

BFI Elected Members Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2022

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Present

Name	Authority
Eric Vardy – in the chair	Norfolk County Council
Harry Blathwayt	North Norfolk District Council
Matthew Bradbury	The Broads Authority
Paul Wells	Great Yarmouth Borough Council

In attendance

Marie Pierre Tighe- Broads Authority, Esmeralda Guds – Broads Authority (minutes), David Cobby – Jacobs, Nathan Harris – South Norfolk District Council/Broadland District Council, Sarah Luff – Norfolk Country Council, Charlotte Rivett - Norwich City Council, Giles Bloomfield – Internal Drainage Board, Peter Doktor – Environment Agency, Mark Johnson – Environment Agency, Gavin Rumsey – Environment Agency

1. Apologies for absence and welcome

Apologies received from Kay Mason Billig (South Norfolk), Richard Rout (Suffolk CC) and Rob Goodliffe (ES, GY, NNDC).

2. Review of EMF Terms of Reference

At the last September meeting it was agreed to review the Terms of Reference after six months. Some members of the forum, including the Chair, were new to the group and therefore didn't have the opportunity to review the terms. A member commented that although he had no issue with the Terms of Reference, he was unable to agree the terms until Great Yarmouth DC had discussed this further internally.

It was agreed to continue the meeting under the current terms pending Great Yarmouth's review of the terms at the next meeting.

3. Methodology for options appraisal

Members received a presentation by Peter Doktor (PD), offering an overview of the methodology for the identification and appraisal of strategic flood risk management actions. The presentation covered the uncertainties of climate change, the plan objectives, the six steps of the proposed methodology, the timescale for plan completion and the proposed input from Elected Members.

The Elected Members Forum was asked to consider and agree the proposed methodology and appraisal of potential flood risk management actions and were asked to agree on their level of input.

A member asked about officer's views on the relative importance of the objectives because from a Great Yarmouth perspective, protection of the build environment was a priority. PD responded that, for example, some objectives might have a legal obligation, such as those related to the internationally and nationally protected sites, and as such may be considered to be of a high priority. Marie-Pierre added that all the objectives seemed important and therefore prioritising them would be a delicate exercise to carry out.

A member commented that he would like the management actions to be identified at the earliest stage so the practicalities and possibility could be considered. PD confirmed that identification of the management actions, which included engagement with the wider public to capture their ideas, was a priority.

Mark Johnson suggested that the workshop scheduled for early 2023 is held face to face so the prioritising of the objectives could be discussed and considered in detail. He said that value judgements of the objectives were determined by what was technical feasible, environmentally acceptable and financially viable.

Giles Bloomfield commented that the challenges not only cover coastal areas, but also the changes in fluvial and rainfall events in the wider catchment of the Broads. This meant the plan was linked to strategies like Water Resources East, which looks at future water resources plans in our water stressed area. Giles stressed the importance of capturing shared issues and opportunities for partnership work, such as nutrient neutrality, where the BFI plan could contribute.

The Chair commented that the community this Forum serves should be reassured that, although saving property was important, threats to life was the number one priority.

The members agreed the proposed methodology for the identification and appraisal of potential strategic flood risk management actions.

and

Agreed to meet at the suggested frequency to review future key outputs, subject to frequencies being amended if circumstances demanded this, and the option to call additional meeting/workshop if required.

4. Update of engagement activities

Gavin Rumsey, Engagement Specialist for the Environment Agency, provided an update on engagement activities.

Past activities

- Virtual exhibition held last year about values and agreed objectives – the information was interactive and accessible to all members of the community and is available on the Environment Agency website.
- Several interviews - BBC Radio, Norfolk Breakfast Show, article in the Eastern Daily Press

- Postal leaflet drops
- 3 Virtual Village Hall Events
- Presentation to working groups, face to face and online

Activities in the last six months

- Presented to the Broads catchment partnership
- Contribution to the recent edition of the Broads Society Harnser Magazine
- BBC Voices Podcast interview via BBC Radio Norfolk
- Presented at the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance meeting held at County Hall
- Presented to the Upper Thurne Working group at Hickling Barn
- BFI Newsletter was published and circulated to stakeholders

Upcoming engagement activities

- Combination of online and face to face engagement activities in relation to long listing of the potential management actions, anticipated at the end of the year 2022
- Meeting with Upper Thurne Working Group, discussing a pilot workshop for the BFI in the Autumn
- Online presentation event to the Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association in the Autumn
- Next newsletter to be published end of August 2022
- Presentation to the Farming community

A member suggested to brief on BFI work the new chair of the Norfolk Association of Local Councils which represents parish and town councils. This was noted.

A member queried the level of engagement on social media and engagement with farmers. Gavin responded that engagement on social media was measured by posts being viewed on Facebook or Twitter. He commented that contact had been made with farmers through NFU, with representation from the NFU at the BFI officer meetings, as well as the East Branch of the NFU and the Stalham Farmers Club, and engagement with the younger generation through contacts with Easton College. A multi-pronged approach was taken to ensure reaching as many of the audience as possible.

In response to a question whether the BFI engages with the Internal Drainage Boards (IDB), Gavin confirmed that the BFI has presented to the IDB in the past and links in with the Internal Drainage Board via Giles Bloomfield who sits on the IPT.

5. Introduction to the Humber adaption tool

The forum received a presentation from David Cobby, about the Humber Adaptive Pathway Explorer and a brief demonstration of the Humber tool.

It was explained that the Environment Agency had created the Humber Explorer tool as a way of engaging with decision makers ahead of the actual delivery of the Humber strategy. Should there be an interest, the Humber tool could be reviewed in more details by the BFI members, online or in a face to face environment, with an emphasis on exploration rather than achieving the solution.

Members were asked whether they would like to take this proposal forward. It was agreed that after members had some time to reflect, the Chair would communicate their decision to David.

6. Future meetings

The members agreed the proposed frequency of meetings set out in agenda item 3. Therefore, it was agreed that further BFI EMF meetings are diarised in the next 12 months, one being face to face in the first half of 2023 to discuss the prioritisation of BFI objectives. It was noted that the dates for the meetings should consider the May District elections.

A further meeting might be added to the diary after the Chair had discussed the need for a workshop about the use of the Humber tool.

7. Any other business

No matters of any other business were raised.

8. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed