



Broadland Futures Initiative

SUMMARY REPORT OF BFI WORKSHOP HOSTED BY UPPER THURNE WORKING GROUP

November 2022

[Abstract](#)

This report shares the results of the workshop activities, participant feedback on the efficacy of the day, as well as summarising reflections and comments from the project team and co-organisers.

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Foreword: The UTWG invited the Broadland Futures Initiative to run a bespoke workshop on November 24th, 2022. This pilot event was organised by the UTWG, in conjunction with the BFI, and was well attended by a range of UTWG members and stakeholders with differing vested interests in the upper Thurne catchment as well as the development and formation of the BFI strategy.

The workshop was designed as a test pilot for other possible workshops to adapt. The UTWG is a widely representative group with a strong sense of identity and solidarity. It formed a very important learning experience for the BFI Partnership.

The workshop saw a range of group and individual activities supplemented by presentations from the BFI team that provided opportunities for participants to comment, influence and deliberate on the strategy.

List of Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Robin Buxton	Horse Estate/IDB/BRGA
Giles Bloomfield	Water Management Alliance
Rob Wise	National Farmers' Union
Steve Prowse	National Trust
Dan Duthie	Natural England
Chris Sallis	Hickling Windsurfing Club
Tim O'Riordan	UEA/UTWG
Rick Southwood	Natural England
Simon Wilson	Hickling
Henry Cator	ADA/NSFA/Broads Society
Tim Harris	Local Landowner
Richard Starling	Broads Reed and Sedge Cutters Association
Kellie Fisher	Environment Agency
William Sands	HBS Farms (1985) Ltd
Neil Punchard	Norfolk FWAG
Harry May	Potter Heigham PC/Maycraft
Peter Doktor	EA
Duncan Holmes	BASG/Broads Society
Paul Rice	Broads Society/Broads Watch/NNDC Flood Warden
Andrea Kelly	Broads Authority
Tom Parkinson	Northern Rivers SC/LO Association
Sean Offord	Winterton Parish Council Environment Group
Paul Savage	Broads Society
Kevin King	Somerton Parish Council
Keith Bacon	Catfield Ltd Charities/R Thurne Tenants Association
Brian Wilkins	UTWG/NSBA
John Blackburn	UTWG/Norfolk Wildlife Trust
Harry Blathwayt	BA/North Norfolk DC
Stephen Bolt	BA
Julia Bower	UTWG/NSBA

Activity 1: What matters most? - Results and reflections

The initial use of the objectives will be to measure our current level of resilience, to assess how resilient the BFI area is to the risk of flooding now, before any further investment in flood management is made. The objectives will then be used to set minimum standards that any future action must achieve, and to evaluate how far different actions go beyond these. This will help us understand the trade-offs that we will need to make in the future, when deciding between different potential flood risk management actions.

At the moment all of our [objectives](#) are of equal weight. The intention of using a combination of actions encourages a mix which could lead to a broader fulfilment of multiple objectives. However, at some point the BFI Partnership may have to prioritise some objectives over others. This process could be caused by socio-economic conflicts, funding constraints, food security concerns, sudden changes in biodiversity, and habitat threat.

Whilst we can go some way to predict existing and emerging pressures, we cannot forecast for certain the extent and the rate of future pressures. The group were invited to undertake this prioritisation task. Participants were invited to rank each objective in accordance with their own priorities using stickers available to them. Stickers were numbered 1-13 (1 being most important, 13 being least important). We also reviewed qualitatively the variation or disparity in each of the ranked priority scores awarded by participants. A low figure indicated that the priority scores given were largely consistent, a high disparity suggested greater variability of the priority function.

The priority ranking from the group collective was as follows.

Objective	Priority Ranking (following group exercise on the day)	Level of disparity
Natural Capital	1	Low
Climate Adaptation	2	Low
Integrated Catchment Management	3	Low
Sustainable Agriculture	4	Low
Economic Viability	5	Low
Healthy Waters	6	High
Recreation, Tourism and Navigation	7	Low
Economic Development	8	Low
Engagement and Participation	9	High
Climate Mitigation	10	Low
Built environment	11	Low
Cultural Heritage	12	Low
Sense of place	13	Low

With respect of the exercise itself, the point was raised by some that there were other factors affecting decisions, such as cost that were not reflected in the current objectives, and perhaps should be. Also, the point was made that the objectives were a mixture

covering both the nature of the strategy itself and the outcomes of the strategy. Some participants felt that these topics should be treated separately.

Despite the term not being familiar to some, Natural Capital was the objective ranked first by the group and this outcome of the exercise was generally well received. The 'Natural Capital' objective sets out that where flood risk management actions are taken by any risk management authority within the BFI Plan area that: *All opportunities are taken to conserve and enhance the natural environment, including internationally and nationally designated sites, for the continuing benefit of our unique biodiversity and all who live, work and visit.* The UK government's 25 Year Environment Plan puts natural capital at the heart of decision making, particularly when involving the use of significant public funds. Integration of natural capital will help identify the most sustainable actions throughout any proposed project development.

Climate adaptation was the second highest objective in the group ranking. Climate adaptation outlines that: *Actions fit into adaptive pathways that perform well under possible future changes in climate and prioritises choices with low regrets.* Climate adaptation will also look to take advantage of any opportunities.

Climate mitigation was ranked 10th. It is possible that participants confused this with global emissions reduction and not adaptation to climate change in the Broads area. One interpretation here is that a singular flood risk management action could improve adaptation. There is a lesson here to be clearer as to the purposes behind each objective in the context of the BFI Partnership.

Both 'built environment' and 'cultural heritage' came relatively low on the list. This in part may reflect that these interests were not particularly represented within the participants. Or it is because the Upper Thurne is not widely noted for its built and cultural heritage compared with other parts of the BFI area.

That 'sense of place' came last in the list is perhaps surprising, especially for a place as distinctive as Broadland. However, it may be for some that a sense of place will emerge regardless, and in any case is an outcome of various factors further up the prioritised list.

This may also be a case of mixed interpretations due to lack of clarity over meaning and context of priority themes in the project. Therefore, the UTWG working day is to be a test case of improving overall meaning and accuracy of the evidence offered.

Activity 2: Flood Risk Management Actions

Utilising a variety of informative maps and one larger map of the Upper Thurne Catchment, this activity invited participants to work as subgroups on their tables. Their task was to think creatively about what potential flood risk management actions could be employed in the Upper Thurne Catchment. Participants were encouraged to refrain from becoming overly concerned with technicalities or funding issues and instead to be creative about potential solutions and opportunities. Participants were asked to identify as many locations and methods as possible, and to at least consider in their groups:

- 1 x Hard Engineering Action
- 1 x Soft Engineering Action
- 1 x Adaptation and Resilience Measure
- 1 x Water Resources Opportunity

The collated ideas and comments from the four separate tables is shown on the next page and as a separate attachment. Note: That for clarity of reading duplicate dots have not been replicated on the final map. Amongst the range of ideas, the following common themes have emerged:

- On the coast there is proposed continuation of current hard and soft engineering practices that would maintain the existing seawall in place.
- Within the immediate coastal hinterland there are several comments relating to the management of water levels, and in some cases the proposed raising of water levels. This theme and location include the idea of adapting the Hundred Stream for both freshwater storage and saltwater drainage.
- Also, within the hinterland but also extending beyond is the idea of new water storage or reservoirs adjacent to the river channels and towards the headwaters (in the manner of the Trinity Broads). Further downstream on the Bure this develops into the idea of washlands, presumably primarily for the management of flood risk. In these middle reaches the need for some bank raising is also noted.
- For the lower river reaches off the map are quite a number of references to barriers and washlands in and around Great Yarmouth.
- There are a number of comments focussed around Potter Heigham. This perhaps reflects a potentially strategic location in managing water and flood risk, but also the current problems being faced.

This exercise was very dependent on the depth of local knowledge present within the group. For example, delegates who own farms or who work across the area, were able to provide strategic level insights, rather than focusing on a smaller part of the map. Other delegates employed in or with working knowledge of FCRM were keen to suggest more innovative approaches. Nevertheless, delegates did not struggle to use a variety of actions in a number of locations, as well as provide detailed insights via post-it notes.

Activity 3: Your Vision for the Broads

This activity invited participants to consider their vision for the Upper Thurne and wider Broadland area.

The statements presented to the group described some possible visions for the future of the Broadland area and in particular the role that flood risk management might have in meeting these visions.

At present, we cannot guarantee the extent of what will be possible, but these statements can express our intentions, our level of agreement and our level of confidence in achieving them.

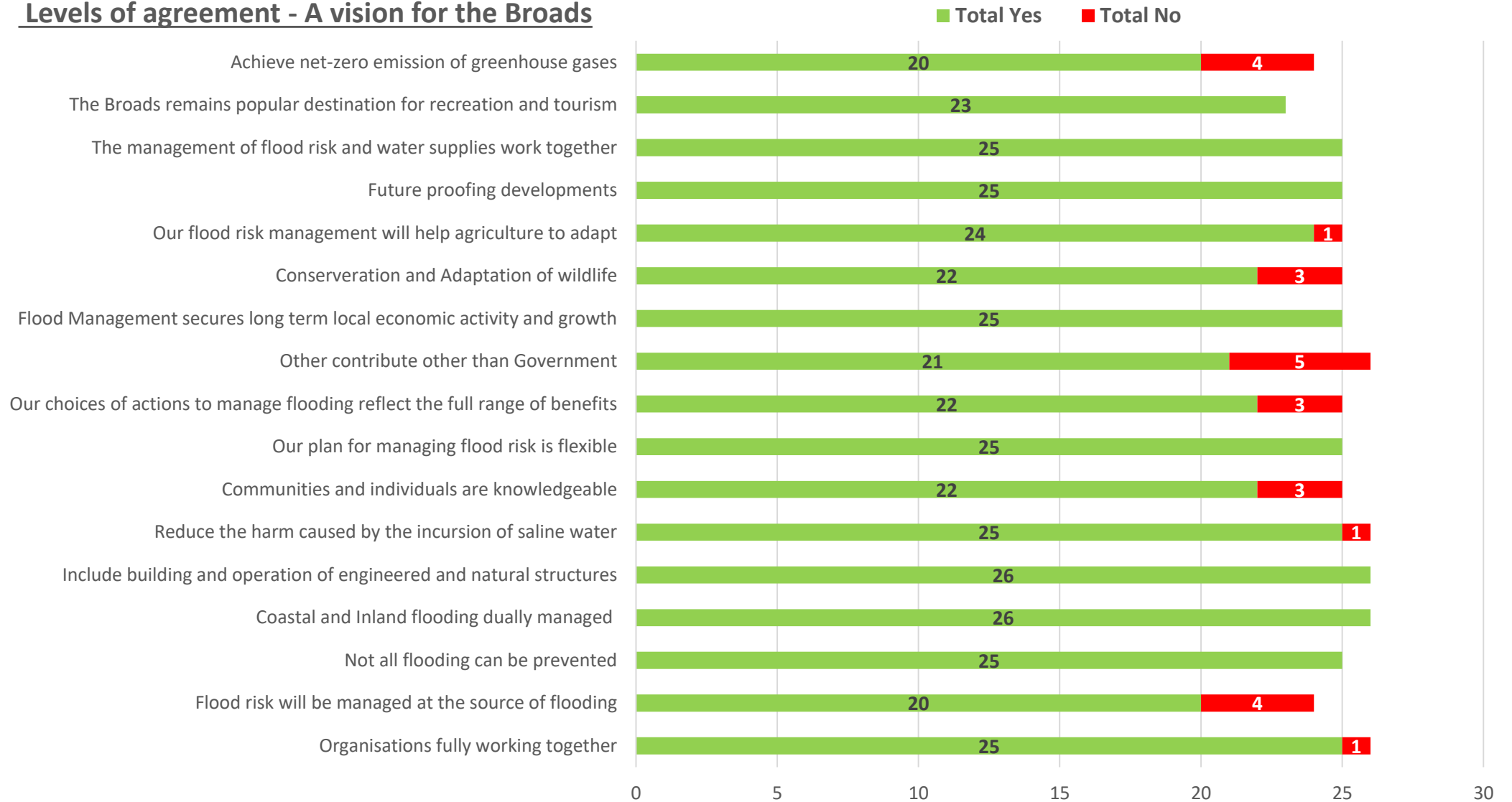
We asked the group to consider whether they agreed with the shared statement of intent and whether they felt it was likely to be achieved. The results of the exercise are on the following 3 pages.

The statements presented to the group have been shortened in the resulting charts for formatting reasons. However, in the accompanying copy of the participant pack given out on the day, you can view the statements in their entirety.

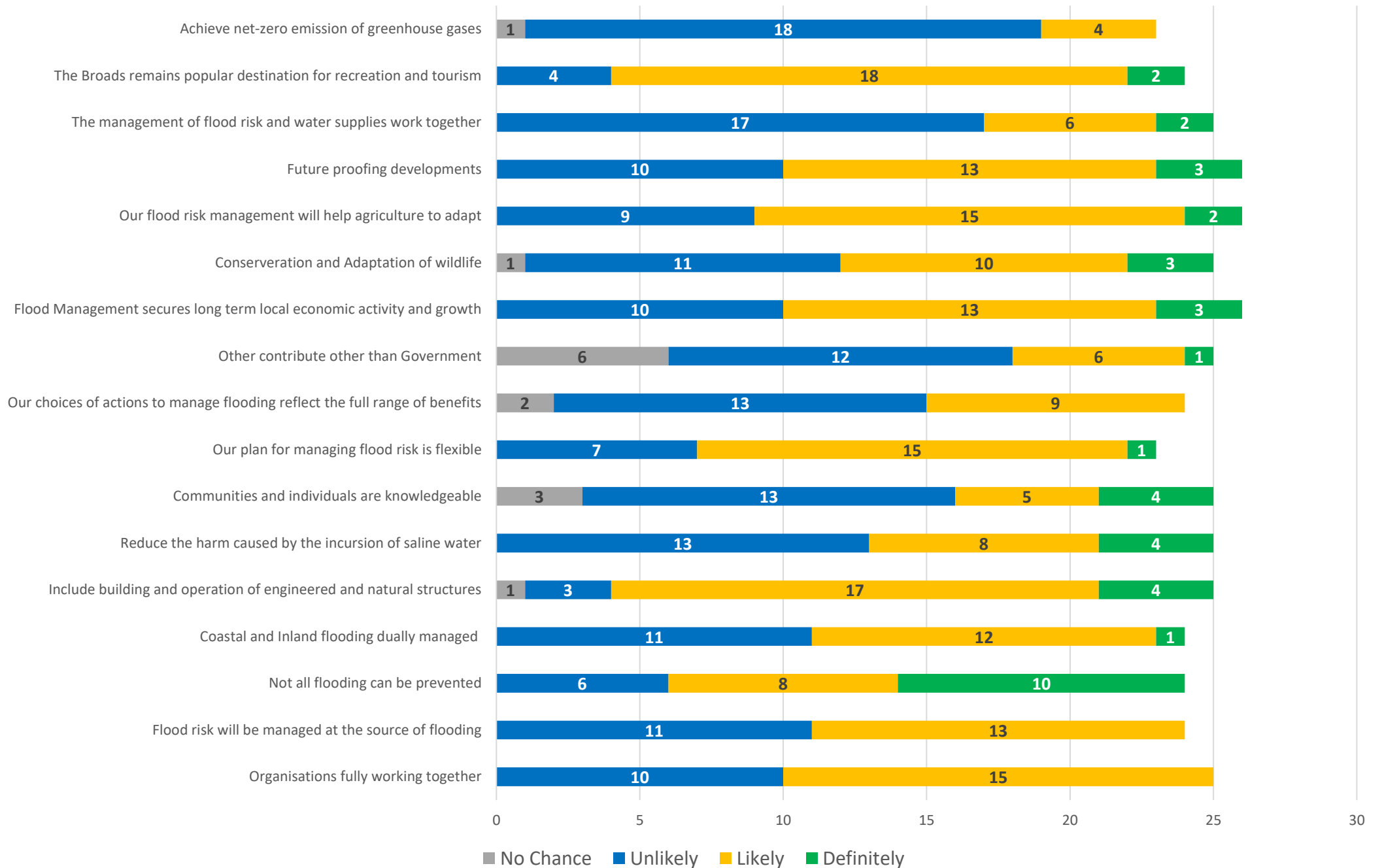


Activity 3 - A vision for the Broads - Results:

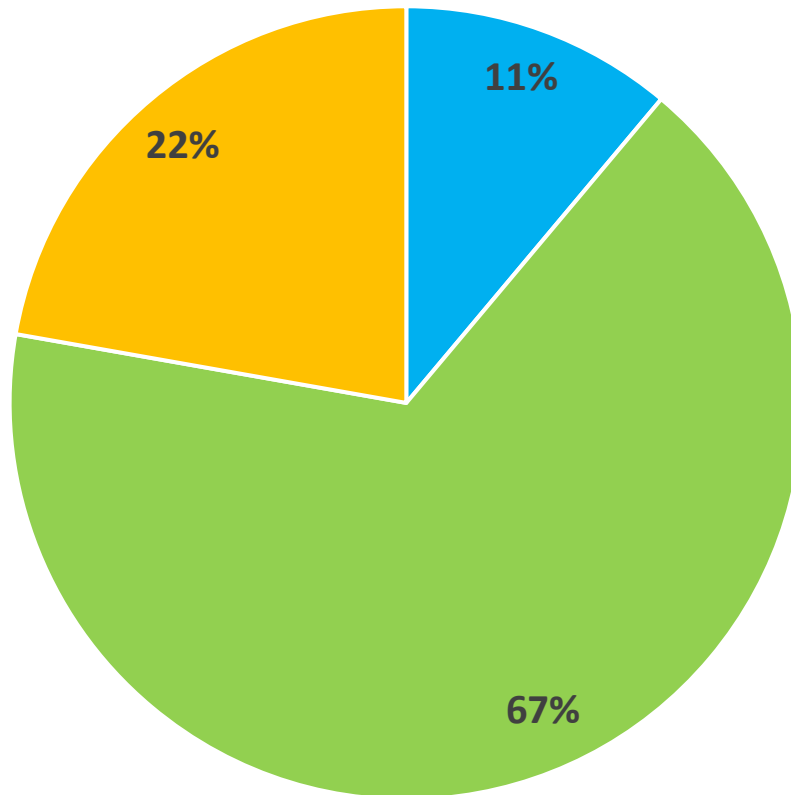
Levels of agreement - A vision for the Broads



Opinions on likelihood - A vision for the Broads



View on how we should respond to climate change in the Broads



■ Accept change and don't alter anything about the way we do things.

■ Accept change but adapt the way we do things to some extent to try get the best from the situation.

■ Accept change but fully re-think and adapt how we use the area to better fit potential new conditions

■ Other

Activity 3 Results and Reflections

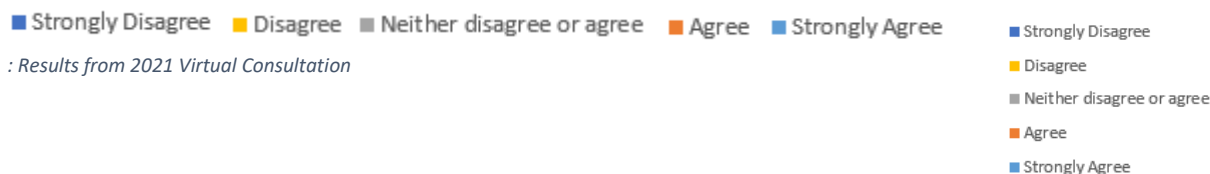
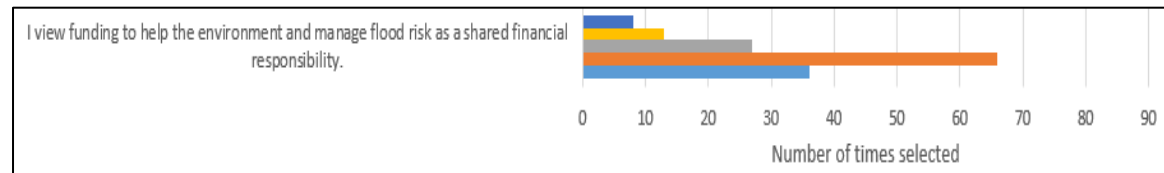
When looking at the set of results that reflect ‘Level of Agreement’ the results show there were high levels of agreement from the participants across the broad spectrum of vision statements shared for the BFI. This is a positive affirmation that intentions and ambitions are favourable to many of the workshop participants.

Considering the relative level of agreement between the individual statements, the pattern is broadly similar to that expressed through the online stakeholder engagement undertaken in early 2021. The possible exceptions that scored better on this occasion were the desire to manage flood risk and water resources together, and the need for a flexible plan for the management of flood risk. This perhaps reflects the background of the workshop participants. It may also be an indication of the heat and drought conditions of the summer of 2022. This suggests that water should be managed from being too much and hence leading to flooding, or too little and hence leading to extreme dryness.

The statement that saw the highest level of disagreement, albeit still at a very low level, was the following:

- *“Where government funding is not enough to meet requirements, those who benefit most and are most able to, would contribute to make up the shortfall through financial and in-kind contributions.”*

We compared this against the results of a similar set of questions on funding that were asked back in 2021 to a wider audience via our virtual consultation. Looking more closely at the most comparable statements, it seems that finding sources of finance for particular BFI measures will require careful consultation. The evidence from the first two parts of the workshop showed a deep consensus over the basic purpose of land and water management for prosperity and economic/ecological gain.



: Results from 2021 Virtual Consultation

Notably there was another correlation in the sentiment/themes of suggestions and feedback received during the workshop discussions, and the additional comments received to this similar funding question in 2021. These comparative sentiments are summarised below:

- Central government should provide more funding and better expenditure of public money.
- Levy or additional tax for tourists/holiday makers.
- Property developers ought to provide ongoing funding to flood risk management schemes if they build in ‘at risk’ areas.
- Clearer explanations as to why extra funding is required.
- It should not fall on residents or individuals to provide the shortfall.

Indeed, the confidence in the likelihood of delivering on this funding vision statement scored the lowest from the workshop participants and this supports the sentiment/themes shared above.

Below is a secondary table that illustrates the results of opinions on likelihood across all the BFI vision statements, this shows you only the level of likelihood that was most chosen for each statement.

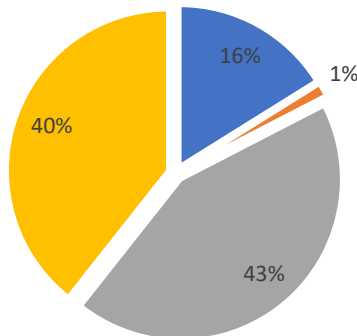
Vision Statement	Opinion of likelihood (most chosen)
Flood risk is managed by organisations fully working together across the whole of Broadland and the adjacent coast.	Likely
Where possible, flood risk will be managed at the source of flooding. For example, using natural flood risk management further up the catchment such as brushwood dams to slow and temporarily store the flow of water.	Likely
Not all flooding can be prevented, but additional measures such as flood warning services, and land use planning will help reduce our vulnerability to the impact of flooding when it does occur.	Definitely
Flood risk management at the coast and inland are considered at the same time and implemented actions should always work in support of each other.	Likely
Management of flood risk will include building and operation of engineered and natural structures to hold back flood water	Likely
Within the Broadland area, action is taken to reduce the harm caused by the incursion of saline water up the river systems and through cleansing freshwater.	Unlikely
Communities and individuals are knowledgeable about the flood risk they face and understand the actions they need to take to reduce its possible impacts.	Unlikely
Our plan for managing flood risk is flexible to enable us to respond in stages to the changing flood risk as climate change unfolds.	Likely
Our choices of actions to manage flooding reflect the full range of benefits provided by flood risk management, especially including those that cannot be expressed in money terms.	Unlikely
Where government funding is not enough to meet requirements, those who benefit most and are most able to contribute to make up the shortfall, through financial and in-kind contributions.	Unlikely
Investment in the management of flood risk helps secure reliable long term local economic activity and growth, and the creation and retention of jobs.	Likely
Our flood risk management will conserve and where possible enhance the existing character and distribution of wildlife and enable wildlife to adapt and move in response to climate change.	Unlikely
Our flood risk management will help agriculture to adapt to the changes caused by climate change such as through the better management of water resources	Likely
New and existing buildings and infrastructure will be built or adapted to be more resilient to flooding and to higher temperatures.	Likely
The management of flood risk works closely with the management of water supplies to identify and take actions that benefit both.	Unlikely
The Broads and the adjacent coast continue to be an accessible and popular destination for recreation and tourism and can adapt to the changing climate.	Likely
The actions to manage flood risk seek to minimise, and if possible, achieve net-zero emission of greenhouse gases, both in relation to their implementation and the activities and water absorbent land uses that they help support.	Unlikely

- 7 of the 17 Statements were given the collective vote of unlikely (of which the funding statement received 6 votes of ‘no chance’)
- 10 of the 17 statements were given the collective vote of likely, (of which the “not all flooding can be prevented received 10 votes of ‘definitely’.)
- The two most popular of ‘likely’ to be achieved statements were: *“Management of flood risk will include building and operation of engineered and natural structures to hold back flood water”* and *“The Broads and the adjacent coast continue to be an accessible and popular destination for recreation and tourism and can adapt to the changing climate.”*

Looking at the final question of Activity 3, we wanted to hear from workshop participants their position/views on how we should collectively respond to climate change in the Broads. Out of the set of statements presented, the most popular statement with 67% of the vote was *“Accept change but **fully re-think and adapt** how we use the area to better fit potential new conditions.”*

When compared to the wider virtual consultation undertaken in 2021 (below), this represents a notable shift in opinion for the same statement received 40% of votes and came in 2nd place as the most agreeable statement. This emphasises the significance of adaptive management of Broadland particularly in the context of new assessments of climate risk and biodiversity losses, as well as general uncertainty over prosperity in rural Norfolk because of declining medium term economic prospects.

2021 - Virtual Consultation Question - Climate change has the potential to affect the way we use the Broadland area day to day, and how we manage the risk of flooding. Which of the following statements best matches your view as to how we should respond to



- Resist the change and make efforts to keep things the same as they are now.
- Accept the change and don't alter the way we do things.
- Accept the change but modify the way we do things to some extent in order to try get the best from the situation.
- Accept the change but re-think our goals and objectives for how we use the area in order to better fit the new conditions.

BFI Workshop Feedback Form: Participants were asked to score the following statements from 1 (don't agree at all) to 5 (agree strongly) as an opinion of how well the workshop was facilitated on the day.

	1. Don't agree at all	2. Somewhat disagree	3. Indifferent	4. Somewhat agree	5. Agree Strongly		
Participant	1. The Workshop met my prior expectations:	2. I feel confident that my views and input has been received	3. The workshop was communicated well	4. The workshop was well organised and structured	5. We spent the right amount of time on each section	6. Overall, I found the workshop a good use of time	7. If there is anything we could improve in the future, please use the below space to provide details:
1	4	4	3	5	5	4	
2	4	5	4	5	5	4	If the public are represented by parish councils, are they represented in these discussions?
3	4	4	5	5	4	4	
4	4	4	3	4	4	4	Rather than having 13 stickers - This could be categorised by overarching groups - Would have saved time.
5	4	4	3	3	2	4	
6	4	5	4	3	4	4	We will get to see the results of the workshop?
7	5	5	5	5	4	5	The debate could have been better informed by sound scientific briefings
8	5	4	5	5	5	5	
9	5	4	3	5	4	5	
10	5	4	4	5	4	5	
11	4	4	4	4	4	4	
12	5	5	5	5	5	5	
13	3	2	1	3	4	3	I want to hear Your ideas for the future
14	2	2	3	3	2	2	Where were the householders?
15	4	4	5	5	5	5	
16	5	5	4	5	5	5	Include young persons in today's session?
17	4	5	4	5	4	3	Could have utilised basics facts and figures on number of properties at risk, their locations. In addition, agriculture values, tourism values.
18	3	4	4	4	4	4	
19	4	5	4	4	3	5	Widen the scope to all water issues including water resources.
20	5	5	4	5	5	5	
21	4	4	4	4	4	5	Review more thoroughly at the end how exercises were organised to pin down outcomes
22	4	5	4	5	5	4	Would have been useful to have a notetaker for feedback elements
23	4	5	4	4	5	5	Bring more stakeholders on board.
24	5	5	5	5	5	5	
25	4	4	4	4	4	3	Many of the questions were ambiguous and too complex
26	5	5	5	5	5	2	Need more of an extensive debriefing for participants

Additional comments received in response to each statement: (Note: Not all participants chose to provide additional feedback to each statement in the feedback form)

Participant	1. The Workshop met my prior expectations:	2. I feel confident that my views and input has been received	3. The workshop was communicated well	4. The workshop was well organised and structured	5. We spent the right amount of time on each section	6. Overall, I found the workshop a good use of time
1			Could benefit with more information - perhaps a summary of previous meeting			
2	I was not sure how it would go, but I was encouraged by the level of expertise available.	The group acknowledged ideas, but can it be followed through?		Lessons have been learnt for next time.		I found it an enlightening experience, but I now realise as a result how many people involved have their own priorities.
5					Activity 3 needs very considered responses to clarify - a waste of time	Communication with communities are always a positive.
6			Good set of slides, all three spoke well, a dream team.	Activity 3 was poorly written - too wordy, and not granular enough. Therefore, it was difficult to predict likelihood.		
7	Well managed - perhaps a little over ambitious		Well facilitated			
8					Perhaps a little over ambitious	High quality debate, and significant knowledge amongst delegates.
9		It's too complex for laymen.				
10			I didn't receive any further comms following August announcement of workshop - need to follow up more with members		Could have dealt a subset, but was a good introduction to the topic	
12	Useful, we need focus					Very useful.
13	Without an agenda, I had no expectations of detail. Although, it was a bit less of a "talking shop" than I had initially feared.	I didn't choose the questions	Difficult to hear people at times, when you had your back to the speaker	start on time		Helpful to meet up

14	Need to reflect water resources management more	The views expressed did not necessarily reflect the issues	Yes	Global issues vs local outcomes	Poor timekeeping when compared with timetable on agenda	Not sure what I have achieved today
16			Maps were difficult to see and read			Very informative
17						competing demands now
18	Agenda not clear on what objectives were, so my expectations were unclear.	Not totally confident, given the EA's current focus on Flood Defence and negative attitude to Biodiversity (James Bevan recent public comment)				
19	Flooding is only part of the water issues being faced in the Broads	Open discussion	Yes, but only focused on flooding	Yes, but only focused on flooding		Yes, interesting
21	Didn't have any expectations			Mapping section was the best exercise by far.		
22	I found it interesting and informative	I felt comfortable to participate	The exercises were good, but they also raised a lot of questions which I feel were perhaps not all captured	Yes, overall structure was good and well timed		Yes generally very interesting, would be good to know a timeframe for the decision making process
23	There are stakeholders missing/not present, that should be involved. E.G. Boatyard owners, emergency planners from district and county councils			Slightly late to start, but maybe because people were late arriving		certainly, provokes a lot of debate
25	Interesting change to the way previous events have been run, very refreshing.	received yes, but implemented is a big a question that makes me doubtful.	yes	yes	yes	Surprisingly better than other workshops
26	Always learning which is a positive outcome	Always listening, which is a vital exercise.	Ambiguities in all the exercises	for a pilot workshop yes, but not forever.	Time management challenging - communication amongst members a challenge but informs debate.	

Please note: Participants: 3, 4, 11, 15, 20 and 24 provided no comments for review

The feedback received for the pilot workshop illustrated in this report has been exceptionally useful to the BFI Project Team and this will be carried forward into future engagement activity. Both positive feedback, as well as areas to improve from constructive criticism, is always valuable.

Listening to stakeholders and improving the experience they have when participating in workshops or any engagement activities is one of our top priorities, and the feedback received here and during the day will allow us to make those improvements.

We look forward to continuing to engage with the Upper Thurne Working Group throughout the development of the BFI Strategy.

Reflections from co-organisers, Tim O’Riordan (UEA) and Brian Wilkins (Chair of UTWG).

The event was very well managed, prepared and conducted. This is a credit to the BFI team who have been working closely with UTWG key members over the preparation period.

The overall agreement that land and water need to be managed as a combination, adapted to changing scientific assessments and actual conditions of the ground, mean that the BFI is more of a comprehensive sustainability function rather than a flood management operation. There was also great emphasis on the scope for new forms of economic enterprise in the region, and for protecting activities such as wind surfing and fishing which bring in people and income.

There is considerable scope for redesigning the water care and biodiversity of the whole complex of land, drainage, water and coastlines for the continuation and improvement of viable economic activities. Jobs and enterprise feed this region, not nature alone. Bring the two together in creative partnership should be a prime objective of the BFI as each leads to more reliable and sustainable outcomes. In addition, creating income allows the spreading of funding to ensure that the BFI prevails over the coming half century without being reliant on a narrow and uncertain body of sourcing in the coming decade.

In the course of time there will have to be more courageous decisions taken over the creation of new grazing marshes, some brackish and some sweet. And there maybe a slow and heavily consulted process of recreating salt marsh on the higher tidal littorals. Indeed, there will almost certainly be a deep and prolonged review of a tide resisting barrier at the mouth of the Yare to safeguard the Borough of Yarmouth and to redesign the water resources of the Broads rivers, fen, and drainage arrangements.

If this exercise is to have legacy there should be a progressive process of such workshops tailored to content, participation age and locale, and to adjusting priorities. What we witnessed here is the initial faltering step of a very vital process of citizen democracy and creative learning geared to accommodating to new Broadland.

Next Steps

The next steps for the BFI will be to return to the UTWG in March 2023 to give participants an opportunity to share their reflections on this report and discuss the findings.

We will then share this report with the BFI Elected Members Forum, BFI partners, as well as Jacobs consultants so together we can include the feedback received from the workshop in preparing this important flood risk management strategy.

We encourage you to share this report with colleagues and friends, or alternatively please direct them to our website [Broadland Futures Initiative \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk) where it can be found along with lots of other really useful information about the strategy.