

Broads Authority

26 July 2019

Agenda item number 16

External funding

Report by Chief Executive

Summary

This report develops initial work by members and officers on the Broads Authority's strategic approach to external funding, and proposes principles and key areas of work.

Recommendation

To agree the proposed principles and key areas of work for external funding, to be developed by officers for further discussion with members.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Broads Authority pursues external funding to help deliver the Broads Plan, linked guiding strategies and relevant corporate plans. External funding also raises our profile and impact by creating or expanding opportunities to work with partners and local communities.
- 1.2. We have a good track record of winning external funding and are currently leading two major partnership projects. CANAPE (Creating a New Approach to Peatland Ecosystems) is an EU funded project involving 14 partners across five EU countries including the UK and realising multiple benefits for navigation and wildlife. The National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Water, Mills and Marshes' Landscape Partnership Scheme involves 38 projects and 55 partners, with a focus on the drained grazing marsh landscape of the Great Estuary. It is implementing a full conservation action plan with improvements to heritage, habitat, landscape awareness and the local economy. These two projects have a combined budget of around £9m over 5 years.
- 1.3. We are also actively involved in habitat enhancement through the RSPB Water Environment Grant (WEG) for the Ant Broads and Marshes SSSI restoration project. This will see our staff delivering 'PC Lake' evaluation techniques, constructing catch-dykes at How Hill and creating shallow scrapes at Clay Rack Marshes. We will also be supervising contractors using an amphibious 360° machine at Reedham marshes.

- 1.4. We recently supported a successful bid by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust for a BIFFA award for restoration work in the Bure and Ant Valleys. The award will fund the replacement by the Trust of the Authority's barriers in Barton Broad and extend the restoration activity to Ranworth Broad.
- 1.5. We have developed a close working relationship with Norfolk County Council officers and supported them in the recently announced EU funded EXPERIENCE programme, whose aim is to foster experiential tourism to extend the visitor season. It will run from September 2019 to March 2023 and involve 14 partners in six regions (Norfolk, Kent, Cornwall, Pas-de-Calais, Compiègne and Brittany), and has a total value of €23.3m. For the Authority it involves two projects, a continuation of the innovative National Park Experience promotion and Phase 2 of the road signage project. The total budget cost for the Authority's project is £254,079, of which £166,966 will be funded by ERDF and the balance by the Authority.
- 1.6. The Authority is also actively engaged in corporate sponsorship through National Park Partnerships and the new National Parks Charitable Foundation.
- 1.7. These partnership projects, along with earlier schemes such as PRISMA (Promoting Integrated Sediment Management) and STEP (Sustainable Tourism in Estuary Parks), show the value and importance of securing external funding to deliver successful partnership schemes in the Broads.
- 1.8. Our external fundraising criteria provides general direction. Primarily, bid proposals must support the strategic objectives for the Broads as set out in the Broads Plan, linked strategies and corporate development plans. We give priority to actions that progress our planned work programmes and are identified in our guiding strategies, such as the Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy and the Broads Integrated Access Strategy. Bid proposals should also encourage opportunities to meet multiple Broads Plan objectives and support significant progress with major or longstanding issues.
- 1.9. However, while additional funds are welcome we must be mindful not to overstretch our staffing and operational capacity, both to prepare funding proposals and to implement projects resulting from successful bids. This includes primary resources such as bid lead officer and project manager, and ancillary resources such as HR, Finance and office space or equipment.

2. Principles and proposals

- 2.1. In recent months, members and officers have been looking at where we should concentrate our external fundraising and capacity building effort. Having developed these ideas further, it is proposed that we focus on the following principles:
 - **Use it or lose it:** Saving 'at risk' infrastructure such as mills and moorings, and cultural heritage skills and traditions

- **Reinforce success:** Building on Water, Mills and Marshes and existing schemes that have a proven track record of success
 - **Inspire the future:** Motivating and supporting young people
 - **Locally connect:** Supporting local communities, particularly hard-to-reach groups, to experience and enjoy the Broads on their doorstep
- 2.2. We have identified three key areas of work for which external funding should be pursued, as outlined in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.5.
- 2.3. **Moorings and access:** The provision and condition of moorings, slipways, footpaths and linked facilities and services is an ongoing significant issue. While solutions are wider than funding, additional financial resources would help us to address these issues. The Broads Integrated Access Strategy has just been refreshed, and there is an opportunity in our current Waterways and Recreation Officer recruitment process to engage someone with project development and fundraising experience.
- 2.4. **Mill restoration and engagement:** The Water, Mills and Marshes scheme needs a further £190,000 of matched funding to comply with National Lottery Heritage Fund criteria and to complete the drainage mills restoration work by the end of 2022. The scheme fits all the above criteria and is showing very positive impacts that we are keen to build upon.
- 2.5. **Place making:** Key sites including Acle Bridge, Whitlingham Country Park and Hoveton Riverside Park are assets that could be developed to attract people from urban centres into the Broads, aimed especially at local communities.
- 2.6. Funding bids need to respond to the particular criteria of different funding programmes, and experience shows it can be beneficial to package projects together. This is working well for the CANAPE programme, where the desire to dredge the navigation channel across Hickling Broad is part of a wider programme involving peat management research and reedbed restoration. Water, Mills and Marshes has a variety of individual projects grouped under an overarching theme. A potential future example is the retention and improvement of the moorings at Burgh Castle and St Benet's Abbey, which could be combined with projects to support recreational access to these important cultural heritage sites as the basis for developing a funding bid.
- 2.7. Another feature of successful bids is being able to access opportunities available to charities. The Water, Mills and Marshes project team has engaged an external funding consultant to identify potential sources of funding, many only available to charities.
- 2.8. The Broads Charitable Trust is an established local charity that has successfully raised funding for a range of small projects in the Broads through business partnership and visitor giving. This Trust is seeking to expand its fundraising capability and is eager to work more closely with the Authority. The two bodies have already identified potential projects that fit joint aims, and there is strength in our working together.

- 2.9. A condition would be confirmation that the Trust's priorities and guiding principles align with the Authority's strategic aims and that any joint approach to fundraising would not compromise the independence of the Trust's status as a charity.

3. Next steps

- 3.1. Members' views are invited on the principles and key areas for external funding proposals set out in section 2. If these are agreed, it is proposed that officers:
- a) Recruit a replacement Waterways and Recreation Officer with external funding bid writing experience;
 - b) Continue to work with the Broads Charitable Trust to align our priorities;
 - c) Through the Broads Charitable Trust, submit bids for funding to charities already identified as having the potential to support the Water, Mills and Marshes programme;
 - d) Explore with Norfolk County Council opportunities for further joint submissions for external funding; and
 - e) Continue discussions with the Norfolk Coast Partnership on potential areas for joint working and collaboration, including external fundraising.

4. Financial and risk implications

- 4.1. The externally funded projects in paragraphs 1.2 to 1.5 require match funding in staff time, use of equipment or cash. These are provided for this year and in future budgets.
- 4.2. The Authority must be careful not to pursue funding that could bring any reputational damage or overcommit existing staffing and financial resources. We must make sure the backgrounds of potential funders are scrutinised and any additional work is programmed into our Directorate work plans and budgets.

Author: John Packman

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[Broads Plan](#) objectives: 9.3