

6th January 2010

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPING LOCAL MOORING STRATEGIES: PUBLIC CONSULTATION PUBLISHED ON 17TH NOVEMBER 2009: Why the consultation runs for less than 12 weeks

British Waterways decided to run this consultation for a period of less than the 12 weeks recommended in the Cabinet Office. The reasons for setting a shorter period, and our response to a request before Christmas to postpone the closing date are listed below. The Code of Practice does in fact provide for deviations: *“...deviation from the Code will, at times, be unavoidable when running a formal, written, public consultation. It is recommended that departments be open about such deviations, stating the reasons for the deviation and what measures will be employed to make the exercise as effective as possible in the circumstances”* We are being open about this deviation and explaining it.:

1. The particular subject of the consultation was not one which necessarily required public consultation. We chose to consult because the matter is closely related to the [general policy consultation](#) launched on 29th October, and we felt it would be helpful to both stakeholder and BW to have some debate on the subject. The general mooring policy consultation does run for 12 weeks, and closes on 31st January.
2. We gave warning in para 3.13 of the general policy consultation that this secondary consultation would follow and run for six weeks.
3. The reasons for choosing 6 weeks were that:
 - a. The questions are limited and specific and, we felt, not matters that would necessary be of great interest to the majority of stakeholders. This view is supported by the very small number of responses received so far compared with the number submitted for the main consultation to date.
 - b. We could not justify the additional time cost involved in running the consultation for 12 weeks: this time cost relates to the availability of project officer time: we have made this appointment for fixed period and it is important that we optimise use of his time from the start. We want to be able to move forward promptly with the establishment of the first local strategy steering group as early in 2010 as possible.
4. Following a request received in mid December for an extension to the closing date, we postponed this until 31st January to coincide with the deadline for the general policy consultation – the information was updated on the moorings consultation page of the website on 18th December. The mooring strategies consultation period was therefore increased to 10 weeks and 6 days.