

Application for Determination

Parish	Wroxham and Hoveton
Reference	BA/2014/0248/FUL Target date 15 October 2014
Location	Hoveton Great Broad, Hudsons Bay and Wroxham Island, Haughs End Road, Lower Street, Hoveton
Proposal	The creation of reedbeds by pumping lake sediment into geotextile to create bunds, back-filling the areas behind with more sediment, and planting these areas with locally sourced fen vegetation, together with the construction of temporary fish barriers
Applicant	Natural England
Recommendation	Approve subject to conditions
Reason for referral to Committee	Major application and third party objections received

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 The application site covers areas around the margins of the waterbodies of Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay, both in the parish of Hoveton, and around Wroxham Island, in Wroxham parish. These sites are located around a meander in the River Bure that forms a 'U' shape east of the settlement of Wroxham and Wroxham Broad and north of Salhouse Broad. Hoveton Great Broad is a large broad sitting within this 'U' separated from the main river by carr woodland; to the northwest is the smaller broad of Hudson's Bay. Due west of Hudson's Bay, across the river, is Wroxham Island, a narrow band of land defining the edge of Wroxham Broad from the river, with openings to the Broad at the northern and southern ends of the Island.
- 1.2 Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay are private broads within the Hoveton Estate and there is no public access to the water or surrounding land. They form part of the Bure Marshes National Nature Reserve and Natural England, the applicant, operate a seasonal nature trail on the southern edge of Hoveton Great Broad, accessed by moorings on the main river. There is a locked gate that gives private access by water from the main river. These two broads are also designated Ramsar, SPA, SAC and SSSI.
- 1.3 Wroxham Island is approximately 700 metres long and varies in width to less than 10 metres at some points. On the river side (east), there are two

sections of Broads Authority 24 hour moorings. On the western side, within Wroxham Broad, there is a starting point pontoon used by the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club which is based on the western side of the Broad, and the Club also has a number of moorings buoys in the water to the southwest of the Island. Wroxham Broad is in private ownership with public access permitted, it does not form part of the main navigation. There are no habitat designations here and the Island is just outside the Wroxham Conservation Area.

- 1.4 This planning application proposes development to facilitate a lake restoration project to improve water quality in Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay. Both waterbodies are currently assessed to be in an 'unfavourable no change' condition and failing to meet 'good ecological status' as defined under the Water Framework Directive. The two broads have turbid water conditions with a decline in macrophyte (aquatic plant) abundance and diversity from historic conditions; considered to be a result of the high nutrient content of the sediment. In order to improve water quality, it is proposed to remove nutrient rich sediment from both broads and biomanipulate the system to 'tip' it back to a clear water, macrophyte-dominated condition.
- 1.5 The project would involve removing a depth of approximately 300mm of sediment from the two broads, pumping this into geotubes around the eastern edges of Hoveton Great Broad and the western side of Wroxham Island to create bunds, backfilling these bunds with further sediment and planting them with fen vegetation, installing fish barriers at all entrances to the two broads, removing all fish and, once water quality has improved, removing the fish barriers. The geotube method is very similar to that used recently in the restoration of Salhouse Spit and it is only the laying of the geotubes to create bunds, backfilling to create new fen areas and the temporary fish barriers which require planning permission.
- 1.6 The geotubes would each measure 6-8 metres in diameter when filled, they would be secured in position with alder poles and would be planted with turves of vegetation that would be sourced from within the National Nature Reserve area. Three new areas of species rich fen would be created around the eastern end of Hoveton Great Broad, measuring 4.29 hectares. The same technique would be used along the length of the western bank of Wroxham Island creating a further 1.67 hectares of tall herb fen to reinstate areas that have been eroded. Sediment would be pumped to Wroxham Island from Hudson's Bay and Hoveton Great Broad by a 0.25 metre diameter pipeline laid temporarily across the bed of the river.
- 1.7 To facilitate the biomanipulation, seven fish barriers are proposed: four on entrances to the two broads from the river and three where these broads connect to a dyke network to the north. These would consist of rows of gabion baskets filled with flint and faced with timber piling. The largest opening to be closed is approximately 15 metres wide and public access is currently prevented here by a line of timber poles and this would be retained, with the fish barrier placed on the Broad side of it. These barriers would allow

water to flush through, but would keep the fish, that would be removed from the two broads by electro-fishing and other methods, out in the river.

- 1.8 The project is intended to take place in two phases over successive winters with the fish barriers being installed in the second phase and retained for up to ten years. Monitoring and post-restoration management plans are proposed.
- 1.9 Plant would access the site by water through one of the existing openings from the river to Hoveton Great Broad. By land, the site would be accessed from the A1062 through the private roads of the Hoveton Estate. A temporary site compound would be established in the southeast corner of an area of grassland known as The Haugh to the north of Hoveton Great Broad.
- 1.10 At the Planning Committee meeting on 15 August, members agreed to undertake a site visit prior to determination in order to gain an appreciation of the location and features of the application site and the details of the proposal. Members undertook this site visit on Friday 29 August a note of which is attached at Appendix 2.

2 Site History

- 2.1 In 2002 permission was granted to restore a length of approximately 80 metres of the bank on the western side of Wroxham Island using soft engineering techniques (BA/2002/3946/HISTAP).

3 Consultation

Hoveton Parish Council – To be reported orally.

Wroxham Parish Council – A worthwhile conservation project. No objections.

Horning Parish Council – No objection.

Salhouse Parish Council – No response.

Hoveton and Stalham Ward Member – Application can be determined by Head of Development Management.

Wroxham Ward Member – No response.

Broads Society – No objection to dredging, piling and creating fringes of fen. Object to creation of fish barriers which are in reality dams and after 3-10 years they will be deeply embedded. Do not agree proposed barriers will allow river water to flow through and consider it likely phosphate-rich sediment will leach through geotextile bund back into Broad and the water quality will be no better, possibly worse. Nets suspended from buoys as used at Barton Broad would be much more appropriate. Another concern is that the application appears incomplete because an inextricably linked proposal to create public access has not yet been lodged. It is our view the two

applications should be considered together. Consulted on additional information, any further comments to be reported orally.

Environment Agency – No objection, the development will only meet the NPPF policy to not increase flood risk elsewhere if conditions on detailed design of fish barriers and reedbed areas are appended to any permission.

Natural England – No objection. Proposal is necessary for European site management and further Habitats Regulations assessment is not required. Not likely to be an adverse effect on the SSSI as a result of the proposal being carried out in strict accordance with the application as submitted. Recommended conditions covering work practices, winter working and silt conditions.

English Heritage – This area is important in historic environment terms because of the survival of important peat deposits which have the potential to contain information relating to archaeology and past human interaction with the environment. This application has the potential to have a direct impact upon the peat deposits and deposition of sediments on top of undisturbed archaic peat deposits would significantly decrease the value of these deposits and their ability to be interrogated. We consider the peat resource and the broads to be undesignated heritage assets of national importance and consider this application has the potential to cause harm. The submitted documents fail to fully understand the character and nature of the heritage assets and do not sufficiently address their significance and no work has been undertaken to assess or characterise the deposits, nor suitable mitigation identified. Further assessment is necessary and if the applicant is unwilling to do so, we would recommend refusal. Consulted on additional information, any further comments to be reported orally.

Norfolk Historic Environment Service – Have discussed the application with English Heritage and support their submitted comments. We would request that further information on the proposed methodology, techniques and extent and nature of archaeological deposits is submitted prior to the determination of the application. Consulted on additional information, any further comments to be reported orally.

Highways – No objection.

Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association – Not in principle opposed to: any scheme designed to improve the water quality and environment of the Broad; the general principle of using geotech bunds to generate disposal sites; or, the restoration of the island between Wroxham Broad and the River Bure. However, we have concluded the application is incomplete and flawed and should be rejected. The application is incomplete because it refers to future applications to improve public access. It is flawed because there are problems inherent in the proposed fish barriers in respect of public access, including the public right of navigation, because it is deficient in that there are environmental costs associated with it, and because of its navigation impact on the Bure during mud pumping. Do not see why it is necessary to erect fish

barriers which are in effect dams on all access points to Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay, we have expert opinion that the barriers proposed are of such a weight they will sink into the sediment and become irremovable within three years. The barriers will thus not be temporary in nature and will effectively provide a permanent prohibition on the exercise of the public right of navigation in the Broad which should be restored. We contest the statement that the Broad is not navigable, it is capable of navigation and the fish barriers are contrary to Policies DP12 and CS3. It is not clear how removing 300mm will improve water quality since the sediment will almost certainly be greater in depth and there are no proposals to reduce future nutrient rich run-off and the mud deposited on the bank will leach back. The conditions created by the fish barriers are those where we would expect the rapid development of blue/green algal blooms and the cycle of eutrophication will repeat. These points indicate the proposal is inconsistent with Policies DP3, DP13 and CS7. There are no proposals to control trees and scrub and the proposed pipeline along the bed of the River Bure will reduce water depth and create the risk of danger to navigation, these points are contrary to Policies DP2, DP12, CS3 and CS15. Consulted on additional information, any further comments to be reported orally.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust – Support proposals. Support need for fish barriers and leave issue of design to be resolved by Natural England and Broads Authority.

Broads Angling Strategy Group – No response.

4 Representations

No other representations received.

5 Policies

- 5.1 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and have been found to be consistent and can therefore be afforded full weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

Adopted Core Strategy (2007)

[Core Strategy Adopted September 2007 pdf](#)

CS1 – Landscape Protection and Enhancement

CS2 - Landscape Protection and Enhancement

CS4 – Creation of New Resources

CS13 – Water Space Management

CS15 - Water Space Management

Adopted Development Management Policies (2011)

[DEVELOPMENTPLANDOCUMENT](#)

DP1 – Natural Environment

DP2 – Landscape and Trees
DP3 – Water Quality and Resources
DP4 – Design
DP11 – Access on Land
DP29 – Development on site with a High Probability of Flooding

- 5.2 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and have found to lack full consistency with the NPPF and therefore those aspects of the NPPF may need to be given some weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

Adopted Core Strategy (2007)
CS20 – Rural Sustainability

Adopted Development Management Policies (2011)
DP5 – Historic Environment
DP12 – Access to Water
DP13 – Bank Protection
DP28 – Amenity

- 5.3 Adopted Site Specific Policies (2014)
No policies relevant to this site or proposal.

- 5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance are also material considerations in the determination of this application.
[NPPF](#)

6 Assessment

- 6.1 The key considerations in the determination of this application are the principle of the development and, if this is considered to be acceptable, the impacts on water quality, ecology, landscape, heritage assets, navigation, design, flood risk, amenity and highways. Members should be mindful that it is only the laying of the geotubes to create bunds, backfilling to create new fen areas and the fish barriers which require planning permission.

6.2 Principle

- 6.2.1 The objectives of the overall project are to improve the ecological status of Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay. As a result of removing sediment in order to facilitate an improvement in water quality, new areas of fen and reedswamp habitat would be created and Wroxham Island would be restored and protected from further erosion. These objectives are consistent with those of the Development Plan and the principle of the proposed development to facilitate the overall project is in accordance with Policies CS4 and DP1 and DP3.

6.3 Water Quality

- 6.3.1 The intention of the project is to improve water quality by removing nutrient rich sediment and subsequently excluding fish to allow the macrophyte community in the natural seed bank to regenerate. Silt curtains would be used to manage sediment entering the river from the two Broads and nutrients in the relocated sediment would be bound with the addition of ferrous compounds. It is accepted there may be some disturbance of nutrient rich sediment in the water, but this is anticipated to be temporary and water quality would be monitored throughout the project with appropriate mitigation covered in a monitoring plan to be agreed by condition.
- 6.3.2 The systems of the two Broads and river would remain connected, but water flows would be reduced by the temporary installation of the fish barriers. Whilst there may be some short-term impacts, overall it is anticipated the proposed method would improve water quality in the long term in accordance with Policies DP2 and DP3.

6.4 Ecology

- 6.4.1 The proposed development is within national and international habitat designations and the area is particularly important for breeding birds and wintering wildfowl. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and Policy DP1 are supportive of development which seeks to conserve or enhance biodiversity and restore or create new habitat, but development which results in adverse impacts on designated sites that cannot be mitigated should not be allowed.
- 6.4.2 Natural England (as statutory consultee) are satisfied the proposed development is necessary for the management of the site and would not adversely affect the SSSI and conditions have been recommended to ensure the special features of the designations are not impacted upon.
- 6.4.3 Mitigation measures are proposed to manage any short term impacts on species and habitats and in the long term it is the objective of the project to significantly improve the ecological status by virtue of the lake restoration and fen creation. The fen creation in the Wroxham Broad and Hoveton Great Broad would result in a loss of open water habitat, however the species rich fen proposed in Hoveton Great Broad is of greater conservation value and would replace that eroded and there are wider benefits from the restoration of Wroxham Island. Within Hoveton Great Broad historic areas of reedswamp that have been lost are anticipated to regenerate naturally as result of the sediment removal and improvement in water quality and a kingfisher bank is proposed on Wroxham Island to enhance this habitat.
- 6.4.4 Subject to appropriate mitigation measures and the conditions recommended by Natural England, it is considered the proposal would result in positive impacts on ecology by improving the remaining open water habitat and creating new areas of fen and reedswamp, in accordance with the Framework and Policy DP1.

6.5 Landscape

- 6.5.1 The proposed development will result in changes to the landscape in the short and long term. These will be most visible to the public on Wroxham Island and there will be a short term adverse impact during construction and until the fen plants are established. Where a similar technique has been used at Salhouse, it has been necessary to install fencing to prevent geese from grazing the establishing plants. In the interests of limiting any short term landscape impact on Wroxham Island, species which are unpalatable to geese are proposed to avoid the need for any fencing here.
- 6.5.2 Within Hoveton Great Broad different fen species are proposed and there is a risk of goose grazing so temporary fencing is proposed which would be removed when monitoring indicates it is appropriate to do so. Carr woodland borders Hoveton Great Broad to the river so there are no direct public views of the fen creation areas here. Visitors can enjoy views across Hoveton Great Broad and appreciate the tranquillity and wildness of this area from the seasonal nature trail but there are no immediate or direct views of the fen creation areas and the work is proposed to be undertaken during the winter months when the trail is closed.
- 6.5.3 Monitoring of the proposed fen turf planting is considered appropriate and a monitoring plan, to be agreed by condition, should include appropriate contingencies should it not be successful or should additional protection measures be necessary. Warning signs are proposed on the river and around Wroxham Island and it is considered that the design, siting and appropriate timing for removal is managed by condition.
- 6.5.4 The project at Salhouse Spit has been successfully colonised by the species planted and this has mitigated any adverse landscape impact. The application of the same technique at Wroxham Island and Hoveton Great Broad is considered appropriate and it is not considered any long term adverse impacts would result on landscape character or visual amenity in accordance with Policy DP2.

6.6 Heritage Assets

- 6.6.1 Removing sediment from the two Broads does not in itself require planning permission, however this material will be used to fill the geotubes and backfill the areas for fen creation and this has the potential to disturb heritage assets. As sites of medieval peat digging, Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay are of historical and archaeological interest, furthermore they are considered likely to include surviving peat deposits which potentially hold information relating to archaeology and past human interaction with the environment. English Heritage consider the peat resource and the two Broads to be undesignated heritage assets of national importance.
- 6.6.2 In accordance with the Framework, when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation

and that weight should be proportionate to the asset's importance. Where applications affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement should be made with regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

- 6.6.3 English Heritage and the Norfolk Historic Environment Service consider the initial information submitted with the application to insufficiently assess the likely direct impact on peat deposits nor is appropriate mitigation proposed. Further information has since been submitted, including results from previous surveys which suggests the upper surface of the peat is 1.4 metres into the sediment, significantly below the 0.3 metres which is proposed to be removed and the 0.36 metre level of the trench that the geotubes would sit in. Previous research also suggests the upper 0.3-0.4 metres of sediment is post-1860 and largely early- to mid-twentieth century. It is proposed that, should permission be granted, further investigation work would be undertaken prior to commencement and this would inform working methods and, if necessary, mitigation measures.
- 6.6.5 Deposition of dredged sediment also has the potential to comprise the environmental sequence and a detailed survey is proposed to be undertaken prior to and shortly after the works. English Heritage and the Historic Environment Service have been consulted on this additional information and proposed mitigation and their comments are awaited.
- 6.6.6 The proposed development on Wroxham Island is outside, but adjacent to, Wroxham Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset, and it is not considered the proposals would adversely affect this asset.
- 6.6.7 If the proposal were to result in the total loss of peat deposits, then this would need to be balanced against the wider benefits of the scheme. However, if partial loss or harm is considered to result and this can be mitigated through an appropriate scheme of investigation and recording, then it is considered likely that the proposal could be considered acceptable in accordance with the Framework and Policy DP5. The comments of English Heritage and the Historic Environment Service on the additional information are awaited and these comments shall inform an assessment of the acceptability of the proposal with regard to heritage assets prior to determination of the application.

6.7 Navigation

- 6.7.1 Hudson's Bay and Hoveton Great Broad are not currently open to navigation by the public. This application does not alter that and there is no material planning reason or planning policy rationale to justify a requirement to open these Broads to public navigation. Aspirations and objectives to increase the publically navigable waterways as set out in other Broads Authority Plans and Strategies are recognised, however this planning application does not represent an appropriate mechanism by which to try to achieve this and is beyond what can be considered reasonable when determining this application.

- 6.7.2 The proposed pipeline across the river to facilitate the work on Wroxham Island does cross the public navigation but it is not considered to endanger or inhibit navigation providing it is appropriately designed and installed. It would be in place temporarily over one winter and appropriate warning signs are proposed. Subject to the final details of the pipeline, fixing and the warning signs, this is considered acceptable.
- 6.7.3 The proposed geotubes and backfilling on Wroxham Island has been designed to protect the existing uses on the Broad, whilst restoring eroded areas of the Island and manage future erosion. As a form of bank protection, the geotubes, matting and planting are considered appropriate in accordance with Policy DP13. It would not be appropriate to encourage mooring against the new bank, particularly in the short term whilst the structure is stabilising and planting is establishing so this should be managed by condition.
- 6.7.4 The application is due to be presented to the Authority's Navigation Committee on the 4 September and the comments made by Navigation Committee Members will be reported orally to this committee to be taken into consideration in the determination of this application.

6.8 Design

- 6.8.1 In terms of visual appearance, the geotubes fronted with alder poles and planted over and the fish barriers with timber pile facing would be acceptable. It is appreciated there is some concern about the construction of the fish barriers and their ability to be removed when necessary. The largest openings to be closed are said to have a firmer base of gravel and sand than the soft organic, peat base of the Broads which would reduce the risk of permanent settling and it is proposed to include monitoring of the barriers with appropriate mitigation in the monitoring plan to ensure that once they are no longer needed, they are removed and the areas are satisfactorily restored. It is considered necessary to agree the detailed design and a method statement for installation of the barriers by condition. Subject to this, the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of design in accordance with Policy DP4.

6.9 Flood Risk

- 6.9.1 Further information is to be provided regarding the heights of the fish barriers and the detailed design, including an assessment on the effect of the fill material on water flows, would be required by condition should permission be granted. The Environment Agency is satisfied that if the barriers do not extend above the normal water level and/or are designed to allow sufficient flow, there would be no adverse impact on flood risk.
- 6.9.2 The proposed fen creation areas would be above the normal water level and thus potentially occupy flood storage and displace flood water, increasing flood risk. The Environment Agency have recommended that the precise design of these areas is agreed by condition, including calculations to

demonstrate that flood risk would not be increased. This is considered appropriate and such conditions would only be discharged if the flood risk is acceptable in accordance with the Framework and Policies CS20 and DP29.

6.10 Amenity and Highways

- 6.10.1 The nearest dwellings to the proposed works are those on the northern edge of Wroxham Broad and a small group of cottages to the northeast of Hudson's Bay within the Hoveton Estate. The area is also enjoyed from the river and Wroxham Broad by the public and by visitors to the nature trail. Once the construction phases are complete, it is not considered the development would result in any adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby occupiers.
- 6.10.2 Construction traffic would pass by the Estate cottages but the largest plant would access the site by water and the site compound would be at a distance from these cottages, on lower ground and therefore out of sight. Water quality in Hudson's Bay nearest the cottages is said to be sufficient to not require dredging, thereby protecting the amenity of the occupiers of the cottages from this operation.
- 6.10.3 Construction would be undertaken in winter when the river is quietest and the seasonal nature trail is closed. There would be some disruption to members of Norfolk Broads Yacht Club during the work on Wroxham Island but the scheme has been designed to maintain their existing start point and moorings. It is not considered the proposal would result in any unacceptable impacts on amenity of adjoining occupiers or recreational users in the local area either during construction or post-completion and the proposal is in accordance with Policy DP28. There are no objections in respect of access, in accordance with Policy DP11.

6.11 Other matters

- 6.11.1 It is appreciated that there is a great deal of interest in the overall project and that a number of matters have been raised in the consultation responses received. Some of these are not material planning considerations and cannot therefore be taken into account in the determination of this application and are not addressed in this report.
- 6.11.2 This planning application seeks consent for development to facilitate the lake restoration. There is more to this project than just the development proposed in this application and it is noted that subsequent parts of the project may also involve development requiring planning application and that subsequent applications may be received. The development proposed in this planning application must be considered independent of any other considerations and any potential subsequent applications. It must be considered on its own merits, with only material planning considerations taken into account and assessed against the relevant planning policies.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The development proposed in this application would facilitate a lake restoration project to improve the ecological status of Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay. The aims of this project are in accordance with the Development Plan and the proposed development is considered appropriate to achieve this. Any short term impacts can be adequately mitigated and the long term ecological improvements and habitat creation are supported. The design of the geotube bunds and temporary fish barriers are considered appropriate and the detailed design and installation can be agreed by condition to ensure there would be no increase in flood risk or permanent separation of the broads from the river. A monitoring plan would ensure that the construction and implementation is effective and any unpredicted impacts are satisfactorily mitigated whilst also securing the prompt removal of the temporary fencing and barriers when no longer necessary.
- 7.2 No unacceptable impacts on amenity or highways are considered to result and in the long term is it not considered that local landscape character or visual amenity would be detrimentally affected. The proposal will affect non-designated heritage assets and responses to additional information received on this are awaited from the appropriate statutory consultees to assess whether any loss or harm would result and if so this needs to be weighed against the significance of the assets and balanced against the otherwise acceptable impacts of the proposal.
- 7.3 Subject to the impact on heritage assets being acceptable, the proposed laying of geotubes to create bunds, backfilling to create new fen areas and temporary installation of fish barriers is considered acceptable in accordance with the Development Plan.

8 Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions:

- (i) Time limit
- (ii) In accordance with submitted plans
- (iii) Detailed design of fen creation areas
- (iv) Detailed design of fish barriers
- (v) Method statement for installation of fish barrier
- (vi) Removal of pipeline on cessation of use
- (vii) Design, siting and timings for warning signs
- (viii) Ecological mitigation measures
- (ix) Cessation of works in freezing conditions
- (x) Mitigation measures to be agreed if any work undertaken in summer
- (xi) Silt curtains
- (xii) No lighting unless otherwise agreed
- (xiii) Biosecurity measures
- (xiv) Pollution control plan
- (xv) Ecological enhancement measures
- (xvi) Planting to be completed within first available season

- (xvii) Monitoring plan, to include fish barriers and water quality
- (xviii) Removal of fish barriers and protective fencing in accordance with monitoring plan
- (xix) Management plan
- (xx) No mooring against geotubes on Wroxham Island
- (xxi) Archaeological assessment and recording as necessary

9 Reason for recommendation

- 9.1 Subject to the impact on heritage assets being resolved, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policies DP1, DP2, DP3, DP4, DP5, DP11, DP12, DP13, DP28 and DP29 of the adopted Development Management Policies (2011) and Policies CS1, CS2, CS4, CS13, CS15 and CS20 of the adopted Core Strategy (2007). The proposal is also considered to be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) which is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

Background papers: Application Fie BA2014/0248/FUL

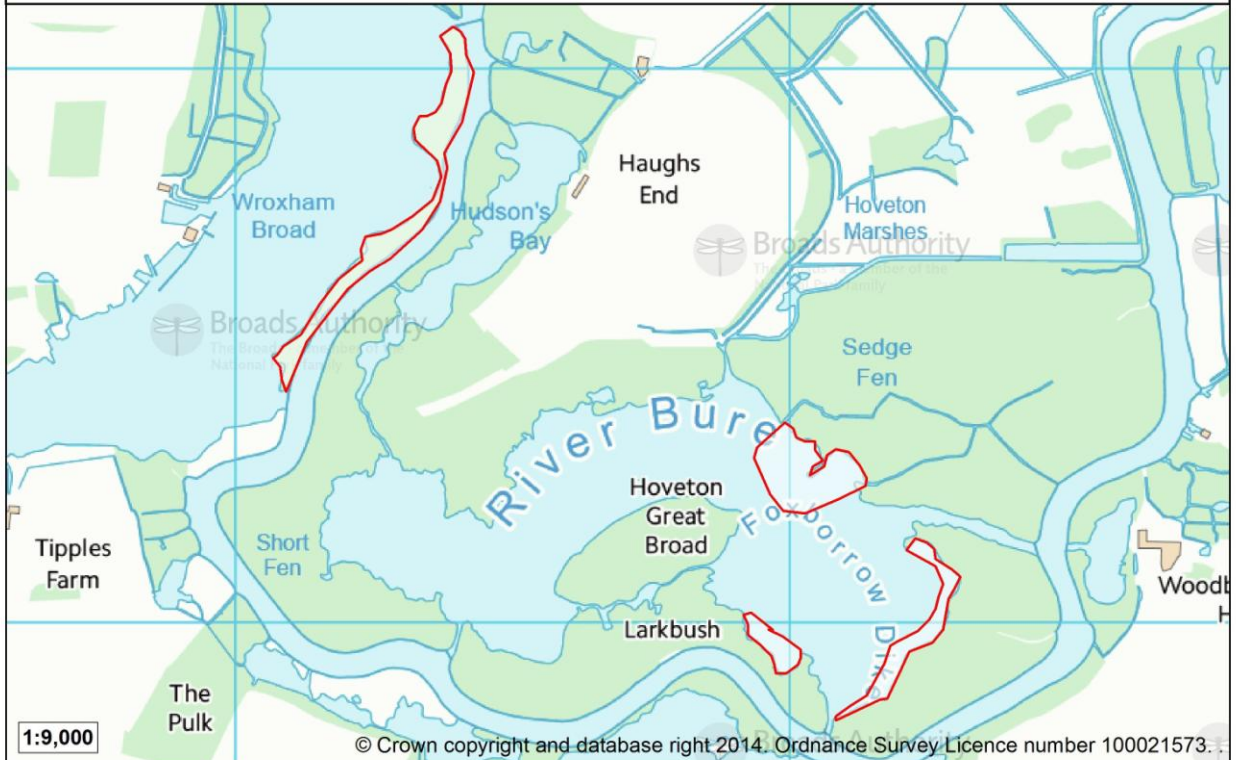
Author: Maria Hammond
Date of Report: 27 August 2014

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APPENDIX 2 – Notes of site visit held on 29 August 2014

APPENDIX 1

BA/2014/0248/FUL - Haughs End Road, Lower Street, Hoveton

The creation of reedbeds by pumping lake sediment into geotextile to create bunds, back-filling the areas behind with more sediment, and planting these areas with locally sourced fen vegetation, together with the construction of temporary fish barriers



PLANNING COMMITTEE

12 September 2014

Note of site visit held on Friday 29 August 2014

BA/2014/0248/FUL Hoveton Great Broad, Hudson's Bay and Wroxham Island, Lower Street, Hoveton

The creation of reedbeds by pumping lake sediment into geotextile to create bunds, back-filling the areas behind with more sediment, and planting these areas with locally sourced fen vegetation, together with the construction of temporary fish barriers

Applicant: Natural England

Present:

Mr C Gould (Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee) - in the Chair

Prof Jacquie Burgess Dr J Stephen Johnson
Mr Nigel Dixon Mr Philip Ollier
Mr George J Jermany Mr Robert Stevens

In attendance:

Mrs Sandra A Beckett – Administrative Officer (BA)
Ms Andrea Long – Director of Planning and Resources (BA)
Ms Cally Smith – Head of Planning (BA)

Mr Clive Gardner – Hoveton Parish Council
Mr Ian Joynson – Wroxham Parish Council
Mr Paul Savage – Broads Society
Mr Mike Evans – Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association
Mr Chris Bielby – Broads WFD Specialist, Natural England (Project Manager for application)
Maria Marston – Landscape Partnership (Agents for applicant)
Sam Ashurst – Work experience at Landscape Partnership

Aided by: Adrian Vernon, Martin Chapman, Graeme Hewitt, Andy Elson and Andy Bartlett (BA)

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr Mike Barnard, Miss Sholeh Blane, Mrs J Broceik-Coulton, Dr Murray Gray, Mrs Lana Hempsall, Mr John Timewell and Mr Peter Warner.

Introduction

The site visit was convened in the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club. The Acting Chairman welcomed everyone and invited them to introduce themselves and declare any interests. (These are noted in Appendix A)

The Director of Planning and Resources set out the procedures for the site visit as explained in the Planning Committee Code for Members and Officers emphasising that it was strictly fact finding and for members to be fully apprised of the details of the application. Members were reminded to be as impartial as possible and not to enter into debate but seek clarification on the factual issues. Other interested parties would be able to ask questions of a factual nature but there would not be the opportunity to put a case. No decision would be made at this visit but the matter would be considered in detail at a future meeting of the Planning Committee, the next one being on 12 September 2014.

The Proposal

The Objective and the Plans

The Head of Planning introduced and explained the plans for the application in detail. She explained that the application proposed certain elements of development to facilitate a lake restoration project to improve the water quality in Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay, both privately owned and with conservation designations as Ramsar site, SPA, SAC and SSSI. She explained that the water bodies were currently assessed as being in an "unfavourable no change" condition failing to meet the "good ecological status" as defined and required under the Water Framework Directive.

The Head of Planning explained that the project would be undertaken in two phases involving the removal of sediment in Hudsons Bay in the first year of the project 2016/17 transporting this by pipeline on the base of the river to create new areas of fen and reedswamp habitat and restore Wroxham Island on the eastern edge of Wroxham Broad; and in the following year removal of sediment in Hoveton Great Broad would take place. This would also create new areas of fen and reedswamp at its eastern edges. The sediment would be pumped into geotubes creating bunds to be backfilled with further sediment. The bunds would be secured in position with timber piling which was likely to be alder but would depend on the engineering details. The second phase would also include the creation of seven fish barriers to facilitate biomanipulation. Four of these would be at the entrances to the two broads from the river with three others on the northern edge of the broads where there was connection to the dyke network on the Hoveton Estate. She explained that these would be made of gabion baskets filled with flint and faced with timber piling to reduce the visual impact. The aim was for these to be in place for up to ten years.

The Head of Planning provided members with the details of the techniques to be used, explaining diagrams of these with the help of the Project Manager. She commented that the Authority was still in discussions with the applicant about the exact methods and location of the pipeline for transporting sediment from Hudson's Broad to Wroxham island in order to avoid any problems for navigation.

The development plant access to the site was pointed out on the plans. The access to the site by water would be through one of the existing openings from the river to Hoveton Great Broad while by land this would be accessed through the private roads of Hoveton Estate. The location of the temporary plant site compound on the north of Hoveton Great Broad was also pointed out.

During and following a full explanation of the proposals, those present asked a number of questions and sought clarification on the techniques to be used.

Points arising from Questions and Comments

It was explained that fish were currently within the Broad and Natural England had undertaken studies to establish the habits of the fish populations. As part of the project, the fish would be removed either by scooping, electrofishing and possibly angling competitions. The fish barriers would be designed to be set at high water level.

Chris Bielby explained that the use of gabion baskets had been chosen as the technique for the fish barriers as being the most effective for rapid restoration of water quality in this location. Experiments within the Broad had been undertaken using the same techniques for fish barriers that had been used when carrying out the Barton Broad restoration project but these had not proved efficient enough for the area.

There was no public access on to Hoveton Great Broad although the landowner did allow access for anglers at certain times.

The life expectancy of the geotubes was purported to be at least 50 years. However, if punctured this would involve seepage of sediment. It was anticipated that the establishment of the reed beds would stabilise the sediment and therefore the purpose of the geotubes would have been fulfilled.

It was noted that the works in restoring Wroxham Island would marginally reduce the navigable water area, however, that part of the area was known to be shallow.

Concerns were expressed about the depth of the water in Wroxham Broad by Wroxham Island as it was known to have a shallow shelf and then a steeper drop and this could make the stabilisation of the geotubes difficult. Natural England had data on the depths although these were not stated within the application plans. It was intended that the timber piling/stakes would hold the sediment and geotubes in place.

Chris Bielby explained that in order to receive designation as an SAC site (so designated in 2005) the site did not have to be of good ecological status but to have the capacity to be so. The benchmark for restoration was 1946 as this was when RAMSAR designation was first given and for which evidence existed from aerial photographs as to the Broad's state. The Broad definitely consisted of fresh water although it was still tidal. He also explained that Hoveton Great Broad had been chosen as priority for restoration as being the most sustainable of all the broads to restore. It had also been specifically chosen as being not so susceptible to saline intrusion as others on the same river system, such as Ranworth Broad. This had been evident from the recent December 2013 tidal surges.

Site context

The parties were given the opportunity to view the Wroxham Island site and then went downstream. The location of the proposed fish barriers from the main river were pointed out. The parties were then taken on to Hoveton Great Broad via the

gate which was normally kept closed, through the dyke into the main Broad to have the sites for the disposal of sediment pointed out.

The parties were then taken into Salhouse Broad to view the "Salhouse Spit" which had been restored using similar techniques as to those proposed for the restoration of Wroxham Island. The techniques for the restoration of the spit had been funded by the PRISMA project with work completed in March 2013. Members noted the substantial reed growth following this completion behind the geese protection netting.

Conclusion

The Acting Chairman thanked everyone for attending the site inspection. The application was due to be considered at the Planning Committee meeting on 12 September 2014.

The Acting Chairman declared the meeting closed at 12.30 pm

Appendix A

Code of Conduct for Members

Declaration of Interests for Application BA/2014/0248/FUL

Committee: **Planning** 29 August 2014

Name	Nature of Interest (Please describe the nature of the interest)
Jacque Burgess	Member of Norfolk Broads Yacht Club
Phil Ollier	Member of Norfolk Broads Yacht Club
Mike Evans	Trustee of Norfolk Broads Yacht Club