

Chief Executive's Report

Summary: This report summarises the current position in respect of a number of important projects and events, including any decisions taken during the recent cycle of committee meetings. It does not include matters which are already on the agenda for this meeting. Members are asked to note the report.

1 Improvements to the A47

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Andrea Long/Nil

- 1.1 Forum Members will recall that the A47 Alliance (partnership of Local Authorities, MPs and other bodies) has been promoting the full dualling of the A47 from the A1 (Peterborough) to the A12 Lowestoft for some time. It is also proposed to re-designate part of the A12 as the A47 under this initiative. A number of individual road schemes have been identified along the length of the route and in the short terms (2015-21) these have been costed at £416m with the longer terms schemes (Post 2021) of an additional £1bn.
- 1.2 Some of the shorter term schemes are either under construction or have secured funding e.g Postwick Hub, Thickthorn Junction. However much of the programme remains unfunded and therefore uncertain. The dualling of the Acle Straight between Acle and Great Yarmouth has been part of the longer term programme for some time (£105m) although more recent feasibility work on the longer term programme has indicated that the full dualling may be rolled back in favour of traffic management measures which would be considerably cheaper. This has been of concern to the Alliance partners and Norfolk County Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council in particular who have voiced concerns about the long term economic benefits to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft of that full dualling may bring. They are pressing for this section of the programme not to be put aside. The area around the Acle Straight is environmentally sensitive – and there are a host of ecological designations in the area. Some work was begun several years ago by the Highways Agency and their contractors to investigate the feasibility of relocating dykes but was never completed due to issues around landowner access and cost.
- 1.3 At the recent Conservative Party Conference the Transport minister told the conference that the A47 was one of the key roads that the Government wished to see improved and described the short term schemes as “low hanging fruit”. Further feasibility work on the programme is being carried out by the Highways Agency and the Route Strategies are expected to be completed by March 2015.

2 Hoveton Great Broad

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Andrea Long/BD3, BD4, TR1.1 and TR1.6

- 2.1 The Navigation Committee considered the planning application for the Hoveton Great Broad Restoration Project on 4 September 2014. Comments from the Navigation Committee were forwarded to the Planning Committee, which met on 12 September 2014 to consider the application. The Planning Committee approved the application subject to a number of conditions including: the provision of the detailed design of fish barriers and protective fencing and the method statement for their installation and removal within a maximum of ten years in accordance with a monitoring plan; and the location and method of siting the pipeline and its removal on cessation of use.
- 2.2 The Broads Authority received a report on the Hoveton Great Broad Restoration Project on 26 September 2014, when members considered whether to support Natural England's applications for external funding for the proposed project. The Authority was also briefed on the wider, non-planning related comments from the Navigation Committee's meeting on 4 September 2014. During the Broads Authority meeting, members recognised the major contribution that the Hoveton Great Broad Restoration Project would provide in the delivery of objectives for the Authority's Biodiversity and Water Strategy. However, the Broads Authority was also cognisant of the views of the Navigation Committee and indeed supported that the project should also be able to achieve better public access to the project area to meet one of the Broads Authority's purposes: promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public. The Broads Authority therefore supported Natural England's application for external funding conditional on the achievement of better public access to the project area. This conditional support will encourage Natural England to achieve better public access to the project area with the landowner and the outcome of such engagement is awaited.

3 Navigation Committee Appointment Process Update

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: John Organ/None

- 3.1 Members will wish to note that the Navigation Committee appointment process is now underway. The Broadsheet, being circulated from 17 October 2014, advertises the appointment process, inviting all Toll Payers to apply. An advert has also been placed in the EDP and on the Broads Authority's website. The Authority is also consulting the relevant organisations, identified as one of the bodies appearing to the Authority to represent a group of users of the Broads navigation area (see Section 9 of the 1988 Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act) and as endorsed by the Navigation Committee on 4 September 2014, inviting them to put forward nominations for membership of the Committee.
- 3.2 The deadline for applications is Thursday 11 December 2014 and interviews will be held on 15 and 16 January 2015.
- 3.3 The Navigation Committee will be consulted on the recommendations for co-opted member appointments at its meeting on 26 February 2015. At this meeting

it will also be necessary for the Navigation Committee to be consulted on the appointment of two co-opted members to the Broads Authority. The appointment of the eight co-opted members and the appointment of two co-opted members to the full Authority will be made by the Broads Authority on 20 March 2015.

4 Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: John Organ/None

- 4.1 The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 came into force on 6 August 2014. There are five parts to the Regulations, some of which apply to the Broads Authority as detailed below.
- 4.2 The Authority is required to allow any member of the public to take photographs, film and audio-record the proceedings, and report on all public meetings. The new regulations do not permit oral commentary to be provided during a meeting and the Chairman should ensure that members of the public who actively object to being filmed are not to be filmed, without undermining the broader transparency of the meeting.
- 4.3 The new Regulations do not change the public's right of access to meetings of the Broads Authority, its committees and any sub-committees it may form. Similarly, the regulations do not change the right of the Broads Authority to exclude members of the public from meetings for exempt business as set out in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
- 4.4 The Regulations require that the written record of the Authority's meetings must reflect certain information. The agenda papers and minutes to the Authority's meetings already provide the level of information required by the Regulations, so no change is required.
- 4.5 The most significant requirement for the new Regulations is that the decision-making officer must produce a written record of any decision if it would otherwise have been taken by the relevant local government body, or a committee, sub-committee of that body or a joint committee in which that body participates, but it has been delegated to an officer of that body by a general or express authorisation. These requirements only apply to certain decisions and do not apply to many administrative and operational decisions that officers may make. At its meeting on 26 September 2014, the Authority agreed which decisions would require a written record to be produced and written records for these decisions will be published on the Authority's website with immediate effect.

Author: John Organ
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Broads Plan Objectives: Multiple
Appendices: None