

**Summary of BFI Public event 04/11/2021**

We would like to begin by expressing our sincere gratitude to Somerton Parish Council for hosting the Broadland Futures Initiative (BFI) public event on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The aim of the BFI is to create a strategy or plan that provides an agreed framework for future flood risk management that adapts to our changing climate and rising sea level. The framework will describe the management intent and long-term strategy for the area, so that individual projects which manage flood risk can be advanced in accordance with the agreed plan.

We truly value hearing from communities, receiving their feedback and understanding their priorities and concerns. The evening gave us just that, and it was the first face-to-face meeting for the BFI for 18 months due to Covid-19. It was extremely useful to hear first-hand about local and wider issues that community members would like to see considered and addressed as part of the strategy development.

Equally, we recognise and empathise with the concerns shared during the event. We will be including an update in our next newsletter to talk in more detail about the work completed under the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project as well as other recent and planned projects on the coast showing that work on the ground to manage flood risk is not being delayed while the BFI is in progress.

We took a great deal away from the event and the experience will serve us well as we look to develop the next phase of the strategy which will begin by looking at long listing potential actions for managing flood risk. Because the BFI is considering the next 100 years an increasingly prominent feature will be the impacts of climate change, both on the risk of flooding, and the wider Broadland economy and environment. Due to uncertainty about the rate and scale of such changes and impacts, especially the further into the future we look, the BFI will not set out a single way forward. For the medium and longer term it will most likely identify a series of critical points where decisions will have to be made, and the possible options available then. This approach will allow the management of flood risk to adapt to changing conditions and provide communities, such as yourselves, the opportunities to inform decisions

We acknowledge, from the event, questions about how the BFI will take into account existing and new plans that will emerge and impact upon the BFI plan area. To answer this, the BFI is represented by several organisations each with their own plans and directives, therefore, through good communication, partnership working and sharing of knowledge we will ensure that these plans are taken into consideration when decisions are made. Of particular relevance here is the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). While the BFI may make observations or recommendations concerning future management of the coast, it does not replace the existing SMP policy or its decision making and approval processes.

Our partner organisations are all keen to ensure their work is informed by the latest findings of the BFI. Similarly, the BFI is pleased to endorse plans which support the aims of the BFI and help to deliver our objectives and aspirations, and the preparation of such local plans need not be restricted by the timing of the BFI which is expected to be complete in 2025.

In conclusion, it is essential to the BFI's progress that community involvement is maintained, and we will be looking to use every option available to us to ensure that communities can inform and provide their thoughts on the strategy. Together, we improve the resilience of people, places and the environment to flooding, as we adapt to the changing climate.