

Planning Committee

22 July 2022

Agenda item number 11

Issues and Options consultation- Local Plan for the Broads

Report by Planning Policy Officer

Summary

This report presents the Issues and Options version of the Local Plan, which is the first stage of producing a new Local Plan for the Broads, and is ready for consultation.

This report also introduces the residential moorings study and section, the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Moreover, the report details the consultation approach. A Call for Sites is included in the consultation.

Recommendations

1. To endorse the Residential Moorings Study.
 2. For comments on the Issues and Options (in particular the residential moorings section), the SA and the HRA.
 3. To endorse the Issues and Options, SA and HRA, and recommend that the Broads Authority endorse the Issues and Options documents for consultation.
 4. For comments on, and then to endorse, the proposed approach to the consultation.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Issues and Options version of the Local Plan is the first stage of producing a new Local Plan for the Broads, and is ready for consultation. This version does not contain policies; it discusses some issues/topic areas and some options to address the issue as well as asks questions. There is also a Call for Sites as part of this consultation.

2. Residential Moorings study and section

- 2.1. RRR Consultancy have completed an assessment of the need for residential moorings, Broads-wide. They undertook the work to inform the current Local Plan, back in 2017. They have used the same methodology as back in 2017, which, in the absence of Government guidance, is the same methodology used to determine Gypsy and Traveller need.
- 2.2. The study is at Appendix 6. It identifies the need as follows:

Permanent residential moorings need	
2021-2026	45
2026-2031	1
2031-2036	1
2036-2041	1
Total	48

- 2.3. The related section of the Issues and Options includes this need as well as the background as to why we need to assess a need for residential moorings. It also highlights the call for sites for residential moorings.
- 2.4. **Members’ comments on the Residential Moorings Study are welcomed.**
- 2.5. **Members are recommended to endorse the Residential Moorings Study.**
- 2.6. **Members comments on the Residential Moorings section of the Issues and Options are welcomed.**

3. Issues and Options Document

- 3.1. Planning Committee Members have seen the majority of the sections of this Issues and Options document over the last year or so. Comments have been taken on board.

- 3.2. Appendix 1 is the compiled, final version of the Issues and Options. Members are asked for their comments and to endorse the Local Plan for consultation. The Issue and Option consultation would then be taken to the July Broads Authority meeting.
- 3.3. There have been some changes to the text since Members saw some bite size pieces. The significant changes are as follows:

Section	Change	Explanation
21.0 Water efficiency	Text relating to potential benefits relating to nutrient release by using less water.	By using less water, there could be less water treated at the Water Recycling Centre.
7.0 About the Broads	Reference to reed and sedge cutters in the economy section.	Requested by Navigation Committee.
8.3 Duty to Cooperate	Reference to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill	To ensure this section is up to date as the LURB Bill proposed the removal of the Duty to Cooperate.
9.0 SWOT analysis	Reference to thatchers	Requested by Historic Environment Manager
10.2 Vision	Inclusion of the draft vision from the Broads Plan that is being consulted on.	To ensure the visions for the two documents continue to be aligned.
Government standard for energy efficiency of new buildings	Removal of this section.	Government introduced new energy efficiency standards of new buildings as part of Building Regulations in June 2022.
Government standard for electric vehicle charging points	Removal of this section.	Government introduced new EV charging requirements as part of Building Regulations in June 2022.
27.2 Government standard for biodiversity net gain	Amended to reflect November 2023 being the date the requirement will be in place as well as to ask about potential for greater than 10% BNG.	Some other LPAs are looking into around 20% BNG. The Government's 25 year plan refers to Environmental Net Gain.

Section	Change	Explanation
	Also refers to Environmental Net Gain	
Section 30. Housing permissions and completions.	Updated figures	To reflect the Annual Monitoring Report (being drafted).
Call for Sites	Some questions expanded to make clearer and the ability to add a polygon to indicate where the site is.	Following feedback by BA staff who trialled the survey.

3.4. **Members' comments on the Issues and Options document are welcomed.**

3.5. **Members are recommended to endorse the Issues and Options document and recommend Broads Authority endorse it for consultation.**

4. Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

4.1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) be undertaken for plans such as Local Plans. The term "sustainability appraisal" is used to describe a form of assessment that considers the social, environmental and economic effects of implementing a particular plan or planning policy document. It is intended that the SA process helps plans meet the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. The results of the sustainability appraisal inform the Authority's decisions on the Local Plan, and the planning inspector's judgement on the Local Plan's legal compliance and soundness.

4.2. The Issues and Options version of the Local Plan does not include policies. The SA for the Issues and Options assesses the options using a RAG rating. The SA is at Appendix 2 and is included in the Issues and Options consultation.

4.3. The SA updates the literature review and baseline data from the SA Scoping Report. It includes the comments made at the SA Scoping Report stage. In terms of assessing policies, as there are no policies in this version of the Local Plan, the options are assessed using a simple RAG rating with some explanation.

4.4. **Members' comments on the SA are welcomed.**

4.5. **Members are recommended to endorse the SA document and recommend that the Broads Authority endorse it for consultation.**

5. Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

5.1. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended, in order to ensure that plans

and projects do not adversely affect any European wildlife sites. A plan being produced by a public body is the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment, and it is the responsibility of the public body to produce the assessment in accordance with the legislation, to inform any necessary changes to the plan, prior to its adoption.

- 5.2. This report provides the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan for the Broads, being undertaken by Lepus Consulting on behalf of the Broads Authority.
- 5.3. The Broads has a wealth of internationally important biodiversity, primarily focused on the wetlands and their associated habitats. This report assesses the implications of the Local Plan for European sites, which are those designated through European Directives, and also includes those listed as Ramsar sites as a matter of Government policy.
- 5.4. The Issues and Options version of the Local Plan does not include policies. The HRA for the Issues and Options provides scoping for later stages as well as gives a high-level assessment of the issues and options discussed. The HRA is at Appendix 5 and is also out for consultation.
- 5.5. **Members comments on the HRA are welcomed.**
- 5.6. **Members are recommended to endorse the HRA and recommend that the Broads Authority endorse it for consultation.**

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The consultation on the Issues and Options version of the Local Plan will run for 10 weeks. The likely dates are from 8th August to 16 October 2022. The consultation will also cover the Design Guide which was presented at the June Planning Committee.
- 6.2. The consultation will be advertised by emailing those on our consultation database as well as advertising on social media. Documents will be placed on our website. Parish Councils will be asked to advertise the consultation as well. Drop in events will be advertised.
- 6.3. Three drop-in events have been organised, Officers will be in attendance to speak to anyone who wishes to drop by.

Date	7 Sept	12 Sept	17 Sept
Venue	Oulton Community Centre - small hall	Brundall Memorial Hall - lounge	Potter Heigham Village Hall
Open to public	4-8pm	4-8pm	10am-1pm

- 6.4. Hard copies of the document will be placed in libraries around the Broads, Council offices as well as in the reception of Yare House. Hard copies are also available on request, but there will be a charge for printing, postage and packaging to cover costs.
- 6.5. Versions will be available in other languages and large print if requested.

- 6.6. People will be able to call in with any queries as well as have the option for video calls.
- 6.7. In terms of engaging hard to reach groups, we have identified some groups which the Authority's Education Officer works with. Indeed, some groups will be undertaking activities in the Broads at the time of the consultation and we will endeavour to use those opportunities to engage with them on the Local Plan.
- 6.8. **Members comments on the approach to consultation are welcomed.**

7. A new NPPF

- 7.1. It had been understood that the Government proposed to issue a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for consultation in July, before the Parliamentary summer recess. Given recent events it is not clear whether this will still happen, however it is proposed that we continue with the Local Plan programme as there is a requirement to have an up-to-date development plan.
- 7.2. The consultation on the Design Guide and Local Plan is proposed to start around the second week of August. There are three scenarios for the way forward as regards the consultation on the Local Plan, depending on when the NPPF is released for consultation. **Members are recommended to endorse these three scenarios and associated actions:**
 - 7.2.1. If the NPPF comes out after the July Planning Committee, but before the consultation starts and, if we find on reading it, that any aspect of the Issues and Options cannot go forward, then we would delay the consultation and amend relevant sections and come back to a future Planning Committee and Broads Authority meetings. We would have to postpone the consultation venues accordingly.
 - 7.2.2. If the NPPF comes out after the July Planning Committee, but before the consultation starts and, if we find on reading it, that it does not affect the Issues and Options, the consultation would go ahead as planned following the Broads Authority meeting.
 - 7.2.3. If the NPPF comes out during or after the consultation, then we would carry on with the consultation as planned. We would then consider the responses to the consultation, as well as the NPPF, in preparation for when the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill becomes an Act.

8. Next steps

- 8.1. All responses to the consultation will be logged, read and responded to. We will report the responses at future Planning Committees.
- 8.2. The next version of the Local Plan will be called the 'Preferred Options' and this will include draft policies. Again, bite size pieces will be brought before Planning Committee as this version of the Local Plan is produced.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. There will be a cost associated with the consultation. The cost will arise from the press advert (usually around £400), hiring of venues for the drop-in sessions (around £200) as well as for printing the hard copies that are left at some venues (no cost known at this stage).

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Date of report: 11 July 2022

Appendices 1-5 are available to view on the [Planning Committee - 22 July 2022 \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk)

Appendix 1 – Issues and Options Local Plan

Appendix 2 – Sustainability Appraisal

Appendix 3 – Sustainability Appraisal Literature Review

Appendix 4 - State of the Environment Baseline

Appendix 5 – Habitats Regulation Assessment

Appendix 6 – Residential Moorings Needs Assessment (July 2022)

Broads Authority Boat Dwellers Accommodation Assessment

Final Report
July 2022

RRR Consultancy Ltd



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Executive Summary

Introduction

- S1. The Broads Authority commissioned *RRR Consultancy Ltd* to undertake a Boat Dwellers Accommodation Assessment (BDAA). The results will inform policy development in housing and planning and to inform the allocation of resources within the planning authority area.
- S2. The need for local authorities to consider the accommodation needs of households residing in houseboats is determined by the Housing and Planning Act (2016). Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (as it was then called) draft guidance on periodically reviewing the housing needs for caravans and houseboats was published March 2016. It provides advice on how to consider the needs of people residing in caravans or houseboats where they differ from those of the settled community.
- S3. The purpose of this assessment is to quantify the accommodation and housing related support needs of boat dwellers in the Broads Authority planning authority area. This in terms of both permanent residential and temporary moorings for boat dwellers. The results will be used to inform the allocation of resources and as an evidence base for policy development in housing and planning.

Definitions

- S4. The term 'houseboat' is not defined by DCLG guidance. According to the HM Revenues and Customs:

"A houseboat is defined for the purposes of VAT as being a floating decked structure which:

- is designed or adapted for use solely as a place of permanent habitation
- does not have the means of, and which is not capable of being readily adapted for, self-propulsion" (HMRC VAT Notice 701/20, December 2013).

- S5. This assessment also adopts the Broads Authority definition of "residential moorings" where those living on boats moor, as:

"one where someone lives aboard a vessel (which is capable of navigation), that the vessel is used as the main residence and where that vessel is moored in one location for more than 28 days in a year. The vessel may occasionally/periodically go cruising and return to base".

- S6. This BDAA also incorporates the National Bargee Travellers Association's (NBTA) definition who define a boat dweller as:

“Someone who lives aboard a vessel (which may or may not be capable of navigation), that the vessel is used as the main or only residence and where that vessel is either (i) moored in one location for more than 28 days in a year (but may occasionally or periodically leave its mooring); or (ii) has no permanent mooring and navigates in accordance with the statutes appropriate to the navigation such as inter alia s.17(3)(c)(ii) of the British Waterways Act 1995 or s.79 of the Thames Conservancy Act 1932”.

Accommodation need

- S7. Accommodation need for the study area was assessed using analysis of primary and secondary data. The accommodation needs calculation steps are based on a model in accordance with both previous and current Practice Guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)¹. It contains seven basic components, five assessing need and two assessing supply, which are applied to each sub-group, based on secondary data.
- S8. Table S.1 summarises number of permanent residential moorings required over the period 2021-41. It shows that a further 48 permanent residential moorings are needed over the period throughout the authority.

Table S.1 Permanent residential moorings need	
	No.
2021-2026	45
2026-2031	1
2031-2036	1
2036-2041	1
Total	48

Broads Authority BDAA 2022

- S9. In relation to transit provision, there is a need to consider more flexibility in relation to temporary moorings, particularly during winter months, and to consider increasing the number of temporary moorings.

Conclusions

- S10. Finally, this report primarily recommends that the commissioning council works jointly with other relevant service providers where appropriate to address boat dwellers' accommodation needs. The other recommendations are as follows:

¹ DCLG Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments, October 2007 located at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7838/accommneedsassessments.pdf

New mooring places and sites

- Contact the marina owners and managers in the Broads Authority area to discuss the possibility of some leisure berths being granted planning permission for permanent residential moorings.
- Develop criteria and processes for determining the suitability of boat dwellers' residential moorings for including in emerging/future Local Plans.
- Agencies could consider helping to meet the needs of households unable to afford to own a mooring or the rental costs of existing moorings by renting or leasing small parcels of local authority owned land to them and assisting with planning applications and mooring development.
- To consider alternative funding mechanisms such as: acquisition funds; loans for private mooring provision through Community Development Financial Institutions; and joint ventures with members of the boating community.
- To determine whether some of the accommodation needs of boat dwellers can be met by affordable or supported housing.

Mooring services and facilities

- Ensure all mooring areas have access to facilities such as toilet and household waste disposal provisions. If possible, all authorised moorings (residential and visitors' moorings) should have access to electric and water hook-up points, and for residential moorings to have individual access and a secure post-box.
- To work with other agencies, in order to review the enforcement processes that are in operation.

Communication and cooperation

- Formalise communication processes between relevant housing, planning and enforcement officers etc. in both the study area and neighbouring local authorities.
- For agencies to develop a holistic vision for their work on boat dwelling services and facilities, and to embed it in Community and Homelessness Strategies, Local Plans and planning and reporting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide training and workshop sessions with service provider employees (and elected members) to help them to further understand the key issues facing the boat dwellers.
- The population size and demographics of the boating community groups can change rapidly. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

1. Introduction

Study context

- 1.1 The Broads Authority commissioned *RRR Consultancy Ltd* to undertake a Boat Dwellers Accommodation Assessment (BDAA) for the planning authority's Local Plan period of 2021 to 2041.
- 1.2 The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of boat dwellers follows the introduction, in the Housing and Planning Act 2016, of a requirement to consider the needs of people residing on places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored². Also, in March 2016 DCLG published its draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats.
- 1.3 *RRR* consultancy calculated the residential mooring need for the Broads Authority to support the currently adopted Local Plan 2019. That study was completed in 2017³. This work provides an updated need figure to support the review of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Methodological context

- 1.4 To achieve the study aims, the research drew on a number of data sources including:
 - Review of secondary information: a review of national and local planning policies and analysis of secondary data.
 - Consultation with stakeholders including housing and planning officers, boat yard owners and managers, and the National Bargee Travellers Association.
 - Consultation with boat dwellers.

Geographical context

- 1.5 Figure 1.1 shows the extent of waterways within the Broads Authority administrative boundary:

² s124 Housing and Planning Act 2016 (c. 22) p.58

³ See: https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/243954/Norfolk-Final-ANA-October-9th-2017.pdf

Figure 1.2 Broads Authority Executive Area Map



Source: Broads Authority 2019

Broads Authority profile

- 1.6 The Broads is an internationally important wetland and designated protected landscape of the highest order with a status equivalent to that of a National Park. The designated Broads Authority Executive Area covers parts of Norfolk and North Suffolk. The Executive Area includes parts of Broadland District, South Norfolk District, North Norfolk District, Great Yarmouth Borough, Norwich City, and East Suffolk Council area. The councils for those areas do not have planning powers in the Broads area, but retain all other local authority powers and responsibilities. Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council are the county planning authority for their respective part of the Broads, with responsibilities that include minerals and waste planning and are also the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 1.7 The Broads Authority is a Special Statutory Authority, established under the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988. It has a statutory duty to manage the Broads for three purposes, none of which takes precedence:
- 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.
- 1.8 A primary aspect of the Broads is that it is a nationally designated area, protected and enhanced for the benefit of the nation as well as for the local population and businesses. This is the justification for control of local planning within the designated area to be entrusted to a special purpose body that includes representation of the national interest as well as of local councils and navigators.
- 1.9 Tourism is the mainstay of the Broads' economy. In 2015, the Broads and surrounding area (including the area of influence) received around 7.4 million visitors, bringing an estimated £431 million and directly supporting more than 7,200 FTE jobs. Land and water-based tourism is important in the area with around 12,173 boats on the Broads in 2015 (10,691 private craft and 1,482 hire craft). Many people also enjoy bird watching, walking, cycling, angling, visiting heritage sites and just being near the water.
- 1.10 The local economy is not entirely tourism related. Agriculture is the predominant business use in terms of land area, if not in numbers employed or monetary value, and has a vital role in maintaining the landscape and its aesthetic and environmental value. Boat building is also a locally important traditional industry⁴.

⁴ Local Plan for the Broads Plan period 2015 – 2036, Adopted May 2019, pp.7-9.

Definition Context

- 1.11 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 requires Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to consider the needs of people residing on places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored. The term 'houseboat' is not defined by DCLG guidance. According to the HM Revenues and Customs:

“A houseboat is defined for the purposes of VAT as being a floating decked structure which:

- is designed or adapted for use solely as a place of permanent habitation
- does not have the means of, and which is not capable of being readily adapted for, self-propulsion” (HMRC VAT Notice 701/20, December 2013).

- 1.12 This assessment also adopts the Broads Authority definition of “residential moorings” where those living on boats moor, as:

“one where someone lives aboard a vessel (which is capable of navigation), that the vessel is used as the main residence and where that vessel is moored in one location for more than 28 days in a year. The vessel may occasionally/periodically go cruising and return to base”.

- 1.13 This BDAA also incorporates the National Bargee Travellers Association’s (NBTA) definition who define a boat dweller as:

“Someone who lives aboard a vessel (which may or may not be capable of navigation), that the vessel is used as the main or only residence and where that vessel is either (i) moored in one location for more than 28 days in a year (but may occasionally or periodically leave its mooring); or (ii) has no permanent mooring and navigates in accordance with the statutes appropriate to the navigation such as inter alia s.17(3)(c)(ii) of the British Waterways Act 1995 or s.79 of the Thames Conservancy Act 1932”.

- 1.14 The NBTA also determine that people who use boats for recreation and whose main home is bricks and mortar, or who owns or rent bricks and mortar homes, should not be classed as a boat dweller, regardless of the amount of time each year that they spend on boats. That person should be classed as a 'leisure boater', because they are not in need of a place to moor their home either temporarily or permanently. However, leisure boaters may need to access services and facilities along rivers and canals whilst residing on boats. As such, whilst the legislation requires the need for houseboats to be assessed, in real terms, for the Local Plan for the Broads, this need is expressed as number of residential moorings.

Policy Context

- 1.15 To assess the current position, existing documents have been examined to determine what reference is made to boat dwellers' issues. The intention is to highlight areas of effective practice in the study area, and examine the extent to which local authorities are currently addressing the issue. Furthermore, understanding the current position will be important in the development of future strategies intended to meet accommodation need and housing related support need among boat dwellers.

National legislation and guidance

Housing and Planning Act 2016

- 1.16 The Housing and Planning Act gained Royal Assent on 12 May 2016. Section 124 of the Act states that:

“In the case of a local housing authority in England, the duty under subsection (1) includes a duty to consider the needs of people residing in or resorting to their district with respect to the provision of –

- (a) sites on which caravans can be stationed, or
- (b) places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored”.

- 1.17 Importantly, according to correspondence between *RRR Consultancy Ltd* and DCLG when undertaking the previous assessment (ANA 2017), DCLG stated that it is for local housing authorities to determine how to assess and understand the accommodation needs of people who reside in or resort to the area with respect to the provision of caravan sites or houseboats. This means that there is no “standard” methodology that can be followed i.e. it is for each authority to prepare (and justify) an appropriate methodology.

*DCLG Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance (March 2016)*⁵

- 1.18 In March 2016 DCLG published its draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats. It states that when considering the need for caravans and houseboats local authorities will need to include the needs of a variety of residents in differing circumstances, for example:

- Caravan and houseboat dwelling households:
 - who have no authorised site anywhere on which to reside

⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-housing-needs-for-caravans-and-houseboats-draft-guidance>. Although it remains in draft form, correspondence to *RRR Consultancy* from the MHCLG dated 17 May 2021 confirms that the government remains committed to finalising the guidance.

- whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable, but who are unable to obtain larger or more suitable accommodation
 - who contain suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units and
 - who are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop on.
- Bricks and mortar dwelling households:
- Whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable ('unsuitable' in this context can include unsuitability by virtue of a person's cultural preference not to live in bricks-and-mortar accommodation).

1.19 The DCLG draft guidance recognises that the needs of those residing in caravans and houseboats may differ from the rest of the population because of:

- their nomadic or semi-nomadic pattern of life
- their preference for caravan and houseboat-dwelling
- movement between bricks-and-mortar housing and caravans or houseboats
- their presence on unauthorised encampments or developments.

1.20 Furthermore, it suggests that as mobility between areas may have implications for carrying out an assessment, local authorities will need to consider:

- co-operating across boundaries both in carrying out assessments and delivering solutions
- the timing of the accommodation needs assessment
- different data sources

1.21 The Guidance remains in draft form at the time of this BDAA, and so does not carry the same status as other guidance and legislation. It is unclear when – if at all – this guidance will lose its “draft” status. Nonetheless, it is of some value for those preparing accommodation needs assessments.

Summary

1.22 The need for Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to consider the needs of people residing in houseboats is determined by the Housing and Planning Act (2016). In March 2016 the Government published draft guidance on periodically reviewing the housing needs for caravans and houseboats. It provides advice on how to consider the needs of people residing in caravans or houseboats where they differ from those of the settled community.

1.23 The purpose of this assessment is to quantify the accommodation and housing related support needs of boat dwellers in the Broads Authority administrative area between 2021 to 2041. This is in terms of both permanent residential and temporary moorings for boat

dwellers. The results will be used to inform the allocation of resources and as an evidence base for policy development in housing and planning.

2. Consultation

Introduction

2.1 Consultations with a range of stakeholders were conducted over the period of the assessment and with boat dwellers. Themes raised through the consultations included: the main issues facing boat dwellers; the main barriers to delivering new mooring places; suitable places for new moorings; preferred type of mooring management; traveling patterns and transit mooring needs; the relationship between local boat dwellers and the settled community; and access to health, education and other services. This chapter presents brief summaries of the consultation and highlights the main points that were raised.

Boat Dwellers' Accommodation Needs

2.2 The main reasons why people choose to reside on boats were lifestyle choice, a lack of affordable or alternative housing, local connections, to be outdoors, to be mobile, for cultural reasons, and to escape mainstream society. Both boat dwellers and stakeholders commented on the main issues facing boat dwellers. Boat dwellers appreciate the sense of community fostered by the community and stated that this way of life may suit people who may not want to reside in one place or require a semi-permanent residence.

2.3 According to both boat dwellers and stakeholders, there are different categories of boat dwellers, including:

- long-term boat dwellers who have resided on the waterways for years, even second generation
- people who turn to it as an alternative form of housing accommodation
- people who turn to it following retirement
- people who try it for a year or two but then return to living in a house

2.4 Boat dwellers and stakeholders commented on how the household size across the study area varied between 1 person and 5 persons with most occupied by 1 or 2 people. They commented on how very few boats within the study area are permanently occupied by families with children. The age of boat dwellers residing on residential moorings ranged from early twenties to retirement age. They also commented on how boat dwellers derive from a broad range of social backgrounds with a similarly wide range of professions, skills and interests.

2.5 As well as those living on boats for 12 months of the year, it was highlighted that there is a growing demand for semi-permanent use. For example, there is a growth in the use of boats by students who live on boats whilst they study at the local university or college, and people who work in the area during the week but have an alternative address for the rest of the time.

2.6 It was acknowledged that there are very few permanent moorings in the Broads Authority area, compared to there being about 200 boat dwellers living on boats all year in the area.

This is a combination of households who choose to be constant cruisers i.e. do not require a residential mooring, and households in need of a residential mooring.

- 2.7 There are also boat dweller households who moor at marinas and boat yards and sleep on their boats at the moorings on an ad hoc basis. There is also an unknown number of boat dwellers residing on boats at the end of gardens and fields (including land the occupier owns) with the consent of the landowners but not necessarily with planning permission to live on board. Whilst planning permission is not required to moor boats at the end of properties, it is required for boats used for residency rather than leisure use.
- 2.8 Some commented on how not all people want permanent moorings, but more flexibility. The cost and requirements placed on providers of permanent moorings often put potential providers off from having such provision. They prefer to have non-permanent provision, allowing people to stay at the mooring for 10 out of 12 months. It was suggested that if the process and requirements to provide permanent moorings were more flexible, marinas and boat yards would be more inclined to provide them.
- 2.9 It was suggested that the lack of permanent moorings means that boat dwellers frequently overstay on 24-hour moorings. It was generally agreed that there is a lack of suitable facilities along local and neighbouring waterways. Some facilities are only available for a fee. There is a lack of access to toilet pumps and waste disposal facilities which are essential to ensure that the waterways are kept clean.

Barriers to new moorings

- 2.10 Barriers in relation to delivering new moorings were cited. Most land adjacent to waterways are not owned by the local authorities, so it may be difficult to gain planning permission for new moorings due to the land not being available.
- 2.11 Some commented on how potential providers (such as existing boat yards and marina owners) might be hesitant about providing permanent moorings. It was noted that some design requirements for permanent moorings could discourage potential providers. It was also suggested that some might be concerned about the impact and implication of having permanent moorings alongside their leisure moorings on one another and for the marina.
- 2.12 Marinas and yards are primarily privately owned. There are a number of private boat yards and marinas which have provision for residential boat dwellers and leisure cruisers as well as space for the storage and maintenance of boats. In relation to whether any new moorings should be owned and managed by the local authority, privately, or a combination of both, stakeholders agreed that a combination of both may be necessary. It was acknowledged that charging for good mooring facilities and services may prove to be difficult for boat dwellers on low incomes. As such, there may be a need for affordable moorings which could be managed by a housing association. It was suggested that the return on capital investment and revenue costs prevent investment in new moorings at present.

Health and education

- 2.13 There were few comments in relation to whether local boat dwellers experience specific health or education issues. Some stakeholders commented on how some boat dwellers have mental health and substance misuse issues. They commented on how some boat dwellers have 'fallen through the net' and live on boats because they cannot cope living in a house. Some commented on how many boat dwellers have minimal access to facilities and healthcare. This is because they tend to move around with no fixed address and there is no support infrastructure.
- 2.14 The NBTA stated that they issue guidance on accessing health and registering with a GP; accessing mainstream education; accessing social services support; and accessing welfare benefits. They cited an example of Bath and North-East Somerset Council which works closely with the charity 'Julian House'. The charity signposts boat dwellers to support organisations and agencies and could be used as a model for local authorities and third sector agencies.
- 2.15 Absence of secure and permanent moorings were regarded by both stakeholders and boat dwellers as limiting boat dwellers' access to services. Not having a postal address adversely impacts on access to employment, registering with GP, education and training, and access to benefits. Some boat dwellers are able to resolve the issue by having post sent to family or friends, or local pubs, whilst other boat dwellers may be registered as living in a house elsewhere (often in a different authority area).

Summary

- 2.16 Consultations with stakeholders and boat dwellers offered important insights into the main issues regarding boat dwellers residing on the waterways. There was general agreement that there is a need for more permanent moorings but also a need for more flexibility on existing provision, in relation to short term use and potential use of non-permanent moorings all year round.

3. Boat dwellers

Introduction

3.1 As described in Chapter 1, this assessment considers the accommodation needs of boat dwellers. Unlike Gypsies and Travellers, boat dwellers are not considered to be an ethnic minority and, as such, are not protected by the Equality Act 2010. Nonetheless, government guidance (DCLG 2016) indicates that local authorities should consider the accommodation needs of boat dweller families. Given the presence of boat dwellers in the study area they have been included in this report.

Methodology

3.2 Given that the requirement to determine the accommodation needs of boat dwellers was only recently introduced by the DCLG Draft Guidance on Housing Needs (Caravans and Houseboats) (March 2016), there is no established method to determine need. As such, the need for residential moorings in the study area is assessed according to DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data provided by the local authorities and consultation with stakeholders (in particular the boat dwellers). It is also in accordance with NBTA guidance. This methodology has previously been used by *RRR Consultancy* to undertake Boat Dweller Accommodation Assessments (BDAAs) on behalf of Oxford City Council (2018) and Wokingham Borough Council (2019), and for other authorities as part of their GTAAAs including Broads Authority (as part of the Norfolk 2017 ANA).

3.3 Whilst there has been consultation with households living on boats in the area, it has not been possible to consult with enough to base the assessment on the consultation alone. This assessment is based on consultation with boat dwellers, boat yard and marina owners and managers, National Bargee Travellers Association (NBTA), Residential Boat Owners Association (RBOA), local authority data, assessment of secondary data, online data concerning marinas, yards and the waterways in the area.

3.4 The consultation has led to the following: estimated number of authorised and unauthorised, residential and transit moorings; the number of occupied and vacant moorings; the characteristics of the boat dwellers; and the need for residential and transit moorings.

Existing Supply

3.5 Table 3.1 below lists the number of authorised moorings, and unauthorised developments (UD) (moorings), and those with temporary planning permission per local authority within the study area. There is planning permission for 23 permanent moorings.

Table 3.1 Current supply	
Location	Moorings
Boat Yard 1	10
Boat Yard 2	12
Boat Yard 3	1
Total	23

Source: BDAA 2022

- 3.6 However, 8 of the 10 moorings at Boat Yard 1 are currently unoccupied but will potentially be made available in due course. Also, the 12 moorings at Boat Yard 2 are yet to be developed, so are considered 'potential' moorings. This results in 3 occupied authorised moorings, and 20 potential moorings.

Calculation of Accommodation Need

- 3.7 The need for residential moorings in the study area is based on the model suggested in DCLG (2007)⁶ guidance and supplemented by data provided by the local authorities. Whilst this guidance relates specifically to assessing needs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, it is considered appropriate for assessing needs for residential moorings and has been found sound in our similar assessments (including Broads Authority 2017, Oxford City Council 2018, and Islington 2019).

Requirement for residential moorings 2021-2026

- 3.8 It is estimated that there are about 140 boat dwellers who reside on boats all year around. Key locations for boat dwellers include Thorpe Island area and Beccles. There are also those who are categorised as constant cruisers and some who have moored in discreet locations across the study area. Some boat dwellers reside at marinas on an ad hoc basis. Due to mooring licences, they might stay at the mooring for the agreed limited period of time, but then travel the waterways or moor elsewhere for the remainder of the year. It is estimated that less than half of such boat dweller households have need of a residential mooring. Due to choice or financial restraints the remaining boat dwellers prefer to be constant cruisers. They require more flexible transit provision.
- 3.9 As Table 3.2 illustrates, the above results in an estimated requirement for a further 48 residential moorings in the study area for the period 2021 to 2026.

⁶ Although the guidance was withdrawn in December 2016 it remains useful as a model for determining accommodation need.

Table 3.2 Estimate of the need for residential moorings 2021-2026	
1) Current occupied residential	3
<i>Current residential supply</i>	
2) Vacant but available for use	0
3) Expected to become vacant	0
4) Planned to be built or brought back into use	20
Total Additional Supply	20
<i>Current residential need</i>	
5) Seeking residential permission from temporary permission	0
6) Households requiring residential moorings	65
7) Family growth	0
Total Additional Need	65
<i>Balance of Need and Supply</i>	
Total Additional Requirement	45

Source: BDAA 2022

Requirement for permanent moorings 2021-2026: steps of the calculation

3.10 Information from local authorities and consultation with stakeholders and boat dwellers was used to inform the calculations. The remainder of this chapter describes both the process and results of the boat dwellers needs calculations.

Supply of moorings 2021-2026

Step 1: Current occupied permanent moorings

3.11 Based on information provided by the Broads Authority and corroborated by information from the consultation. There are currently 3 occupied authorised mooring.

Step 2: Number of unused permanent moorings available

3.12 As the mooring is occupied there are 0 unused moorings.

Step 3: Number of existing moorings expected to become vacant between 2021-2026

3.13 This is calculated using mortality rates as applied in conventional Housing Needs Assessments. It then calculates the number of moorings that would become vacant as a result of the mortality. This results in 0 additional supply.

Step 4: Permanent moorings planned to be built or brought back into use, 2021-2026

3.14 This can include moorings which have been partly developed, never developed or which were previously occupied but are now vacant and in need of redevelopment. This results in 20 additional supply.

Need for Moorings 2021-2026

Step 5: Seeking permanent permission from temporary moorings in the study area 2021-2026

3.15 This is determined by local authority data. It is assumed families residing on moorings whose planning permission expires within the period 2021-2026 will still require accommodation within the study area. There are currently 0 moorings with temporary planning permission located in the area.

Step 6: Households seeking permanent mooring in the study area 2021-2026

This is determined by the data gleaned from the consultation and secondary data. It is estimated that there are 65 households seeking permanent provision across the study area.

Step 7: Family growth in the study area 2021-2026

3.16 This is based on household growth. A growth rate of 0.6% per annum (equating to 3% over a 5-year period) is applied. This results on 0 additional need in the first five years.

Balance of Need and Supply

3.17 From the above the net additional plot requirement is calculated by deducting the supply from the need.

Requirements for residential moorings 2026-2041

3.18 It is assumed that by 2026 vacant residential moorings will be occupied, potential moorings will have been developed and occupied, and any additional need will have been met by new supply. The base figures regarding the number of residential moorings at the end of the first 5-year period would be 68 (3 existing occupied mooring + 20 potential + additional need of 45).

3.19 If any of the 20 potential moorings are not available to be occupied by 2026, then the accommodation needs will increase by a subsequent number e.g., if 8 of the 20 potential moorings not available, then the additional need will increase by 8 resulting in an additional accommodation need of 53 permanent moorings.

3.20 Based on consultation with boat dwellers and stakeholders, whilst there is limited evidence of the level of intergenerational need, there is evidence of ongoing demand by new generations of the settled community in need for residential moorings across the study area. Therefore, this assessment has incorporated assessment of the needs for 2026 – 2041. This is based on the method adopted for the other communities (household growth minus mortality).

3.21 The boat dweller accommodation needs for the period 2026-2041 are determined by applying a mortality rate of 0.4% per annum (equating to 2% over a 5-year period), and a population growth rate of 0.6% per annum (equating to 3% over a 5-year period). This equates to a net population growth of 1% during each 5-year period.

3.22 The residential moorings accommodation needs for the period 2021-2041 are shown in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3: Summary of boat dweller accommodation needs 2021-41 (moorings)					
	2021-26	2026-31	2031-36	2036-41	2021-41
Broads Authority	45	1	1	1	48

Source: BDAA 2022

Requirements for transit moorings: 2021-2041

3.23 The Broads Authority manages a number of transit temporary stopping places across the study area for boaters. There are 974 24-hour moorings at 57 locations across the Broads Authority area. Most are free for boat owners to use. There are many more boat moorings available moorings at places, although some charge a fee.

3.24 It is recommended that the current temporary moorings are made available for longer periods out of season. It is also recommended that these provisions are upgraded. This includes ensuring easy access to the bank and clear and secure facilities to secure the boats, electric and water hook-ups, toilet and household waste facilities, access to parking within walking distance, and ensuring that the emergency services can access moorings.

Summary

3.25 Table 3.4 summarises the number of permanent residential moorings, required over the period 2021-41. It shows that a further 48 permanent residential moorings are needed between 2021 and 2041 in the Broads Authority planning area.

Table 3.4 Permanent residential moorings need 2021-2041	
	No.
2021-2026	45
2026-2031	1
2031-2036	1
2036-2041	1
Total	48

Source: BDAA 2022

4. Conclusions on the evidence

Introduction

- 4.1 This final chapter draws conclusions from the evidence. It then makes a series of recommendations relating to meeting the identified need for moorings, site management and facilities, and recording and monitoring processes. The recommendations throughout this chapter are put forward by *RRR Consultancy* for the authority to consider in accordance with respective policies and constraints.
- 4.2 The chapter begins by presenting an overview of the policy changes, followed by a review of the accommodation needs and facilitating these needs for boat dwellers. It then concludes with key recommendations.

Policy Changes

- 4.3 In March 2016 the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published its draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats. It states that when considering the need for caravans and houseboats local authorities will need to include the needs of a variety of residents in differing circumstances including, for example caravan and houseboat dwelling households and households residing in bricks and mortar dwelling households.
- 4.4 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 requires Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to consider the needs of people residing on places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored. However, the term 'houseboat' is not defined by DCLG guidance. As such, the accommodation needs determined by this assessment uses a broader definition first used by the Broads Authority⁷ who define boat dwelling as vessels capable of navigation and is used as the main residence but may occasionally go cruising and return to base.
- 4.5 Importantly, according to correspondence between *RRR Consultancy Ltd* and DCLG (27 October 2016), the DCLG stated that it is for local housing authorities to assess and understand the accommodation needs of people who reside in or resort to the area with respect to the provision of caravan sites or houseboats. This means that there is no "standard" methodology that can be followed i.e. it is for each authority to prepare (and justify) an appropriate methodology.

⁷ The definition was developed as part of *the Norfolk Caravans and Houseboats Accommodation Needs Assessment* (ANA) undertaken by *RRR Consultancy Ltd* in 2017.

New accommodation provision

- 4.6 Due to the transient characteristic of boat dwellers it is not possible to identify with certainty all existing households residing on boats in the study area. However, the assessment has provided an estimation of need and identified the general circumstances of boat dwellers requiring permanent residential moorings. The accommodation need in the Broads Authority planning area derives mainly from boat dwellers residing on unauthorised ('unregulated') moorings, tolerated unauthorised moorings, and constant cruisers who require accommodation in the local area.
- 4.7 Table 4.1 summarises the number of permanent residential moorings, required over the period 2021-41. It shows that a further 48 permanent residential moorings are needed over the local plan period.

Table 4.1 Permanent residential moorings need	
	No.
2021-2026	45
2026-2031	1
2031-2036	1
2036-2041	1
Total	48

Broads Authority BDAA 2022

Temporary stopping provision

- 4.8 It is recommended that the current temporary moorings are made available for longer periods out of season. It is also recommended that these provisions are upgraded. This includes ensuring easy access to the bank and clear and secure facilities to secure the boats, electric and water hook-ups, toilet and household waste facilities, access to parking within walking distance, and ensuring that the emergency services can access moorings.

Summary

- 4.9 As well as incorporating the identified need into its local plan, it is recommended that the authority incorporate consideration of any planning applications that might materialise over the plan period from households whose existence was not known at the time of the assessment. This could include households residing on unauthorised moorings, due to in-migration, and those residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. This accommodation need should be considered separate to the need identified above and could be met through windfall applications.
- 4.10 Finally, this report primarily recommends that the Broads Authority works jointly with other relevant service providers where appropriate to address boat dwellers' accommodation needs. The other recommendations are as follows:

New mooring places and sites

- Contact the marina owners and managers in the Broads Authority area to discuss the possibility of some leisure berths being granted planning permission for permanent residential moorings.
- Develop criteria and processes for determining the suitability of boat dwellers' residential moorings for including in emerging/future Local Plans.
- Agencies could consider helping to meet the needs of households unable to afford to own a mooring or the rental costs of existing moorings by renting or leasing small parcels of local authority owned land to them and assisting with planning applications and mooring development.
- To consider alternative funding mechanisms such as: acquisition funds; loans for private mooring provision through Community Development Financial Institutions; and joint ventures with members of the boating community.
- To determine whether some of the accommodation needs of boat dwellers can be met by affordable or supported housing.

Mooring services and facilities

- Ensure all mooring areas have access to facilities such as toilet and household waste disposal provisions. If possible, all authorised moorings (residential and visitors' moorings) should have access to electric and water hook-up points, and for residential moorings to have individual access and a secure post-box.
- To work with other agencies, in order to review the enforcement processes that are in operation.

Communication and cooperation

- Formalise communication processes between relevant housing, planning and enforcement officers etc. in both the study area and neighbouring local authorities.
- For agencies to develop a holistic vision for their work on boat dwelling services and facilities, and to embed it in Community and Homelessness Strategies, Local Plans and planning and reporting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide training and workshop sessions with service provider employees (and elected members) to help them to further understand the key issues facing the boat dwellers.
- The population size and demographics of the boating community groups can change rapidly. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

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Glossary

Bargee traveller: people whose main or only home is a boat without year-round access to a permanent mooring.

Boat Dweller Accommodation Assessment (BDAA): a document which assesses the accommodation needs of boat dwellers.

Canal & River Trust (CRT): replaced British Waterways in July 2012. It is a registered charity whose main aim is to protect over 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales.

Constant cruiser: a boat dweller whose permanent residence is a boat but has no permanent mooring i.e. they constantly cruise. They may temporarily use transit moorings but such stays are usually limited to between 24 hours and 14 days.

DCLG Draft Guidance on Housing Needs (Caravans and Houseboats) (March 2016): provides advice on how to consider the needs of people residing in caravans or houseboats where they differ from those of the settled community.

Environment Agency: an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. It is responsible for the management of the River Thames and other river channels that join their main courses.

Houseboat: commonly defined by the HMRC VAT Notice 701/20, December 2013 as being a floating decked structure which:

- is designed or adapted for use solely as a place of permanent habitation
- does not have the means of, and which is not capable of being readily adapted for, self-propulsion" (HMRC VAT Notice 701/20, December 2013).

Housing and Planning Act 2016: requires Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to consider the needs of people residing on places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored.

Leisure cruiser: someone who cruises the waterways for recreational purposes and does not permanently reside on a boat.

Mooring: a place beside a canal or river used to moor boats. Some moorings have facilities such as electricity hook up points or space for storage. They can be used for temporary (transit) mooring or permanent mooring. 'Authorised' moorings have planning permission whereas 'unauthorised' do not.

Transit mooring: a mooring used for a short period of time – usually between 24 hours and 14 days. Transit moorings are managed by a range of private and public organisations including the Environment Agency (EA) and Canal and River Trust (CRT).