

Navigation Committee

02 November 2023

Agenda item number 10

Integrated Access Strategy- consultation feedback

Report by Head of Construction Maintenance and Ecology, and the Waterways and Recreation Officer

Purpose

To update on the Stage 1 consultation of the review of the Integrated Access Strategy and set out the timetable through to the final sign-off of the adopted strategy by the Broads Authority.

Broads Plan context

E1 - Improve the integrated network of access routes and points (with easier access for people with mobility and sensory needs), linked to visitor facilities

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The current [Integrated Access Strategy](#) (2019) aims to address the issue of access routes, including to and between land and water, and their connections to key visitor facilities and sustainable transport links. To ensure the strategy is truly integrated across the Broads, from April 2024 it will also guide mooring and de-masting provision

on the Broads waterways, as previously covered by the Authority's 2006 Mooring Strategy.

- 1.2. An initial consultation to refresh the basic assumptions of the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) has been opened to statutory and major stakeholder organisations as part of this five-year review. The IAS review also keeps pace with the refreshed [Broads Plan](#) (2022-27) which has been produced in the interim period. The IAS is one of the sub-strategies that informs how the aims of the Broads Plan will be achieved. Various other relevant sub-strategies also inform the IAS (including the [Local Plan for the Broads](#), [Waterways Management Strategy](#) and [Biodiversity and Water Strategy](#)).
- 1.3. This scoping paper (see Appendix 1) describes the values, principles and aims of the suggested revisions to the strategy. Six questions were asked of responders, relating to whether the list of suggested values, principles and aims reflect the needs and concerns of Broads users.
- 1.4. This Stage 1 consultation was sent to a wide range of stakeholder organisations with involvement in access and boating activity in the Broads. This report gives a summary of the responses received to date for all Values, Principles and the Aims of Theme 2 (Land-Water Access) and Theme 3 (Mooring & Demasting Provision).

2. Summary of responses for the core Values of the Strategy

- 2.1. Other than the generally supporting comments, those which specifically fed back on the consultation text included valuable statements for all the proposed values. Where alterations to the emphasis of the text are likely to be put forward into the Stage 2 consultation (the draft Strategy Document), these are summarised below.
- 2.2. A - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. A comment was received that "the values of Inclusivity align with British Canoeing's values and cross cutting themes of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; being inclusive to help everyone enjoy paddling, regardless of identity, ability or circumstance." Inclusivity in this context largely relates to social inclusion. Inclusivity in terms of stakeholder engagement process will be picked in an additional Principle.
- 2.3. B – Sustainability. Clarity over the definition of "sustainability" as queried. For clarity, the definition intended for this value in the IAS is economic development and social well-being that is conducted without depletion and degradation of natural resources. A comment was received that "the benefits of getting more people active and connecting those people with nature is key" and "our blue spaces should be welcoming, accessible and clean, for the enjoyment of all to connect with nature for the benefit of the environment as people will care for the Broads and also for the benefit of people's mental and physical wellbeing". However, as a counterpoint, another comment was that "having a representation of quiet, no access, limiting/zoning certain activities in a map-based form would overcome future conflict." Both viewpoints can be

accommodated through adopting an evidence-based approach seeking to gain multiple-benefits at the Broads wide scale, thus achieving sustainability.

- 2.4. C - Financial cost effectiveness. Several comments were received that benefits to public health and the local economy should be considered in the wording of this value, as additional benefits that need recognition.
- 2.5. One of the challenges in interpreting the responses on the core values of the Integrated Access Strategy has been that some stakeholders are keen to draw in other wider environmental or navigation issues into a strategy that is not directly focussed on, or able to effectively tackle them. A note needs to be included in subsequent consultation stages to highlight that other, more appropriate statutory consultation mechanisms exist, as well as being already captured under the wider Broads Plan and other Broads Authority sub-strategies (see paragraph 1.2).

3. Summary of the responses for the Principles of the Strategy

- 3.1. Table 1 below summarises the comments where modifications to the strategy text are likely to be put forward into the Stage 2 consultation on the draft strategy document.
- 3.2. Table 1. Summary of comments on the Principles (numbering in table refers to numbering in Appendix 1).

Principle	Comment
5.1	Add that if biodiversity impacts cannot be mitigated effectively, then net gain in benefits off-site or other habitat improvements will be sought
5.2	Clarify definition of “non-powered boating” to include all forms of sailing and paddling
5.4	Add in the concept of "least restrictive option" when considering new or replacement access developments
5.5	Include boaters in the development/ revision of local planning policy
5.6	Add the need to follow the design principles of: coherent; safe; comfortable; and attractive; in new access development to help achieve the greatest range of benefits for all users
5.7	Add sustainable materials to the considerations for conserving local character in access developments
5.9	Publish evidence of no net reduction in mooring length managed by the Broads Authority
5.9	Add no net loss of slipways/launch points to the suite of sites directly managed by the Authority
5.10	Seek advice from professionals to make sure commercial fees associated with moorings reflect up to date data
5.10	Demonstrating best value would allow for greater flexibility in considering some investments

5.13	Add the need to increase the resilience of access provision in the face of impacts from climate change
General Comments	The engagement process needs to be clearly communicated for each new development project

4. Summary of the responses for the Aims of the Strategy

- 4.1. Table 2 below summarises the comments where modifications to the strategy text are likely to be put forward into the Stage 2 consultation on the draft strategy document.
- 4.2. Table 2. Summary of Theme 2 – Land to Water Access comments (numbering in table refers to numbering in Appendix 1).

Aim	Comment
6.1.3	Need to import this aim from Theme 1 into Theme 2, as it is about land/water connection
6.2.1	Add that hubs should have adequate facilities including car parking, to facilitate the transport of craft (car sharing encouraged)
6.2.2	Add improve provision of access points
6.2.2	Reword to “improve and expand where possible”
6.2.3	Include paddle launch points to types of facilities that would benefit from improved access to land-based facilities
6.2.3	Expand to include access from moorings to land based activities and footpaths
6.2.5	A query was raised whether establishing public navigation to Filby broad was a consideration? Answer is that in the 1988 Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Act the Trinity Broads were not part of the ‘Navigation Area’, so are not included in the Authority’s navigational management duties
6.2.7	Change emphasis from simply improving car parking, to only targeted parking for those towing boat trailers and adding cycle parking/storage
6.2.7	Should specifically allow for trailer parking at slipways as this can be a significant restriction for small boat users

- 4.3. Table 3 below summarises the comments where modifications to the strategy text are likely to be put forward into the Stage 2 consultation on the draft strategy document.
- 4.4. Table 3. Summary of Theme 3 - Moorings and demasting moorings (numbering in table refers to numbering in Appendix 1).

Aim	Comment
6.3.1	It was felt this should carry more weight and be a key principle of this strategy

6.3.1	Comment that involvement of user groups in the design, delivery and ongoing monitoring of provisions to mitigate conflicts between users should be explored wherever possible
6.3.3	Comment that water should be available free at point of use. Other ancillary services should be carefully considered before charging regime is introduced so as to meet core value (A): Inclusivity
6.3.4	Include climate resilience as a consideration in innovative design and development in existing mooring network
6.3.4	Include new designs in engagement process so stakeholder views can be received
6.3.6	Comment that all double-alongside mooring needs to be carefully considered in order to maintain safe navigation
6.3.6	Double alongside moorings are highlighted but stern-on mooring is omitted, this is an inconsistency
6.3.9	Comment that users of the de-masting points should be included in the development of this aim
6.3.9	Include de-masting provision from the Mooring Strategy (several respondees sought to stress the importance of de-masting provision and location)
General Comments	Bring Principles 5.8, 5.9 & 5.10 into Theme 3 as aims, as they are specific to moorings, rather than general Principles of the IAS
	Several comments reflected on the need for a Principle defining and setting out how an engagement approach would work and be implemented

5. Consultation and IAS development timeline

5.1. Table 4 - Dates and milestones for the stages (from consultation to final adoption)

Dates	Stage	Status
2 Nov	Summary of Stage 1 consultation on Themes 2 and 3 with the Navigation Committee	This report
16 Nov – 14 Dec	Stage 2 consultation on Draft IAS text and objectives section with all stakeholders	
11 Jan 2024	Draft IAS document to Navigation Committee	
06 Mar	Draft IAS document to BLAF	
15 Mar	Final draft IAS to Broads Authority	

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Date of report: 17 October 2023

Background papers: [Integrated Access Strategy](#) (2019)

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: **E1** - Improve the integrated network of access routes and points (with easier access for people with mobility and sensory needs), linked to visitor facilities. **C4** - Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways.

Appendix 1 – Stage Consultation and the Integrated Access Strategy

Appendix 1 – Stage 1 Consultation on the Integrated Access Strategy (sections 3-6 only)

3. What will the strategy cover?

The strategy will cover three key themes:

Theme 1: Land-based access – e.g., improve access links to local facilities, settlements, and visitor destination points.

Theme 2: Land-to-water access – e.g., provision of slipways and launch points.

Theme 3: Mooring and de-masting provision e.g., identifying gaps in the mooring network.

4. What will be the core values of the Strategy?

Each of the above themes will have to consider whether both guidance and project proposals are aligned to the IAS values of:

A. Inclusivity – to ensure that access is available to as many people as possible, regardless of their age, ability, and protected characteristic(s). It is based on the principle that providing for the widest range of users creates better places, richer experiences, and benefits. ¹

B. Sustainability – to ensure that access delivery should seek to reduce impact on the environment.

C. Financial cost effectiveness – to ensure that the cost of all projects is evaluated at the outset and the financial viability looks at a broad range of solutions, for example working in partnership to maximise funding potential and long-term outcomes.

5. What will be the guiding principles of the strategy?

The following principles will be used to help guide the development and delivery of access projects in the Broads:

5.1 Project proposals for new or improved access provision will need to demonstrate that negative impacts on the environment and designated sites can be minimised. Where possible, access schemes should be designed to deliver biodiversity and habitat improvement.

5.2 To encourage sustainable travel choices such as public transport, walking, cycling and non-powered boating, and improve links between public transport provision, visitor destination points and access between land and water and to the water's edge.

¹ taken from 'Outdoor Accessibility Guide,' Paths for All & Sensory Trust (2023).

5.3 Where possible, project proposals should demonstrate partnership and community involvement in planning, delivery, and ongoing maintenance liability. Stakeholders will be consulted on the scope and design of project proposals to maximise opportunities for collaborative working.

5.4 Ensure provision of safe, barrier free access is key to encouraging and enabling people of all ages and abilities to experience the Broads' countryside and waterways. Sometimes only minor works are required to make routes and access points easily accessible to a wide range of users.

5.5 Encourage sustainable development of boating and associated infrastructure to be consistent planning policies and other statutory consents. Connecting to local plan and planning documents

5.6 Project proposals should, where possible, provide multiple benefits for users with differing interests, needs and abilities (e.g., creating a new mooring to link to the existing rights of way network and local facilities, or improving surfaces and removing barriers to open up an access point or route to people with mobility problems).

5.7 Project proposals should seek to conserve and enhance the character of the area using materials and construction techniques appropriate to a protected landscape.

5.8 Maintain the free use of Broads Authority unstaffed moorings.

5.9 Maintain a policy of no net reduction in publicly accessible mooring length directly managed by the Broads Authority.

5.10 The Broads Authority should not enter leases for mooring sites that require the payment of annual fees higher than those recommended by the Authority's property adviser.

5.11 When considering acquiring new sites, the Broads Authority should consider the cumulative implications of taken on new liabilities, in particular the potential cost of repairing and relacing piling, duration of tenure when leasing, etc.

5.12 Project design should consider the potential impacts of climate change, including changes in water levels to support climate change resilience and adaptation.

5.13 Encourage provision of access routes that relieve visitor pressure on internationally designated sites, avoid disturbance of protected species and help to accommodate growth.

6. What will be the aims of the strategy?

The proposed aims of the strategy are as follows. They are grouped in to the three themes.

6.1 Theme 1: Land-based access - Aims.

6.1.1 Work with local transport authorities and others to maintain, improve and promote public transport provision in and to the Broads.

6.1.2 Support the development of cycle hire facilities and routes in new locations for the benefit of boaters and land-based visitors.

6.1.3 Support the development of canoe trails with appropriate facilities in suitable areas.

6.1.4 Generate a strategic delivery plan for installation of Electric Charging points.

6.1.5 Provide appropriate information on access to recreational opportunities and interpretation about recreational sites.

6.1.6 Determine where access improvements to land designated as open access land under the CROW Act 2000 would be appropriate.

6.1.7 Identify and promote the development of new access routes to improve the connectivity of the existing public access network, including rights of way, permissive paths, and long-distance routes.

6.1.8 Identify potential new bridleway routes that will allow riders to avoid dangerous road riding – including shared use routes suitable for horse riding, cycling, and walking.

6.2 Theme 2: Land-to-water access – Aims.

6.2.1 The development of access hubs where it would be appropriate to focus access provision.

6.2.2 Improve access points between land and water, including visitor moorings, demasting moorings, safety moorings, isolated moorings, canoe portages, ferries, and slipways.

6.2.3 Improve links from moorings to land-based facilities and visitor destinations.

6.2.4 Improve pedestrian access to the water's edge and alongside water for the purposes of walking, angling (including angling platforms) and bird watching.

6.2.5 Extending access to new areas of navigable water space where appropriate.

6.2.6 Work in partnership to protect, staithe rights and the access benefits they bring.

6.2.7 Identify appropriate locations where improved car parking would benefit users (e.g., at slipways).

6.3 Theme 3: Mooring and demasting provision - Aims.

6.3.1 Reduce potential user conflict through good communication with relevant stakeholders and mitigating through design and alternative provision.

6.3.2 Consider and encourage partnership development / funding opportunities to deliver objectives, such as enhancing existing sites and facilities.

6.3.3 Seek contributions/ establish charges for ancillary services e.g., water.

6.3.4 Ensure new mooring sites and launch points will be assessed for potential impacts in environmentally sensitive localities. Encourage innovative mooring design to provide habitat opportunities and mitigate landscape impacts.

6.3.5 Improve the dissemination of information to users on mooring opportunities, to include location of sites, facilities available.

6.3.6 Promote double alongside mooring at appropriate sites.

6.3.7 Work in partnership with third parties to maximise publicly accessible short-stay mooring provision.

6.3.8 The Broads Authority will work to ensure wherever possible that the distribution of moorings is a maximum 30-minute cruising time (equal to 2 miles distance at 4 mph) apart.

6.3.9 Review de-masting provision in the Broads and develop a prioritisation methodology to guide future investment in new provision.