

Broads Authority

24 January 2025

Agenda item number 10

Landscape Connections expression of interest

Report by Partnership and External Funding Manager

Purpose

To inform Members of the National Lottery Heritage “Landscape Connections” funding opportunity and seek authorisation to submit an expression of interest to the Heritage Fund to begin the development of an initial bid with partners.

Broads Plan context

Theme B: Improving landscapes for biodiversity and agriculture

Theme D: Protecting landscape character and the historic environment

Theme E: Promoting understanding and enjoyment

Theme F: Connecting and inspiring communities

Recommended decision

To authorise the submission of an expression of interest to the National Lottery Heritage Landscape Connection Scheme and the subsequent development of an initial bid ready for submission at the end of 2025.

Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Landscape Connections Ambitions and Outcomes	3
3.	Broads Authority Ambitions	4
4.	Financial implications	6
5.	Risk implications	6
6.	Conclusion	6
	Appendix 1 – Initial list of potential partners	8

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In July 2024, [The National Lottery Heritage Fund has launched a £150 million Landscape Connections scheme](#) to enhance protected landscapes across the UK. The initiative aims to improve biodiversity, increase public access to nature, and strengthen these areas as vibrant, working landscapes. Key priorities include ensuring universal access to natural spaces, making landscapes more inclusive, delivering ambitious projects with measurable outcomes, supporting local communities and landowners, accelerating nature recovery, and fostering innovative partnerships.
- 1.2. Projects must include a protected landscape (National Park or National Landscape) at its core. The Broads Authority would be the lead partner. Potential projects are intended link across boundaries, work at a catchment level and are encouraged to integrate urban communities.
- 1.3. The National Lottery initial aim is to support 20 projects across the country from the initial £150 million. We would look to develop an initial bid in the range of £10 million to support a scheme in the Broads Catchment.
- 1.4. A successful initial bid would open a funded 2-year development period to fully develop and write a project plan for the identified scheme area (the Broads Catchment) to be delivered over an 8-year period.
- 1.5. This scheme is similar to our previous Heritage Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme, Water Mills & Marshes (WMM LPS), which we recently completed, though the Landscape Connections scheme is much greater in scale and geographic scope, with a greater focus on connecting people with protected landscapes.
- 1.6. Members previously agreed as a Strategic Priority for 2025/26 to “Bring significant external funding to deliver Broads Plan objectives” with the milestones (i) Develop partnership arrangements for new project by summer 2025 and (ii) Submit bid to the Lottery by end of 2025. This would fulfil this strategic priority for this year.
- 1.7. Proposed timeline for Landscape Connections scheme:

Landscape Connections Development and Delivery Phases	Estimated Time Frame
Submission of Expression of Interest	February 2025
Submission of Stage 1 Application	December 2025
Start of Development Period	Apr-Jun 2026 (then 2 years)
Submission of Stage 2 Application	Apr-Jun 2028
Start of Delivery Period	Oct-Dec 2028 (then 8 years to 2036)

- 1.8. The first step is to submit an Expression of Interest. This is a relatively short document which requests information for the following questions. Each has a limited word count for this stage in the process.

Question	Max word count
Have you spoken to anyone at the Heritage Fund about your idea?	*Names of HF officers
What is the need for this project?	200
Describe what you will do during the project.	200
Do you have a title for the project?	*Working Title
Tell us about the heritage of the project.	100
Please outline how your project will respond to our four investment principles.	300
Who will be involved in the project?	100
How long do you think the project will take?	50
How much is the project likely to cost?	200
How much funding are you planning to apply for from us?	*Amount

- 1.9. Updates about the Landscape Connections Development will be provided through the regular item to Members about Strategic Priorities for 2025/26.
- 1.10. Before our submission of the Stage 2 application, as part of the development phase, we will host a workshop with members to discuss the draft application and Area Based Projects Action Plan that will be created during the development phase. We will then ask for members' approval to the Stage 2 application before its submission.

2. Landscape Connections Ambitions and Outcomes

- 2.1. The Heritage Fund has identified 6 Ambitions that will need to be met for a successful bid to the fund. These ambitions closely link with our strategic objectives set out in the Broads Plan in themes B, D, E and F.
1. **Universal Access:** Ensure everyone in the UK can access landscapes rich in nature, clean water, and fresh air.
 2. **Inclusive Landscapes:** Make landscapes more welcoming and accessible to people from all backgrounds.
 3. **Bold and Measurable Projects: Deliver long-term, ambitious projects with clear outcomes for Protected Landscapes.**

- 4. Strengthening Working Landscapes: Support local communities and landowners to revitalize landscapes based on a clear understanding of their needs and challenges.**
 - 5. Accelerated Nature Recovery: Drive systemic and lasting nature recovery across entire landscapes, creating models for sustainable conservation and community engagement.**
 - 6. Innovative Partnerships: Foster collaborative frameworks between communities, landowners, organizations, and land managers to drive equitable change and lasting legacies.**
- 2.2. All Landscape Connections projects must also adhere to the Heritage Fund’s four investment principles of (i) Saving Heritage (ii) Protecting the Environment (iii) Inclusion, Access and Participation (iv) Organisational Sustainability.
 - 2.3. Landscape Connections projects should focus on putting landscapes into recovery while connecting people, heritage, nature, and culture.

3. Broads Authority Ambitions

- 3.1. We believe that we, with our partners, would be able to develop a focused, clear set of projects that would deliver substantial outcomes for the people and landscape of the Broads while meeting the ambitions and principles of the Heritage Fund.
- 3.2. We would aim to deliver the scheme beyond the geographic area targeted through the WMM LPS, which was constrained largely to the areas around the Halvergate Marshes, and the Yare and Waveney Valleys.
- 3.3. This new funding would allow us to work across the entirety of the Broads, including the northern Broads, the entire city of Norwich and into the Catchment. The funding allows for us to engage areas outside of the Broads Executive Area and we have been encouraged to look beyond political boundaries to impacts across a larger area.
- 3.4. We think that even at this increased level of funding, the largest impacts will not be achieved through large scale capital works, but through long term, sustained engagement that better connects people to nature, place and other people.
- 3.5. Initial ideas include, but are not limited to:
 - Developing and delivering a Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) style small grant programme to directly support farmers/land managers to improve the water quality of runoff from farms within our river catchments. We would incorporate our learning and evaluation from the current FiPL scheme so we can focus on the unique needs of our landscape.
- 3.6. This would directly address Strategic Objective B2 and its key action to: *Work with farmers/land managers and organisations to implement tailored environmental land*

and water management measures to reduce air pollution and water pollution [BCP coordination, HA]

- 3.7. We would seek to further develop the work that we have been doing with partners around better integrations with the mental health system in Norfolk and Suffolk. Great progress has been made in Social Prescribing using the green and blue spaces of the Broads as natural capital. We have research partners onboard for the scheme who would be able to measure the health, social and economic impacts of people participating in nature-based health and wellbeing activities and volunteering.
- 3.8. This would directly address Strategic Objective F1 and its key action to: Provide nature-based health & wellbeing activities, e.g. Active Outdoors, Wellbeing Walks, Green Gym, green & blue social prescribing schemes and community connectors schemes [LAs, health & social care sector, volunteer sector, BA, other partners]
- 3.9. We would continue to develop our work from the previous WMM LPS which allowed for the creation of new facilities that meet point of need and access for all requirements. We would specifically look to increase the number of Changing Places toilets in the Broads. This would be based on our experience working with Whitlingham Charitable Trust in the installation of a Changing Places Toilet at Whitlingham Country Park in 2023.
- 3.10. This would directly address Strategic Objective E1 and its key action to: Implement working agreements and other measures to improve strategic network of toilet facilities (incl. Changing Places accessible toilets) and refuse & recycling facilities [BA, LAs, local businesses]
- 3.11. We would aim to redevelop the River Wensum Strategy with Norwich City Council to improve the green corridor around the river as this is a key link to nature and the rest of the Broads for hundreds of thousands of people in the area.
- 3.12. We are acutely aware of the risk of Climate Change on the historic environment of the Broads. The Broads is already known for its significant waterlogged archaeology, and we understand that changes in climate will have a negative impact on the condition of our heritage assets.
- 3.13. We have begun to create a list of projects with partners to enhance the landscape character and historic environment of the Broads. Our work in the Broads Hidden Heritage project run as part of the WMM LPS opened several new themes around archaeology, industrial heritage (including drainage mills) and intangible heritage. We are now planning on how to better understand, interpret and exhibit the objects, places and stories that make this landscape unique. One potential project would address the ongoing issue of bank erosion at St. Benet's Abbey, which is endangering the buried archaeology of the former quayside buildings of the former monastic complex.
- 3.14. This would directly address Strategic Objective D1 and its key action to: Develop evidence base and policy to improve awareness, understanding and protection of the

Broads' exceptional waterlogged archaeology, and develop management plan [NAT, BA, NCC, SCC, HE]

- 3.15. We would also aim to deliver against many of our internal and partner strategies: the Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan, Broadland Futures Initiative, Broads Nature Recovery Strategy, Integrated Access Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, Education Strategy, Tourism Strategy, Volunteer Strategy, etc.
- 3.16. These are examples of potential projects. We would develop the final scheme with the partnership to ensure that our partners' ideas and proposals are heard and integrated as best possible to meet the ambitions of the fund.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1. At this stage there is an initial need to commit significant officer time to the development and writing of the expression of interest and initial bid. We have been advised by the Heritage Fund to apply for a small grant to support to help develop the initial bid, which we intend to submit alongside the expression of interest.
- 4.2. A successful initial bid would open a funded period of 2 years to continue the development of the scheme. This would fund officer time and some initial scoping and trialling of projects to be included in the main bid.
- 4.3. The focus of any funded scheme developed by the partnership should be on services and projects that fall outside of the Authority's 'Business as Usual'. Funding from this scheme, and from the Heritage Fund in general, is not to be used to support statutory obligations. As such, there will be limited opportunity to address navigation expenditure as part of this funding scheme.

5. Risk implications

- 5.1. At this stage, before the expression of interest is submitted, there is a very limited level of risk.
- 5.2. If the expression of interest is successful, we would create a comprehensive risk register for the initial bid which would cover governance and partnership agreements. This would be a requirement of the initial bid.
- 5.3. The lessons learnt from the Water Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership Scheme will be incorporated into the bid development of the Landscape Connections scheme.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This is an incredible opportunity for the Broads Authority to improve upon the celebrated work that we were able to achieve through the previous Water, Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership Scheme which was also funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Our relationship with the Heritage Fund is good and we have been

encouraged by the fund to develop new projects that engage with the communities in our area.

- 6.2. Our discussions with the Heritage Fund over the last few years and feedback they have received nationally have resulted in the increased level of grant (up to £10 million before cash matches) and delivery time (8 years), which would allow us to deliver and properly evaluate landscape scale projects.
- 6.3. We have already begun to speak with potential partners (Appendix 1) for the bid and have reached agreements with most of them to be included in the expression of interest and initial bid. We are leveraging our experience with the last partnership scheme to evolve our partners to be able to develop new and innovative collaborations that deliver high quality, impactful outcomes across the themes identified in the Broads Plan.
- 6.4. Initial conversations with the Heritage Fund are positive and they have taken an interest in the unique geographic features of the Broads including our integrations with Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and the City of Norwich.
- 6.5. If agreed by Members, we would aim to submit the expression of interest to the Heritage Fund by the end of February. Once approved by the Heritage Fund, this would open up the next stage of the application process and allow us to submit an initial bid to the scheme by the end of the calendar year.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: Across themes B, D, E and F

Appendix 1 – Initial list of potential partners

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Landscape Connections Partner
Broads Authority
Broadland Catchment Partnership
Broads Society
Business in the Community (BITC)
Collusion Cambridge Ltd
Diocese of Norwich
Environment Agency
Institute for Creative Technology
Institute for Sustainable Worlds
Museum of the Broads
Natural England
Norfolk Archaeological Trust
Norfolk County Council
Norfolk FWAG
Norfolk Initiative for Coastal and Rural Health Equalities (NICHE)
Norfolk Rivers Trust
Norfolk Wildlife Trust
Norwich City Council
Norwich University of the Arts
River Waveney Trust
RSPB
Restoration Trust
River Waveney Trust
Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape
Suffolk Wildlife Trust
University of East Anglia
Wensum Catchment Partnership
Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership