

Hampshire County Council

Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee

10 February 2012

Basingstoke Canal Authority – Management Restructure

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) is the body managing the Basingstoke Canal on behalf of the Canal owners Hampshire and Surrey County Councils and the supporting partners. The BCA staff are all Hampshire County Council employees and are line-managed by Hampshire County Council through the Council's Countryside Service.
- 1.2. In response to the impact of budget reductions and the need to increase income, the Countryside Service is embarking upon a re-structure of its senior management team and the management of its parks and sites. For some time, there has been a clear need identified to improve the management structure of the BCA and how this fits within the Countryside structure. In particular, the County Councils have been keen to realise the benefits of the BCA working more closely with the Blackwater Valley Countryside Management Partnership and the Service's sites in the north of the county.
- 1.3. Therefore, the review of the wider management of the Countryside Service presents the opportunity to consult upon the possible changes to the management of the Canal and Blackwater Valley. This enables all of these proposals can be considered together and for staff to see all the posts that are proposed to continue after the review.
- 1.4. This report summarises these proposed changes for the Joint Management Committee and is to invite and comments or concerns the proposals raise.

2. The Countryside Service Management Review

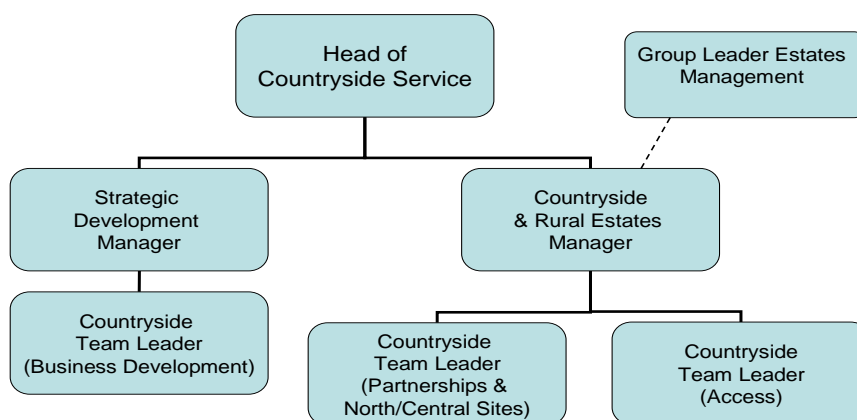
- 2.1. Hampshire Countryside Service is part of Hampshire County Council's Culture, Communities and Business Services Department. The Service manages a wide range of parks, sites and rights of way in the county which provide many opportunities for people to access and enjoy the countryside.
- 2.2. In addition to the Basingstoke Canal and the Blackwater Valley Partnership, the Service has responsibility for seven country parks, several nature reserves and historic sites which together provide a wide and diverse range of places to visit. The Countryside Service protects and conserves the landscape, wildlife and heritage and our sites are host to a wide range of activities including education. The Service also protects and maintains over 4,500 km of footpaths, bridleways and byways which enable people to walk and explore the county. The Vision Statement for the Countryside Service is: **"Providing the highest quality countryside for people to enjoy - now and in the future."** The Service is

responsible for the management of the Basingstoke Canal Authority staff through the line management of the post of the Canal Director.

3. Proposed Changes

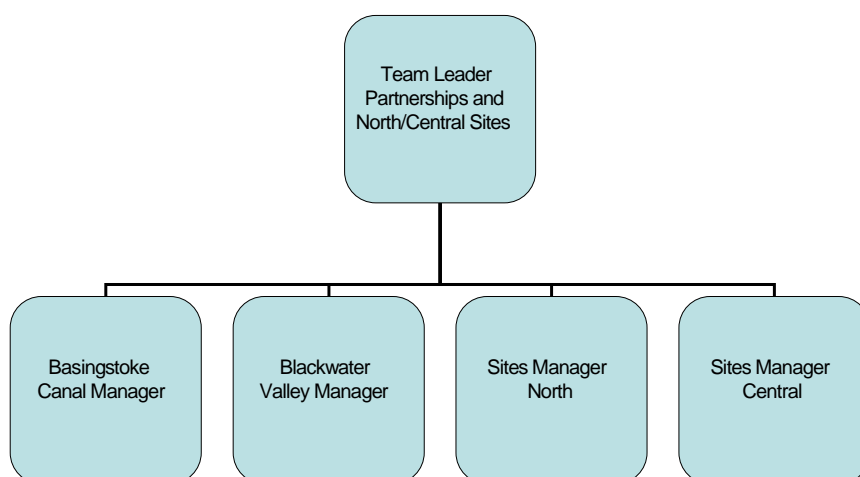
- 3.1. Hampshire’s Countryside Service, including the Basingstoke Canal, needs to create the capacity to develop new business opportunities, seek external funding and be in at the start of proposed new developments which may fund major improvements. To do this, the Service is proposing a model of joint Country Park teams which bring together the operational management of the Parks under one strategic lead officer. This model can also be applied to the strategic management of the Canal and Blackwater Valley but not to the same extent of having one fully integrated team. It is important to recognise the clear differences in the objectives of the Canal and Blackwater Valley and their discreet identities whilst maximising the benefits of bringing these areas under the same strategic leadership. It is proposed therefore to appoint one Team Leader to provide this strategic lead supported by a full-time operational manager for each of the partnerships. The attached structure chart shows the proposed the new positions.
- 3.2. The post of Canal Director would cease under this proposed arrangement. It has been evident for some time that the Canal Director has had the responsibility to both perform the strategic leadership for the Canal *and* to provide the necessary operational management. Both are vital roles to ensuring the safe and sustainable management of the Canal as viable concern into the future. It is the view of Hampshire and Surrey County Councils that this is too much to expect from one person and that a change is therefore necessary.
- 3.3. In this new structure the Basingstoke Canal would benefit from the strategic leadership provided by the Countryside Team Leader (Partnerships and North/Central Sites). Whilst not solely dedicated to the Canal, this post will help realise the efficiencies and flexibility to be gained from overseeing these three areas of work.

Proposed HCC Countryside Service HQ Structure

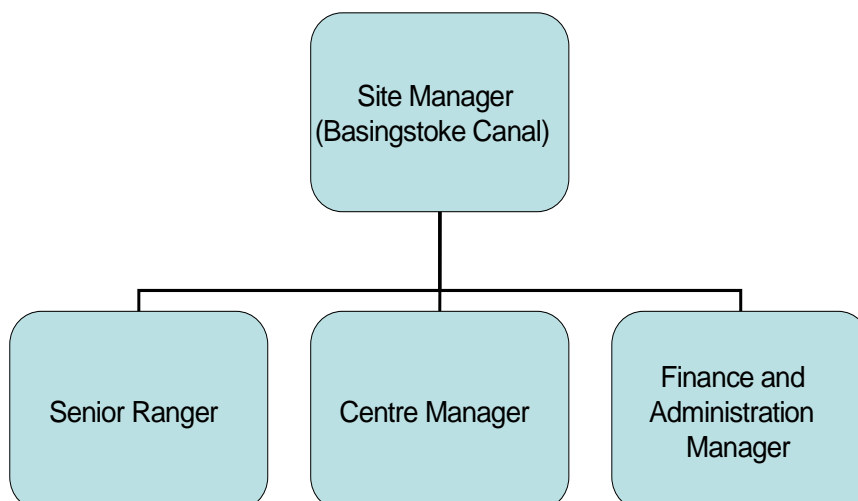


3.4. Reporting to this post of Countryside Team Leader will be a new full-time post of Basingstoke Canal Manager. This post will be focussed on the operational management of the Basingstoke Canal and will line manage the existing posts of Senior Canal Ranger, Canal Centre Manager (Visitor Services Manager) and Finance and Administration Manager. In addition, both Counties are currently investigating the possibility of funding of a temporary 'projects officer' post to drive forward and coordinate the many new initiatives that are currently underway.

Proposed structure – North/Central and Partnerships



Proposed Basingstoke Canal Management Structure



4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. These changes are proposed in response to the known changes in funding which have resulted in an overall reduction in the resources available to the BCA. The changes are intended to create the management capacity necessary to develop the business whilst maintaining the basic functions of managing the Canal and all that that entails. The changes do not represent a reduction in the staffing resource for the BCA, indeed they will create a much needed increase in the operational and strategic management. This increase will be managed through the changes in the overall management of Hampshire's Countryside Service and the wider benefits of the BCA being managed within it. Many of the costs of Hampshire acting as the employing authority are not easily quantifiable. These include the support from senior management, Human Resources, Occupational Health, peer support, some training and staff development costs.

5. Current Progress

- 5.1. Staff consultation about the changes across the Countryside Service is now underway with the staff within the scope of the review. The officers' Joint Advisory Groups of both the Blackwater Valley and the Basingstoke Canal have been consulted on the proposals. Implementation of the any changes will be dependent upon the results of the consultation and also partly upon how posts are filled elsewhere in the Service. In any event, it is proposed not to fully implement changes at the BCA until much later this year to ensure consistency of service and the appropriate level of preparation.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. That members of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee note the changes that are proposed and take the opportunity to seek clarification or to raise any concerns.