



Innovative Water Management for Peatlands in the Broads: Protecting peat, enhancing biodiversity and capturing carbon

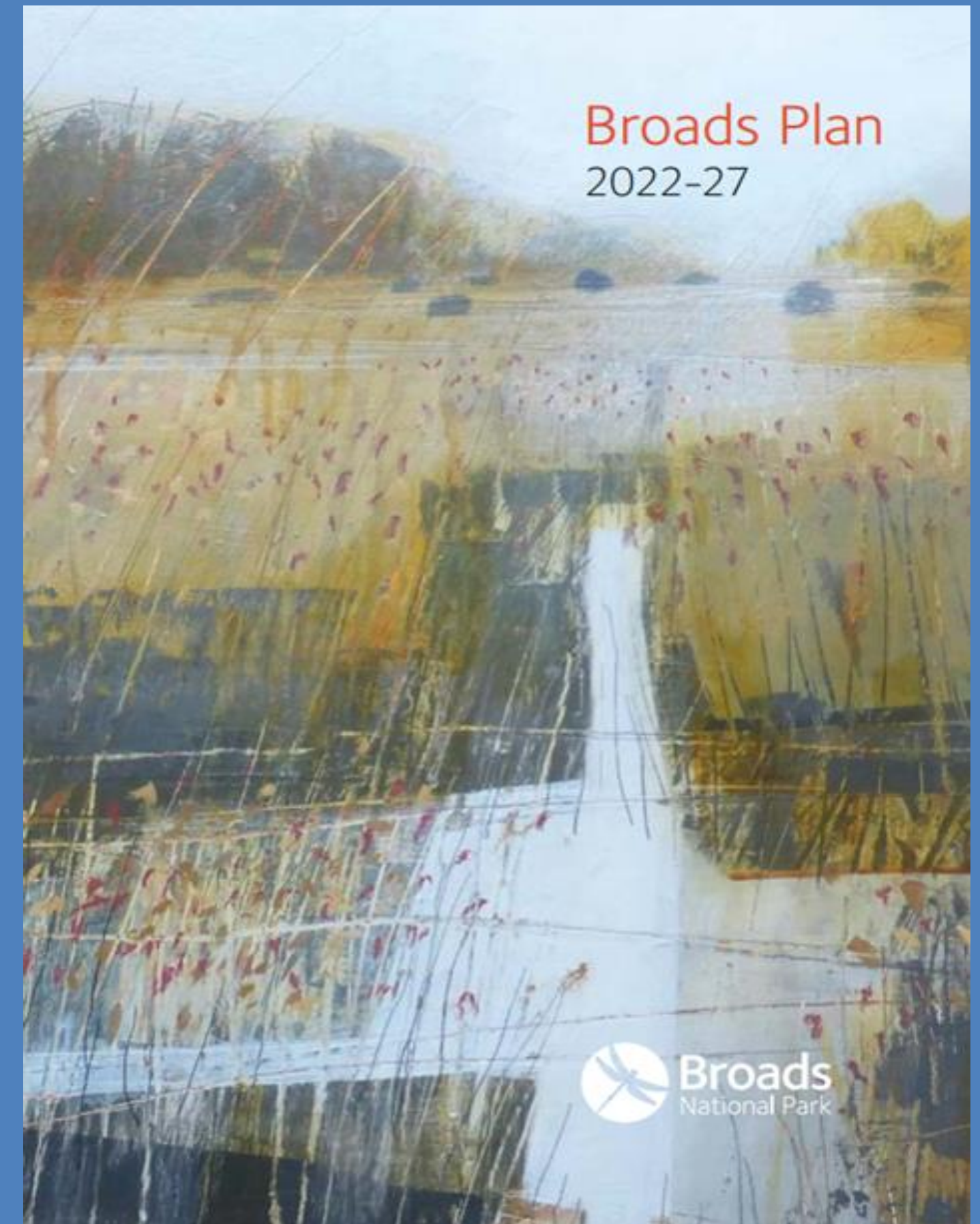
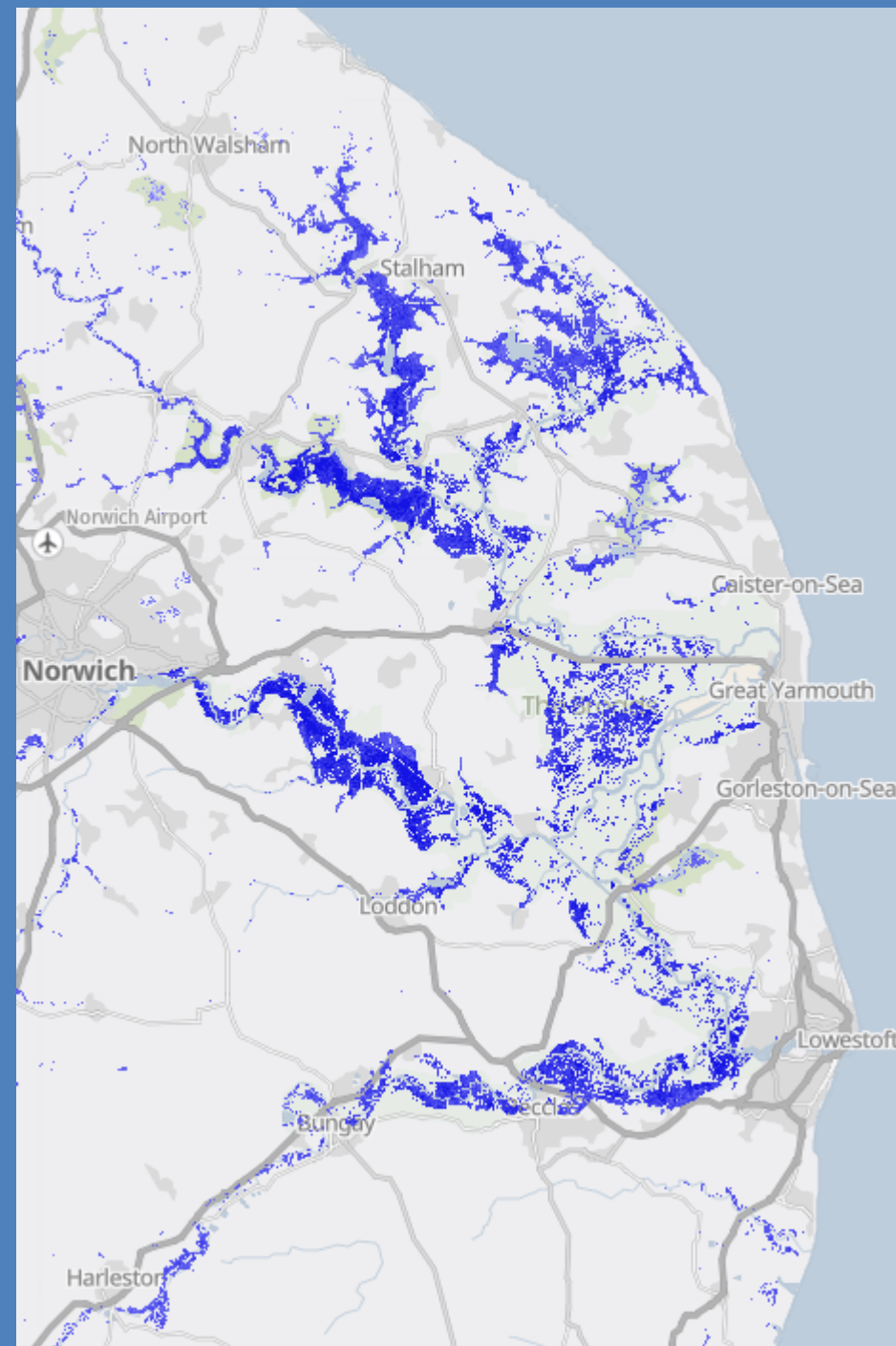
Broads Authority | Cranfield University | Norfolk FWAG | NEFF

Broads Plan

Priorities

- Climate
- Nature

Map: England Peat Soils Map



Lowland Agricultural Peat Road Map

- Government want paludiculture to take its place in our matrix of opportunities to farm more sustainably on lowland peat
- Recommendation 14 of the LAP Task Force report

Paludiculture is farming on rewetted peat



Lowland Agricultural Peat Task Force
Chair's Report



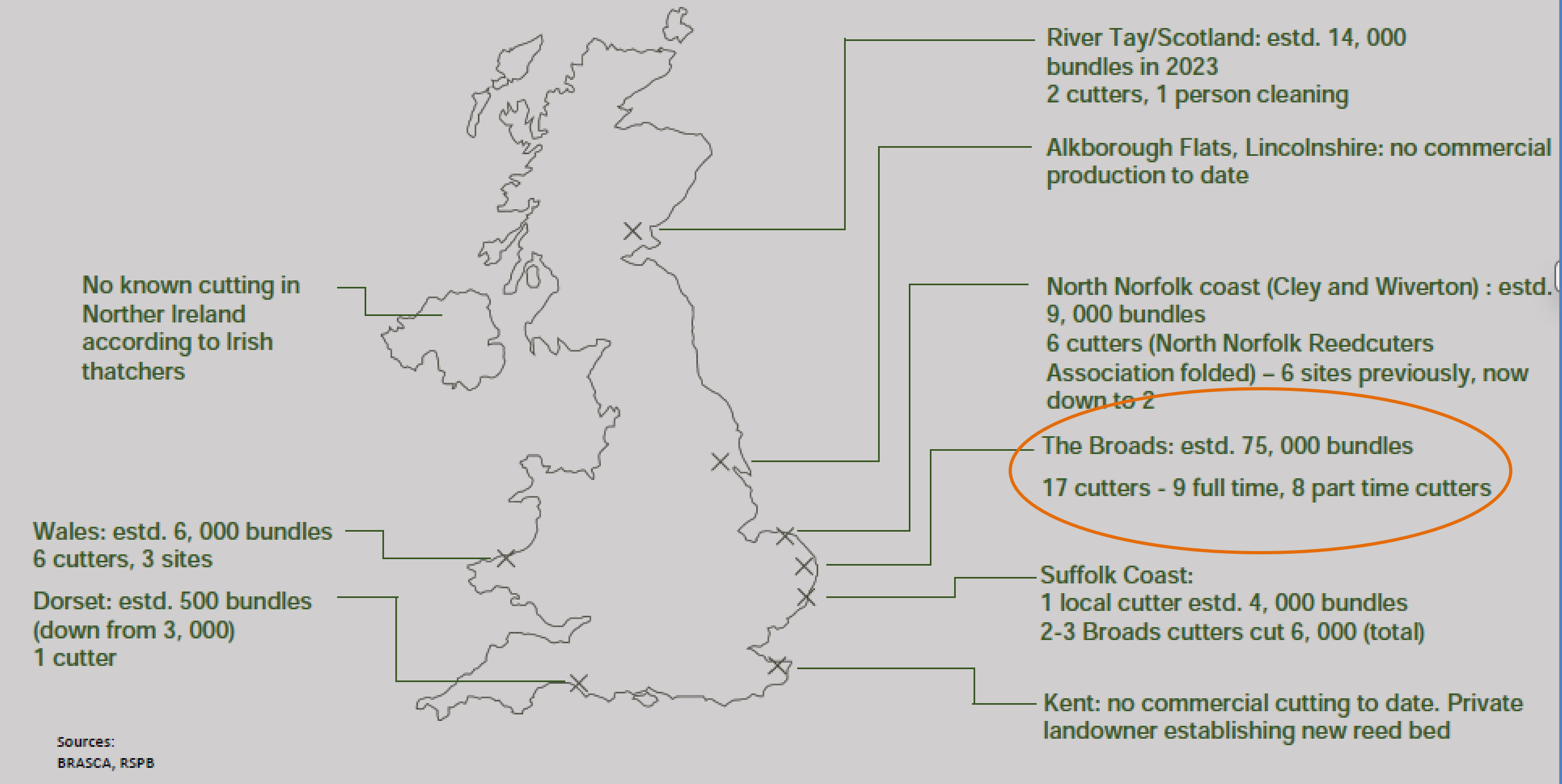
Why Reeds

- **Climate & Carbon:** Store carbon and reduce peat emissions
- **Water:** Slow flows, cut flood risk, improve water quality
- **Nature & Landscape:** Vital habitat; protect the Broads' character
- **Economy:** Local, renewable material supporting green jobs
- **Resilience:** Adapt to wetter conditions and sea-level rise



Reed for thatch UK

Actively cut reedbeds- England, Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland



Reed & Sedge supply challenges

- **Limited supply:** Controlled by landowners; high machinery costs
- **Skills & viability:** Strong heritage value, but cutters lack access to land, grants, and training
- **Climate risk:** Harvesting windows increasingly weather-dependent



Reed Production

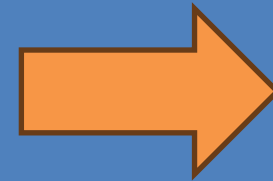
Current Production

3%

UK production

65%

Produced in the
Broads



Ambition

100%
5000 ha

To supply UK
thatching needs



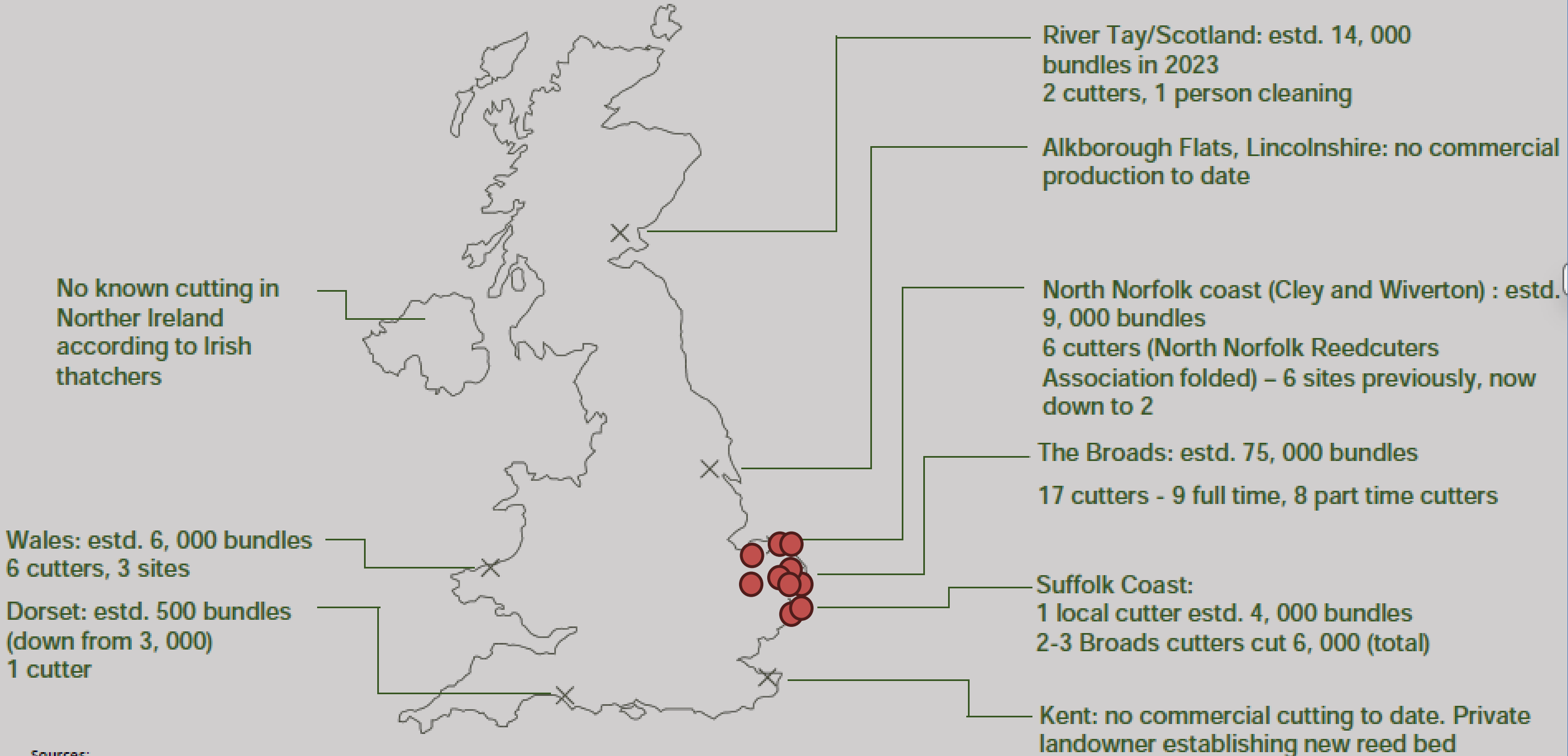
Reed Supply: Key Insights

- Reedbeds grow well, thatching quality reed is possible
- Requires 200ha of reed to sustain a commercial venture
- Water supply in early summer is most important for the crop



Assessing potential for expansion

Actively cut reedbeds- England, Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland



15 assessments in 2025/26

Sources: BRASCA, RSPB

Map: Hannah Millet 2023



Reed and Miscanthus Panels

- Non-thatching quality reed
- Structural + acoustic applications



Granules



Acoustic Panels



Reed cleanings

*ESG Natural
Capital and
Woolly Shepherd*

Broads Authority



Next steps

- Training schemes for new entrants
- More agreements with landowners
- Secure storage barns for reed
- Sites managed to facilitate good reed growth
- Co-location of harvesting, drying, storage and panel production
- Understanding of economics (gross revenue - £4,750/ha) – economic model (BA, ADAS)



Landscape Connections

Skills training, Nature Recovery

FiPL extension 2026-29

Farm investments, machinery – enhancing the Protected Landscape

Paludiculture Fund

Agronomy trials, machinery, technology, processing hubs, farm system adaptation

Lowlands Water Programme

Peatland Restoration and Water Management



£85M Peat Funding

2026-2030

Find out more: **Broads Peat Partnership** andrea.kelly@broads-authority.gov.uk

