

Broads Local Access Forum

Agenda 19 November 2025

10.00am

Online

This is a remote meeting held under the Broads Authority's [Standing Orders on Procedure Rules for Remote Meetings](#).

Participants: You will be sent a link to join the meeting. The room will open at 9.45am and we request that you log in by 9.55am allow us to check connections and other technical details.

Members of the public: Please refer to section 6 of the [BLAF constitution](#) regarding public questions, alternatively you can email BLAF@broads-authority.gov.uk with any queries about this meeting.

Introduction

1. **Appointment of Chair**
2. **Appointment of Vice Chair**
3. Apologies for absence and welcome
4. Declarations of interest
5. **To receive and confirm the minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 4 June 2025 (Pages 4-10)**
6. **Summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings- to note the schedule (Pages 11-13)**

Items for discussion

7. **Active Travel England update (Pages 14-115)**
Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

Other matters

8. Any other business
9. To note the date of the next meeting – **Wednesday 20 May 2026** at 10.00am.

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 Tuttlés 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 |
|---------------------|--|-----------------|--|--|
| Patricia Holtom | 7 Market Place Loddon Norfolk NR14 6EY | 0779649 1063 | pat@holtom.org.uk | Tourism and local business/walking |
| 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 |
| 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

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Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 04 June 2025

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Present

David Lilley (vice chair) – in the Chair, Keith Bacon (from item 5), Christine Cane, Peter Dixon, Geoff Doggett, Tony Gibbons, Edward Gilder, Tim Harris, Pat Holtom.

In attendance

Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology, Kylie Moos – Administrative Officer.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome

Vice Chair David Lilley took the role of Chair for today's meeting.

The Chair welcomed new Forum member Pat Holtom who provided a short introduction of their experience and interests in the Broads.

Following today's meeting there will be an optional visit along the new permissive footpath from Acle to Acle Bridge.

Apologies received from Richard Atkins, Peter Mason, Katie Phillips, Christopher Yardley.

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 5 March 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2025 were approved as a correct record and agreed by the Chair.

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

Lost paths

Dan Hoare has been in contact with Caroline Bidwell, the new Team Leader of the Green Infrastructure team who manages Public Rights of Way and the Trails network in Norfolk. Caroline has agreed to come along to the next Forum meeting and provide an update.

5. Integrated Access Strategy progress monitoring

Dan Hoare, introduced the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) progress report to the Forum. The purpose of the report is to track the progress of the three year action plan which is divided into three categories of access objectives: land based, land to water, mooring and demasting. It is important to note that the objectives related to mooring and demasting are reviewed by the navigation committee.

A Forum member asked if there was any update on open water swimming in the Broads (LW4). Dan Hoare confirmed that the previous action was to clarify the Broads Authority's stance on open water swimming and to make this clear on the website. The website has now been updated to include the risks of [outdoor swimming](#). A Forum member asked if there was an update following a previous presentation from Anglian Water regarding increased swimming facilities in the next two years. Dan Hoare confirmed that that Anglian Water were seeking three bathing areas the Anglian region that were not coastal and that none had been identified by Anglian Water in the Broads.

The Broads Authority supports the work that the River Waveney Trust are leading on for bathing water application at Falcon Meadow in Bungay. A Forum member added that the water quality results are coming back better than expected. The site is well used, but ultimately wild swimmers will swim anywhere there is water. Dan Hoare added, for this reason, the Broads Authority strongly advises against entering the water, especially in the publicly navigable areas, unless part of an organised event and highlighted the hazards.

Regarding objective L2, Dan Hoare reported that the Broads Authority does not have a statutory role in PRoW maintenance, this is the responsibility of Norfolk County Council, but when the Authority has resources, it helps the county by maintaining approximately 21km of ProW in the Broads. Following the announcement of an 8.2% reduction in the National Park grant for this year, it is likely that this area of work may experience some shrinkage pending a review.

A Forum member asked if the move to a unitary authority will have an effect on the Broads Authority and the work that it carries out. Dan Hoare responded, it is likely, but it is unclear how that will look at this early stage.

Regarding objectives that have made slower progress, a Forum member commented that is unlikely to change soon given the current uncertainty regarding funding. Dan Hoare added, the Waterways and Recreation Officer role is now vacant and there is a currently a freeze on recruitment to the post. A Forum member suggested that the Forum should submit a formal letter to the Authority to stress the importance of the Waterways and Recreation officer role for access in the Broads.

A Forum member asked what the plans are for Three Acre Wood now that it is back under the responsibility of the Broads Authority. A new canoe launch was installed last year however the wood is currently closed to the public due to the condition of the trees caused by Chalara ash dieback. A Forum member added, originally the Authority did not want to the liability of the woods, and it was considered too dangerous. Given the financial context discussed today, it seems unlikely that the Authority would want to continue managing the woodland. Dan Hoare confirmed that the woodland is currently closed because the trees have not been maintained and this cannot be rectified until the autumn once the bird breeding season has passed. The woodland will open again once the remedial works have been completed. Several Forum members commented on how important public access is for the popular woodland and recommended that the Forum contacts the Chief Executive of the Authority to share their views on the importance of the long term maintenance of the woodland.

The Forum agreed to write a letter to the Chief Executive of the Authority regarding the importance of the following resources:

- **The Waterways and Recreation officer post which is currently vacant.**
- **Long term maintenance for Three Acre Wood.**

Keith Bacon joined the meeting. David Lilley remained in the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

Regarding objective L7, a Forum member asked how open access land is determined when the land is tidal. A Forum member responded open access is marked on OS maps and it is either open moor land or registered common land. Open access land in the Broads tends to be registered common land, an example of this is Herringfleet Hills. There is not any known open access land near the water in the Broads. Dan Hoare added, there is an action for a future Waterways and Recreation officer to go through the parcels of land which are open access with landowners to see if there is an opportunity for enhanced land-based access.

Once land has been designated as Open Access it cannot change until the designation is lifted. The Broads Authority has a statutory responsibility to consult the Broads Local Access Forum on status changes for open access land. A Forum member asked if Land Registry would have a register of open access land in the Broads. A Forum member responded, there could be land that is not registered if the status were granted before compulsory registration.

A Forum member asked if there is access along riverbanks for mooring between the high and low water mark. Dan Hoare responded, that it is still the landowner's prerogative as to who moors beside their land. A Forum member added, a lot of private moorings are being withdrawn, often this is because there is a reluctance for landowners to provide insurance and public liability.

6. Broads Local Access Forum meeting dates

Dan Hoare introduced the report which outlines the reasons behind moving from four meetings a year to two meetings a year, one of which will be the AGM. Decreasing to two meetings per year will mean that the Forum is still within the constitution and compliant with [The Local Access Forums \(England\) Regulations 2007](#). There will still be the option for member led meetings or site visits, outside of the formal meeting schedule.

A Forum member asked if Authority officers could be invited to attend a member organised meeting and noted the importance of the Broads Authority still being involved. Dan Hoare responded, this may be possible if the meeting were focused with a specific topic. They added that the reduction in meetings is a chance for members to consider the effectiveness of the Forum, how it functions, and the value of its role in stakeholder engagement. A Forum member added, it is useful to see stakeholders, and officers often provide access related information which will still need to be shared with the Forum by email.

A Forum member noted that at the March 2025 meeting a report on the reduction of meeting dates was tabled, but the recommendation was to move from four meetings to three and

asked why this has changed. They requested that the Forum moves to three meetings instead of two with one of the meetings held online to save on room hire and officer time. Another member agreed that they would like to keep three meetings with an increase in online meetings. Dan Hoare responded, it still takes the same amount of officer time to prepare the agenda and papers for a meeting, whether it is online or in person. They added, that since March 2025 the Defra reduction in the National Park grant has meant that the Authority is reviewing the number of all committees and staff time involved.

In 2003 the government used to provide funding to support access forums and service the meetings. A Forum member asked if this is still in place. Dan Hoare agreed to investigate if the earmarked funding was still in place.

A Forum member commented that over the next couple of years there is likely to be considerable change across the landscape with regards to funding and the restructure of local government. They added that they would like to see three meetings a year so that the Forum does not disperse and lose its focus.

The AGM would take place in November, after the Broads Authority AGM, and the second meeting would take place in May. Informal meetings and site visits can take place between these dates and there are still the options to add additional meetings if it is deemed necessary. A Forum member suggested holding an informal meeting with a site visit in the summer months. Informal meetings can be arranged by anyone in the Broads Local Access Forum membership.

There has been a notable decline in attendance at meetings, a Forum member questioned if the reduction to two meetings would increase the turn out of members in the future. A Forum member commented, the general trend is that everyone is struggling to stay in business and questioned if the Forum should contact other Broads organisations and encourage them to attend meetings, especially if they are talking about similar topic across the Broads.

A Forum member noted the meetings are not only an opportunity for Forum members to provide feedback but for the Authority to provide updates and bring interesting projects to the agenda. However, the Broads Authority budget cuts are already being seen, and this is reflected in the vacant Waterways and Recreation Officer post.

A Forum member commented than in the last few years there have been fewer items on the agenda which makes it difficult to justify an argument for three meetings a year. It was therefore agreed to accept the recommendation to move to two meetings per year. It was regrettable that the Authority did not have the resources to service more than the two statutory meetings per year. If the finances improve, they would like to see an increase to the number of meetings to three.

7. Any other business

A member of the public advised that they will inform the Broads Society trustees of the reduction in Forum meetings and suggest that the Society hosts an informal meeting in the future.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust have recently started sharing their high level plans for Hickling which include access to the Broad. A member of the public asked if the Forum has been approached regarding the plans. Dan Hoare responded, the officer working on the project has been invited to speak at the next Forum meeting. Any consultations regarding Hickling will be shared with the Forum as soon as they become available.

A member asked if the Authority is interested in extending the refurbished permissive path which runs from Acle to Acle Bridge to the Stokesby turnoff. Currently it is very dangerous to cycle and asked if it is possible for the Forum to submit a lottery bid. Dan Hoare responded, the Authority is developing the Broads Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and it is looking at these kinds of smaller connections. The route has also been identified in the Norfolk Country Council LCWIP. The Forum member added, it is beyond the scope of the Forum to make lottery applications and recommended contacting the Partnership and External Funding Manager who has submitted an expression of interest for the Landscape Connections Fund.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broads Local Access Forum would be held on 19 November 2025 at 10.00am at Yare House, 62 – 64 Thorpe Road, Norwich.

The meeting ended at 11.15am

Signed by

Chair

Broads Local Access Forum

19 November 2025

Agenda item number 6

Summary of progress 19.11.2025

| 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> | In progress |

| Title | Meeting date | Lead officer | Summary of actions | Progress so far | Status |
|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---|--------|
| | | | | <p>June 2023: The Chair agreed to raise this item at the upcoming NLA Rights of Way subgroup meeting.</p> <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> | |

| Title | Meeting date | Lead officer | Summary of actions | Progress so far | Status |
|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--|--------|
| | | | | <p>March 2025: A member of the Norfolk Trails team joined the meeting and agreed to check which sections of path are lost or vulnerable in the Broads.</p> <p>June 2025: The new Team Leader of the Green Infrastructure team has agreed to attend future meeting.</p> | |

Date of report: 12 November 2025

Broads Local Access Forum

19 November 2025

Agenda item number 7

Active Travel England Update

Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

Summary

This report acts as a recap on the scope of the work of Active Travel England (ATE), to provide a progress update on the Broads Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and plans for delivery of Phase Two of the ATE funding to the Broads Authority in 2026/27.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. In November 2023, Active Travel England met the UK National Parks to explore the potential to develop active travel in National Parks. In April 2024, all 10 English National Park Authorities each received £100,000 from ATE to ‘enable National Parks and their co-located authorities to develop inclusive active travel programmes’. The funding was for the development of a National Park equivalent of a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and other capability building activities over a 12-month period.
- 1.2. Active Travel England aims to improve health and wellbeing, tackle climate change and restore nature through increased active travel replacing shorter journeys and commutes, achieved by improving connectivity. In addition to this, more extensive leisure routes would link settlements, attractions and public transport.

- 1.3. The funding will allow authorities to develop a pipeline of projects for future investments, with a focus on inclusive routes that connect schools, employment and leisure sites with local communities.

2. Phase One progress update

- 2.1. In May 2025 ATE consulted on a draft Rural Design Guidance which the Broads Authority provided detailed feedback on.
- 2.2. Phase One completed in June 2025 with the production of the Broads LCWIP, titled 'Broads Cycling, Wheeling and Walking Plan'. See Appendix 1. Proposed infrastructure and travel route improvements have been identified within the Broads LCWIP Annex Table (see Appendix 2) with associated timescales and priorities.
- 2.3. The ATE Capability Fund also enabled the commission of the report by Pathmakers "Gateways to the Broads National Park: A Vision for the Future." See Appendix 3

3. Phase Two Project Objectives

- 3.1. Phase Two activities in 2026/27 will work towards bringing projects to a point where they are ready for practical delivery The Phase Two funding requires that the early feasibility stage for projects is developed to the point where they are sufficient for subsequent funding bid stages. Feasible projects need to comply with the ATE design tools and at least one scheme is to be developed to the delivery ready stage by the end of March 2027.
- 3.2. There are supporting activities for which funding applies, including:
 - Development of the LCWIP
 - Public engagement and consultation
 - Data and evidence collection
 - Bespoke training for NPA officers and board members for upskilling regarding latest access travel standards
 - Legal work including planning and negotiations
 - Dedicated project resources (additional staff, feasibility studies for future projects).

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 Phase Two will be funded by ATE with £100,000 revenue budget already confirmed to the Broads Authority for expenditure in 2026/27.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. With the 2026/27 funding, the Broads Authority will look to add capacity to focus on ATE projects, either through partnership working, engaging with consultants or temporary staff contracts. The aim will be to bring at least one project as proposed in the Broads LCWIP to the feasibility stage ahead of the next round of funding.

Author: Tobi Radcliffe

Date of report: 11 November 2025

[Broads Plan](#) objectives: 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 – [Broads LCWIP 2025](#)

Appendix 2 - [Broads LCWIP Annex Table 2025](#)

Appendix 3 - [Pathmakers: Gateways to the Broads National Park: A Vision for the Future, June 2025](#)



Broads Cycling, Wheeling and Walking Plan

June 2025

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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. 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 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.

Our Active Travel Objectives

This plan seeks to address a key strategic action identified 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."⁴ Identified within this is to "implement Norfolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and East Suffolk Walking & Cycling Strategy". These are two local LCWIPs that cover the geography of the Broads. The Plan for the Broads builds on the strengths to these local LCWIPs with a focus on the creating and improving opportunities for active travel within the Broads more specifically.

The plan also seeks to reinforce objectives from the Broads Integrated Access Strategy's land-based access aims (section 5) and the Broads Tourism Strategy including:

- Support the development of cycle hire facilities, cycle security and routes in new locations for the benefit of boaters and land-based visitors. (IAS 5.3)

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

⁴ Strategic Objective E1, Broads Plan (Broads Authority, 2022)

- Identify and promote the development of new access routes to improve the connectivity of the existing public access network, including rights of way, permissive paths, and long-distance routes. (IAS 5.4)
- Identify potential new bridleway routes that will allow riders to avoid dangerous road riding – including shared use routes suitable for horse riding, cycling, and walking. (IAS 5.7)
- Encourage visitors to make more sustainable travel choices when visiting and exploring the Broads. (BTS Obj. 2)
- Enable more people from all walks of life to experience the Broads National Park to benefit their physical and mental health and wellbeing. (BTS Obj. 7)

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, 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. Though the total number of residents within the Broads executive area is low, there are larger, urban population centres in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Beccles, Bungay and Stalham. These areas are covered through Plans maintained by their respective local authorities. This 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.

Why Active Travel in the Broads is important

While most visitors arrive at the Broads by private car, this often creates a jarring experience. The resulting carbon emissions, seasonal traffic, and parking struggles contradict the peaceful atmosphere people anticipate. Walking, wheeling and cycling are important for the Authority's aim to reduce carbon emissions from vehicles, contributing to environmental protection of the area's sensitive wetlands and landscapes. Walking and cycling directly promote the physical and mental health and well-being of both residents and visitors, allowing them to engage more deeply with the truly tranquil environments of the area. Active travel also provides a sustainable

and enjoyable means of access to and around these protected areas, enhancing visitor experiences while minimizing negative impacts on the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Broads.



The Broads executive area, at around 303km², sits at the end of the much larger Broadland Rivers Catchment (c.3200km²)

Governance

The Broads Authority is responsible for the management of the Broads executive area. Its statutory purposes under the Broads Act⁵ 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 councillors, 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

The Broads Authority receives a government funded National Park Grant and navigation income funded by boat toll payers. In 2019, the Landscapes Review⁶ 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 revenue funding is unlikely to increase in the foreseeable future, strong partnership working and additional funding sources are increasingly important.

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 Act⁷, which places a stronger duty on public bodies *to seek to further the purposes of England's national*

⁵ [Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988](#)

⁶ [Landscapes review: National Parks and AONBs](#) (Defra, 2019)

⁷ [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#), Section 245

landscapes, and to take a more active role in implementing national landscape management plans, including the Broads Plan. [See Appendix 1 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 Strategy⁸, which sets out the practices and procedures to manage and maintain its land, property and other assets.

Preparing the Plan

Steering group

The Plan was prepared by Broads Authority officers in consultation with the Broads Local Access Forum.

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.

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, the next stage was to prepare this Plan, setting out proposed recommendations for new and improved access infrastructure.

Results from the Consultation

In total, we received 326 responses through our online survey, providing a source of quantitative and qualitative feedback. In addition to the survey, we gathered numerous further insights via emailed submissions, reflecting the public's strong interest in the topic. Beyond digital engagement, we also connected with hundreds more individuals through a series of in-person consultation events held across the Broads, ensuring a broad and inclusive range of voices were heard throughout the process.

⁸ [Asset Management Strategy](#) (Broads Authority, 2024)

Demographics

The consultation received responses from a broad range of age groups, with the majority of participants falling within the older adult categories. The breakdown of respondents by age group is as follows:

| Age Group | Number of Respondents |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 55-64 Years | 108 |
| 65-74 Years | 73 |
| 45-54 Years | 50 |
| 35-44 Years | 36 |
| 25-34 Years | 21 |
| 75-84 Years | 15 |
| Prefer Not To Say | 6 |
| 16-24 Years | 5 |
| 0-15 Years | 2 |
| 85+ | 1 |

Type of Respondents

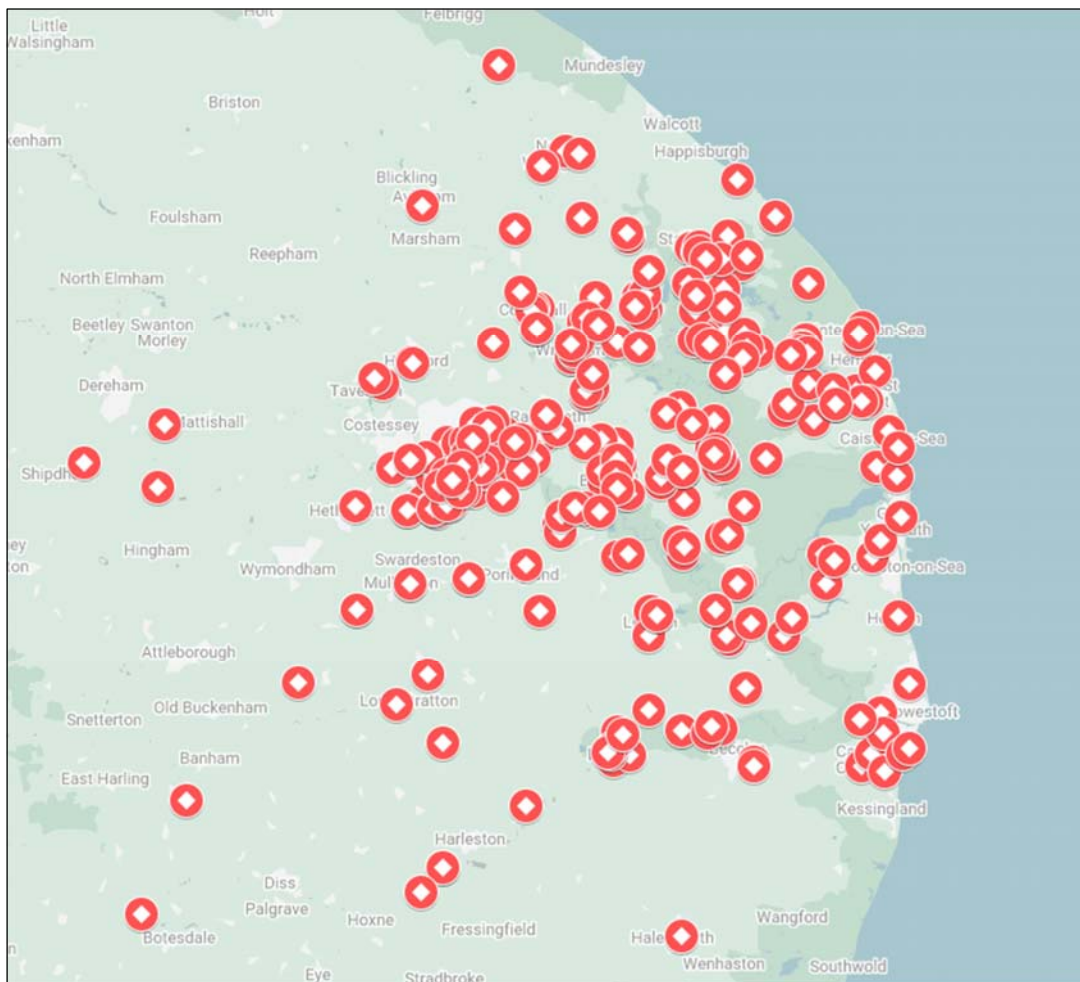
The majority of responses came from individuals. A smaller number of responses were submitted on behalf of organisations or groups, including businesses, councillors, and voluntary organisations.

| Respondent Type | Count |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| An Individual | 290 |
| On Behalf of a Business | 9 |
| A Local Councillor | 9 |
| On Behalf of a Voluntary Org. | 8 |
| On Behalf of a Statutory Org. | 5 |
| Other | 1 |

How Respondents Described Themselves

Respondents were asked to describe their relationship to the Broads. The most common self-descriptions were as permanent residents or visitors.

| Description | Count |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| A Permanent Resident of the Broads | 221 |
| A Broads Visitor | 77 |
| Other | 14 |
| A Second Homeowner in the Broads | 5 |



Map of consultation responses by Post Code Map data: Google, Maxar Technologies

Barriers to Walking and Cycling in the Broads

Respondents identified a range of barriers that hinder walking, wheeling, and cycling in the Broads. Common themes included poor maintenance of paths (most common barrier), lack of segregated or continuous routes, and safety concerns on roads shared with vehicles. Many also mentioned the need for better signage, improved accessibility for those with mobility challenges, and more secure bike storage facilities. These insights highlight the importance of infrastructure improvements to support active travel in the region.

Overcoming these barriers in the Broads

To encourage more people to walk and wheel in the Broads, the survey highlights the importance of improving safety, accessibility, and infrastructure. The most cited motivators include safer roads (50%), well-maintained pavements (36.8%), and more and safer crossing points (32.2%). Improved access by public transport (30.4%) and better maps and signposting (30.7%) were also seen as key enablers. Respondents emphasized the need for accessible facilities such as toilets, and online information about walking routes, which would make planning and undertaking walks more convenient and inclusive. These findings suggest that a combination of physical improvements and better information provision would significantly enhance the walking and wheeling experience in the Broads.

For cycling, the survey results indicate that the creation of off-road and separated cycle paths (67.8%) and safer roads (50.6%) are the most critical factors in encouraging more people to cycle. Safe cycle lanes (47.9%) and well-maintained road surfaces (28.2%) were also highly valued. Additionally, better signposting, secure cycle storage—particularly in town and city centres—and promotion of local cycling routes were seen as important. These responses reflect a strong desire for a safer, more connected, and better-supported cycling environment, which would not only improve safety but also boost confidence and convenience for both new and experienced cyclists.

Additional Insights

Respondents were asked how often they walk or wheel in the Broads. Many permanent residents reported doing so daily or several times a week, while visitors tended to walk or wheel a few times a year or month. Cycling was less frequent overall, with many indicating they never cycle or do so only occasionally.

When asked about their main reasons for suggesting new or improved routes, the most common motivations included access to the countryside, mental and physical wellbeing, and practical needs such as commuting or shopping.

Support for the creation of more cycle-only lanes, even at the expense of road space for cars, was strong. Most respondents expressed support or strong support for this idea, while a smaller portion were neutral or opposed.

Notable Comments

Respondents provided a wide range of comments regarding walking, wheeling, and cycling in the Broads. Common themes included the need for better maintenance, safer routes, improved signage, and more accessible facilities. Below are select examples of comments received:

- *Generally, the roads are narrow and busy, particularly in the summer. Moving pedestrians and cycles off the road would make everyone feel safer.*
- *Consideration should be given to "shared use" schemes in the centre of Wroxham and Stalham and in many of the local villages.*
- *Where cycle lanes exist, they need to be maintained and penalties for cyclists then not using them.*
- *It is a beautiful location that deserves to be enjoyed by more people. Simple changes and improvements to maintenance would go a long way.*
- *It isn't always easy to know whether walking routes will be passable. High water levels this winter have meant we haven't been sure whether paths will be flooded. A way of finding this info online would be useful.*
- *Walking routes are from local knowledge and not from displayed maps or visitor centres promoting and basically zero green/ gravel cycling provision currently.*

Context for recommendations

Public access network

The Broads executive area has 303km of public rights of way⁹, including three county long distance trails (Angles Way, Weavers' Way, Wherryman's Way) and a small part of the national England Coast Path trail near Horsey. 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. 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. However, the cycle share operator beryl has expanded its provision in more recent years. The network is largely centred around Norwich, but it has recently opened routes to smaller settlements 10 miles southwest of the city, if this was applied to the east of the city there would be multiple routes for cyclists to access the Broads.

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. Cars disproportionately contribute to carbon emissions, increase seasonal traffic congestion and demand for parking, which can create a contradictory impression to visitors who expect the area to be tranquil. Motor traffic can also be a deterrent for pedestrians, cyclists and horse

⁹ 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

riders who reported in the consultation feedback that they feel unsafe sharing the road with vehicles traveling at speed.

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.

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 Strategy¹⁰ 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 cycles and charging points.

¹⁰ [Broads Recreation and Tourism Strategy 2024-29](#) (Broads Authority, 2024)

Issues/Barriers

Local Government reorganisation in the medium term

In February 2025, the Government launched a consultation on a devolution deal for Norfolk and Suffolk. The consultation seeks views on a proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk. A combined county authority would receive devolved funding from the government in areas including housing, local growth, skills and transport including Active Travel.

The Government has also called for Local Government reorganisation in Norfolk and other areas where county and district councils will be replaced by new unitary authorities. The indicative timeline is based on asking for proposals by September 2025 then working towards mayoral elections in 2026, shadow unitary elections in May 2027 and new unitary councils going live in 2028.

Strategically, this is an opportunity for the Broads Authority as it would allow for better coordination on transport related objectives, including Active Travel, which would otherwise be split between Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils. There is a medium-term risk with the results of the Local Government reorganisation as we currently are unsure of the future structure of any new unitary authorities in the Broads executive area, or how the PROW and other green infrastructure assets will be maintained in this new future.

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.

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 have already become inaccessible, some 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.

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.

There are a limited number of bridges and other crossings over the rivers in the Broads, which can lead to traffic bottlenecks during the busy tourist season. The underlying geology of the area and the Broads Authority's duty to Protect the Interests of Navigation make the consideration of new bridges difficult to propose without the provision of significant financial resources.

Land, access and asset management responsibilities

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 centres, 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 highway 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 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

The current Broads Integrated Access Strategy (2024) identifies the development of settlement and travel hubs as a key component in delivering sustainable and inclusive access across the Broads. These hubs are envisioned as focal points where public transport, walking and cycling routes, and local amenities converge, creating seamless transitions between different modes of travel. By concentrating access improvements in these well-connected areas, the Broads Authority aims to enhance the visitor experience while supporting local communities and reducing environmental pressures on more sensitive sites.

In line with this vision, the Authority is also exploring new opportunities to link public rights of way and access agreements with essential facilities such as 24-hour moorings. This integrated approach supports a more cohesive access network, enabling visitors to move easily between land and water-based activities. Enhancing connections between moorings and nearby footpaths, cycle routes, and visitor destinations not only encourages sustainable travel but also promotes longer stays and deeper engagement with the Broads landscape. These efforts are underpinned by a commitment to accessibility, ensuring that mooring sites and associated infrastructure are inclusive and usable by people of all ages and abilities.

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.”¹¹

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 cycles
- 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. The strategies which play a significant role in this Plan are set out below. Information on other plans and policies can be found in Appendix 2.

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

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.

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 for Improvements

The recommendations outlined in this plan are intended as guiding suggestions rather than fixed proposals, and they do not represent the only possible means of delivering infrastructure improvements. Likewise, the Plan should not be viewed as a comprehensive inventory of all potential cycling and walking infrastructure opportunities within the Broads Executive Area and neighbouring areas. Implementation of any recommendations will likely require further evidence gathering and detailed discussions with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, in their role as the Local Highways Authority, as part of a broader long-term strategy for the area. Where relevant, the Broads Authority will also participate in these discussions. Additionally, individual recommendations may need further assessment during implementation, including, where applicable, a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Methodology

The Broads Authority is using the findings from its consultation to inform the development of a scheme of proposals aimed at improving walking, wheeling, and cycling access across the Broads. The consultation has provided a valuable evidence base, highlighting the key barriers faced by users and identifying priority areas for intervention. These proposals will focus on enhancing safety, connectivity, accessibility, and the overall experience for those travelling actively within the Broads.

It is recognised that many of the areas identified through this consultation are already addressed within neighbouring Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). The Broads Authority is therefore committed to ensuring that its proposals complement, rather than duplicate, existing plans. This approach will help to reinforce shared priorities and ensure that the unique characteristics and needs of the Broads are appropriately reflected within the wider regional access network.

In developing these proposals, the Broads Authority is aligning its priorities with the strategic objectives set out in the Broads Plan, the Integrated Access Strategy, and other relevant frameworks such as the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan. These strategies collectively emphasise the importance of sustainable access, health and wellbeing, and the protection and enjoyment of the natural environment.

It is important to note that the delivery of any proposed interventions will require close collaboration with the Local Highway Authority and other key partners. As such, further consultation and engagement will be essential to refine the proposals, assess feasibility, and ensure that any interventions are deliverable, supported, and aligned with local priorities. The Broads Authority will continue to work in partnership to ensure that the outcomes of this consultation are translated into meaningful improvements for all users of the Broads.

General recommendations

Footpath Mowing and Maintenance

A recurring theme highlighted during the public consultation was the pressing need for enhanced, year-round maintenance of the existing footpath and bridleway network. Concerns were frequently raised regarding the current state of mowing and general upkeep, which can significantly impact the accessibility and enjoyment of these routes. Furthermore, it is evident that a more robust and responsive feedback mechanism is required in conjunction with the respective County Councils to ensure that reported issues concerning Public Rights of Way are addressed in a timely and effective manner by the local highways authorities who hold the statutory duty for their maintenance.

To address these concerns and to proactively manage the extensive network of over 300km of public rights of way within the Broads executive area, this Plan proposes the establishment of a dedicated working group. This group would bring together the Broads Authority with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, and other relevant local authority partners, to foster a more collaborative approach to the cutting, maintenance, and overall management of shared access provision. The primary aim of this partnership will be to ensure that the public rights of way network is consistently available and accessible throughout the year, thereby supporting both recreational use and active travel for residents and visitors alike and building on the Authority's existing commitment to assist partners in priority path maintenance.

County Long Distance Trails

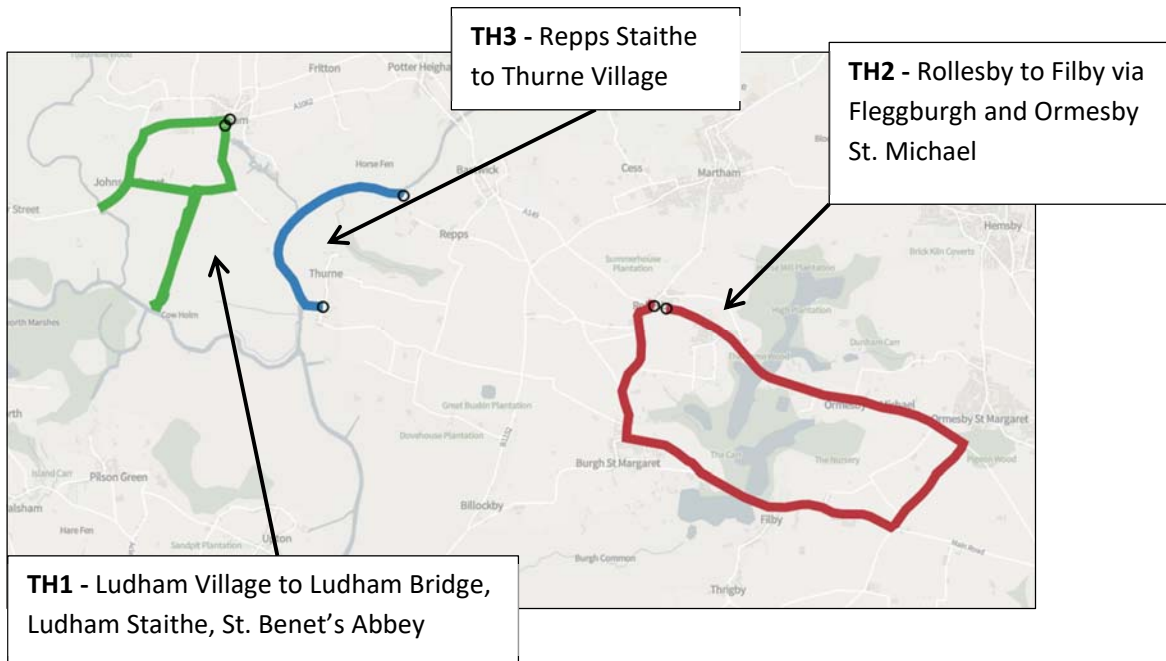
This Plan actively supports Norfolk County Council's ambition to enhance and promote its network of long-distance trails, with a particular focus on those that pass through the Broads: the Angles Way, Weavers' Way, and Wherryman's Way. A key aspiration is the strategic upgrade of the entirety of these routes to bridleway status. This would significantly broaden their appeal and utility by formally enabling cycle access alongside walking, aligning with our objectives to increase opportunities for active travel and identify new off-road bridleway routes.

The Authority recognises that achieving full bridleway status across these trails presents distinct challenges, especially within the unique landscape of the Broads. Careful consideration and innovative solutions will be required to address issues such as routing across sensitive fen and marsh habitats, the suitability of paths on top of flood defence banks, and passage through areas with active grazing. Collaborative feasibility studies and ongoing dialogue with landowners, Norfolk County Council, and other stakeholders will be essential to navigate these complexities, ensuring that any upgrades are sympathetic to the Broads' protected status and land management practices while unlocking new potential for sustainable recreation and access.

Site-specific recommendations

River Thurne

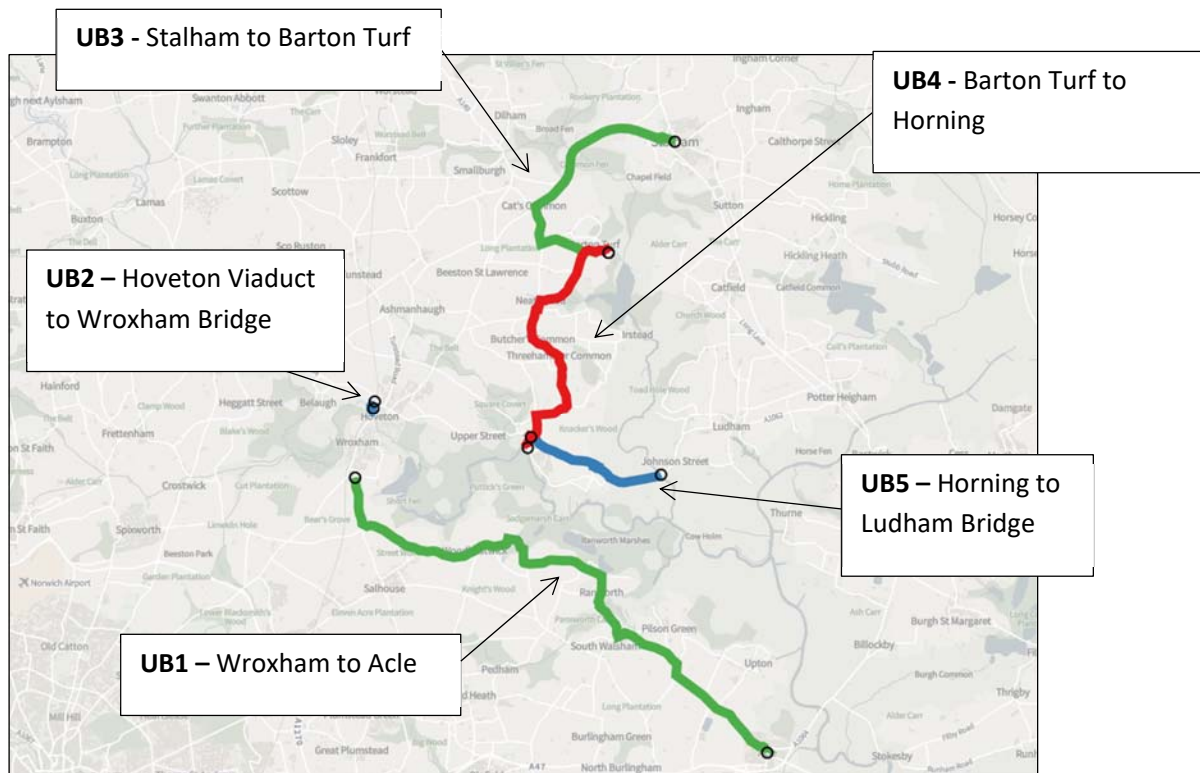
| Route Reference | Route | Route Description |
|-----------------|--|--|
| TH1 | Ludham Village to Ludham Bridge, Ludham Staithe, St. Benet's Abbey | Improved wayfinding and access on an 8.8km route connecting Ludham village to Womack Staithe and Ludham Bridge. Integrations with moorings, local amenities, How Hill and St. Benet's Abbey. |
| TH2 | Rollesby to Filby via Fleggburgh and Ormesby St. Michael | Feasibility study for cycle connections along a 12km route between Ormesby, Filby, Fleggburgh, Rollesby and areas around Trinity Broads. Shared Pedestrian/Cycle way along A149 and A1064. |
| TH3 | Repps Staithe to Thurne village | Repair and enhanced maintenance of Thurne FP1 Repps FP3, part of Weavers' Way improvement plan. |



Map of Recommendations around the Thurne valley, © MapTiler © OpenStreetMap contributors

River Bure

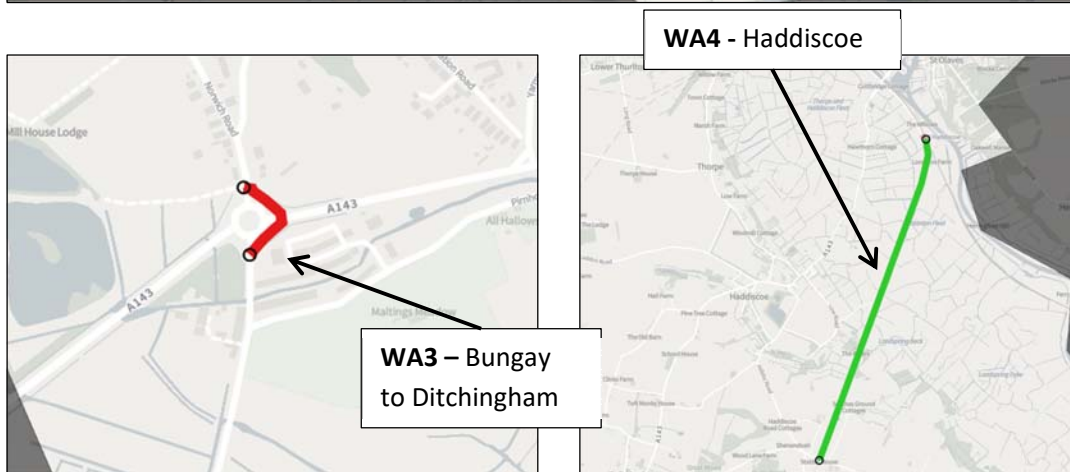
| Route Reference | Route | Route Description |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| UB1 | Wroxham to Acle | A cycling and walking route to connect Wroxham to Acle via Salhouse and South Walsham utilising quiet lanes. |
| UB2 | Hoveton Viaduct to Wroxham Bridge | A walking route connecting Bure Valley Path to Hoveton Viaduct, Hoveton Riverside Park, Wroxham Bridge, improved connection to Hoveton and Wroxham Station. |
| UB3 | Stalham to Barton Turf | An upgraded cycling and walking route linking Stalham to Barton Turf along A149 and A1151. New section of foot/cycleway connecting A1151 and Smallburgh Rd. |
| UB4 | Barton Turf to Horning | New signed cycling and walking route between Barton Turf, Neatishead and Horning to connect Stalham with Hoveton utilising quiet lanes and the 3 Rivers Way. |
| UB5 | Horning to Ludham Bridge | Feasibility study for a 3.5km extension of the 3 Rivers Way shared cycle path through Horning to Ludham Bridge. |



Map of Recommendations around the Bure and Ant valleys, © MapTiler © OpenStreetMap contributors

River Waveney

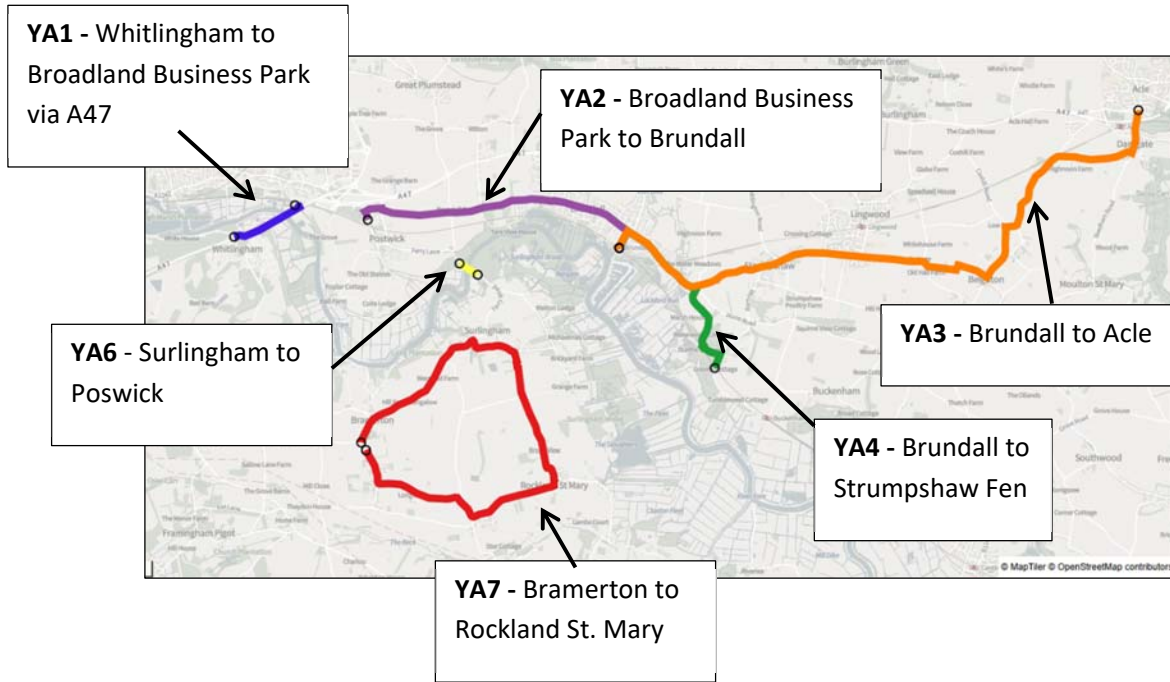
| Route Reference | Route | Route Description |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| WA1 | Geldeston Village to Geldeston Locks | A 1.5km cycling and walking route to connect Geldeston Village to Geldeston Locks and 24-hour mooring. Feasibility study for ramp to bridge to Suffolk, owned by Environment Agency. |
| WA2 | Geldeston to Ellingham | Repair and enhanced maintenance of current 6.5km route between Geldeston and Ellingham. |
| WA3 | Bungay to Ditchingham | Feasibility study for new crossing at Ditchingham roundabout on A143 near Bungay to allow for better walking along the Angles Way. |
| WA4 | Haddiscoe | Feasibility study for a new cycling and walking route utilising former Beccles to Lowestoft Railway line near Haddiscoe. |



Maps of Recommendations around the Waveney valley, © MapTiler © OpenStreetMap contributors

River Yare

| Route Reference | Route | Route Description |
|-----------------|--|--|
| YA1 | Whitlingham to Broadland Business Park via A47 | Feasibility study to improve a 1km unofficial cycle route on Postwick flyover on A47. Improve connections to official cycle routes connecting to this bridge. Part of the Postwick and Witton Neighbourhood plan. |
| YA2 | Broadland Business Park to Brundall | A new, signed cycle route connecting Broadland Business Park, Postwick Park and Ride and Brundall Station. Expansion of dockless cycle hire provision currently run by Beryl to expand East along route to Brundall. |
| YA3 | Brundall to Acle | A 10km cycle route connecting Brundall to Acle via quiet lanes. |
| YA4 | Brundall to Strumpshaw Fen | A 3km cycling and walking route connecting Strumpshaw BOAT7 to Brundall village. |
| YA5 | Loddon Village to Pyes Mill | A walking route connecting Pyes Mill, Loddon Village, Loddon Staithe and Wherryman's Way. |
| YA6 | Surlingham to Postwick | Feasibility study for new foot/cycle ferry crossing between Surlingham and Postwick. |
| YA7 | Bramerton to Rockland | Traffic calming back lanes to improve cycling between Bramerton, Surlingham, and Rockland. |



Maps of Recommendations around the Yare valley, © MapTiler © OpenStreetMap contributors

Monitoring progress

The Broads Authority will monitor the progress of this plan through a structured and transparent process. An annual progress report will be prepared and presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Broads Local Access Forum. This report will assess progress against the recommendations set out in the plan and provide an opportunity for public review and stakeholder input. Following the AGM, the online version of the plan will be updated to reflect any changes, achievements, or new priorities. This plan will be delivered as a key component of the Integrated Access Strategy over the coming years, ensuring that improvements to walking, wheeling, and cycling access are implemented in a coordinated and accountable manner.

Additional Maps

Angles Way

Source: [About Angles Way and points of interest - Norfolk County Council](#)

93 miles

Angles Way

For more information see www.angles-way.co.uk

An inspiring and intriguing walk, where you can follow the River Waveney from source to sea and whatever the season, enjoy breathtaking open country. You'll also discover rare wildlife and delve into the landscape's ancient past, with churches, idyllic market towns and even a Roman fort, all waiting to be explored.



Weavers Way

Source: [About Weavers Way and points of interest - Norfolk County Council](#)

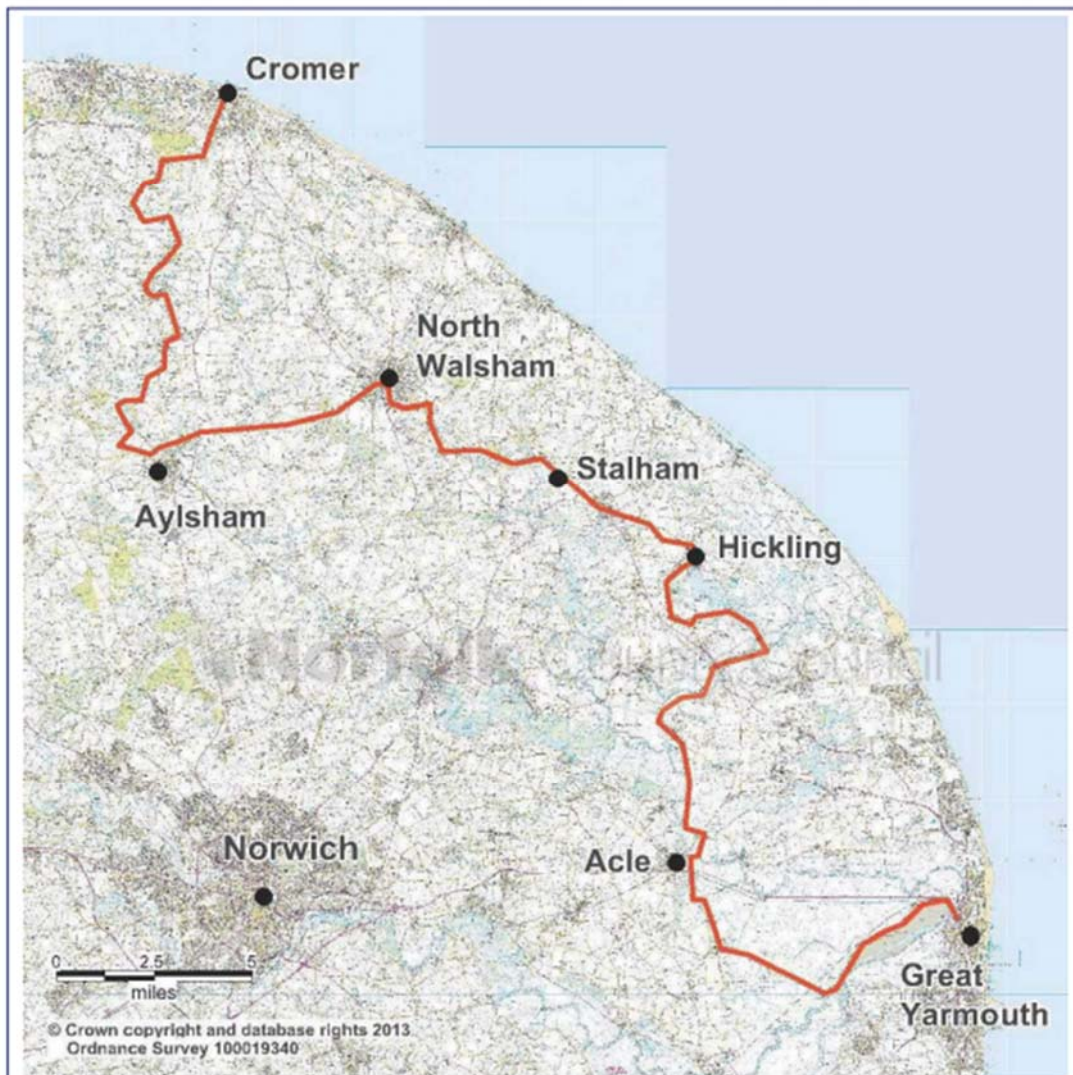
61 miles

Weavers' Way



Weavers' Way runs between Cromer and Great Yarmouth and is named after the once important weaving industry, which flourished in the Middle Ages around North Walsham.

The trail meanders its way through the diverse landscape of north-east Norfolk. Starting on the north Norfolk coast in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the trail passes stately homes, mixed farmland, picturesque market towns and follows dis-used railway lines. Then take in stunning riverside walks passing windmills and flint churches through the famous Broads, on the way to the historic seaside resort of Great Yarmouth.



Wherryman's Way

Source: [About Wherryman's Way - Norfolk County Council](#)

37.5 miles

Wherryman's Way

www.norfolk.gov.uk/trails



Wherryman's Way is a meandering walking trail, running between Norwich and Great Yarmouth, taking its name from the wherry, a large cargo-carrying barge whose elegant black sails were a once common sight on these waters. Running through the heart of the Broads, this trail winds along the banks of the River Yare, through open marshes, reedbeds, grazing meadows and riverside villages.



Appendix 1 – Key Partners

Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council are responsible for a wide range of public services within their respective counties including social care, public safety, roads and transport, education, environment and waste management. As highway authorities, their responsibilities include public rights of way for the Broads.

The Broads executive area straddles six District Council areas: Broadland, East Suffolk, Great Yarmouth, North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk. The councils provide a range of community services including housing, planning (outside the Broads executive area), and waste collection and recycling.

More than 90 parish council areas sit partly within the Broads executive area. The level of government closest to the community, the councils represent local interests, deliver services to meet local needs and support community life and wellbeing.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Wildlife Trust are charities working to protect and enhance county wildlife and wild places including reserves, and promote environmental education.

The National Trust is a charity working to preserve and protect historic places and spaces. It is one of the UK's largest landowners and owner of a large number of heritage properties, including historic houses and gardens, industrial monuments, and social history sites.

The RSPB is a nature conservation charity that protects and manages special places for wildlife, saves species from extinction and encourages people to experience and help protect wildlife and nature.

The Greater Anglia Community Rail Partnership is a franchise that works to embed rail into the heart of local communities by enabling, empowering, and engaging. The aim is to grow the rail market and make local lines and stations a stronger part of their local communities.

Appendix 2- Related plans, policies and guidance

Broads

The [Local Plan for the Broads](#) (Broads Authority, 2017¹²) 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 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,

¹² The Local Plan for the Broads adopted in 2017 is under review. The updated plan is due to be adopted by 2026.

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.

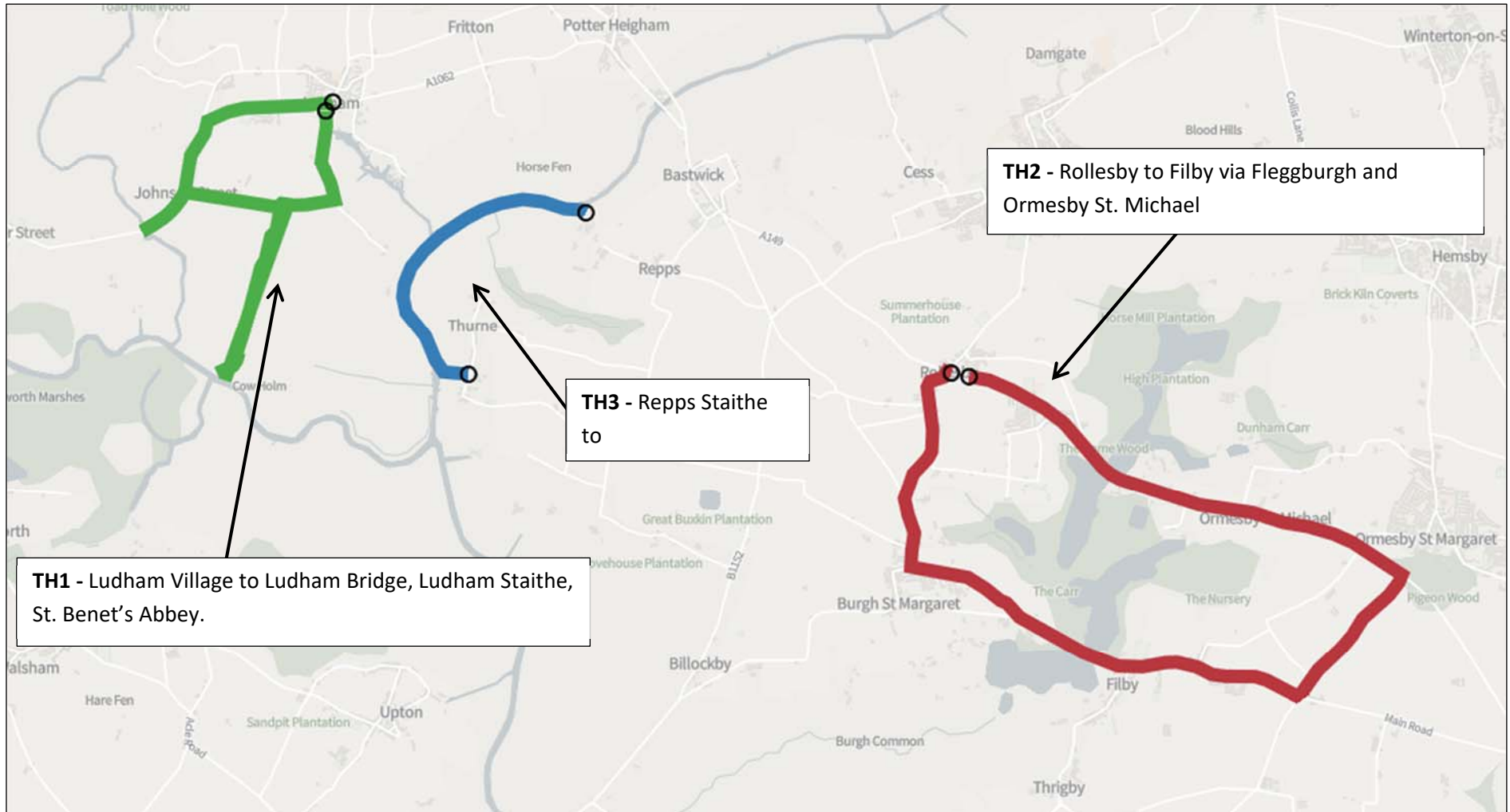
The LCWIP Technical Guidance for Local Authorities (DfT, 2017) sets out a recommended approach to planning networks of walking and cycling routes that connect people with places they need to get to, whether for work, education, shopping or other reasons.

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.

ANNEX A: Site Specific Recommendations for Improvements in the Broads

| Route Reference | Area (Settlement/ River Valley) | Route Location | Route Description | Route Type | Intervention Type | Length (km) | Timescale (<3years, <5years, 5+years) | Delivery Partners | Priority Scale (High, Medium, Low) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| TH1 | Thurne | Ludham Village to Ludham Bridge, Ludham Staithe, St. Benet's Abbey | Improved wayfinding and access on an 8.8km route connecting Ludham village to Womack Staithe and Ludham Bridge. Integrations with moorings, local amenities, How Hill and St. Benet's Abbey. | Walking, wheeling and cycling | Signage and Interpretation, Surfacing, Maintenance | 8.8km | <5 years | Broads Authority (BA), Ludham PC, New local unitary authority, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Medium |
| TH2 | Thurne | Rollesby to Filby via Fleggburgh and Ormesby St. Michael | Feasibility study for cycle connections along a 12km route between Ormesby, Filby, Fleggburgh, Rollesby and areas around Trinity Broads. Shared Pedestrian/Cycle way along A149 and A1064. | Cycling | Multi-use paths, Signage and Interpretation | 12km | 5+ years | BA, Rollesby PC, Filby PC, Ormesby St Michael PC, New local unitary authority, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team, Highways England | Low |
| TH3 | Thurne | Repps Staithe to Thurne village | Repair and enhanced maintenance of Thurne FP1, Repps FP3, part of Weavers' Way improvement plan. | Walking and wheeling | Surfacing, Maintenance | 3km | <3 years | BA, Thurne PC, Repps with Bastwick PC, New local unitary authority, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Medium |



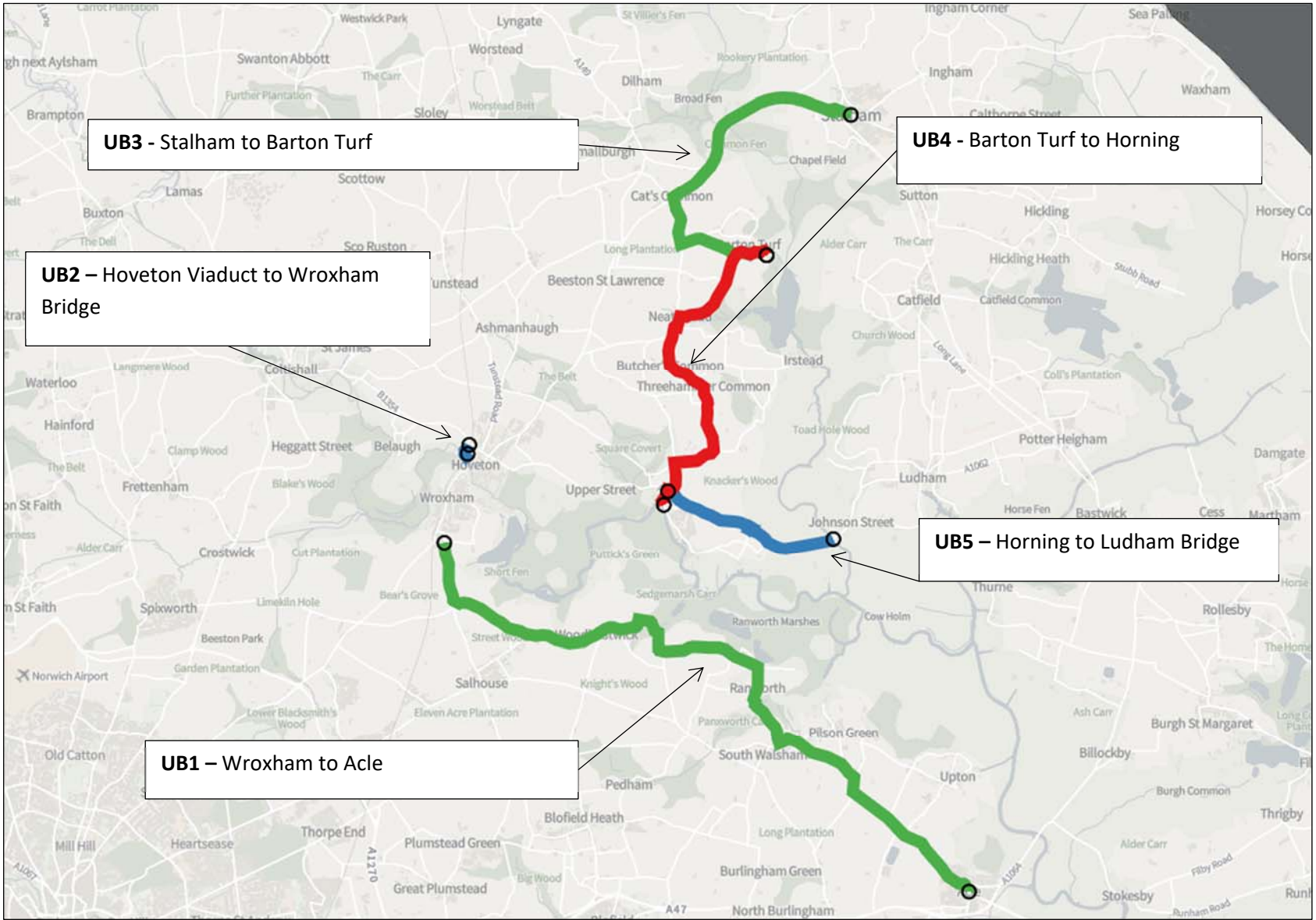
TH1 - Ludham Village to Ludham Bridge, Ludham Staithe, St. Benet's Abbey.

TH3 - Repps Staithe to

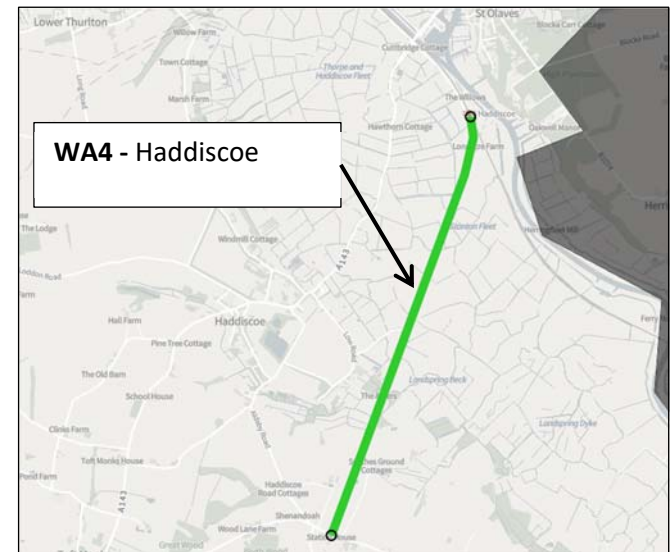
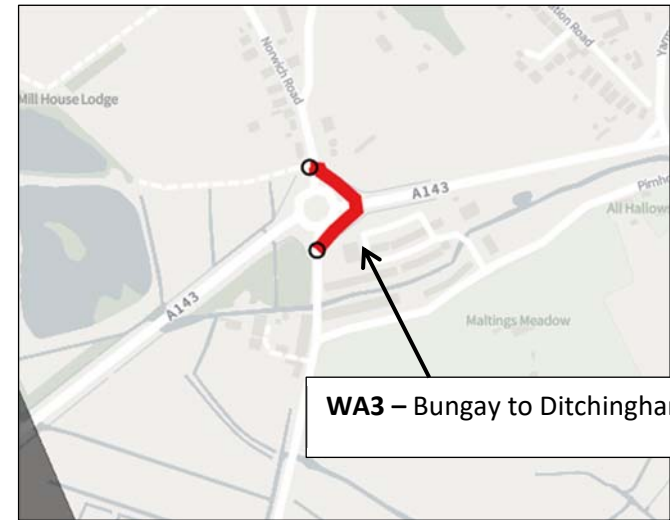
TH2 - Rollesby to Filby via Fleggburgh and Ormesby St. Michael

| Route Reference | Area (Settlement/ River Valley) | Route Location | Route Description | Route Type | Intervention Type | Length (km) | Timescale (<3years, <5years, 5+years) | Delivery Partners | Priority Scale (High, Medium, Low) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| UB1 | Upper Bure | Wroxham to South Walsham | A cycling and walking route to connect Wroxham to Acle via Salhouse and South Walsham utilising quiet lanes. | Walking, wheeling and cycling | Signage and Interpretation, Traffic calming, Quiet lanes | 16km | <5 years | BA, Wroxham PC, New local unitary authority, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Medium |
| UB2 | Upper Bure | Hoveton Viaduct to Wroxham Bridge | A walking route connecting Bure Valley Path to Hoveton Viaduct, Hoveton Riverside Park, Wroxham Bridge, improved connection to Hoveton and Wroxham Train Station. | Walking and wheeling | Signage and Interpretation, Surfacing, Maintenance | 0.5km | <5 years | BA, Wroxham PC, Hoveton PC, Greater Anglia (Community Rail Partnerships), New local unitary authority, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Medium |
| UB3 | Upper Bure | Stalham to Barton Turf | An upgraded cycling and walking route linking Stalham to Barton Turf along A149 and A1151. New section of foot/cycleway connecting A1151 and Smallburgh Rd. | Walking, wheeling and cycling | Multi-use path, Surfacing, Signage and Interpretation | 6.5km | 5+ years | BA, Stalham PC, Barton Turf and Irstead PC, New local unitary authority, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team, Highways England | Medium |
| UB4 | Upper Bure | Barton Turf to Horning | New signed cycling and walking route between | Walking, wheeling | Signage and Interpretation, | 6km | <5 years | BA, Barton Turf and Irstead PC, | Medium |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|---|-------------|---|-------|----------|---|-----|
| | | | Barton Turf, Neatishead and Horning to connect Stalham with Hoveton utilising quiet lanes and the 3 Rivers Way. | and cycling | Traffic calming, Quiet lanes | | | Neatishead PC, Horning PC, New local unitary authority, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | |
| UB5 | Upper Bure | Horning to Ludham Bridge | Feasibility study for a 3.5km extension of the 3 Rivers Way shared cycle path through Horning to Ludham Bridge. | Cycling | Multi-use Path, Surfacing, Signage and Interpretation | 3.5km | <3 years | BA, Ludham PC, Horning Parish Council, New local unitary authority, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Low |

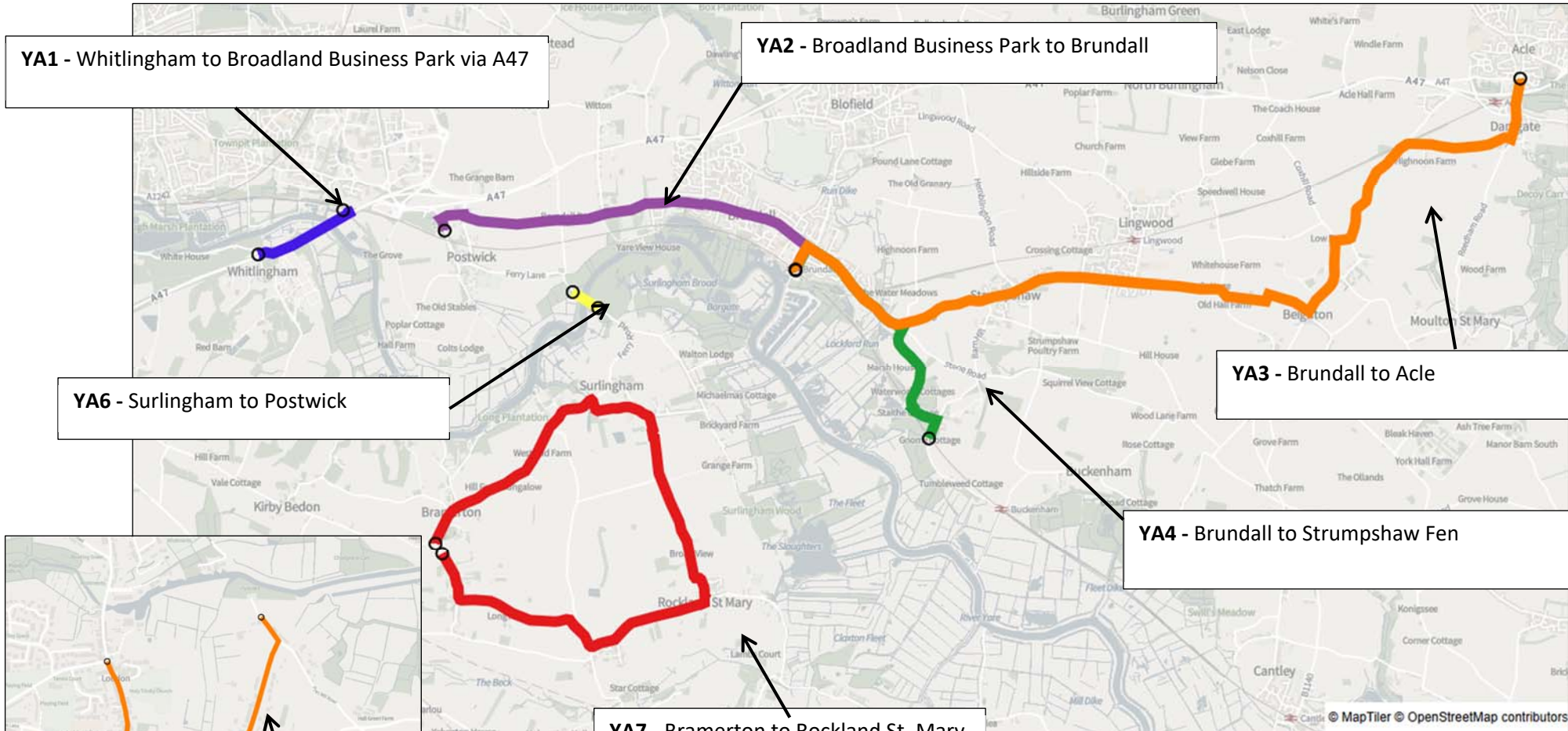


| Route Reference | Area (Settlement/ River Valley) | Route Location | Route Description | Route Type | Intervention Type | Length (km) | Timescale (<3years, <5years, 5+years) | Delivery Partners | Priority Scale (High, Medium, Low) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| WA1 | Waveney | Geldeston Village to Geldeston Locks | A 1.5km cycling and walking route to connect Geldeston Village to Geldeston Locks and 24-hour mooring. Feasibility study for ramp to bridge to Suffolk, owned by Environment Agency. | Walking, wheeling and cycling | Signage and Interpretation, Surfacing, New Infrastructure | 1.5km | 5+ years | BA, Geldeston PC, New local unitary authority, Environment Agency, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team, Suffolk County Council | Medium |
| WA2 | Waveney | Geldeston to Ellingham | Repair and enhanced maintenance of current 6.5km route between Geldeston and Ellingham. | Cycling | Signage and Interpretation, Maintenance, Traffic calming | 6.5km | <5 years | BA, Geldeston PC, Ellingham PC, New local unitary authority, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Medium |
| WA3 | Waveney | Bungay to Ditchingham | Feasibility study for new crossing at Ditchingham roundabout on A 143 near Bungay to allow for better walking along the Angles Way. | Walking and wheeling | New crossing, Signage and Interpretation | <1km | 5+ years | BA, Ditchingham PC, Bungay Town Council, New local unitary authority, Suffolk County Council, Highways England | Low |
| WA4 | Waveney | Haddiscoe | Feasibility study for a new cycling and walking route utilising former Beccles to Lowestoft Railway line near Haddiscoe. | Walking, wheeling and cycling | Multi-use Path, Signage and Interpretation, Surfacing | 20km | 5+ years | BA, NCC, Suffolk County Council, Lowestoft Town Council, Beccles Town Council, New local unitary authority, | Low |



| Route Reference | Area (Settlement/River Valley) | Route Location | Route Description | Route Type | Intervention Type | Length (km) | Timescale (<3years, <5years, 5+years) | Delivery Partners | Priority Scale (High, Medium, Low) |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| YA1 | Norwich | Whitlingham to Broadland Business Park via A47 | Feasibility study to improve a 1km unofficial cycle route on Postwick flyover on A47. Improve connections to official cycle routes connecting to this bridge. Part of the Postwick with Witton Neighbourhood plan. | Cycling | Multi-use path | 1km | 5+ years | BA, Highways England, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team, Postwick with Witton PC | Low |
| YA2 | Norwich | Broadland Business Park to Brundall | A new, signed cycle route connecting Broadland Business Park, Postwick Park and Ride and Brundall Station. Expansion of dockless cycle hire provision currently run by Beryl to expand East along route to Brundall. | Cycling | Signage and Interpretation | 6km | <5 years | BA, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team, Postwick with Witton PC, Brundall PC, Beryl Bikes | Medium |
| YA3 | Yare | Brundall to Acle | A 10km cycle route connecting Brundall to Acle via quiet lanes. | Cycling | Signage and Interpretation | 10km | <5 years | BA, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team, Acle PC, Brundall PC | Medium |
| YA4 | Yare | Brundall to Strumpshaw Fen | A 3km cycling and walking route connecting Strumpshaw BOAT7 to Brundall village. | Walking, wheeling and cycling | Signage and Interpretation, Surfacing, Maintenance | 3km | <5 years | BA, Strumpshaw PC, Brundall PC, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Medium |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|-------|----------|---|--------|
| YA5 | Yare | Loddon Village to Pyes Mill | A walking route connecting Pyes Mill, Loddon Village, Loddon Staithe and Wherryman's Way. | Walking and wheeling | Signage and Interpretation | 1.5km | <5 years | BA, Loddon PC, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Medium |
| YA6 | Yare | Surlingham to Postwick | Feasibility study for new foot/cycle ferry crossing between Surlingham and Postwick. | Walking, wheeling and cycling | New crossing | <1km | 5+ years | BA, Surlingham PC, Postwick with Witton PC, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Low |
| YA7 | Yare | Bramerton to Rockland | Traffic calming back lanes to improve cycling between Bramerton, Surlingham, and Rockland. | Cycling | Traffic calming, Quiet Lanes, Signage and Infrastructure | 8km | <5 years | BA, Bramerton PC, Surlingham PC, NCC - Green Infrastructure Team | Medium |



YA1 - Whitlingham to Broadland Business Park via A47

YA2 - Broadland Business Park to Brundall

YA3 - Brundall to Acle

YA4 - Brundall to Strumpshaw Fen

YA6 - Surlingham to Postwick

YA7 - Bramerton to Rockland St. Mary

YA5 - Loddon Village to Pyes Mill

Pathmakers

June 2025

Gateways to the Broads National Park: A Vision for the Future

Prepared by Pathmakers CIO
In Partnership with the Broads Authority

Executive Summary

The Broads National Park is Britain's largest protected wetland and an area of national ecological and cultural significance. This report, commissioned by the Broads Authority and prepared by Pathmakers CIO, examines barriers to active travel and public access in the park, highlighting the importance of walking, cycling and wheeling for sustainability, health, and the local economy. Stakeholder engagement, local audits and best practice review reveal urgent issues including fragmented and poorly maintained routes, safety hazards, and a lack of joined-up infrastructure.

There is a clear need for greater political will, sustained funding and innovative volunteer models. The report recommends strengthening the evidence based on user needs, fostering collaboration, prioritising improvements that address safety and accessibility, and empowering local people through volunteer networks and training. Developing accessible promotional materials, supporting low-impact tourism, integrating routes with public transport, and enhancing youth involvement are also key priorities. While the Broads faces significant challenges in providing accessible and well-maintained active travel routes, coordinated action and partnership working offer clear opportunities to create a more inclusive, sustainable and vibrant future for everyone who lives in, works in or visits the Broads.

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Introduction

In April 2025 Pathmakers was commissioned by The Broads authority, to produce a report and the barriers to access to the Broads National Park and explore the opportunity for volunteering to help improve access.

The Broads is Britain's largest protected wetland and has national park status. It has 28 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, many National and Local Nature Reserves and is home to a quarter of the UK's rarest species. The Broads Authority looks after this magical water land with responsibility for conservation, maintaining the waterways, recreation, tourism and planning. They need to consider all these interests together to manage the Broads now and for the future. They are responsible for the integrated management of land and water in the Broadland area. This includes conserving local wildlife, improving habitats, maintaining visitor facilities and their award-winning work in dredging. The Broads Authority Integrated Access Strategy, which was first produced in 2019 and then updated in 2023¹, aims to address the issue of maintaining and improving access routes, including over land and between land and water, and their connections to key visitor facilities and sustainable transport links. In common with other national park authorities the Broads Authority has an access responsibility regarding the placement of notices indicating boundaries, restrictions and exclusions and appointing wardens. It can also decide applications from landowners and others with legal interests to exclude or restrict access.

The Broads Local Access Forum has a key role in advising the Broads Authority on access functions and are consulted on applications².

Pathmakers is a charitable organisation based in Norfolk, whose purpose is improving public access to the countryside within Norfolk.

Pathmakers current activities include arranging monthly walks and the annual walking festival in October each year. These are particularly aimed at groups of people who would not normally get out and about within the countryside for whatever reason. The charity also has a well-being programme working with disadvantaged groups to arrange activities within the countryside

Most of the Broads National Park lies within Norfolk and therefore many of Pathmakers activities happen within the park. Therefore, Pathmakers already has some knowledge

¹ Broads Authority. (2024) *Integrated access strategy for the Broads*. Norwich: Broads Authority. Available at: https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/181134/Integrated-Access-Strategy-2023.pdf (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

² Broads Authority. (n.d.) *Broads Local Access Forum*. Available at: <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/committees/local-access-forum> (Accessed: 2 June 2025)

about accessibility within the park and is very much interested in promoting ways of improving access.

A report of this nature would normally involve formal consultation with local authorities, local businesses and other organisations with interest in public access to the park. Such a consultation would take several weeks if not months complete however this report was required within a time scale which would not allow for a full consultation.

Some form of informal consultation with organisations was however deemed necessary and therefore Pathmakers has undertaken consultation with representatives of these bodies to seek opinions about accessibility to properly inform this report.

The scope of this informal survey responses bar included as an appendix to this report.

Pathmakers has for several years commissioned research projects with UEA student researchers into aspects of public access ability.

Whilst these are not necessarily site specific, the results can be quite often be applied to issues within the park.

Consequently, Pathmakers has drawn on these projects to inform this report.

The Importance of Active Travel within the Broads National Park

Active travel—encompassing walking, cycling, and wheeling—plays a vital role in shaping the future of sustainable access and engagement within the Broads National Park. As a unique and ecologically sensitive landscape, the Broads offers a rich tapestry of waterways, wetlands, and rural communities that are best experienced at a slower, more immersive pace. Promoting active travel in this context is not only a matter of transportation but a strategic approach to conservation, community wellbeing, and economic resilience.

Environmental Sustainability

Encouraging active travel reduces reliance on motor vehicles, thereby lowering carbon emissions and minimising the environmental footprint of tourism and local travel. This aligns with broader climate action goals and helps preserve the fragile ecosystems that define the Broads.

Health and Wellbeing

Walking and cycling offer significant physical and mental health benefits. By improving access to safe, scenic routes, the National Park can support healthier lifestyles for both residents and visitors. The tranquil environment of the Broads enhances the restorative effects of outdoor activity, contributing to reduced stress and improved mental health.

Enhanced Visitor Experience

Active travel allows for a deeper connection with the landscape. Visitors who explore on foot or by bike are more likely to engage with local heritage, wildlife, and communities. This slower pace of travel fosters appreciation and stewardship of the natural environment.

Economic Opportunities

Improved active travel infrastructure can stimulate local economies by increasing footfall in rural villages and supporting businesses such as cafés, accommodation providers, bike hire services, and local attractions. Walking festivals and themed trails can further boost tourism and create seasonal economic uplift.

Community Engagement and Ownership

Active travel initiatives provide a platform for local communities to take pride in and responsibility for their surroundings. Through volunteering, route auditing, and event participation, residents become active stewards of the landscape, strengthening social cohesion and local identity.

Accessibility and Inclusion

By investing in well-maintained, clearly marked, and accessible routes, the Broads can become a more inclusive destination. Active travel infrastructure that accommodates a range of mobility needs ensures that more people can enjoy the park's natural beauty.

Project Objectives

Objective 1: Community and Stakeholder Engagement

This objective focuses on engaging with a wide range of local stakeholders—including communities, Parish Councils, land managers, and businesses—to gather insights and suggestions for improving the footpath network. The aim is to ensure that any enhancements reflect local needs and priorities, fostering a sense of ownership and long-term commitment to the active travel infrastructure.

Objective 2: Volunteer Network Scoping

The second objective is to explore the feasibility of establishing a network of volunteers who can help audit walking routes and identify areas for improvement. This includes assessing how volunteers might contribute to maintaining paths and enhancing connections to public transport, thereby supporting a more integrated and sustainable travel network.

Objective 3: Capacity Building and Training

This objective addresses the need to equip volunteers and partner organisations with the skills and confidence to act as walk leaders. It involves identifying training needs and developing resources or programs that can build local capacity, ensuring that community-led initiatives are safe, effective, and sustainable.

Objective 4: Walking Festival Potential

The final objective is to investigate the potential for launching a Broads-themed walking festival. This includes exploring the concept, identifying logistical and resource requirements, and evaluating how such an event could promote active travel, celebrate the local landscape, and engage both residents and visitors.

Methodology

Research and Analysis Approach

The methodology employs a structured and comprehensive stakeholder consultation process to ensure there was a comprehensive understanding of the footpath network needs with secondary sourced research to supplement the report throughout. A total of 42 organisations were included across five categories, comprising 16 Parish Councils as primary governance bodies with statutory consultation rights, 16 businesses representing tourism, hospitality, and retail in gateway communities, 3 community groups including local access forums and civic societies, 3 land managers consisting of major conservation organisations and significant landowners, and 4 other organisations encompassing accessibility organisations and educational institutions (see *Appendix 2*)

A key element of the methodology was the deliberate matching of businesses with their corresponding Parish Council areas. This approach ensured that for each Parish Council included, there was a directly related business or group of businesses from the same locality. This practice is recognised in sector best practice as a means of facilitating more place-based and contextually relevant consultation, enabling a clearer understanding of local needs and opportunities from both governance and economic perspectives³. By aligning the number and type of businesses with each Parish Council, the consultation process was able to capture a balanced view, supporting more effective partnership working and reflecting the interconnected roles of councils and local enterprises in shaping active travel provision.

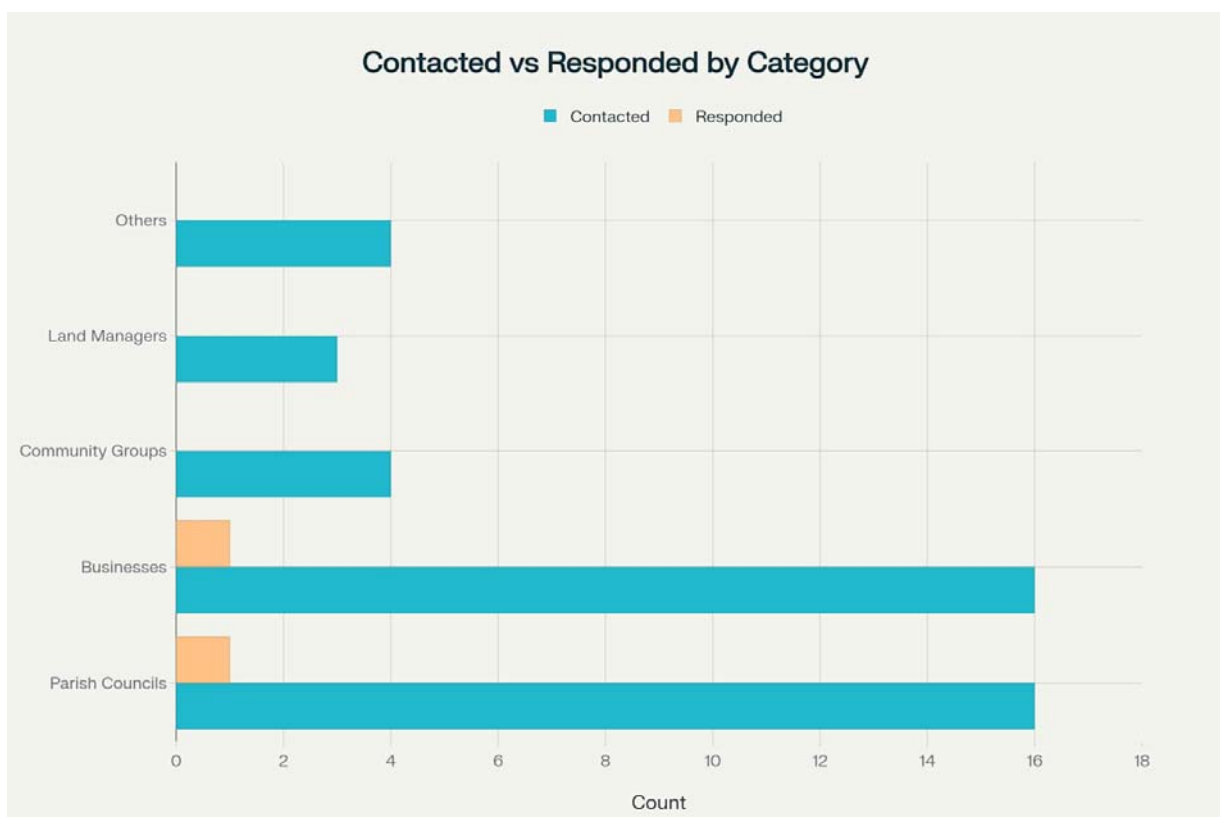
Stakeholders were initially contacted by email and invited to complete a detailed survey, which was developed using Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) principles⁴. The survey was designed to identify barriers and opportunities for active travel within the Broads National Park, focusing on existing strengths and local capacity. Topics included access barriers, network connectivity, infrastructure needs, volunteering interest, and community event participation.

³ D. Mears, *is there a need to improve relationships between local councils and the local businesses they represent? Dissertation submitted in partial completion of a BA Honours degree in Community Governance*, De Montfort University, 2023. Available at: <https://www.slcc.co.uk/site/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/David-Mears-Dissertation-Collaboration-between-Local-Councils-and-Local-Businesses-Research-Project.pdf> (Accessed: 5 June 2025).

⁴ Woodward, J., South, J., Coan, S., Bagnall, A.-M. and Rippon, S. (2021) *Asset Based Community Development: a review of current evidence*. Project Report. Leeds Beckett University, Leeds. Available at: <https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/7641/1/AssetBasedCommunityDevelopmentAReviewOfCurrentEvidencePV-SOUTH.pdf> (Accessed: 6 June 2025).

To maximise response rates, a structured follow-up process was implemented. Weekly reminder emails were sent to organisations that had not yet replied, and telephone calls were made to key contacts to encourage participation and address any queries. Despite these efforts, the consultation did not result in high levels of engagement, with only 2 responses received across the stakeholder categories (see *Figure 1*). This outcome has been documented in the attached survey response data and although low, key insights are found.

Figure 1: Consultation Outreach and Response Rates by Stakeholder Category



Stakeholder Consultation Process

The consultation process utilised a variety of engagement methods tailored to different stakeholder groups, with email consultation serving as the primary channel to reach all 42 targeted organisations. Weekly follow-up emails and phone calls were made to encourage participation and clarify any queries, but the project's limited timeframe further constrained opportunities for engagement. The structured question framework

addressed a broad range of topics within the survey, including infrastructure gaps and connectivity, specific concerns about path conditions, requirements for public transport integration, improvement priorities, volunteer capacity and willingness, interest and capacity for walking festivals, training needs, and open-ended comments (see *Appendix 1*). Despite these comprehensive outreach efforts, the report highlights the significant engagement challenges in rural areas with outreach. This low response rate reflects both the broader difficulties documented in rural community engagement literature⁵ and ongoing post-COVID impacts on volunteer capacity and community engagement, as explicitly noted by the responding organisations (see *Appendix 2*).

Stakeholder Engagement Findings

The most substantive response came from Wroxham Parish Council, providing detailed insights into local infrastructure challenges and community capacity issues. The response highlighted critical infrastructure gaps: "Lack of joined up infrastructure. We have individual footpaths, but you have to travel on busy roads to get between them". This fundamental connectivity issue represents the core challenge facing the footpath network, requiring strategic intervention to create linked routes serving both recreational and practical transport needs.

Specific safety hazards were identified with particular urgency, including "Wroxham FP7 - the gate at the top of the path obstructs access and then the path is steep and poorly surfaced, which is a shame because it goes to a delightful spot next to the water". The western end of Wroxham FP2 is "often impassable in winter due to mud," while most critically, "The north end of FP4 ends on a blind bend on a busy A road with pedestrians having to cross a railway bridge to come into Wroxham. It's a death wish". This latter issue represents an immediate life-threatening hazard requiring urgent intervention. The response revealed significant historical context regarding previous improvement efforts: "We would like to see a footpath connect the south of Wroxham with Salhouse and have researched a route."

Additionally, "Several years ago Councillors also worked on a scheme they called the 'green loop', linking with Hoveton and taking pedestrians and cyclists off of the A115. The landowner objected and there was no political support or funding, so the idea was abandoned". These previous efforts indicate both local knowledge and ambition that could be leveraged for future development. Regarding political and funding challenges, the response was frank about systemic barriers: "There needs to be political will and

⁵ Urban Institute (2020) *In Search of "Good" Rural Data*. Available at: <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102134/in-search-of-good-rural-data.pdf> (Accessed: 6 June 2025)

funding to create linked routes. These then need to be maintained, signposted and promoted. Pigs are currently flying past my window". This scepticism about political support reflects broader challenges in rural infrastructure development and highlights the need for robust business cases demonstrating economic and social benefits. The volunteer capacity situation revealed significant post-COVID impacts: "We are an 11-seat council with 5 councillors. I would love to say yes to this question, but the reality is that people are just not volunteering since Covid. I can't even get somebody to maintain a small flowerbed!". This stark assessment of local capacity highlights the need for alternative volunteer models, with the suggestion that "you would probably get more support via a group such as The Ramblers or U3A walking group" providing potential pathways for engagement.

Business Stakeholder Response

The Hungry Otter, a small food establishment at Salhouse Broad, provided a brief but constructive response indicating business willingness to support footpath development. While noting "none in my area (Salhouse Broad)" regarding current path issues, they expressed interest in supporting festival development: "I am a tiny little food hut so could provide refreshments if people passed through Salhouse Broad". This response demonstrates business recognition of economic opportunities from increased footfall and suggests potential for broader business engagement in route development and festival planning.

Identified Needs and Suggestions

The stakeholder feedback revealed five critical themes requiring strategic intervention. Maintenance of the footpath network currently represents the most fundamental and highest challenge recorded (see *Figure 2*), with existing footpaths failing to connect into coherent networks enabling practical journey-making between communities and key destinations.

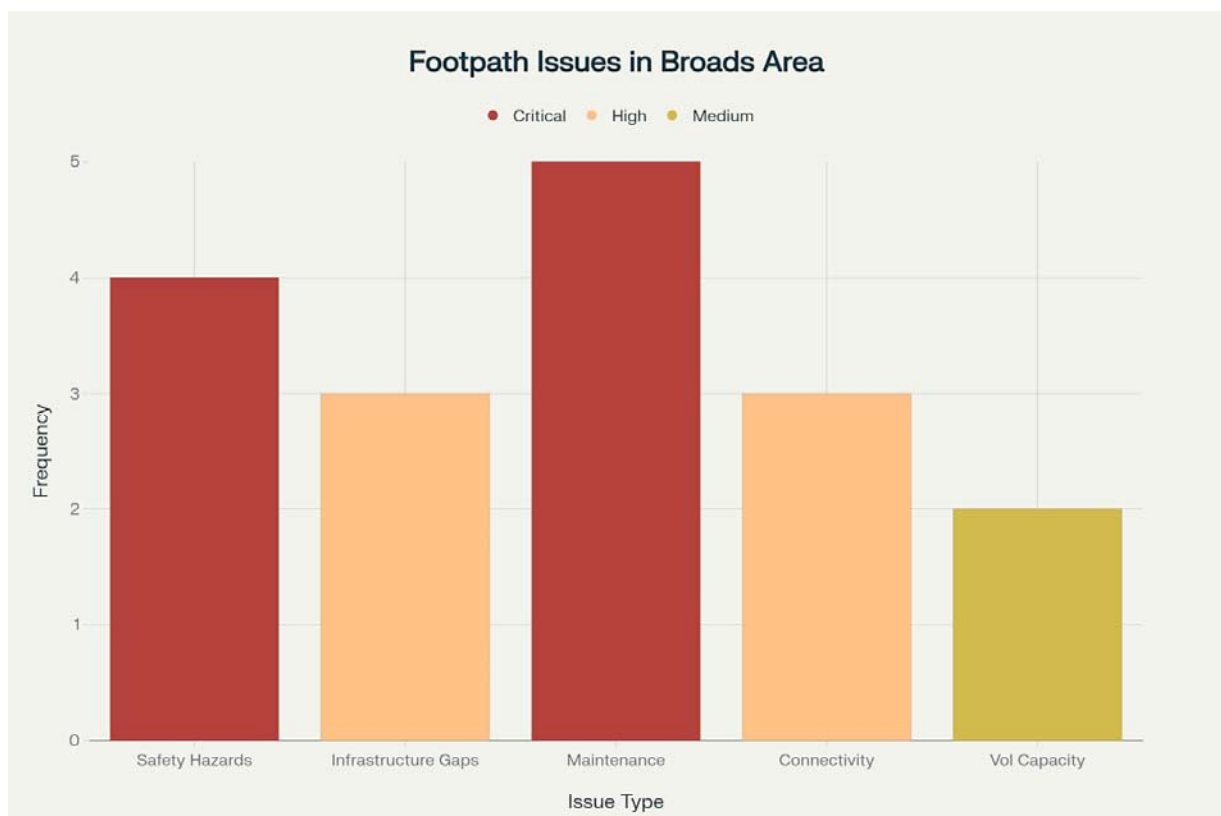
- **This fragmentation requires strategic intervention to create linked routes serving both recreational and practical transport needs, as highlighted by Wroxham Parish Council's call for improved connectivity.**

Safety hazards emerged as the second most urgent priority through the word frequency analysis (see *Figure 2*) from the stakeholder engagement survey, with FP4's blind bend crossing described as "a death wish" representing immediate life-threatening conditions. Multiple dangerous road crossings with insufficient warning signage create significant barriers to network use and require coordinated action with highway authorities. These

safety issues represent clear priorities for immediate intervention given their potential consequences.

- **Further investigation and proactive communication with parish councils is essential to both enhance accessibility and address safety concerns. The low response rate to initial outreach highlights the urgency of this matter, as additional safety issues may exist but remain unreported. Strengthened engagement will help identify and resolve barriers, ensuring that connectivity and user safety are prioritised in line with stakeholder feedback.**

Figure 2: Footpath Issues in Broads Area Identified Through Word Frequency Analysis



Best Practice Review

Parish Paths Partnership Models

The Essex Parish Paths Partnership (P3) represents an effective model that utilises the community for footpath management and promotion. This partnership involves the collaboration voluntarily between Essex County Council, parish/ town councils, landowners, and local voluntary groups⁶. The scheme provides grants to participating parishes to cover additional costs involved and carrying out maintenance and improvement on Public Rights of Way (PRoW) networks⁶.

The Essex P3 scheme highlights clear objectives for capacity building at the local level to “give local people the resources and skills to enable them to actively look after their local rights of way network”, “promote local awareness” and “promote community involvement”⁶. Through this agreement signed by both the local P3 group and Essex County Council it outlines:

- Background to the scheme
- The grant
- Support and advice – what help is expected from Essex County Council
- Responsibilities of the Parish

By keeping a record of this written agreement, it outlines the commitments of both parties and their objective, in turn creating a governance framework of accountability with local autonomy.

Funding through the P3 scheme covers a wide range:

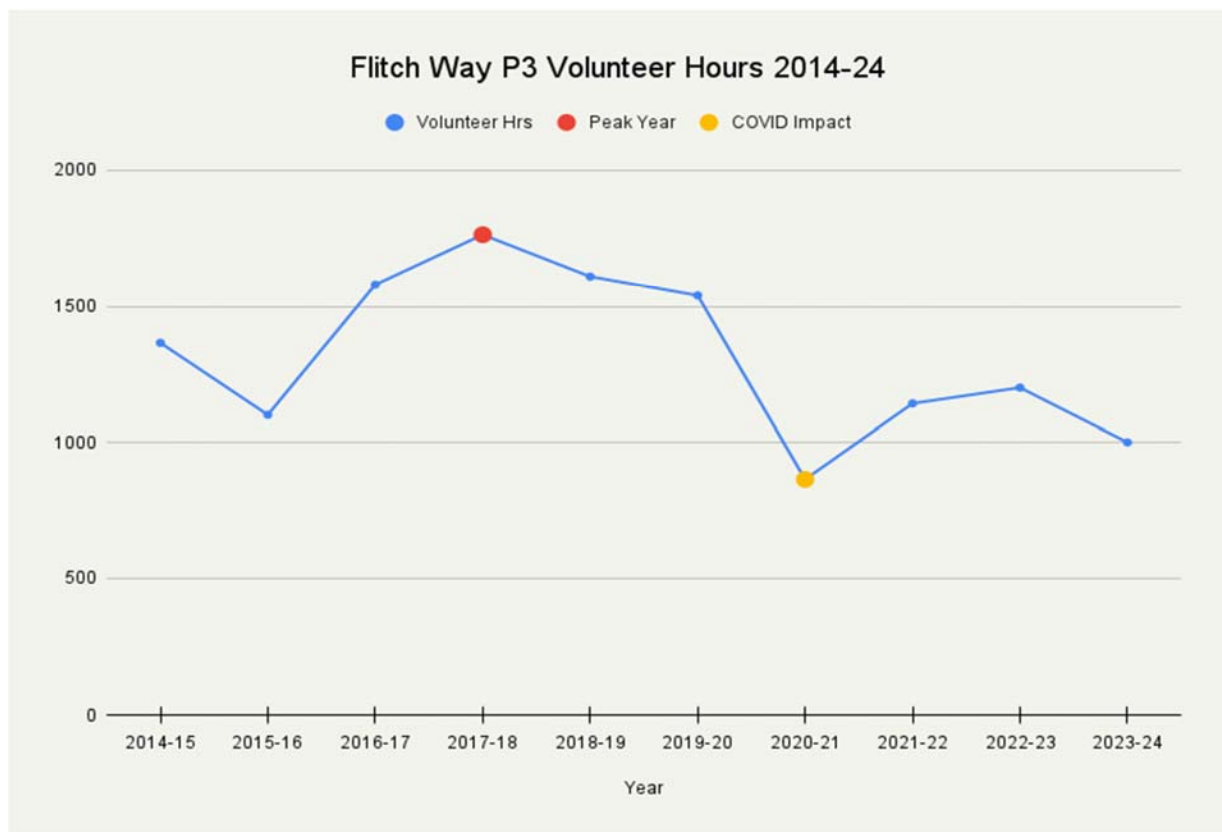
- Purchase of tools/ sundries
- Additional insurance costs
- Training for volunteers
- Safety equipment
- Contractor costs for maintenance work
- Volunteer travel expenses
- Administration costs (stamps, photocopying etc)
- Design and printing of promotional material (up to 50%)

⁶ Essex County Council. (2011) *Parish Paths Partnership Manual*. Available at: https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/files/parish_paths_partnership_manual.pdf (Accessed: 9 June 2025).

Through this approach to path management, has enabled successful implementation across multiple parishes such as Danbury, where volunteers are supported to coordinate with Essex Highways to maintain the public rights of way network⁷. Consequently, the group utilises local available resources to “install new way marker posts, clear vegetation, replace signs on posts and repair bridges”⁷.

Success of the scheme is further shown through the Friends of the Flitch Way P3 group which has contributed **13,813 volunteer hours over an 11-period between 2014-15 to 2024-2025** (see *Figure 3*). The data shown reflects consistent volunteer participation, even during challenging periods like the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings directly address some mentioned previously from the community stakeholder engagement as a model for **strategic intervention to create linked routes** and the **challenge in having volunteers for the path network post-covid by utilising a similar funding model for the Broads Authority**.

Figure 3: P3 Volunteer hours contributed by Friends of the Flitch Way group



⁷ Danbury Parish Council. (n.d.) *Parish Paths Partnership (P3)*. Available at: <https://www.danbury-essex.gov.uk/parish-paths-partnership-p3/> (Accessed: 9 June 2025).

Current State of Active Travel in the Broads

Existing Active Travel Infrastructure

- **Footpaths and Cycle Routes:** The Broads National Park has an extensive network of footpaths and cycle routes, including the Wherryman's Way and the Three Rivers Way
- **LCWIP Development:** The Broads Authority is developing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to enhance active travel within the park

Access to Footpaths, cycle routes and permissive paths, relies heavily on general condition and maintenance.

Is there a way for a better maintenance regime for public access routes within the broad National Park?

Access routes into the Broads National Park are largely by public footpaths or privately owned permissive paths. Public footpaths are within the statutory responsibility of County Councils as the Highway Authority. However, both Parish Councils and District Councils as well as the Broads Authority itself, also have an interest to ensure that access routes are well maintained.

Along with the statutory obligation to maintain footpaths, the County Councils also have a statutory responsibility for public safety on footpaths along with landowners. The responsibility for safety is a complicated issue as is the responsibility for carrying out maintenance and how it should be done.

The current financial climate in which councils operate it is becoming increasingly difficult and providing sufficient budget to carry out level of maintenance which communities and walkers find acceptable. Organisations such as parishes have issues maintaining access routes within their borders but with no statutory responsibility for carrying out work often passing responsibility back to the County Council. The impending Local Authority reorganisation could further complicate regarding the issue about who has responsibility for these access routes.

It is possible that maintenance within the National Park could be undertaken by maintenance agreements between the County Councils, District Councils and local Parishes to share the responsibility for maintenance.

Public access to the Broads National Park could be improved by a better maintenance regime for dealing with seasonal vegetation. This could be achieved by agreements between local authorities and interested organisations groups coordinated by the Broads Authority. However, the Broads authority is not the highway authority for the Broads National Park. This is responsibility shared by the two county councils Norfolk and Suffolk. The Broads Authority does, however, have some access responsibilities and works in partnership with these councils to manage and improve access routes within the park.

Maintenance that is carried out within the Broads National Park is therefore heavily influenced by the policies of the two councils. As highway authority each council has statutory responsibilities and obligations for public rights of way which includes public liability for the safe provision of the footpaths. This means the cooperation of these authorities is fundamental to the formation of any localised maintenance agreement. The two councils also have their own budgets for maintenance of public rights of way however these are not exclusive to the Broads National Park, and it is their responsibility to cover all public rights of way in their area. Councils have funds allocated for maintenance of public rights of way, but there is considerable demand on this resource, and this is likely to mean that in some cases the public will not be happy with the standard of maintenance.

The imminent Local Government reorganisation may give an opportunity to look at whether it is time to consider applying for proposals that just one of the new authorities become the highway authority for the Broads National Park. Local government reorganisation could lead to yet another authority becoming the responsible authority for part of the park leading to the Broads authority having to deal with three separate authorities about access issues. If the broader authority took on this responsibility this could lead to a more standardised approach across the park and would lead to more focused approach to maintaining public rights of way throughout the whole park.

While the Broads Authority is not currently the highway authority for public rights of way within the Broads National Park, it is theoretically possible for this to change. Achieving this would likely require legislative amendments and collaboration between various stakeholders.

Here are some steps that might be involved:

1. **Legislative Change:** The primary step would be to amend existing laws to designate the Broads Authority as the highway authority for public rights of way

2. within the park. This would involve lobbying and working with government bodies to pass the necessary legislation⁸.
2. **Stakeholder Collaboration:** The Broads Authority would need to work closely with local county councils (Norfolk and Suffolk), landowners, and other relevant organisations to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities².
3. **Resource Allocation:** Adequate resources, including funding and personnel, would need to be allocated to the Broads Authority to manage and maintain the public rights of way effectively².
4. **Public Consultation:** Engaging with the local community and stakeholders through consultations to gather input and support for the change⁸.
5. **Implementation Plan:** Developing a detailed implementation plan outlining how the Broads Authority would take over the responsibilities, including timelines and milestones².

If the Broads Authority were to become the highway authority for public rights of way within the Broads National Park, several financial and administrative challenges could arise:

Financial Problems

1. **Funding Allocation:** The Broads Authority currently receives funding primarily for its National Park responsibilities, not for maintaining public rights of way [3]. Securing additional funding to cover these new responsibilities could be challenging and might require significant lobbying and negotiation with government bodies⁹.
2. **Increased Costs:** Managing public rights of way involves substantial costs, including maintenance, signage, and enforcement. These costs could strain the Broads Authority's budget, especially if existing funding sources are insufficient⁹.
3. **Revenue Generation:** The Broads Authority might need to find new ways to generate revenue to support the maintenance of public rights of way, such as

⁸ Lean, J. (2020) *Access to National Parks and the Broads: Rights of Way*. London: Landmark Chambers. Available at: <https://www.landmarkchambers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Access-to-National-Parks-and-the-Broads-Rights-of-Way.pdf> (Accessed: 7 June 2025)

⁹ Inland Waterways Association. (2024) *IWA responds to Broads Authority briefing on navigation charges*. Available at: <https://waterways.org.uk/about-us/news/iwa-responds-to-broads-authority-briefing-on-navigation-charges> (Accessed: 8 June 2025)

introducing tolls or seeking grants. This could be met with resistance from the public and stakeholders⁹.

Administrative Problems

1. **Resource Management:** The Broads Authority would need to allocate additional resources, including personnel and equipment, to manage public rights of way. This could require restructuring and expanding its current operations¹⁰.
2. **Coordination with Local Councils:** Transitioning responsibilities from local county councils to the Broads Authority would require extensive coordination and collaboration. Ensuring a smooth transition and maintaining effective communication channels could be complex¹⁰.
3. **Regulatory Compliance:** The Broads Authority would need to ensure compliance with various regulations and standards related to public rights of way. This could involve navigating complex legal frameworks and adapting existing policies¹⁰.
4. **Public Engagement:** Engaging with the local community and stakeholders to gather support and address concerns would be crucial. This could involve extensive consultation processes and managing differing opinions⁹.

However, if the Broads Authority were to become the highway authority for public rights of way within the Broads National Park, several benefits could arise:

Enhanced Local Management

1. **Focused Management:** The Broads Authority, being dedicated to the park, could provide more focused and tailored management of public rights of way, ensuring that they align with the park's conservation and recreational goals¹¹.
2. **Improved Coordination:** Having a single authority manage both the park and its public rights of way could lead to better coordination and more cohesive planning and development¹¹.

¹⁰ Broads Authority. (2025) *Financial performance and direction: Agenda item 10, 9 May 2025*. Available at: https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0039/569748/Financial-performance-and-direction-May-2025.pdf (Accessed: 8 June 2025)

¹¹ Broads Authority. (n.d.) *Transport – Local Plan for the Broads: Preferred Options*. Available at: <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/local-plan-for-the-broads/preferred-options/transport> (Accessed: 8 June 2025)

Environmental and Recreational Benefits

1. **Sustainable Practices:** The Broads Authority could implement more environmentally sustainable practices in maintaining and developing public rights of way, enhancing the park's natural beauty and ecological health¹¹.
2. **Enhanced Access:** Improved management could lead to better access for visitors, including the creation of new footpaths and cycleways, promoting outdoor activities and tourism⁸.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

1. **Local Engagement:** The Broads Authority's closer ties with local communities could facilitate better engagement and responsiveness to local needs and concerns regarding public rights of way¹¹.
2. **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Enhanced collaboration with stakeholders, including local businesses and conservation groups, could lead to more effective and innovative solutions for managing public rights of way¹¹.

Economic Benefits

1. **Tourism Boost:** Improved access and management could attract more visitors, boost local tourism and benefit the economy¹¹.
2. **Funding Opportunities:** The Broads Authority might be able to secure specific grants and funding aimed at enhancing national parks, which could be used to improve public rights of way¹¹.

Policy and Planning context

Local Authorities Covering the Broads National Park and Their Responsibilities

The Broads National Park, a unique network of rivers and lakes in Norfolk and Suffolk, is overseen by a combination of local authorities and a dedicated statutory body. This collaborative governance ensures the protection of its natural environment while supporting local communities and sustainable development.

1. The Broads Authority

The primary body responsible for the Broads is the **Broads Authority**, a special statutory authority established under the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988, but with the added status equivalent to a national park authority with responsibilities for navigation¹².

Responsibilities:

- **Conservation and Enhancement:** Protecting the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the Broads.
- **Public Enjoyment:** Promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Broads by the public.
- **Navigation:** Maintaining and improving navigation on the Broads' waterways, including dredging, signage, and safety.

2. Local District and County Councils

The Broads National Park spans across several local authority areas, each with distinct responsibilities:

a. Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council

- **Highways and Transport**
- **Education**
- **Social Services**
- **Waste Disposal**
- **Strategic Planning**

¹² Broads Authority. (n.d.) *Legislation*. Available at: <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/legislation> (Accessed: 3 June 2025).

b. District Councils:

These include:

- **Broadland District Council**
- **South Norfolk Council**
- **North Norfolk District Council**
- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council**
- **Norwich City Council**
- **East Suffolk Council**

Each district council is responsible for:

- **Local Planning (outside the Broads Authority area)**
- **Housing**
- **Environmental Health**
- **Waste Collection**
- **Leisure and Recreation Services**

3. Planning Responsibilities

The **Broads Authority** is the **local planning authority** for the area within the Broads Executive Area. This means it handles:

- Development control
- Local plan preparation
- Conservation area designation

However, outside the Broads Executive Area, planning responsibilities fall to the respective district councils.

Broads Plan 2022-2027: Objectives for Enhancing Public Access

The Broads Plan 2022-2027 outlines several strategic objectives aimed at improving public access to the Norfolk Broads National Park. These objectives are part of Theme E: Promoting Understanding and Enjoyment¹³.

1. Improve Integrated Access Routes

- **Objective:** Enhance the network of access routes and points, ensuring easier access for people with mobility and sensory needs.
- **Actions:** Develop and maintain pathways, bridges, and access points that connect visitors to key areas and facilities.

2. Year-Round Visitor Activities

- **Objective:** Offer a coordinated program of activities that promote the unique Broads experience throughout the year.
- **Actions:** Organise events and activities that highlight the natural and cultural heritage of the Broads, while mitigating any adverse environmental impacts.

3. Multimedia Interpretation

- **Objective:** Upgrade and maintain multimedia interpretation tools to provide visitors with information about the special qualities of the Broads.
- **Actions:** Implement interactive displays, mobile apps, and informational signage at key locations.

4. Enhance Local Tourism Offer

- **Objective:** Strengthen the quality and distinctiveness of the local tourism offer, including careers and skills training.
- **Actions:** Support local businesses and tourism operators in improving service standards and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

These objectives aim to create a more accessible, engaging, and sustainable experience for all visitors to the Norfolk Broads National Park

¹³ Broads Authority. (2022) *Broads Plan 2022–27*. Norwich: Broads Authority. Available at: https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/443877/Broads-Plan-2022-27.pdf (Accessed: 8 June 2025).

Challenges

Creating better public access to the Norfolk Broads National Park faces several barriers:

1. Environmental Sensitivity

- **Impact on Habitats:** Enhancing access routes can disturb sensitive habitats and wildlife.
- **Conservation Conflicts:** Balancing public access with the need to protect and conserve the natural environment.

2. Funding and Resources

- **Financial Constraints:** Limited funding for developing and maintaining access infrastructure.
- **Resource Allocation:** Competing priorities for available resources within the park management.

3. Infrastructure and Facilities

- **Existing Infrastructure:** Upgrading old or inadequate infrastructure to meet modern accessibility standards.
- **Maintenance:** Ongoing maintenance of access routes and facilities to ensure safety and usability.

4. Land Ownership and Permissions

- **Private Land:** Negotiating access rights with private landowners.
- **Legal Restrictions:** Navigating legal and regulatory frameworks that govern land use and access.

5. Accessibility

- **Physical Barriers:** Ensuring that access routes are suitable for people with disabilities and other mobility issues.

- **Inclusive Design:** Designing facilities and services that cater to a diverse range of visitors.

6. Seasonal and Weather Conditions

- **Weather Impact:** Seasonal weather variations affecting the usability of access routes.
- **Flooding and Erosion:** Managing the impact of flooding and erosion on pathways and facilities.

7. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- **Local Opposition:** Addressing concerns and opposition from local communities and stakeholders.
- **Collaborative Planning:** Ensuring effective collaboration and communication among various stakeholders.

Addressing these barriers requires careful planning, adequate funding, and strong collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure that public access improvements are sustainable and beneficial for both visitors and the environment.

Opportunities

Opening up more of the Norfolk Broads National Park to public access can be most straightforward in areas where there is existing infrastructure and minimal environmental impact. Here are some key areas and strategies to achieve this:

1. Existing Access Points and Routes

- **Focus Areas:** Enhance and expand existing access points such as moorings, footpaths, and cycle paths.
- **Strategy:** Upgrade facilities at these points to improve accessibility for all visitors, including those with disabilities.

2. Public Rights of Way

- **Focus Areas:** Utilise and improve public rights of way, including footpaths and bridleways.
- **Strategy:** Work with local authorities and landowners to maintain and enhance these routes, ensuring they are well-signposted and accessible.

3. Community and Visitor Facilities

- **Focus Areas:** Develop access routes that connect to key visitor facilities such as visitor centres, car parks, and public transport hubs.
- **Strategy:** Implement integrated access strategies that link these facilities with popular destinations within the park

4. Sustainable Transport Options

- **Focus Areas:** Promote and improve sustainable transport options such as cycling, walking, and public transport
- **Strategy:** Create and enhance cycle paths and walking trails, and improve public transport links to and within the park

5. Collaboration with Landowners

- **Focus Areas:** Engage with private landowners to negotiate access agreements and easements

Strategy: Develop partnerships and agreements that allow for public access while respecting private property rights

6. Environmental Considerations

- **Focus Areas:** Identify areas where access improvements can be made with minimal environmental impact
- **Strategy:** Conduct environmental impact assessments and implement measures to protect sensitive habitats and species

7. Community Engagement

- **Focus Areas:** Involve local communities in the planning and implementation of access improvements
- **Strategy:** Conduct public consultations and gather feedback to ensure that access improvements meet the needs and preferences of residents and visitors

By focusing on these areas and strategies, the Broads Authority and its partners can effectively enhance public access to the Norfolk Broads National Park while preserving its natural beauty and biodiversity.

Volunteer Network Feasibility

Evidence shows access to green space helps to achieve significant reductions in physical health conditions, improves quality of life, reduces stress, anxiety and depression and leads to better levels of mental health and wellbeing¹⁴. However, people lack confidence and knowledge about how to get out and need support with good accessible information. The Norfolk County Council Access Improvement Plan in consultation with local communities has identified in Theme 6 the need for a community led access network in Norfolk working with Parish Councils, volunteers and other community organisations¹⁵.

The Broads Authority has a range of volunteering opportunities from practical volunteering including repairs to quay headings, fen management and management of invasive plant species, to survey volunteering to assist with surveys of species and habitats and education volunteering working with schools and young people. They are managed by a volunteer coordinator. However, the opportunities are limited to specific roles which can be supervised by relevant Broads Authority staff. Footpath management is not one of these roles, but the Authority is keen to see better management of the footpath network particularly where it links with the waterways and is interested in scoping partnership arrangements.

Pathmakers aims to improve countryside access, protect our heritage and engage new audiences by working with volunteers, land management partners and walk leaders to create safe routes with good information; organising high quality activities and walks, providing transport and actively address barriers to access including an annual Walking Festival and monthly walks.

Pathmakers most recent project Walk Norfolk has identified a need for better information for those supporting people out walking. Support workers in voluntary organisations need to know where to go and what to look for; walk leaders need information about leading a group safely, land managers need to know how to provide walks for vulnerable groups.

¹⁴ Senn, N., Berset, N. and Michel, S. (2024) 'Greenspaces and Health: Scoping Review of Studies in Europe', *Public Health Reviews*, 45. Available at: <https://www.ssph-journal.org/journals/public-health-reviews/articles/10.3389/phrs.2024.1606863/full> (Accessed: 9 June 2025).

¹⁵ Norfolk County Council. (2023) *Norfolk Access Improvement Plan*. Available at: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/43034#:~:text=We%20have%20created%20a%20new%2010%20year%20plan%2C,enjoyment%20of%20Norfolk%E2%80%99s%20public%20rights%20of%20way%20network> (Accessed: 11 June 2025)

Pathmakers is proposing the development of “walking hubs” for volunteers in market towns such as Wroxham and Acle with local information and a place where volunteers can receive training, meet, exchange experience, network and form relationships. They can work with local Parish Councils, the Broads Authority, Local Authorities and others to identify local need and develop services and support for the path network be it maintenance, better information or to actively engage with local communities leading walks and talking about the local environment. Pathmakers is planning to create good accessible information on the Pathmakers website and on social media and creating an online volunteer hub.

Pathmakers, Broads Authority and Norfolk Community Rail Audit – Pathmakers and the Assist Trust (a day service for adults with learning disabilities) made an audit of selected routes around the Community Rail network on the Broads

A number of issues were highlighted by the audits. The biggest impediment to access encountered on each walk has been the overgrown state of the paths which are not being kept clear. In all cases the grass was long obscuring the paths but, in some cases, it was difficult to even see the route of the paths.

It was also concluded that the current route descriptions are too wordy - with not enough useful information, e.g. distance in metres between key points or change in route direction to help users follow the route. Next to each number there should be a photo or image of a key point or feature. And the whole trail could be made more concise into 1 page.

It was assessed that the volunteers would need the physical strength and equipment to clear the paths and maintain them. The signage on the paths was poor and is not maintained and has deteriorated to a point where they cannot be read or are non-existent. One of the audits was abandoned before completion as it involved crossing the A47 at a location where there was no adjacent safe crossing point for walkers with learning difficulties or mobility issues.

To undertake the work volunteers would need close supervision, be provided saws and cutting equipment, safety clothing, and have the necessary qualifications to use the equipment.

Conclusions

- As they currently exist the paths audited are not attractive to walkers and not suitable for those with some mobility impairment or wheelchair users. Most of the issues identified could be addressed by a well-resourced volunteer network.
- Currently volunteers and walkers were not aware of the existence of these routes and so more publicity is needed to encourage access.
- Marketing and introducing some interactive support tools such as apps so people can decide themselves if a route is suitable and accessible would encourage use.
- Significant and regular maintenance is needed on footpaths for them to be accessible and attractive to walkers.
- Signage also needs maintaining and, in some cases, replacing.
- Alternative signed routes should be considered where the crossing of the A47 is involved. In all cases this should be highlighted on any route guides.
- The use of volunteers alone cannot in first instance reclaim these paths but may be able to maintain them in the future.

Walking Festival Proposal

Before considering the potential for launching a Broads-themed walking festival, it is first necessary to examine the effectiveness of existing festivals. There are already two annual festivals which take place in or include events within the National Park. These are the Broads Outdoor Festival, which takes place in Spring each year and Walk Norfolk, a month-long walking festival, organised by Pathmakers in October each year.

Several weeks of the year are therefore already covered by Festivals and an analysis of the effectiveness of both these festivals was undertaken first, before considering the need for a further festival

This includes exploring the concept, identifying logistical and resource requirements, and evaluating how such an event could promote active travel, celebrate the local landscape, and engage both residents and visitors.

Analysis of Pathmakers Walking Festival

Pathmakers is a UK-based charity dedicated to improving access to the Norfolk countryside for people of all abilities and backgrounds. Their flagship event, Walk Norfolk, is a month-long walking festival held every October, celebrating Norfolk's rich natural landscapes, heritage, and history. The festival features guided walks across the county, with many events being subsidised or free, thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund¹⁶.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|--|
| <p>Accessibility Focus</p> <p>Emphasises inclusivity, offering walks that are wheelchair-accessible, buggy-friendly, and suitable for families.</p> | <p>Weather Dependency</p> <p>As an outdoor event, the festival is susceptible to weather, impacting attendance and participation.</p> |

¹⁶ Pathmakers. (n.d.) *About us*. Available at: <https://pathmakers.org.uk/about-us/#:~:text=Pathmakers%20are%20a%20charity%20dedicated,ways%20%2D%20that%20improve%20countryside%20access> (Accessed: 8 June 2025)

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Diverse Activities</p> <p>Events range from nature walks and historical tours to sensory experiences like biofluorescent night walks.</p> | <p>Limited Reach</p> <p>Despite growth, the festival may still be limited to certain demographics and regions within Norfolk.</p> |
| <p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Collaborations with local councils, landowners, and community groups enhance local involvement and support.</p> | <p>Resource Constraints</p> <p>As a charity, Pathmakers faces financial and logistical challenges in expanding the festival's scope and impact.</p> |
| <p>Support for Vulnerable Groups</p> <p>Initiatives like the MONUMENT project provide dementia-friendly and carer-supported walking events, promoting social inclusion.</p> | |

Analysis of Broads Outdoor Festival

The Broads Outdoor Festival is an annual event celebrating the natural beauty and heritage of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. It offers a range of outdoor activities, including guided walks, boat trips, and nature-based workshops, aiming to engage both locals and visitors with the Broads National Park¹⁷.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| <p>Variety of Activities</p> <p>The festival offers a mix of land and water-based activities, appealing to a broad audience.</p> | <p>Seasonal Timing</p> <p>The festival's timing may coincide with other local events, leading to potential</p> |

¹⁷ Visit East of England. (2023) *Festival to celebrate Broads life comes to Beccles*. Available at: <https://www.visiteastofengland.com/post/festival-to-celebrate-broads-life-comes-to-beccles> (Accessed: 8 June 2025).

| | |
|---|---|
| | scheduling conflicts and divided attendance. |
| <p>Family-Friendly</p> <p>Events are designed to be accessible and enjoyable for all ages, with many free activities.</p> | <p>Resource Limitations</p> <p>As with many community-based festivals, there may be constraints in funding and volunteer support, affecting the scale and diversity of events.</p> |
| <p>Local Collaboration</p> <p>Partnerships with local businesses and organisations enhance the festival's offerings and community involvement.</p> | <p>Accessibility Concerns</p> <p>While efforts are made, some activities may not be fully accessible to individuals with mobility challenges or other disabilities.</p> |

Strengthens & Weaknesses of both festivals

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| <p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Both festivals actively involve local communities, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.</p> | <p>Weather Dependency</p> <p>Both festivals are vulnerable to adverse weather conditions, which can impact attendance and the feasibility of certain activities.</p> |
| <p>Promotion of Outdoor Activities</p> <p>They encourage physical activity and connection with nature, contributing to public health and well-being.</p> | <p>Limited Accessibility</p> <p>Despite efforts, some events may not be fully accessible to all individuals, particularly those with mobility impairments.</p> |
| <p>Educational Opportunities</p> <p>Participants gain knowledge about local history, wildlife, and conservation efforts.</p> | <p>Resource Constraints</p> <p>Funding and volunteer support limitations can affect the scale and diversity of events offered.</p> |

Is there a need for an additional festival?

While both festivals serve important roles in promoting outdoor activities and community engagement, there may be room for an additional festival that focuses on specific underserved groups, such as individuals with disabilities, low-income families, or marginalised communities. This could help bridge gaps in accessibility and ensure that all members of the community have opportunities to participate in outdoor experiences.

Could Pathmakers walking festival be enhanced by including more Broads-centered activities?

Incorporating more Broads-centered activities into the Pathmakers Walking Festival could enrich the experience for participants. This could include guided walks focusing on the unique ecosystems of the Broads, educational sessions on local conservation efforts, or partnerships with Broads-based organisations to offer diverse perspectives and expertise. Such collaborations would not only diversify the festival's offerings but also strengthen the connection between the two regions.

Could Broads Outdoor Festivals be enhanced by additional events run in conjunction with Pathmakers aimed at groups who miss out on mainstream events, due to accessibility, affordability, and any other reason?

Integrating additional events aimed at groups who miss out on mainstream events due to accessibility, affordability, or other reasons could enhance the Broads Outdoor Festival. For instance, offering subsidised or free activities for low-income families, providing transportation for individuals with mobility challenges, or organising culturally inclusive events could broaden participation and foster a more inclusive community.

Inclusivity Enhancement Strategies

Establishing a successful walking festival in the Broads National Park will require a well-coordinated combination of **human, financial, promotional, and logistical resources**, alongside strong collaboration with local communities and businesses. The aim should be to design an inclusive, accessible, and environmentally sustainable festival that enhances the walking offer, encourages active travel, and strengthens the connection between residents, visitors, and the unique landscape of the Broads.

- **Staffing and Volunteer Coordination** - A dedicated **Festival Coordinator** will be essential to oversee planning, stakeholder liaison, volunteer management, route coordination, marketing, and evaluation. This could be a part-time or contracted role, possibly hosted by the Broads Authority or a partner such as Pathmakers CIO. Additionally, a network of **trained volunteer walk leaders** will be required to guide walks, support accessibility needs, and ensure health and safety compliance. Investment in **basic training (e.g., navigation, first aid, disability awareness)** and risk assessment tools will be essential to equip volunteers effectively.

- **Marketing, Promotion, & Community Engagement** - A clear and inclusive promotional strategy will be necessary to reach a diverse audience, including residents, tourists, families, older adults, and underrepresented groups. Resources will be needed for:
 - **Design and printing** of posters, maps, and accessible digital materials.
 - **Social media and PR campaigns**, possibly in partnership with Visit the Broads, local councils, and transport providers.
 - Production of **inclusive imagery and multilingual content** to ensure wide accessibility and cultural relevance.
 - Outreach through **community centers, GP surgeries, schools, and local charities** to target lower-income and socially excluded groups.

- **Logistics and Infrastructure** - Walks should start and finish at **transport-accessible locations**, ideally near public transport hubs or with temporary shuttle services. Resources will be needed for:
 - Temporary **signage, waymarking, and route maintenance**.
 - **Public liability insurance** and risk assessment support.
 - **Event equipment** such as gazebos, portable toilets, first aid kits, high-visibility vests, and radios.
 - A small fund for **contingency costs**, such as weather-related changes or last-minute accessibility needs.

- **Partnerships** - Local businesses (e.g. cafés, outdoor retailers, tour operators) can be engaged as **sponsors, refreshment providers, or route hosts**. Their contributions — whether financial or in-kind — can help offset costs and build local pride. Partnering with health organisations or charities (e.g., Walking for Health, Active Norfolk) can offer additional funding, volunteers, or access to specific audiences.

- **Budget Estimate & Finding Sources** - While the exact cost will depend on the scale of the festival, an initial pilot event could run on a budget of **£10,000–£20,000**, with support sought from:
 - Broads Authority or DEFRA access funds.
 - Active Travel England grants.
 - The National Lottery (e.g., Awards for All).
 - Local authority or LEP regeneration funding.
 - Sponsorships from transport providers and local businesses.

Themes to Explore

A. Community Ownership and Stewardship

- Promote local pride by naming trails after local history, heritage, or figures.
- Encourage "Adopt-a-Path" schemes where individuals, families, schools, or community groups take stewardship of a segment of trail.
- Offer local recognition schemes (certificates, signs, annual volunteer awards).

B. Volunteer Coordination and Management

- Develop a **volunteer strategy** including:
 - Clear roles (e.g., route auditing, waymarking, vegetation management, guiding walks).
 - A centralised database for volunteers.
 - Volunteer agreements and insurance guidance.
 - Tool kits (GPS, maps, route forms).

C. Long-Term Maintenance Resources

- Establish a **Community Access Fund** to support tools, training, and minor works.
- Develop partnerships with local businesses (sponsorship of paths, tools, branded signage).
- Use **Section 106 agreements** or developer contributions in areas of new development.

Practical Resources to Be Developed

| Resource Type | Description |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Volunteer Handbook | Orientation material on path auditing, health & safety, and local ecology. |
| Digital Map Portal | Interactive, mobile-friendly map showing trails, updates, hazards, and volunteer needs. |
| Path Maintenance App | For reporting issues, logging inspections, sharing photos and GPS data. |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Training Packages | Modular training in walk leading, risk assessment, navigation, and first aid. |
| Local Walk Toolkits | For parishes to design, promote and maintain circular routes (template leaflets, signage, route ideas). |
| Walking Festival Toolkit | For event planning, branding, promotion, volunteer recruitment. |

Encouraging Local Participation

- School & Youth Engagement: Partner with local schools for “young rangers” or Duke of Edinburgh volunteering hours.
- Intergenerational Walks: Organise events bringing together older residents and families to build community cohesion.
- Local Business Involvement: Incentivise businesses to promote walks (e.g., walking reward cards redeemable in cafés).

Partnership and Funding Opportunities

| Source | Potential Use |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| National Lottery Heritage Fund | Community engagement, trails linked to heritage and nature. |
| Active Travel England | Support for infrastructure or training linked to walking. |
| Local councils and LEPs | Economic and wellbeing benefits justify co-investment. |
| Pathmakers CIO | Existing experience and structure for volunteer support. |
| Corporate Sponsorships | Local business branding of waymarks or events. |

“Best Practice” Examples

- **South Downs ‘Take the Lead’ campaign:** Promoted responsible walking with dogs and community engagement.
- **Yorkshire Dales Ranger Volunteers:** Structured volunteer schemes including training and uniform, aiding pride and visibility.
- **Cumbria’s Fix the Fells:** Public donations and volunteering used to maintain path networks sustainably.

Potential Enhancement Outline

1. **Establish a central volunteer coordination system** with a named staff lead or partner organisation (e.g., Pathmakers).
2. **Create community trail resource kits** tailored to each parish to build capacity for local engagement.
3. **Develop a small grants scheme** to support micro-projects for signage, benches, or community walks.
4. **Integrate digital tools** (maps, reporting apps, newsletters) to streamline communication and engagement.
5. **Launch an annual "Broads Walking Champions" programme** to reward contributions and showcase success stories.
6. **Pilot a legacy plan** in one Gateway community (e.g., Coltishall) as a replicable model for others.

Case Study 1: Mosaic Outdoors (UK National Parks)

Empowering Diverse and Low-Income Communities to Access National Parks

Overview:

Mosaic Outdoors worked with National Parks in the UK (e.g., Lake District, Peak District) to engage low-income and ethnic minority communities who had little access to green spaces.

Challenges Identified:

- Travel costs to parks were a key barrier.
- Lack of confidence in accessing "rural" and unfamiliar environments.
- Absence of targeted information and cultural relevance in promotion.

Solutions Implemented:

- Trained "Community Champions" within urban communities (e.g., Bradford, London) to promote outdoor visits.
- Funded transport and offered guided walks and experiences for first-time visitors.
- Worked with park authorities to adapt signage and materials to be more inclusive.

Outcomes:

- Over 100 champions trained.
- Sustained increase in community-led walks.
- Demonstrated that long-term engagement requires embedded community roles and low-barrier entry points.

Case Study 2: Miles Without Stiles – Lake District National Park

Improving Path Accessibility for Physical and Economic Barriers

Overview:

This initiative created over 40 accessible routes without stiles or steep gradients, designed for wheelchair users, families with pushchairs, and those with limited mobility – including those without access to expensive equipment or transport.

Low-Income Relevance:

- Publicised low-cost, car-free routes via bus/train connections.
- Promoted through libraries, community centres, and social services to reach low-income users.
- Worked with affordable accommodation providers and family support charities.

Outcomes:

- Increased visits by people with physical disabilities and low-income families.
- Provided a blueprint for inclusive and accessible trail design that supports multiple needs.

Case Study 3: Walking for Health – England

Free, Local Walking Groups for Health and Inclusion

Overview:

This nationwide scheme, funded initially by Natural England and the Ramblers, supports free, volunteer-led walks designed to improve health, especially for those at risk of social isolation or poor physical health.

Accessibility for Low-Income Participants:

- Walks are short, free, and local — no transport or equipment needed.
- Groups often based in low-income communities (e.g., urban estates, post-industrial towns).
- Walk leaders receive free training and are often local residents.

Outcomes:

- High participation from those aged 50+, low-income, and long-term unemployed.
- Often participants progressed from walking to volunteering, creating sustainable community-led initiatives.

Case Study 4: Transit to Trails – Los Angeles, USA

Removing Transportation Barriers for Underserved Communities

Overview:

Transit to Trails is a program by the National Parks Conservation Association and community partners that provides free transportation from low-income neighbourhoods in LA to nearby natural areas.

Accessibility Barriers Addressed:

- Cost and lack of public transport to parks.
- Limited awareness and cultural relevance.
- Safety and social concerns.

Interventions:

- Organised free bus trips to trails with interpreters, guides, and healthy food provided.
- Engaged local youth in trail maintenance and advocacy.

Outcomes:

- Participants reported higher connection to nature and willingness to revisit.
- Provided a replicable model for urban-to-nature transport access.

Case Study 5: Walking Festival – Peak District (Inclusive Focus)

Reducing Economic Barriers to Participation in Outdoor Events

Overview:

The Peak District Walking Festival trialled inclusive approaches to reach lower-income families and individuals.

Inclusion Strategies:

- Offered free-to-join walks with public transport-friendly meeting points.
- Partnered with food banks and community support services to promote events.
- Some festivals included free lunch or gear lending for participants without appropriate kit.

Outcomes:

- Higher attendance from low-income participants than previous years.
- Demonstrated that transport costs and gear access were more significant barriers than motivation or interest.

Key Takeaways

1. **Transport is often the biggest barrier** – consider shuttle buses or “walks from the station” approaches in Gateway communities.
2. **Free and localised events are essential** – focus on micro-festivals or weekly group walks based in low-income areas.
3. **Community champions and local leaders** can act as trusted connectors between institutions and underserved communities.
4. **Gear access (e.g., boots, jackets)** matters – consider a loan scheme or donation partnerships with outdoor brands.
5. **Cultural relevance and confidence** – not everyone may see walking in the countryside as “for them.” Inclusive language, imagery, and leadership can help bridge this.

Specific Local Businesses the Broads Could Utilise for Walking Network Support

Leveraging local businesses can help with sponsorship, volunteer support, in-kind contributions, or promotional partnerships. Here are several **Broads-based businesses and organisations** that could be strategic partners:

A. Outdoor Gear & Retail

- Norfolk Outdoor Adventures (Wroxham) – Although more water-based, they are passionate about outdoor access and may support land-based initiatives through cross-promotion or staff volunteering.
- Cotswold Outdoor (Norwich) – National brand with local branches that regularly support conservation and walking events through gear sponsorship or community funds.
- Go Outdoors (Norwich) – Offers community partnership schemes, ideal for equipment loan banks or event gear sponsorship.

B. Transport & Access

- Bure Valley Railway (Aylsham–Wroxham) – Could promote walking trails starting or ending at stations; opportunity to create walking + rail circulars.
- Bittern Line (Greater Anglia) – Railway service between Norwich and Sheringham; has previously supported community walking initiatives.

C. Cafés, Pubs, and Accommodation

- The River Kitchen (Wroxham) or The Recruiting Sergeant (Coltishall) – Popular with walkers and could serve as trail hubs, offering discounts to festival participants or sponsoring way markers.
- Broads Tours (Wroxham) – Offers boat trips but could partner to offer “walk one way, boat back” experiences; cross-promotional packages.
- Whitlingham Adventure Centre Café – Situated at a key gateway, ideal for signage, volunteer briefings, or walk festival gatherings.

D. Local Tourism & Experience Providers

- Visit the Broads/Norfolk Broads Direct – May assist with wider promotion and branding of events.

- Pathmakers CIO – Local organisation already working on access; could provide training and coordination for volunteers.

How Branding Can Enrich the Events?

1. Increased Awareness & Recognition

- Consistent branding across marketing materials, signage, and social media makes events instantly recognisable.
- Helps build brand loyalty among attendees and stakeholders year over year.

2. Boost in Attendance

- A polished, professional look and feel attracts new demographics (tourists, families, influencers, funders).
- Helps events stand out among a crowded landscape of seasonal outdoor offerings.

3. Better Engagement Across Platforms

- Branded visuals and stories can drive social media sharing, user-generated content (e.g., #WalkNorfolk2025).
- Merchandise (badges, shirts, maps) can double as branding tools and souvenirs.

4. More Effective Inclusion Campaigns

- A unified message and look helps reach underserved groups by tailoring inclusive messaging (“Nature for Everyone”, multi-language guides, Easy Read versions).
- Helps reinforce commitment to accessibility, affordability, and inclusion.

5. Easier Partnerships and Funding

1. Funders, councils, and sponsors are more likely to support events with clear branding and messaging.
2. Co-branding strategies increase collaborative potential with other nonprofits or accessibility advocates.
3. A thoughtful, inclusive branding system can **transform both festivals from seasonal events into recognisable movements.**
 - Drives awareness
 - Encourages broader participation

- Attracts partnerships
- Reinforces the festivals' missions of community, access, and nature

Current Partnerships

Pathmakers Walking Festival Partnerships

The Pathmakers Walking Festival, particularly WalkNorfolk, collaborates with several organisations to deliver its events¹⁸:

- The Broads Authority: Supports events within the Broads National Park, promoting sustainable exploration.
- Norfolk Rivers Trust: Provides expertise on local waterways and conservation efforts.
- The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme: Offers insights into the Brecks region's unique landscapes.
- Reveal Nature: Assists in organising nature-focused walks and activities.
- Norfolk Archaeological Trust: Contributes to heritage-themed walks and educational sessions.
- Central Norfolk Ramblers: Leads guided walks and promotes walking as a recreational activity.
- Friends of Thetford Forest: Facilitates forest-based walks and conservation initiatives.
- Swaffham Museum: Provides historical context for walks in the Swaffham area.

These partnerships could be leveraged for co-branded initiatives, such as:

- Joint Marketing Campaigns: Collaborate on promotional materials and social media campaigns to increase event visibility.
- Themed Walks: Organise walks focusing on specific themes, like heritage or conservation, with input from relevant partners.
- Community Engagement Initiatives: Develop programs targeting underrepresented groups, ensuring inclusivity.

Broads Outdoor Festival Partnerships

¹⁸ All Things Norfolk. (2024) *Walk Norfolk 2024*. Available at: <https://allthingsnorfolk.com/walk-norfolk-2024/> (Accessed: 9 June 2025).

The Broads Outdoor Festival engages with various organisations to enhance its offerings:

- Richardsons Leisure Limited: Serves as the launch sponsor for the Discovery Hubs, promoting sustainable exploration¹⁹.
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust: Provides expertise on local wildlife and conservation efforts.
- Norfolk Wherry Trust: Offers insights into traditional boatbuilding and maritime heritage
- Museum of the Broads: Contributes to educational programs and exhibits.
- Nancy Oldfield Trust: Facilitates water-based activities for individuals with disabilities.
- Hunter's Yard: Offers traditional sailing experiences
- Broads Society: Promotes the conservation and appreciation of the Broads.
- Whitlingham Adventure: Provides outdoor adventure activities.
- Water Mills and Marshes: Broads Landscape Partnership: Focuses on preserving the Broads' unique landscapes.
- RNLI, HM Coastguard, BroadsBeat, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, Norfolk County Council: Collaborate on water safety demonstrations and educational programmes.

Potential co-branded initiatives include:

- Inclusive Water Safety Programs: Develop programs that cater to individuals with disabilities, ensuring accessibility.
- Cultural Heritage Walks: Organise walks that highlight the Broads' rich cultural history, in collaboration with local museums and heritage organisations.
- Sustainable Tourism Campaigns: Promote responsible tourism practices through joint marketing efforts.

By aligning with these existing partnerships, both festivals can create a cohesive and inclusive branding strategy that resonates with a broader audience. Co-branded initiatives can enhance the festivals' visibility, attract diverse participants, and foster a sense of community engagement.

¹⁹ Richardsons Leisure Limited. (2024) *Discovery Hubs Sponsor*. Available at: <https://richardsonsholidays.com/discovery-hubs-sponsor/> (Accessed: 11 June 2025).

Mock-up Marketing Efforts

Current Outreach Materials:



Colour Scheme:

- Greens (various shades)
- Blues (various shades)
- Whites

Typography:

- Clean and modern font styles
- Clear headings and body text

Imagery:

- Nature-inspired images (woodland, windmill, sky)
- People engaging in outdoor activities (walking)

Layout:

- Balanced composition
- Use of negative space

Graphics and Icons:

- Compass icon (used as a logo element)
- Simple, illustrative graphics (e.g., windmill)

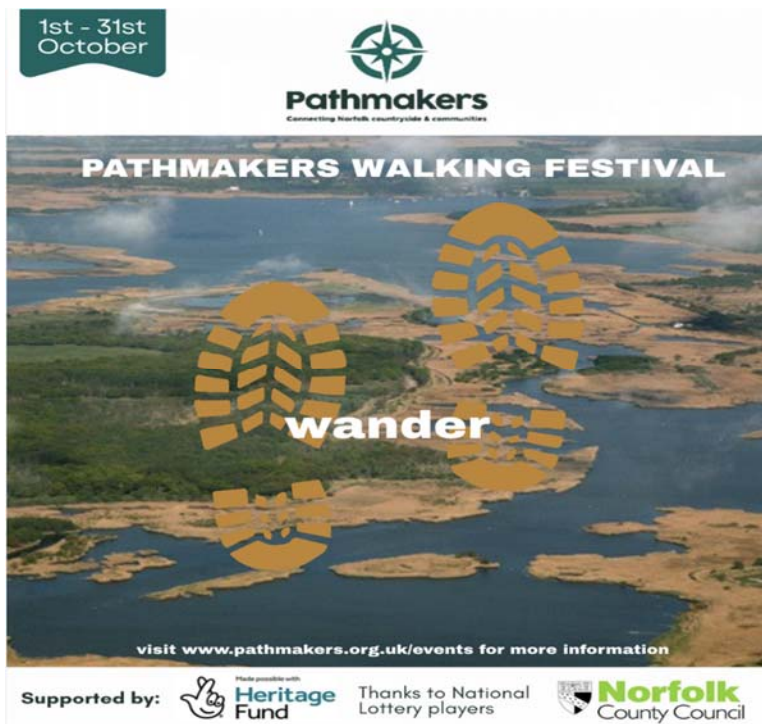
Branding:

- Consistent use of the Pathmakers logo
- Clear branding messaging (e.g., "creating healthier, happier communities")

***Visual Hierarchy: ***

- Clear headings and subheadings
- Use of size and color to draw attention to important information

Proposed Outreach Materials:



Characteristics:

Visual Theme: Aerial view of a natural landscape with visible water and grassy patches, emphasising exploration and terrain.

Typography: Bold, sans-serif typeface with high contrast in size between “wander” and the other text, conveying clarity and simplicity.

Overlay Graphics: Large boot prints reinforce the walking/hiking theme, and the textured topographical pattern enhances the feeling of navigation and movement.

Color Palette: Earthy tones, ochres and forest greens, convey a grounded, rustic aesthetic.

Inclusive Tone: The term “wander” suggests flexibility and freedom, accessible to people of varying abilities and backgrounds.

Sponsorship Highlighting: Clearly positioned logos (Heritage Fund, National Lottery, Norfolk County Council) in a well-defined footer area for professional credibility.



Characteristics:

- **Visual Theme:** A scenic photograph of a windmill by a reflective waterway—an iconic and tranquil Broads landscape.
- **Typography:** "GO BEYOND" in bold white lettering stands out overlaid on water; the font is confident yet friendly.
- **Overlay Graphics:** Subtle topographic lines overlaid on the sky create texture without overwhelming the natural beauty of the photograph.
- **Colour Palette:** Cooler, more serene tones—blues, whites, and greys—evoking calm, openness, and breathability.
- **Inclusive Tone:** The phrase "GO BEYOND" suggests openness to everyone, encouraging people to push past limitations, both physically and symbolically.
- **Sponsorship Highlighting:** Partner logos (Broads Authority, RSPB, Access Unlimited) integrated seamlessly into the bottom of the design for balance and visibility.

Recommendations and Conclusion

- Further increase the evidence base of user needs and expectations to and within the Broads, engaging with key stakeholders within the business, culture, heritage and community sectors.
- Encourage those key stakeholders to collaborate and share resources to support agreed active travel priorities
- Use all gathered evidence to agree priorities for attracting funding to deliver improvements which address gaps in provision.
- Reduce barriers to access and prioritise opportunities for all abilities and infrequent users of the walking and cycling network.
- Establish and support volunteer networks to help empower local people to determine and direct action to help manage, maintain and improve access to the countryside near to where they live and work.
- Audit routes to identify barriers to access, addressing the needs of those without access to a car or who have mobility problems, visual impairment or mental health difficulties.
- Develop targeted promotional programmes and materials to encourage active travel including good online and printed information, wide use of social media, volunteer led walks/rides, sponsored walks and rides, walking for health initiatives, walkers are welcome schemes.
- Identify win, win opportunities which benefit both the visitor economy and local communities to help encourage healthier and more active lifestyles and:
- Support low impact tourism by prioritising opportunities for integrating local off-road routes with public transport to help the Broads become a net zero carbon destination.
- Create opportunities for involving younger people as individuals or through their careers and the education system to become more physically active.
- Work closely with Pathmakers to further develop existing Pathmakers initiatives like the Norfolk Walking Festival and volunteering projects including a volunteer hub, and to jointly identify and collaborate on new projects in the future.

- Actively consider if Local Government review is the opportunity for the Broads Authority to take on the role of Highway Authority for public rights of way in the Broads National Park.

Appendix

1. Broads National Park Active Travel Consultation Survey

Broads National Park Active Travel Consultation Survey

Gateways to the Broads National Park: A Vision for the Future

1. What are the main barriers your organisation feels people face when walking, cycling, or wheeling in your area of the Broads National Park?
2. Are there footpaths or publicly permissible routes within your parish or local area where access is restricted due to the need for improvement or better maintenance?
3. How well do you feel the current active travel network (walking, cycling, wheeling) connects key locations in your part of the Broads National Park? (such as Wroxham/Hoveton, Coltishall, and Whitlingham)
4. What suggestions do you have for improving access, signage, or safety on local footpaths and routes?
5. Would you or your organisation be interested in participating in a volunteer network to help audit and maintain walking routes? If yes, what support would you need?
6. Are there existing local groups or individuals you know who could be involved in volunteering for route auditing or improvements?
7. Would your organisation be interested in being involved with supporting or leading community walks?
8. What types of training or resources would make you or your group feel confident (e.g., first aid, navigation, working with diverse groups)?

Would you be interested in being involved with a Broads-themed walking festival? What activities or features would make such a festival appealing to you or your community?

1. To engage with local communities, Parish Councils, land managers, businesses and other local organisations to identify their needs and suggestions for improvement to the footpath network

Councils Information Table:

| Councils | Organisation/Group | Area | Contact Form - No Email Listed | Email | Phone | Alternative Number | Name of Clerk |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Hoveton Parish Council | Parish Council | Hoveton/Wroxham | | clerk@hoveton-pc.org.uk | 07572349600 | | Ben Bethell |
| Wroxham Parish Council | Parish Council | Wroxham | | clerk@wroxhamparishcouncil.org | 07241837375 | | Clare Male |
| Coltishall Parish Council | Parish Council | Coltishall | | clerk@coltishall-pc.gov.uk | 07446 542156 | | Phil Chapman |
| Canley, Limpenhoe and Southwood Parish Council | Parish Council | Canley, Limpenhoe and Southwood | | clerk@canleylimpenhoesouthwood-pc.gov.uk | 07842716165 | | Amie Tandy |
| Fleggburgh Parish Council | Parish Council | Fleggburgh | | fleggburghpc@gmail.com | 07502735991 | | Paul Johnson |
| Horning Parish Council | Parish Council | Horning | | clerk@horningparishcouncil.gov.uk | 01263733417 | | Jo Beardshaw |
| Ludham Parish Council | Parish Council | Ludham | | ludhamparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk | 01263733417 | 07973744029 | Stephane Shackleton |
| Reedham Parish Council | Parish Council | Reedham | | reedhampc@outlook.com | 01493701325 | | Caroline Purdy |
| Ranworth and Panworth Parish Council | Parish Council | Ranworth and Panworth | | clerk@woodbastwick-pc.gov.uk | 01692566056 | | Sarah Martin |
| Salhouse Parish Council | Parish Council | Salhouse | https://thurne-parishcouncil.org.uk/contact/ | clerk.salhousepc@gmail.com | 07761480102 | | Jane Beck |
| Thurne Parish Council | Parish Council | Thurne | | clerk@thurne-pc.gov.uk | 07725209037 | | Michaela McGoun |
| Outton Broad Parish Council | Parish Council | Outton | | Paul.Cunningham@beccles-towncouncil.gov.uk | 01502580942 | | Paul Cunningham |
| Beccles Town Council | Town Council | Beccles | | blundeston.fixton-parishclerk@gmail.com | 01502712109 | | Anya Coleman |
| Blundeston and Fixton Parish Council | Parish Council | Blundeston and Fixton | | clerk@rtoncolvilletowncouncil.gov.uk | 0798380378 | | Alison Ayers |
| Carlton Colville Town Council | Town Council | Carlton | | parish.clerk@ashwillares.org.uk | 01502521959 | | S Read |
| Somerleyton, Ashby and Herringfleet Parish Council | Parish Council | Somerleyton, Ashby and Herringfleet | | | 1502 349506 | | |

Business Information Table:

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---------------|--|--|
| Broadland Cycle Hire | Cycle Hire | Hoveton/Horning | https://norfalderoadscyclehire.co.uk/contact-us/ | Info@wroxhambarris.co.uk | 07747 483154 | | |
| Wroxham Barris | Retail | Wroxham | | burevalleycyclehire@gmail.com | 01603783762 | | |
| Burevalley Cycle Hire | Cycle Hire | Coltishall | | lvmillibarris@hotmail.com | 07824 992513 | | |
| The Reedcuter Inn | Pub/Restaurant | Canley/ Limpenhoe | | hello@aclebride.co.uk | 01493701099 | | |
| Acle Bridge Inn | Pub/Restaurant | Acle/ Fleggsburgh | | Info@thesalicyhorning.co.uk | 01493750288 | | |
| The Galley at Horning | Deli | Horning | | ludhamrtdc@roostemail.com or | 01692630088 | | |
| The Dog | Pub/Restaurant | Ludham | | Info@thedogpub.co.uk | 01692630321 | | |
| The Reedham Ferry Inn | Pub/Restaurant | Reedham | | reedhamferry@aol.com | 01493 700 999 | | |
| The Millsters | Pub/Restaurant | Ranworth | | Info@ranworthmillsters.com | 01603270900 | | |
| The Hungry Oler | Coffee Shop | Salhouse | | Thehungryoler1@gmail.com | 07789984888 | | |
| The Lion Inn | Pub/Restaurant | Thurne | | countryardsurefarm@gmail.com | 01692671806 | | |
| The Courtyard | Hotel | Outton | https://www.thelionatthurne.com/contact-us | enquiries@wyarevalleyhousehotel.co.uk | 01502 568724 | | |
| The Wrennery House Hotel | Hotel | Beccles | | Info@blundestonparishcouncil.gov.uk | 01502 712270 | | |
| The Plough | Pub/Restaurant | Blundeston | | Info@lvythousecountryhotel.co.uk | 01263735000 | | |
| Crooked Barn | Pub/Restaurant | Carlton | | Info@lvythousecountryhotel.co.uk | 01502501353 | | |
| Dikes Head | Pub/Restaurant | Somerleyton | | dikeshead@somerleyton.co.uk | 01502730281 | | |

Local Community Groups:

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|--------------|--|--|
| Broads Local Access Forum | Broads Authority - Statutory Advisory Group | Broads Authority executive area | | BLAF@broads-authority.gov.uk | 01603 610734 | | |
| The Broads Society | Community Group | Norfolk and Suffolk Broads | | admin@broads-society.org | 01603714172 | | |
| Love the Broads | Local Charity | Broads National Park | | Info@lovethebroads.org.uk | 01603 720276 | | |
| Land Managers | | | | berneymarshes@rsnb.org.uk | 01603 715191 | | |
| RSPB | Conservation Charity/ Land Manager | Berney Marshes & Breydon Water Nature Reserve | | Info@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk | 01603 625540 | | |
| Norfolk Wildlife Trust | Conservation Charity/ Land Manager | Norfolk | | teamwildlife@suffolkwildlifetrust.org | 01473 890089 | | |
| Suffolk Wildlife Trust | Conservation Charity/ Land Manager | Suffolk | | | | | |

2. Stakeholder Contact Information

3. Audit Walks completed by Pathmakers

