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To All Parish and Town Councils

Date

Our ref

Your ref

16 December 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

Broads Authority Draft Strategic Priorities – 2014/15

The Broads Authority's Annual Strategic Priorities, along with the Business Plan, provide the high level link between the Broads Plan 2011 and the Authority's work programme.

The Authority is presented with a rapidly changing external environment and will face some difficult choices as a result of further reductions in National Park Grant. The National Park Grant is already set to reduce from £3,547,447 in the current year to £3,320,095 in 2014/15. The Authority has also been advised that further reductions in the Grant will be applied for 2014/15 and 2015/16 and is awaiting details in this regard. This strategic context is significant for the Authority in the identification of Strategic Priorities for future years, as is the need for the Authority to target its limited resources on bringing in additional income from funding opportunities.

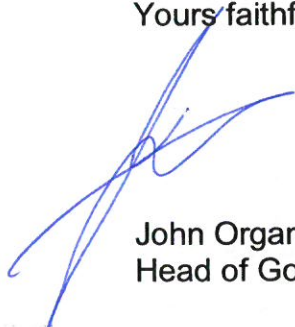
The Authority has reviewed the objectives set out in the Broads Plan 2011, and identified much progress that has been made so far. This review has also identified some gaps which have not yet been covered. However, in the light of reducing National Park Grant the Authority must have a heightened sense of realism about what can be delivered within this strategic context.

During its meeting on 22 November 2013, the Authority endorsed the diagrammatic representation of the overall context at Appendix 1, as it provided a helpful means of focusing attention on those overarching Strategic Priorities to be considered in delivering effective and efficient services. Following on from this, a draft set of overriding Strategic Priorities for 2014/15, that are matched to the three key themes in the Broads Plan are detailed in Appendix 2. However, it should be noted that these draft Strategic Priorities do not replicate all the activities being undertaken by the Authority, but concentrate on those matters which involve large levels of resource, have a very large impact on the Broads or are politically sensitive. The Authority will still look to pursue a range of other priority activities within work programmes as resources allow and some examples of these activities are detailed

in Appendix 3. In practice this leaves little spare capacity for new activity in the coming year with much of the project and operational resources already having been committed.

As in the last two years, we would welcome comments from the Parish and Town Councils on the draft Strategic Priorities at Appendix 2 as we are keen to receive feedback on whether the advisory Committees and Forums and the Broads Authority members have correctly identified the matters of current importance. Comments should be sent to the Head of Governance and Executive Assistant at the above address or by email john.organ@broads-authority.gov.uk to be received by 14 February 2014.

Yours faithfully

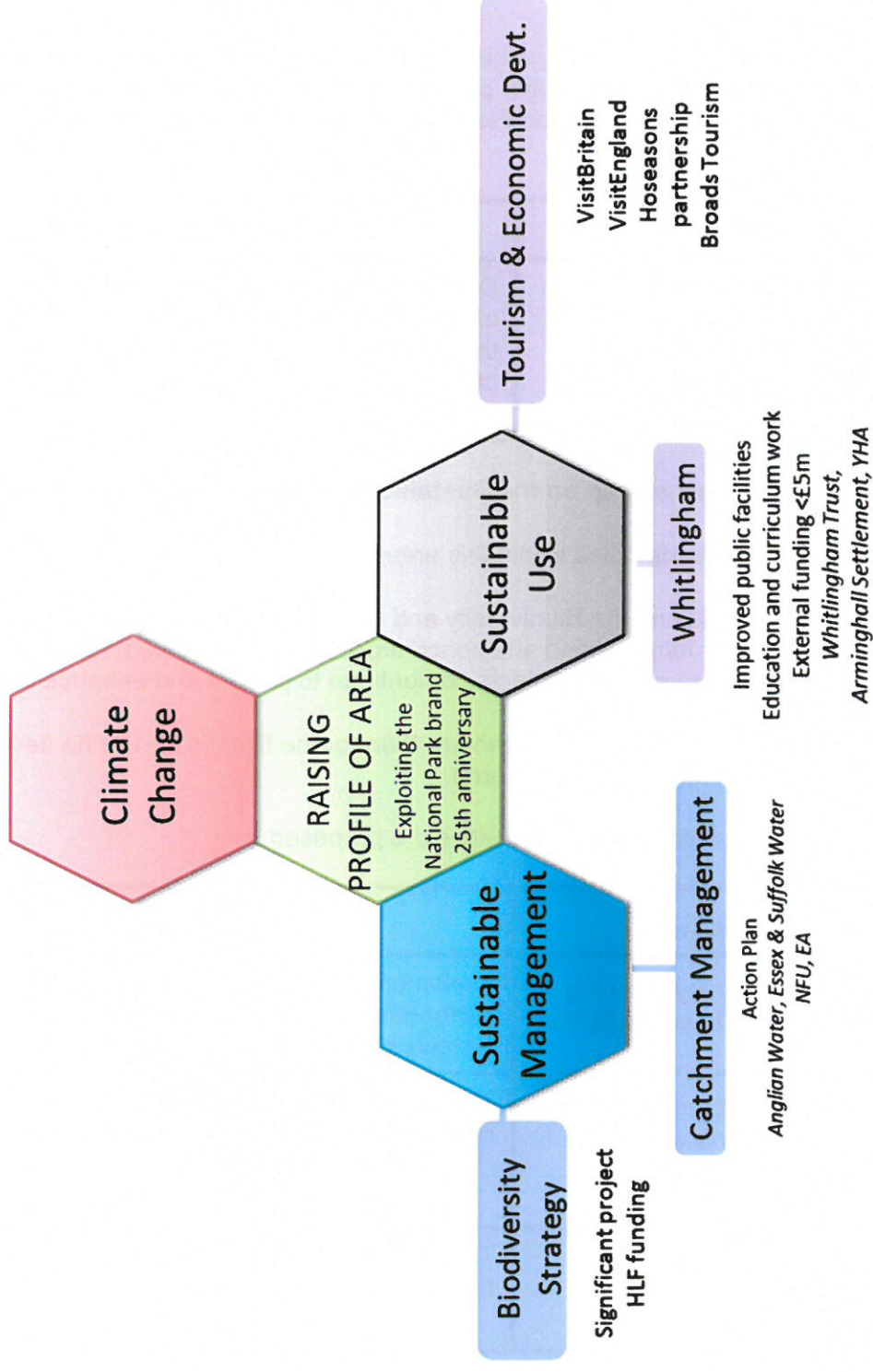


John Organ
Head of Governance and Executive Assistant

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Diagrammatic Representation of the Overall Context.
- Appendix 2 - Draft Strategic Priority Objectives 2014/15.
- Appendix 3 – Examples of Other Priority Activities to be Undertaken Within work Programmes as Resources Allow.

Diagrammatic Representation of the Overall Context



Draft Strategic Priority Objectives for 2014/15

A draft set of overriding Strategic Priorities for 2014/15, which are grouped within the three key themes in the Broads Plan are detailed below. At the heart of themes 1 – 3 is the profile of the Broads and the Broads Authority. Dedicated resource will be required to see how the area could make the most of the National Park brand. Activities in this regard are detailed in a fourth theme concerning the Governance/Organisational Development of the Authority.

Theme 1 - Planning for the Long-term future of the Broads in response to climate change and sea-level rise

This priority continues to be identified by others, including the Broads Forum, as a high priority, and the Authority has embarked on a major public consultation exercise which should lead to a revised Adaptation Plan and a new Action Plan. The following objective with indicative activities are proposed:

Ser	Objectives	Indicative Activities
1.1	Furthering community involvement to understand vulnerabilities and inform adaptation planning (Broads Plan Objective CC2)	Dialogue with the community on the potential impacts of climate change has started and will continue through to next year. The output will then be used to produce a revised climate adaptation plan and an action plan

Theme 2 - Working in Partnership on the Sustainable Management of the Broads –

There are two main strands identified within this area:

- The Biodiversity Audit and the Biodiversity and Water Strategy completed in 2012 should provide the guide for future action and concentration should be given, working with partners, for a major project, or series of projects, to continue to protect and enhance biodiversity in the area.
- In conjunction with partners, the Catchment Plan for the Broads should be developed to seek long-term benefits to the whole area.

The following objectives, with indicative activities are proposed:

Ser	Objectives	Indicative Activities
2.1	Deliver biodiversity planning (Broads Plan Objective BD1)	Implement the Biodiversity Strategy through partnership working and developing a major conservation project suitable for external funding.
2.2	Continue the improvement of water quality and water resource (Broads Plan Objective BD3)	Through partnership working, make use of the Water Framework Directive and other funding.
2.3	Develop landscape-scale initiatives (Broads Plan Objective BD5)	Take forward the Catchment Management Plan through partnership working.

Theme 3 - Encouraging the Sustainable Use of the Broads

There are two main strands identified within this area:

- In conjunction with the Whitlingham Charitable Trust, the Trustees of the Arminghall Settlement and the Youth Hostel Association, develop a project to improve the public facilities in the Whitlingham Country Park. This was likely to involve applications for external funding.
- Following the completion of the STEP programme, work with partners to further promote tourism and economic development within the area.

The following objectives, with indicative activities are proposed:

Ser	Objectives	Indicative Activities
3.1	Promote a clear and consistent Broads 'brand' that defines the special qualities and status of the area as a resource for all (Broads Plan Objective PE1)	Understand the need and take opportunities to develop a national park brand.
3.2	Develop the network of information provision to enable people to better understand the special qualities of the Broads and enjoy them in a sustainable way. (Broads Plan Objective PE2)	Continue to work with the WCT on the major project to enhance the public facilities at Whitlingham.
3.3	Continue to improve the quality of the visitor experience, providing a consistent standard of facilities, services and welcome. (Broads Plan Objective TR2)	Seek to utilise Rural Development Strategies to enable investment in tourism and other economic development. Conduct a visitor survey to base the future tourism strategy on. Continue to explore partnership approaches for marketing the whole Broads

Theme 4 - Governance/Organisational Development of the Authority

At the heart of Strategic Priorities 1 – 3 is the profile of the Broads and the Broads Authority. Dedicated resource will be required to see how the area could make the most of the National Park brand. The following objectives, projects and key milestones are proposed:

Ser	Indicative Activities
4.1	Use the 25 year anniversary of the Broads Authority to focus on the profile of the Broads and the Authority to galvanise support for future objectives.
4.2	Strengthen partnership working to meet common objectives by combining/identifying available resources

Examples of Other Priority Activities to be Undertaken Within work Programmes as Resources Allow

This appendix provides examples of other priority activities to be undertaken within work programmes as resources allow. Similarly, to the draft Strategic Priorities in Appendix 1, these actions are grouped within the three themes from the Broads Plan, together with the fourth theme concerning governance and organisational development.

Theme 1 - Planning for the long-term future of the Broads in response to climate change and sea level rise

Broads Plan Objective	Suggested Work Areas
Promote planning and design approach to sustainable living (Broads Plan Objective CC4)	Working with partners, continue to champion the importance of the Broads to ensure maximum benefits from the urban growth around Norwich and on the edge of the Broads.

Theme 2 - Working in partnership on the sustainable management of the Broads

Broads Plan Objective	Suggested Work Areas
Promote distinctive landscape character areas, integrated project management with local communities (Broads Plan Objective LC1)	<p>Determine approach to enable protection of the special qualities of the Broads and in particular partnership working with farmers to allow water quality and conservation to improve.</p> <p>Provide more information to the public on what makes the Broads special through the 'Place making' initiative.</p> <p>Generate evidence based analysis of recreation effects on Broads Special Qualities</p>
Protect heritage assets (Broads Plan Objective LC2)	<p>A survey of mills has been completed. The next stage is to develop a project in partnership and apply for funding for mills and the drained marshes.</p> <p>Explore, with partners opportunities for potential apprenticeship schemes to foster traditional skills on the Broads</p>
Promote affordable housing to meet identified local needs and encourage sustainable communities (Broads Plan Objective LC3)	In partnership, development of local plans
Deliver strategic sediment management (Broads Plan Objective NA1)	<p>Continue regular programme of dredging and sediment management exploiting the new techniques developed under PRISMA.</p> <p>Look for a potential follow-on project from PRISMA with external funding.</p>
Safety Management (Broads Plan Objective NA4)	Complete land based inventory and risk management

Theme 3 - Encouraging the sustainable use and enjoyment of the Broads

Broads Plan Objective	Suggested Work Areas
Network of information provision to better understand the Broads (Broads Plan Objective PE2)	Identify partnership opportunities for enhanced interpretation at key sites
Enable a wider range of people to understand, experience and actively benefit from the Broads (Broads Plan Objective PE3)	<p>Develop electronic/social media provision Continue development of the Broads Curriculum and educational programmes.</p> <p>Promote opportunities for young people to gain an understanding of the Broads environment.</p> <p>Develop improved resource sharing, through the Volunteer Strategy in particular</p>
Provide a wide range of opportunities to experience and enjoy the Broads – implement the integrated access strategy (Broads Plan Objective TR1/3)	<p>Take opportunities to increase slipway and angling provision</p> <p>Promote opportunities for young people to take up boating and sailing. Fill in gaps in mooring provision</p> <p>Explore strategies to reverse the reducing trend in numbers of small boats</p> <p>Support restoration of Broads and explore managed access onto and around them</p>

Theme 4 - Governance and Organisational Development of the Authority

Suggested Work Areas
Continue programme of Parish Forums
Maximise the opportunities for partnership / external funding / income generation
Continue refinement of services and consolidation of premises to develop greater efficiency and effectiveness
Review the governance and structure of the Authority in conjunction with the review of National Park status

