



Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee

Capital Works Report

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Key Issue

To update the Committee on the progress of the asset and risk improvement programme funded by Surrey and Hampshire County Councils.

Summary

The County Councils' Capital Programme to date has significantly reduced the backlog of asset maintenance on the Canal. Continued inspection and cyclical maintenance should reduce the risk of unforeseen failures. The forward capital programme sets out the completion of two major backlog items in Hampshire and a moving towards a more cyclical maintenance phase in Surrey.

Officer's recommendation

That the Committee note the contents of the report, and delegates final approval of the programmes in each County to the Assistant Director of Natural Environment & Recreation for Hampshire County Council, and the Natural Capital Group Manager for Surrey County Council.

1. Introduction & background

- 1.1. In 2010 Surrey and Hampshire County Councils allocated a capital budget of £700k each to address a serious backlog of heavy maintenance which had built up since the opening of the restored Canal in 1991. This build up of deferred maintenance along with poor knowledge of asset condition resulted in the closure of the Deepcut flight of locks for safety reasons and a near breach in Hampshire in 2009. The first three-year capital programme was completed under a joint term contract in 2013. This helped with works following the completion of a first Principal Engineering Inspections for most assets, immediate safety issues in the Deepcut locks and carried out safety related works on embanked sections of Canal in Hampshire – but there was still a substantial backlog of outstanding works.
- 1.2. A further £2m was allocated by each of the owning authorities in 2013, with Hampshire initially allocating the funding over 3 years and Surrey 4 years. However, half of the Hampshire County Council funding was consumed repairing the unforeseen landslip at Dogmersfield.
- 1.3. In 2017 Hampshire County allocated a further £1.5m in instalments over a three-year period. Surrey County Council allocated £750k over a 5-year period, SCC have now allocated an additional £100k per annum to the end of their current Medium Term Financial Plan.

2. Discussion

2.1. Since the Committee was last updated on the capital programme works have progressed to address many of the items identified; the initial paragraphs highlight the works undertaken in each County:

2.2. Surrey

2.3. In Surrey the works have progressed well, with a scheme of “Works in the Interest of Public Safety” under the Reservoirs Act carried out on Mytchett Lake Embankment (2013), a series of projects to address canal seepage and bank erosion each year, bed lining of sections of Ash Embankment (a cross border scheme with HCC), the completion of works to improve culvert condition, and the complete second Principal Inspection of all 28 Locks and resulting repair works.

2.4. In the last three years Surrey’s programme has largely gone to plan, with the main expenditure in each of the last three years being repairs to a tranche of locks following Principal Inspection alongside ongoing bank protection work to combat erosion.

2.5. SCC Countryside have continued to employ a part time Canal Engineer, on a complete time and cost recovery basis, to lead the design and supervision of works – and his experience has proved essential to cost effective delivery of schemes. The SCC Canal Engineer has been working on schemes for both Counties and the Canal Authority with time charged to the schemes as appropriate.

2.6. The Engineer reports that in Surrey the backlog of works have largely been eliminated with ongoing cyclical maintenance following reinspection now becoming the priority. The capital budget allocated by Surrey is expected to be able to delivery this over the next 5 years and maintain the current level of maintenance.

2.7. Hampshire

2.8. The early portion of the Hampshire programme was dominated by the repairs to the landslip which occurred at Tundry Hill, Dogmersfield in March 2013 and worsened in March 2014 and took until 2017 to complete. As well as being an engineering challenge to repair, the site is complicated by fragmentation of ownership, with much of the cutting sides now being in private ownership.

2.9. Except for an annual programme of bank protection to combat sudden leaks, seepage and bank erosion the principal expenditure has been works following the Principal Inspection of culverts (most notably a replacement culvert at Barley Mow, Winchfield)

2.10. A number of Hampshire projects are related to earthworks. These are large schemes and due to the protected nature of the Canal have proved much more time consuming to progress due the requirement to gain consents and deal with adjoining landowners where assets are not wholly in canal ownership. The schemes at Crookham Deeps and Swan Bridge, North Warnborough remain outstanding, with much of the residue of the £1.5m allocated in 2017 assigned to these projects. The employment within the BCA of a Canal Project Officer for two years is expected to help deliver these projects.

3. Forward Programme to 2025

3.1. **Appendix 1** – sets out the **Hampshire County Council** forward capital programme. The principal areas of spend will be on the two large earthwork related projects at Crookham and North Warnborough. The remaining budget will pick up items identified in the Principal Inspection of Weirs & Sluices, and will have been expended in 2023/24 with the completion of works arising from the Principal Inspection of culverts due in 2022/23.

3.2. **Appendix 2** – sets out the **Surrey County Council** forward capital programme. The main areas of work are now associated with cyclical maintenance such ongoing bank protections schemes, lock gate replacement. There is also funding for essential maintenance such as the overhaul of the back-pumping equipment and the surfacing of the last section of towpath which has not had a surface.

3.3. In both Counties not all schemes are fully funded, with works to aid safety in both Counties being prioritised. There is a shortfall of approx. £2m in each county to fully fund all works – however some of the identified projects could be considered desirable rather than essential.

3.4. Dredging

- 3.5. No funding is now allocated to systematic dredging of the channel in either County, although the whole channel depth survey in 2015 noted that systematic dredging was required in several areas in each County; systematic dredging will be required for both navigation and conservation reasons soon – but systematic dredging is a very expensive business, with the disposal of the waste being the major cost. Additional funding will be required in the medium term, and serious consideration will need to be given to the carbon capture implications of this type of operation.
- 3.6. The BCA's maintenance dredger *Unity* is expected to be back in operation before the Autumn and will be used to deal with some spot dredging where there are localised shallows around drainage inlets and bridges, etc.

3.7. Trees

- 3.8. Following the delays set out previously to Committee in the inspections of the tree stock, work has commenced in Surrey, and SCC arborists have agreed to inspect the Hampshire section thereafter. It is not expected that there will need to be a call on the capital programmes, although this will need to be kept under review. Should additional funding be required a lower priority capital item such as the improvement may need be deferred to pay for essential tree maintenance, or there be an extra call on the BCA's reserve.

3.9. Special Capital Projects

- 3.10. Surrey County Council's Property Department have secured an additional £500k of funding to renew the mooring at the upper houseboat mooring at Scotland Bridge, West Byfleet. The mooring was constructed during the restoration phase of the Canal with a cost-conscious form of construction, after over 30 years this is now life expired and requires wholesale replacement. With the upper moorings on a raised embankment replacement is more urgent than in other areas due to potential for a failure if there remained ongoing leakage. The works are expected to take place in winter 2021/22 with the Strategic Manager, Canal Engineer and Canal Project officer working alongside other SCC colleagues.
- 3.11. Surrey County Council have also received s.106 funding of £536k from the developers of the Deepcut Barracks scheme now called Mindenhurst. This funding is ring fenced to the provision of a paved 3m wide pedestrian / cycle route from Lock 28 to Lock 15, with any funding left thereafter to be expended on the towpath west of Lock 28 towards the Canal Centre. The Strategic Manager has programmed the development of a design for the present 2021/22 financial year, with expected delivery during the 2022/23 year – but this may slip to the following year depending on the consents required.
- 3.12. Hampshire County Council have allocated £30k from their Covid Path Recovery Fund towards repairing paths which were significantly damaged by high use during the Covid lock-down period. The BCA will be leading on the implementation of works for the two identified areas at Ash Lock and Norris Hill cutting, Fleet.

4. Financial and value for money implications

- 4.1. The funded schemes of works will be undertaken by contractors drawn from the appropriate procurement frameworks in the respective County Council or as stand-alone tenders.
- 4.2. The funded areas of work do not fully cover the identified works required, additional funding will need to be sought to fund safety improvements such as lock ladder replacement, and overdue major maintenance such as dredging. Currently the Principal Inspection of High Risk Embankments is being undertaken, and during the next 2 years Principal Inspections of Public Access (i.e. towpath and adjoining routes) and Culverts are due. Although some funding has been allocated in the capital programme for work to culverts, a major deterioration in asset condition of any asset within these groups could lead to further pressures on the capital programme.

5. Equalities & diversity implications

5.1. The works are targeted at making the Canal safer for all residents and visitors, there are considered to be no significant equalities and diversity impacts.

6. Crime & disorder implications

6.1. There are considered to be no major Crime and Disorder implications for the capital works programme.

7. Conclusion and recommendation

- 7.1. Under the County Councils capital programme since 2010 the Canal has been transformed; the Deepcut locks have reopened and stayed open, high risk embankments and cutting failures have been repaired, all of the culverts and locks improved following Principal Inspections and the BCA re-equipped with appropriate equipment.
- 7.2. The programme especially within Surrey has moved from one of dealing with a major 25-year backlog of deferred maintenance to an ongoing cyclical maintenance programme dealing with overhauls on a planned basis. The only major item of deferment is of a systematic dredging programme – which is currently not funded.
- 7.3. Given that unplanned failures have the biggest impact on budget one of the keys must be to ensure that the unexpected failures are kept to a minimum. It is essential that the BCA's regular inspection programme detailed in the Asset Management Plan continues to be followed going forward, and areas of concern are highlighted.

8. Officer's recommendation

8.1. That the Committee note the contents of the report, and delegates final approval of the programmes in each County to the Assistant Director of Natural Environment & Recreation for Hampshire County Council, and the Natural Capital Group Manager for Surrey County Council.

What happens next

- The JMC will be provided updates of officer's actions in completing the remaining capital programme.

Appendix 1 - Hampshire County Council capital works programme

Budget				£1,371,635	£991,635	£81,635	£1,635	£1,635	
Project name	Project ID	Priority	Project estimate	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Additional funding required	
Totals			£3,615,000	£380,000	£910,000	£80,000	£0	£2,245,000	
Works following PI of Artillery sluice	C130	1	£10,000		£10,000			£0	
Works following PI of Farnborough Rd sluice	C131	1	£25,000		£25,000			£0	
Works following PI of Norris sluice	C132	1	£50,000		£50,000			£0	
Works following PI of Reading Road weir	C133	1	£50,000	£50,000				£0	
Swan cutting bank stabilisation	C62	2	£1,000,000	£25,000	£750,000			£225,000	
Bank protection / towpath reinstatement - repairing erosion	C64	2	£500,000		£50,000	£50,000		£400,000	
North Warnborough sluice & repairs to outfall	C70	2	£25,000		£25,000			£0	
Crookham Deeps o/s Embankment - bed lining	C141	2	£315,000	£305,000				£10,000	
Repairs to culverts following PI Hants	C149	2	£30,000			£30,000		£0	
Culvert repair: Wilks Water Culvert (resolve leaks)**	C68	3	£20,000					£20,000	
Potential land purchase to make towpath wider / safer	C145	3	£50,000					£50,000	
Towpath improvements west of Fleet (5km)	C146	3	£400,000					£400,000	
Connecting paths	C147	3	£50,000					£50,000	
Reinstate Broadoak sluice	C135	4	£50,000					£50,000	
Dredging	C83	4	£1,000,000					£1,000,000	
New car park at Penny Bridge, Up Natley	C137	5	£5,000					£5,000	
Hard bank boat moorings work boat moorings: Ash Lock	C138	5	£35,000					£35,000	





Appendix 2 - Surrey County Council capital works programme

Budget				£231,000	£150,000	£150,000	£100,000	£100,000	
Project name	Project ID	Priority	Project estimate	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Additional funding required
Totals			£3,127,000	£231,000	£150,000	£150,000	£100,000	£100,000	£2,569,000
Engineering costs				£27,000	£18,000	£14,000	£14,000	£14,000	
Works following PI of Horsell sluice Bank protection / Towpath reinstatement - repairing erosion	C114	1	£5,000	£1,000					£4,000
Lock gate cyclical replacement programme	C23	2	£200,000	£50,000	£25,000	£40,000	£50,000		£35,000
10 year overhaul of backpumping equipment	C139	2	£144,000	£18,000	£18,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Repairs to culverts following PI	C43	2	£25,000	£25,000					£0
Dredging	C148	2	£30,000		£27,000				£3,000
Repairs and security improvements at Deepcut Depot	C26	3	£800,000						£800,000
Scotland Bridge Road car park improvement	C40	3	£14,000	£14,000					£0
Reinstate stop gates at Frimley Aqueduct	C41	3	£55,000		£55,000				£0
Amend existing ladders in chambers 1,3-9,11-15, 17,18, 20-26 (22 locks / £7k)	C42	3	£60,000			£60,000			£0
Deepcut High Bridge to Kings Head Bridge flash path re-surface	C94	3	£154,000	£7,000	£7,000				£140,000
Renewing paved towpath surfaces	C44	3	£80,000	£80,000					£0
Gratings at Junction Culverts	C142	3	£500,000					£50,000	£500,000
Ash aqueduct winch improvements	C143	3	£10,000	£9,000					£1,000
Ash wharf renew pile edging	C24	4	£10,000						£10,000
Towpath resurface - Kingshead Bridge to Great Bottom Flash	C09	4	£60,000						£60,000
	C144	4	£980,000						£980,000