

Broads Authority

25 September 2026

Agenda item number 8

Strategic priorities- update and draft strategic priorities for 2027/28

Report by Head of Governance

Purpose

The report sets out the latest progress in implementing the Authority's annual strategic priorities for 2026/27 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 2027/28.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Updates – 2026/27	2
3. Setting strategic priorities for 2027/28	11
4. Financial Risks	12
Appendix 1 – 'Golden thread' strategic framework	14

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 – 2026/27

- 2.1. The latest update on the agreed strategic priorities for 2026/27 is in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Strategic priorities 2026/27 – progress update

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
Potentially all 1. Start preparation of a replacement Broads Plan to cover the period 2028-2033 Aim: To implement the next steps of the Broads Plan preparation. Milestones: (i) Broads Plan – start preparation of a new plan to cover the period 2028-2033 (ii) April-July 2026: - Commission State of the Park Report - Prepare report summarising feedback - First Broads Plan Partnership workshop - Report progress to Broads Authority (iii) August-December 2026 – Draft Broads Plan (iv) January-March 2027 – Consult on emerging draft plan.	Status: On track (i) Consultant appointed to support the process. Letters issued week ending 17 April 2026 to partners, parish councils, local authorities and Natural England on the review of the current plan. (ii) Officers workshops; one stakeholder workshop; Broads Authority Member workshop; and a Navigation-specific workshop which included stakeholders and Navigation Committee members were held in June 2026. A delivery partner workshop was held in July 2026. For the partners that were not able to attend the workshop, the Broads Plan Coordinator will be contacting them individually for their input. (iii) Not yet due (iv) Not yet due	Chief Executive

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
2. Adoption of the Local Plan for the Broads Authority Aim: To facilitate the Local Plan Enquiry. Milestones: (i) Submit the Broads Local Plan for Local Plan Inquiry for independent inspection by a local plan inspector. (ii) Receipt of Matters, Issues and Questions. (iii) Examination hearings. (iv) Modifications consultation. (v) Receipt of Inspector's Report. (vi) Adoption of Local Plan.	Status: On Track (i) Completed 16 February 2026. (ii) August 2026. (iii) Scheduled for February 2027. (iv) TBC (v) TBC (vi) TBC	Planning Policy Officer
Protect communities from the dangers of flooding 3. Broadland Futures Initiative Aim: Responding to Climate Change and supporting the Broadland Futures Initiative Milestones: • Baseline modelling (BFI Product 34) report due in 2026/27 • Appraisal of the flood risk management action pathways using the modelling data and multi-criteria decision analysis	Status: On Track With two-thirds of the Broads below Mean Sea Level, living, working, and enjoying Broadland depend on flood risk management. The BFI Plan (due for completion by the Environment Agency (EA) in 2028) will be an adaptive pathway which will guide local planning, future decisions and investments, ensuring they are cost-effective, environmentally sustainable, technically feasible, and democratically agreed upon. 1. BFI newsletter #17 issued in June 2026. 2. Hydrological Modelling nearing completion – awaiting EA to complete.	Director of Delivery

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	3. The Flood Risk management actions modelling also nearing completion. 4. The EA's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management funding policy was updated in April 2026 5. Summary documents on BFI progress can be located Broadland Futures Initiative	
Improving landscapes for biodiversity and agriculture. Protecting landscape character and the historic environment. Connecting and inspiring communities. 4. Landscape Connections Aim: Develop partnership and submit development phase bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to unlock up to £10m over 10 years. Milestones: (i) Deliver and complete initial landscape connections project (#LC Broads Heritage Partnership: A Vision for the Future) by October 2026. (ii) Submit expression of interest to Heritage Fund by Summer 2026. (iii) Submit bid to the Heritage Fund by end of November 2026.	Status: On Track (i) Work continues in the delivery of our initial funding from the Landscape Connections scheme (#LC Broads Heritage Project) which is laying the groundwork for the new partnership and co-creation of initial project ideas. We have agreed with the Heritage Fund to extend the project through mid-January to continue development work with the partnership, ensuring that we are able to fully spend our grant allocation. We have now completed the delivery of the first 4 planned workshops to facilitate the creation of our new vision for the future of Heritage in the Broads and are planning for an additional workshop this October. Our consultants have identified more than 300 local organisations that have a	Head of External Funding

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	potential to work with the partnership in some capacity, which will help to address some of our identified partnership gaps around access and inclusion. We continue to work with partners to develop and write the partnership's <i>Vision for the Future</i>, which will form the basis of our next steps with the Heritage Fund. (ii) We continue to speak with investment officers at the Heritage Fund in preparation of submitting our EOI for the next phase of funding. We have been adapting our draft EOI to address some of the larger changes to the area including the recent drought and the future closure of the Cantley Sugar refinery. We continue to work with the Heritage Fund on the development of a new cohort of other landscapes which are developing bids to the scheme, as well as with other significant projects also receiving investment from the Heritage Fund. We are also supporting partners with some early externally funded pilot projects that will be incorporated into the larger scheme, these include	

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	working with local universities and the University of Cambridge, including a major grant from the AHRC. (iii) We will be able to start on the next step for submission after the EOI stage.	
Responding to climate change and flood risk 5. Responding to Climate Change and Nature Recovery Aim: Implement the agreed Climate Action Plan and begin working towards incorporating the next plan in the Broads Plan from 2028. Broads Climate Action Plan, Broads Nature Recovery Action Plan, Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) and 30 by 30. Milestones: (i) Seek funding through the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition (CDMC) and Zero Emission Vessels & Infrastructure (ZEVI) programmes for maritime decarbonisation (ii) Continue developing the CyclePods Cycle Charging network (iii) Use Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS), Local EV	Status: On Track (i) The BA is a partner in a CMDC project submitted at the end of July. If funded, this project will trial hydrogen fuel cells as a way to power electric dredging equipment. (ii) The expansion of the CyclePODS network is still awaiting funding being available. (iii) Next target site is Ludham bridge, pending agreement with EA. This has been delayed by the process of transferring management of the moorings. (iv) The CDP report is in the process of being drafted, ready for submission. (v) Produced an EOI project programme for the Broads Biodiversity Partnership. Projects will be prioritised to align with the £64K budget for wildlife rich habitat delivery.	Sustainability Manager / Environment Policy Adviser

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
Infrastructure (LEVI) and other available funding to continue expanding the boat charging network (iv) Report and track progress via the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) reporting process. (v) Produce a programme of projects that meet wildlife rich habitat and 30 by 30 targets, including working with Broads Biodiversity Partners and purchasing land that meets criteria (vi) Identify key projects to take forward within the funding available (vii) Use additional Defra funds to deliver projects, reporting progress through the Broads Biodiversity Partnership (viii) Seek funding through the Peatland Sector Capacity, Lowland Water Fund and Paludiculture and Wetter Farming programmes (2026-2030) for peatland restoration and wetter crops, working with Broads Peat Partnership	(vi) Developing pond restoration and breeding wader habitat creation projects. (vii) Feasibility studies in relation to wetland creation and water treatment in the Ant valley are being developed. (viii) BA are a partner in a consortium bid for the Lowland Peat Water Discovery grant. The bid is being led by Norfolk FWAG and includes 9 sites in the Broads. If successful, the Broads Authority's role will be to act as Partnership Chair, provide strategic direction and high-level technical expertise, contribute site-specific knowledge, and support engagement with landowners across the project area. The result of the application will be known by late September 2026.	
Access for all 6. Access in the Broads Aim: Maximising benefits from Access for All and Active Travel England funding. Deliver the Broads	Status: On Track (i) Programme plan produced and submitted.	Waterways and Recreation Officer

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
Local Cycling, Walking, Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in partnership with key stakeholders and the highway authority. Milestones: (i) Produce Active Travel England National Park Capability Fund programme plan (end May 2026) (ii) Identify by end June 2026 key Active Travel Projects to take forward within the funding available, with the inclusion of socio-economic access. (iii) Deliver programme of Access for All projects in line with the funding guidance, reporting progress through the Broads Local Access Forum (BLAF). (iv) April: Increase capacity for ATE Phase Two project management. (v) May: Establish ATE Steering group. (vi) June – December: Focussed active travel community public engagement events. (vii) Review Year 2 and deliver Year 3 Integrated Access Strategy. (viii) Identify and deliver Access for All projects and suitable sites in the Broads.	(ii) 3 routes selected following development of scoring matrix: UB2 - Hoveton Viaduct to Wroxham Bridge (Walking and wheeling); YA5 - Loddon Village to Pye's Mill (Walking and wheeling); UB1 - Wroxham to Acle (Walking, wheeling, cycling) (iii) Progress reported to BLAF 20 May 2026. Feedback form signage in place for paddle craft launch feedback with feedback being received and processed. Programme of works created and budgeted. Delivery of projects commencing. (iv) Active Travel Project Officer had been recruited but then left. The Broads Authority is currently in discussion with another authority regarding an alternative option of secondment for this post. (v) Steering Group established, second meeting held in July. (vi) To be organised when Active Travel Project Officer in post. (vii) Year 2 reviewed, feedback report to BLAF. Delivering on Year 3 objectives: attended Water Safety press morning, progress on zoomable/scrollable maps for angling and mooring provision, working with PaddleUK to	

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
(ix) Early 2027: Produce initial draft design schemes for active travel in the Broads in partnership with key stakeholders and the highway authority.	promote paddle routes, progressing moorings scoring matrix including gap analysis. (viii) First projects being delivered with additional areas of improvement being identified through creation of launch point networks plans and collation of proposed projects (Cary's Meadow staged plan and accessibility audit, Horstead portage improvements). (ix) August/ September 2026: contractors commencing feasibility and concept design for identified routes, to be completed by January 2027. Next stage: preliminary designs commencing January 2027.	
Protecting the interests of navigation 7. Maintenance of the navigation priorities Aim: Ensure the frameworks for decision-making and timely delivery of maintenance works are in place following consultation with key partners. Milestones: (i) Review of the Breydon and lower tidal rivers management plan (5-year consented plan for all	Status: On track (i) Consultation with Navigation Committee in April on a suitable approach for channel marking in the lower tidal rivers was completed. Selected post removal to be started in 2027/28 on the Lower Yare. (ii) Consultant has started, due for completion by end October. (iii) Riverside Tree Management programme refresh is in	Head of Operations

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
waterways management activities). (ii) Develop joint Maintenance Dredge Protocol with Peel Ports (GYHA). (iii) Riverside Tree Management Plan (5-year consented plan) is due for completion in 2026/27. Refresh and finalise next 5 year plan 2027/28 to 2031/32.	development and is aligned with the update of the overarching Waterways Management Strategy & Action Plan 2027/8-2031/2, which is due for adoption in April 2027.	
8. Information and Data Management Project Aim: Data migration to a cloud-based platform, improved information governance and compliance thereby moving from legacy on premise software to cloud solutions. Milestones: (i) Scope data migration project with Consultants. (ii) Review all data held, delete duplicates and ensure data is removed that we should no longer hold. (iii) Migrate Tolls documents from the on premise DMS to the cloud. (iv) Migrate the Planning system to the cloud.	Status: On Track (i) Report received from consultants in June. Contract awarded in August, project kick off meeting has taken place and weekly update meetings commenced first week of September. We are currently in a discovery and planning phase which will involve workshops with relevant stakeholders. This process is scheduled to complete by 1 December 2026. The following stage is to undertake a pilot migration of an existing SharePoint on premise site to SharePoint online. (ii) Ongoing process being undertaken by ICT support staff working with relevant data holders.	Head of ICT

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	(iii) Once a contract is in place, the intention now is to move Planning Documents to SharePoint Online, followed by the Tolls documents. (iv) Cloud hosted system goes live week commencing 21 September 2026.	
Potentially all 9. Devolution and Mayoral Authority Aim: Continue to engage with the Broads Authority's constituent local authorities to make the most of the new governance structure for Norfolk and Suffolk. Milestones: (i) Confirmation of board amendments with new unitary councils and DEFRA (ii) Engagement with the new Mayor	Status: On track (i) A review of plans to streamline local government was announced on 7 September, to ensure the process is robust and aligns with the new government's plans. While the review takes place, the government has confirmed that local elections in May 2027 will go ahead on existing council boundaries in Norfolk and Suffolk. (ii) Mayoral elections have been delayed from 2026 to 2028 for the new strategic authority for Norfolk and Suffolk.	Chief Executive

3. Setting strategic priorities for 2027/28

- 3.1. The role of strategic priorities in our strategic "golden thread" is set out in appendix 1. The strategic priorities for 2027/28 will feed into the 2027/28 budget setting process.
- 3.2. Each year, a few of the many strategic priorities that the Authority undertakes are highlighted to provide Members with details on how these projects are being implemented and the progress thereon. The priorities listed for 2027/28 are not the only priorities that the Authority are working on. All actions are aligned with the long-

term aims of the Broads Plan. This document also forms part of the data provided to meet Defra requirements for tracking business plan deliverables.

3.3. Management Team reviewed the 2026/27 strategic priorities and felt that the current priorities should be carried forward through to 2027/28. Some of the priorities, such as Responding to Climate Change and Nature Recovery, which had a big impact on the Broads, would likely stay the same for a number of years. The draft Strategic Priorities for next year are listed below, for members' consideration:

- Broads Plan for 2028-2033
- Broadland Futures Initiative (BFI) - responding to climate change and supporting the BFI)
- Landscapes Connections
- Maintenance of the navigation priorities
- Adoption of the Local Plan for the Broads Authority
- Responding to Climate Change and Nature Recovery – to include the Clean Maritime Project development
- Access in the Broads
- Information and Data Management Project

3.4. 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.

3.5. Members' views are welcome on the suggested priorities.

3.6. As part of the strategic priorities update report to the Authority in November, the agreed priorities for 2027/28 will be presented, together with expected milestones for reporting progress, wef April 2027.

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. 2.4 above).

Author: Lorraine Taylor

Date of report: 08 September 2026

Background papers: none

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: All

Appendix 1 – ‘Golden thread’ strategic framework

Appendix 1 – ‘Golden thread’ strategic framework

Fig. 1

‘Golden thread’ strategic framework

