



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

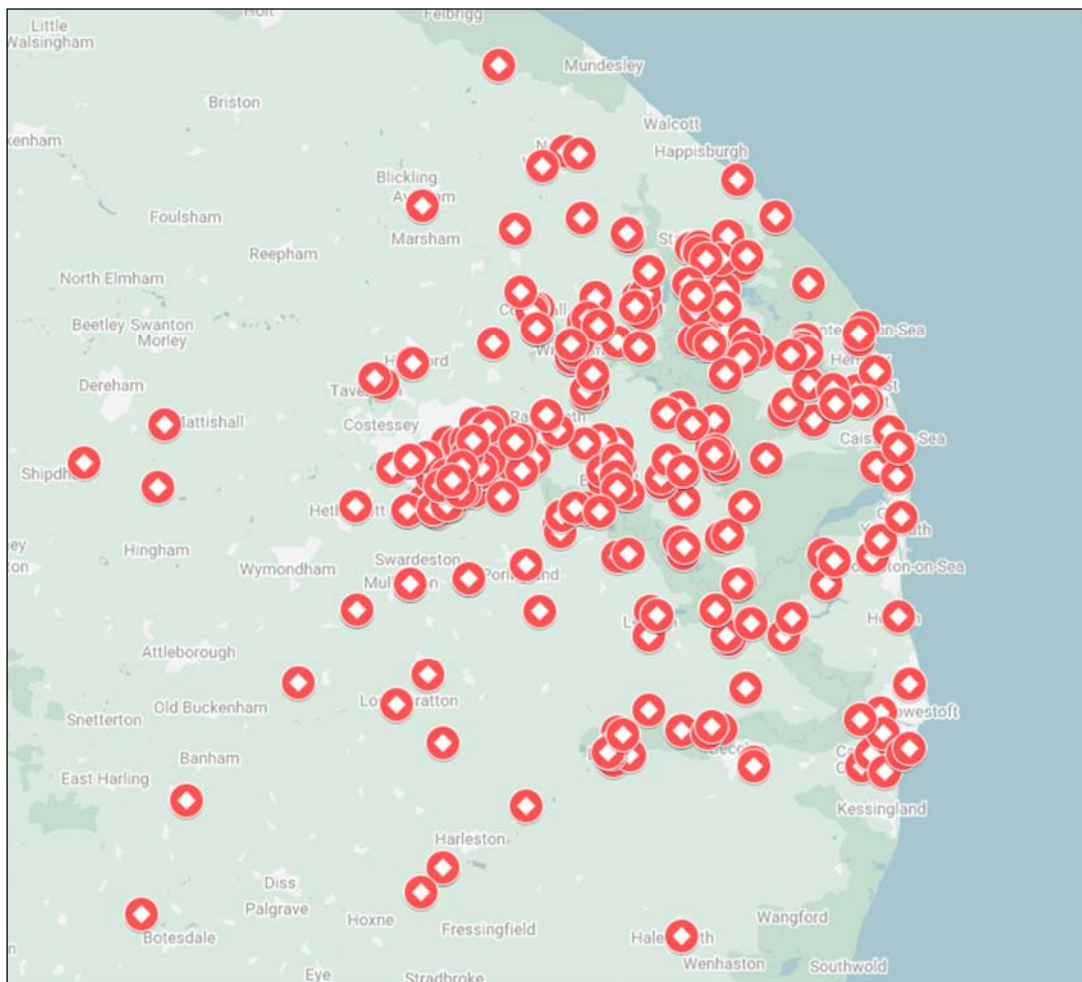
The majority of responses came from individuals. A smaller number of responses were submitted on behalf of organisations or groups, including businesses, councillors, and voluntary organisations.

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

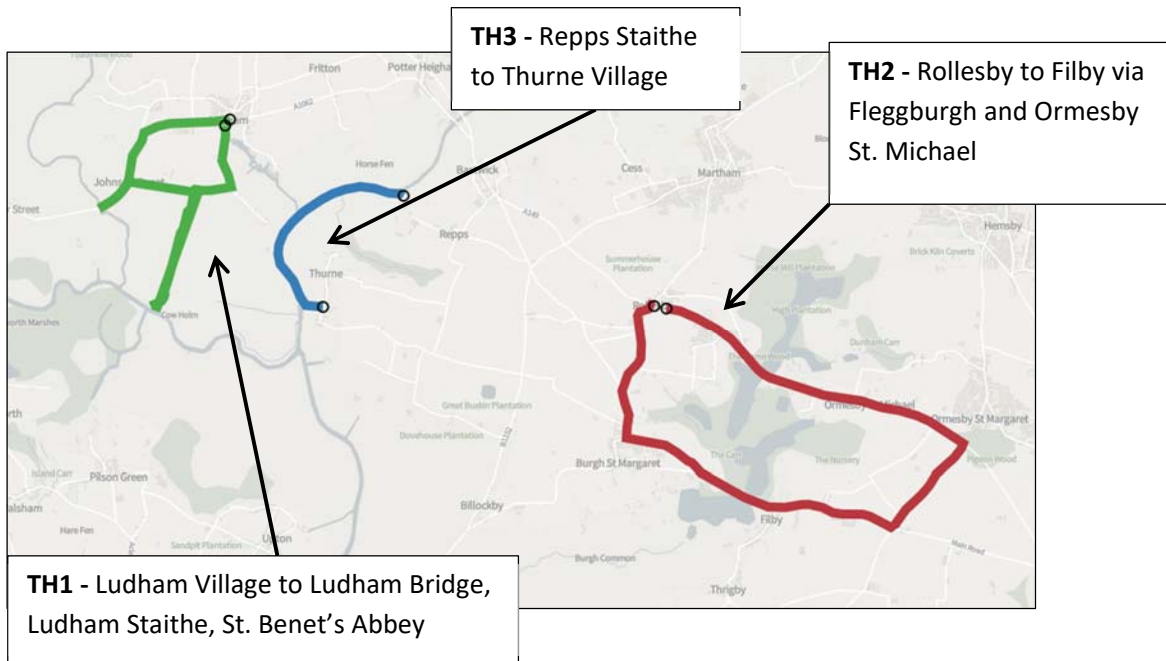
This Plan actively supports Norfolk County Council's ambition to enhance and promote its network of long-distance trails, with a particular focus on those that pass through the Broads: the Angles Way, Weavers' Way, and Wherryman's Way. A key aspiration is the strategic upgrade of the entirety of these 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

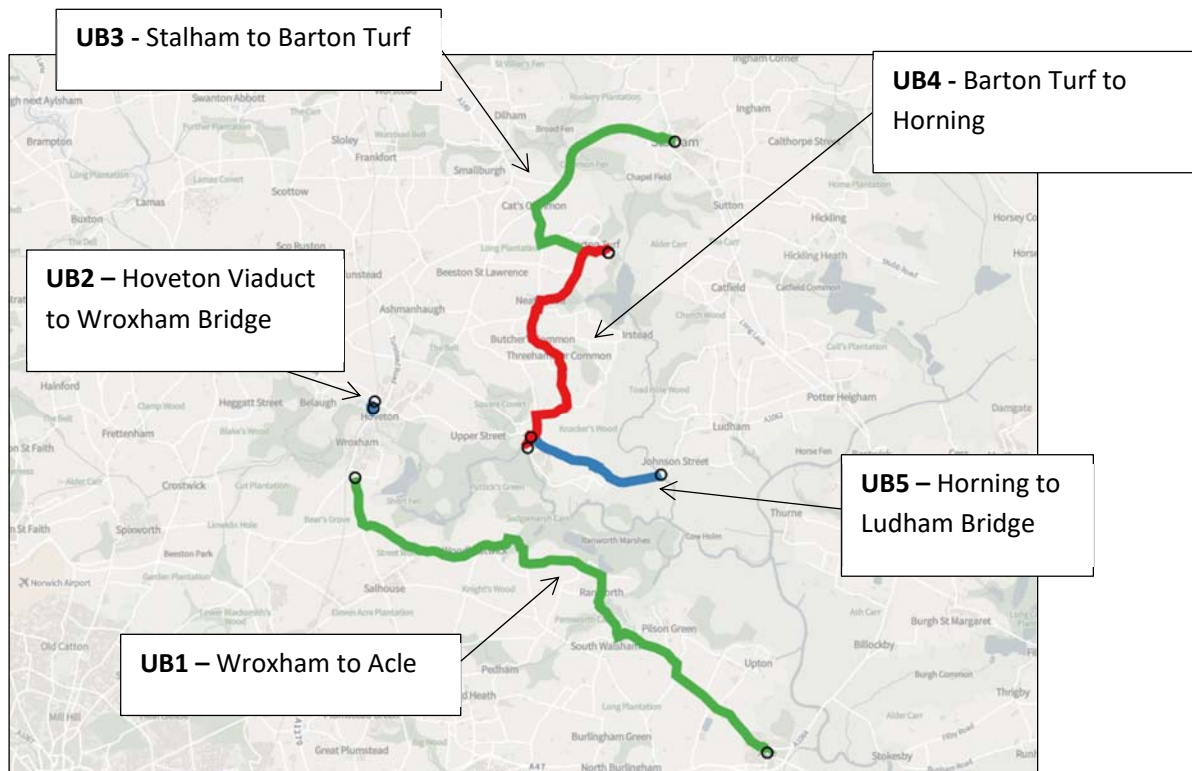
Route Reference	Route	Route Description
TH1	Ludham Village to Ludham Bridge, Ludham Staithe, St. Benet's Abbey	Improved wayfinding and access on an 8.8km route connecting Ludham village to Womack Staithe and Ludham Bridge. Integrations with moorings, local amenities, How Hill and St. Benet's Abbey.
TH2	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

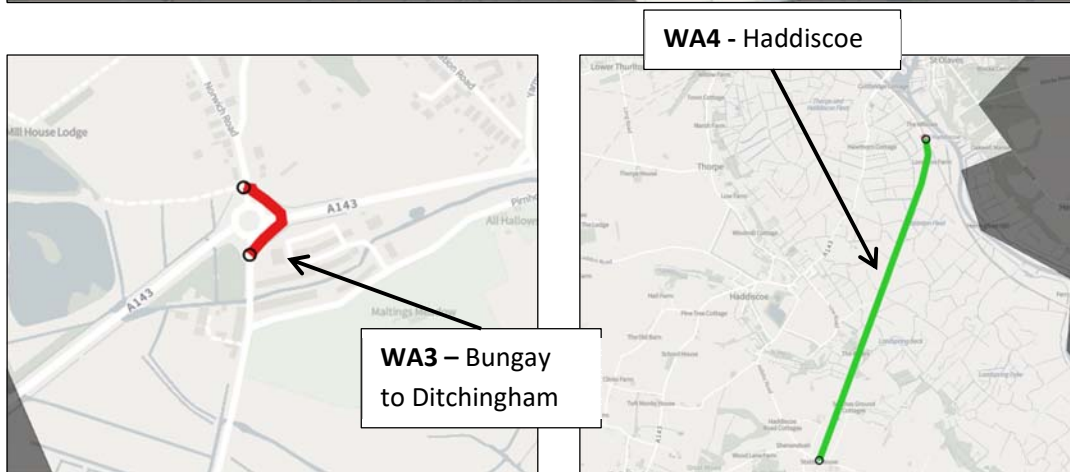
Route Reference	Route	Route Description
UB1	Wroxham to Acle	A cycling and walking route to connect Wroxham to Acle via Salhouse and South Walsham utilising quiet lanes.
UB2	Hoveton Viaduct to Wroxham Bridge	A walking route connecting Bure Valley Path to Hoveton Viaduct, Hoveton Riverside Park, Wroxham 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

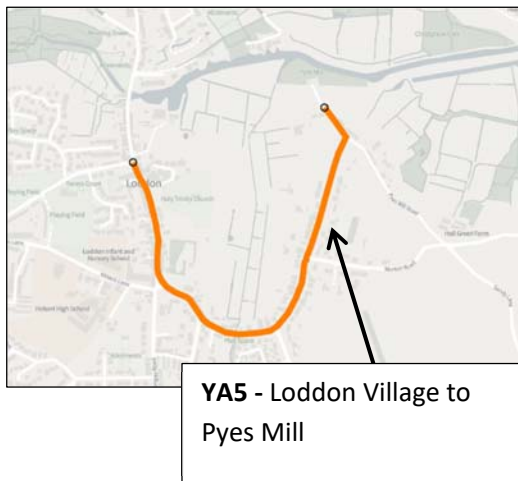
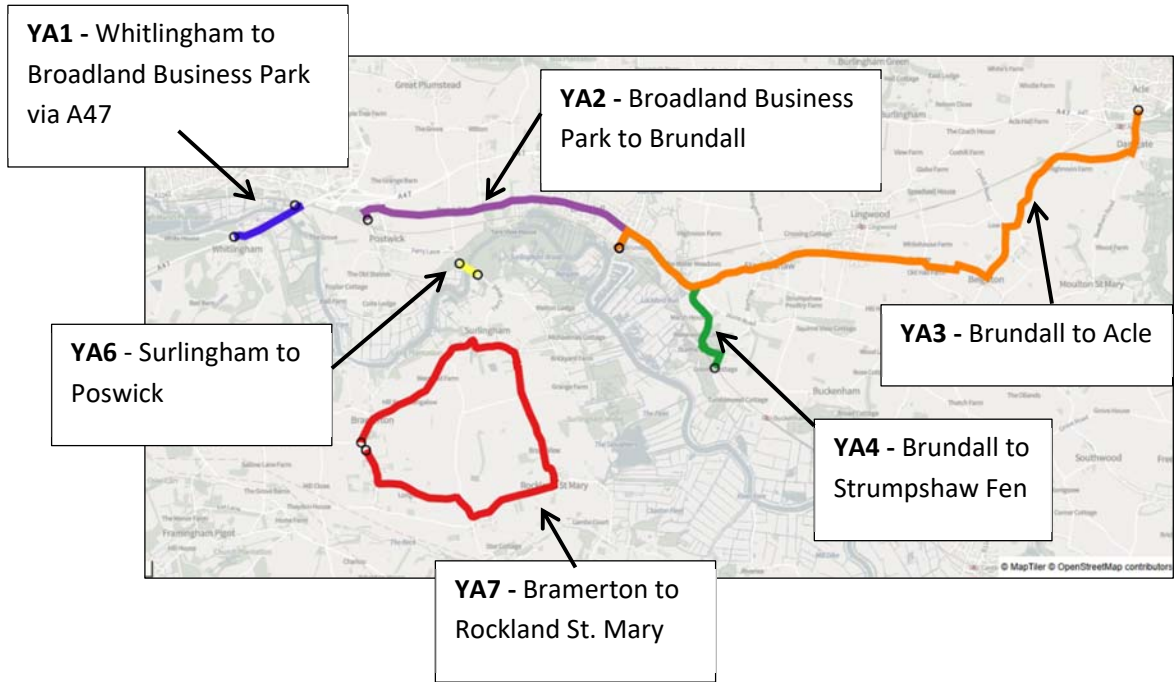
Route Reference	Route	Route Description
WA1	Geldeston Village to Geldeston Locks	A 1.5km cycling and walking route to connect Geldeston Village to Geldeston Locks and 24-hour mooring. Feasibility study for ramp to bridge to Suffolk, owned by Environment Agency.
WA2	Geldeston to Ellingham	Repair and enhanced 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](#)

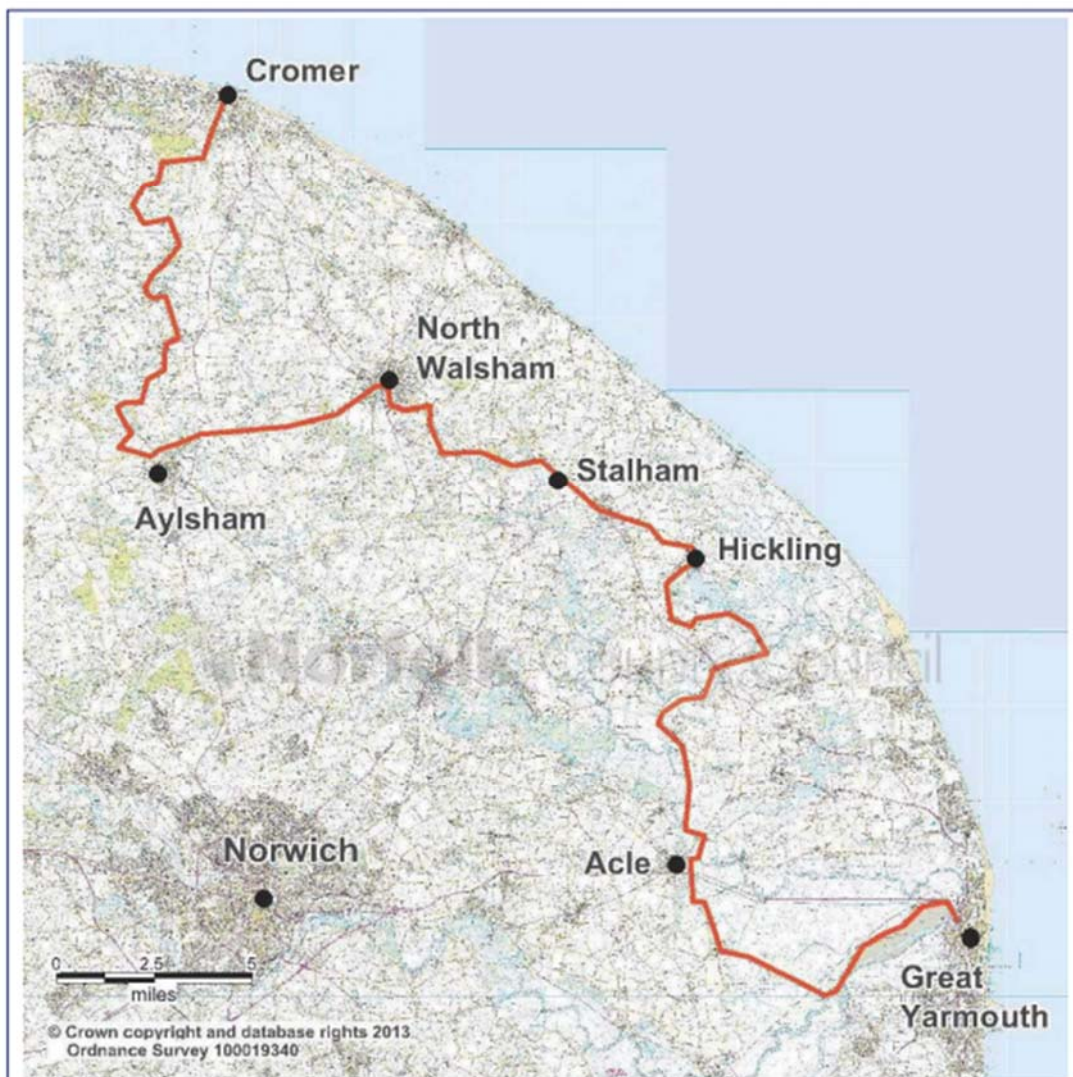
61 miles

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.