

# Broadland Futures Initiative

## Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2025

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## Attendees

Marie-Pierre Tighe (Chair)- Broads Authority, Peter Doktor- Environment Agency, Dan Hoare- Broads Authority, Kellie Fisher- Environment Agency, Vanessa Gouldsmith- Natural England, Fiona Hinds- Natural England, Andrea Kelly- Broads Authority, Kari Nash- Water Management Alliance, Philip Pearson- RSPB, Charlotte Rivett- Norwich City Council, Yvonne Smith- Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Rob Wise- NFU, Kylie Moos (minutes).

## 1. Apologies for absence and welcome

Marie-Pierre Tighe (MPT) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from Wendy Brooks, Rebecca Bromley, Victoria Egan, Hannah Gray, Kevin Hart, Rob Kelly.

## 2. Update on technical work

Peter Doktor (PD) provided an update on the technical work since the last meeting. The hydraulic modelling deliverables are still being reviewed and tested prior to the modelling of baseline scenarios such as the 'do minimum' and 'do nothing\*' starting this summer. The project team held a workshop session to develop the ideas for possible action combinations over different periods of time and over different locations which will be subject to the modelling.

\*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.

### **Possible flood risk management actions**

- The 'toolkit' of 16 possible flood risk management action types was subject to public consultation in June/July 2023.
- The 'toolkit' is informing the development of action combinations for appraisal (Product 21).
- Jacobs have produced a series of detailed descriptions which will explain how the action will work, generic costs and limitations for each management action type. The profiles will be included as an appendix to the final reporting.
- The action descriptions will be available for IPT review in late January.
- The document will be large (approx. 100 pages/30MB). PD is to consider the practicalities of sharing and reviewing.

### **Landscape impact of management actions**

- The impact methodology was extended to include the appraisal of different flood management action types on the landscape.

- The intended proposal was to circulate ahead of 10 March IPT meeting and take review comments at the meeting. However, this needs to be reviewed in light of the report just received which is over 200MB.

### **Salinity modelling**

- Due to illness HR Wallingford have not yet updated the salinity modelling report.
- The next version is to be shared with the IPT in early February when ready.
- A new possible source of continuous and geographically spread salinity monitoring has been identified. The Environment Agencies (EA) fisheries team are involved with a PhD study and have set out salinity monitoring devices in various locations within Broadland. The devices are not live links, but the data can be downloaded and provide continuous monitoring.
- The view from H R Wallingford is that data needs to be collected over a longer period of time before looking to incorporate into the current analysis.

### **Coastal boundary conditions**

The 'boundary' refers to the boundary of the wider BFI study area and how that may affect the outcome of the wider appraisal of the different flood risk management actions.

- The intention has been to determine some scenarios for the Eccles-Winterton shoreline in the far future to be incorporated into the modelling and appraisal of wider possible BFI flood risk management actions:
  - How the shoreline could evolve and possible responses.
  - Order of magnitude differences in areas potentially affected.
  - Order of magnitude differences in flood risk management investment required.
- Local input was provided through a workshop with the Upper Thurne Working Group (UTWG) on 25 Apr 2024.
- Decisions for the shoreline policy are through the existing SMP governance rather than directly through the BFI, but the BFI can inform SMP governance.
- The current policy is 'Hold the Line' till 2105 subject to sustainability.
- The possible future evolution of the shoreline:
  - Sea level rise results in greater depth of water at the shore eroding the reducing the beach level.
  - An increased risk of overtopping and/or undermining and failure of the existing sea wall.

Based on the background of increasing exposure, Jacobs have produced a set of example diagrams to demonstrate what would need to happen to maintain the present day standard of protection, but assuming different alignments for coastal flood risk management structures.

- UTWG workshop participants were asked ‘what if we cannot hold the existing line?’ and from the responses a zone of potential realignment for the long term was identified. Participants were asked to think different degrees of change and existing features such as relics and embankments.
- The area affected and construction costs will vary depending on alignment. Holding the existing shoreline is estimated to cost £53 million per kilometre over a frontage of 14 kilometres. Inland alignments vary from £5-24 million per kilometre.

Key points from the workshop discussion:

- The importance of the existing communities and need for their involvement if ideas are developed further.
- The importance of having and retaining a beach locally.
- The need to protect the most important freshwater sites for wildlife.
- Raising the existing sea wall and losing the beach is undesirable.
- Generally agreed there is little point having limited realignment, but no desire for extensive realignment.
- The same approach is unlikely to be appropriate everywhere.
- Change may open new opportunities. For example, the offshore reefs at Sea Palling and the conditions that they have created.
- Lots of questions about feasibility and potential impacts.

Next steps for the BFI:

- The workshop has identified scenarios for realigned coastal structures in addition to Hold the Line.
- The BFI will not be developing and appraising the different coastal alignments with the intention of having a preferred alignment. That role is for the SMP.
- When testing possible action combinations for wider Broadland we will test the effect of the different coastal alignments on the overall outcome of the appraisal.

Phil Pearson (PP) asked if the appraisals of different actions will include different HRA requirements and the impact on the ecology, particularly along the coastal strip between Eccles and Winterton. PD responded, the approach to the HRA in general has been considered and meetings have taken place with Natural England and Ian Robinson (RSPB) previously, but not specifically for the coastal frontage.

PP has been involved with the Eccles upgrade and noted that it has been interesting to see the challenges of working in the shallow environment. Beach material had to be moved to create causeways to access the rocks which has changed the beach profile. Concerns have also been raised regarding the effectiveness of the defences when material has been taking away from an area that is already secreting. PP asked if the construction costs and implications of how it is applied will be considered in the assessment. PD agreed that there have been practical challenges for the current phase of works, but the BFI cannot get into that level of detail for assessments. BFI operates at a similar level of detail as the SMP and so not focus much on construction. The BFI will decide what details are needed before the high level option assessment is carried out.

The location of new salinity monitoring points cannot be shared in the report due to the high value of the equipment. There are 10 units being deployed with another 6 ready to be installed across the Broads at different locations and depths in the water column. Andrea Kelly (AK) asked how this information would be shared outside of BFI because there are several stakeholders who are interested in the topic. There is also a number of different groups and conservation organisations that carry out salinity monitoring across the Broads which would benefit from the update.

The monitoring is carried out as part of a PhD and will provide data in the short term, but it is not going to provide long term continuous data. PD suggested that once the report on salinity report is shared, the IPT discuss the next steps including how to extend the geographical monitoring and how salinity measurements by other groups can be included. AK asked if there is a defined bidding process to allow for a long term salinity monitoring process in Broadland. All the studies are pointing to the fact that there is not enough information to do the predictions that are required to make good decisions. Dan Hoare (DH) added, salinity monitoring has parallels with water levels and they would like to see the collective intelligence of data collecting increased to be useful outside of BFI.

PD will be investigating how best to share the larger reports with the IPT and is considering using SharePoint.

Thames Estuary 2100 advertised a knowledge hub that is hosted on SharePoint and includes a bank of best practises and digital tools. AK asked if the assessments and technical reports that the IPT are reviewing are available to stakeholders. PD responded, public facing summaries to the technical reports are available on the BFI website and stakeholders can request a copy of the technical report by emailing [info@broadland-futures.org.uk](mailto:info@broadland-futures.org.uk). AK noted that the reports would not be easy to find if you are new to the website. There is a large amount of information available, but it is not the most accessible. MPT agreed to discuss the accessibility of public facing and technical reports at the next BFI core group meeting.

### 3. Update on communications and engagement

Last week Broads Authority members took part in a BFI workshop. The workshop was presented as a high level health check which reviewed the work of BFI and what is planned for the future. The feedback from members was that the BFI needs to continue what it is doing,

but there was a call for more engagement work and for BFI to make better use of the fact that the impacts of climate change are happening now. The impacts of climate change will make engagement with the public more relatable and currently it was felt that this message is not strong enough.

Members suggested that there should be a way to explain what the future solution and impacts would look like which go beyond flood maps. The information also needs to be presented in a different way for different strands of society and engagement with young people is important. A key point for partners of the IPT is that support is also needed from non-governmental bodies to relay the BFI message.

John Hammond from the Met Office joined the workshop to present future climate change impacts and current impacts. One of their key messages was that global sea level has risen 20cm since 1901 and the rate which it is rising is getting quicker. It is important for members to understand the impacts and how it is affecting their communities. For example, when boats can no longer fit under bridges, it is not necessarily because a government organisation is not doing something, or made changes, it is likely because sea level is rising. It was also important to discuss with members that accommodating sea level rise does not necessarily mean abandonment, but it is a challenging issue the BFI needs to address.

Engagement activities are often quite intensive and resource heavy at a time when most partners are under resourced and experiencing funding pressure. Fiona Hinds (FH) commented that Natural England have a partnership with the UEA around the public engagement laboratory and agreed to share the information with PD and MPT.

As part of the East Coast Wetlands programme the RSPB are talking about adaptation and what the future looks like for certain areas of the coast, PP asked if there is there is key messaging that non-governmental bodies need to be sharing regarding BFI. MPT responded, the defined message will need to be built into the communications and engagement plan. PP added, they would be happy to start the conversation, but a joined-up approach is required, and it also depends on Natural England's view on what the future looks like. Kellie Fisher (KF) reported that Elected Members are still finding people in their parish that have not heard of the BFI, despite Parish Councils receiving quarterly newsletters for several years. At this stage it is about raising awareness of the BFI and signposting people to the BFI website.

There are examples of District Councillors producing monthly reports to the parishes and the local ward councillors receiving a digest of all things that have been happening in the area. DH suggested that this could be a way to share BFI updates. Charlotte Rivett (CR) agreed to contact the political assistants at Norwich City Council to see if the reports come from the districts or within the political parties. AK suggested that parish councils are asked what the best way is to disseminate information.

MPT agreed to contact John Hammond to see if they can produce a shortened version of the presentation that was shared with Broads Authority members. AK recommended that any videos that are produced are no longer than 2 minutes in length for using on social media.

## 4. Update on Elected Members Forum

The next Elected Members Forum is taking place on 27 February 2025.

## 5. AOB

Kari Nash (KN) reported that as part of the Upper Thurne pumping package of works, the first four stations have gone into contract: Horsey, Martham, Potter Heigham and St Benet's. Construction is due to start in April.

WMA send out quarterly newsletters and have included information on the BFI and links to the website.

Rob Wise (RW) reported that they will be providing an update on flooding matters to internal NFU staff in the east region next week and will be providing an update on BFI and Fens2100+. PD followed up the overtopping volumes with Jacobs last week, but it is unlikely that the outcome will be available in time for the meeting with internal NFU staff.

AK is attending the Fenland Soil conference in Ely next month and will be presenting some of the adaption work such as Horsey demonstration site. Peter Craven, Head of Agriculture at Natural England will also be visiting the site next month to talk about pump infrastructure investment.

MPT will be attending the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance Flood and Drought summit on the 31 January at County Hall.

## 6. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broadland Future Initiative is 11.30am-1.00pm 10 March 2025.

## Summary of progress

Outstanding actions	Meeting date	Assigned to
Discuss the accessibility of public facing and technical reports on the BFI website.	20.01.2025	MPT/PD
Share information on the NE and UEA public engagement library with MPT and PD.	20.01.2025	FH
Contact the political assistants at Norwich City Council to see who produces the monthly reports for local ward councillors.	20.01.2025	CR
Contact John Hammond to see if they can produce a shortened version of the presentation that was shared with BA members	20.01.2025	MPT