

# Navigation Committee

13 April 2023

Agenda item number 12

## Channel marker and Aids to Navigation policy

Report by Lucy Burchnall

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### Purpose

To make members aware of the new Channel marker and Aids to Navigation policy within the Safety Management System Document.

### Broads Plan context

C4 Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Broads Authority, as Duty Holder for the Broads, has developed a Safety Management System (SMS) in accordance with the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code. The purpose of the SMS is to document the arrangements put in place by the Broads Authority to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety of those using or working on the Broads. At a recent audit of Aids to Navigation (AtoN) on the Broads by Trinity House (UK's General Lighthouse Authority) it was recommended the information on channel markers and AtoN within the SMS document be updated to include a policy on how the Authority will manage these assets.

## 2. Management of channel markers and Aids to Navigation

- 2.1. The draft wording for the channel markers and Aids to Navigation Policy is set out in Appendix 1 for members information. The policy does not change the approach the Authority takes for management of channel markers but adds more detail into the SMS document to allow for better review and auditing of these procedures. The SMS document is reviewed annually and subject to internal and external audits.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: C4 Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways

Appendix 1 – Channel marker and Aids to Navigation Policy

## Appendix 1

### Management of Channel Markers and Aids to Navigation (AtoN)

Several areas of the navigation are marked, either by posts or buoys, to clearly define the safe navigable channels in accordance with the Waterways Management Strategy. This includes marking the maintained channels across shallow Broads, examples being Rockland Broad, Hickling Broad and Breydon Water.

There are 3 different categories of channel markers:

- Channel markers recognised by Trinity House. These are the channels posts on Breydon water, which was formerly under the Great Yarmouth Port jurisdiction, transferred to the Authority in 2012.
- Channel markers to mark new flood defence works, installed on behalf of the Environment Agency to protect these areas.
- Other channel markers, including those marking navigable channels on narrow Broads, not inspected by Trinity House.

The Broads Authority has developed a Geographic Information System (GIS) based Asset Management System to regulate the management of navigation channels. The system will flag up planned regular inspections and maintenance as it becomes due and allows Rangers to record observed problems with navigation channel markings. If an issue is reported against an ATON which falls under the responsibility of Trinity House an email is generated to the Head of Ranger Services who is then responsible for adding the defect to the Trinity House defect reporting system, PANAR.

When assessing which type of mark is suitable at each location the Authority takes into consideration the category of water, likely conditions on the stretch of water, distance marks need to be seen from and type and amount of river traffic. Usually, posts are installed in preference to buoys. This is because buoys can often be pulled out of position by wind, tide or by vessels.

Posts on Breydon historically had caps with white tops. Some of the older posts, which have not yet been replaced still have the caps on. The caps are being phased out as new posts are installed. This is because the new metal posts are easier to maintain without the caps which have been lifted by high tides in the past. The Authority and Trinity House have a list of the posts with and without the caps. These lists are updated as the posts are replaced.

Cable and Gas crossing signs are also included as AtoN. All of the cable crossing signs are listed with Trinity house and checked annually as part of this. The signs are the responsibility of the organisation who are responsible for the hazard, so for electrical cable crossings these are the responsibility of UKPN.

It is the Broads Authority Policy that it will:

- Carry out annual visual checks on each channel marker and cable and gas crossing signs, as well as recording defects seen as part of routine patrolling by the Ranger team. Issues will be recorded and the defect rectified or controlled (such as a temporary replacement) within the defined timescales.
- For those AtoN which fall under the responsibility of Trinity House, keep an up to date record of these AtoNs and report any defects to Trinity House using their defect reporting system, PANAR (LARS from April 2023).

- Ensure AtoN availability targets as set by Trinity house are met.
- Keep the Channel markers and AtoN policy under review if any defects occur and also as part of a five-year review to determine if the amount and type of marks is sufficient or if any can be removed if no longer required.

#### Marking hazards

The Broads Authority has a duty to mark hazards within the navigation. On the Broads the locally recognised method of doing this is via a yellow post or buoy. The type of mark is determined by the conditions in which it is being deployed and the length of time it is anticipated it will need to remain in place. Hazards can include sunken vessels, trees fallen in the river and hazardous piling. In areas where the hazard has a significant impact on the channel, orange flashing lights may also be deployed to ensure anyone navigating after dark is able to clearly see it (as set out in the works licence guidance).

Rangers undertake checks on the marks as part of routine patrolling to ensure they are in position until the hazard has been removed.