

Broadland Futures Initiative

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2024

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Attendees

Kellie Fisher (Chair)- Environment Agency, Mareth Bassett- Environment Agency, Libby Bush-Jacobs, David Cobby- Jacobs, Peter Doktor- Environment Agency, Victoria Egan- National Trust, Hannah Gray- WRE, Catherine Harris- Environment Agency, Fiona Hinds- Natural England, Dan Hoare- Broads Authority, Fiona Johnson- Norfolk County Council, Charles Krolik-Root- Coastal Partnership East, Ian Robinson- RSPB, Tom Say- Environment Agency, Yvonne Smith- Coastal Partnership East, Rob Wise- NFU, Kylie Moos - Broads Authority (minutes).

1. Apologies for absence and welcome

Kellie Fisher (KF) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from Kevin Hart, Phil Pearson, Marie-Pierre Tighe.

2. Update of technical work

Peter Doktor (PD) provided an update on the technical work to the Initiative Project Team (IPT).

Prioritisation of objectives (Product 23)

The public facing summary is being finalised. Once completed, it will be listed on the BFI website and publicised through the BFI engagement network.

SMART objectives (Product 22)

To identify one or two SMART 'indicators' for each BFI objective for use in appraisal. This work has re-started, initially reviewing the outcomes from the IPT workshop last year.

Possible flood risk management actions (Product 21)

A series of project team workshops took place in February /March to identify possible flood risk management actions and action combinations. David Cobby (DC) is reporting on the workshops later in the agenda.

Reporting units (Product 20)

Work to divide the BFI area into 'reporting units' is still on hold pending progress with the hydrological modelling.

Designated sites for nature conservation (Product 25a)

To determine the approach to Habitats Regulations assessment and understand legal obligations arising. Jacobs are currently putting together a report to provide direction to the BFI. The first draft technical report has been reviewed and the second draft will be shared with the IPT.

Social value indicators (Product 25c)

Jacobs have issued a revised proposal for the development of a 'wellbeing' indicator that can also be monetised. PD has been sharing the second draft with Environment Agency (EA) colleagues at a national level to determine that the proposed approach is appropriate; and locally to know what similar work is underway. Engagement is also taking place with Norfolk County Councils Public Health team.

Salinity modelling (Product 25d)

HR Wallingford have undertaken initial analysis of fixed monitoring data. There is a possible opportunity to feedback what are the most important characteristics of the salinity regime to model for example, peak salinity or salinity over a certain threshold over a certain period of time.

Economic appraisal (Product 26)

IPT comments on the technical report have been feedback to Jacobs and they are working on the final version of the report. It has been proposed that Jacobs be instructed to investigate the valuation of recreation, the natural and historic environment. Also, to provide an overview of the economic appraisal process.

Rob Wise (RW) commented, they can appreciate the comments in the report regarding the Future Fens approach and deciding that it was non proportionate to follow a similar approach in the Broads, however the report talks about following the Multi Coloured Manual in relation to agricultural land use. The market value of agricultural land in the in the manual is listed as £600 per hectare to reflect the subsidy effect and farm income support, however, the farm income support has gone post Brexit and this needs to be reflected in the cost benefit analysis.

RW agreed to email PD with their comments after the meeting.

Socio-economic scenarios (Product 29)

Work is underway investigating whether the BFI should consider a range of socio-economic scenarios over the duration of the appraisal period. Most recently, the UEA have carried out modelling exercises and presented the idea of different socioeconomic scenarios to the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance.

Coastal boundary conditions (Product 31)

Agreed with the Upper Thurne Working Group (UTWG) to use their 25 April meeting as a workshop session to consider the existing coastal flood management structures and possible scenarios of alternative alignments. Coastal Parishes in the Upper Thurne have also been invited to the workshop.

Jacobs have put together a draft note which will be shared with the UTWG ahead of the meeting. The note will include background information for the workshop and will set the expectation of the meeting.

Dan Hoare (DH) offered to review the note before circulation.

Dredging of the River Bure

In response to the urgent suggestion from 2 February public meeting at Hickling, it was proposed to use the emerging Broads hydraulic model to test the effect of lowering the bed level the Bure. DH has taken the existing bathymetry and identified that there is a relatively high section over the final 7-8km of the Bure. The model will be used to test lowering the bed by 0.5 meters and 1 meter to see what the effects might be. Jacobs are currently scoping this piece of work.

KF commented, the BFI is a long term flooding strategy, and it is important that expectations are managed regarding the activities that can take place now. KF added, it has been a difficult winter, and thoughts are with those people that have been affected by the flooding. PD added, the BFI has the tools to inform the situation, but the modelling is not the only outcome of the BFI.

Dredging experience from elsewhere has shown that dredging a tidal system could reduce the duration of fluvial flooding, but it is also likely to increase tidal flood risk which is why it is important to undertake the modelling. Catherine Harries (CH) added, the stability of the piled edges also needs to be considered and the impact that increased dredging depths could have.

The investigating that is taking place through the modelling is a good demonstration of how the BFI is a partnership project. DH has provided data, Matt Philpot has spoken to landowners to gather their input and all of the information is then being run through an EA built model. DH added, the Chief Executive of the Broads Authority had an action to report back on the feasibility of the dredging at the next public meeting at the end of the summer.

The lower Bure is also being reviewed by others. The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance were out on boats last week gathering evidence of where they believe there are spots that could be cleared out along that stretch of river.

Ian Robinson (IR) commented, the flooding was not just restricted to the Northern Broads, there were severe implications in the Southern Broads around the Ant valley and near Strumpshaw Fen.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

SEA Scoping Report was produced and consulted on in 2021 with the IPT and statutory consultees. The new proposal is that a Sustainability Assessment (SA) is undertaken for BFI instead. SA has a broader scope and is more useful for forming strategic planning documents.

DH asked if there is a place on the BFI website where all of the products of BFI are listed. PD responded, there is not a public list of the products. The naming convention of products originates from the contractual work with Jacobs and not all of the products have a public document.

PD agreed to list all of the products, both public and technical reports, and to include information on how to obtain a copy of the technical reports.

BFI scenario and action workshops

David Cobby (DC) presented the initial feedback from the scenario and action workshops which have taken place over the last two months with the BFI project team.

Recap on Flood Risk Management (FRM) actions in BFI Phases

- Phase A gathered background information and developed objectives.
- Phase B is the ongoing development of hydraulic model.
- Original scope of BFI Phase C was to prepare for appraisal, including

- Developing generic long list of FRM actions and reference material
- Process to short list these in future Phase D
- As part of project acceleration, brought forward
 - Developing geographical and temporal combinations of actions, emphasising building on past work.
 - Short listing action combinations for appraisal in Phase D

Purpose of the workshops

1. Consider possible future scenarios
2. Create FRM action concepts and combinations
 - Geographical maps
 - Potential timings
3. Start the process for
 - Creating specific FRM actions and combinations
 - Requires modelling to complete action development
 - Short listing actions and combinations

Why base around scenarios?

- Represent hypothetical but plausible descriptions of the future.
- Coherent pictures of the future in terms of both physical (i.e. environmental) and transitional (i.e. wider social and economic) aspects.
- Adaptation Pathway Planning is centred on exploring future scenarios.
- Need diverse scenarios that provide the basis for challenging 'what-if?' analyses.
- Each scenario should be focussed on a concise question or questions and should describe
 - an outcome at a certain time horizon and
 - a pathway from today to that outcome

Overview of all scenarios

Baselines

- Do nothing to manage flood/erosion risks. Do-nothing represents an alternative to investment which must be included in Government FCERM economic appraisal. It acts as a counterfactual reference against which the benefits and impacts of future investment can be measured
- Legal obligations on FCERM – provides only those actions needed to meet a legal or contractual obligation.

- Do minimum to manage flood/erosion risks – the least that would be done for FCERM, which is realistic and reflects typical action during incidents.
- Sustain current Standard of Service (SOS) –continue the current levels of service provided by FCERM.

‘Do something’ scenarios

The different components of the new approach to resilience as outlined in the EA national strategy.

- Improved placemaking- making the best land use and development choices to manage flooding and coastal change.
- Better protect- building and maintaining defences and managing the flow of water.
- Recover quickly- getting back to normal and building back better.
- Ready to respond- preparing for and responding effectively to incidents.

Workshop scenarios

Workshop theme	Baseline scenarios	‘Do something’ scenario
1. Baseline and respond and recover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing • Legal obligations • Do minimum • Sustain current SOS 	Focus on people and resilience
2. Place making	-	Focus on the natural, social and historic environment
3. Protect	-	Focus on water engineering through FRM structures
4. Inland and coastal adaption	-	Focus on the long-term sustainability of actions

The following questions were asked at each workshop:

- Which FCERM actions in the near term are least likely to be regretted?
- Which FCERM actions are most likely to be required in the long term?
- Which FCERM actions would contribute most substantially to achieving net zero carbon?
- Which FCERM actions are most likely to be cost-beneficial and affordable?

Workshop Outcomes

1. Refinement of baselines

- Following 'do nothing' there is a need to accommodate health and safety expenditure on the coast which could be higher than ongoing maintenance if the asset is left to deteriorate and requires safety repair.
 - The legal minimum scenario is not needed as a separate scenario unless new information emerges, but It will be kept under review in product 25a.
2. Concepts for individual do something actions
 - How can the long list of 16 actions can be developed into real flood risk management actions that have costs and implications associated with them.
 3. Potential action combinations
 - Exploring potential pathways for different groups of actions whilst considering the flood likelihood, environmental benefit, social resilience, and economic cost.
 4. Early pathways concept
 - Three pathways were presented: default pathway- adapting place naturally and social empowerment, preferred pathway- medium term protection for a smoother adaption and the alternative pathway- offering longer term protection.
 - Moving from the default pathway to the preferred pathway is going to require funding which will be a challenge.
 - Another potential difficulty is moving to a more natural and social set of flood risk actions and not to continue to build things higher and higher to offer longer term protection.

Next Steps

- Technical report on action development.
- Further development of actions concepts into specifics.
- Develop and apply short listing of actions and combinations.

3. Update on communications and community engagement

Mareth Bassett (MB) and Tom Sayer (TS) provided an update on communications and community engagement.

Current actions

- BFI updates have been provided for Harnser magazine and RFCC papers.
- Creating the BFI newsletter which will be based on the actions that came out of the public Hickling meeting.
- Updating the newsletter mailing list.

- Moving from reactive to proactive engagement following winter floods
- Revamp of the BFI website to make it more interactive and easier for people to digest information.

Next Steps

- Updating the BFI engagement plan.
- Reviewing the use of Hello Lamp Post. The platform provides an opportunity to increase community engagement and reach. Engagement costs and their associated carbon footprint would be reduced, and the platform is accessible 24/7.
- Planning for the Norfolk Show on 26 and 27 June and the launch of Hello Lamp Post at the show. BFI partner organisations are welcome to get involved at the show and join MB and TS on the stand. The stand will also be positioned next to the Broads Village which would be a good opportunity to show the partnership working of BFI.
- BFI will be attending the Potter Heigham Parish Council meeting and the Upper Thurne Working Group.

4. Update on Elected Members Forum

KF and CH are arranging to meet with the Chair of the Elected Members Forum for an update on the technical work of BFI and the study area.

Marie-Pierre Tighe (MPT) contacted local authorities to remind them of their responsibility to BFI and to provide contact details of their substitute member. BFI officers who represent a local authority were asked to contact Kylie Moos (KM) with any member updates.

5. AOB

No matters of any other business were raised.

6. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broadland Future Initiative is 11.30am-1.00pm 20 May 2024.

Summary of progress

Outstanding actions	Meeting date	Assigned to
Share comments on economic appraisal (product 26) with PD	25.03.2024	RW
Share UTWG note ahead of workshop with DH	25.03.2024	PD
Create a list of all products (public and technical) for the BFI website	25.03.2024	PD