

Broads Authority

28 November 2025

Agenda item number 8

Strategic priorities update for 2025/26 and draft strategic priorities for 2026/27

Report by Governance Officer

Purpose

This report sets out the latest progress in implementing the Authority's annual strategic priorities for 2025/26 and starts the process for considering next year's priorities.

Broads Plan context

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

Recommended decision

- i. To note the progress in implementing this year's strategic priorities; and
- ii. To consider the draft strategic priorities for 2026/27 in Section 3.

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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 a 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 are used by officers to comply with that requirement.

2. Updates

2.1. An update on the agreed strategic priorities for 2025/26 is in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Strategic priorities 2025/26 – progress update

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>Protect communities from the dangers of flooding</p> <p>1. Respond to future flood risk in the Broads that better copes with climate change and sea level rise</p> <p>Aim: To implement the next steps of the Broadland Futures Initiative and prepare an adaptation plan for BA moorings.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Publish at least two editions of the Broadland Futures Initiative BFI newsletter, by March 2026. (ii) Hold at least two meetings of the BFI Elected Members Forum, by March 2026. (iii) Develop plan to adapt moorings to higher water levels in the Broads. 	<p>Status: On track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The sixteenth edition of the BFI newsletter was published. Recruitment for a senior comms and engagement officer completed (internal to the EA). (ii) At the EMF meeting on 8 May 2025, members discussed and endorsed different pathways for the Broads. Each pathway sets out steps to a different future outcome for flood management across the BFI area. The pathways are a start point for analysis and will ultimately be assessed using a combination of Economics and how they perform against the BFI objectives. Public engagement on the pathways is scheduled towards the end of the year. (iii) The approach outlined and accepted in the 05/09/2024 Navigation Committee is being 	<p>Director of Delivery and Head of CME</p>

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	implemented as each mooring is programmed for full repiling	
<p>Ensure nature’s recovery and clean up Britain’s rivers, lakes and seas</p> <p>2. Continue to provide home to thriving wildlife that can adapt to the changing climate.</p> <p>Aim: A thriving wildlife in the Broads</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Implement year 1 of the Broads Nature Recovery Delivery Plan. (ii) Conclude the work with Natural England on the apportionment of Protected Landscapes targets for the Broads. (iii) Timely response to the consultations to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in Norfolk and Suffolk, as a Supporting Authority, expected in February and May 2025. (iv) Completions and lessons learnt from the restoration projects at Buttle Marsh and Horsey. 	<p>Status: On track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) On track. Annual review of Delivery Plan complete Broads Nature Recovery Strategy 2024-29. The BA projects in the Norfolk Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Action Plan are being considered for funding approval before end of December to further protect designated sites. (ii) On track, targets set by partners in 2024, annual report for national data complete to assess progress against targets, awaiting guidance to include targets in Broads Plan. (iii) The Norfolk LNRS and Suffolk LNRS final pre-publication consultation with Supporting Authorities was completed (on Monday 13 October). No objections were received or PANs (Public Advisory Notices) from the Supporting Authorities. Submission to Defra and publishing is due at end of October with 6 November launch event with BA featuring in launch film at Carlton Marshes. (iv) Buttle Marsh sluice installation, and the tender for the remaining water management works ongoing. 	<p>Environment Policy Adviser and Sustainability Manager</p>

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	<p><i>Funding: Defra – Peat Restoration Grant</i></p> <p>Conference: Managing carbon and water in lowland landscapes Tickets, Tue, Jan 20, 2026</p> <p>Bookings are open. Eight podcast interviews have been completed, and a new peat webpage is currently in development.</p> <p><i>Funding: Defra – Lowland Agricultural Peat Water Discovery Project (LAPWDP)</i></p> <p>Reedbed Expansion</p> <p>Assessments of potential reedbed expansion sites are ongoing across Norfolk and Suffolk. A liaison visit to the Netherlands with Broads partners is planned for December, and work continues to further develop the BA/ADAS REEDS economic model.</p> <p><i>Funding: Defra – Paludiculture Exploration Fund (PEF)</i></p> <p>Broads Peat Partnership</p> <p>The Broads Peat Partnership has now been established. The Partnership’s work was presented at the Norfolk Landscapes Conference on 29 October.</p>	
Net Zero by 2050	<p>Status: On track</p> <p>i) Work on drafting a refreshed Action Plan is ongoing. We have agreed with the other National Parks to draft a common template, which is being prepared by a Task and</p>	Sustainability Manager

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<p>3. Implement the five Ps¹ of the Race to Zero Programme to halve emissions by 2030.</p> <p>Aim: pledge to make Broads Authority own operations carbon neutral by 2030, and to aim for a zero-emissions by 2040.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Refresh Climate Action Plan, by summer 2025. (ii) Develop BA response to Defra’s request to move to electric vehicles by 2027. (iii) Develop plan towards more zero-emission boating. (iv) Find funding to implement the plan for zero-emission boating. 	<p>Finish group which includes the Broads Authority. The Task & Finish group has circulated initial outlines, and we are working to all National Parks having a refreshed action plan by January.</p> <p>ii) We have not received further updates from the DEFRA Electric Vehicles Group. We are investigating potential 4x4 EVs that have come onto the market. The operations team have tested a 4x4 EV, but which did not match up to operational requirements. This showed that the technology is approaching the place where electric 4x4 vehicles can be used to tow, but it has not quite matured to the point we can use it. The Operations Team also tested a fully electric telehandler, but this proved to not yet meet the capabilities needed by the authority in terms of managing rough terrain, and its lifting power.</p> <p>iii) The Broads Authority took part in a bid to the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition that would have explored marine hydrogen applications. Despite scoring highly the application was unfortunately not successful. The project leader is exploring other funding routes for the project.</p> <p>iv) The Broads Authority submitted evidence to the call for evidence for</p>	

¹ Pledge; Plan; Proceed; Publish and Persuade

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	<p>decarbonising boats under 400 tonnes under the Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy. We are co-ordinating our response through AINA and the Canal and Rivers Trust.</p> <p>The government have announced further funding of £448 million for maritime decarbonisation through to 2030, with the next round of applications opening in 2026.</p>	
<p>Potentially all</p> <p>4. Bring significant external funding to deliver Broads Plan objectives</p> <p>Aim: to leverage additional funding to deliver against Broads objectives.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <p>(i) Develop partnership arrangements for new project by summer 2025.</p> <p>(ii) Submit bid to the Lottery by end of 2025.</p>	<p>Status: On Track</p> <p>(i) We have formed a group of core partners who are currently in the process of developing initial project ideas for the development phase bid. We are continuing to meet with current and prospective partners to identify gaps in delivery opportunities that will need to be filled for a successful application to the scheme.</p> <p>We continue to meet with the Heritage Fund and other Landscape projects nationally in support of our bid.</p> <p>(ii) We have received a grant of £129,312 to formally set up a new partnership through the project <i>#LC Broads Heritage Partnership: A Vision for the Future</i>.</p> <p>This funding will allow us to bring together the new partnership, through funded officer time, to develop and submit the first-</p>	<p>Head of External Funding</p>

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	<p>round bid to the Heritage Fund. We will be recruiting a new externally funded Partnership Develop Officer to lead in this work.</p> <p>In the first week of November, we hosted a visit with the regional director of the Heritage Fund and one of the Senior Engagement Managers where we discussed our plans for developing our schemes for the programme.</p>	
<p>Access for all</p> <p>5. More people enjoying more activities in the Broads safely</p> <p>Aim: for all to enjoy safe visits to the Broads.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <p>(i) Ensure that the 2025 edition of Broadcaster (and all website and social media content produced in 2025) highlight the breadth of activities available in the Broads, including information regarding accessibility, with relevant and appropriate safety messaging.</p> <p>(ii) Continue to use communications channels during 2025 that reach the widest possible audiences, in particular those that may not traditionally access the Broads.</p> <p>(iii) Deliver year 2 of the Integrated Access Strategy action plan.</p>	<p>Status: On Track, except (iii) which is behind schedule</p> <p>(i) 90,000 copies of the 2025 edition of Broadcaster have been distributed through the usual channels</p> <p>(ii) Social media posts were scheduled throughout the season. The core campaign messaging focussed on Lifejackets (Take care of the people you love) and alcohol (Don't drink and drown). A case study was obtained featuring a quote from a survivor of a serious accident from earlier this year and used during the summer season (lifejacket messaging). New safety signage produced for Great Yarmouth Yacht Station proved successful with noticeably more people wearing life jackets whilst around the quay. The design was</p>	<p>Head of Communications and Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology</p>

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(iv) All officers responsible for writing for commissioning reports and published materials complete the Accessibility training by the end of 2025.	<p>replicated for handouts and posters which were printed and distributed as a PDF file for partners to display.</p> <p>(iii) Access for All projects for delivery in 2025/26 have all been delayed due to the freeze on recruitment to the Waterways & Recreation Officer post. The post will be filled by the end of November 2025.</p> <p>(iv) Accessibility training for report authors and others responsible for published material is available on the online staff training platform and reminders sent throughout the year,</p>	
<p>Support our farmers to boost Britain's food security</p> <p>6. Support farmers and land managers in carrying out projects which benefit the Broads</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> <p>(i) Allocate all grant funding to projects, by December 2025.</p> <p>(ii) Review of the outcomes of Farming in Protected Landscapes (since July 2021)</p>	<p>Status: On track</p> <p>(i) Have received our grant funding and have £260,833.00 to allocate to projects in 2025/26. £100,418.32 has been allocated to 14 projects so far. 7 projects have completed.</p> <p>(ii) Headline Stats have been reviewed by Defra, and follow up information has been submitted.</p> <p>(iii) Summaries of all projects across years 1 – 4 are available on the Broads FiPL website. There are eight more detailed case studies also available on the website.</p>	Head of External Funding

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(iii) Publish case studies showing example projects completed in the Broads.		

3. Setting strategic priorities for 2026/27

- 3.1. The role of strategic priorities in our strategic “golden thread” is set out in appendix 1. The strategic priorities for 2026/27 will feed into the 2026/27 budget setting process.
- 3.2. It is important to remember that much of the Authority’s resources is already committed into the future: in providing statutory services such as navigation safety and tolls, planning, and undertaking essential works such as maintenance of the waterways.

Defra Priorities

- Clean up Britain's rivers, lakes and seas: This includes improving water quality and making it cleaner through various initiatives.
- Support farmers to boost food security: This involves working with the agriculture sector to make it more productive, resilient, and sustainable.
- Create a roadmap to a circular economy: This aims to minimize waste and make the best use of resources to support economic growth and achieve net-zero targets.
- Ensure nature's recovery: This priority focuses on restoring and enhancing the environment and biodiversity across the nation.
- Protect communities from the dangers of flooding: This involves improving flood defences and maintenance to better protect homes and businesses.

Draft Broads Authority Strategic Priorities 2026/27:

- Broads Plan – start preparation of a replacement plan to cover the period 2028-2033
- Local Plan – submit plan for Local Plan Inquiry for independent inspection by a local plan inspector
- Responding to Climate Change and supporting the Broadland Futures Initiative
- Landscape Connections supporting nature recovery. Deliver partnership and submit development phase bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to unlock up to £10m over 10 years.

- Access for All – maximising Active Travel England funding in partnership with key stakeholders and the highway authority.
- Information and Data Management Project - the main aims are data migration to a cloud-based platform, improved information governance and compliance thereby moving from legacy on premise software to cloud solutions.
- Devolution and Mayoral Authority – continue to engage with the Broads Authority’s constituent local authorities to make the most of the new governance structure for Norfolk and Suffolk.

3.3. Members are asked to review and potentially prioritise the suggested strategic priorities for 2026/27. Once members views have been received officers will define the milestones for 2026/27.

4. Financial Risks

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. Over-committing to additional work or priorities will have an adverse impact on the budget (see para. 3.2 above).

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Date of report: 14 November 2025

Background papers: none

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: all

Appendix 1 – ‘Golden thread’ strategic framework

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Fig. 1

‘Golden thread’ strategic framework

