

Broads Authority

15 May 2026

Agenda item number 9

Strategic priorities- Update May 2026

Report by Head of Governance

Purpose

The report sets out the latest progress in implementing the Authority's annual strategic priorities for 2026/27.

Broads Plan context

The Broads Plan is a key part of the Authority's strategic framework.

Recommended decision

To note the progress in implementing this year's strategic priorities.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Each year the Broads Authority identifies a small set of strategic priorities, which focus on projects that have high resource needs or a very large impact on the Broads, or that are politically sensitive. Setting these priorities helps target the Authority's resources and make the most of partnership working and external funding opportunities. Priorities are set each financial year, although some large-scale projects carry across several years.
- 1.2. In addition, Defra has a requirement for National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority to provide quarterly updates on deliverables against the Business Plan, as part of its grant funding agreement. These update reports on our strategic priorities are used by officers to comply with that requirement.

2. Updates

2.1. The first update on the agreed strategic priorities for 2026/27 is in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Strategic priorities 2026/27 – progress update

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>Potentially all</p> <p>1. Start preparation of a replacement Broads Plan to cover the period 2028-2033</p> <p>Aim: To implement the next steps of the Broads Plan preparation.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Broads Plan – start preparation of a new plan to cover the period 2028-2033 (ii) April-July 2026: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission State of the Park Report Prepare report summarising feedback First Broads Plan Partnership workshop Report progress to Broads Authority (iii) August-December 2026 – Draft Broads Plan (iv) January-March 2027 – Consult on emerging draft plan. 	<p>Status: On track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Consultant appointed to support the process. Letters issued week ending 17 April 2026 to partners, parish councils, local authorities and Natural England on the review of the current plan. (ii) Workshop planning underway (iii) Not yet due (iv) Not yet due 	<p>Chief Executive / Director of Resources</p>
<p>2. Adoption of the Local Plan for the Broads Authority</p> <p>Aim: To facilitate the Local Plan Enquiry.</p>	<p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Planning Policy Officer</p>

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Submit plan for Local Plan Inquiry for independent inspection by a local plan inspector. (ii) Receipt of Matters, Issues and Questions. (iii) Examination hearings. (iv) Modifications consultation. (v) Receipt of Inspector’s Report. (vi) Adoption of Local Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Completed 16 February 2026. (ii) Potentially May 2026. (iii) September 2026. (iv) TBC (v) TBC (vi) TBC 	
<p>Protect communities from the dangers of flooding</p> <p>3. Broadland Futures Initiative</p> <p>Aim: Responding to Climate Change and supporting the Broadland Futures Initiative</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Baseline modelling (BFI Product 34) report due in 2026/27 (ii) Appraisal of the flood risk management action pathways using the modelling data and multi-criteria decision analysis 	<p>Status: On Track</p> <p>With two-thirds of the Broads below Mean Sea Level, living, working, and enjoying Broadland depend on flood risk management. The BFI Plan (due for completion in 2028) will be an adaptive pathway which will guide local planning, future decisions and investments, ensuring they are cost-effective, environmentally sustainable, technically feasible, and democratically agreed upon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Joint meeting and workshop with Internal Project Team and Elected Members Forum held in April to start the appraisal of the action pathways (ii) TBC 	<p>Director of Delivery</p>

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>Improving landscapes for biodiversity and agriculture. Protecting landscape character and the historic environment. Connecting and inspiring communities.</p> <p>4. Landscape Connections</p> <p>Aim: Develop partnership and submit development phase bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to unlock up to £10m over 10 years.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Deliver and complete initial landscape connections project (#LC Broads Heritage Partnership: A Vision for the Future) by October 2026. (ii) Submit expression of interest to Heritage Fund by Summer 2026. (iii) Submit bid to the Heritage Fund by end of November 2026. 	<p>Status: On Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Work continues in the delivery of our initial funding from the Landscape Connections scheme (#LC Broads Heritage Project) which is laying the groundwork for the new partnership and co-creation of initial project ideas. We have held 2 workshops this spring to facilitate the creation of our new vision for the future of Heritage in the Broads, with further workshops booked through the spring and summer. Our consultants have begun to work with organisations across the area in support of this work to further identify and refine the next phase of our Landscape Connections bid. (ii) We have held discussions with investment officers at the Heritage Fund in preparation of submitting our EOI for the next phase of funding. We have begun drafting responses to the EOI form. We continue to work the Heritage Fund on the development of a new cohort of other landscapes which are developing bids to the scheme, as well as with other significant projects also 	<p>Head of External Funding</p>

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	<p>receiving investment from the Heritage Fund.</p> <p>(iii) We will be able to start on the next step for submission after the EOI stage.</p>	
<p>Responding to climate change and flood risk</p> <p>5. Responding to Climate Change and Nature Recovery</p> <p>Aim: Implement the agreed Climate Action Plan and begin working towards incorporating the next plan in the Broads Plan from 2028.</p> <p>Broads Climate Action Plan, Broads Nature Recovery Action Plan, PLTOF and 30 by 30.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Seek funding through the CDMC and ZEVl programmes for maritime decarbonisation (ii) Continue developing the CyclePods Cycle Charging network (iii) Use GIRAMS, LEVI and other available funding to continue expanding the boat charging network (iv) Report and track progress via the CDP reporting process. (v) Produce a programme of projects that meet wildlife rich habitat and 30 by 30 targets, including working with Broads Biodiversity 	<p>Status: On Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Ongoing work to develop partnerships. Further exploration of a project under ZEVl programme and preparation of a new submission under CDMC was approved by Management Team in April 2026. (ii) Identifying funding sources and locations (iii) Next target site is Ludham bridge, pending agreement with EA (iv) Next report due to be compiled in August (v) Produced an EOI project programme for the Broads Biodiversity Partnership (c. £400K), projects will be prioritised to align with the £53K budget for wildlife rich habitat delivery. Following discussion at RAG, a minor amendment was made to our Asset processes to cover land purchase. (vi) Defra final guidance for wildlife rich habitat delivery 	<p>Sustainability Manager / Environment Policy Adviser</p>

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>Partners and purchasing land that meets criteria</p> <p>(vi) Identify key projects to take forward within the funding available</p> <p>(vii) Use additional Defra funds to deliver projects, reporting progress through the Broads Biodiversity Partnership</p> <p>(viii) Seek funding through the Peatland Sector Capacity, Lowland Water Fund and Paludiculture and Wetter Farming programmes (2026-2030) for peatland restoration and wetter crops, working with Broads Peat Partnership</p>	<p>received in April and projects prioritised with senior officers, potentially May 2026</p> <p>(vii) Complete and report by end March 2027</p> <p>(viii) Potentially June-Aug 2026</p>	
<p>Access for all</p> <p>6. Access in the Broads</p> <p>Aim: Maximising benefits from Access for All and Active Travel England funding. Deliver the Broads Local Cycling, Walking, Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in partnership with key stakeholders and the highway authority.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <p>(i) Produce Active Travel England National Park Capability Fund programme plan (end May 2026)</p> <p>(ii) Identify by end June 2026 key Active Travel Projects to take forward within the funding</p>	<p>Status: On Track</p> <p>(i) Programme plan in production for review by Steering Group on 23 April 2026 and submission to ATE 1 May 2026.</p> <p>(ii) Training under way and Steering Group established to progress and guide ATE NPCF project.</p> <p>(iii) Initial ideas being collated with input from colleagues and the public. Microsoft forms being produced for existing installations to obtain feedback and suggestions for</p>	<p>Waterways and Recreation Officer</p>

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>available, with the inclusion of socio-economic access.</p> <p>(iii) Deliver programme of Access for All projects in line with the funding guidance, reporting progress through the Broads Local Access Forum (BLAF).</p> <p>(iv) April: Increase capacity for ATE Phase Two project management.</p> <p>(v) May: Establish ATE Steering group.</p> <p>(vi) June – December: Focused active travel community public engagement events.</p> <p>(vii) Review Year 2 and deliver Year 3 Integrated Access Strategy.</p> <p>(viii) Identify and deliver Access for All projects and suitable sites in the Broads.</p> <p>(ix) Early 2027: Produce initial draft design schemes for active travel in the Broads in partnership with key stakeholders and the highway authority.</p>	<p>similar developments (paddlecraft launch; angling platforms). Reporting to BLAF at May meeting.</p> <p>(iv) Active Travel Project Officer role submitted for evaluation.</p> <p>(v) Steering Group established: kick off meeting 23 April.</p> <p>(vi) To be organised when ATPO in position.</p> <p>(vii) Year 2 review commenced.</p> <p>(viii) Identifying projects and creating 3 year plan for delivery.</p> <p>(ix) N/A at this point.</p>	
<p>Protecting the interests of navigation</p> <p>7. Maintenance of the navigation priorities</p> <p>Aim: Ensure the frameworks for decision-making and timely delivery of maintenance works are in place</p>	<p>Status: On track</p>	<p>Head of Operations</p>

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>following consultation with key partners.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Review of the Breydon and lower tidal rivers management plan (5-year consented plan for all waterways management activities). (ii) Develop joint Maintenance Dredge Protocol with Peel Ports (GYHA). (iii) Riverside Tree Management Plan (5-year consented plan) is due for completion in 2026/27. Refresh and finalise next 5 year plan 2027/28 to 2031/32. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Initial consultation with Navigation Committee in April on a suitable approach for channel marking in the lower tidal rivers (ii) Expression on Interest completed. Consultant quotes due by end May. 	
<p>8. Information and Data Management Project</p> <p>Aim: Data migration to a cloud-based platform, improved information governance and compliance thereby moving from legacy on premise software to cloud solutions.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Scope data migration project with Consultants. (ii) Review all data held, delete duplicates and ensure data is removed that we should no longer hold. 	<p>Status: Project at initiation stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Met with a consultant on 31 March 2026. Awaiting statement of works for discovery workshops. (ii) Ongoing process being undertaken by ICT support 	<p>Head of ICT</p>

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<p>(iii) Migrate Tolls documents from the on premise DMS to the cloud.</p> <p>(iv) Migrate the Planning system to the cloud.</p>	<p>staff working with relevant data holders.</p> <p>(iii) Planning for this will be discussed during the discovery workshops mentioned above</p> <p>(iv) Preferred supplier identified. Discussion on data migration is underway; the project will require our planning documents to be moved from on premise to SharePoint online.</p>	
<p>Potentially all</p> <p>9. Devolution and Mayoral Authority</p> <p>Aim: Continue to engage with the Broads Authority's constituent local authorities to make the most of the new governance structure for Norfolk and Suffolk.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Confirmation of board amendments with new unitary councils and DEFRA? (ii) Engagement with the new Mayor? 	<p>Status: On track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Government has confirmed plans for local government reorganisation (LGR) in Norfolk and Suffolk. <p>From April 2028, the existing councils will be replaced by three new unitary councils for Norfolk and three for Suffolk. This means the number of constituent local authorities for the Broads Authority will reduce from 8 to 3.</p> <p>It is expected that Parliament will confirm the legal arrangements in the Autumn 2026 with shadow authorities in May 2027 and in full operation from April 2028. Engagement continues with the Local Authorities at CEO and CFO level.</p> <p>At some point in the future consequential changes to the</p>	<p>Chief Executive / Director of Resources</p>

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	<p>Authority's Board will be made.</p> <p>(ii) Mayoral elections have been delayed from 2026 to 2028 for the new strategic authority for Norfolk and Suffolk.</p>	

3. Financial risks

- 3.1. If the Authority fails to comply with any of its obligations in the Grant Funding Agreement, DEFRA may, at its discretion, reduce, suspend or terminate payments of grant, or require any part or all of the grant to be repaid.
- 3.2. Over-committing to additional work or priorities will have an adverse impact on the budget.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: All

Appendix 1 – 'Golden thread' strategic framework

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Fig. 1

‘Golden thread’ strategic framework

