

Integrated Access Strategy for the Broads

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1. Executive Summary

The Broads is the UK's premier protected wetland, internationally recognised for its landscape, nature conservation and cultural heritage. More than seven million people a year visit the area to enjoy a range of outdoor activities from boating, walking, angling, and cycling; to wildlife watching, photography and visiting historic and cultural assets such as mills and churches. The area has more than 200 km of inland, navigable, lock-free waterways and over 300 km of public rights of way, including three county long distance trails and part of the England Coast Path.

A priority action identified in the Broads Plan 2022-27 that summarises the strategy for access provision in the Broads is for the “development and implementation of schemes to upgrade and improve the network of access points and routes that are linked to visitor facilities and include easier access for people with mobility and sensory needs.”

The Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) 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.

The Broads Authority will continue to work with partners and local communities towards the objectives of this strategy, seeking to make the best use of shared knowledge and resources. The strategy will be delivered through a three-year action plan with detailed annual action plans of priority projects being updated via the Broads Local Access Forum and the Navigation Committee.

This document updates the previous 2019 Integrated Access Strategy, incorporating for the first time the Authority's strategic approach to managing its network of 24-hour moorings and demasting locations. By its nature, the document is focused on strategic aims to provide a broad range of access benefits to all Broads users across land and water. Moorings provide one of the key means by which true integration of land and water access can be facilitated.

2. Introduction

The Broads landscape is a mosaic of interconnected rivers, shallow lakes, fens, marsh, woodland, and agricultural land set between the urban surrounds of Norwich, Great Yarmouth, and Lowestoft. A member of the UK National Parks family, the Broads has a range of national and international designations in recognition of its landscape, nature conservation and cultural features. It is a popular recreational destination, with over 200 km of lock-free rivers and open water bodies, an extensive public rights of way network and a rich variety of natural, historic, and cultural assets to be explored and enjoyed.

As part of the government's response to the 2019 Landscapes Review of National Parks & Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's), the intention is for legislation to place a stronger requirement on partners such as local authorities and public bodies to contribute to their delivery. A new Protected Landscapes Partnership will bring together national organisations representing England's National Parks, AONB's, National Trails and Natural England to collaborate, share knowledge and tackle common objectives such as nature recovery and improved public access. Further to this, Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan includes the joint aims of connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing and creating more green infrastructure.

The Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) 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. To ensure the strategy is truly integrated across the Broads it will include guide mooring and de-masting provision on the Broads waterways, as previously covered by the Authority's 2006 Mooring Strategy.

Adequate and appropriate provision of public access points, routes and services is vital to sustainable recreation and tourism. This strategy aims to manage and develop the access network in the Broads in an integrated way considering how individual access points and routes fit into the overall network of access provision in the Broads. The strategy will also take account of other strategies and plans covering interrelated themes such as sustainable tourism, biodiversity, climate change, economic growth, landscape and cultural heritage, angling, water space management and public transport.

The key strategic actions identified in the Broads Plan (2022-2027) that inform this strategy are:

- C2 - Maintain existing navigation water space and develop appropriate opportunities to extend access for various types of craft.
- C4 - Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways.

- E1 - Improve the integrated network of access routes and points (with easier access for people with mobility and sensory needs), linked to visitor facilities.

An initial consultation to refresh the basic assumptions of the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) was conducted with statutory and major stakeholders as part of this three-year review. The IAS review also keeps pace with the refreshed Broads Plan (2022-27) which has been produced in the interim period. The IAS is one of the sub-strategies that informs how the aims of the Broads Plan will be achieved. Various other relevant sub-strategies also inform the IAS include the Local Plan for the Broads, Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Waterways Management Strategy and Biodiversity & Water Strategy (see Appendix).

Future development of permanent or residential moorings, whilst a key issue for the Broads generally, will not be considered within this strategy and must be addressed through the Local Development Framework. All data gathered through the Local Development Framework process will be made available to Planning Officers for consideration in the development of the Core Strategy.

3. Scope

The scope of the Broads Integrated Access Strategy covers the following access types, categorised under one of three themes.

Table 1. Access types by category

Land-based access	Land-to-water access	Short stay mooring and demasting provision
Public rights of way	Slipways and other launching facilities	Broads Authority 24-hour moorings
Permissive paths	Staithes (landing stages)	Broads Authority demasting and emergency moorings
Public transport links	Ferries	
Private transport facilities	Angling access points	
Land designated as Open Access land (under the CROW Act 2000)		

This strategy provides the framework to deliver the long-term aim for sustainable, integrated access in the Broads. It is for anyone with an interest in access in the Broads including users, landowners and managers and stakeholders. Actions will be informed by a GIS-based spatial analysis approach and guided by the principles, strategic aims and objectives listed in the following sections.

This strategy also takes account of other relevant local and regional strategies for interrelated topics such as recreation (including the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Improvement Plans), climate change adaptation, landscape and cultural heritage, community health and wellbeing, local transport, and biodiversity.

4. Principles

The following principles are applicable across all access related themes (land-based access, land to water access, and mooring and demasting provision) and will be used to help guide the development and delivery of access plans and projects in the Broads:

- 4.1 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion – to ensure that access is available to as many people as possible, regardless of their age, ability, circumstance, and any protected characteristics. It is based on the principle that providing for the widest range of users creates better places, richer experiences, and more benefits.
- 4.2 Sustainability - to ensure that projects and plans to increase economic development and social well-being are conducted without depletion and degradation of the earth's natural resources.
- 4.3 Financial cost effectiveness – to ensure that the cost and value for money of all projects is evaluated at the outset and the financial viability considers a broad range of benefits, such as to public health and the local economy.
- 4.4 Biodiversity Gain - project proposals for new or improved access provision will need to demonstrate that negative impacts on the environment, ecology and designated sites can be avoided or minimised. Where negative impact is not avoidable, schemes will follow the principles of Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 4.5 Sustainable travel choices - To encourage public transport, walking, cycling and non-powered boating, and improve links between public transport provision, visitor destination points and access between land and water and to the water's edge.
- 4.6 Partnership and community involvement - project proposals should demonstrate partnership and community involvement in planning, delivery, and ongoing maintenance liability. Relevant stakeholders will be consulted on the scope and benefits of project proposals to maximise opportunities for collaborative working.
- 4.7 Access for All - Ensure provision of safe access with adoption of the least restrictive options following the design principles of coherent; safe; comfortable; and attractive: to encourage and enable people of all ages and abilities to experience the Broads' countryside and waterways.
- 4.8 Innovative design - All access infrastructure to be consistent with local planning policies whilst delivering user benefits and value for money.
- 4.9 Asset liabilities - When considering acquiring new assets, the Broads Authority should consider the cumulative implications of taking on new liabilities, in particular the

potential cost of replacing physical assets, maintenance costs over duration of tenure, etc.

- 4.10 Climate change resilience - Project design should consider the potential impacts of climate change, such as changes in weather patterns and water levels, to support long-term resilience and adaptation.
- 4.11 Impact reduction - Encourage provision of access that relieves visitor pressure on internationally designated sites, avoids disturbance of protected species and helps to accommodate growth.
- 4.12 Access hubs - To identify, promote and develop access hubs where it would be appropriate to focus access provision. Access hubs are areas of the Broads which have connections to public transport, cycling and footpath networks, local services and amenities, public facilities such as toilets and car parking, and provision of information.

5. Land-based access – aims

- 5.1 Provide appropriate information on access to recreational opportunities and interpretation about recreational sites.
- 5.2 Maintain, improve, and promote sustainable modes of transport in and to the Broads by working with local authorities and transport providers.
- 5.3 Support the development of cycle hire facilities, cycle security and routes in new locations for the benefit of boaters and land-based visitors.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Maximise and promote use of appropriate open access land under CROW Act 2000.
- 5.6 Seek opportunities to increase provision for electric charging points for cars and bikes.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 Assist partners in priority path maintenance in the Broads, where the Broads Authority can add value.

6. Land-to-water access – aims

- 6.1 Support the development of paddle trails with appropriate land-based facilities in suitable areas.
- 6.2 Identify appropriate locations where improved car parking, paddle storage, secure trailer parking and cycle storage would benefit users (e.g., at slipways).
- 6.3 Seek opportunities to extend and formalise access to new areas of navigable water space by paddle craft where appropriate.
- 6.4 Improve access to the water's edge and alongside water for the purposes of walking, angling (including angling platforms) and bird watching.
- 6.5 Improve links from moorings to land-based facilities and visitor destinations.
- 6.6 Improve and expand access points between land and water, including visitor moorings, staithe, safety moorings, canoe portages, ferries, and slipways, where possible.
- 6.7 Work in partnership to protect staithe rights and access benefits they bring.
- 6.8 Support provision of public boat trips which support accessibility.

7. Mooring and demasting provision – aims

- 7.1 Improve the availability and accessibility of information to users on mooring opportunities, location details and facilities available.
- 7.2 Maintain the free use of Broads Authority unstaffed moorings.
- 7.3 Maintain a policy of no net reduction on publicly accessible mooring length directly managed by the Broads Authority.
- 7.4 The Broads Authority should not enter leases for mooring sites that require the payment of annual fees higher than those recommended by the Authority's Property advisers.
- 7.5 Promote most effective use of mooring space through double alongside or stern-on mooring at appropriate sites.
- 7.6 Promote provision of charging points for vessel electric batteries for propulsion.
- 7.7 Seek contributions/ establish charges for ancillary services e.g., water donation points, electricity provision from pillars.
- 7.8 The Broads Authority will work to ensure wherever possible that the distribution of short stay moorings is a maximum of 30-minute cruising time apart (equal to 2 miles distance at 4mph).
- 7.9 Seek to provide de-masting mooring opportunities at all four quadrants of low bridges.
- 7.10 Adopt a range of mooring design options which offer value for money where access to land is not essential.
- 7.11 Increase the proportion of moorings with design features allowing greater range of usability, accessibility, low freeboard, etc.

8. Objectives

Impact scoring	1 – No Impact	2 – Minor Impact	3 – Moderate Impact	4 – Significant Impact	5 – Major Impact
Achievability scoring	1 – Very Unlikely to be Achieved	2 – Unlikely to be Achieved	3 – Achievable	4 – Likely to be Achieved	5 – Highly Achievable

Table 2. Land-based access objectives

Objective number	Land Based Access Objectives	Achievability	Impact	Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
L 1	Develop a Communications Plan to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusivity in land access provision around the Broads.	5	4	20	Devise and implement communications plan. Thinking particularly about how to break down social, cultural and age barriers.	Implement communications plan.	Review communications plan.
L 2	Review the Broads Authority role in Public Rights of Way (PRoW) maintenance.	5	4	20	Carry out review of PRoW maintenance by the Authority.	Consult with stakeholders.	Plan for review next year.

L 3	Identify priority sites for new and improved access provision.	4	3	12	With partners identify priority sites. Consult with stakeholders about what site improvements could take place.	Project plan and seek funding.	Complete.
L 4	Consult with users regarding priority locations for the development and promotion of access hubs and facility improvements.	3	4	12	Consultation on location of access hubs / development of hubs / definition of hubs.	Promote facilities. Project plan for improvements. Seek funding.	Implement project/s.
L 5	Work with local authorities and transport providers, to promote use and enhancement of the travel around the Broads.	3	4	12	Contact local authorities and transport providers to seek opportunities to work in partnership.	Promote facilities. Project plan for improvements. Seek funding.	Promote facilities.
L 6	Carry out feasibility study of installing electric charging	5	2	10	Review local electricity grid capacity at Broads	Seek external funding and partners who could aid with	Initiate project/s.

	points for cars and cycles at Broads Authority sites.				Authority sites with parking facilities.	increasing access to electric charging points for vehicles and boats.	
L 7	Look at what Open Access land is available for increased access opportunities.	2	4	8	Review Broads Authority's role and duties with regards to Open Access land.	Review access provision and barriers to greater usage of Open Access land.	Project plan and seek funding for improvements.
L 8	Norfolk County Council Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling Strategy and Suffolk County Council Cycling and Walking Strategy linking up with BLAF to promote cycling, walking and horse-riding provision.	4	2	8	Discuss strategies with NLAF and BLAF.	Identify how the strategies can be used within the Broads.	Working with partners implement strategies.

Table 3. Land-to-water based access objectives

Objective Number	Land-to-Water Access Objectives	Achievability	Impact	Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
LW 1	Develop a Communications plan for land-to-water access on the Broads.	5	4	20	Devise and implement communications plan. Thinking particularly about how to break down social, cultural and age barriers.	Review and implement communications plan.	Review and implement communications plan.
LW 2	To assist the prioritisation of service delivery, develop a method of determining the relative boating activity within waterways management units, by using aggregated and anonymised mobile phone data.	4	4	16	Learn to use data system. Use data to create a prioritisation matrix.	Implement prioritisation matrix.	

LW 3	Continue to work at multi-use hubs with access to water identified around the Broads.	5	3	15	Identify hubs with access to water. Work with local stakeholders for improvements.	Promote multi-use hubs with access to water.	
LW 4	Update and disseminate open water swimming advice and guidance.	5	2	10	With help from Rangers monitor swimming activity. Work with partners and local water safety forum to communicate safety messaging. Report to BLAF.	Continue monitoring and working with partners on safety communications. Consider safety at hot spots. Report to BLAF.	Continue monitoring and working with partners on safety communications. Consider safety at hot spots. Report to BLAF.
LW 5	Develop a web-based zoomable/ scrollable map of access facilities in the Broads.	3	4	12	Improve map provisions and usability for Broads users.	Annual review and update.	Annual review and update.
LW 6	Carry out a review with stakeholders to understand the issues	4	3	12	Work with sailing clubs to carry out a review.	See what improvements can be	Implement.

	and barriers to sailing in the Broads.					made to break down barriers.	
LW 7	Promote and enhance opportunities for launch of small vessels and paddlecraft where vehicle access or parking is possible.	4	3	12	Identify sites with the help of Rangers and local stakeholders. Maintain existing access points.	Use study to seek partners, external funding and improve facilities at sites. Maintain existing access points.	Implement project/s Maintain existing access points.
LW 8	Maintain and promote the Broads Authority managed angling pads/ platforms.	5	2	10	Maintain existing platforms. Work with comms team to promote. Work with local stakeholders to promote.	Maintain existing platforms. Work with comms team to promote. Work with local stakeholders to promote.	Maintain existing platforms. Work with comms team to promote. Work with local stakeholders to promote.
LW 9	Promote and enhance opportunities for paddlecraft routes/trails.	3	3	9	Using study of craft transportation sites identify where craft can be launched. What are the facilities at these sites?	Work with stakeholders on routes and facilities within the Broads.	Seek funding and carry out projects.

LW 10	Review of access provision at Mutford Lock and adjacent Authority owned land.	3	3	9	Carry out feasibility study of access improvements at Mutford lock.	Develop a business case, project plan. Seek partners and funding for any access developments which have become apparent from survey.	Carry out project works.
LW 11	Review access to slipways across the Broads to ensure long-term usage.	4	2	8		Review of locations, ownership, general condition and barriers to wider usage.	Develop enhancement plans at prioritised sites.
LW 12	Review the accessibility arrangements for public boat trips.	2	3	6		Carry out review; seek partners and funding; seek accessibility enhancements.	Develop enhancement plans.

Table 4. Mooring and demasting provision objectives

Objective Number	Mooring and Demasting Provision Objectives	Achievability	Impact	Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
M 1	Report annually on total mooring length managed by the Broads Authority compared to agreed baseline.	5	5	25	Agree a baseline that reflects capacity where needed and report.	Report.	Report.
M 2	Review policy regarding DP16 moorings. Improve communications to public regarding DP16 moorings.	5	4	20	Review maps of DP16 moorings thinking about usage and accessibility.	Work with comms team to improve communication around DP16 moorings.	
M 3	Identify locations for new short-stay moorings in gaps identified by gap analysis.	4	5	20	Cost up what it would take to fill all the gaps in gap analysis. Agree a process for new mooring locations.	From prioritised sites approach landowners with project proposal.	Develop projects. Implement.

M 4	Review de-masting provision in the Broads and develop a prioritisation methodology to guide future investment in new provision.	4	3	12	Review de-masting provision. Identify points needing improvement.	Develop prioritisation methodology. Use methodology against sites identified for improvement.	Seek funding and implement improvements.
M 5	Review ancillary services provision at 24-hour moorings.	5	3	15	Review of water and electric hook ups at Broads Authority moorings.	Review fast charging for battery powered propulsion systems at Broads Authority moorings.	
M 6	Identify the highest priority modification for accessibility at 24-hour moorings.	3	5	15	Consult on where access issues are having a negative impact on user enjoyment.	Create project proposals. Seek funding.	Carry out project/s.
M 7	Review lease fees and assess on a case by case basis.	5	3	15	Review lease fees.	Continue to assess.	
M 8	Feasibility study of different mooring	5	3	15	Feasibility study and consultation.	Implement findings.	Continue implementing.

	design options and consult.						
M 9	Work on a zoomable/ scrollable map of Broads Authority Waterways facilities which include moorings.	3	3	9	Improve map provisions, include moorings.	Update map.	Update map.
M 10	Review every 3 years double alongside and stern-on mooring provision in appropriate locations.	5	2	10			Complete review.
M 11	Identify if there are popular moorings which need to become staffed.	4	4	16			Carry out review.

9. Reporting and Communicating Progress

9.1 Reporting Process

The detailed annual work plan will be reported via the Broads Local Access Forum for the 'land access' and 'land-to-water access' themes (section 5 and 6 of this document) in June each year, and via the Navigation Committee for the '24-hour moorings and demasting provision' theme (section 7 of this document) in April each year. These annual meetings will also report progress achieved against the aims set out in the three-year action plan.

9.2 Operational Updates

At regular Navigation Committee meetings, progress will be reported on the major waterways management projects, including those on 24-hour moorings, demasting moorings and slipways/launch points. At Broads Local Access Forum meetings, a standing item will be the reporting on delivery of specific land and land-to-water projects identified through this strategy.

9.3 Review of three-year action plan

At the end of the three-year plan a full review of progress against the strategic aims and objectives will be carried out. Prior to the next three-year action plan being developed, public consultation will be repeated on the priorities, aims and objectives. Updating changes in priorities, approaches, and practices in implementing access improvements is an on-going process and the three-year review enables these to be captured and evaluated in a suitable timeframe.

10. Appendix

Associated strategies and Plans

Broads Plan (2022-2027) [Broads Plan 2022 - 2027 \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk/broads-plan-2022-2027)

Broads Authority sub-strategies [Strategy \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk/strategy)

- Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy
- Local Plan for the Broads
- Waterways Management Strategy
- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Climate Change and Carbon Reduction

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Improvement Plans [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans - Norfolk County Council](#) and [Improvements for walking, cycling and wheeling - Suffolk County Council](#)

2019 Landscapes Review of National Parks & AONB's [Landscapes review: National Parks and AONBs - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/landscapes-review)

Progress Reporting on the Integrated Access Strategy

Broads Local Access Forum [Broads Local Access Forum \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk/broads-local-access-forum)

Navigation Committee [Navigation Committee \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk/navigation-committee)

Key partners for engagement and strategic delivery:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| • Norfolk Coast AONB | • Great Yarmouth Borough Council | • Marine Management Organisation |
| • British Canoeing | • Highways England | • Open Spaces Society |
| • Broadland District Council | • Homes England | • RSPB |
| • Broads Society | • National Highways | • South Norfolk Council |
| • Broads Hire Boat Federation | • Natural England | • Sport England |
| • Campaign for National Parks | • Norfolk County Council | • Suffolk County Council |
| • East Suffolk Council | • Norfolk FWAG | • Suffolk Wildlife Trust |
| • Environment Agency | • North Norfolk District Council | • Upper Thurne Working Group |
| • Forestry Commission | • Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association | |