

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022

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Present

Keith Bacon – in the Chair, Linda Aspland, Richard Atkins, Harry Blathwayt, Christine Cane, Peter Dixon, Tony Gibbons, Tim Harris, Alison Holden-Standley, Steve Read, Chris Yardley.

In attendance

Thomas Balfour – Anglian Water, Jason Beck – East Suffolk Council, Ken Hawkins – Norfolk Local Access Forum, Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology, Natasha Kenny – Anglian Water, Emily Linsdell – Anglian Water, Kylie Moos – Administrative Officer, Martin Sullivan – Norfolk Local Access Forum, Grant Tuffs – Anglian Water, Andrew Walters – Waterways and Recreation Officer.

1. Appointment of Vice Chair

The Forum agreed that the appointment of Vice Chair was not required at this time. If the Chair is unable to attend a future meeting than an interim Vice Chair will be appointed for the duration of the meeting. Nominations for a Vice Chair will be opened again at the 2023 AGM.

2. Apologies for absence and welcome

Apologies received from Louis Baugh, Katie Baxter, Peter Mason, Paul Saunders

3. Declarations of interest

Members indicated they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered and set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

4. Minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 31 August 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. Summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meeting

There were no comments on the actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings.

Access to National Parks

This week a local newspaper published an article which stated that there is a lack of public access to the Broads and other National Parks. The Chair commented, the nature of Open Access land often refers to moorlands in other National Parks, as the Broads does not contain moorlands it is an unfair comparison. The article has come from an analysis that the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) carried out. Dan Hoare suggested that CNP are invited to a future Forum meeting to describe the access opportunities in the Broads and the different way in which the land is owned and managed.

Andrew Walters agreed to contact Dr Rose O'Neill from CNP and invite them to a future Broads Local Access Forum meeting.

6. Safety of splash sports in the Broads: Anglian Water's responsibilities, challenges and future plans for water quality improvement

Grant Tuff, Natasha Kenny, Tom Balfour and Emily Linsdell from Anglian Water presented Get River Positive, an initiative to improve river health and river quality with partners Severn Trent. Anglian Water is the largest water and water recycling company in England by geographic area and is the driest region in the UK with 2/3 of the national average rainfall each year.

Water Industry National Environment Plan

- The environmental ambition of our current Business Plan is underpinned by the sector's largest Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP).
- £800m of investment and 1,200 schemes -contains 20 per cent of the total, national obligations.
- We've accelerated at pace, front loading the programme with £300 million of investment and 200 schemes fast-tracked through the government's Green Recovery Plan at no extra cost to customers.
- By the end of 2022, 88% of our programmes will be complete, and crucially we're delivering our programme in collaboration with Catchment-Based Approach partnerships, local Rivers Trusts, environmental groups and landowners.

Chalk streams

- Deliver a wide array of river restoration, habitat improvement, river support, sustainability reductions, water treatment wetlands and pollution reduction through our WINEP.
- Protect chalk streams by capping abstraction from all major groundwater aquifers to recent actual levels to prevent any further deterioration.
- Invest in major capital solutions to allow a significant reduction in abstraction from two critical chalk streams in our region -River Lark and River Nar.
- Create up to 34 water treatment wetlands, building upon the learnings made from our award-winning low carbon wetland at Ingoldisthorpe in Norfolk, which benefits the River Ingol chalk stream.
- Conduct investigations on a further 40 combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and put intervention in place for these deemed to be the highest risk.

Get River Positive

Anglian Water joined forces with Severn Trent in March 2022 to launch [Get River Positive](#).

Get River Positive commitments:

1. Ensure storm overflows and sewage treatment works do not harm rivers.
2. Create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy our region's rivers
 - Within 10 years, 90 per cent of the population in our region will live within an hour's drive of a bathing site.
 - We will create more across the regions for canoeists, anglers and recreational events.
 - We have already identified over 20 potential inland bathing water locations across our region, and we will work with local river groups and communities to prioritise at least two for early implementation.
 - We will continue to promote the use of our existing inland bathing water at our Rutland Water reservoir and will look for opportunities to further increase recreational access to our reservoir sites.
 - Application in at Deben in Woodbridge, one on river Waveney in Bungay and one on the River Cam in Cambridge.
3. Support others to improve and care for rivers.
4. Enhance our rivers and create new habitats so wildlife can thrive.
5. Be open and transparent about our performance and our plans.

Storm overflows

Storm Overflows, also know as Combined Storm Overflows (CSO) were built in Victorian times and 60's and 70s, none have been built since privatisation (1989). 80% of CSO are fitted with an Event Duration Monitor, the remaining 20% are in progress.

Investment in the Broads

Between 2020-2025 185 environmental obligations have been identified.

Investigations/Monitoring:

- Enhanced understanding of flows to our Water Recycling Centres
- CSO spill frequency across Norwich, Diss, Gt Yarmouth, Lowestoft
- Monitoring of flows through our networks

Improvements:

- Licence reductions and River flow enhancement
- Habitat restoration
- Catchment Management
- WQ Improvements at Sisland, Swardeston, Cotton, Aylsham and Southrepps WRCs

Water recycling and pollutions

Across the UK combined sewer overflows contribute just 4% of the reasons why UK rivers are not high quality (and only 1% in the East of England).

Other drivers impacting river water quality include:

- Agriculture and rural management
- Urban development and transport
- Non-native species
- Misconnected plumbing

Comments and answers to questions

A 16km pipeline is being installed between East Ruston water treatment works and Horstead water tower. The new pipeline will move water from the north of the region, where supply is more abundant, to areas of water shortage. More information can be found at the following website: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/hidden-pages/east-ruston/>

Today's presentation focused on rivers however, there are separate targets and environmental quality standards depending on whether water is being discharged inland, coastal or to an estuary. Targets are driven by the water quality standards set by the Environment Agency. For example, one river compared to another can have a different standard depending on the amount of discharges it has and the amount of dilution. Coastal sites have different targets because they fall within the bathing water directive.

Storm tanks are built to hold storm stormwater and settle out some of the water before it discharges the stormwater into the environment. Storm tanks can be concrete or metal and sit both underground and above ground. Anglian Water are continuing to build more tanks to reduce the number of spills from storm overflows. They are also targeting areas that spill the most and investigating any misconnections. The long-term aim is to keep the water in the environment instead of inside a tank next to a watercourse or the sea.

Anglian Water were handed over the requirement from the Environment Agency (EA) to test their own discharge from water recycling centres and water treatment works to the water course in 2010. Anything that has been specified within the environmental permitting regulation permit that the EA issue is tested. Examples of this are ammonia, phosphorus, iron, biological oxygen demand and chemical oxygen demand.

The EA will test for E-coli and any bacterial virus in rivers when an application for a bathing water for a particular area is submitted. The sampling is managed and funded by the EA. It was noted that splash sports such as canoeing and paddle boarding involve people frequently entering the water. The Forum commented that busy areas for splash sports should also be tested as well as bathing areas.

A Forum member asked if Anglian Water are looking at an economic solution for saline incursions in the Broads, particularly after the incursion which took place in September 2022. Tom Balfour responded, the team worked with the EA to net 10,000 fish and relocate them into Hickling Broad. Anglian Water support the EA with flooding issues across the catchment however it is the EA that are responsible for investigating saline incursions.

A Forum member asked who is responsible for checking and monitoring water quality in the Broads and added that since the privatisation of water companies there have multiple stakeholder and policy meetings but a lack of monitoring and fulfilment. Grant Tuffs confirmed that it is the EA responsibility for monitoring quality and Anglian Water will support where possible. Anglian Water will be doing more water quality monitoring in the next

program of work, but it is going to be focused on what's going on upstream and downstream of the discharges.

The EA have previously shared data on water quality monitoring but it can be difficult to understand. A Forum member requested that any data Anglian Water may publish is in a clear and understandable for the public.

Dan Hoare agreed to invite the EA to a future meeting to discuss water quality monitoring in the Broads.

7. East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy

Jason Beck (JB) from the Policy department at East Suffolk Council presented the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to create safe, coherent, direct, comfortable, and attractive cycling, walking and wheeling environments that lead to improvements in health and wellbeing, facilitate greater social interaction and play, encourage more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, reduce road congestion, and support economic growth.

An interactive web version of the strategy can be found here: [East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy 2022 \(arcgis.com\)](#). A PDF version is also available. Jason Beck demonstrated the following features of the map.

Recommendations map

This map shows the cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations from the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy 2022 alongside supporting data. There are four types of recommendations:

Key corridors

Key routes between, and through, settlements where there are significant opportunities to changing people's use of transport modes from vehicular travel to cycling and walking by improving cycling and walking infrastructure.

Local plan site allocation recommendations

Recommendations for Local Plan site allocations, covering both on and off-site opportunities.

Leisure routes

A number of rural routes have been identified, connecting some more rural settlements. The primary function of these routes is to facilitate leisure opportunities.

Community recommendations

Recommendations submitted to the Council as part of the initial consultation. These have been assessed against the methodology set out in the community recommendations tab. These have also been useful in identifying opportunities for the above three recommendations types.

Next Steps

- Infrastructure Development Framework that provides cost estimates as well as funding options
- Working with Suffolk County Council to create a prioritisation table.
- Monitoring framework.
- Potential implementations opportunities including:
 - Planning applications,
 - Neighbourhood plans
 - Other funding opportunities e.g SCC or CIL

Comments and answers to questions

The Planning Policy officer for the Broads Authority has been involved with the strategy and attended stakeholder groups.

A Forum member asked if there was ever any consideration for horse riders to be included in discussions regarding suitable routes and noted that wider paths for cyclists doesn't always make it suitable for horse riders. Jason Beck responded, it is a cycling and walking strategy first however, equestrians were considered in the recommendations to ensure that they were not adversely affected by any of the proposals made. All users will be considered at the design stage of the routes.

The strategy is not included in the Suffolk Rights of Way improvement plan, but recommendations are made to the plan.

Suffolk Local Access Forum were included in the consultation but did not sit on any steering groups.

8. Any other business

The Chair encouraged forum members to suggest and/or present future agenda items. The Chair also noted a possible future agenda item on Open Access which was mentioned at item 5.

Andrew Walters to liaise with the Chair on this topic to identify future speakers, if the invitation to Dr Rosie O'Neill from the Campaign for National Parks isn't picked up

Forum members were interested in Norfolk County Council's response to the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking strategy and if their own strategy is being developed.

Andrew Walters agreed to ask for an update on the Norfolk Cycling and Walking Strategy from Norfolk County Council.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broads Local Access Forum would be held on Wednesday 8 March 2023 at 10.00am

The meeting ended at 12.10pm

Signed by

Chairman

