

## **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 Dualling of the A47**

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Andrea Long/Nil

- 1.1 Broads Forum members will be aware that there has been a long held ambition by a number of MPs, public and private sector bodies to realise the dualling of the A47 along its entire length between Great Yarmouth and Peterborough. This includes the stretch between Great Yarmouth and Acle ("the Acle Straight"). These bodies formed a collective some years ago called the A47 Alliance and this has been successful in pressing the Government to assist with funding the improvements to the trunk road that it considers are necessary to improve economic growth and prosperity in the settlements along the route.
- 1.2 More information on the A47 Alliance and its supporters can be found on their website: [The A47 Alliance - Our Goal » A47 Alliance](#). The emphasis of the Alliance's case is an economic one and they have recently refreshed the Business Case for the dualling of the entire route and are calling on Government to commit to a short to medium term investment programme costing £416m as well as a fully dualled A47, with appropriate grade separation, in the longer term. The estimated cost of a fully dualled A47 is some £1.4bn.
- 1.3 The Alliance estimate that with a combination of selected improvements on the A47 and A12 trunk road between Peterborough and Lowestoft, within 20 years there will be 16,890 more jobs in the area, 10,585 new dwellings and an increase of £706m per annum in economic output (GVA). The Enterprise Zone at Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft (set to deliver 10,000 jobs in 25 years) and the Greater Norwich City Deal (set to deliver 40,000 jobs by 2031) offers further economic opportunity for the area.
- 1.4 The Alliance believe a fully dualled A47 would significantly improve safety and journey reliability, reducing travel times by 55 minutes, to the significant benefit of road users including hauliers, as well as deliver further economic benefit to the area. Recent work conducted by the A47 Alliance shows that a fully dualled A47 offers high value for money with certain schemes categorised as 'very high'. The suggested programme is divided into short, medium and long term.

- 1.5 The short-medium term is 2015 - 2021 with the stated priorities (in Norfolk/Suffolk) being:
- the Postwick Hub Junction £19m – funding secured
  - Hardwick/Saddlebow Improvements (King's Lynn) - £20-30m
  - North Tuddenham to Easton Dualling - £71m
  - Longwater (£30m) and Thickthorn Junctions (£50m)
  - Blofield to Burlingham Dualling - £40m
  - Vauxhall Roundabout - £20m-£30m
  - Lowestoft – Denmark Road - £10-12m
- 1.6 The longer term programme looks post 2021 and Norfolk/Suffolk Priorities include:
- King's Lynn to Swaffham Dualling - £166m
  - Swaffham to Dereham Dualling - £163m
  - Acle Straight Dualling - £105m
  - Great Yarmouth – 3rd River Crossing - £112m
  - A47to A12 Link (Gorleston bypass) - £123m
  - Lowestoft – lake Lothing Crossing - £65m
- 1.7 Broads Forum members will see from the list above that the costs associated with the implementation of this programme are not insignificant and that currently only the Postwick hub has any secured funding.
- 1.8 The project potentially of most interest to the Broads Forum is the Acle Straight dualling which is given a high benefit cost ratio under the revised Business Case. There have been some preliminary investigations carried out in order to provide the cost figures, however the Broads Authority has yet to see a formal scheme and this is likely to be some way off in terms of timing for formal consultation. The key issues are likely to be impact on landscape, ecology and drainage issues.

## **2 Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy Work Programme Progress Update** Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Andrea Kelly/BD1

- 2.1 The Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy, adopted by the Broads Authority in 2013, provides the framework for the work required to improve water and wildlife. This section of the report provides progress on some notable projects for members' information.
- 2.2 Lake Review. A comprehensive 45 years review will be complete in August, informing how lakes are managed in the Broads over the next 50 years. Results will be publicised at the 2014 international shallow lakes conference.
- 2.3 Catchment Plan. Successfully launched at the River Waveney Study Centre.
- 2.4 Barn Owl Project. 50 nest boxes provided free to landowners to enhance owls and kestrel populations. Land management advice has resulted in 3ha of enhanced owl hunting habitat, over 40 holdings covering 700 ha of land. This

project is a cost effective way of incentivising habitat management. Funded by Broads Authority, Love the Broads, Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership and supported by Hawk and Owl Trust.

- 2.5 Cuckoo Tracking. Broads Authority assisted with the tagging of 'Gowk' who has been named by the Authority after a Cuckoo that stars in a new children's book by John Miles - it is also the Scottish name for Cuckoos.  
<http://www.bto.org/science/migration/tracking-studies/cuckoo-tracking/gowk>
- 2.6 Recent Research Supported. Lake review (Stirling Uni), invasive shrimp food webs (QMUL), new web-based toolbox for understanding lake ecology (Southampton Uni), Lake Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Sustainability (UCL) <http://lakebess.wordpress.com/>, metals in sediments in Hickling Broad (UCL), water vole mitigation methods (UEA), peat compression (UEA), bats using mills (UEA)
- 2.7 Biomass to Bioenergy. DECC funded project is in final year and a trial of creating briquettes for burning will take place in the Broads. Collaboration with Future Biogas will investigate if Broads biomass harvested by the Authorities new Softrack is suitable for local Anaerobic digestion.

### **3 Outboard Tolls**

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Adrian Vernon and Bill Housden/Nil

- 3.1 During the last meeting a member raised the issue of toll avoidance in relation to outboards on rowing boats/dinghies.
- 3.2 To provide members with more information, an Outboard Motor Toll allows the toll payer to exchange one outboard motor between vessels as opposed to paying the motor craft toll on each one. This is applicable when the toll payer has paid tolls for three or more rowing or sailing craft of 5m<sup>2</sup> or less in length. The outboard motor and the craft must be registered in the same ownership. 19 Outboard Motor Tolls have been issued to private owners this year. The Rowing boat toll is £29.75. The motor (non-electric) boat toll, for vessels with a block area of 5m<sup>2</sup> or less, is £92.70; an additional £62.95. In 2013 approximately 1600 rowing craft tolls and around 1000 outboard dinghy tolls were purchased.
- 3.3 Rangers on patrol are aware of toll avoidance issues and look carefully at each vessel especially if it is carrying an outboard engine without displaying registration numbers and a toll. Joint patrols are carried out with the police and the EA fisheries on about 9 occasions a year when all licensing and toll issues are looked at in relation to persons fishing from small vessels. Very early or late fishing trips from dinghies that are launched from slipways are probably missed on occasions as a decision has to be made as when to best to deploy resources. Adjacent Water checks by rangers will pick up some vessels but only if they are committing an offence at the time. Rangers also look out for tenders that are kept on davits and will report those that are not tolled if they are seen on the water.

3.4 It is not thought that a significant amount of toll income is lost by this rowing dinghy /motor vessel avoidance but a fishing representative in a past Tolls Review did comment that more anglers would purchase a motor licence if the toll was reduced.

Author: John Organ

Date of report: July 2014  
Broads Plan Objectives: Multiple

Appendices: None