

Broads Authority

12 May 2023

Agenda item number 10

Strategic priorities- update

Report by Senior Governance Officer

Purpose

This report sets out the latest progress in implementing the Authority's annual strategic priorities for 2023/24.

Broads Plan context

The strategic priorities relate to all six themes of the Broads Plan.

Recommended decision

To note the progress in implementing the 2023/24 priorities.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Each year the Broads Authority identifies a small set of strategic priorities, which focus on projects that have high resource needs or a very large impact on the Broads, or that are politically sensitive. Setting these priorities helps target the Authority's resources and make the most of partnership working and external funding opportunities. Priorities are set each financial year, although some large-scale projects carry across several years.
- 1.2. In addition, Defra has introduced a new requirement for National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority to provide quarterly updates on deliverables against the Business Plan, as part of its grant funding agreement. These update reports on our strategic priorities are used by officers to comply with that requirement.
- 1.3. The first update on the agreed strategic priorities for 2023/24 is in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Strategic priorities 2023/24 – progress update

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
1. Climate Change crisis response Aim: To implement the next steps of the various projects tackling climate change related issues, including the	Status: on track	Director of Strategic Services

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>actions in the Authority’s Climate Change Action Plan.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Publish at least two editions of the Broadland Futures Initiative BFI newsletter, by March 2024. (ii) Hold at least two meetings of the BFI Elected Members Forum, by March 2024. (iii) Various technical deliverables from BFI consultant including the new hydraulic model, throughout 2023/24. (iv) Work with partners to secure funding and implement Phase II of the “Electrifying the Broads” project, by March 2024. (v) Deliver the actions set out in the Authority’s Climate Change Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) 11th edition of the newsletter published in February 2023. (ii) Meeting of the Elected Members Forum held on 4th April 2023, with an item to discuss the list of possible flood risk management actions. Next meeting scheduled in July 2023. (iii) On track. (iv) We have had discussions with the Canal & Rivers Trust and Environment Agency to see what joint work can be done on boating electrification. (v) We are currently drafting a tender for the installation of solar panels at the Dockyard. 	
<p>2. Biodiversity crisis response</p> <p>Aim: Co-ordinate and implement with partners the development of strategies and projects, including the legacy of the peat project.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Endorsement of Norfolk & Suffolk Nature Recovery Strategies – timings to be confirmed subject to further details expected from government. (ii) To implement the next steps of the Nature for Climate Peat restoration project within agreed budget and timeline, 	<p>Status: On track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Next meeting of the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership to be held on 16 May 2023. LNRS Regulations & Guidance came into force on 13 April 2023. Responsible Authorities need the support of Supporting Authorities (including NPAs) in the production of LNRS. (ii) NE approved the Broads Peat project extension to 31 August, 	<p>Environment Policy Adviser</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>and review lessons learnt by June 2023.</p> <p>(iii) Complete site selection for potential restoration, and support the submission of Restoration Grant Application, if appropriate, by 26 May 2023.</p>	<p>the project budget was revised to £1,125,831.</p> <p>Broads Peat project legacy report completed and final report in draft.</p> <p>Submission of ~£400k Paludiculture Exploration Fund bid 'FibreBroads' with Norfolk FWAG, Norfolk County Council, NUA, Wetland Products Foundation and Hudson Architects. with support from EA, Broads IDB, Fenland Soil.</p> <p>(iii) A restoration bid is being prepared for Buttle Marsh, and discussions are continuing with Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) about another site. See agenda item 9.</p>	
<p>3. Navigation IT</p> <p>Aim: To replace current tolls system and provide improved online functionality.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <p>(i) Develop timetable and specification by May 2023</p> <p>(ii) Progress workplan for 2023/24 as per agreed timeline.</p>	<p>Status: On track</p> <p>(i) Meeting with Management Team on 2 May to report on discussions with other waterways and to agree critical project deliverables.</p> <p>(ii) Ongoing</p>	<p>Head of ICT/Collector of Tolls</p>
<p>4. Water Mills and Marshes</p> <p>Aim: Co-ordinate and implement with partners the WMM programme to latest agreed schedule and budget.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <p>(i) Monitor and report progress (July & Dec 2023).</p>	<p>Status: on track</p> <p>(i) All projects progressing well to adjusted plans</p>	<p>Broads Landscape Partnership Programme Manager</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>(ii) Submit quarterly claims to National Lottery Heritage Fund (April/Jul/Oct/Jan).</p> <p>(iii) Complete individual project plans with project partners (June)</p> <p>(iv) Complete final project evaluations with external scheme evaluators (September)</p> <p>(v) Hold project legacy partner conference (November)</p> <p>(vi) Prepare final project report</p>	<p>(ii) Quarterly returns submitted on time and paid by NLHF.</p> <p>(iii) Most external partner projects now completed with individual project evaluations being conducted and submitted.</p> <p>(iv) External scheme evaluators continue to conduct research and interviews. On-site meetings took place April 24th - 28th.</p> <p>(v) Planning for the Landscape Partnership legacy conference is ongoing. Conference will highlight the works accomplished since 2018 and look at planned legacy works and opportunities derived from the scheme.</p> <p>(vi) Evidence for the final scheme report is being gathered and collated.</p> <p>Work is nearing completion at Mutton's Mill, which is our final large capital project. Much of what remains is dependent on fair weather and drier conditions.</p> <p>We have successfully tendered for the repair of the drainage structure at Strumpshaw Fen, with works to begin this summer.</p> <p>We are completing work on our upcoming volume on the history of the Broads being written by Tom Williamson at UEA.</p> <p>Our exhibition on the history of drainage windmills in the Broads in the museum of the Broads in Stalham is now open to the public for its second</p>	

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
	season. It will remain open through October 2023.	
<p>5. Local Plan for the Broads</p> <p>Aim: To review the Local Plan for the Broads for adoption in 2024 (estimated).</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Preparation of the Preferred Options version of Local Plan (with HRA and SA) consultation – towards consultation in autumn 2023. (ii) Preparation of the Publication version of the Local Plan throughout 2024 	<p>Status: On track</p> <p>Policies are being drafted and taken to Planning Committee each month. Sites put forward for consideration are being assessed.</p>	<p>Planning Policy Officer</p>
<p>6. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)</p> <p>Aim: To run the FiPL programme and allocate Broads grants to farmers and landowners, and support the Broads and Norfolk Coast Land Management Board to allocate their funding.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Hold six Land Management Board meetings, by March 2024. (ii) Allocate all grant funding to projects, by December 2023. (iii) Engagement activities to showcase case studies funded through FiPL, by March 2024. 	<p>Status: on track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Held the first Land management Board of the year on 17th April 2023. Three projects were approved, one rejected and four deferred to the June meeting. (ii) £69,126.65 already allocated to projects out of a total budget of £148,370.32 (iii) Planning for website case studies is underway. 	<p>Catchment & Farming Officer</p>
<p>7. Budget pressures</p>	<p>Status: on track</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>Aim: To operate at a level in line with expected income.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Use January budget report for 2023/24 and the three-year horizon to continue discussions with Defra officials on future funding levels. (ii) Further savings and additional income (including from external funding) for 2024/25 Budget (January 2024) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Work to start over the summer period on the 2023/24 budget. (ii) The Philanthropy Company has been appointed on behalf of the English National Parks and DEFRA to look at income generation opportunities. Draft report received 17 April 2023, meeting held on 21 April 2023 to discuss. From a Broads Authority perspective, a useful starting point. Company working up second phase of the project. 	<p>Director of Finance</p>

2. Financial Risks

- 2.1. If the Authority fails to comply with any of its obligations in the Grant Funding Agreement, DEFRA may, at its discretion, reduce, suspend or terminate payments of grant, or require any part or all of the grant to be repaid.

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