

**Review of Consultative Arrangements:
Evaluating Changes to the Broads Forum**
Report by Director of Planning and Resources

Summary: This report outlines the findings of an audit into the Broads Authority's Consultation Activities and Partnership Provisions undertaken in January 2015.

In particular, the audit examined the implementation of the Action Plan arising from the Review of Consultative Arrangements and Community/ Stakeholder Engagement, carried out by the Broads Authority during 2012/13.

Forum Members are invited to note the Audit findings and give their views on the effectiveness of the changes to the Terms of Reference and operation of the Broads Forum, made as part of the above Review.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Broads Authority undertook a Review of Consultative Arrangements and Community/Stakeholder Engagement in 2012/2013 and implemented an Action Plan (attached at Appendix A) in 2013/14. Broads Forum Members took part in the review process. A key output was a revised Terms of Reference for the Broads Forum (Appendix B), which was subsequently agreed by Forum Members in February 2013 and by the Broads Authority in March 2013.
- 1.2 In January 2015, the Broads Authority's Auditors examined the Authority's Consultation Activities and Partnership Provisions, including the implementation of the above Action Plan.

2 Audit Findings

- 2.1 The Auditors produced their report in February/March 2015. Of the four possible assurance ratings – Unsatisfactory, Limited, Adequate and Good – the Authority received an 'adequate' rating for this audit.
- 2.2 The Auditors made three recommendations all of which they considered to be of medium priority, which are outlined below:

1. Parish Forum Feedback is provided to the Broads Authority

Consideration should be given to providing a more formal feedback report, covering attendees, issues raised and the advice given at the Parish Forum meetings. (Target date – May 2015)

2. Parish Forums are consulted on Strategic Priorities

Consideration should be given to increasing the Parish Forums participation in the setting of the Strategic Priorities by holding a joint meeting / workshop during the consultation period for the Parish Forums. (Target Date – January 2016)

3. Consultative Review Action Plan

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures put in place to implement the Review of Consultative Arrangements recommendations should be carried out. (Target Date – March 2016)

These recommendations have been included in the Broads Authority's Annual Governance Statement, adopted by the Authority in September 2015 for implementation before the end of the financial year 2015/16.

3 Effectiveness of Changes to Broads Forum

- 3.1 This report is concerned primarily with the aspects of the Action Plan (Appendix A) that relate to the operation of the Broads Forum, and specifically options for improving the effectiveness of the Forum and communication between Forum Members and their nominating Groups. The specific recommendations are in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Extract from Action Plan that relates to the Broads Forum

A. Regular consultative committees/forums - Broads Forum			
A1: Forum members to elect Chair and Vice Chair	Run process to elect new Chair and Vice Chair	JO	Election process to be commenced April 2013 meeting
A2: Strengthen communication between Forum members and constituent groups	Nominate 'correspondent' for each group on Forum with whom the Forum representative member will liaise, and provide supporting information	JO/ MIC	By April 2013
	Review list of Forum groups and invite suggestions for new groups	JO	By April 2013

A3: Raise profile of Forum and its members	Provide dedicated Broads Forum page on BA website – to include who's who of members, meetings timetables, contacts, comments box, etc.	Com ms/ MIC	By July 2013
A4: Encourage more ownership of Agenda by Forum groups	Include 'Parish issues' as standing item on agenda	JO	From April 2013
	Strengthen membership attendance rules	JO	New wording included in revised Terms of Reference
	Publicise timetable of meetings to all Forum groups (via correspondent) and wider public (via BA website)	JO	From April 2013
A5: Increase public access to Forum	Reinforce ability of members of public to attend Forum meetings and pose issues for debate by Forum members	JO	New wording included in revised Terms of Reference
	Create and publicise Forum website page on BA website (see above)	JL	By July 2013
A6: Review Terms of Reference	Review and as necessary redraft Terms of Reference to reflect agreed review recommendations	AL/ JO	Terms of Ref redrafted; to be adopted by May 2013

- 3.1 While the Action Plan has been fully implemented, the Auditors were keen that the Authority explore and report on the effectiveness of the changes introduced.
- 3.2 Forum Members are therefore invited to comment on how effective they feel the changes have been in improving the operation of the Forum and the communication between Members and their nominating groups. Members may wish to consult with their groups prior to this meeting.
- 3.3 A summary of some of the changes is set out below.

3.3.1 Chairman and Vice Chairman

Since April 2013, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Forum have been elected from within, and by, the Forum membership, replacing the independent Chair arrangement previously in place.

Richard Card from the NSBA was elected as the first Chairman under this new arrangement and served for 12 months before stepping down. Keith Bacon from the Broads Society served as Vice Chairman. In April 2014, Keith

Bacon was elected as Chairman, with Peter Medhurst (representing the Broads Local Access Forum) and Mike Flett (Parishes in the Northern Broads) as Vice Chairmen. Peter is no longer a Forum member, having left the area in July 2015.

3.3.2 Communication between Forum Members and nominating groups

A review of the list of Forum groups and representatives was carried out in February-April 2013 as part of the revision to the Terms of Reference.

3.3.3. Broad Forum web page

The Broads Forum has its own page on the Broads Authority website, displaying agendas, meeting dates, Terms of Reference and information on the Forum members. It may be viewed here: [Broads Forum](#)

3.3.4 Broads Forum agenda and meetings

'Parish Issues' has been included on the Agenda as a standing item since April 2013. A wide range of matters have been raised under this item, including: Mutford Lock, Ludham Footpath, Oulton Broad Free Quay, Chedgrave Common, Pegasus Development at Oulton Broad, and Whitlingham access issues.

New wording has been included in the Terms of Reference aimed at strengthening member attendance.

Forum Members have provided more reports/presentations, so that the agenda is less Broads Authority led. This has included presentations on BRASCA, Angling and Prymnesium, Drought and Climate Change, Long-term Conservation of the Broads, and Crime on the Broads.

Publication of agendas has been at least two weeks in advance of meeting dates, via the Broads Authority website.

3.3.5 Public access to Broads Forum meetings

An opportunity for members of the public to raise issues/questions directly with Forum Members has been included as a standing item on the agenda, although to date this opportunity has not been used.

3.3.6 Terms of Reference

The Forum produced, consulted on and adopted a new Terms of Reference in 2013, incorporating a number of the changes outlined above.

- 3.4 The views of Forum Members on the effectiveness of these changes are sought, and will be reported to the Broads Authority as part of the overall response to the audit.

Background papers: Review of Consultative Arrangements and
Community/Stakeholder Engagement – Final Report
March 2013

Author: Andrea Long
Date of report: 7 October 2015

Broads Plan Objectives: Nil

Appendices: APPENDIX A –[Review of Consultative Arrangements and
Community Engagement Final Report](#) – Action Plan
APPENDIX B –[Terms of Reference for the Broads Forum](#)

APPENDIX A – Review of Consultative Arrangements and Community Engagement Final Report – Action Plan 2013

Recommendations	Actions	Lead	Progress
A. General engagement principles and guidelines			
A1: Clarify BA decision making structure and rationale	Provide diagram of key BA decision making mechanisms and processes - include in stakeholder engagement guidance and on BA website	JO/ MIC	Included in draft document (see A3 below)
	Assess all stakeholder working/liaison groups led or regularly attended by BA and identify need for rationalisation/improvement	AL/ MIC	List prepared; improvements to be discussed with relevant officers
A2: Provide clear and consistent guidance on stakeholder engagement	Produce internal working guidance for BA staff (and Member reference) on stakeholder engagement principles and procedures	MIC	Draft document prepared
	Produce information for public on how BA consults them and how to get involved – publish in paper copy (e.g. pamphlet) and on BA website	MIC/ JL	In progress. For completion in 2013/14 in association with new corporate website
	Assess staff knowledge and skills in stakeholder engagement and provide necessary training, e.g. in running facilitated workshops and events	AL/ MIC	Ongoing. Provide training event for staff by March 2014.
A3: Provide guidance to BA staff on strategy/ plan preparation	Produce internal working guidance for BA staff on strategy/plan preparation, linked to stakeholder engagement guidance	MIC	Draft document prepared.
A4: Raise public profile of BA members	Update 'who's who' thumb nail biographies of BA members and publish on website	JO/ JL	In progress. For completion in 2013/14 in association with new corporate website
	Assign members to Parish Forum areas (see below)	AL	See D1 below
	Include section in engagement guidelines for staff that sets out the key role of Members in this process	MIC	Included in draft document (see A3 below)
B. Regular consultative committees/forums - Broads Forum			
B1: Forum members to elect Chair and Vice Chair	Run process to elect new Chair and Vice Chair	JO	Election process to be commenced April 2013 meeting
B2: Strengthen communication between Forum members and	Nominate 'correspondent' for each group on Forum with whom the Forum representative member will liaise, and provide supporting information	JO/ MIC	By April 2013

Recommendations	Actions	Lead	Progress
constituent groups	Review list of Forum groups and invite suggestions for new groups	JO	By April 2013

B3: Raise profile of Forum and its members	Provide dedicated Broads Forum page on BA website – to include who's who of members, meetings timetables, contacts, comments box, etc	Comms /MIC	By July 2013
B4: Encourage more ownership of Agenda by Forum groups	Include 'Parish issues' as standing item on agenda	JO	From April 2013
	Strengthen membership attendance rules	JO	New wording included in revised Terms of Reference
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	Create and publicise Forum website page on BA website (see above)	JL	By July 2013
B6: Review Terms of Reference	Review and as necessary redraft Terms of Reference to reflect agreed review recommendations	AL/JO	Terms of Reference redrafted; to be adopted by May 2013

C. Regular consultative committees/forums - other

C1: Review Broads Local Access Forum (LAF)	Examine arrangements of National Park Authorities in regard to County Council access officer attendance at LAF meetings and encourage stronger links	BLAF chair/ BA chair	In progress - Norfolk County Council officer invited to March BLAF meeting
C2: Review Navigation Committee	No changes recommended		n/a

D. Community engagement mechanisms

D1: Establish Parish Forums	Prepare proposals for establishment of (x4) area based parish forums in consultation with parish councils. Pilot and review proposal	AL	Included in BA Strategic Priorities for 2013/14 - pilot by Sept 2013
D2: Consider establishment of BA online public forum	Online forums researched and BA/Broads Forum members consulted; idea not progressed at this stage		n/a
D3: Review structure/ format of BA annual meeting	Dockyard Open Day to be held in June 2013 as a trial of a new format; other formats to be considered	JP	In progress
D4: Improve	Produce residents' newsletter	Comms	Identified in BA

information delivery to Broads residents			Comms Team Work Programme for 2013-14
D5: Make better use of non-BA led engagement methods	Investigate use of citizens panels (including Norfolk County Council citizens' panel), council newsletters/ mailouts, etc	AL	In progress