

Broads Local Access Forum

30 August 2023

Agenda item number 8

Integrated Access Strategy- scoping paper

Report by Head of Construction, Maintenance & Ecology

Summary

An interim update on the Stage 1 consultation of the refreshed Integrated Access Strategy, to be completed by end March 2024.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Summary of responses for the core Values of the Strategy	2
3. Summary of responses for the Principles of the Strategy.....	3
4. Summary of responses for the Aims of the Strategy	3
5. Consultation and IAS development timeline	5
Appendix 1 – Stage 1 Consultation on the Integrated Access Strategy (sections 3-6 only).....	6

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The current [Integrated Access Strategy](#) (2019) aims to address the issue of access routes, including to and between land and water, and their connections to key visitor facilities and sustainable transport links. To ensure the strategy is truly integrated across the Broads, from April 2024 it will also guide mooring and de-masting provision on the Broads waterways, as previously covered by the Authority's 2006 Mooring Strategy.
- 1.2. An initial consultation to refresh the basic assumptions of the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) has been opened to statutory and major stakeholder organisations as part of this five-year review. The IAS review also keeps pace with the refreshed [Broads Plan](#) (2022-27) which has been produced in the interim period. The IAS is one of the sub-strategies that informs how the aims of the Broads Plan will be achieved. Various of other relevant sub-strategies also inform the IAS (including the [Local Plan for the Broads](#), [Waterways Management Strategy](#) and [Biodiversity & Water Strategy](#)).

- 1.3. This scoping paper describes the values, principles and aims of the suggested revisions to the strategy. Six questions were asked of responders, relating to whether the list of suggested values, principles and aims reflect the needs and concerns of Broads users.
- 1.4. This Stage 1 consultation was sent to a wide range of stakeholder organisations with involvement in access and boating activity in the Broads. The consultation was open for one month, ending 8 August 2023. This report gives a summary of the responses received to date for all Values and Principles.
- 1.5. As Theme 3 (section 6.3 in the Appendix) deals solely with moorings and de-masting moorings on the public navigation, these comments will not be reported and discussed at this Stage 1 with the Broads Local Access Forum. This topic will be discussed with the Navigation Committee on 2 November 2023 and will be reported at a future BLAF meeting, as detailed in section 5.

2. Summary of responses for the core Values of the Strategy

- 2.1. Other than the generally supporting comments, those which specifically fed back on the consultation text included valuable statements for all the proposed values. Where alterations to the emphasis of the text are likely to be put forward into the Stage 2 consultation, these are summarised below.
- 2.2. A - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. A comment was received that “the values of Inclusivity align with British Canoeing’s values and cross cutting themes of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; being inclusive to help everyone enjoy paddling, regardless of identity, ability or circumstance.”
- 2.3. B - Environment & Sustainability. A comment was received that “the benefits of getting more people active and connecting those people with nature is key” and “our blue spaces should be welcoming, accessible and clean, for the enjoyment of all to connect with nature for the benefit of the environment as people will care for the Broads and also for the benefit of people’s mental and physical wellbeing”. However, as a counterpoint, another comment was that “having a representation of quiet, no access, limiting/zoning certain activities in a map-based form would overcome future conflict.” Both of these values can be achieved through adopting an evidence-based approach seeking to gain multiple-benefits at the Broads wide scale.
- 2.4. C - Financial cost effectiveness. Several comments were received that benefits to public health and the local economy should be considered in the wording of this value, as additional benefits that need recognition.
- 2.5. One of the challenges in interpreting the responses on the core Values of the Integrated Access Strategy has been that some stakeholders are keen to draw in other wider environmental or navigation issues into a strategy that is not directly focussed on, or able to effectively tackle them. A note needs to be included in subsequent consultation stages to highlight that other, more appropriate statutory consultation mechanisms

exist, as well as being already captured under the wider Broads Plan and other Broads Authority sub-strategies (see paragraph 1.2).

3. Summary of responses for the Principles of the Strategy

3.1. Table 1 below summarises the comments where modifications to the strategy text are likely to be put forward into the Stage 2 consultation.

3.2. Table 1. Summary of comments on the Principles

Principle	Comment
5.1	Add that <i>if impacts cannot be mitigated effectively, then net gain in benefits off-site or other habitat improvements will be sought</i>
5.3	Add <i>volunteers</i> to list of stakeholders included in partnership working
5.4	Add in the <i>concept of "least restrictive option"</i> when considering new or replacement access developments
5.6	Add the need to follow <i>the design principles of: coherent; safe; comfortable; and attractive; in new access development to help achieve the greatest range of benefits for all users.</i>
5.7	Add <i>sustainable materials</i> to the considerations for conserving local character in access developments
5.9	Add <i>no net loss of slipways/launch points</i> to the suite of sites directly managed by the Authority
5.13	General comments on how to balance the need to positively manage and maintain access to Protected Sites for all the beneficial reasons such access brings, with the need for ecological mitigation of new schemes and increased demand where growth of population and settlements is planned in and around the Broads. Add the need to increase the resilience of access provision in the face of impacts from climate change

4. Summary of responses for the Aims of the Strategy

4.1. Tables 2 and 3 below summarise the comments where modifications to the strategy text are likely to be put forward into the Stage 2 consultation.

4.2. Table 2. Summary of Theme 1 - Land-based Access comments

Aim	Comment
6.1.1	Add <i>Network Rail</i> specifically as a partner to work with in promoting access to and within the Broads
6.1.4	Add <i>electric bikes</i> specifically as items that would benefit from increased public electric charging network
6.1.7	Add <i>to help relieve visitor pressure on sensitive sites and improving or developing routes to/from urban areas nearby or within The Broads, targeting nearby areas with poor access to wild spaces and nature, or populations from minoritized ethnic or lower socioeconomic backgrounds</i>
6.1.9	Additional aim - <i>Ensure new development provides safe and suitable access for all users and promotes and facilitates sustainable modes of travel.</i>
General comments	Need to add aims relating directly to encouraging diversity in visitor groups or provisions to overcome social or cultural barriers to access
	Need to add aims specifically relating to access for children and young people or those living in urban areas
	Add a "back to basics" aim for liaising with the relevant Highway Authorities to ensure that all existing public paths, within the Broads Authority area, are actually usable, ie. free from obstruction and in a fit state of repair, as per the Highway Authority's statutory duties

4.3. Table 3. Summary of Theme 2 - Land-based Access comments

Theme 2 – Land-to-Water access	
6.2.1	Add that <i>hubs should have adequate facilities including car parking, to facilitate the transport of craft (car sharing encouraged)</i>
6.2.2	Add improve <i>provision</i> of access points
6.2.3	Include <i>paddle launch points</i> to types of facilities that would benefit from improved access to land-based facilities
6.2.7	Change emphasis from simply improving car parking, to only targeted parking for those towing boat trailers and adding cycle parking/storage

5. Consultation and IAS development timeline

5.1. Table 4 - Dates and milestones for the stages (from consultation to final adoption)

Dates	Stage	Status
11 Jul - 8 Aug 2023	Stage 1 consultation on IAS values, principles and aims with statutory and larger stakeholder organisations	completed
21 Aug – 18 Sept	Stage 1 consultation with sailing clubs and other waterways users	current
30 Aug	Summary of Stage 1 consultation on Themes 1 and 2 with BLAF	this report
2 Nov	Summary of Stage 1 consultation on Themes 2 and 3 with the Navigation Committee	
9 Nov – 7 Dec	Stage 2 consultation on IAS text and objectives section with all stakeholders	
11 Jan 2024	Draft IAS document to Navigation Committee	
06 Mar	Draft IAS document to BLAF	
15 Mar	Final draft IAS to Broads Authority	

Author: Dan Hoare

Date of report: 16 August 2023

Background papers: [Integrated Access Strategy](#) (2019)

[Broads Plan](#) objectives: **E1** - Improve the integrated network of access routes and points (with easier access for people with mobility and sensory needs), linked to visitor facilities

C4 - Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways.

Appendix 1 – Stage 1 Consultation on the Integrated Access Strategy

Appendix 1 – Stage 1 Consultation on the Integrated Access Strategy (sections 3-6 only)

3. What will the strategy cover?

The strategy will cover three key themes:

Theme 1: Land-based access – e.g., improve access links to local facilities, settlements, and visitor destination points.

Theme 2: Land-to-water access – e.g., provision of slipways and launch points.

Theme 3: Mooring and de-masting provision e.g., identifying gaps in the mooring network.

4. What will be the core values of the Strategy?

Each of the above themes will have to consider whether both guidance and project proposals are aligned to the IAS values of:

A. Inclusivity – to ensure that access is available to as many people as possible, regardless of their age, ability, and protected characteristic(s). It is based on the principle that providing for the widest range of users creates better places, richer experiences, and benefits.¹

B. Sustainability – to ensure that access delivery should seek to reduce impact on the environment.

C. Financial cost effectiveness – to ensure that the cost of all projects is evaluated at the outset and the financial viability looks at a broad range of solutions, for example working in partnership to maximise funding potential and long-term outcomes.

5. What will be the guiding principles of the strategy?

The following principles will be used to help guide the development and delivery of access projects in the Broads:

- 5.1 Project proposals for new or improved access provision will need to demonstrate that negative impacts on the environment and designated sites can be minimised. Where possible, access schemes should be designed to deliver biodiversity and habitat improvement.
- 5.2 To encourage sustainable travel choices such as public transport, walking, cycling and non-powered boating, and improve links between public transport provision, visitor destination points and access between land and water and to the water's edge.

¹ taken from 'Outdoor Accessibility Guide,' Paths for All & Sensory Trust (2023).

- 5.3 Where possible, project proposals should demonstrate partnership and community involvement in planning, delivery, and ongoing maintenance liability. Stakeholders will be consulted on the scope and design of project proposals to maximise opportunities for collaborative working.
- 5.4 Ensure provision of safe, barrier free access is key to encouraging and enabling people of all ages and abilities to experience the Broads' countryside and waterways. Sometimes only minor works are required to make routes and access points easily accessible to a wide range of users.
- 5.5 Encourage sustainable development of boating and associated infrastructure to be consistent planning policies and other statutory consents. Connecting to local plan and planning documents
- 5.6 Project proposals should, where possible, provide multiple benefits for users with differing interests, needs and abilities (e.g., creating a new mooring to link to the existing rights of way network and local facilities, or improving surfaces and removing barriers to open up an access point or route to people with mobility problems).
- 5.7 Project proposals should seek to conserve and enhance the character of the area using materials and construction techniques appropriate to a protected landscape.
- 5.8 Maintain the free use of Broads Authority unstaffed moorings.
- 5.9 Maintain a policy of no net reduction in publicly accessible mooring length directly managed by the Broads Authority.
- 5.10 The Broads Authority should not enter leases for mooring sites that require the payment of annual fees higher than those recommended by the Authority's property adviser.
- 5.11 When considering acquiring new sites, the Broads Authority should consider the cumulative implications of taken on new liabilities, in particular the potential cost of repairing and relacing piling, duration of tenure when leasing, etc.
- 5.12 Project design should consider the potential impacts of climate change, including changes in water levels to support climate change resilience and adaptation.
- 5.13 Encourage provision of access routes that relieve visitor pressure on internationally designated sites, avoid disturbance of protected species and help to accommodate growth.

6. What will be the aims of the strategy?

The proposed aims of the strategy are as follows. They are grouped in to the three themes.

6.1 Theme 1: Land-based access - Aims.

- 6.1.1 Work with local transport authorities and others to maintain, improve and promote public transport provision in and to the Broads.
- 6.1.2 Support the development of cycle hire facilities and routes in new locations for the benefit of boaters and land-based visitors.
- 6.1.3 Support the development of canoe trails with appropriate facilities in suitable areas.
- 6.1.4 Generate a strategic delivery plan for installation of Electric Charging points.
- 6.1.5 Provide appropriate information on access to recreational opportunities and interpretation about recreational sites.
- 6.1.6 Determine where access improvements to land designated as open access land under the CROW Act 2000 would be appropriate.
- 6.1.7 Identify and promote the development of new access routes to improve the connectivity of the existing public access network, including rights of way, permissive paths, and long-distance routes.
- 6.1.8 Identify potential new bridleway routes that will allow riders to avoid dangerous road riding – including shared use routes suitable for horse riding, cycling, and walking.

6.2 Theme 2: Land-to-water access – Aims.

- 6.2.1 The development of access hubs where it would be appropriate to focus access provision.
- 6.2.2 Improve access points between land and water, including visitor moorings, demasting moorings, safety moorings, isolated moorings, canoe portages, ferries, and slipways.
- 6.2.3 Improve links from moorings to land-based facilities and visitor destinations.
- 6.2.4 Improve pedestrian access to the water's edge and alongside water for the purposes of walking, angling (including angling platforms) and bird watching.
- 6.2.5 Extending access to new areas of navigable water space where appropriate.
- 6.2.6 Work in partnership to protect, staithes rights and the access benefits they bring.
- 6.2.7 Identify appropriate locations where improved car parking would benefit users (e.g., at slipways).

6.3 Theme 3: Mooring and de-masting provision - Aims.

- 6.3.1 Reduce potential user conflict through good communication with relevant stakeholders and mitigating through design and alternative provision.
- 6.3.2 Consider and encourage partnership development / funding opportunities to deliver objectives, such as enhancing existing sites and facilities.
- 6.3.3 Seek contributions/ establish charges for ancillary services e.g., water.
- 6.3.4 Ensure new mooring sites and launch points will be assessed for potential impacts in environmentally sensitive localities. Encourage innovative mooring design to provide habitat opportunities and mitigate landscape impacts.
- 6.3.5 Improve the dissemination of information to users on mooring opportunities, to include location of sites, facilities available.
- 6.3.6 Promote double alongside mooring at appropriate sites.
- 6.3.7 Work in partnership with third parties to maximise publicly accessible short-stay mooring provision.
- 6.3.8 The Broads Authority will work to ensure wherever possible that the distribution of moorings is a maximum 30 minute cruising time (equal to 2 miles distance at 4 mph) apart.
- 6.3.9 Review de-masting provision in the Broads and develop a prioritisation methodology to guide future investment in new provision.