

Navigation Committee

06 November 2025

Agenda item number 10

Planning application with implications for navigation - BA/2025/0289/FUL, Heigham Sound, Hickling, Norfolk

Report by Assistant Planning Officer

Purpose

To inform members of a planning application submitted by the Broads Authority for the installation of floating pontoons at three existing 24-hour mooring locations between Heigham Sound and Hickling Broad. The views of the Navigation Committee are sought on any matters relevant to navigation.

1. Background

- 1.1 Broads Authority manages three 24-hour moorings on the Upper Thurne system between Heigham Sound and Hickling Broad — Whiteslea, Deep Dyke, and Deep Go Dyke. These sites are owned by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and leased to the Broads Authority for public use.
- 1.2 The existing steel piling at these moorings has reached the end of its structural life and no longer meets current safety standards. Replacing the piling on a like-for-like basis would be prohibitively expensive, particularly given the need for higher capping levels and longer piles to address climate change impacts and rising water levels in the Broads.
- 1.3 A more cost-effective, resilient alternative has therefore been developed in the form of floating pontoons, which are cheaper per metre, require less maintenance, and maintain a consistent freeboard height with changing water levels — improving safety and accessibility for boaters.

2. The Planning Application

- 2.1 The application proposes the replacement of the existing piled edge and the installation of new floating pontoons at the three 24-hour mooring sites.

- 2.2 The proposed pontoons will provide approximately 85 metres of mooring at Deep Dyke, 20 metres at Whiteslea, and 40 metres at Deep Go Dyke. The pontoons will be installed parallel to the original mooring line, ensuring that the navigation channel is not significantly reduced.
- 2.3 The pontoon will be approximately 2 metres wide and connected to a tubular pile via a sliding bracket, allowing it to rise and fall with the tide. Safety ladders, navigation hazard lights, and mooring cleats will be installed along the pontoons, with a handrail provided at the landward edge for visitor safety.
- 2.4 Prior to installation, the existing piled edge will be removed and the bank reprofiled to encourage natural restoration of the river margin habitat.
- 2.1. The comments of the Navigation Committee on the planning application would be welcomed.

3. Stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 The Broads Authority has undertaken early engagement with local stakeholders, including sailing clubs and nearby boatyards. Emails and indicative drawings were circulated, and an in-person event was held in Hickling to discuss the proposal and gather initial feedback.
- 3.2 No formal consultation responses have been received at the time of writing this report.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The proposed replacement of existing piling with floating pontoons represents a proactive and sustainable approach to maintaining public moorings within the Upper Thurne area. The design ensures that navigational width is preserved while improving safety, accessibility, and climate change resilience.
- 4.2. Members' views on any matters of relevance to navigation are sought and will be considered as part of the planning process.

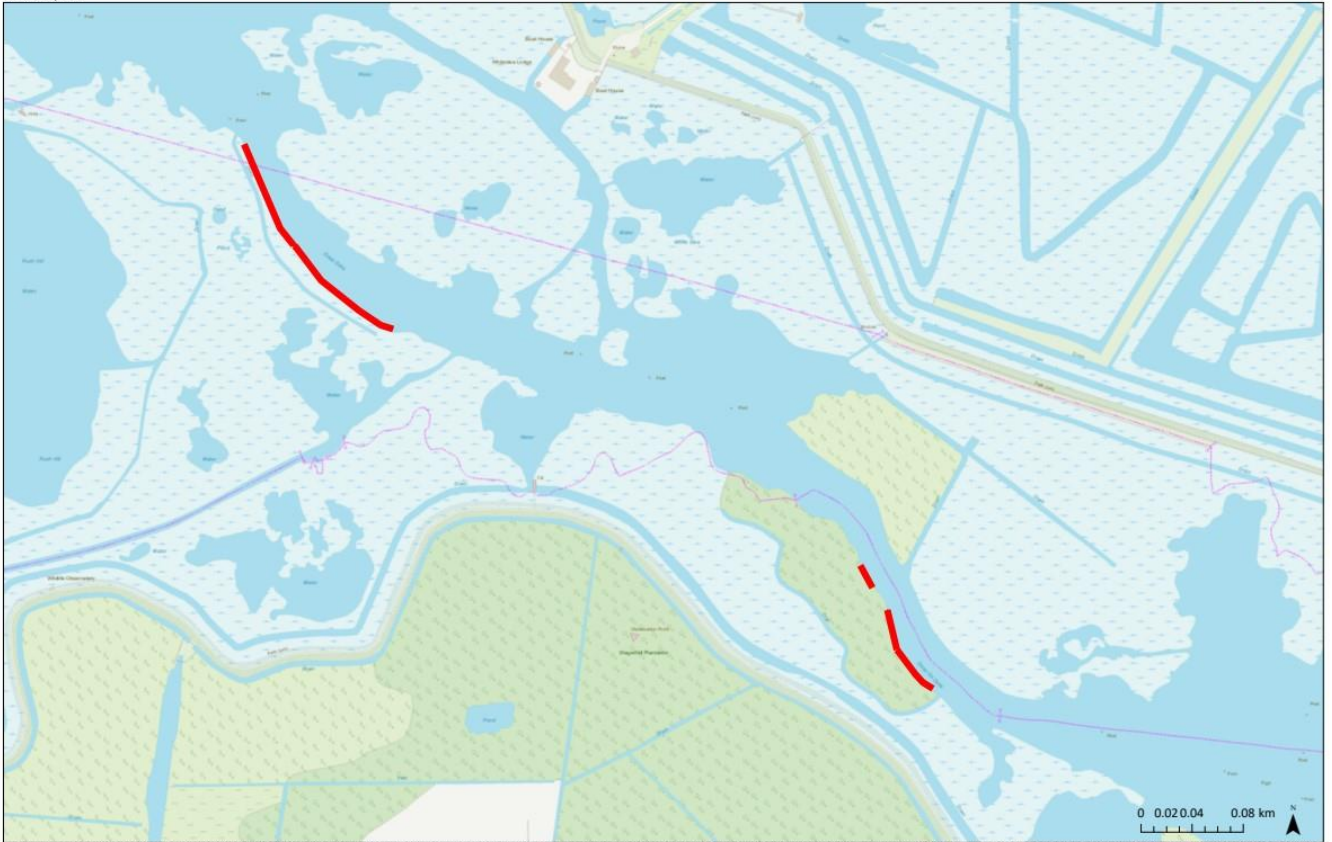
Author: Callum Sculfor

Date of report: 21 October 2025

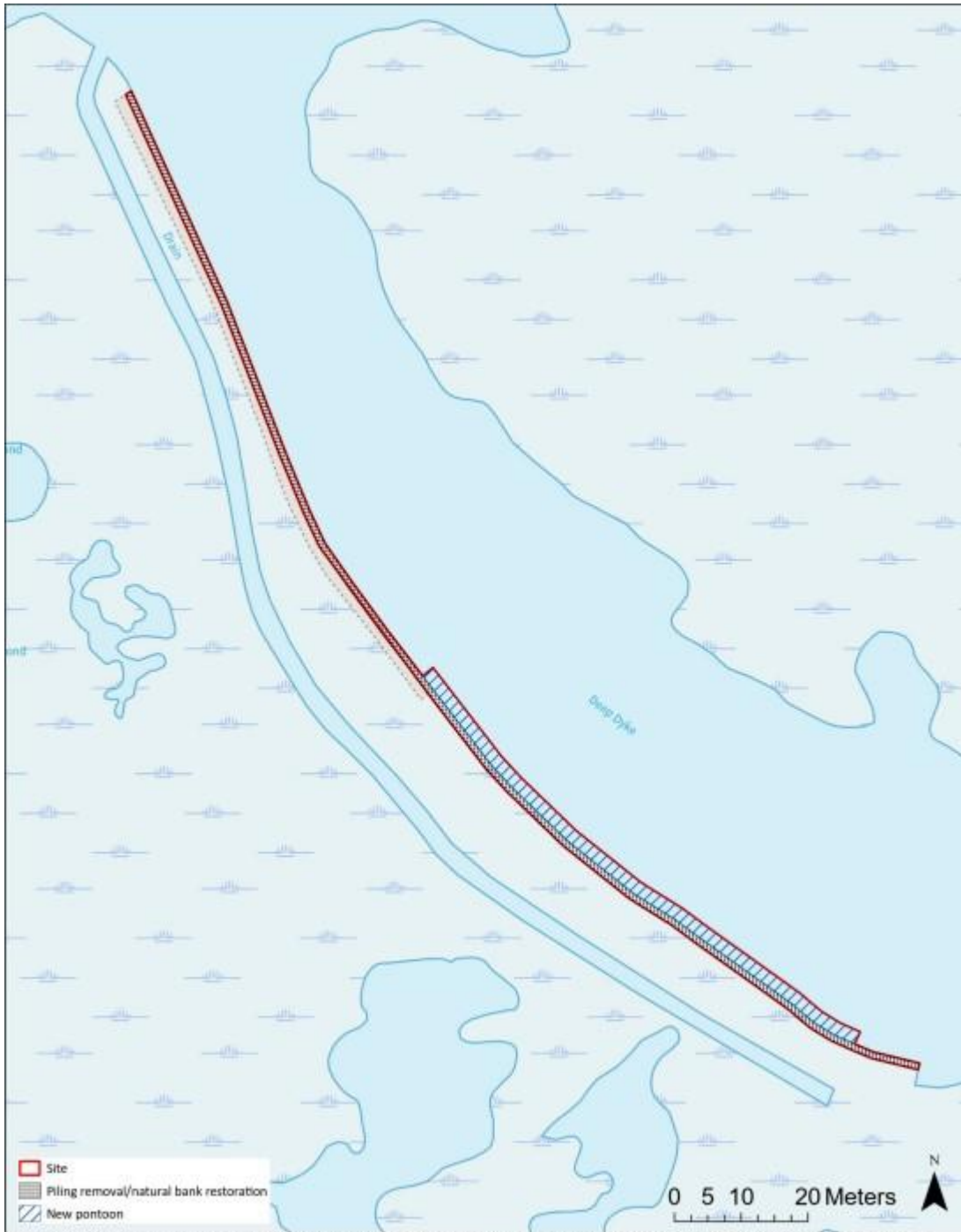
Appendix 1 – Location map

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Location Plan
Scale: 1:2,500



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