

**Review of Consultative Arrangements and Community/Stakeholder
Engagement – Final Report**
Report by Director of Planning and Strategy

Summary:	This report advises Members of the findings of the Review of Consultative Arrangements and Community/Stakeholder Engagement that has been taking place during 2012/13. Members are asked to note the contents of the Final Report, endorse the recommendations, and agree the actions outlined therein. Members are also asked to consider the revised Terms of Reference for the Broads Forum.
Recommendation:	Members are asked to consider the Final Report and adopt its Key Findings and recommendations.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members may recall that, in response to the Government's consultation on the Governance of National Parks and the Broads, the Authority committed to carrying out a review of the role, composition and support provided to all the Authority's consultative bodies, particularly following its reorganisation in the light of the reduction in National Park Grant. This decision was subsequently endorsed by the Government in its decisions. At its meeting on 18 November 2011, the Authority set out how it intended to review the way it engages with non-statutory stakeholders and local communities. The scope of the review was to include the Authority's three main consultative mechanisms - the Navigation Committee, the Broads Forum and the Broads Local Access Forum - but could potentially include other committees such as the Planning, Financial Scrutiny and Audit, and Standards committees. At its meeting in January 2012, the Authority agreed to extend the scope of the review to consider the effectiveness of its existing community engagement mechanisms, e.g. parish forums, parish pop-ins, local events, written consultations and newsletters.
- 1.2 A wide range of people have a keen interest in the future of the Broads and the way it is managed, and the review has looked at how the Authority could promote a more open, inclusive and consistent approach to communication and consultation as part of its decision making process.
- 1.3 The review was led by Andrea Long, Director of Planning and Strategy with Maria Conti, Strategy and Projects Officer and guided by a small Working Group of Members including the Chairs of the relevant consultative committees. The Review was included within the Authority's Strategic

Priorities for 2012-13. Originally it was anticipated that the review would be completed by December 2012; however, this was extended to March 2013 to allow the Broads Forum to reflect on amendments proposed to its Terms of Reference in February. A revised Terms of Reference for the Broads Forum features elsewhere on the Agenda for consideration by Members. The Final Report is attached as Appendix 1 to this Report.

2 Review Findings

2.1 The scope of the Review was broken down into three separate but interlinked projects, as follows:

- (a) To establish an open and consistent consultation process for the preparation, delivery and review of Broads Authority strategies and policies, including the 'we asked, you said, we did' line of communication and feedback
- (b) To review the Authority's informal and ad hoc engagement with non-statutory stakeholders – e.g. local residents, interest and amenity groups, visitors, businesses, schools, volunteers – and the ways it engages with them
- (c) To review the Authority's more formal, regular consultative mechanisms, e.g. Broads Forum, Navigation Committee, Broads Local Access Forum

2.2 The Review Final Report (Appendix 1) sets out a number of recommendations for Members to consider; however, for ease of reference, the key findings against the three projects are summarised below:

(a) Strategy Preparation and Consultation

An internal guidance framework had already been developed for use by Broads Authority staff engaged in strategy production. This gives guidance on document design and structure, research, and consultation planning, delivery and feedback. As a result of the Review, a second internal document has been developed which gives guidance to staff (and Members) on widening and strengthening stakeholder and wider public participation in decision making. From this guidance, information will be produced for the public on how the Authority engages them in participatory processes, and how they can get involved.

(b) Review of Community Engagement Mechanisms

Research and ongoing consultation with a range of stakeholders helped to inform the Review. This included research on community engagement 'good practice' in other organisations, including National Park Authorities, adjoining local authorities, harbour authorities and other inland navigation authorities.

A series of detailed interviews were undertaken with front line staff (those whose job roles bring them into regular contact with local communities and members of the public). Feedback was invited on their experience of public perceptions of, and interests in, the Broads and the purposes and work of the Authority, and how easy people felt it was to engage with the Authority, particularly in terms of getting information and giving their views.

Telephone interviews were also carried out with a number of stakeholders who represent a wide range of interests in the Broads and who have a past or present relationship with the Broads Authority. The interviews, which were carried out by an independent facilitator, sought feedback on the effectiveness of the Authority's engagement methods and suggestions for improved or new ways of working. Using a similar range of questions, a written questionnaire was distributed to parish council clerks in the Authority's executive area.

The summary findings from this research and consultation are included in the Final Report (Appendix 1) and were used to inform the overall Review and recommendations for action set out in the report.

(c) Review of Consultative Arrangements

Information from the research outlined in (b) above was also used to inform this part of the Review.

An independently facilitated workshop for members of the Broads Authority, Navigation Committee, Broads Forum and Broads Local Access Forum was held on 3 October 2012. As a result of the workshop and associated research, this part of the Review was focused largely on the Broads Forum. Forum Members have been updated on the progress of the Review at each of their meetings and have also considered changes to the way they operate, including reviewing their Terms of Reference.

Broads Authority Members are asked to consider the Revised Terms of Reference for the Broads Forum (attached as Appendix 2). In summary, the key changes are:

- Forum Chairman to be elected directly by Forum members
- Parish issues to be a standing agenda item
- Improvements to communication between Forum Members and their nominating groups
- Introduction of new measures to raise the profile of the Forum including Member profiles and a website page
- Introduction of new agenda arrangements to allow greater time for interaction between Forum Members and their nominating groups

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the Final Report and the recommendations therein. Members are also asked to consider the revised Terms of Reference for the Broads Forum. If agreed, the Broads Forum Members will be in a position to implement the revisions at their meeting on 25 April 2013.

Background papers: Nil

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Broads Plan Objectives: Nil

Appendices: APPENDIX 2 – Revised Terms of Reference for the Broads Forum

Enclosure: APPENDIX 1 – Review of Consultative Arrangements and community/stakeholder Engagement Final Summary Report and Recommendations

Broads Forum

1 Terms of Reference

- 1.1 To act as a reference group to offer advice and comment on the Broads Authority's strategic aims and objectives and other key issues as they arise, including the Broads Plan, Broads Local Plan/Local Development Framework and Business Plan.
- 1.2 To provide a consultative forum for discussion on all issues related to the Broads and its wider catchment area.
- 1.3 To promote two-way communication and closer liaison and understanding between the Authority and the various bodies and organisations which have an interest in the Broads and its wider catchment area.
- 1.4 To have regard, when providing advice and comment, to the general duty of the Authority to manage the Broads for the purposes of:
 - (a) conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads;
 - (b) promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public; and
 - (c) protecting the interests of navigation.
- 1.5 To bear in mind the Authority's requirement to have regard to:
 - (a) the national importance of the Broads as an area of natural beauty and one which affords opportunities for open-air recreation;
 - (b) the desirability of protecting the natural resources of the Broads from damage; and
 - (c) the needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interest of those who live or work in the Broads.

2 Membership

- 2.1 The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected by the membership of the Forum. They will be persons who are able to command the respect of the Forum Members and the nominating groups.
- 2.2 The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be appointed for a term of one year. There will be no limit on the number of re-elections.
- 2.3 The balance of the membership will fairly and equitably reflect all the different stakeholder interests in the delivery of the Broads Plan.
- 2.4 Persons who are already members of the Broads Authority will not be eligible for membership of the Forum.
- 2.5 The membership will be of sufficient size to ensure that all the various interest groups are adequately represented and there is sufficient experience and knowledge of the various issues which relate to the management of the Broads, but will not be so large as to become unwieldy.
- 2.6 The bodies and organisations represented on the Forum (the 'nominating groups') will be grouped by category of interest (e.g. boating, cultural heritage, education). The Forum will comprise member representatives of these various categories.
- 2.7 The member representatives will be appointed to the Forum by the nominating groups within each category of interest. Where the groups are unable or unwilling to decide upon a person to represent them, the matter will be referred to the Chairman of the Forum and the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Broads Authority for determination. Nominating groups will be entitled to appoint named substitutes to attend meetings in the event that their member representative is unable to attend.
- 2.8 Each nominating group will be invited to select a correspondent with whom their member representative will liaise to report Forum business and to represent the group's views at Forum meetings.
- 2.9 The nominating groups will be invited to review their member representative every three years, and in so doing to consider the member's attendance record and the extent to which he/she has liaised with and reported back to the groups which he/she represents. If a nominating group is not represented by its member representative or named substitutes at three consecutive meetings, the matter will be referred by the Chairman of the Forum to the nominating group to review their member representative/named substitutes.

- 2.10 The Chairman of the Forum and Chairman of the Broads Authority may delete organisations from the lists of nominating groups where they cease to exist, and add successor and new organisations where it is appropriate to do so. However any wide-ranging review of the membership or categories of interest must be reported to and agreed by the Broads Authority.
- 2.11 The Chairman Vice-Chairman and Members of the Authority may attend meetings of the Forum.
- 2.12 The Chief Executive, together with other officers of the Authority as appropriate, will if available attend meetings of the Forum to present reports and answer questions.
- 2.13 The Forum may, in respect of any particular matter or more generally, invite other persons or representatives of other organisations to attend meetings of the Forum and participate in discussions, but not to vote.

3 Principles

- 3.1 The role of the Forum will be advisory only.
- 3.2 The Forum will consider strategic/significant issues only. It will not be asked to consider detailed operational matters (such as individual planning applications), except where they may have significant strategic or policy importance.
- 3.3 Members of the Forum may propose items for discussion at future meetings. Nominating groups may also propose items for discussion through the Forum Members. Matters to be discussed at the next meeting will be identified either during the previous meeting or through consultation with the Chairman. In the latter case, a minimum of four weeks' notice should be given if the matter is likely to require the Authority to provide a report with background information.
- 3.4 The Forum will be a truly consultative body and its advice and views will be sought in advance of matters being considered by the Authority. As such, it will not be used merely as a rubber stamping exercise or to endorse decisions already taken.
- 3.5 Meetings of the Forum will be open to the public. Members of the public may pose a question for the Forum to debate or make a statement about any matter on the agenda by prior agreement with the Chairman. Such questions or statements should be submitted to the Chairman at least five working days before the meeting, to allow sufficient time for consideration by members in advance of the meeting. The Agenda will contain a standing item on Parish Issues.

- 3.6 The Forum will be accountable directly to the Broads Authority and a record of its proceedings will be received by the Authority. In addition, the advice or comments of the Forum will be reported to and taken into account by the Authority in the decision making process. The Chairman or Vice Chairman will be invited to attend meetings of the Broads Authority to present the record of the Forum's proceedings.
- 3.7 The Forum will meet quarterly as part of the Authority's regular cycle of committee meetings, and on other occasions as may be required.

4 Amendments

- 4.1 Any amendments to the Terms of Reference, Principles and Membership of the Forum, (other than the replacement of member representatives/named substitutes, as set out in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.9, or changes to individual groups within a category of interest), must be agreed by the Broads Authority following consultation with the Chairman of the Forum and the Forum itself.