

# BFI Elected Members Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2021

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## Present

Name	Authority
Andy Grant – in the Chair	Norfolk County Council
Kay Mason Billig	South Norfolk Council
Harry Blathwayt	North Norfolk District Council
Matthew Bradbury	Broads Authority
Nigel Brennan	Broadland District Council
Penny Carpenter	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
James Mallinder	East Suffolk Council

## In attendance

Charlotte Hounsell – Norwich City Council, John Jones – Norfolk County Council, Marie-Pierre Tighe - Broads Authority, Kellie Fisher - Environment Agency, Mark Johnson - Environment Agency, Peter Doktor- Environment Agency, David Cobby – Jacobs, Kylie Moos – Broads Authority (minutes).

## 1. Apologies for absence and welcome

Marie-Pierre Tighe welcomed everyone to Broadland Futures Initiative (BFI) Elected Members Forum, a short introduction was provided by all.

Apologies received from Rob Goodliffe, Susan Lawn, Alison Old, Gavin Rumsey.

## 2. Terms of Reference

In advance of today's meeting members were asked to review the draft BFI Elected Members Forum Terms of Reference. Marie-Pierre Tighe provided a summary to the forum and asked two additional questions for members to consider:

1. Can members of the BFI Initiative Project Team (IPT) observe future Elected Members Forum meetings?
2. How will members of the public be able to access Elected Members Forum meetings? For example, ensuring minutes are made available to the public, uploading meeting recordings, inviting members of the public to observe meetings?

A member noted that the Terms of Reference are fit for purpose and suggested a review in one year.

A member commented that the Terms of Reference refers to challenges due to climate change and environmental sensitivities, but there is no reference to changes due to planning. Planning

changes could include planning law, the increase in housing, rights and responsibilities of riparian landowners and enforcement. Some planning decisions have led to difficulties at recent flooding events.

Mark Johnson responded, in the scope of risks which are being addressed, all sources of flood risks are considered. If decisions are being made which will affect a certain type of flood risk, it can be addressed as the project evolves. Kellie Fisher added, the framework cannot be agreed without respecting planning law and the rights and responsibilities of riparian landowners.

A member agreed that itemising every flood risk could mean that the Forum loses track of the high-level objectives. The Forum should still receive and discuss planning issues as they arise if relevant to the BFI work.

A member cautioned that a public forum could see members of the public joining to voice their concerns about local flooding issues. Concerns should be raised with Elected Members and not this forum, which is providing a high-level overview.

The Chair proposed a review of the Terms of Reference in 6 months.

**It was resolved unanimously to adopt the BFI Elected Members Forum Terms of Reference subject to a review in 6 months.**

### 3. Update on engagement activities

Marie-Pierre Tighe provided an update on engagement activities on behalf of Gavin Rumsey, Engagement Specialist for the Environment Agency.

#### 2021

- The online survey and virtual consultation took place from 14<sup>th</sup> January - 31<sup>st</sup> May.
- 167 full responses to the online survey. An analysis of the survey results is available on the BFI website. 924 visitors to the virtual exhibition space.
- The stakeholder list now stands at 400, this is up from approximately 300 stakeholders at the beginning of the online consultation. The overall total number includes individuals, Parish Councils, organisations etc.
- 2000 leaflets were sent to targeted properties within the BFI Plan area.
- Across the first six months of the year approximately 18,000 people were reached with a variety of social media engagement activity.
- A series of virtual village hall events were hosted by the project team and attended by local members of the communities. A recording of the events can be found on the BFI website.
- A young person's survey, targeting 16-24 yr. olds, took place for 4 weeks and completed with the support of East Norfolk Sixth Form and Easton College. An Analysis is available on the BFI website.

- A consultative exhibition is open until the end of October at the Museum of the Broads

### **Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA)**

It is expected that the BFI will inform the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA). The BFI is represented at the NSFA by a number of organisations, and will endeavour to develop good partnership working between the BFI and the NSFA through good communication, and sharing of knowledge to ensure that the aims and aspirations of both initiatives support and complement one another.

### **A forward look**

- Stakeholder Progress Newsletter to be issued end of October.
- Explore potential development of Stakeholder focus groups.
- Review feedback from Museum of the Broads exhibition.
- Evaluation of engagement activity so far, including review of engagement plan and objectives. Engagement planning meeting scheduled for October.
- Continue to raise awareness at community events and working group. For example, the Norfolk and Suffolk Coastal Conference.

A member noted that saltwater intrusion is affecting the fish in the Broads system already and questioned if BFI are looking into this. Peter Doktor responded; it is an issue that has been highlighted by a range of stakeholders. There is a piece of work currently underway to identify the range of receptors and the ability to predict how that may change over time. Flood risk management structures such as a flood barrier across the Bure to manage saltwater intrusion have been considered previously and would also come under BFI.

A member stated their support of the duelling the A47 between Acle and Great Yarmouth. The duelling of the road would form a dam, and a sluice at the point where the River Bure flows through Great Yarmouth would help control flooding and saltwater ingress whilst retaining navigation. Another member noted that this will affect the Broads for many years to come, and it is the responsibility of forums like this to raise these concerns at a national level.

The Chair concluded that this is the start of a long journey for the Forum. The outcome is not to look at small investments but substantial government funding to be spent across Norfolk and Suffolk to defend the Broads in the years to come. Mark Johnson responded that people are aware of this strategic initiative at a national level, it is also aligned with the Environment Agency's National Flood Risk Management Strategy.

## **4. The proposed BFI plan objectives**

Ahead of today's meeting members received a copy of the draft BFI plan objectives and a non-technical summary for their consideration. Kellie Fisher, Flood and Coastal Risk Management Senior Advisor and Peter Doktor, Project Manager for the Environment Agency explained the purpose and origin of the proposed strategy plan objectives.

## **The BFI Vision**

“Together, we improve the resilience of people, places and the environment to flooding, as we adapt to the changing climate”

Resilience is “the capacity of people and places to plan for, better protect, respond to, and recover from flooding and coastal change”.

Strength in six ‘capitals’ -natural, built, economic, human, social & political. These capitals create resilience.

## **The purpose of objectives**

- Defining the baseline
- Appraising options
- Monitoring progress

## **Characteristics of the strategy area**

- Ten ‘characteristics’ have been identified that reflect the makeup of the place and the ambition of the plan.
- Each embody one or more of the capitals, therefore, if the characteristics are improved, resilience is increased.
- One or more objectives have been proposed for each characteristic

## **10 Characteristics of Resilience**

- Economic viability and development
- Sustainable agriculture
- Recreation, tourism and navigation
- Cultural heritage and sense of place
- Built environment
- Engagement and participation
- Natural capital
- Healthy waters
- Integrated catchment management
- Climate adaptation and mitigation

## **The source of proposed objectives**

- Stakeholder engagement- stakeholder desires for future flood risk management primarily through online surveys and exhibitions with people who live, work and visit the BFI area

- Existing plans and strategies – strategies from partner organisations as well as aspirations from local and regional bodies
- Baseline research- findings of technical studies undertaken for the BFI area.
- It may not be possible to meet all objectives, a review of priorities may take place at a later stage

### **Draft BFI objectives**

There are 13 objectives in total. Each objective has been grouped into the 3 national ambitions from the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England.

- Places are resilient to flood risk –integrated catchment management, healthy waters and climate, adaption & mitigation (2).
- BFI supports sustainable growth – natural capital, sustainable agriculture, recreation, tourism & navigation and economic viability & development (2).
- Communities are aware and involved – built environment, engagement and participation, and cultural heritage and sense of place (2).

### **Questions**

Do you agree with the proposed vision for the BFI strategy plan that *“Together, we improve the resilience of people, places and the environment to flooding, as we adapt to the changing climate”*?

Are there any important aspects of the plan area which could be impacted by flooding and which may not be covered by the objectives?

### **Next Steps**

- Can we agree the concise objectives now?
- We will continue to make the objectives more SMART.
- We will explain how the objectives are used to appraise and select future strategic flood risk management interventions.
- We will start to identify possible management interventions.

Valuing nature and using it as a credit in the decision-making progress was welcomed by a member. It was also questioned how this material would be made available to the public. Kellie Fisher responded, everything that the BFI produces is made publicly available, the objectives document will be made available on the BFI website. Another member commented that the BFI objectives are relevant now with the effects of climate change already upon us and water frequently reaching the hard sea walls. The document will be shared with their ward members.

A member commented that the challenges still come back to planning changes. For hundreds of years we have been diverting rivers and putting obstacles in the way of the natural flow of water for our own purposes. In the past fields would be allowed to flood, but with the demand on new houses we are forced to look at areas that would not have been looked at for development.

An officer questioned the map of the BFI area, if it is up for discussion and how far it reaches in to Norwich. Kellie Fisher responded, the BFI plan area includes the full extent of the Broads

Authority executive area and key stretches of the coast which could influence flooding in the Broads. The plan area is predominantly in east Norfolk but also crosses into north east Suffolk. There are not any plans to change the mapped area, but when strategic approaches to flood risk are considered, it is likely the BFI could influence areas outside of the BFI plan area.

The Chair agreed that the BFI objectives is an open document for all county and district councils to feed into. Interventions carried out in one area may affect other areas. He supported that the BFI objectives are accessible to all.

Regarding the BFI vision statement, a member commented that this feels correct for now, but may need to be reviewed in the future as the relationship between people, landscape, biodiversity and the economy is always changing. They also supported the BFI plan area and welcomed the flexible approach which had been introduced.

A member raised a query regarding the Broads Authority reducing dredging depths from 4 meters to 2 meters and how it will affect this forum. Marie-Pierre Tighe responded, the Waterways Management strategy was discussed by Broads Authority members last week and the reduced dredging depths relates to the area around Breydon Water only. Monitoring of the water depth demonstrates that the water depths at this location have been stable, with hydrographic data showing a water depth greater than 3.5m. The revision to the waterways specification which was approved by Broads Authority members should not impact on how the waterways can be used. Another member agreed with the comments and added that the previous 4 meters specification related to commercial freights presently not using this route.

Kellie Fisher commented that based on stakeholder feedback, a video had been produced on dredging and its relation to flood risk, which is useful to explain how dredging is unlikely to be effective for flood risk purposes because the Broads system is tidal. The video can be found on the BFI website.

**It was resolved unanimously to approve the BFI plan objectives.**

## 5. AOB

A member requested for a future meeting a study on hard borders between Horsey and Sea Palling and if the effects of introducing a salt water marsh behind dunes as an alternative to a sea wall. Mark Johnson responded, the sand is re-nourished from time to time to retain the amenity, but the primary flood management purpose of the beach is to protect the assets behind from sea and wave action. The frontage from Eccles to Winterton is closely monitored, and the next re-nourishment is due in the upcoming capital programme. Peter Doktor added that there is a document on coastal processes on the BFI website. Additional work is currently taking place to look at historical monitoring and the trends that are taking place.

Regarding the two questions raised on attendance in agenda item two, the forum agreed the following:

- Members of the BFI Initiative Project Team are permitted to observe future Elected Member Forum meetings.

- Members of the public will not be invited to attend or observe Elected Member Forum meetings. Minutes of the meetings will be made available to the public on the BFI website.

The Chair asked when options are likely to be presented to the forum to make decisions for BFI. Peter Doktor responded, one of the key tools required for the appraisal of flood risk management options is a hydrological model of the Broads. Development of this model has started and is due to be completed mid 2023, but in the meantime, options can still be identified and go through an initial screening process. Mark Johnson added that BFI is a long-term strategic approach with democracy at the heart of the decision-making process, and any flood event would inform our knowledge of the system.

## 6. Date of next meeting

TBC