

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 National Park Grant Update

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: John Packman/Nil

- 1.1 Following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 5 December, Defra has now given the National Park Authorities and other bodies funded by the Department, such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, their grant allocations for the next two years. National Park Authorities were already expecting a cut in funding of 6.4% between 2013/14 and 2014/15 following the last Spending Review (SR10). An additional 2.2% reduction for 2014/15 and a further cut of 1.7% in 2015/16 have now been announced following the latest Spending Round (SR13) in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. Therefore in effect this means a cut of 8.5% from 2013/14 to 2014/15. For the Broads Authority this means a reduction of £302,054 between this year and next – an increase of £74,702 over what had been indicated following the previous Spending Review – and a further reduction of £56,441 in 2015/16. This means that the Authority will receive National Park Grant of £3,245,393 in 2014/5 and £3,188,952 in 2015/16.
- 1.2 No announcement has been made in respect of National Park Grant allocations for 2016/17 and beyond, however it is clear that there is likely to be continuing downward pressure on public sector finances over this period.
- 1.3 Taking into account the recently announced grant settlement, the National Park deficit based on current budget figures would be approximately £230,000 in 2014/15, £327,000 in 2015/16 and £419,000 in 2016/17 (assuming no further grant reduction in this year). There clearly remain some difficult decisions to be made in order to address this deficit and develop a sustainable Financial Strategy for the National Park budget.
- 1.4 However, the Authority is well prepared to respond to these reductions and suggestions have been sought from across the organisation to identify how the Authority could raise income, make efficiencies and find further savings. The significant balance of the general National Park reserve means that the Authority also has some flexibility in the timing of its response to these grant reductions. As a result, it is considered that there will be no need for a major restructure of the organisation, as the new two Directorate arrangement is working well. It is also considered unlikely that any staff changes will be required until the 2015/16

financial year. Officers are now engaged in developing detailed proposals to address the grant reductions for consideration by the Financial Scrutiny and Audit Committee on 11 February 2014 and then by the Broads Authority on 21 March 2014. The full Budget and Financial Strategy will be presented for consideration and approval by the Authority in March 2014 to allow sufficient time for this detailed planning and consultation with the FSAC in response to the grant settlement to be undertaken.

2 Breydon Water Navigation Works

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Tom Hunter/NA4

- 2.1 The Navigation Committee received a report at its meeting in December 2013 which provided an overview of works undertaken on Breydon Water over the year. With regard to the Dickey Works, members noted that the conclusion of the survey report was that the existing superstructure remains had little effect on the local hydraulic flows although a sonar survey to determine the extent of the remaining structure and the navigation hazard it posed was required. The structural remains were marked but eventual removal was considered appropriate.
- 2.2 The Committee gave detailed consideration to the immediate and long term management requirements for the Turntide Jetty as a result of the condition survey report and the hydromorphological study of Breydon water. The Committee was mindful that the condition of the Turntide Jetty was more serious than at first anticipated, that it would present a safety hazard and so action would be required sooner rather than later. Following detailed discussion, the Committee supported the re-piling of the essential part of the structure of the Turntide Jetty in one operation, but with the work being programmed to start in March 2015 and extending over two financial years. The Committee would be updated on estimated costs in later in the year following further design and planning work.

3 Waterway Specification Compliance

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Adrian Clarke/NA1

- 3.1 The Navigation Committee received a report at its meeting in December 2013 which provided a summary of the work being undertaken to develop a new methodology for reporting on waterway specification compliance for the Authority's Sediment Management Strategy (SMS). The Committee considered that the methodology proposed would simplify the compliance reporting process, allow for easier identification of non-compliant areas with greater accuracy and be more effective in prioritising the annual dredging programme potentially delivering efficiencies. It was clarified that the SMS had been appropriately assessed under the Habitats Regulations and no adverse comments had been received from colleagues in Natural England.

The Committee welcomed and endorsed the proposed approach as a pragmatic way forward, recognising that it would allow for more accurate and cost efficient dredging and define a new baseline against which performance could be measured.

4 Hirer Safety Review

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Steve Birtles/NA4

- 4.1 A UK inland waterway navigation authority review of boat hirer safety is taking place concerning hired powered boats only. This review is being administered through the support committees of Boat Safety Scheme. The review covers hirer safety generally and the hire trade and other stake holders are participating. The outcomes of the review will see hirer safety delivered through an appropriate balance between the roles and responsibilities of the navigation authorities, hire operators and hirers themselves. The aim is to influence navigation authority licensing conditions, as well as BSS hire boat requirements, which were last reviewed in 2002.
- 4.2 The initial risk review is now complete and initial recommendations have been developed for consideration by the navigation authorities. The Broads Authority and operators of hire boats on the Broads have been actively involved in the review and during 2014 outputs from the review will be evaluated and where necessary will inform updates to the Broads Authority Hire Boat Licensing scheme.
- 4.3 The consultant's report containing initial recommendations from the risk review (stage 1) and assessment stage of the navigation authority's general review of hirer safety is available to download from this link.
<http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/media/231417/navigation-authority-hsr-initial-recommendations-nov-13.pdf>
- 4.4 The forum will be updated as the review develops during 2014.

5 Breydon Water

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Andrea Long/NA4.1

- 5.1 The Broads Authority had resolved to produce a Water Space Management Plan for Breydon Water. The milestones for this required stakeholder engagement and agreement on the scope and content of the Plan by the end of December 2013 with a draft plan for consultation completed by March 2014. A series of individual stakeholder interviews were carried out during summer and autumn 2013 representing a wide range of interests – these included amongst others the RSPB, NSBA, Natural England, Broads Society, Water skiing interests, Great Yarmouth Borough Council. Officers also attended two meetings (April and October) of the Breydon User Group to seek direction on the proposed scope and content of the Plan. The outcome of the interviews was that there did not appear to be a strong single driver that would necessitate the production of a Water Space Management Plan. Stakeholders felt that adequate measures and mechanism were already in place to deal with any specific issues or conflict that arose in the area and that adequate communication between users was already taking place and it was considered that this would be beneficial to continue. The interviews were written up into a composite summary, which outlined the main issues raised but concluded that there did not appear to be an overwhelming

need for a plan nor an overwhelming desire from any particular stakeholders to see one produced. The summary was then circulated to all participants and their comments on its accuracy and conclusion sought. Whilst responses were received in respect of clarification of some factual issues there has been no adverse reaction from stakeholders to its conclusion not to proceed with the production of the plan. Therefore it is proposed not to take the matter forward.

6 Breydon Water Water Skiing Trial

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Steve Birtles/NA4

- 6.1 At its meeting of the 18 January 2013 the Broads Authority passed a resolution to designate a zone for the purposes of water skiing and wakeboarding on Breydon Water following a public consultation and guidance from Natural England. As Breydon Water has many designations relating to wildlife and its special features the Authority also added that the zone was to be established for at least one year in order to collect data on the potential effects of water skiing on the features of the site. Water skiers were required to have permits issued by the Authority and additionally to get permission from Broads control before they embarked in water skiing so that accurate data relating to usage could be collected, also this would allow rangers to be present to monitor effects on birds and other users from water skiing activity.
- 6.2 To date no one has formally engaged in water skiing on Breydon Water and at the recent water ski review panel meeting it was recommended that the trial of water skiing on Breydon Water should continue for a further year in order that data could be collected to inform any future proposal the Authority may consider.

Author: John Organ
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Broads Plan Objectives: Multiple
Appendices: Nil