

Broadland Futures Initiative

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2023

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Attendees

Marie-Pierre Tighe (Chair)- Broads Authority, Mareth Bassett- Environment Agency, Giles Bloomfield- IDB, David Cobby- Jacobs, Peter Doktor- Environment Agency, Fiona Hinds- Natural England, Catherine Harries – Environment Agency, Kevin Hart – Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Krolik-Root -Coastal Partnership East, Philip Pearson- RSPB, Charlotte Rivett- Norwich City Council, Rob Wise- NFU, Kylie Moos - Broads Authority (minutes).

1. Apologies for absence and welcome

Marie-Pierre Tighe (MPT) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from Julie Beeden, Victoria Egan, Mark Johnson, Ian Robinson, and Matt Williams.

2. Update of technical work

Peter Doktor (PD) provided an update on the technical work and reminded the Initiative Project Team (IPT) of the plan creation process. The hydrological model is still being developed and is anticipated to be complete by summer 2024.

Identify all possible actions (Product 21)

Following feedback from the public consultation Jacobs have been collating the information into a technical report. The draft technical report was due for IPT review in October 2023 but a revision of this and other products is being considered and will be discussed later in the meeting.

Make the objectives SMART (Product 22)

To identify one or two SMART 'indicators' for each BFI objective for use in appraisal. Following the IPT workshop earlier this year, work on this is still on hold while other products are being developed.

Agree possible priority of objectives (Product 23)

To investigate whether the BFI objectives can be ranked and weighted in a priority order, the result of which would be reflected in the appraisal of possible flood risk management actions.

Following the Elected Members Forum (EMF) workshop on 10 July members undertook the prioritisation exercise twice, considering the 'near term' (25-30 years) and the 'longer term'. It was made clear that the prioritisation of objectives would not affect statutory duties. The results will be discussed and confirmed at the EMF meeting on 9 October.

EMF members also suggested that some of the objectives, which are grouped into key characteristics, could be separated, or combined. HW1: Healthy Waters has a low priority, but ICM1: Integrated Water Management has a high priority and will positively effect HW1. Philip Pearson (PP) noted that there is an overlap with the water objectives and suggested that some of the objectives are grouped together.

Some objectives such could be treated as a 'given' such as objective CAM2: Actions are carbon neutral within the 100 year plan period. Giles Bloomfield (GB) added that cultural heritage, place, recreation, tourism, and navigation may also be assumed as a given but there is little influence available to protect them.

It has been suggested in EMF members feedback that objective EDV1: Pathways of actions are cost-beneficial and can be afforded was also taken as a 'given'. The concern was that the objective could be interpreted with too narrow of a perspective which may foreclose possible funding opportunities in the future. GB cautioned that a cost-benefit analysis is not simple in the Broads with its various designations. There is also the cost of the environment and value of tourism which needs to be considered in the calculation. Fiona Hinds (FE) added, environment vs environmental benefits need to both be considered in the financial model, and they should not be used against each other.

EMF members also noted that implementing CHSP1: Through enhancing the area's special qualities and landscape, people's wellbeing and sense of place is improved would positively affect NC1: All opportunities are taken to conserve and enhance the natural environment, the two objectives could be combined into one. IPT members cautioned that the parts of the landscape could be at risk if the natural environment and the areas special qualities are combined.

Define the management units (Product 20)

Jacobs are looking into dividing the BFI area into several 'reporting units' that will be appraised individually. The work is currently on hold until the finalisation of the hydrological models that are needed to help define the boundaries.

Implications of designated sites (Product 25a)

To determine the approach to Habitats Regulations assessment and understand obligations for designated sites.

A workshop is taking place with Natural England (NE), Norfolk County Council (NCC) the Broads Authority (BA) and NGOs on 30 October to explore if there is a consensus about the need for designated sites to adapt to climate change and how.

PD agreed to forward the invite to the workshop GB, PP and Rob Wise (RW).

Potential use of social value (Product 25c)

The technical report on identifying indicators for social value and wellbeing have been sent to Jacobs, for finalisation.

An activity schedule for the development of the indicators and collection of relevant data is being produced by Jacobs.

Salinity modelling (Product 25d)

Jacobs are still to appoint subcontractors HR Wallingford for the statistical modelling of salinity due to contractual matters.

Landscape character (Product 25f)

Jacobs have started to collect landscape character data.

A possible re-focussing to accelerate?

The following products are presently planned as separate sequential activities:

- Identify all possible actions (Product 21)
- Screen the potential actions to a shorter list (Product 24)
- Combination of management actions (Product 27)
- Rules for transition between combinations of actions (Product 28)

The proposal is to combine these stages and bring forward options for where the actions may be most beneficial. The combination would not change the overall timeline of the project.

The following points consider what have we learned that supports a change of approach:

Consultation feedback supportive of most long list actions

- Short listing could refocus on where actions are suitable

Dividing the area into many 'management' units unlikely to be beneficial

- Consider combination of actions operating across wider BFI area

BFI objectives can inform possible combinations of actions

- E.g., which actions could best work together to reduce saline intrusion?

Context for appraisal has changed significantly since 1990s but much earlier work remains valid

- Building on past work will speed development of actions and improve confidence

Maximum benefit from Product 21 if includes locations and past studies

- Seeking opportunities for streamlining delivery

Comments

MPT welcomed the accelerated progress and simplification of products and asked if there is any risk by combining the four products into one. David Cobby (DC) responded, there is not a risk of combining the products, instead the proposal moves away from an automated selection of actions and combinations to a more manual judgement-based approach. The automated approach would have considered all combinations of actions in a large area, the proposal is to move to a focused approach.

Concern was expressed about the ability to progress without Product 20 and the reporting units being decided. GB previously worked on a project that investigated increasing the wall

height around the River Alde estuary. The hydrologic model very quickly highlighted that the height of the walls could not be raised without transferring the risk to somewhere else. As a result, the project moved away from management units and considered the estuary in zones. In the Broads, 100mm can have a significant impact around the system and it will be difficult to decide on the refocusing of products whilst the hydrological modelling is not complete.

DC confirmed that the model will be available soon and the draft results are coming in. The plan is to start by using the data gathered in previous modelling studies and then to apply the results from the new model as and when they are available.

Habitats in the Broads can be complex with instances of the land not being designated but the species on the land is protected. Mitigation plans and compensation work are often large costly tasks.

The model testing of which actions to consider is still a long way off, DC added that a baseline needs to be decided first.

The focused approach will allow for more opportunities for stakeholder to input. GB added that the modelling is also important to make stakeholders aware of the options that are not viable.

PD reminded the IPT that this is piece of work is about selecting a series of scenarios that can be tested in more detail, instead of going through every possible scenario. DC and PD agreed to work on a detailed proposal to feed back at a future IPT meeting.

3. Update on communications and community engagement

Mareth Bassett (MB) has recently joined the BFI project team and works at the Environment Agency as an Anglian Eastern RFCC Community Engagement Advisor. MB provided a short introduction and an engagement update.

- PD and Catherine Harries (CH) had a positive meeting with Duncan Holmes who represents the Broads Angling Services Group (BASG) and is a Broads Society trustee.
- MPT and PD will be providing a high-level overview of BFI to the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) group this week. A longer presentation will be provided to the NSFA in November.
- East Anglian Coastal Conference is taking place on the 12 October. MB will be in attendance.

MB is intending to continue the following supporting actions:

- Progress newsletter – raising awareness of the survey with our subscriber list
- Targeted emails at interest groups e.g., Angling Trust, Norfolk, and Suffolk Boating Association amongst many others.
- Update to the Anglian (Eastern) RFCC

- Social media promotion via Twitter and Facebook. We would be grateful if BFI partners could share this via their own organisations (wording provided).

4. Update on Elected Members Forum

The Elected Members Forum (EMF) took place on the 10 July and was well attended by members. MPT shared the updated list of Elected Members and their respective officer contact.

John Jones (JJ) will be leaving their post at Norfolk County Council in the next month. MPT is meeting with JJ to discuss who will be taking their place for the IPT.

Authority	Member	Officer
Broadland District Council	Jan Davis	Nathan Harris
Broads Authority	Matthew Shardlow	Marie-Pierre Tighe
East Suffolk Council	Vacant	Charles Krolik-Root
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	Paul Wells	Charles Krolik-Root
Norfolk County Council	Eric Vardy	John Jones
North Norfolk District Council	Harry Blathwayt	Charles Krolik-Root
Norwich City Council	Emma Hampton	Charlotte Hounsell
South Norfolk Council	Richard Elliott	Nathan Harris
Suffolk County Council	Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro	Matt Williams

5. Proposed meeting dates

IPT members agreed to the following IPT dates. PD added that one of the meeting dates will likely be a workshop event held in person. More information will be provided once the date has been set.

Date	Time	Location
Monday 5 February 2024	11.30-1.00pm	Online
Monday 25 March 2024	11.30-1.00pm	Online
Monday 20 May 2024	11.30-1.00pm	Online
Monday 22 July 2024	11.30-1.00pm	Online
Monday 9 September 2024	11.30-1.00pm	Online
Monday 4 November 2024	11.30-1.00pm	Online

6. AOB

No matters of any other business were raised.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broadland Future Initiative has been moved to 11.30am-1.00pm 4 December 2023.

Summary of progress

Outstanding actions	Meeting date	Assigned to
Forward the NE/NCC workshop on 30/10/2023 to GB, PP, RW	26/06/2023	PD