

Broads Authority

19 March 2021

Agenda item number 10

Hoveton Riverside Park – proposal

Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

Purpose

The Broads Authority has been working with local partners to develop a project plan for Hoveton Riverside Park. The project aims to rejuvenate the site, increase its use and reduce the costs of its long-term site maintenance. If supported, the next steps are to source external funding to fund the proposed major changes to the site.

Broads Plan context

The proposed project fits multiple objectives including reducing bankside erosion, improving riverside access and facilities, developing site masterplans for Broads Authority visitor hub sites, and increasing partnership fundraising to support Broads-themed projects.

Recommended decision

To support the proposed project plan for Hoveton Riverside Park.

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	The project	2
3.	Partnership and funding	3
4.	Children's play area and Discovery Hub	4
5.	Risk implications	4
6.	Conclusion	5

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Broads Authority leases Hoveton Riverside Park from Roys of Wroxham. The lease is for 99 years with 80 years remaining, and places the Authority under significant maintenance liabilities for river edge and internal waterway piling, and for other engineered structures within the Park. Our Ranger team has the day-to-day responsibility for site maintenance and safety checking. The site is adjacent to the

Authority's Hoveton Tourist Information Centre, which in itself is a major draw and adds to the overall offer to visitors to the Riverside Park site.

- 1.2. A recent inspection by our Operations Maintenance Team has identified that, over the next five years, the Authority will need to budget approximately £300,000 to discharge its obligations under the lease (mainly on sheet piling, bridge repairs and decking replacement).
- 1.3. The layout of the Park does not best serve its originally intended purpose. This is due largely to winter flooding, inadequate drainage, poor signage and lack of interest in the facilities. It is not recommended that we simply accept the Park layout according to the lease, as the challenges at the site would not be adequately addressed. The approach taken thus far includes reappraising the use of the site, and identifying who benefits from a vibrant and inviting site and what resources are needed to achieve our vision (outlined in paragraph 2). Officers' preferred option is to reconfigure the site to enable greater benefits to residents and visitors and to reduce our ongoing maintenance liabilities.
- 1.4. The funding required to achieve the vision exceeds current revenue budgets for the site. To meet even the basic level of site maintenance obligations, additional internal budgets or external funding would be required.

2. The project

- 2.1. Hoveton Riverside Park is often flooded and inaccessible for most of the year. This is due largely to rising tides and piling in need of repair. There is also a lack of accessible pathways through the park, most noticeably connecting to the Liana mooring, which is used by the Nancy Oldfield Trust in the off-peak season.
- 2.2. Now more than ever, it is important to encourage sustainable travel. The Park offers the opportunity of multi-modal travel with connections to the railway station. There is also a considerable investment being made into upgrading the Bure Valley Path and creating the Broadland Way, which connects Norwich to Hoveton.
- 2.3. The Broads Authority is planning to dredge this section of the Upper Bure starting in the winter of 2021/22. This would be a good opportunity to make a positive re-use of the dredged sediment at the park for landscaping purposes.
- 2.4. To retain the sediment and to prevent flooding in future, it is essential to re-pile the river banks and dykes. This piling is now over 20 years old, much of which is timber and has exhausted its lifespan.
- 2.5. If the Authority uses dredged sediment to help re-landscape the Park and re-piles the river edge, this would be a significant financial contribution to the project. Most funders require an in-kind contribution to consider an application, so this planned practical work is a great way for the Authority to meet its dredging obligations and kick-start the Hoveton Riverside Park project.

- 2.6. Upgrading all the pathways to fully accessible paths and cycleways will encourage visitors to travel in a sustainable way and negate the need to use the main roads between the railway station and the town. Fully accessible benches and signage are also paramount to the future success of the Park.
- 2.7. Table 1 highlights individual elements of the project and the cost breakdown.

Table 1

Hoveton Riverside Park project elements and costs

Projects	Estimated costs
Pond restoration	£10,096
Children's play area	£70,000
Landscaping and river piling	£150,418
Dyke restoration and bridge replacement	£95,000
Canoe launch facilities	£25,000
Picnic and waste facilities	£4,700
Discovery Hub and signage	£36,700
New access paths/cycleways	£21,000
Lighting	£7,750
Parking facilities	£2,464
Professional fees/designs	£10,800
Total	£433,928
Authority in-kind contribution	£145,218 (£45,218 of which comprises the dredging and staff costs)
Funding to source	£288,710

3. Partnership and funding

- 3.1. The Authority has been working in partnership with the Broads Charitable Trust (BCT) to develop site plans and explore funding opportunities to support project delivery.
- 3.2. Norfolk County Council officers have also been consulted and had input on the initial concept drawings. It is hoped that, by collaborating with their external funding team, funding sources can be identified.
- 3.3. The local Parish Council has been a key stakeholder and gives its full support to the project. A meeting with Roys in January 2021 was also very successful, when they gave their initial approval of the revised plans.

- 3.4. A public survey was conducted throughout December 2020 and January 2021. The outcomes of this survey have been fed into the concept masterplan.
- 3.5. A management agreement will be created for the site and signed by all interested parties. This will ensure the longevity of the site and allow local communities to take greater responsibility for the Park. This type of agreement builds stronger communities and encourages people to become active in their local landscapes.
- 3.6. The Authority is also collaborating with Norfolk County Council and Cycling UK as part of the EXPERIENCE project on a cycle hub scheme, the pilot of which will be based in Hoveton.

4. Children's play area and Discovery Hub

- 4.1. The Authority has been supporting the Broads Charitable Trust in their Discovery Hub project. It was identified early on that an element of play should be incorporated within the Hub's design, and where appropriate as an extension to the Hub.
- 4.2. Statistics recorded by CAP.CO, a company that designs and builds play spaces, show that creating a children's play space within an area can have an uplift in visitor numbers between 40% and 1500%. These expected additional visitors would have a substantial economic impact within Hoveton and Wroxham.
- 4.3. We have already had positive discussions about the play area. It was identified that Hoveton is situated within the eligible boundaries of the Landfill Communities Fund through Tarmac, and that they typically fund the creation of play areas.
- 4.4. The Broads Charitable Trust has been in discussions with various businesses regarding sponsorship of the Hubs and the Park to pay for the ongoing maintenance costs. Roys has also expressed an interest in contributing to the Park.
- 4.5. It is also worth noting that, as part of the original lease agreement, it was always intended to create a children's play area at Hoveton. There is a disused mound situated to the rear of the site that lends itself to our designs.

5. Risk implications

- 5.1. There is a financial risk that no external funding can be sourced. At that point, the Broads Authority would have to consider how to fund the repair and maintenance of the Park in its current state, as contractually obliged.
- 5.2. Long-term maintenance of the Park will need to be managed better than in the past, with a renewed joint management agreement with the Parish Council and the Broads Authority. Ongoing maintenance has also been discussed with the Broads Charitable Trust, with a view to arranging sponsorship of some of the facilities. There is, however, a risk that this may not be successful.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The officers' recommendation is to support the proposed project plan for Hoveton Riverside Park. It will improve a neglected and underused key riverside site, encouraging more people to visit and in a sustainable way. It links well with initiatives being led by other organisations, and will make sure that our duty to maintain and manage the site is fulfilled.

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[Broads Plan](#) objectives: 3.1, 3.2, 6.1, 6.2, 8.2, 9.3