

High level review of flood risk management for the Broads
Report by Head of Strategy and Projects

Summary: The Broads Climate Partnership wishes to support the Environment Agency with its need to identify what needs to be done to further the Shoreline Management Plan policies for the low lying coast from Eccles to Winterton and how this relates to adjoining coastal stretches and inland flood management. By undertaking a high level review, the various pieces of information that inform options for flood and saline incursion management should be brought together to provide clearer options on the way forward. Members are asked to support the idea of the Broads Authority contributing to the review costs as effective partnership working to help inform stakeholders of the issues and options.

Recommendation:

That members

- (i) welcome and support the partnership approach to this high level review of flood management needs for the low lying coast in relation to the Broads and so provide clearer information about future options; and
- (ii) contribute £5,000 from this year's Projects' Budget.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will remember that the Broads Climate Adaptation Plan has highlighted the importance of looking at flood risk management in an integrated way pulling together the needs of the coast with the needs of the inland area. It also highlighted the importance of continuing to try and understand the risk of saline water coming into the Broads and how this might be best managed over time.
- 1.2 The current Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) gives the policy for the low lying land between Eccles and Winterton as 'Hold the line'. To achieve this, the Environment Agency have been monitoring the beach levels and structural defences along this stretch of the coast and have recently intervened by introducing further rock groyne seeking to retain the beach and its protection of the sea walls and dunes. The Environment Agency need to look to the future and start the process of gaining the necessary permissions for any future interventions in this area along with identifying what technically feasible solutions can be followed to bring maximum benefit and who might

contribute financially. The coastal protection authorities (district councils) are also undertaking strategy reviews with both Great Yarmouth Borough Council and North Norfolk District Council seeking to improve their understanding of how to follow the SMP policies.

2 Next Steps

- 2.1 The Environment Agency recognise the value of working in partnership to explore the best options for the next, and future, phases of flood risk management and brought their needs to the Broads Climate Partnership. The Partnership was able to discuss the needs and suggest a collaborative way forward.
- 2.2 The Partnership will commission consultants to undertake a high level review of the possible pathways to secure continued protection of the low lying coast between Eccles and Winterton and how this relates to the strategic needs for the protection of the coast along to and including Great Yarmouth. This will enable all the recent research and review work about protecting the coast and its implications for the Broads to be brought together and considered collectively. It will incorporate high level consideration of issues such as river and coastal barriers and allow an update of the costs and technical feasibility of such structures. Although this initiative will not allow the commissioning of new modelling or data collection, it will put in one place the best current knowledge. This, it is hoped, will enable a simple overview of how the current policy can be achieved and initiate effective discussion with interested parties on what the options are including the necessary funding packages that would need to be found.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Environment Agency would like to use the next Climate Partnership meeting to shape the brief for the review and are willing to meet the bulk of the overall costs. As this partnership approach is seen as a vital way forward to ensure collaborative action, members are asked to support the idea of the Broads Authority contributing £5,000 towards these costs. This level of funding can be found from within this year's budget for Projects.
- 3.2 The Partnership will be approaching other bodies to see if they can also contribute though it is recognised that financial constraints still exist and others may find it hard to contribute to un-budgeted amounts.

4 Timescale

- 4.1 The wish is to shape the requirements of the research in January and if possible seek to present at least the preliminary findings to the July meeting of the Broads Forum and reporting back to the Broads Authority in September when the final report has been finished. It is likely this will take the form of identifying 'road-maps' on the way forward that can then be considered by stakeholders to see which might be options worth pursuing further.

5 Risks

5.1 Reputational

- 5.1.1 The Authority has been keen to see thinking and research around future risk management for the Broads to be both in partnership with the critical bodies and to be transparent to stakeholders. The partnership working – ensuring knowledge and understanding is shared to bring mutual benefit and avoid unintended consequences – brings a need to share responsibilities as well. The outcomes from this study may air information that not all stakeholders would welcome or perhaps accept/believe. This will therefore bring a clear burden of planning and executing high quality communication about its purpose and its result and may require a confidence in standing behind the conclusions. Part of the purpose of bringing this to Members is to foster public clarity from the start. The Climate Partnership has been dealing with sensitive topics throughout and is aware of the need to deal with the process carefully.
- 5.1.2 For some there will also be expectations raised and the Authority will need to be clear on decisions about what will follow the study and who should lead any follow up or actively deciding not to take further steps (in all or part of the topic area)

5.2 Financial

- 5.2.1 As the scoping of the study has still to be finalised, at this stage it is unclear what a final cost may be. The Authority has however clearly stated that this is a fixed sum contribution rather than a percentage of costs though officer help has been offered to see if we can facilitate any further contributions from partners. The Environment Agency had originally budget to cover all the cost and so addition funds alongside wider scoping seeks to keep the balance.

5.3 Governance

- 5.3.1 The Broads Authority is the facilitator and lead for the Broads Climate Partnership and so will play a central part in the process of partners creating the scope for the work and receiving reports and therefore help to ensure the work is suitably balanced. The Environment Agency will however actually let the contract and manage the day to day running of the study. The Authority will seek to provide an interface with the Broads Forum over this work and so keep stakeholders informed and feedback any of their observations

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This work is seen as a very positive way of furthering the aspirations of the Broads Climate Adaptation Plan and providing clarity over what options might exist to manage flood risk and saline intrusion. It also provides a collaborative approach through the key agencies helping to develop partnership ideas that can be explored further by stakeholders.

Background papers: See Broads Climate Adaptation Plan (full and summary)

Author: Simon Hooton
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Broads Plan Objectives: CC2, CC3, CC4

Appendices: None