

Broads Angling Strategy Consultation
Report by Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer

Summary: This report provides members with details of the consultation draft of the Broads Angling Strategy which has recently been published for consultation purposes by the Environment Agency. The report also sets out the approach the Broads Authority adopts with regard to angling. Member's comments are sought on the draft strategy and the contents of the report.

1 Background

- 1.1 A consultation draft of a Broads Angling Strategy has recently been published by the Environment Agency (EA) (see separate enclosure). The document is effectively a revised and updated version of the original Broads Fisheries Action Plan (FAP) which was published in 2003.
- 1.2 Although essentially an EA led project, the aims and objectives of the FAP built on those of an existing local initiative entitled '*Towards an Angling Strategy for the Broads*' (1997). This document was jointly funded by the Broads Authority and EA and aimed to 'outline the nature of the Broads fishery resource and how it is used'. It also led to the formation of the Broads Angling Strategy Group (BASG) which represents a wide range of angling and conservation interests.
- 1.3 The FAP identified 12 key issues which had the potential to affect angling in the Broads and had a lengthy action plan setting out actions under each of the issues identified by the BASG. The FAP was due for review in 2010 and at that time the Broads Authority advised that the issues identified in the existing document were too wide ranging and that the action plan was possibly too ambitious. The BASG, which became a fully constituted body in 2012, agreed that the document should be comprehensively reviewed and rewritten to reflect the progress made on fisheries issues generally since the document was first published in 2003. Further the BASG suggested that the title of the document should be changed to the "Broads Angling Strategy".
- 1.4 Officers also recommended that the revised document should aim to identify synergies with other strategies and action plans such as the Broads Authority's Integrated Access Strategy in order to better identify opportunities and ensure best use of resources.

2 Draft Broads Angling Strategy

2.1 Accordingly the BASG gave consideration as to how the document could be redrafted to reflect current areas of concern and be written in a more succinct and focused manner.

2.2 A draft strategy (see separate enclosure to this report) has now been published by the EA. The strategy document focuses on three core themes under which the issues that the BASG considers are currently relevant have been grouped. These are:

- Access to angling in the Broads
- Communication and education
- Environments for fish

Under each theme the document has set out a range of objectives and actions that the BASG considers will “help partners to maintain, improve and develop angling in the Broads”.

2.3 The document emphasises that partnership working will be crucially important if “on the ground improvements” for angling in the Broads are to be delivered through the strategy and officers concur with this view. Cuts in public sector budgets across the board mean that effective collaboration and partnership working between agencies and local communities will be essential if projects are to be realised. This approach is in accordance with advice given in the Government’s Vision and Circular 2010 on English National Parks and the Broads which emphasises the need for partnership working to achieve strategic objectives, maximise benefits and minimise costs.

3 How the Strategy Relates to Navigation

3.1 The Access to Angling in the Broads theme of the draft strategy is of particular relevance to navigation. Generally under this theme the strategy seeks to advise and support the Authority in the development of its Integrated Access Strategy. The document also makes it clear that anglers feel their traditional rights of access have been eroded over time in favour of other interests in the Broads and consequently there is a need to ensure that there is a “fair balance of access to the Broads resource”. Also under objective A4 (maintain and improve slipway facilities for small boats) the document states that the strategy will identify gaps in slipway provision and liaise with and advise the Broads Authority on the delivery of its navigation function. Officers will seek clarification as to what these comments actually mean before formally commenting on the draft document.

4 Broads Authority Involvement in Angling

4.1 Under the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988, the Broads Authority has a duty to manage the Broads for the following three purposes, none of which takes precedence:

- (a) conserving and enhancing the natural beauty wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads;
 - (b) promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public; and
 - (c) protecting the interests of navigation.
- 4.2 Clearly angling is an important way in which the public can enjoy the Broads and local and visiting anglers certainly contribute significantly to the local economy. Anglers have the right to fish the tidal rivers and broads and approximately 65,645m of riverbank can be accessed by anglers either freely or if day tickets are purchased from the various angling clubs that lease banks from private landowners throughout the Broads. Further the majority of the 7,997m of river frontage which is managed by the Broads Authority as 24-hour moorings is available on the basis of anglers being welcome but having to make way for boats wishing to moor. The Broads Authority therefore accepts that the availability of bank access and boat launching facilities is essential for anglers to enjoy the Broads.
- 4.3 The importance of angling as a recreational activity in the Broads is also recognised in the Authority's Integrated Access strategy. Objective 1 of the strategy "To improve links between land and water and the water's edge" seeks to improve the provision of slipway access and access to the water's edge for the purposes of angling. However, angling is only one of the ways in which the public can enjoy the Broads and the Authority has to take account of the needs of a wide range of users in the delivery of its second purpose.
- 4.4. The Broads Authority has therefore taken the view that the EA is the lead public body for angling. Recognising that the EA receives all rod licence income from anglers the Authority has adopted a supportive role in the delivery of angling enhancements and access provision. The BA is proposing to continue to maintain this approach with regard to the angling enhancements identified in the Broads Angling Strategy. The Authority will therefore not lead on the delivery of specific angling enhancements in the Broads but, where possible and where funding is available, it will work angling enhancements into other projects it is delivering that meet the aims of its various strategies. This is in accordance with the integrated approach to access management that the Authority has recently adopted.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Broads Angling Strategy review is welcomed by officers as it presents an opportunity to reprioritise angling projects in the Broads and to maximise partnership working opportunities. Officers propose to comment in detail on the text of the document and to inform this process the views of the Navigation Committee on the text of the document and the contents of this report are sought.

Background papers:	None
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Broads Plan Objectives:	TR1
Enclosure:	APPENDIX 1 - Draft Broads Angling Strategy