there a copy of BW's Terms and Conditions for Long Term Moorings.

Searching for a suitable site

Demand does vary regionally, but almost all waterways are currently experiencing a shortage of moorings. If you already have a site in mind, check its situation within the waterway network. Maps can be viewed on our corporate and consumer websites shown above. Locations with a good choice of cruising routes are generally more popular than those at the end of the line. If the lock-free cruising from the site is limited to less than 1km it is likely to create difficulties in water control and management. Sites located towards the terminus of a canal may also create difficulties in conveying the water from the supply source down to the area of increased demand. However we will assess the suitability of the location when you contact us.

Marinas which require a connection to be made 'through' our towpath will need to provide a towpath over-bridge and associated infrastructure, including access ramps on either side. This can add a significant cost to your scheme as a whole.

Planning designations and site constraints

Contact the Local Planning Authority (normally the local council) and check the Development Plan. Walk over the site to survey its main physical attributes and do some simple research of websites and local plans to identify any obvious physical constraints such as major utilities, pylons, pipeline markers, trees etc

Assessing potential revenue and viability

An estimation of the gross revenue potential of the site can be calculated by multiplying the potential gross mooring capacity by the potential mooring rate.

How many boats could it accommodate? Moorings are usually charged by length rather than berth. The average length of boat on the BW network is 13m, but this varies regionally (if you're close to a river navigation, you're likely to attract an above average proportion of cruisers compared to narrowboats; cruiser lengths are generally shorter).

The mooring fee you may be able to achieve depends on how attractive the location is to boaters and on the scale and quality of services you offer. Check the waterways press or www.waterscape.com/boating for a guide to prices in your region.

Check the financial model in our Inland Marina Investment Guide 'The investment Case' on page 14 for broad cost and revenue indicators.

Road Access

Access to the nearest public highway can be a significant cost. Initial discussions with the Highways Agency highways.gov.uk or Local Planning Authority (LPA) should provide an early indication of whether road access will be permitted and whether highway improvements will be required. They are likely to be concerned about the impact of your customers' cars on local roads.

Utilities

The cost of connecting to local services is likely to be a major cost and also diverting any services that may cross the site. You may also need to upgrade the capacity of existing services on site. You will therefore need to contact the local utility offices or arrange for a specialist surveyor to identify the necessary connections, diversions and costs.

Useful references and links

www.britishwaterways.co.uk

www.waterscape.com

British Marine Federation www.britishmarine.co.uk

Highways Agency www.highways.gov.uk

"Waterways World" publication

"Canal Boat and Inland Waterways" www.canalboatmag.co.uk.

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THINGS FURTHER?

If you have found a site and would like our initial assessment of whether a mooring scheme at your proposed site would be acceptable in principle, you should start our Application Process with the first stage, the Expression of Interest (for which there is no charge). For more information refer to the page [Our Application Process](#) of this website.

Go to next section >