



Broadland  
Futures Initiative

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## Progress Newsletter

### UPDATE TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

In this edition: 'Recent Engagement Activity', 'A snapshot of existing work in the area', 'BFI Plan Objectives agreed', 'Forward look'

## Recent engagement activity

There is plenty to update our readers about in this edition, so we'll jump right in with a summary of the recent engagement activity the BFI project team have been doing.

### Norfolk and Suffolk Coastal Conference

The Norfolk and Suffolk Coastal Conference was held on 7<sup>th</sup> October in partnership with the Anglian (Eastern) Regional Flood and Coast Committee.

As their first joint conference, it was fantastic mix of live and recorded events that showed how the Norfolk and Suffolk Coastal Forums are working with people, nature and science to develop a future along one of the most challenging coastlines in western Europe. The BFI were there and were proudly represented in a live talk by the Environment Agency and Broads Authority. To watch the conference simply click the following link and follow the instructions: [Norfolk and Suffolk Coast and Estuary Conference 2021 \(eventee.co\)](https://www.eventee.co)

**Museum of The Broads 'BFI Exhibition' draws to a close**

The collaborative exhibition at the Museum of the Broads – 'The Broadland Futures Initiative' has now closed for the winter.

We'd like to extend our sincere thanks to the museum for hosting the exhibition and promoting the BFI in the community. This exhibition has been available virtually for some months, but this is the first time that visitors could physically attend. It was a consultative exercise so people could participate and have their say on the future of Broadland and how you think we should be adapting to the future flood risk and climate change. Keep a look out in 2022 for this exhibition at other BFI events.

### Open Public event in Somerton

The evening of 4<sup>th</sup> October saw the first open public event and face to face meeting for the BFI since before the Covid-19 pandemic began. The event proved to be a great opportunity to meet with local people from Somerton and surrounding areas such as Horsey and Winterton and for the Project Team to share the latest updates from the strategy development.

Equally, it was a fantastic opportunity for the BFI to hear first-hand from the public what their concerns are for the future and where they feel we should be focusing our collective

efforts. All of which was taken on board and recorded by the BFI members in attendance. It is essential to the BFI's progress that community involvement is maintained, and we will be looking to use every option available to us to ensure that communities can inform and provide their thoughts on the strategy going forwards. We would like thank Somerton Parish Council for hosting the event and look forward to working closely again in the future. The presentation and the full summary of the event can be found on our webpage.

### Norfolk and Suffolk Coastal Forum

The BFI were invited to give an update on the progress of the strategy and the recent convening of the Norfolk and Suffolk Coastal Forum (NSCF). The NSCF, attended by many local councillors and organisational representatives is a valuable opportunity to share updates and ensure others are fully aware and can have the opportunity to comment and endorse the BFI's progress and direction.



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## A snapshot of existing work in the area

The BFI will take several years to complete which is necessary given the size and complexity of the area being considered. However, we are keen to show that action on the ground to manage flood risk day-to-day is not being prevented or delayed whilst awaiting the BFI strategy. The following are some brief examples of what is currently underway or being planned by our partners.

Spring this year marked the end of the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project (BFAP). Born out of the previous strategy for managing flood risk within the Broads, over a 20-year period more than 240km of flood embankments and other risk management structures have been raised and strengthened by Broadland Environmental Services Limited (BESL). Following the end of the BFAP responsibility has returned to the Environment Agency who undertake regular inspections and maintenance of the flood defences.

The Water Management Alliance is currently seeking approval to replace 13 pumping stations, two culverts and decommission 2 pumping stations to manage statutory environmental obligations whilst also managing tidal, fluvial and surface water flooding. The new pumping stations will comprise state of the art Archimedes screw pumps, which allow for the passage of fish and eels whilst maintaining the water level regime in the Upper Thurne catchment.

Archimedes screw pumps offer reduced long term maintenance costs and ensures the long-term management of water levels and water quality within the Broads. Following approval, the scheme is aiming to be largely completed by 2025

Turning to the coast, the Environment Agency undertakes annual surveys of the beach levels in front of the concrete flood wall between Eccles and Winterton. This flood wall prevents a breach in the sand dunes that could result in extensive landward flooding. Informed by the monitoring the Environment Agency has started to prepare a business case

that will seek approval and funding to address the gradual decline in beach volume that is occurring in certain places. This may involve a new phase of bringing in dredged sand to build up the beach levels and so prevent the flood wall from being undermined.

The above are all examples of different ways of managing the risk of flooding in Broadland. For more information on this topic see the document '*Current Approaches to Flood Risk Management within the Plan Area*' available on the [BFI website](#).

## BFI plan objectives agreed

*While reading this section, it may be useful to also read the accompanying document titled "BFI Objectives Summary."*

The intention of the BFI is to produce a plan for how we manage the risk of flooding in the future. In preparing the plan the BFI aims to put **people at the heart of decision making**. Therefore, a draft of the plan objectives was shared with the local councillors who will make core decisions as part of the BFI Elected Members Forum on behalf of local communities and stakeholders. The following questions were provided to prompt responses.

- **Do you agree with the proposed vision for the BFI plan that *"Together, we improve the resilience of people, places and the environment to flooding, as we adapt to the changing climate"*?**
- **Are there any important aspects of the plan area which could be impacted by flooding and which may not be covered by the objectives?**

We used the feedback from the Elected Members Forum and stakeholders to finalise

the objectives attached alongside your newsletter.

The plan vision and objectives were then approved by the Elected Members Forum.

Note that the objectives are not prioritised. However, this may be something we consider further down the line in situations where we are constrained (e.g. by funding) to fulfil some objectives more than others.

Essentially, the BFI plan objectives will **guide how actions for managing flooding are developed and evaluated**, so that preferred actions are selected. The transparent process for selection of actions will be set out in a future separate document and will show how legal and good practice requirements will be integrated with wider considerations. The objectives have come from careful consideration of the following sources of information:

- Desires for future flood management, expressed through a virtual exhibition and consultations with the people who live, work and visit the BFI area. Therefore, drawing on the knowledge and experience of local communities.
- Strategies of the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authorities, Broads Authority, Internal Drainage Boards and other BFI partner organisations, as well as the aspirations from local and regional bodies which are not directly involved with managing flooding.
- Findings of technical studies undertaken for the BFI area, including investigations into natural processes operating at the coast, opportunities for improving natural capital, the likely impacts of climate change and the already extensive influence of flood management in Broadland.

In the same way as the social, natural and economic characteristics of the BFI area are closely interconnected, so are the objectives. However, as you will see upon viewing the objectives summary attached to this

newsletter, we have separated these objectives into categories with headings that represent key characteristics of the BFI area. This enables us to assign specific measures to each objective. The grouping of the boxes by colour shows how our BFI objectives provide a local link to the government's three national ambitions for flood resilient places.

The initial use of the objectives will be to measure our current level of resilience, to build up a picture of how resilient to flooding the BFI area is, before any further investment in flood management is made. The objectives will then be used to set minimum standards that any future action must achieve, and to evaluate how far different actions go beyond these minimum standards for different scenarios. This will help us understand the trade-offs that we will need to make in the future, when deciding between different actions.

## A forward look

In our last edition we shared with you the round wheel infographic inserted on this page that sets out the approach to producing and implementing the BFI plan. This helps us visualise where we are on this journey. Having recently agreed the BFI objectives, we are at Step 3 in the approach. The next step, Step 4 will comprise using our new and updated computer-based models of the Broadland rivers and the sea to understand how climate change may affect the risk of flooding in different locations. But these models are still in development and will not be available for us to use until 2023. In the meantime, we can make a start on Step 5 and are currently planning the required tasks to begin early next year. Our planning includes identifying points when we will need input and feedback from communities and other stakeholders.

Steps 5 will start by identifying potential actions to manage future flood risk. Such actions could be traditional measures such as flood embankments and walls, or those that have been considered previously such as barriers and washlands.

In addition to physical structures designed to keep out flood water, some actions may be more about how we plan developments, use the land, or prepare for flooding so that impacts are reduced when it does happen. We will look for innovative ideas locally, and from elsewhere in the UK and abroad. Different actions might be implemented together or at different points in time depending on circumstances. Therefore, it is likely that in Step 6 a large number of action combinations may be considered and tested against the objectives. From this list of actions, we will select the best range of possible 'pathways' of actions that will allow a flexible response and adaptation to currently uncertain changes in climate and flood risk.

After this, Steps 7 and 8 sees the development and implementation of the BFI strategy and plan for managing future flood risk management. Steps 9 and 10 highlight the need, in a changing world, to check on our progress, with a possible need to revisit certain aspects of the cycle.

The sources of flooding for a large and low-lying area like BFI can be complex and interconnected. As a strategy the BFI plan will be relatively 'high level' in nature, providing the direction for subsequent more detailed projects on the ground. It will set out a framework that help communities, the public sector and other organisations to work together to manage flood risk. The BFI will support local decision making, engagement around flood risk management and ensure flood risks are managed in a coordinated way.



**CONTACT US**

Broadland Futures Initiative

Broads Authority, Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1RY

[info@broadland-futures.org.uk](mailto:info@broadland-futures.org.uk)

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