

Broads Authority

24 November 2023

Agenda item number 12

Education Strategy

Report by Education Officer

Purpose

This report presents the final version of the Broads Education Strategy 2023-28. The strategy has been through a consultation process with stakeholders and partner organisations.

Broads Plan context

Theme F of the Broads Plan: Promoting Understanding and Enjoyment, especially: **F3** - Provide and expand schools-based and outreach environmental education opportunities for young people, using the Broads as a learning resource.

Recommended decision

Adoption of the Broads Education Strategy 2023-28.

1. Strategy production

- 1.1. The current Broads Education Strategy was produced in 2017, and it has been reviewed and refreshed. It has followed the same approach and format as the volunteer strategy which was adopted in September 2022. As with the Broads Plan, a wide range of partners are involved in the implementation of the strategy.
- 1.2. One of the key actions of the Broads Education Strategy was to ensure that it was fully aligned with the Broads Plan 2022-27 and its high-level strategic direction. There are also strong links and lessons learnt to the project delivered in the last period, especially the legacy of Water, Mills and Marshes and [Generation Green](#).

2. Strategy Content

- 2.1. The Broads Plan 2022-27 contains the aspiration to “Provide and expand schools-based and outreach environmental education opportunities for young people, using the Broads as a learning resource”. This aspiration is underpinned by three key areas of focus:
 - Production of environmental education schemes, activities, resources, and tools and deliver to local schools, building upon educational projects initiated under Water, Mills and Marshes and Generation Green.
 - Improving resource capacity for education delivery.

- Offer a range of projects for young people focused on skills training, practical experience, and progression.
- 2.2. These areas of focus provide the high-level context for the Broads Education Strategy which includes an action plan 2023-2028 (Appendix 1). The strategy aims to provide a clear progression of opportunities for schoolchildren and other young people to learn about and engage with the Broads, emphasising the benefits of high-quality outdoor learning and environmental activities.
- 2.3. The 5-year action plan will deliver elements through the following progression route:
- The provision of resource materials, schools contact, in-school workshops, and presentations, or contact with the Broads Authority (BA) through public events and careers fairs.
 - School visits to the Broads National Park; 'Discovery Day' contact or longer-term learning projects with the BA Education team and Rangers.
 - Longer-term youth projects, leading to John Muir Award, youth social action or work experience.
 - Youth volunteering opportunities, including Broads Authority Youth Ranger programme.
 - Apprenticeships and career opportunities
- 2.4. The action plan will be delivered against 5 objectives:
- Production and delivery of an enhanced range of environmental education schemes, activities, and resource tools.
 - Build upon educational opportunities initiated by Water, Mills and Marshes and Generation Green.
 - Increase resource capacity.
 - Offer a range of projects for young people focused on skills training, practical experience, and progression.
 - Monitor and improve the effectiveness.
- 2.5. There was a consultation with key stakeholders in October and November 2023. The consultation responses have been general comments of support and offers of help in implementing actions, which are appreciated.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: F3

Appendix 1 – Education Strategy 2023-2028

Broads Education Strategy 2023-2028

Education Strategy for the Broads and Action Plan 2023-2028

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Introduction

Broads Plan 2022-27

The Education Strategy for the Broads sits under the [Broads Plan](#), the key strategic management plan for the Broads. It is produced by the Broads Authority (BA).

The Broads Plan 2022-27 states that: ‘The Broads is a wonderful outdoor resource for environmental education as a ‘classroom without walls’, and for wider outreach. Our long-term aim is that the Broads is a source of enjoyment, learning and personal development for every child in Norfolk and Suffolk during their school career, echoing the ‘night under the stars’ ambition of the Landscapes Review. However, providers often have to focus limited resources where they are likely to have most impact, particularly for young people who might otherwise not have a chance to experience an outdoor landscape like the Broads.

The [Education Strategy for the Broads](#) identifies the need to increase our resources to build on existing school-based and outreach activities, including new projects following the end of the ‘Water, Mills & Marshes’ education activities in 2023, and partnerships established by Generation Green.

One of the Broads Plan’s long-term aims is that: ‘People from all walks of life and all ages and abilities are able to connect with the Broads for their health and wellbeing. Educational and outreach opportunities make use of the area’s natural and cultural assets to inspire and motivate everyone, especially young people, as part of lifelong learning.’ Strategic objective F3 is to: ‘Provide and expand schools-based and outreach environmental education opportunities for young people, using the Broads as a learning resource’.

Broads Authority Education Service

The Broads Authority is committed to providing and developing an environmental education service that gives young people opportunities to learn about and enjoy the special qualities of the Broads National Park. The Broads Education Strategy supports the organisation’s statutory second purpose to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public. It provides a framework for school-based education and wider outreach in the Broads over the next five years (2023-2028), although a number of actions will continue beyond this timeframe.

Benefits of environmental education

In delivering environmental education to schools and colleges, youth groups and through other channels, the Broads Authority and its partners want to inspire the next generation, as the future users and custodians of the Broads. This outreach also helps young people from all background and circumstances to connect, or perhaps reconnect, with the special natural environment on their doorstep for their health and wellbeing. Evidence highlights the many benefits that everyone, particularly children and young adults, gain from learning about and enjoying our protected landscapes, including:

- Improved self-confidence and personal character development.

- Better awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural environment, and a passion to help protect and enhance it.
- A greater sense of community connection and belonging, helping to reduce social isolation and conflict.
- New and enhanced life skills, including social and vocational skills, offering broadened horizons and lifelong opportunities.
- Improved physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- A lifelong appetite for learning.
- And, importantly, lots of fun!

The Broads Authority takes a progressive approach to offering learning opportunities and involving young people in helping to look after the Broads, based on the following steps for engagement and intervention:

1. The provision of resource materials, schools contact, in-school workshops, and presentations, or contact with the BA through public events and careers fairs.
2. School visits to the Broads National Park; 'Discovery Day' contact or longer-term learning projects with the Authority's Education team and Rangers.
3. Longer-term youth projects, leading to John Muir Award, youth Social Action or schools work experience.
4. Youth volunteering opportunities, including Broads Authority Youth Ranger programme.
5. Apprenticeships and career opportunities

Context

The Broads Education Strategy 2023-28 updates the previous version adopted in 2017. Some of the key changes for environmental education in the Broads since 2017 are outlined below.

Landscapes Review

The [Landscapes Review](#) (2019) recognises the transformative effect that engaging with our protected landscapes, including National Parks and AONBs, can have on young people. One of its core recommendations is "A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child" (Proposal 8). More widely, it identifies the need for those managing England's protected landscapes to do more to engage with people from all sectors of society, putting particular emphasis on forging better links with underrepresented communities. The Landscapes Review states that most visits are made by the same (better off, less diverse) people repeatedly, and those who miss out are the older, the young – especially adolescents – and those from lower socio-economic groups and black, Asian and minority ethnic communities:

- 13% of children (under 16) and 5% of young people (aged 16-24) typically never visit the natural environment or even spend any of their leisure time outdoors.

- Children are spending less time unsupervised outside and children from Black, Asian and minority ethnic, and low income, communities are even less likely to do so. 18% of children living in the most deprived areas never visit the natural environment at all.
- 20% fewer Visibly Minority Ethnic (VME) children go out into green spaces weekly compared to white, middle-class children. Children from deprived backgrounds visit 10% more than VME children.
- The numbers of children going on school visits to the countryside is shockingly low at just 6-7%.

The [Government's initial response to the Landscapes Review](#) was published in January 2022, followed by a public consultation on proposed legislative and other changes.

Government policy on sustainability and climate education

Environmental sustainability and responding to the impacts of climate change are bringing increasing challenges for the management of the Broads. Delivering the strategic objectives in the Broads Plan requires strong partnership working and innovative approaches, especially in the context of reduced funding for many organisations.

In September 2021, the University of Reading brought together young people, scientists, teachers and educationalists, policymakers and campaigners at a Climate Education Summit to create [the National Climate Education Plan](#) for better climate education in schools and colleges in the UK. The aim of the plan is to give all young people today and future generations the understanding and empowerment to respond to the impacts of climate change.

On 21 April 2022, the Department for Education published its policy paper '[Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy: A strategy for the education and children's services systems](#)'. The strategy's aim is to help the UK's education system transition out of the Covid pandemic and, in doing so, face the environmental challenges of climate change, giving all children, young people and adults the knowledge and skills to thrive in the green economy and to help restore nature.

Both of these initiatives will provide context to the delivery of education within this strategy.

Face-to-face and online engagement

As from April 2020, the Authority no longer has responsibility for Whitlingham Country Park, which was used to deliver formal and informal learning opportunities and public events. With few alternative accessible sites under the Authority's ownership or management, this presented potential difficulties for delivering face-to-face educational activities. However, new partnerships and teaching opportunities have been developed at Barton Turf Adventure Centre and other locations throughout the Broads, together with new approaches developed as part of the Generation Green initiative. This has led to a more flexible delivery of learning opportunities across the whole area.

The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 had profound effects on many areas of the Authority's work, and the Education Service had to stop face-to-face-delivery to schools and visiting groups for many months. However, it continued its online engagement, delivering virtual learning sessions to a range of audiences. Since that time, the Authority has continued to adapt and develop its delivery approaches, making greater use of online meetings and teaching sessions, and providing more web-based resource materials. The hiatus in direct face-to-face delivery also gave the Authority more time to review and develop all its educational resource materials.

Generation Green

The Covid pandemic gave many schools and youth groups a new or refreshed perspective on the value of getting young people out into nature, particularly protected landscapes like the Broads, for their physical and mental health and wellbeing. A positive outcome was [Generation Green](#), a 16-month project funded by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The project's aim is to connect thousands of young people with nature through new jobs, training, volunteering roles, as well as residential, outdoor, and online learning experiences. Delivered by the Access Unlimited coalition (YHA, Outward Bound Trust, Scouts, Girlguiding, Field Studies Council and the 10 English National Parks), opportunities were designed to cultivate in young people a sense of connection and care for the natural environment.

Funded activities provided through the project included day visits and overnight experiences in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), social action and citizen science projects, self-guided learning, and micro-volunteering. The BA delivered a project targeted at 8-26-year-olds who were less likely to participate in outdoor or nature-based activities and who were from either under-privileged urban or coastal communities (e.g., Norwich, Great Yarmouth, and Lowestoft) or underrepresented groups in the visitor profile of the area (e.g., Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities). Delivered by the Authority's Education Service team and creating two part-time Learning Officer posts, the project reached around 600 young people and delivered more than 5,000 hours of practical conservation and engagement work.

The Generation Green project granted the Authority with new partners and approaches in its education delivery and demonstrated the value of working collectively with other organisations. It also forged a stronger bond between the education teams of the National Parks. An aim of this strategy is to build on the successful legacy of both Generation Green and the Lottery funded 'Water, Mills and Marshes' Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Guiding principles

The following principles guide the delivery of this Education Strategy:

- Learning opportunities and materials are engaging, inclusive and accessible to all.
- Education delivery highlights the special qualities of the Broads and the work of the Authority.

- Learning opportunities contributes to Broads Plan aspirations and objectives, including working with Broads Authority partners.
- Learning opportunities are effective, innovative, and sustainable.
- Education and engagement volunteers receive high standards in safety, training, and support.

Key objectives

The Broads Education Strategy aims to deliver learning opportunities in the Broads under the following objectives:

Objective 1: Produce an enhanced range of environmental education schemes, activities, and resource tools (including Broads Curriculum materials and teacher support) and promote and deliver to local schools.

Objective 2: Complete and build upon schools-based educational opportunities initiated under the Broads Landscape Partnership 'Water, Mills & Marshes' programme and the Generation Green project.

Objective 3: Increase capacity to deliver more outreach educational activities for school-aged children and young people.

Objective 4: Offer a range of projects for young people focused on skills training, practical experience, and progression.

Objective 5: Monitor and improve the effectiveness of the Education Service in promoting understanding of the Broads and delivering Broads Plan objectives.

Resources

The Authority's Education Service sits within the Communications Section in the Strategic Services Directorate. Currently (November 2023), a full-time Education Officer manages and delivers the service. This role is supported by two part-time Project Officers (2 to 2.5 days a week) who are funded by external grants to deliver two projects:

- **Rails, Sails, and Trails:** A school, youth, and family focused project to discover the Broads National Park using trains on the Wherry and Bittern Lines; funded by Greater Anglia Railways via the Community Rail Partnership.
- **Youth Engagement:** A project to deliver and support youth work and develop Broads Youth Rangers. Funded by grants from the Lottery 'Water Mills and Marshes' Landscape Partnership Scheme, Forest Holidays and Amex until March 2024.

Rangers: the Ranger Team have the necessary skills and expertise to support education activities, for example through guided walks, micro-volunteering opportunities and taster days.

Volunteers: The Authority's education programme is supported by trained and experienced Education volunteers, many of whom are current or retired teachers. This team of dedicated people is essential to the delivery of the service.

The Authority works with a wide range of partners to deliver education in the Broads.

Broads Environmental Education Network (BEEN)

BEEN is a coalition of approximately 40 organisations delivering education and outdoor activities in and about the Broads National Park. The Broads Authority convenes two meetings annually of the BEEN and provides its administrative support. It is an essential network to disseminate information and requests, develop partnerships and bids for external funding.

Financial resources

As core funding for education within the Authority's budget is limited, the importance of external funding, both for staff salaries and delivery of projects cannot be underestimated.

Projects such as 'Generation Green' and 'Rails, Trails and Sails' have shown the impact and effectiveness of increased staff capacity thanks to external funding.

A key action of this strategy is to work with partner organisations to secure funding for educational delivery in the next period 2023-2028.

Monitoring

Objective 5 includes actions to monitor the effectiveness of the Authority's Education Service. This includes regular internal reviews and update reports to the Authority's Board as part of the annual Business Plan review, highlighting progress against the objectives in this strategy.

Action plan 2023-2028

Objective 1: Produce an enhanced range of environmental education schemes, activities, and resource tools (including Broads Curriculum materials and teacher support) and promote and deliver to local schools.

Ref.	Key actions	Key outputs by 2028	Resources	Timescales
1.1	Develop and deliver new activity programmes in response to school curriculum and Government initiatives (e.g., GCSE Natural History curriculum, Government Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy).	Schools offered range of new activity programmes on various topics (e.g., climate change, sustainability, rivers, tourism, local history).	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA education volunteers BEEN organisations	Ongoing
1.2	Expand and develop education partnership with Barton Turf Adventure Centre (BTAC) and establish new schools' activities.	Educational delivery partnership with BTAC maintained and expanded.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA education volunteers BTAC staff	Ongoing
1.3	Develop and deliver new Broads-related in-school workshops, projects, and presentations, and promote to local schools.	New in-school activities available and delivered to local schools; activity resources available online.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA Comms team	Ongoing
1.4	Work with local schools to deliver Broads topic work over structured programmes of engagement	BA Education team delivering multiple-session Broads projects to local schools	BA Education Officer BA project officers Education volunteers	Ongoing
1.5	Review and update Broads' educational resource material in liaison with Broads Environmental Education Network (BEEN) partners.	Comprehensive and up-to-date set of Broads resources available to schools via BA website.	BA Education Officer BA Comm team BEEN partners	Ongoing Annual review

1.6	Develop new resources based on key subject areas/ topics identified by schools and in Broads Curriculum. Link to Broads Discovery Days, projects, and school curriculum requirements.	Comprehensive set of Broads resources available to schools via BA website.	BA Education Officer BA Comms team BEEN partners	Ongoing Annual review
1.7	Update and consolidate Broads Curriculum framework and publish on education pages on BA website, linked to partner outreach resources.	Broads Curriculum updated and published on website, with links to resources.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA education volunteers BA Comms team BEEN partners	Ongoing Annual review
1.8	Develop teacher training sessions to promote and support delivery of education programmes and activities.	Bookable teacher training sessions developed and promoted.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA education volunteers BA Comms team BEEN partners	2025 onwards
1.9	Continue to provide administrative support to Broads Environmental Education Network (BEEN) and to facilitate biannual meetings.	Bi-annual BEEN meetings held and updates sent regularly to member organisations.	BA Education Officer BA Strategic Services Admin Officer BEEN partners	Ongoing

Objective 2: Complete and build upon educational opportunities initiated under the Broads Landscape Partnership ‘Water, Mills & Marshes’ programme and Generation Green project.

Ref.	Key Actions	Key outputs by 2028	Resources	Timescales
2.1	Complete development of Broads Youth Ranger programme for 12-18-year-olds and develop volunteer role to support programme.	Youth Ranger programme established, supported by trained volunteers.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA education volunteers BA Rangers BA Volunteer Coordinator	2024

			BEEN partners	
2.2	Complete Rails, Sails and Trails (RST) programme, and seek further funding and project opportunities with Anglia Railways and other partners.	RST programme delivered. Resources available for school self-led visits. New project launched (subject to funding).	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA education volunteers	Feb 2024
2.3	Seek funding to continue residential visits programme started under Generation Green and maintain partnership with Youth Hostels Association (YHA).	Partnership maintained with YHA Sheringham. Funding sourced to deliver residential opportunities to youth groups and schools, e.g., New Routes Integration.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA Partnership and External Funding Manager BA education volunteers YHA BEEN partners	Ongoing
2.4	Develop proposal for Broads' school travel grant scheme and, if feasible, establish process to offer grant assistance to schools in areas of high Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).	Schools travel grant scheme established.	BA Education Officer BA Partnership and External Funding Manager	2025
2.5	Maintain and develop partnership with New Routes Integration (NRI) and deliver outreach opportunities to newly settled and BAME communities; work with NRI to seek additional funding to support delivery.	Ongoing learning and engagement opportunities delivered to newly settled and BAME communities, including regular visits and residential opportunities.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA Partnership and External Funding Manager BA education volunteers New Routes Integration YHA BEEN partners	Ongoing

Objective 3: Increase capacity to deliver more outreach educational activities for school-aged children and young people.

Ref.	Key actions	Key outputs by 2028	Resources	Timescales
3.1	Use key experience and evidence from Generation Green, LPS 'Water, Mills & Marshes,' and Rails, Sails & Trails to develop new educational and outreach projects with partners; secure funding for delivery and staff.	New, innovative education projects funded, resourced, and launched. Project officers employed.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA Partnership and External Funding Manager	Ongoing
3.2	Secure funding for additional BA Education Officer and recruit to the post.	Additional BA Education Officer post funded and filled.	BA Education Officer BA Head of Comms BA Partnership and External Funding Manager	Ongoing
3.3	Work up project ideas ready to feed into new funding opportunities from Access Unlimited coalition and other UK National Parks initiatives. Link with other DEFRA/BA/NPA initiatives eg. Farming in Protected Landscapes. (FIPL).	Developed and costed projects available and rolled out as funding opportunities arise.	BA Education Officer BA Partnership and External Funding Manager BA Project Officers Access Unlimited UK NPs	Ongoing
3.4	Develop education and events volunteer roles and training opportunities to allow for volunteer-led school activities and public events.	Trained and resourced volunteers independently leading some school activities and events.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA education and events volunteers BA Volunteer Coordinator	2024

3.5	Source funding to develop partnership projects delivering 'Broads experiences,' particularly targeted to groups in high IMD areas.	'Broads experiences' projects funded and delivered through partnerships.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA Partnership and External Funding Manager BA education volunteers BEEN partners, other external partners (e.g., Country Trust, First Nature)	Ongoing as opportunities arise
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Objective 4: Offer a range of projects for young people focused on skills training, practical experience, and progression.

Ref.	Key actions	Key outputs by 2028	Resources	Timescales
4.1	Run BA Youth Ranger programme for 12-18-year-olds.	12-18-year-olds taking part in BA Youth Ranger monthly programme.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA education volunteers BA Rangers BA Volunteer Coordinator BEEN partners	2024
4.2	Develop and implement youth activity programmes during weekends and school holidays with partner organisations and youth groups, e.g., Henderson Trust, Mancroft Advisory Project, Youth Advisory Boards, scouts, guides. Seek supporting funding streams, e.g., Clarion Housing Community Ambassador Project.	Youth groups taking part in annual programme of activities in school holidays and at weekends throughout year.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA education volunteers BEEN partners	Ongoing

4.3	Deliver and further develop John Muir Award (JMA) scheme projects to youth groups.	Young people taking part in JMA programmes and successfully gaining award.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers	Ongoing
4.4	Deliver and further develop Pathways project; expand and offer similar conservation work experience opportunities to other SEND ¹ groups as resources allow and seek additional funding.	Regular programme of work experience maintained with Pathways College and other SEND providers.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA Partnership and External Funding Manager BA education volunteers BTAC BEEN partners	Ongoing
4.5	Develop programme of practical activity to deliver City and Guilds qualification Skills for working life 4807: Conservation units and any successor scheme.	Students undertaking regular work experience programmes able to achieve CG qualification.	BA Education Officer Pathways College staff	2024 and ongoing
4.6	Use model of Pathways project to seek new funding to expand provision of SEND opportunities.	Funding available to expand provision of SEND opportunities.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers BA Partnership and External Funding Manager BA education volunteers	Ongoing
4.7	Maintain and develop work experience programme for schools and college students, including progression routes following completion of placements.	Youth volunteer opportunities established for offered to 16-18-year-olds.	BA Education Officer BA Volunteer Coordinator	Ongoing
4.8	Develop micro-volunteering opportunities and regular taster days for 16-24-year-olds.	Minimum of two micro-volunteering taster days offered annually.	BA Education Officer BA Rangers BA education volunteers	2024 and ongoing

¹ SEND: Children with special educational needs and disabilities

			BA Volunteer Coordinator BEEN Partners	
4.9	Seek partners to deliver youth projects and opportunities that contribute to the BA's work at more sites.	Young people offered learning opportunities at multiple sites throughout Broads National Park.	BA Education Officer BA Partnership and External Funding Manager BEEN Partners	Ongoing
4.10	Produce variety of information resources on careers advice for young people and deliver at school career days, work placements and taster day events.	Young people getting information on potential careers in Broads National Park.	BA Education Officer BA Comms Team	2024

Objective 5: Monitor and improve the effectiveness of the Education Service in promoting understanding of the Broads and delivering Broads Plan objectives.

Ref.	Key actions	Key outputs by 2028	Resources	Timescales
5.1	Carry out regular feedback and evaluation monitoring with participants and visiting staff on effectiveness of BA Education Service delivery. Identify areas for improvement.	Robust data supporting continuous improvement of BA Education Service provision. Improvements implemented, as necessary.	BA Education Officer BA Project Officers	Ongoing Annual review
5.2	Report to BA members and key external partners on progress against Education Strategy action plan.	Education Strategy progress reported as part of annual Broads Authority Business Plan review.	BA Education Officer	Annual