

Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan Update
Report by Catchment Officer

Summary: This report summarises the progress of actions in the Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan and outlines the Catchment Partnership Action Fund 'Slow the Flow' project application for 2015/16.

Recommendation: That the Forum

- (i) supports the progress of the Broadland Catchment Partnership and the proposed project and provides any suggestions for improvement; and
- (ii) recognises the on-going importance of seeking external funding to continue to progress the Broadland Catchment Based Approach beyond March 2016.

1 Partnership Action Summary

- 1.1 The Broadland Catchment Partnership (BCP) has secured funding for a Catchment Officer until end of March 2016 to continue to facilitate and co-ordinate partners to deliver actions in the Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan.
- 1.2 The progress in relation to the seven key goals of the BCP is presented against each action below. The actions in italics are not all encompassing but provide examples of some of the areas of work that the key partners are undertaking and where the partnership has had a contributory role.
- 1.3 There are several organisations undertaking statutory and voluntary actions that are sign-posted in the catchment plan.

2 Land Management

- 2.1 Seek funding for additional independent advisers to provide 'face-to-face' advice and support to land managers and farmers.

Anlian Water has recruited a Catchment Adviser for Norfolk and Suffolk. Catchment Sensitive Farming funding has been secured into 2016 although no officer is currently in post for the Bure, Ant & Muckfleet. Essex & Suffolk Water are recruiting a new farm adviser with most attention for 2015-2016 focussed in the Dickleburgh Stream sub-catchment of the Waveney catchment.

- 2.2 Through existing advisers and agronomists, make potential run-off risk maps available to farmers to help locate effective measures.

Development of a publicly available web map is underway by the Broads Authority IT team. It will include run-off risk and water quality/biodiversity priority

maps. These will be available in trial form at forthcoming farmer workshops in May and June 2015 that will explore the need for targeted 'soil and water' improvement measures.

- 2.3 Hold talks with farmers and their advisers to get their views on effective environmental land management measures and how best to incentivise these.

A local farmer meeting was held in February 2014 in relation to Countryside Stewardship with farmers' requests for longer and more flexible agreements sent directly to Defra. The 'Management of the marshes' report on farmer intentions following the end of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme was published in November 2014. A Water and Tramline on-farm event for farmers and advisers was held in September 2014 where equipment for the disruption of tramlines was demonstrated and tramline management discussed.

- 2.4 Agree, with all interest groups, suitable key locations for targeting environmental land management measures to provide multiple benefits.

An ecosystem services mapping workshop held in December 2014 allowed key stakeholders to decide scoring and weighting based on their local knowledge to highlight key locations down to the field (and even within field) level. The Broads have been selected as a pilot area for the Defra supported Ecosystem Accounting Project.

3 Waste Water Management

- 3.1 Raise awareness of effects of misconnections, washing products, waste disposal and septic tank best practice at community events and on school visits.

Partners have provided relevant information in quarterly newsletters and at the Broads Authority Parish Forums, Trinity Broads Celebration, Countryside Classroom, Wild About the Wensum and River Waveney Trust public events. A risk assessment tool for septic tanks around freshwater SSSIs has been developed which may assist targeted community engagement in rural areas.

- 3.2 Explore potential locations for reed beds and constructed wetlands and seek funding for local trials in areas where water bodies have high phosphorus levels.

A trial scheme in Somerset and on the neighbouring River Mun catchment led by Norfolk Rivers Trust has been promoted. Discussions with Anglian Water are underway about a similar trial at Ridlington Sewage Treatment Works where the company has a large area of land that could accommodate a reed bed system.

4 Water Management

- 4.1 Raise awareness of water efficiency, capture and water friendly gardening and promote free water saving packs at community events and on school visits.

Partners have provided relevant information in quarterly newsletters and at the Broads Authority Parish Forums, Trinity Broads Celebration, Countryside Classroom, Wild About the Wensum and River Waveney Trust public events.

- 4.2 Support the whole farm water management approach by Essex & Suffolk Water in the Waveney catchment and promote in other sub-catchments.

The Launch Event held in June 2014 promoted best practice at Old Hall farm where clean and dirty water separation, bio beds and constructed wetlands were demonstrated on the site visit. The Waveney Catchment Partnership (Agri-advice) to co-ordinate farm advice is underway.

5 Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage

- 5.1 Agree key areas of high flood incident and upstream run-off risk with landowners, communities, flood authorities and drainage boards.

Meetings with Norfolk County Council are underway regarding locations with surface water flooding issues that will receive funding for retrofitting of SuDS and changes to land management practices to mitigate problems. Caister-on-sea, Diss, Great Yarmouth, Harleston, Hemsby, North Walsham, Wymondham are listed as are Catton Grove/Sewell, Drayton, Nelson and Town Close in Norwich.

- 5.2 Seek funding for demonstration projects for rural drainage in high run-off risk areas in each of the Bure, Wensum, Waveney and Yare sub-catchments in association with local communities.

Norfolk Rivers Trust and Environment Agency 'Optimising Flood Risk and Environment Funding' workshop was held in October 2014. Catchment Partnership Action Fund application submitted - see Section 8 for more details.

6 River and Floodplain Management

- 6.1 Agree potential locations, in non-tidal locations, to re-connect river with floodplain, and seek funding for projects.

A workshop held in December 2014 allowed interest groups to highlight key locations down to the field (and even within field) level. Additional funding of a total of £34K for river restoration upstream of Ingworth on the Bure, on the Alma Beck in the Waveney catchment, and at two sites on the upper Wensum was applied for as part of the Catchment Partnership Action Fund bid.

- 6.2 Scope potential for a woody debris installation project on the Upper River Bure with relevant farmers and landowners.

A small scheme involving woody debris and channel enhancements is almost ready to be delivered. A larger floodplain re-connection scheme requires hydraulic modelling and flood defence consents. The National Trust is championing these sites and it is hoped that funding can be sourced from the EA flood and coastal risk management budget.

- 6.3 Establish priorities for fish barrier by-pass, or removal, and eel projects involving local community action, and seek funding for demonstration schemes.

The EA is funding a £28K project to install eel passes at four structures on the River Waveney at Wainford, Bungay, Earsham and Mendham being delivered by a contractor and River Waveney Trust volunteers.

- 6.4 Promote workshops for landowners and encourage co-ordinated invasive species control on rivers, including extending 'Check, Clean, Dry' messages beyond the Broads.

A landowner workshop was held in March 2014. Trial sites are being investigated for biological control of Himalayan balsam. Partners and wider stakeholders will be provided with the opportunity to view and feedback on Biosecurity plans for Norfolk and Suffolk in 2015.

7 Understanding and Recreation

- 7.1 Raise awareness of riparian owner responsibilities, river care, canoe trails and angling opportunities at community events and on school visits.

Partners have provided relevant information in quarterly newsletters and at the Broads Authority Parish Forums, Trinity Broads Celebration, Countryside Classroom, Wild About the Wensum and River Waveney Trust public events.

- 7.2 Co-ordinate volunteer catchment walkover surveys of tributaries and compare findings with run-off and habitat models.

Norfolk County Council and Catchment Sensitive Farming walkover in Trinities catchment co-ordinated in August 2014. Information on the Upper Bure has been obtained from Environment Agency.

- 7.3 Populate website and information sharing facilities to include mapping, projects, events and activities at a sub-catchment scale.

Catchment plan, engagement reports and all quarterly newsletters with events listing are available on the web page. A web map is in development.

- 7.4 Raise awareness of catchment processes and the water cycle at community events and on school visits.

Countryside classroom event in May 2014 on the Salle Estate. Imperial College and Anglia Ruskin University site visits to Ranworth Broad in April 2014 and 2015 and Barton Broad in July 2014 respectively.

8 Investment

- 8.1 Seek funding opportunities around sustainable catchment management and climate change adaptation and include European partners where necessary.

RSPB led Interreg: North Sea Region bid to be submitted by June 2015: 'Balancing the multifunctional role of fen landscapes' which includes catchment work around Sutton fen and Strumpshaw fen.

Catchment Partnership Action Fund project application submitted - see below.

9 Catchment Partnership Action Fund 'Slow the Flow' Project Application

- 9.1 An application for £46,000 was submitted to Defra's Catchment Partnership Action Fund in March 2015 for a 'Slow the Flow' project of which £15,000 will contribute to host support. A further £34,000 for river habitat improvement schemes on the Bure, Waveney and Wensum was also applied for. The National panel meets on 22 April 2015 and allocation decisions will be made with award letters issued as soon as possible after.
- 9.2 The fund is for projects that could help to improve Water Framework Directive water body status in 2015/16. The Environment Agency reports that physical modification and pollution from rural areas affects over 50% of the waterbodies in our Broadland Rivers catchment.
- 9.3 The project would construct and promote demonstration rural sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) in less productive, marginal areas of agricultural fields. This links to catchment plan action 4.2.
- 9.4 Rural SuDS are generally low tech, low cost solutions that can collect, store and improve the quality of run-off from fields, roads and urban development. They can potentially reduce surface water flooding, recharge groundwater and provide valuable wetland habitats.
- 9.5 Examples include sediment traps, bunds and swales that can usually be constructed simply using a digger. Many are already in place in the catchment but more widespread adoption is sought to improve the effectiveness of existing buffer strips given increasing frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events.
- 9.6 The partnership has prioritised fields using a scoring system developed by all interest groups including farmers and has produced surface water run-off risk maps to help target any schemes. It will be holding a series of workshops to introduce the maps and the issues they are designed to resolve.
- 9.7 If the bid is successful small grants £500-£5,000 will be available for up to 100% funding in areas that are outside of Catchment Sensitive Farming Capital Grant Scheme Target Areas. Applications for potential schemes would be made May – August 2015. Successful applicants would be notified early September 2015. Works would have to be completed and claimed by February 2016.
- 9.8 Funding would be competitive and any proposed scheme assessed against set criteria by the partnership Steering Group including any match funding/in kind contributions offered.

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Broads Plan Objectives: AL2

Appendices: None