

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 Wherry Procurement

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Rob Rogers/NA1

- 1.1 In 2012 the Authority completed a tendering process for a new wherry following an open advertisement and as part of the tender, tenderers were asked to supply an optional price for the supply of a second wherry. A need for a further wherry has been identified as part of the Authority's Asset Management Plan, which has been costed by the successful tenderer of the first wherry at £107,000. This was considered to be competitive and, given the difference between the original tenders and the potential cost of re-advertising, the Financial Scrutiny and Audit Committee agreed on 9 July 2013 that a waiver to standing orders relating to contracts be raised to facilitate the procurement of a second wherry from the original contractor.
- 1.2 In conjunction with the wherry designer, Andrew Wolestenholme, the wherry builder, John Kearney Ltd and feedback from Operation Technicians, some minor amendments to the hull design and specification have been made, and the design drawings are being altered to reflect this.
- 1.3 Once John Kearney Ltd has supplied the fabrication timetable and agreed the changes can be incorporated for the quoted price an order will be placed. Delivery is anticipated in the summer of 2014.

2 Navigation Committee Appointments

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: John Organ/Nil

- 2.1 Further to the consultation of the Navigation Committee on 5 September 2013, the Broads Authority considered the appointment process for co-opted members of the Navigation Committee on 20 September 2013. The Authority agreed to extend the current term of appointment for all co-opted members and adopt a four-year term for all future appointments (including reappointments), up to a maximum aggregate term of eight years.
- 2.2 The Authority also agreed that the appointment process for future terms should be scheduled to allow the two co-opted members from the Navigation Committee to be appointed to the Authority before the Annual meeting; allowing such members to be considered when appointments to the Chair, Vice Chair,

committees, Lead Member Roles and outside bodies are decided. This will result in the current term of appointment for co-opted members being extended until two meetings prior to the Annual meeting in 2015. This will provide a term completion date of March 2015 if the current committee timetable is rolled forward next year.

- 2.3 The Authority also agreed the proposals which will facilitate the temporary appointment of co-opted members of the Navigation Committee to the Authority and the appointment of an interim Chair of the Navigation Committee, should this be required at the beginning of a new appointment term. These are important measures to ensure that representation from co-opted members of the Navigation Committee can be continually maintained on the full Authority.

3 External Funding Opportunities and Income Generation

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Titus Adam/Nil

- 3.1 At the Financial Scrutiny and Audit Committee (FSAC) meeting on 19 September 2013, members received a report which set out details of potential external funding opportunities and income generation options open to the Authority, along with details of research into the indicative amounts that may be available from such sources. It was agreed at the full Authority on 20 September 2013 that the External Funding Opportunities and Income Generation report to the FSAC be circulated to all members of the Authority and Navigation Committee for comment to allow an updated report to be presented to the November meeting of the Broads Authority. The updated report will be available on the Broads Authority's website on 15 November 2013, prior to the Authority's consideration on 22 November 2013.

4 Broadland Catchment Partnership

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Andrea Kelly/BD3/BD5

- 4.1 The Broadland Catchment Partnership¹ is working to improve the local water environment so that there is more wildlife, better fishing, improved bathing beaches, lower water bill rises, reduced flood risk, more sustainable farming and a better chance to adapt to climate change.
- 4.2 The Partnership believes that the farmers and land managers, the water industry, local communities and business, and water users in particular have a key role in maintaining and enhance a high quality natural environment delivering a wide

¹ **The Broadland Catchment Partnership Steering Group**

Andrea Kelly and Neil Punchard – Broads Authority

Barry Bendall – The Rivers Trust

Will Robinson – Essex and Suffolk Water

Lucinda Gilfoyle – Anglian Water

Rob Wise and Henry Walker – NFU and farming interests

Rory Sanderson and Bridget Marr – The Environment Agency

Tony Goodwin – Water Management Alliance

Victoria Fradley – Natural England

range of high quality ecosystem services² and the cultural landscape of the Broadland Rivers Catchment.

- 4.3 The Partnership is involving communities, water users, investor organisations, companies and farmers in working together to improve the catchment. The engagement process includes working through existing networks, as well as a series of stakeholder workshops and a regular electronic newsletter. The next workshop on 3 December is helping form the actions across the catchment. The Partnership is keen to hear from at least one representative from boating organisations to participate in the development of the plan via this workshop. The Partnership is also keen to interview water users about their experience of the Broads and the value of managing the whole catchment for multiple benefits.
- 4.4 The Partnership is seeking to provide a clear understanding of catchment issues, an idea of what is already happening to address these, what more can be done and who can help. A plan will be produced and launched at a Broads conference in March 2014.
- 4.5 A river valley (or sub-catchment area) approach is being taken in many places. Already the River Waveney Trust, Wensum Alliance, Brograve and Upper Thurne and many other community groups around the Bure, Ant, Tud and Yare are taking a catchment based approach to care for Broadland rivers.

5 Agri-Environment Scheme and the Value of Grass Marsh in Broadland

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Andrea Kelly/CC4, LC2, BD1 – 5, AL1 - 3

- 5.1 At its meeting on 20 September 2013, the Authority received a report outlining the history of the agri-environment support in the Broads as well as the development of the new agri-environment scheme, alongside the current increase in applications to Natural England to allow reversion back to arable which was of considerable concern, and the proposed way forward.
- 5.2 It was noted that the New Environment Land Management Scheme (NELMS) was due to replace the Stewardship scheme and was currently being discussed prior to Defra carrying out consultation. In the current system landowners wishing to change land management of drained grasslands would be required to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment if the grassed area was over two hectares and not been cultivated in the last 15 years and had to submit this to Natural England. This was to enable Defra to minimise the loss and it was understood that landowners were aware of the procedures, although it was not actively publicised.
- 5.3 Members recognised that this was a very important issue for the Broads, given the value of grassland management to the area both in terms of ecosystem services including carbon and pollution management, landscape and biodiversity which provided key characteristics and elements that made the area unique in the UK, the impacts on water levels, and the role and experience the Authority

² Ecosystem services are the goods and services from the environment. They include pollination, water purification, carbon storage and landscape

had in developing government policy. Members considered that given the potential threats, it was important that the Authority had a clear scientific understanding of those risks. Members noted that the new scheme would have a more targeted approach and therefore were fully supportive of the need to consider how the Authority advised Defra and Natural England to target the new scheme.

- 5.4 Members were appraised of the agricultural perspective and the complexity of the decisions facing landowners given the changes in the agri-environment funding, the international markets and circumstances as well as the added uncertainties concerning the EU Common Agricultural Policy. Members were advised that it was the responsibility of Natural England to deal with all the landowners in the area directly and that the Authority did not have the resources to do so. However, the Authority through the Senior Ecologist was consulted particularly on the HLS (Higher Level Schemes) for fens, developing wetland creation and restoration projects and provision of advice when approached.
- 5.5 Members were supportive of the proposed 5 point plan of action which included engagement with landowners through discussions with the NFU and CLA, contributions to a study building on the NFUs document Why “Farming Matters” produced in 2010, coordination of the messages to Defra and New Anglia Local Enterprises Partnership concerning capital investment and benefits, working closely with the Water Management Alliance and Internal Drainage Boards and a reappraisal of the Halvergate Conservation Area.

6 Broads Authority Weedcutter Effectiveness

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Rob Rogers/NA3

- 6.1 The vast majority of commercial weed cutters on the market are air cooled, although in discussion with Berky (the manufacturer of the Authority’s weed cutter) it was agreed that water cooling would be more efficient. Broads Authority Fitters will retro fit a water cooling system to the weed cutter once this cutting season has been completed.
- 6.2 Random samples of the cut weed are taken to ensure that the cutting bar is cleanly severing the water weed. Random samples taken at Somerton show that the cutter severed the weed cleanly and without tearing. A small amount of tearing may occur, as the cutter head moves forward as the cutter bar sits within a mounting frame. The mounting can get tangle in weed as it progresses forward, resulting in a small portion of torn weed. However, as the frame is only a tiny percentage of the overall cutting bar, this tearing is a tiny fraction of the cut area.
- 6.3 The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for weed cutting at Somerton states that water weed is cut at 30cm from the river bed. This is to allow the plants to survive a cut which enhances water quality, improves water ecology and stabilises the river bed helping to prevent sediment fluidisation. The SOP at Somerton also helps protect the rare Stonewort, which grows at this location. The SOP is strictly adhered to by Operatives, unless authorisation is given by Environment Officers, to deviate from the procedures.

7 Greater Norwich Development Partnership Joint Core Strategy Update

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Natalie Beal/Nil

- 7.1 The Main Modifications suggested to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNPD) Joint Core Strategy (JCS) were put out for consultation and considered by the Authority's Planning Committee on 11 October 2013. The consultation closed on 21 October 2013. Of importance to note is that two of the changes were proposed by the Planning Inspector and as such the Councils who make up the GNPD were able to respond to the consultation with comments regarding these two proposed Main Modifications.
- 7.2 A summary of the Main Modifications was reviewed by the Planning Committee. These included:
- a. Additional clarity regarding the Northern Distributer Route and Postwick Hub and what development can come forward prior to these traffic management schemes. The Authority did not comment as it has not previously objected to 10,000 dwellings in the Growth Triangle.
 - b. The inclusion of two new policies. Policy 21 is the Planning Inspectorate model policy (similar to what the Authority has in its Sites Specifics). Policy 22 refers to a specific local plan if housing delivery is 90% of what expected to be. The Authority did not comment as it would be involved to some extent on a specific Local Plan.

8 Mutford Lock Harbour Revision Order

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Angie Leeper/Nil

- 8.1 At the members request a briefing note regarding Mutford Lock was prepared and presented to the Navigation Committee in June 2013. NP Law have confirmed that the Harbour Revision Order (HRO) has been agreed between the two parties and submitted in draft to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for their comments and once they are happy will be formally submitted.
- 8.2 NP Law have received comment that the MMO are happy with the draft HRO. They commented that both the HRO and the plan attached to it seemed clear.
- 8.3 The next step is to lodge a notice of intention to submit an HRO. This will produce a formal response from the MMO setting out whether or not an Environmental Impact Assessment is required (which the Authority has been advised is unlikely), what the statutory fee will be; and the next steps.

Author: John Organ
Date of report: 21 October 2013
Broads Plan Objectives: Multiple
Appendices: Nil