

# Broads Authority

26 July 2024

Agenda item number 10

## Strategic priorities- update

Report by Senior Governance Officer

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### Purpose

This report sets out the latest progress in implementing the Authority's annual strategic priorities for 2024/25.

### Broads Plan context

The Broads Plan is a key part of the Authority's strategic framework.

### Recommended decision

To note the progress in implementing the 2024/25 priorities.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Each year the Broads Authority identifies a small set of strategic priorities, which focus on projects that have high resource needs or a very large impact on the Broads, or that are politically sensitive. Setting these priorities helps target the Authority's resources and make the most of partnership working and external funding opportunities. Priorities are set each financial year, although some large-scale projects carry across several years.
- 1.2. In addition, Defra has introduced a new requirement for National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority to provide quarterly updates on deliverables against the Business Plan, as part of its grant funding agreement. These update reports on our strategic priorities will assist officers in compiling the information necessary to comply with that requirement.
- 1.3. The second update on our agreed strategic priorities for 2024/25 is in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Strategic priorities 2024/25 – progress update

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<b>1. Responding to climate change (Broadland Futures Initiative)</b>	Status: <b>On track</b>	Director of Strategic Services

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>Aim: To implement the next steps of the Broadland Futures Initiative.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Publish at least two editions of the Broadland Futures Initiative BFI newsletter, by March 2025.</li> <li>(ii) Hold at least two meetings of the BFI Elected Members Forum, by March 2025.</li> <li>(iii) Various technical deliverables from BFI consultant including the new hydraulic model expected mid-2024.</li> <li>(iv) Engagement activities, including consultation as required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) BFI Newsletter (April 2024) has been sent out to the subscriber list, which has been updated to include all Parish Councils in the Broads area</li> <li>(ii) April 2024 Elected Members Forum meeting was held. Next Elected Members Forum is set for October 2024 when a new Chair will be elected.</li> <li>(iii) Updates on Product delivery from the EA/Jacobs team have been presented at steering group meetings and Elected Member Forum. All on track</li> <li>(iv) BFI core team were in attendance with a display at the Royal Norfolk Show. Additional outputs from the hydraulic model regarding capital dredging scenarios in the lower Bure are being tested following discussions at the Hickling flooding meeting arranged by the local MP.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Biodiversity crisis response</b></p> <p>Aim: Co-ordinate and implement with partners the development of strategies and projects, including the three Nature for Climate projects.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Endorsement of Norfolk &amp; Suffolk Nature Recovery Strategies – timings to be</li> </ul>	<p>Status: <b>on track</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Attended steering group and several themed working groups. Timing for draft LNRS is likely to be December 2024. Requesting that</li> </ul>	<p>Environment Policy Advisor</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>confirmed by responsible authorities.</p> <p>(ii) To complete the “Broads Authority consideration” of biodiversity actions by 1 January 2024. This is the first requirement of the enhanced Biodiversity Duty introduced in the 2021 Environment Act for local authorities and will consider action to take by the Broads Authority to comply with the duty.</p> <p>(iii) To review and refresh the Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy with partners by March 2025.</p> <p>(iv) To implement Nature for Climate Peat restoration project at Buttle Marsh within agreed budget ~£300k and timeline by March 2025.</p> <p>(v) To implement Nature for Climate Paludiculture Exploration Fund ‘FibreBroads’ project within agreed budget ~£500k and timeline by March 2025.</p>	<p>the consultation period fits with BA Committee.</p> <p>(ii) Completed</p> <p>(iii) Draft Broads Nature Recovery Strategy sent to Broads Biodiversity Partners, including LNRS teams for comment.</p> <p>(iv) Announcement of additional funding award decision from Natural England to follow the election period. Active dialogue with Environment Agency regarding water abstraction.</p> <p>All FibreBroads work packages on track, including volunteers planted reed and reedmace, planning another ‘train the trainer’ farm advisers’ event, guiding them on water voles, watertable assessment, permissions and Countryside stewardship. Preparing for the <a href="#">Innovation Hub</a> again at the Royal Norfolk Show with our partners NUA and Hudson Architects. Two Lowland Agricultural Peatland Grants on track, assessing water table management and forecasting the water storage needs to deliver land-based carbon targets in the Broads peatland.</p> <p>Applied for two Water Restoration Fund grants related to water management.</p>	
<p><b>3. Local Plan for the Broads</b></p> <p>Aim: To produce an updated Local Plan for the Broads.</p>	<p>Status: <b>On track</b></p>	<p>Planning Policy Officer</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Preferred Options consultation: March 2024.</li> <li>(ii) Publication consultation: December 2024.</li> <li>(iii) Submission: By end of June 2025.</li> <li>(iv) Adoption: By end of 2026.</li> </ul>	<p>Comments received as part of the Preferred Options being assessed. Next version of the Local Plan being produced.</p>	
<p><b>4. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)</b></p> <p>Aim: To run the FiPL programme and allocate Broads grants to farmers and landowners, and support the Broads and Norfolk Coast Land Management Board to allocate their funding.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Hold six Land Management Board meetings, by March 2025.</li> <li>(ii) Allocate all grant funding to projects, by December 2024.</li> <li>(iii) Engagement activities to promote and showcase FiPL, by March 2025.</li> </ul>	<p>Status: <b>On track</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) There have been two FiPL Board meetings - on 29 April and 10 June.</li> <li>(ii) £109,459.88 of grant funds for 24/25 have been allocated to projects already out of a total grant budget of £380,785.</li> <li>(iii) The FiPL Officer attended the Norfolk Show with leaflets to promote the programme. The FiPL team visited the Peak District to discuss the programme with Defra and other Protected Landscapes.</li> </ul>	<p>Catchment &amp; Farming Officer</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p><b>5. Navigation IT</b>            Aim: To replace current tolls system and provide improved online functionality.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <p>(i) Develop timetable and tender document by June 2024 for amendments to core system and a replacement web interface.</p> <p>(ii) Publish and then review tender responses by end of September 2024.</p> <p>(iii) Award contract (depending on affordability) and agree timescales with contractor.</p>	<p>Status: <b>On track</b></p> <p>(i) The upgrade of the internal tolls system to the latest software version has been completed and testing has commenced.</p> <p>Work is now commencing on the replacement online payment system.</p> <p>(ii) The online application will be totally rewritten. The initial application will provide the key functionality required to renew a toll online. It will utilise the latest security technologies such as one-time passcodes for logon thereby simplifying the current process.</p> <p>(iii) We are planning for the above works to be completed in time for the 2025/26 tolls season.</p>	<p>Head of ICT/Collector of Tolls</p>

## 2. Financial risks

- 2.1. If the Authority fails to comply with any of its obligations in the Grant Funding Agreement, DEFRA may, at its discretion, reduce, suspend, or terminate payments of grant, or require any part or all of the grant to be repaid.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: all