

Broads Authority

24 July 2026

Agenda item number 10

Strategic priorities- Update July 2026

Report by Head of Governance

Purpose

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

Broads Plan context

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

Recommended decision

To note the progress in implementing this year's strategic priorities.

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Updates	2
3.	Financial implications	11
	Appendix 1 – 'Golden thread' strategic framework	12

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. The second update on our 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 will be held in July 2026. (iii) Not yet due (iv) Not yet due	Chief Executive / Director of Resources
2. Adoption of the Local Plan for the Broads Authority	Status: On Track	Planning Policy Officer

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
Aim: To facilitate the Local Plan Enquiry. Milestones: (i) Submit 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.	(i) Completed 16 February 2026. (ii) Potentially June 2026. (iii) September 2026. (iv) TBC (v) TBC (vi) TBC	
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 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. 3. The Flood Risk management actions modelling also nearing completion.	Director of Delivery

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	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 held 3 workshops this spring and summer to facilitate the creation of our new vision for the future of Heritage in the Broads, with further workshops booked later this summer. Our consultants have identified more than 300 local organisations that have a 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 have also had our mid-point evaluation report from our external evaluators who have identified no major issues with	Head of External Funding

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	project delivery. The next phase is to begin coalescing the outputs from the workshops into a cohesive <i>Vision for the Future</i>. (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 begun drafting responses to the EOI form. We continue to work 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 continue to develop the initial project pipeline for the full scheme, including the possible integrations of the outcomes of the current River Basin Management Plans being undertaken by the EA. (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	Status: On Track (i) Ongoing work to develop partnerships. Further exploration of a project under ZEVl programme and preparation of a new	Sustainability Manager / Environment Policy Adviser

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
towards incorporating the next plan in the Broads Plan from 2028. Broads Climate Action Plan, Broads Nature Recovery Action Plan, PLTOF and 30 by 30. Milestones: (i) Seek funding through the CDMC and ZEVl programmes for maritime decarbonisation (ii) Continue developing the CyclePods Cycle Charging network (iii) Use GIRAMS, LEVI and other available funding to continue expanding the boat charging network (iv) Report and track progress via the 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	submission under CDMC was approved by Management Team in April 2026. We are continuing to explore both potential projects. The CMDC project would look at Hydrogen as a fuel source for dredging work, and is likely to submit. The ZEVl project, which would look at Electrified hire cruisers, is still at the partnership development stage. (ii) The expansion of the CyclePODS network is still awaiting funding. (iii) Next target site is Ludham bridge, pending agreement with EA. This delayed by the process of transferring management of the moorings. (iv) Next report due to be compiled in August. The Sustainability Manager met with the CDP to discuss the submission of the next report and improvements needed in the BA activities to raise its score. (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.	

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
Paludiculture and Wetter Farming programmes (2026-2030) for peatland restoration and wetter crops, working with Broads Peat Partnership	(vi) Defra final guidance for wildlife rich habitat delivery received in April and projects prioritised with senior officers. Two projects being taken forward are pond restoration and breeding wader habitat creation. (vii) Defra grant via National Parks Partnership secured for feasibility in relation to wetland creation and water treatment in the Ant valley. (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 several sites in the Broads developed during previous peat grants. 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 summer 2026.	
Access for all 6. Access in the Broads Aim: Maximising benefits from Access for All and Active Travel	Status: On Track	Waterways and Recreation Officer

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
England funding. Deliver the Broads 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.	(i) Programme plan produced and submitted. (ii) Training under way and Steering Group established; route matrix in progress for route selection. (iii) Progress reported to BLAF May 20th. Feedback form signage in place for paddle craft launch feedback with feedback being received and processed. Programme of works created and budgeted. (iv) Interviews June 12th. (v) Steering Group established. (vi) To be organised when Active Travel Project Officer in position. (vii) Year 2 reviewed, feedback report to BLAF. Commencing on Year 3 objectives. (viii) Identifying projects and creating 3 year plan for delivery. (ix) N/A at this point.	

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.		
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 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.	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 planned for 2027/28. All post positioning to guide future channel management and dredging specifications to be included in the refreshed Waterways Management Strategy & action Plan for April 2027 onwards. (ii) Consultant has started, due for completion by end October. (iii) Riverside Tree Management programme refresh is in development and is aligned with the update of the overarching Waterways Management Strategy & Action Plan 2027/8-2031/2.	Head of Operations
8. Information and Data Management Project Aim: Data migration to a cloud-based platform, improved information governance and compliance thereby	Status: On Track	Head of ICT

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
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.	(i) Report received from consultants in June. A preferred supplier has been identified in accordance with the G-Cloud 14 Buyer Guide. A draft contract has been received for consideration. (ii) Ongoing process being undertaken by ICT support staff working with relevant data holders. (iii) Once a contract is in place, the intention now is to move Planning Documents to SharePoint Online, followed by the Tolls documents. (iv) Contract awarded, cloud hosted servers configured in June with initial data extract undertaken for user acceptance testing during July.	
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:	Status: On track (i) The Government has confirmed plans for local government reorganisation (LGR) in Norfolk and Suffolk. From April 2028, the existing councils will be replaced by three new unitary councils for Norfolk and three for Suffolk. This means the number of constituent local authorities	Chief Executive / Director of Resources

Defra/Gov priority BA strategic priority, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
(i) Confirmation of board amendments with new unitary councils and DEFRA (ii) Engagement with the new Mayor	for the Broads Authority will reduce from 8 to 3. It is expected that Parliament will confirm the legal arrangements in the Autumn 2026 with shadow authorities in May 2027 and in full operation from April 2028. Engagement continues with the Local Authorities at CEO and CFO level. At some point in the future consequential changes to the Authority's Board will be made. (ii) Mayoral elections have been delayed from 2026 to 2028 for the new strategic authority for Norfolk and Suffolk.	

3. Financial implications

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. Over-committing to additional work or priorities will have an adverse impact on the budget.

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Background papers: none

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: All

Appendix 1 – 'Golden thread' strategic framework

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Fig. 1

‘Golden thread’ strategic framework

