

# Navigation Committee

11 January 2024

Agenda item number 14

## Construction Maintenance and Ecology work programme progress update

Report by Head of Construction, Maintenance & Ecology, and Ecology & Design Supervisor

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### Purpose

To give an update on the Broads Authority's management activities to maintain public navigation, develop mooring facilities for public use and demonstrate the effective use of available resources in managing the Broads waterways.

### Broads Plan context

C1: Maintain navigation water depths to defined specifications, reduce sediment input, and dispose of dredged material in sustainable and beneficial ways.

C2: Maintain existing navigation water space and develop appropriate opportunities to extend access for various types of craft.

C3: Manage water plants, riverside trees and scrub, and seek resources to increase operational targets.

C4: Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways.

### Recommendation:

To note the report.

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## **1. Maintaining water depths for navigation**

- 1.1. The detailed breakdown in Appendix 1 gives progress and volumes for the dredging programme for 2023/24 (April 2023 to end November 2023). A total of 27,870 m<sup>3</sup> of dredged sediment was removed from the prioritised sites. This figure represents 70% of the programmed target of 40,050 m<sup>3</sup> for the year.
- 1.2. On the Upper Bure, dredging has started well. Work is progressing from the railway line at Hoveton and heading upstream, targeting the shoals and stretches of river where the Waterways Specification of 1.5m below mean low water level is to be met.
- 1.3. Two areas are also to be dredged on the lower Yare this financial year, at Haddiscoe Cut and a shoal near Breydon Bridge. The sediment removed from Haddiscoe Cut is to be used to fill a floodbank set-back area near Reedham Ferry.

## **2. Maintaining safe public mooring facilities**

- 2.1. Planned work for winter 2023/24 includes repiling work at Womack Island 24-hour mooring. The open tender process has been completed, with the preferred contractor due to sign the contract in the first week of the new year. The scope of works is to replace the timber piles and renew the timber capping and waling.
- 2.2. Repairs and routine replacement of timber quay heading continues. The largest task for the Maintenance Team is to repair the section of piling and quay heading at Ranworth 24-hour mooring, which was damaged and closed off to public use earlier in the autumn. Timber refurbishment between now and the end of March 2024 is also planned for Dilham Staithe.
- 2.3. Several moorings in the northern rivers have been hit hard by high water levels (much more so than normal). This means they will need extra attention and materials to make them good for use. Our normal amount of time spent topping up aggregate and wood chip prior to the start of the season will need to be increased.

## **3. Water plant management**

- 3.1. Floating pennywort can rapidly cover still and slow-moving waters and is currently present in the River Ant between Tonnage Bridge and Hunsett Mill. To keep on top of the spread of the non-native invasive plant, operational staff have spent 51 person days over 2023, removing growth of this plant wherever it has been found. This Authority staff time commitment is on top of the routine water plant cutting in the main waterways. Co-ordination of removal work between the Authority, Norfolk Non-Native Species Initiative (NNNSI), Water Management Alliance (Broads IDB) and RSPB is on-going. Liam Smith nature recovery officer at the NNNSI is leading a funding bid and developing a web-based tool to co-ordinate removal efforts, track sightings of the plant and help engage the public. However, greater input from a wider range of stakeholders and landowners is required, if this species is to be eradicated from the River Ant.

## 4. Riverside tree management

- 4.1. The planned winter 2023/24 tree management activity is underway. The most intense effort with the hydraulic tree shears is focussed in two areas, the River Yare near Thorpe St Andrew, and the River Bure above Hoveton Viaduct. Rangers, volunteers and contractors are also heavily involved.

## 5. Channel marking

- 5.1. Planned work for March 2024 is the replacement in Breydon Water of the wooden posts or those entirely missing, with new steel posts. The bulk of this work is planned for March 2024, with an application to extend this work into April 2024 currently lodged with Natural England.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic actions: C1, C2, C3, C4

Appendix 1 – Annual dredging progress 2023-24 (April 2023 to end November 2023)

## Appendix 1 – Annual dredging progress 2023-24 (April 2023 to end November 2023)

<b>Project title Dredge site and sediment re-use location</b>	<b>Active Broads Authority dredging weeks completed/ planned</b>	<b>Planned volume removed m<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Actual volume removed m<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Planned annual project cost <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Actual project cost</b>
<b>River Ant</b> River Ant - Wayford to Barton (Apr '23 - Jul '23)	18/17	12,230	12,920	£115,740	£112,070
<i>COMPLETE – lower actual cost was due to slightly lower staff numbers needed to achieve the targets than planned</i>					
<b>River Waveney</b> Oulton Broad (Apr '23 – Sept '23)	23/16	7,600	12,490	£98,430	£121,530
<i>COMPLETE – final costs reflect extension of time on this project</i>					
<b>River Bure</b> Coltishall to Hoveton Viaduct (Oct '23 – Mar '24)	4/30	13,630	2,460	£176,510	£72,720
<i>Planned start date delayed owing to mobilisation restrictions. Costs so far are all related to project planning costs and site set up</i>					
<b>River Yare</b> Haddiscoe Cut (Nov '23 – Jan '24)	0/13	6,590	0	£80,630	£9,190
<i>There will be some reduction in dredging duration on this project owing to the extension of time at Oulton</i>					

<sup>1</sup> project costs include staff time for all elements (pre-works ecological mitigation, site set-up, active dredging & site restoration); BA plant; & budgetary expenditure (equipment hire, survey costs, contractor costs, mitigation works, materials & consumables etc); within the reporting period.

<b>Project title Dredge site and sediment re-use location</b>	<b>Active Broads Authority dredging weeks completed/ planned</b>	<b>Planned volume removed m<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Actual volume removed m<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Planned annual project cost <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Actual project cost</b>
<b>Site restoration</b> Hardley Flood <i>(yet to be fully completed)</i>	-	-	-	£8,800	£1,810
<b>Future site preparation</b> Survey, mitigation & set-up	-	-	-	£6,810	£4,700
<b>Dredging support activities</b> Maintenance of ancillary dredging kit, etc.	-	-	-	-	£16,740
<b>Total</b>	<b>45/76</b>	<b>40,050</b>	<b>27,870</b>	<b>486,920</b>	<b>338,760</b>