



## Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee

### BCA Risk Register

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Lead officers: James Taylor

Telephone: 01252 370073

Email: [james.taylor@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:james.taylor@surreycc.gov.uk) / [James.Taylor2@hants.gov.uk](mailto:James.Taylor2@hants.gov.uk)

#### Key Issue

To inform the JMC of the key risks associated to the BCA Canal Partnership after annual review and to ensure risks are mitigated as far as possible.

#### Summary

A Risk Register is maintained highlighting that the key risks relate to the partnership ceasing to function properly through partners withdrawing funding, or if the BCA fail to inspect critical infrastructure correctly. The annual review has highlighted a significant increase in risk especially surrounding funding levels.

#### Officer's recommendation

That the JMC note the annual revision of the Risk Register

#### 1 Introduction & background

- 1.1 A Risk Register was prepared and reported to Committee in June 2015, building on a register prepared by Officers in 2011.
- 1.2 The register has now been updated following its annual review by the Strategic Manager.

#### 2 Discussion

- 2.1 The highest risk remains around funding of the partnership (BCA 44) with funding partners being unable to continue revenue support. Officers' concerns noted in previous editions of this report that there is an imminent risk of some partners withdrawing some or all of the funds are now taking place with Rushmoor and Woking Borough's having withdrawn all their funding in the last 12-month period. This coupled with rising costs means that the BCA is in a financially unsustainable position and drawing on its reserve to provide a cut back service. A solution is addressed in other reports on the JMC agenda.
- 2.2 A further seven (7) risks have got worse or have become more likely in the past 12 months. For the first time one of these, the risk associated with delivering the BCA's Business Plan (BCA31) is now a **red risk**; as the prospect of growing income to replace declining partner contributions is no longer considered an achievable option - as investment in the Canal Centre has proved impossible and the gap due to withdrawn contributions too wide. Proposals to address this are also contained elsewhere on the agenda.
- 2.3 Of the other 6 risks that have increased, three are due to external forces, these relate to the management of animals (eg: signal crayfish) [BCA 18], theft of equipment [BCA 3] and pollution [BCA 5].

The Invasive Non-Native Species Order 2019 has made trapping North American Signal Crayfish increasingly difficult, so that it is no longer economically viable for crayfish trappers to operate. A cost-effective method of controlling crayfish is no longer available, and this has led to the signal crayfish population increasing and as a result damaging infrastructure. There appears to be no easy solution to this – the BCA have previously made both the EA and Natural England aware of the unintended consequences of this legislation. Similarly, the two pollution incidents in Woking earlier in the year have highlighted the interconnection of the canal with local drainage networks and highlighted its vulnerability to road-based pollution incidents. Without wholesale changes to the drainage network away from the canal there appears to be little that can be done about this.

- 2.4 The other 3 risk that have worsened all relate to the inability to recruit a suitable replacement Canal Operations Manager in the current job market and the worsening financial position of the BCA – these risks are around staffing levels [BCA 15], implementing the Conservation Management Plan [BCA 41] and Emergency Plan [BCA 28]. These risks are likely to decline once a suitable level of staff is employed and the financial position of the BCA is stabilised.
- 2.5 For the first time since the inception of this register no risks have improved or declined in likelihood in the last 12 months.

### **3 Equalities & diversity implications**

- 3.1 The risks associated with reduced funding and increasing income may make it more likely that those on low incomes feel less able to use Canal facilities as more charges have to be made.
- 3.2 Any reduction in revenue maintenance for facilities may impact on the provision of facilities, well maintained level towpath, for less able people.

### **4 Crime & disorder implications**

- 4.1 The risks associated with Crime & Disorder on the Canal are not significant, and there are no associated risks in the risk register.
- 4.2 Reducing funding and therefore Canal staffing further would make the on the ground presence even less than at present, with anti-social behaviour and associated crimes, such as graffiti or vandalism, likely to rise.

### **5 Conclusion and recommendation**

- 5.1 The highest risk therefore remains around funding, which has reached a critical point. Expenditure and programmes have been scaled back, but costs are continuing to rise, and partners are withdrawing funding support - the BCA continues to have to draw on its reserve to offer a declining service with only 2 or maybe 3 years of resource remaining.
- 5.2 The JMC asked officers to address this at their June 2023 meeting, and proposals are contained in other reports on the agenda.
- 5.3 The Strategic Manager recommends that:
- That the JMC note the annual revision of the Risk Register

### **6 What happens next**

- 6.1 JMC Members note the risks and consider the other reports on the agenda which propose mitigations.