

Broads Local Access Forum

Agenda 05 March 2025

10.00am

Broads Authority office, Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road,
Norwich, NR1 1RY

Members of the public: Please email BLAF@broads-authority.gov.uk with any queries about this meeting.

Introduction

1. Apologies for absence and welcome
2. Declarations of interest
3. **To receive and confirm the minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 20 November 2024 (Pages 3-13)**
4. **Summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings- to note the schedule (Pages 14-16)**

Items for discussion

5. **Broads Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Pages 17-36)**
Report by Partnership and External Funding Manager
6. **Norfolk County Council Trails update**
Update from Norfolk County Council
7. **Access for All project update (Pages 37- 38)**
Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer
8. **Broads Local Access Forum meeting dates (Pages 39- 40)**
Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

Other matters

9. Any other business
10. To note the date of the next meeting – **Wednesday 4 June 2025.**

Broads Local Access Forum membership

Member	Address	Phone number	Email	Interest
Richard Atkins	Riverview Cottage Off Church Lane Surlingham NR14 7DF	01508 538083	richard.p.atkins@btinternet.com	Paddle sports/ walking
Keith Bacon	Woodcroft Wood Street Catfield NR29 5DF	01692 581314	keithbacon@broadland.net	Archaeology and landscape heritage
Harry Blathwayt	20 Broad Reaches Ludham NR29 5PD	01692 678644	Harry.blathwayt@north-norfolk.gov.uk	Broads Authority
Christine Cane	The Roundhouse 160 Tuttlles Lane West Wymondham NR18 0JJ	01953 606019	christine.cane@bhsvolunteer.org.uk	Equestrian riding and driving
Peter Dixon	The Smea Hickling NR12 0YL	078509 30486	Peterjbdixon@hotmail.com	Broads Authority
Geoff Doggett	68 Pilgrims Way Harleston Norfolk IP20 9QE	01379 853464	geoffdoggett@gmail.com	Waterborne recreation/nature conservation
Tony Gibbons	19 Blithewood Gardens Sprowston NR7 8PS	01603 400973	tonygibbons.ndaa@gmail.com	Angling
Edward Gilder	30 The Hills Reedham Norwich NR13 3AR	0777188 3406	edwardgilder@yahoo.co.uk	Cycling/ archaeology and landscape heritage
Tim Harris	Catfield Hall Catfield NR29 5DB	01692 580220	tim@catfieldhall.com	Nature conservation / archaeology and landscape heritage
Duncan Holmes	127 Lower Street Salhouse Norfolk NR13 6RX	0739356 6749	duncanholmes123@hotmail.com	Waterborne recreation/angling

Member	Address	Phone number	Email	Interest
David Lilley	26 Burnt Hill Way Oulton Broad Lowestoft Suffolk NR33 8PF	0773824 4595	lilleyd@live.co.uk	Angling
Peter Mason	7 Brick Kiln Gardens Catfield Gt Yarmouth NR29 5DW	01692 583152	peter.mason120780@gmail.com	Walking/tourism and local business
Joe Mitchell	High House Farm, Potter Heigham Road, Catfield, Great Yarmouth. Norfolk. NR29 5BU	0776776 4398	joemitchell@afiweb.net	Landowners and managers/ nature conservation
Katie Phillips	c/o Broads Authority Yare House 62-64 Thorpe House Norwich NR1 1RY	01603 610734	outdoorskatiep@gmail.com	Walking/nature conservation
Christopher Yardley	Larkhill Cottage Priory Lane Ingworth NR116PG	01263 479691	Cj.yardley@tiscali.co.uk	Waterborne recreational users/ nature conservation

Kylie Moos – Broads Local Access Forum Secretary

Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich, NR1 1RY

01603 610734

BLAF@broads-authority.gov.uk

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024

Contents

1.	Apologies for absence and welcome	2
2.	Declarations of interest	2
3.	Minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 4 September 2024	2
4.	Summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings	2
	Staithe	2
	Footpath maintenance	2
	Lost paths	3
	Water quality monitoring in the Broads	3
5.	BFI salinity modelling	3
6.	IAS progress monitoring	7
7.	Any other business	7
8.	Date of next meeting	9
	Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests Broads Local Access Forum, 20 November 2024	10

Present

Keith Bacon – in the Chair, Richard Atkins, Harry Blathwayt, Christine Cane, Peter Dixon, Tony Gibbons, Edward Gilder, Tim Harris, Duncan Holmes, David Lilley, Katie Phillips, Christopher Yardley.

In attendance

Hannah Davison- Natural England, Peter Doktor- Environment Agency, Ken Hawkins- Norfolk Local Access Forum, Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology, Kylie Moos – Administrative Officer, Jo Thompson– Waterways and Recreation Officer.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome

Apologies received from Geoff Doggett, Peter Mason.

2. Declarations of interest

Members indicated they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered and set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

3. Minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 4 September 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2024 were approved as a correct record and agreed by the Chair.

4. Summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings

Staithe

The Broads Authority communications team confirmed that because the Broads Authority commissioned the staithe report, they would also hold the publishing rights. Due to the recent publication of “Broadland: Shaping marsh and fen” by Tom Williamson and Alison Yardley, which also includes a section about staithe, it is unlikely that the staithe report will be published as a book. The document is publicly available online [The Staithe of the Broads](#) .

Footpath maintenance

Norfolk County Council Trails teams responded to the complaint regarding the lack of response when using the online portal, the letters were shared with the Forum ahead of the meeting. The responses confirmed that the National/Norfolk Trails network is cut three times a year and Highways maintained routes are cut twice a year. It was requested that all issues with National and Norfolk Trails (as well as the wider Public Rights of Way network) are reported via the Norfolk County Council portal [Report a highways problem](#) . This item is now closed.

Lost paths

The Norfolk Trails team were unable to attend today's meeting, but they have provided a written update on the Wherryman's Way which will be provided in any other business.

Water quality monitoring in the Broads

The free water quality testing kits which are available from Anglian Water are not appropriate for bathing water testing.

An update on salinity modelling in the Broads is being provided in agenda item 5. This item is now closed.

5. BFI salinity modelling

Peter Doktor, Project Manager with the Environment Agency (EA) introduced the salinity work that has been carried out in Broadlands Futures Initiative (BFI) and the initial findings from the draft salinity modelling report. BFI is a 100-year flood risk management strategy for the Broads, adjacent low-lying coast, and Great Yarmouth that addresses the challenges presented by climate change and sea level rise.

The Broads rivers are open to the tide and the extent of saline incursion is dependent upon conditions. Possible changes in the salinity regime are a significant concern for nature conservation, angling, and agriculture. Flood risk management actions could help manage salinity; or make it worse, which is why a tool to help predict how the behaviour of salinity within the Broads system may change in the future has been developed for the strategy.

In 2022 a baseline study was completed by Jacobs which aimed to do the following:

- Identify sources of salinity monitoring data, both in the river and groundwater.
- Investigate the impact of salinity on different receptors.
- Recommend an approach for the modelling of salinity.

2020 Salinity data

The EA has three continuous monitoring points; Cantley and Acle are monitored for salinity every 15 minutes throughout the year and the monitoring point at Repps is active during the winter months only. The salinity data for all three locations across 2020 was presented in a graph and shared with the Forum. Data at Acle is showing a wider range of conditions than is experienced at Cantley, even though both locations are a similar distance from the river mouth at Great Yarmouth. There is also a seasonality pattern and the impact of saline groundwater seepage to consider.

Regarding the data at Repps, a Forum member asked if effect of tide locking on salinity has been considered. Peter Doktor agreed that could be, but the focus is on periods where no saline incursion is taking place, and the salinity is higher at Repps than Acle Bridge. A Forum member asked if there is any historical data to demonstrate if it is getting worse. Peter Doktor responded, there has not been any analysis to see if it is getting worse over time, but it would be interesting to look at.

Regarding the conductivity, typically, sodium chloride content is used to measure the salt content in water bodies.

Routine sampling

Alongside the continuous monitoring points there are a number of additional locations in the Broads where salinity is measured. The biggest difference between the continuous monitoring points and additional routine sampling is the timing of the sampling. The random timing of the sampling means that it cannot be linked to the state of the tide, but by plotting the available data for the last 14 years, it gives a good indication of what is happening.

Salinity modelling

The 2022 baseline study recommended a statistical approach using all the data that has been collected over the years. The work was undertaken by HR Wallingford and the first draft of the report has been presented to the BFI project team. The work included:

- Collation, cleaning and checking of salinity monitoring data, fluvial flows, and tidal level data at the mouth of the river.
- Focus on individual salinity level events within a tidal cycle (High Water to High Water) and the relationship between key variables.
- Two approaches developed:
 - Occurrence analysis; the probability of a salinity threshold being exceeded.
 - Intensity analysis; predicts the max. and min. salinity levels in an event.

Key variables

- The key variables influence high conductivity levels include:
 - The high tide level at the start of the High Water to High Water cycle.
 - The low tide level in the middle of the preceding High-Water cycle (occurrence only).
 - The low tide level in the middle of the High-Water cycle (intensity only).
 - The average gauged flow rate upstream in the 24 hours preceding the HW cycle.
 - The month in which the High-Water cycle occurs as a proxy for seasonality.
- All the possible combinations of monitoring locations within the relevant river system are tested.
- Equations comprising of the key variables are determined with different coefficients calculated for different combinations of monitoring location.

Modelling accuracy

- For the occurrence equation the average Area under the Curve (AUC) value is between 0.80 and 0.95 (where 0.5 is no predictive accuracy and 1.0 is complete accuracy). The predictive accuracy improves as the salinity thresholds increase.
- For the intensity equation the key variables on average explain 70% to 80% of the salinity behaviour.
- Wider spatial aspects were investigated with limited success due to uncertainty about the timing of data collection.
- Predictive accuracy appears to be linked to the distance between flow, tide, and salinity gauges.

Conclusions

- Predicted future tide levels and flows can be used in the equations to predict the future occurrence or intensity of salinity at the existing monitoring points.
- Predictions beyond the range of the current data should be treated with caution.
- The accuracy of the equations, including spatial relationships, could be improved with more data collection in additional locations, but presently there is little guidance as to the optimal locations.

Comments and answers to questions

A Forum member asked if the salinity still varied with tidal times during the tide locking and freshwater flooding in the northern rivers last winter. Peter Doktor was not aware but can ask the people who hold the data. A Forum member responded, during the high rainfall last winter, they were monitoring the SWANTEL data, and they did not see any significant saline incursion through the period, and it was a very low winter for saline.

A Forum member noted that it was positive that salinity was being looked but was surprised to see the categorisation and tolerances schedule from the Broads Biodiversity Audit of 2010 being used. There is more recent work available such as the STOWA Guidelines, 2018 which are the Dutch Government official guidelines on salinity tolerance. The tolerances are also more stringent in the Stofberg et al report of 2014. The River Ant has the most delicate ecology, but the EA are trying to predict what is happening in the Ant from the gauge at Acle Bridge. Irstead Church measurements are showing that the level of salinity is damaging the fens according to Stofberg and Panta. The Forum member added, the categorisations are out of date and misleading and asked if the EA are aware of the more recent research about the sensitivity to the riverine ecology from salinity and from pollution in the rivers. Peter Doktor responded, the Panta tables are the ones used in the Broads Biodiversity Report, and they were not aware of the more recent work on tolerances. They agreed that it is difficult to predict what will happen in the Ant based on Acle Bridge data.

The salinity measurements taken at Irstead church are conducted by the EA, but it is not regular monitoring. A Forum member added that they would like to see more monitoring take place in the Ant, it is already known that the level of salinity is damaging the fens. Peter

Doktor agreed that more fixed continuous monitoring taking place at different levels would help to understand the current position and predict what may change.

A Forum member asked if salinity levels are higher in the Upper Thurne due to the high levels of salinity in the ground and areas historic association with tidal flow through Horsey Gap. Peter Doktor responded; it is possible that saline groundwater is present because it has been drawn in through the drainage system. The legacy of saline from previous flood events can be seen in the ecology of the area. With increasing sea level comes an increase in the hydraulic gradient between the sea and the land which could increase the flow. Dan Hoare added, additional research and monitoring has been done in the Upper Thurne area, particularly around Brograve, because of the deep drainage through that level. The IDB and partners have been looking at raising more levels in those areas.

A Forum member noted that when the Repps salinity loggers are monitored on a regular basis, it is possible to see when there are high levels of pumping, and the salinity levels increase at Repps against what is expected with a tidal pattern. Salinity increases as the tide goes out and decreases as it comes in, which suggests it has been pumped in from above.

The study supports what the Land and Water Team at the Environment Agency have been doing for a number of years at the Herbert Woods fish barrier entrance. In 22 years, there has only one occurrence where the barrier was not raised in time. A Forum member asked if their methodology has been considered in the study presented today and if there is a comparison between the two. Peter Doktor responded, they will be sharing the salinity modelling report with Bridget Marr and others withing the Land and Water team.

Regarding the recent Bure Hump dredging scenario report, a Forum member asked if dredging could control salinity levels in the Bure. Peter Doktor responded, based on the modelling, a reduction in the bed level will increase the tidal range. This could potentially result in more saline water intruding further into the river system, but it has not been tested.

A Forum member commented that there they have seen a change in flow levels in the last five years, especially on the flood tide. The flood tide on the Thurne appears to be six times the speed of the ebb tide, which means there is more water coming into the system than going out. They asked if there is any data on the water that is being held in the catchment at any time. Peter Doktor responded, they are not aware of any analysis that has taken place. Dan Hoare added, all the EA monitoring on fluvial input is at the top end of the tidal system. The observations described today could also vary with the moon phase.

A Forum member commented that there is a saline incursion currently taking place in the Broads. Saline measurements at Cantley and Acle were identical on the 16 November, since then, salinity levels have decreased at Cantley, but not at Acle, suggesting that there are restricted movements in the Bure.

The Chair thanked Peter Doktor for a very interesting presentation.

6. IAS progress monitoring

Jo Thompson, Waterways and Recreation Officer presented the six monthly monitoring report on the objectives of the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS). Several of the land-based objectives have been achieved because of the Broads Local, Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which has been funded by Active Travel England. The IAS review has highlighted that there needs to be more focus on moorings and the annual reporting of DP16 reports over the next six months.

Regarding objective L2 (Review the Broads Authority role in Public Rights of Way (PRoW) maintenance), the Authority will review where Norfolk County Council and the EA are cutting and where possible, look at the feasibility of filling in the gaps of the priority paths. The Authority currently cuts 20km a year of public footpaths but does not have a statutory role to do so.

A Forum member asked if there is any likelihood of the previous permissive path near St Benet's Abbey reopening. Before its closure around 10 years ago it was a well-used path, and members of the public still ask if it is possible to use the path. Currently the Norwich and District Angler's Association pay for access to fish from the riverbank. Jo Thompson responded, it is up to the landowner if they are interested in turning it into a permissive path. Norfolk County Council would then need to be involved if they would like the path designated as a PRoW.

A Forum member asked if there are any plans to reopen the path from Woodbastwick to Cockshoot Broad, which closed 10- years ago. Dan Hoare indicated that the landowner discontinued permissive access largely due to the cost of maintaining the boardwalk.

7. Any other business

Norfolk County Council provided a written update on the Wherryman's Way for today's meeting and agreed to attend the next Forum meeting.

"Norfolk County Council have undertaken a strategic review of the whole Wherryman's Way project as unprecedented water levels over the last few winters have caused significant erosion.

We have met with the Greater Norwich Partnership regarding our funding and were advised that as the project scope has increased considerably from the original outputs and therefore a new application would be required.

We have applied for CIL funding for repair works at Bramerton and are expecting a decision at the end of November 2024.

Bramerton (Footpath 5) status

Invitation to Tender to be issued shortly to appoint a contractor.

The Broads Authority have recently met with the landowner, and we are awaiting their feedback regarding accesses and design, which could influence content in the tender.

Following landowner consent, we will need to appoint a contractor and carry out updated ecology surveys and tree reports which will inform our planning application content.

Once a contractor is appointed, we will be able to confirm a provisional programme for delivery which will account for the planning permission approval timeline.

Access to the site is difficult with all materials requiring transportation via the River Yare, making construction along this section more complicated.

Hardley Flood status

The Wherryman's Way route at Hardley Flood has been closed for some time due to significant and on-going erosion of the bank which carries the public rights of way. It is currently extremely unsafe and closed to public access, with a diversion in place. This has been caused by flooding, tidal currents and high volumes of water on the River Chet which has undermined the riverbank and associated infrastructure.

The exceptionally wet weather over the last two years has led to rapid erosion at several locations along the route and the situation has changed significantly. The strong tidal pull has accelerated the deterioration of bridges on the west side of Hardley Flood. These conditions have also resulted in the erosion of nearby banks and other bridges due to altered ground conditions. This means that further viable solutions along the route are being investigated with the relevant statutory bodies.

We want to see the situation resolved to restore public access along the Wherryman's Way route in a safe and sustainable manner.

We are working with the Broads Authority (responsible for managing the waterway) and the Environment Agency (responsibility for flooding) to seek a long-term solution in this area.

We are currently updating and re-costing our plans to reflect the change in conditions to the natural environment.

Surlingham status

Much of the public right of way (footpath) at this location has been lost to the river. A possible solution is for the landowner to dedicate the permissive path as a public right of way. NCC do not carry out works on permissive paths. The costs and time associated for the Bramerton works will be used to estimate potential cost to reinstate the riverside path if this was dedicated as PRoW." (end of Norfolk County Council written update)

A Forum member suggested that the report is shared with the Wherryman's Way stakeholder forum. Jo Thompson agreed to ask the author of the report.

A Forum member commented, the landowner in Surlingham has advised that they are open to dredging material being placed along the bank and asked how they can engage with the Broads Authority dredging team. The dredging material would raise the bank and keep the footpath in place. Dan Hoare agreed to raise this with the engineer who plans the projects.

A Forum member asked how long a section of the Weavers Way will be closed, between Potter Heigham and Decoy Road. Jo Thompson advised that the closure is in place until 6

January 2025 and up to date information can be found online [Closures and diversions - Norfolk County Council](#).

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broads Local Access Forum would be held at Yare House on Wednesday 5 March 2025 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 11.25am.

Signed by

Chair

Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests Broads Local Access Forum, 20 November 2024

Member	Agenda/minute	Nature of interest

Broads Local Access Forum

05 March 2025

Agenda item number 4

Summary of progress 05.03.2025

Title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Summary of actions	Progress so far	Status
Lost Paths in the Broads	09/06/2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify 'Lost Paths' to the river Contact NCC and SCC to identify 'Lost Paths' 	<p>September 2021 Norfolk LAF representative agreed to raise this item at a future meeting.</p> <p>December 2021: Norfolk LAF representative agreed that 'Lost Paths' will be raised at the January 2022 Norfolk Local Access Forum meeting.</p> <p>August 2022: The Chair has written to Norfolk County Council and Suffolk Council and requested a list of all the paths that have been lost to the river.</p> <p>March 2023: The Chair agreed to raise this item at the upcoming NLAF Rights of Way subgroup meeting.</p> <p>June 2023: The Chair agreed to raise this item at the upcoming NLAF Rights of Way subgroup meeting.</p>	In progress

Title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Summary of actions	Progress so far	Status
				<p>August 2023: The Chair agreed to raise the request on behalf of the Forum at the next Norfolk Local Access Forum Rights of Way subgroup meeting.</p> <p>November 2023: The Norfolk Local Access Forum supports the request, but the focus needs to be on contacting officers at Norfolk County Council.</p> <p>March 2024: Waterways and Recreation Officer agreed to review the areas where paths are at risk of erosion to the river or vulnerable to flooding, and report back to the Forum.</p> <p>June 2024: Waterways and Recreation Officer agreed to present the report at the next meeting.</p> <p>September 2024: The Waterways and Recreation Officer agreed to invite the Norfolk Trails team to a future meeting.</p>	
Staithes Report	04/12/2019		Contact the Environment Agency asking their opinion as a follow-up from the	September 2021: The Chair has written to the Environment Agency but has yet to receive a response. A follow up phone call will take place with David Horsfall.	In progress

Title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Summary of actions	Progress so far	Status
			<p>publication of the staithe report.</p>	<p>March 2023: The Chair agreed to select two staithe of interest to the Forum and contact the EA.</p> <p>June 2023: The Authority are making progress on 24 hour moorings and are negotiating a public staithe with the Environment Agency.</p> <p>August 2023: The new Waterways and Recreation Officer will compare staithe in the Broads which are on EA owned land.</p> <p>June 2024: The Broads Authority are in discussion with the Environment Agency about taking over the management of a public staithe in the Broads.</p> <p>September 2024: The Waterways and Recreation Officer agreed to investigate with the Broads Authority communications team and Forum member Geoff Doggett who has the publishing rights to the staithe report.</p>	

Date of report: 25 February 2025

Broads Local Access Forum

05 March 2025

Agenda item number 5

Broads Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Report by Partnership and External Funding Manager

Summary

The Broads Authority received funding from Active Travel England to develop inclusive active travel programs, including a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for the Broads Executive Area. This project aims to improve walking, cycling, and wheelchair access through infrastructure development and collaboration with local partners. Key activities include public engagement, data collection, route assessments, and scheme planning.

Community consultations, both in-person and online, are informing the development of the Broads LCWIP, which is currently being drafted by a consultant. This plan integrates with existing local plans including other LCWIPs. The Broads LCWIP prioritises visitor active travel due to the Broads' high visitor numbers and small resident population.

Consultations highlighted the need for better maintenance of existing routes, including vegetation management and surface improvements. Visitors also desire improved sustainable transport and better wayfinding. The project is exploring other active travel forms, like horse riding and paddling.

The Authority is developing a scheme of improvements for future funding opportunities. Route audits are underway, focusing on railway and walking route connections. The Broads LCWIP is targeted for presentation to the Broads Authority in May 2025. Next steps include finalizing the LCWIP, completing scheme planning, presenting the LCWIP for adoption, and further engaging communities to promote active travel.

Recommendation: To receive feedback on the Draft Broads LCWIP (V1.1).

Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Current Progress	2
3.	Key Themes and Issues	4
4.	Next Steps	5

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In April 2024, the Broads Authority received a grant from Active Travel England's National Parks Capability Fund. This funding was provided to each National Park Authority in England to support the development and delivery of capability building activities, including Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).
- 1.2. This fund supports the Broads Authority in developing high-quality infrastructure that encourages more walking, cycling, and wheelchair use. The Broads Authority will build its capacity to deliver these improvements and will collaborate with local partners, including councils, highway authorities, businesses, charities, and community groups, to ensure its funded activities complement their efforts.
- 1.3. This fund aims to help the Broads Authority, and its partner local authorities and highway authorities, build the skills and resources needed to create inclusive active travel programmes. This support includes developing technical expertise for planning and building high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, fostering strong partnerships, engaging communities and gathering data to improve future programmes.
- 1.4. The primary focus of the funding is to support the Broads Authority to develop an LCWIP or equivalent plan, for routes and facilities within the Broads Executive Area. The following other activities are also within scope of the fund:
 - 1.4.1. Public engagement/consultation
 - 1.4.2. Data & evidence collection
 - 1.4.3. Street/Route audits
 - 1.4.4. Network design
 - 1.4.5. Scheme planning and design
 - 1.4.6. Training for officers
- 1.5. Enabled by this funding, the Broads Authority is currently developing an LCWIP for the Broads Executive Area as well as undertaking scheme planning and scheme design to identify projects that could feasibly be delivered in the coming years.

2. Current Progress

- 2.1. From June to November 2024, officers from the Authority conducted a series of community consultation events in the communities of the Broads. An online consultation through Survey123 (which integrates with the authority's GIS) was made available to the public. Officers have spent time since the closure of the consultation period compiling, reviewing and analysing the data from the in-person and online

consultations to gain an understanding of what is working well and what needs to be improved in the Broads regarding walking, wheeling and cycling.

- 2.2. A total of 326 online survey responses were submitted between June 2024 and November 2024. Further analysis of the data highlighted core themes of maintenance, traffic calming, cohesive online information regarding walks, and cutting of footpaths. The survey was distributed to the public via social media, leaflets and posters, and key stakeholders were contacted directly via email.
- 2.3. The first in-person event coincided with the launch of the online survey in June 2024, with engagement of over 200 people at the Royal Norfolk Show. A further seven consultation events were held following this until November 2024 at locations across the Broads area including Freethorpe, Carlton Marshes, Loddon, Geldeston Locks, Lowestoft, and two events held at The Forum in Norwich. A total of 111 responses were recorded and many more people engaged with through discussions. Similar themes became apparent through these events with similar suggestions of improved maintenance, accessible online information, more frequent cutting, improved waymarking and information and safer cycle routes.
- 2.4. In November 2024 we employed an external consultant to lead on the writing of the LCWIP. This work is currently in draft form and can be found in Appendix 1. The consultant is writing the plan to focus on access within the Broads Executive Area while also identifying partnership opportunities immediately beyond the boundary that may benefit Broads' residents and visitors. The plan identifies strategic integrations with other local plans including the Broads Integrated Access strategy and the local LCWIPs produced by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, Norwich City Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and East Suffolk District Council.
- 2.5. The Broads LCWIP is being designed to complement, rather than duplicate or replace, the work already completed by other local authorities, and aims to sit alongside and support their work to build better walking and cycling infrastructure. Many of the suggested improvements and identified issues raised through our consultation have already been identified in other local LCWIPs. Where appropriate our plan will point to these plans
- 2.6. Officers are currently working to take the results from the consultation to create a new scheme of walking, wheeling and cycling improvements in the Broads. These are being developed using guidance provided by Active Travel England, and training workshops held in conjunction with access officers from the other National Park authorities. The expressed intent from officers at Active Travel England is to put National Park Authorities, including the Broads Authority, in a position to have "on-the-shelf projects" ready for capital funding opportunities in the near term.
- 2.7. We are also working with local partners to audit portions of priority routes for access and inclusion. This includes looking at integrations between the Wherry and Bittern

railway lines and the network of circular and linear walks that originate from local stations.

- 2.8. The aim is to present the Broads LCWIP for adoption to the Broads Authority in May 2025.

3. Key Themes and Issues

- 3.1. **Recreation and Leisure vs Commuting** – One of the key themes identified through our discussions with Active Travel England, other National Park Authorities and through our consultation is the need for the Broads LCWIP to focus more on improvements and infrastructure that supports active travel for visitors to the Broads rather than supporting local journeys or commuting. This aligns with the fact that the population within the Broads Executive Area is small at around 6,500 all while attracting more than 7 million visitors a year to the area.
- 3.2. **Ownership and Responsibilities** – The Broads Authority owns very little land of its own and is only responsible for a small handful of permissive pathways in the Broads. The Authority does not have responsibility for the rights of way within the Broads. This has remained with both County Councils, and we need to work in partnership with the relevant authorities to ensure that access to and within the Broads is appropriately maintained. We recognise that this is a challenge in the current financial situation and that current resources may not be adequate for the demands of the pathway networks. The future of the current structure within county and district councils is also unknown at this moment and how this develops over the coming years is potentially an issue and an opportunity when looking at strategic priorities across county boundaries.
- 3.3. **Maintenance and upkeep** – One of the key findings from our consultation work is that people know and enjoy the current cycling and walking routes in the Broads. The main issues are around mowing of vegetation, path surfacing and flooding/erosion. Recent years of wet winters, hot summers and increased precipitation have led to significant growth on the path networks. People want clear, mown paths free of tall grass and nettles, and there needs to be some thought into how we can create a more agile cutting programme that can respond to significant growth during the tourist high season. We also understand that with our limited resources across all local authorities, it is not currently prudent to look to establish new footpaths/cycle paths if sufficient resources are not available for their long-term maintenance and upkeep.
- 3.4. **Sustainable transport to destinations** – Respondents to the consultation want to visit places around the Broads through sustainable means. Their desire is to journey to a destination (i.e. Hoveton, Beccles, Hickling, etc) and then engage in an active travel activity in the landscape. We already benefit from a local train service that can move people between major population centres on the periphery of the Broads, and the local station between these centres provides good access into the landscape as the lines follow along the major river valleys. People are looking for increased bus service and

provision to tourist sites around the Broads, and we believe that better active travel infrastructure would help to induce demand for increased services.

- 3.5. **Information, interpretation and wayfinding** – Respondents expressed a need for coherent wayfinding in the landscape and consistent, reputable information about active travel opportunities online. Many generations of wayfinding schemes can be found along our footpath networks, and similarly there are many years of out-of-date access information available online. Routes need to be regularly audited and updated across these platforms, or more preferably, coordinated and centralised for the area. This is also highlighted in the Broads Recreation and Tourism strategy.
- 3.6. **Other forms of Active Travel** – We have raised with Active Travel England the fact that we could potentially consider other forms of travel in the Broads as “Active Travel”. These, including horse riding, paddle boarding and canoeing, while not currently defined by the funding, are nonetheless important and identified though the consultation.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1. Complete draft of Broads LCWIP and circulate to partners for comment and review.
- 4.2. Complete scheme planning and prioritisation, work with partners in coordinating schemes where appropriate.
- 4.3. Present final Broads LCWIP to Broads Authority in May 2025
- 4.4. Re-engage with local communities on the finalised plan to further promote walking and cycling in the Broads.

Author: Andrew Farrell

Date of report: 16 February 2025

[Broads Plan](#) objectives: **Theme E: Promoting understanding and enjoyment E1** - Improve the integrated network of access routes and points (with easier access for people with mobility and sensory needs), linked to visitor facilities

Appendix 1 – Draft Broads LCWIP V1.1

Appendix 1 – Broads LCWIP Draft V 1.1

Broads Cycling and Walking Plan

Version 1.1 – 27/01/25

Notes in red are for guidance on what to put in the various sections, and prompts for info to be added. There are also some comment boxes for your attention.

The Plan is written for external audiences to understand (hopefully!) but can be edited to be more of an internal working document if this is preferred.

We need to get a balance of not repeating what is covered in other plans, but making sure it's adequately referred to where appropriate. We also need to get a balance of being realistic but optimistic!

General ref

LCWIP Technical guidance for local authorities says LCWIP should include:

- A network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development*
- A prioritized programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment*
- A report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network*

What the technical guidance says the plan should cover:

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>Determining Scope</i>	<i>Establish the geographical extent of the LCWIP, and arrangements for governing and preparing the plan.</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>Gathering Information</i>	<i>Identify existing patterns of walking and cycling and potential new journeys. Review existing conditions and identify barriers to cycling and walking. Review related transport and land use policies and programmes.</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>Network Planning for Cycling</i>	<i>Identify origin and destination points and cycle flows. Convert flows into a network of routes and determine the type of improvements required.</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>Network Planning for Walking</i>	<i>Identify key trip generators, core walking zones and routes, audit existing provision and determine the type of improvements required.</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>Prioritising Improvements</i>	<i>Prioritise improvements to develop a phased programme for future investment.</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>Integration and Application</i>	<i>Integrate outputs into local planning and transport policies, strategies, and delivery plans.</i>

Contents

About this Plan.....	8
Geographical scope.....	8
Governance.....	9
Resources.....	9
Preparing the Plan.....	10
Steering group.....	10
Preparation stages.....	10
Context for recommendations.....	11
Public access network.....	11
Transport network.....	12
Issues.....	12
Status and designations.....	12
Climate change and flood risk.....	13
Geography.....	13
Land, access and asset management responsibilities.....	13
Settlements and visitor hubs.....	14
Information and interpretation.....	14
Supporting plans, policy and guidance.....	14
Integrated access.....	14
Related plans, policies and guidance.....	15
Methodology.....	18
Recommendations.....	18
Monitoring progress.....	19
Appendices.....	20

About this Plan

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are helping to meet the Government's ambition¹ to increase physically active travel by creating a more appealing, safer and better-connected environment for cycling and walking.

In March 2024, Active Travel England² announced targeted funding of £1m to help the English National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority develop LCWIPs for those who live in, work in and visit England's 10 National Parks. The Broads Cycling and Walking Plan (the 'Plan') is the LCWIP for the Broads National Park. As well as cycling and walking, the Plan covers wheeling³ and equestrian use.

Active travel is compatible with the National Park philosophy of quiet recreation and encouraging people to consider the impact of their activities on these valuable national landscapes. This Plan identifies existing provision and makes recommendations for potential new and improved active travel infrastructure to benefit health and wellbeing, the natural and cultural environment, and the local economy. While the Plan's emphasis is on recreational access, it also considers other uses such as commuting to work and school.

Geographical scope

The Broads is an internationally important wetland within Norfolk and North Suffolk, and a unique member of the UK National Parks family. Natural changes and centuries of human intervention have shaped the landscape, creating a rich mosaic of water and land habitats including shallow lakes, rivers, fens, drained marshland, wet woodland, estuary saltmarsh and coastal dunes. The area has 28 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and many National and Local Nature Reserves, and is home to a quarter of the UK's rarest species.

Around 6,500 people live within the Broads executive boundary [map], and the area attracts more than seven million visitors a year. The Broads may be best known for leisure boating, but is also very popular for land-based activities such as walking and cycling. Local residents and visitors are also drawn to the many recreational opportunities at the coast, in the city of Norwich, and in nearby towns and villages. *Add text on travel patterns for commuter/business use, where applicable to this plan*

The Plan focuses on access within the Broads executive area, but also identifies partnership opportunities immediately beyond the boundary that may benefit Broads' residents and visitors.

¹ [Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#) (DoT, 2017)

² [Active Travel England](#) is an executive agency sponsored by the Department of Transport

³ 'Wheeling' includes the use of pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters

Governance

The Broads Authority is responsible for the management of the Broads executive area. Its statutory purposes under the Broads Act⁴ are:

- conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads;
- promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public; and
- protecting the interests of navigation.

In managing the area, the Authority must consider the delicate balance of environmental, social and economic needs of those who live in, work in and visit the area.

The Broads sits within the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, and straddles parts of six district council areas: Broadland, East Suffolk, Great Yarmouth, Norwich City, North Norfolk and South Norfolk. The Broads Authority is the local planning authority for the Broads executive area. Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council are the local highways and transport authorities for their respective counties, including those parts within the Broads executive area.

The Broads Authority's governance arrangements reflect the interests of its national and local stakeholders. Of its 21 members, 10 are appointed by the Secretary of State, nine are locally elected county and district councilors, and two are co-opted from the Authority's Navigation Committee.

The Broads Local Access Forum is a semi-independent body that advises the Authority on improving and promoting public access to land within the Broads and adjacent parts of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Resources

Include info on core funding, partnership resources, external funding, staffing resources

The Broads Authority receives a government funded National Park Grant, and navigation income funded by boat toll payers. In 2019, the Landscapes Review⁵ highlighted that the Government's approach to funding England's protected landscapes is not as diverse and sustainable as it should be. However, as core funding is unlikely to increase in the foreseeable future, strong partnership working and additional funding sources are increasingly important. The Authority has a Partnership and External Funding Manager, whose role is xxxxxxxxx

Add text on manpower resources for BA, and (where known) for partners ...

⁴ [Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988](#)

⁵ [Landscapes review: National Parks and AONBs](#) (Defra, 2019)

The Authority will work with local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, public transport providers, local businesses and others to improve active travel within and to the Broads. The partnership approach has been boosted by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act⁶, which places a stronger duty on public bodies to seek to further the purposes of England’s national landscapes, and to take a more active role in implementing national landscape management plans, including the Broads Plan. See Appendix x for a list of key partners.

Proposals and project plans for new and improved access infrastructure involving asset liabilities for the Broads Authority will be assessed in line with its Asset Management Strategy⁷, which sets out the practices and procedures to manage and maintain its land, property and other assets.

Preparing the Plan

Steering group

Info on BA, BLAF, NCC/SCC and others involved in preparing/overseeing this plan.

The Plan was prepared by Broads Authority officers in consultation with the Broads Local Access Forum. *Add text on who else was involved from the BA, and how partners (e.g., SCC/NCC officers) were involved in drafting the recommendations*

Preparation stages

Before drafting the Plan, the Authority invited partner and community views on the existing access provision for cycling, walking, wheeling and horse-riding, and what improvements people would like to see. The consultation was from July to October 2024 and included a launch at the Royal Norfolk Show, an online survey and engagement with parish councils, local groups, businesses and public transport providers. *Add ref to schedule of responses – will this be available online?*

The Authority also reviewed the access-related objectives in the Broads Plan and guiding strategies for the Broads, local planning policy, national guidance and best practice, and regional and local strategies including other LCWIPs covering Norfolk and Suffolk.

Based on this evidence and the methodology in section x below, the next stage was to prepare a draft Plan, setting out proposed recommendations for new and improved access infrastructure.

The Authority consulted on the draft Plan in xxxxx. *The final plan will need to include details of all stages up to plan adoption*

⁶ [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#), Section 245

⁷ [Asset Management Strategy](#) (Broads Authority, 2024)

Context for recommendations

Technical guidance on what to include:

Review existing conditions and identify barriers to cycling and walking. Review related transport and land use policies and programmes:

Existing networks and synergies with other planned/proposed transport and land use schemes that could impact on cycling and walking

Travel patterns of walking and cycling, journeys currently made by other forms of transport and potential new journeys that could be made partly/wholly on foot or by bicycle.

Locations of significant trip generators (e.g. visitor attractions, travel hubs)

Peoples' concerns about making trips on foot or by bicycle, and requests for new and improved routes and facilities.

Page 16 of the Government Technical Guidance for LCWIPs refers to potential data sources.

Also see Broads Plan/Broads Local Plan [SWOT analysis](#)

The required info above will be split between the Context sections and the Recommendations tables. We need to make sure the context provide the general background justification for the recommendations (with the site-specific detail being in the recommendations)

Public access network

The Broads executive area has 303km of public rights of way⁸, including three county long distance trails [name] and part of the national England Coast Path trail. However, there is a limited rights of way network in some parts, and there are also concerns about the future of permissive access negotiated within Agri-Environment Schemes with life-limited agreements.

As valuable infrastructure for recreational access, the Authority's development planning policy affords public rights of way protection from development that is likely to prejudice their current or future use.

There are around 150 hectares of open access land in the Broads, covering 14 distinct areas including Herringfleet Hills near Somerleyton, part of Outney Common in Bungay and East Ruston Allotments. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, walkers can access mapped areas of previously off-limits common land, heath, downland, moor and mountain without having to stick to paths. Cycling and horse riding are not usually allowed on open access land unless the landowner allows it, public bridleways or byways cross the land, or there are local traditions, or rights, of access.

As well as walking, the flat landscape of the Broads is well suited to leisure cycling. There are many quiet country lanes ideal for less experienced cyclists, and long-distance routes National Cycle Network Route 1 and Regional Route 30 both skirt the Broads. The number of cycle hire operators in the Broads has declined in the last 20 years from around 10 hire points to three. The Broads Recreation and Tourism Strategy notes that this has been attributed to a poor business case for cycle hire and a lack of good off-road routes.

Add further facts and figures on existing provision of footpaths/cycling paths/bridleways – useful to add how much of this provision is safe/off road, and how much is 'easier access'

⁸ Public Rights of Way includes CROW access land, bridleways, cycle ways, permissive paths, byways (and restricted byways) and roads used as public paths and footpaths

Transport network

Parts of the Broads are rural and other parts are more urban, albeit on the edge of settlements. The area is crossed by several major transportation links, including the A47 trunk road east of Norwich and south of Great Yarmouth, and by several other important roads. However, access to villages, rivers and broads is usually off minor roads.

Using the car in the more rural areas is often the only practical way to get around, and (in common with other National Parks) most visitors come to the Broads by car. In some areas this contributes to carbon emissions, increases seasonal traffic congestion and demand for parking, and creates a contradictory impression to visitors who expect the area to be tranquil. Motor traffic can also be a deterrent for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

Three railway lines serve many of the smaller settlements between Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. There are good bus services in some places, and a number of community transport schemes based in and around local villages. However, there is a general lack of public transport across the area as a whole.

Add further relevant data on the current public transport network inc. hopper buses

Issues

May need a different heading, but the following sections are to cover strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to potential access improvements, where these factors are relevant to all or much of the Broads. This can include common themes emerging from the public consultation, and significant partner transport and land use policies and programmes. More site-specific factors can be picked up in the recommendations tables.

Also refer to other BA strategies and policies that already identify and address the issues (e.g., the Recreation and Tourism Strategy objectives to improve coordinated information on access opportunities).

At the moment this content may be focusing too much on weaknesses and threats, rather than strengths and opportunities!

Status and designations

The Broads is one of the UK's national landscapes, with status equivalent to a National Park. It represents a significant area for outdoor recreation and access to green space within the wider region, and its natural and cultural environment provides the basis for most of the Broads' economy. There are high levels of tranquility through much of the area, even in some parts close to concentrations of housing and commerce.

One of the Broads Authority's statutory purposes is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads. The area's protected landscape status and nature conservation designations means that access opportunities must be provided in ways that meet the Authority's purpose to promote understanding and enjoyment, but that will not damage fragile wetland habitats or disturb wildlife (see Sustainability Appraisal and HRA, section x).

Climate change and flood risk

Almost all of the Broads area is subject to, or at risk of, flooding. Sea level rise, coastal change and the predicted more rapid changes to the climate pose enormous challenges to this easterly, low-lying wetland. More frequent flooding, along with other climate change impacts such as droughts and heatwaves, may affect the existing access network and future access provision. Some areas may become increasingly inaccessible, while there may be opportunities to create new access infrastructure in other areas. As well as adapting to the inevitable changes in our climate, the Authority is committed to taking mitigation measures, including reducing carbon emissions from travel and other sources. *Ref to Harry's work?*

Geography

The accessible terrain in the Broads is mainly flat and the wide-open skies, abundance of habitats and wildlife, and waterside views make it highly appealing to walkers, cyclists, wheelers and horse-riders.

However, due to its wetland habitats and network of rivers and broads, much of the area is relatively difficult to access on land, particularly during the winter months when routes can become muddy and waterlogged. The best – and sometimes only – way to reach many parts of the system is by water, and limited river crossings in many areas mean that travelling across land can involve lengthy detours.

Land, access and asset management responsibilities

Refer to BA and partner roles/responsibilities and issues relating to resources, access rights, land use rights and changes, cross-boundary liaison, etc.

The Broads executive boundary is cut close to the rivers. The majority of the Broads Authority's land and property assets are relatively small, the largest being the land holding at How Hill, but many of these are high profile sites and, in the case of information centers, yacht stations and 24-hour moorings, are used extensively by the public. For the Authority, taking action to improve the recreational access infrastructure often relies on gaining realistic landowner and land manager agreements, and on having sufficient resources both to carry out infrastructure works and to maintain the overall network in the longer term.

As the local highways authorities, Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council have a duty to record, maintain and protect public rights of way within their respective counties, including those parts within the Broads executive area. In common with other National Park Authorities, the Broads Authority has an access responsibility, meaning it can place notices indicating boundaries, restrictions and exclusions, and appoint wardens. It also determines applications from landowners and others with legal interests to exclude or restrict access.

The Authority has limited financial and manpower capacity to assist in the day-to-day management of the public rights of way network. Currently, it has an agreement to maintain a series of 'priority paths' that have been identified because of their significance to the Broads, with a ceiling of 30km (about 10% of the total network) set up for the maintenance of such paths. The Authority will review its role in PROW maintenance in 2025.

Settlements and travel hubs

May need a different heading, but this is to capture issues relating to the role of access/travel hubs in improving active travel opportunities, and perhaps more on the concept of integrated access provision.

There is not much in the plan about commuting/business needs – is there anything relevant to add, or is this more for the county councils to deal with?

The Broads Integrated Access Strategy ~~xxxxxx~~

The Authority will look for new opportunities to link public rights of way and access agreements with other facilities such as 24-hour moorings.

Information and interpretation

Increasing active travel is not just about improving the physical access infrastructure, but also about making sure people know what's there and how to make the most of it.

The Broads Authority and its partners, including Visit the Broads, provide various trail itineraries, route maps and guidance on active travel opportunities both into and around the Broads, as well as on site interpretation and way markers. However, the information is not as well coordinated, comprehensive and up to date as it could be. The following objectives in the Broads Recreation and Tourism Strategy⁹ seek to address this:

- Improve orienteering and booking information on the area's access infrastructure and services such as walking routes, bridleways, non-powered boating trails and hire facilities, and cycle routes and hire facilities
- Promote public transport options and itineraries, including links to destination and access points, in all tourism marketing and visitor information
- Work with public transport operators to promote customer incentives
- Promote green energy options, including electric bikes and charging points.

Supporting plans, policy and guidance

Integrated access

This Plan will help to meet the strategic aim in the Broads Plan to “improve the integrated network of access routes and points (with easier access for people with mobility and sensory needs), linked to visitor facilities.”¹⁰

⁹ [Broads Recreation and Tourism Strategy 2024-29](#) (Broads Authority, 2024)

¹⁰ Strategic Objective E1, Broads Plan (Broads Authority, 2022)

The main objectives for improving integrated access in the Broads are:

- To develop new routes to improve the extent and connectivity of the public access network including rights of way, permissive paths and long-distance routes
- To support the development of cycle hire facilities, cycle security and routes in new locations
- To increase the provision of electric charging points for cars and bikes
- To identify new off-road bridleway routes, including shared routes for walkers and riders
- To promote the use of appropriate open access land under the CROW Act 2000
- To work with local authorities and public transport providers to maintain, improve and promote sustainable transport to and within the area
- To assist partners in priority path maintenance within the Broads, where the Broads Authority can add value
- To provide appropriate information and interpretation on access to recreational sites

Related plans, policies and guidance

This Plan cross-relates to other plans, policies and guidance at a local, regional and national level that are relevant to the management of the Broads. Key documents are listed below.

Ref key docs that impact on this Plan, and why. What else should be included here? (See East Suffolk LCWIP 'policy context' as useful ref). Depending on how many plans you want to include, this list could stay within the main text here, or go into an Appendix.

Broads

The [Broads Plan](#) (Broads Authority, 2022) is the overarching statutory management plan for the Broads. The Broads Authority implements the Plan with multiple partners, including public and private sector bodies, land managers, tourism businesses and local interest groups.

The [Local Plan for the Broads](#) (Broads Authority, 2017¹¹) sets the spatial planning policies and proposals for development and land use within the Broads executive area.

Several parish or town councils in the Broads have, or are developing, [Neighbourhood Plans](#). Some of these plans include sustainable transport policies and/or site allocations that will help provide new or improved cycling and walking infrastructure.

The [Broads Integrated Access Strategy](#) (Broads Authority, 2024) identifies actions to maintain and improve the Broads' physical access network on and between land and water, linked to visitor facilities and sustainable transport provision.

¹¹ The Local Plan for the Broads adopted in 2017 is under review. The updated plan is due to be adopted by 2026.

The [Broads Recreation and Tourism Strategy 2024-29](#) (Broads Authority, 2024) sets objectives to manage, enhance and promote sustainable recreation and tourism in the Broads. It includes actions to promote active travel and sustainable transport choices.

The [Broads Nature Recovery Strategy](#) (Broads Authority, 2024) takes forward the Government's ambition and targets for nature recovery, and lays out how the Broads Biodiversity Partnership will contribute to restoring nature on 30% of land by 2030.

The [Asset Management Strategy](#) (Broads Authority, 2024) sets out the Authority's practices and procedures for the management and maintenance of its land, property and other assets.

See the [Broads Authority's Strategy pages](#) for more information.

County and regional

[Neighbouring planning policy documents:](#) The Broads Authority is the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the Broads executive area. Parts of the area cover Norwich City, Broadland, South Norfolk, North Norfolk, Great Yarmouth Borough and East Suffolk Council areas. These districts are the LPAs for the remainder of their areas.

[Local Transport Plans set out the long-term transport strategy and policy framework for Norfolk and Suffolk, including those parts within the Broads executive area.](#)

County Rights of Way Improvement Plans: The [Norfolk Access Improvement Plan](#) (Norfolk County Council, 2019) and the [Suffolk Green Access Strategy](#) (Suffolk County Council, 2020) set out priorities for improving access including Public Rights of Way, cycle tracks, quiet lanes, and permissive routes.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans: The LCWIPs for [Norfolk, Great Yarmouth, Greater Norwich, Suffolk](#) and [East Suffolk](#) include recommendations for cross-boundary access improvements.

The [Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Plan](#) (Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape, 2023) and the [Norfolk Coast National Landscape Management Plan](#) (Norfolk Coast Partnership, 2019) seek to protect natural beauty, promote sustainable tourism, protect against climate change, protect wildlife and habitats and promote health and wellbeing. Parts of the Norfolk Coast National Landscape overlap with the Broads executive area.

National and international

The [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategies](#) (DfT, 2017 and 2022) outline the Government's ambition to make cycling, walking and wheeling the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey.

The [LCWIP Technical Guidance for Local Authorities](#) (DfT, 2017) sets out a recommended approach to planning networks of walking and cycling routes that connect people with places they need to get to, whether for work, education, shopping or other reasons.

The [Landscapes review: National Parks and AONBs \(Defra, 2019\)](#) sets out 27 proposals to strengthen the natural beauty of England's protected landscapes to serve the country better by improving their biodiversity and the lives of people who work in them, live in them and enjoy them.

The [25 Year Environment Plan](#) (Defra, 2018) sets out the Government's long-term approach to protecting and enhancing England's natural environment. It includes aims to create more green infrastructure and to connect people with nature for their health and wellbeing.

Sustainability Appraisal and HRA

This Plan is subject to Sustainability Appraisal. The appraisal process evaluates the significant environmental, economic and social impacts of the Plan's implementation, identifies and mitigates potential negative effects, and makes sure the Plan contributes to sustainable development.

Where required, a Habitats Regulations Assessment will also be carried out to assess the impacts of the Plan on local sites protected by the Habitats Regulations including Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

Recommendations

The East Suffolk LCWIP says its recommendations only relate to new and improved access infrastructure, not existing maintenance. This doesn't paint a very realistic picture in terms of resource management. Do you want to include reference to existing asset liabilities?

I assume the recommendations will have been through an initial feasibility process (described in the Methodology section below). However, we need to consider the realism vs. optimism balance regarding what goes in. We can make clear that any recommendations (after going through the initial 'vetting process') are not prescriptive/comprehensive and are liable to further evidence/HRA/partner agreement/external, funding, etc. Text below from East Suffolk LCWIP is useful for reference:

The recommendations in this Plan should not be read as prescriptive proposals, or as the only way in which the infrastructure improvements can be delivered. The Strategy should also not be seen as an exhaustive list of all of the cycling and walking infrastructure potential in the district. The implementation of any recommendations in this Strategy are likely to need to be informed by further evidence gathering and detailed discussions with SCC as the Local Highways Authority as part of a long-term strategy for the district. Where appropriate the Broads Authority will also be involved in the detailed discussions. Further assessments of individual recommendations may also be required as part of the implementation, including (where necessary) Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Methodology

In addition to the supporting plans, policy and guidance above, what technical tools and processes will the BA use to develop, assess and prioritise the recommendations in the Plan?

What processes will be used to assess and deliver partnership projects, where the BA is a joint or supporting partner, or a consultee?

What is the process for setting and prioritizing the BA operations schedule?

Consultation input: Refer to the schedule of consultation responses, and how they have informed the recommendations. (Will the schedule be posted online?)

Recommendations tables

General recommendations

As well as site-specific recommendations, there will be non-spatial actions such as improving comms/information materials. I'm guessing that most (if not all) of these are covered in other plans, but do you want to include a table showing what and where these actions are? The alternative is just to say that actions relating to comms, etc., are covered in other plans and leave it at that!

Site-specific recommendations tables (these will also be mapped)

Suggested columns in first set of tables:

- a. *Ref, location/map ref (how do you want to divide up the areas in the Broads?)*
- b. *What we want to do and why (description of current status and desired status, rationale, feasibility, priority)*
- c. *Recommended action (include ref to relevant proposals/projects in other BA plans and in partner plans)*

Suggested columns in second (linked)set of tables

- d. *Ref, location/map ref*
- e. *Approx/actual cost, potential/actual funding/manpower sources*
- f. *potential/actual lead/joint delivery partners*
- g. *potential/actual delivery mechanisms, and links to relevant recommendations/projects in BA and partner plans*
- h. *Current status of recommendation (for online version – see monitoring process below)*

Monitoring progress

Explain how progress against the recommendations will be monitored.

Will you do 'live' update reporting in the online Plan (will there be sufficient progress to report in more than 6-month intervals)? If you take 6-monthly/annual progress reports to the committee, include links to the relevant committee meeting/agenda items in the online Plan pages on the website.

Appendices

Possible appendices:

- *Maps (check how other LCWIPS include maps within PDF versions)*
- *Related plans and policies (if not included within main text)*
- *Key partners*
- *Glossary and abbreviations (may not be needed)*
- *Government ambition by 2040 (see below)*

It may be useful to include this as an overarching guide, albeit not all is within the BA's remit:

The **Government's ambition in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2017)** is to meet the following goals by 2040:

'A safe and reliable way to travel for short journeys'

- streets where cyclists and walkers feel they belong, and are safe
- better connected communities
- safer traffic speeds, with lower speed limits where appropriate to the local area
- cycle training opportunities for all children

'More people cycling and walking - easy, normal and enjoyable'

- more high-quality cycling facilities
- more urban areas that are considered walkable
- rural roads which provide improved safety for walking and cycling
- more networks of routes around public transport hubs and town centers, with safe paths along busy roads
- better links to schools and workplaces
- technological innovations that can promote more and safer walking and cycling
- behavior change opportunities to support increased walking and cycling
- better integrated routes for those with disabilities or health conditions

'Places that have cycling and walking at their heart'

- places designed for people of all abilities and ages so they can choose to walk or cycle with ease
- improved public realm
- better planning for walking and cycling
- more community-based activities, such as led rides and play streets where local places want them
- a wider green network of paths, routes and open spaces

Broads Local Access Forum

05 March 2025

Agenda item number 7

Access for All project update

Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

Summary

An update on how the Access for All fund from DEFRA has been spent between 2022 and 2025.

Recommendation

To note the update.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In 2022 DEFRA distributed £7.66m between the 44 protected landscapes over a 3-year period. The money was intended to make protected landscapes more accessible to people of all ages and abilities and from all backgrounds.
- 1.2. The funding aimed to improve accessibility to all through capital expenditure including access infrastructure, buildings, machinery and equipment.
- 1.3. The Broads Authority was allocated £152,580. April 2025 sees the end of the funding period.

2. Project Overviews

- 2.1. In the 2022/2023 financial year the funding was used for path improvements at Hoveton Riverside Park, the installation of digital, solar powered signage across the Halvergate Marshes trail system and for the installation of a tactile map at Beccles Quay. There was no funding in 2023/2024. The funding for 2024/2025 has been spent on refurbishment to the Acle to Acle Bridge permissive path and access improvements at Hoveton Riverside Park.
- 2.2. The Halvergate signage enables better access through usage of public transport infrastructure and increased year-round access to the system.
- 2.3. The tactile map is from the Royal National Institute of Blind People and allows improved access for visually impaired people to better access the River Waveney, Quay and Marshes.
- 2.4. The Acle to Acle Bridge permissive path is one of few footpaths owned by the Broads Authority. It provides access from the Acle Bridge moorings to the town and vice versa.

- 2.5. Hoveton Riverside Park has been going through an overhaul. Rejuvenation and reinstatement of the paths, and installation of benches and wayfinding are part of the overhaul. The paths will be reinstated to Access for All specifications.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1. Funding spent in 2022/2023 was £69,729.13 and the funding for the 2024/2025 year is £82,851.02.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. DEFRA allocated £152,580 of additional funding to the Broads Authority in 2022. These funds have been used for access improvements within the protected landscape.

Author: Jo Thompson

Date of report: 18 February 2025

[Broads Plan](#) objectives: E1, E3

Broads Local Access Forum

05 March 2025

Agenda item number 8

Broads Local Access Forum meeting dates

Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

Summary

A proposal to change the frequency of BLAF meetings from 4 to 3.

Recommendation

BLAF moves to having 3 meetings a year, one of which will be the AGM.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. It is proposed that the Forum moves from having 4 meetings a year to having 3 meetings a year. One in March, one in July, and then the AGM in November.
- 1.2. Recruitment can take place in April, as it did in 2024, so that new members experience a meeting of the Forum before they attend an AGM.

2. Constitution and Governance

- 2.1. Section 2.4 of the constitution states that “the Forum will meet at least twice a year and aim to meet four times in the year”. Dropping one meeting to 3 will mean that the Forum is still constitutionally correct.
- 2.2. The June BLAF meeting has been agreed with Broads Authority so should this change go forward, it would take effect in the 2025/26 season starting in July 2025. This could be taken to the Broads Authority meeting on 9 May, should it be seen that this needs to be formally accepted.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1. Moving to 3 meetings year will have some positive financial implications as it will save Broads Authority Officer time and expenses for hall hire and travel.

4. Risk implications

- 4.1. There is the risk that topics will not have the same traction when the Forum meets 3 times a year, although there is the option to have additional meetings should a pressing issue become apparent, or to have break out group meetings outside of the regular BLAF meeting.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. If the meetings change from 4 to 3 the Forum will still be within the parameters of the constitution and would save time and officer expense. The option to add additional meetings if deemed necessary would remain.

Author: Jo Thompson

Date of report: 18 February 2025