

Navigation Committee

11 January 2024

Agenda item number 15

Integrated Access Strategy

Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

Purpose

To update on the Stage 2 consultation of the review of the Integrated Access Strategy and set out the timetable through to the final sign-off of the adopted strategy by the Broads Authority.

Broads Plan context

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.

Recommended decision

To note the report.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The previous (2019) Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) aimed 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. The scope of the IAS is to act as a framework for focussing and prioritising areas of future work, which will then in turn generate projects for new or modified forms of service delivery that will generate benefits to users. Given the breadth of access topics and the largely influencing role the Authority plays on many access work areas, the IAS scope cannot identify the detail of specific projects that will bring user benefits. The outcomes of each of the strategic objectives will generate project priorities with specific sites identified. The delivery progress against each strategic objective will be tracked via the Broads Local Access Forum and Navigation Committee, as relevant.
- 1.3. The initial Stage 1 consultation to refresh the basic assumptions of the Integrated Access Strategy took place with statutory and major stakeholder organisations as part of this five-year review. The summary of feedback from the Stage 1 consultation was reported at the November 2023 Navigation Committee meeting.
- 1.4. The Stage 2 consultation was an open public consultation on the draft IAS text and objectives. This was an opportunity for all stakeholders to comment on the focus on access for the next three years (2024/25 – 2026/27).
- 1.5. The Authority and officers are grateful for all the comments received towards shaping the final strategy document. Officers have considered the comments from all stakeholders as well as being mindful of the Authority's statutory obligations across a wide range of social, environmental, and financial responsibilities. The wording and emphasis of the strategy will aim to consider these responsibilities and user requirements, to maximise the accessibility within the Broads for as many users as possible.

2. Summary of Responses to Principles

- 2.1. Below are the comments we received regarding the principles of the IAS. It was commented that we should add a principle relating to safety and one relating to nature and landscape recovery with the following words suggested:
 - Safety - 1: Paddle-sports, canoeing and stand-up paddleboarding will be encouraged in areas that are suitable... but discouraged on the fast-flowing rivers.
 - Safety – 2: Ensuring adequate short term moorings including mast lowering and waiting moorings will be given prioritisation on the lower reaches of the rivers Yare, Bure and Waveney to meet the objective of short stay moorings at a maximum 30-minute cruising time or two miles apart.

3. Summary of Responses to Aims of the Strategy

3.1. The tables below summarise the comments submitted regarding the three themes the aims are based around: land- based access, land-to-water access, and mooring and demasting provision. The final column in Tables 1 -3 shows the officer response to the consultee’s suggestion.

3.2. Table 1. Comments relating to Land-based access:

Aim number	Comment received	Officer response
5.3	Reducing car use, even electric car use, should be a priority in designated landscapes to minimise its impact on landscapes, wildlife, and habitats. We welcome the addition of electric bikes to this aim.	Cars not prioritised. Also see Sustainable Tourism strategy.
5.4	Identify possible popular walks, especially from moorings, walk them or use local knowledge base to check their feasibility with different accessibility needs e.g. pushchairs, young children, dogs etc.	Included elsewhere in the strategy objectives.
	Have signs up at moorings to identify possible walks.	
5.5	We welcome changes to 5.5 in relation to ensuring responsible recreational use of the Broads.	Noted.
5.8	We support all aims in particular 5.8. We would like clarification on who is responsible for maintenance of riverside and broadside footpaths as there is much debate when standards fall.	Norfolk County Council for all Public Rights of Way.
General Comments	Give consideration to use of ferries for linkage between land facilities in preference to new fixed bridges that would obstruct the navigation.	Noted. Largely a planning issue.

3.3. Table 2. Comments relating to Land-to-water access:

Aim number	Comment received	Officer response
6.1	There has been a gradual loss of formal and wild moorings over the past 20 years.	Authority mooring length has increased in this time. Unauthorised moorings on

		private land are not encouraged.
	Having the majority of slipways at chargeable car parks leads to lack of affordability for sections of society.	Noted.
	I am keen to see more public canoe access points. The Broads Authority should be actively promoting paddle sports as a green option.	Included elsewhere in the strategy objectives.
6.2	Horning and Hoveton/ Wroxham require more moorings... there are currently no accessible moorings for private craft when river levels are high (Wroxham).	Noted.
6.3	There is much scope to encourage bird watchers, pond-dippers and, on specific stretches, anglers, with new and additional platforms.	Noted.
6.4	Why just paddle craft?	Noted.
	Could current routes be extended, or currently closed routes be reopened?	Rewording to 6.4 required to define target areas outside the existing public navigation.
6.5	Fully agree, also maintain them as free moorings and not start charging.	See Aim 7.8.
6.6	We welcome the addition of the mention of cycle storage to aim 6.6 to support the de-prioritisation of car travel within the Broads and the support of alternative means of travel where a car is not needed.	Noted.
6.8	Not sure how or why BA would support provision of public boat trips. This is perhaps something for the private sector.	See principle 4.1.
General Comments	Add safety signage and warning signs where it will be relevant to users.	Noted.

3.4. Table 3. Comments relating to Mooring and demasting provision:

7.1	We welcome the addition of detail to aim 7.1 to introduce visitor charges... We also raise the concern that this should be done in a way where it does not raise a financial barrier to access to these ancillary services for groups on lower incomes.	Noted.
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7.2	Very few fully electric cruisers exist, and these will need infrastructure in place before they become viable. The current electricity posts are not powerful enough to cope with the demands of a fully electric vessel. The costs are going to be huge, where will the funds come from?	Noted.
7.3	Low freeboard is only a problem in areas with large tidal range, a lot of moorings are actually too low and require raising to allow safe boarding.	Included elsewhere in the strategy objectives.
7.5	Double moorings are a no from me, and I will not accept them unless I personally know the crew, their competence and manners, I avoid stern on moorings for the same reasons.	Noted.
7.6	There should be more emphasis on this aim.	Aims in each theme will be ranked to help identify relative priority.
7.7	It seems unlikely, and possibly unnecessary to provide moorings at all four quadrants of most bridges.	Noted. See next comment.
	We wish to emphasise the importance of providing mooring for mast lowering and raising at all four quadrants of low fixed bridges. There should be more emphasis on this aim.	Noted. See previous comment.
7.8	Recommend maintaining a balance of free moorings on the Northern and Southern Rivers and that ways be developed to monitor their use.	See Aim 7.6.
7.9	It's good to ensure no net reduction of moorings, but the spatial distribution of moorings is also important.	See Aim 7.6.
7.10	We tend to agree with this policy, mainly because the tolls system could not absorb major new demands from landowners.	Noted.
	There should be more emphasis on this aim.	Noted.
7.11	Please concentrate on moorings where land access is required.	See Aim 6.2.
	Use of pontoons needs review, and greater use could be made of innovative moorings, such as floating pontoons and temporary, removable pontoons.	Included elsewhere in the strategy objectives.
	The prioritisation of value for money in mooring design may lead to negative impacts on the landscape and on wildlife.	Noted.

General Comments	We query the removal of the aim covered by 6.3.4 of the July Scoping Paper relating to the impact of mooring and de-masting provision on environmentally sensitive localities.	Reworded and incorporated as Principle 4.4.
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4. Summary of Responses to Objectives of the Strategy

4.1. Below are the comments which relate directly to the objective of the strategy.

4.2. Table 4. Comments relating to Objectives:

Acle Bridge would be an important access hub if sustainability problems could be resolved... Hoveton would be an alternative, arguable better, option as a visitor/ information hub.	Noted.
As well as the last land-based access objective to develop a Communications Plan to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in land access provision, diversity in visitor groups may be further improved through consultation with currently underserved groups, similar to other outlined user and stakeholder consultation- related objectives.	Noted. Wording to include consultation.
Despite the obvious environmental risks, we were pleased to see an objective relating to swimming.	Noted.
It is important to invest in and maintain Mutford Lock.	Noted.
We recommend a feasibility study to use the large commercial mooring on Breydon Water for de-masting and re-masting of sailing boats. One possibility would be to use temporary pontoons attached to the mooring that could be removed and stored for the winter. This facility would greatly enhance recreational use of Breydon Water by sailing boats.	The priority of this site by consultees is noted.
We recommend improvements to the demasting provisions downstream of Ludham Bridge, in line with the suggestion in the draft.	The priority of this site by consultees is noted.
A floating pontoon on the lower reaches of Breydon Water at or adjacent to the commercial wharf upstream of the Breydon Bridge carrying the A47 trunk road as the highest new moorings priority.	The priority of this site by consultees is noted.
The document contains no tables or hyperlinks to surveys and by failing to identify any specific projects (Mutford Lock aside) is of very little value.	See section 1.2 of this report.
We query the absence of any objectives that assess or monitor the environmental, landscape or wildlife impact of access provision.	Noted, though largely covered in Principle 5.4. Also see

	Biodiversity and Water Strategy.
The prioritisation of the aims and objectives would assist with turning aspirations into an action plan, and with the prioritisation of both time and funds.	Agreed. Aims and objectives to be ranked.
There is no objective relating to seasonality of visitors - Winter closure of facilities on public rights of way could be communicated better or, facilities kept open as PRow are used throughout the year.	Noted. Such facilities, like public toilets are largely managed by others, but the objective ranking activity at sites using anonymised mobile phone data can also be used for seasonality trends.

4.3. There were many comments received which weren't linked specifically to an aim or an objective, but which are worth mentioning.

- Many comments were received regarding wild moorings. This type of mooring is not the remit of the Broads Authority or within the scope of the IAS and therefore not included in any mooring and demasting aim. Unauthorised mooring on private land could be considered as trespass mooring.
- Feedback was received that access to the Broads via the sea has not been considered in this strategy, but this will be considered within the Tourism Strategy.
- Comments around the apparent lack of detail in the IAS on the consideration of landscape and wildlife impact. Principles 4.4 and 4.11 largely cover this concern, as well as the Authority's legal obligations under various UK conservation and planning regulations. A lot of the themes and priorities for nature conservation are covered in the Biodiversity and Water Strategy.

5. Consultation and IAS development timeline

5.1. Table 5 – 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

Dates	Stage	Status
21 Aug – 18 Sept	Stage 1 consultation with sailing clubs and other waterways users	Completed
30 Aug	Summary of Stage 1 consultation on Themes 1 and 2 with BLAF	Completed
2 Nov	Summary of Stage 1 consultation on Themes 2 and 3 with the Navigation Committee	Completed
16 Nov – 14 Dec	Stage 2 consultation on IAS text and objectives section with all stakeholders	Completed
11 Jan 2024	Draft IAS document to Navigation Committee	This report
06 Mar	Draft IAS document to BLAF	
15 Mar	Final draft IAS to Broads Authority	

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Background papers: [Integrated Access Strategy \(2019\)](#); [Sustainable Tourism Strategy](#); [Biodiversity & Water Strategy](#)

[Broads Plan](#) strategic 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.