

**Review of Consultative Arrangements and Community/Stakeholder
Engagement: Broads Forum Revised Terms of Reference (Draft)
and Parish Forum Proposal (Draft)**

Report by Director of Planning and Strategy

Summary: This report is part of the progress being made to date on the review of consultative arrangements and community/stakeholder engagement.

Forum Members are asked to consider a Revised Terms of Reference (draft) which follows on from the consideration given to improving the effectiveness of the Broads Forum at its previous meeting of 22 November 2012.

In addition the views of Forum Members are requested on the Parish Forum proposal which has been drawn up in response to comments made during the review on potential improvements to the Broads Authority's community engagement methods.

1 Revised Terms of Reference (Draft)

- 1.1 Broads Forum Members will recall that at the last meeting on 22 November 2012, consideration was given to options for improving the effectiveness of the Forum itself and to improving communication between Forum Members and the nominating Groups. Following Forum Members' consideration of that report a Revised Terms of Reference (draft) has been drawn up for Forum Members to consider. This is attached at Appendix A of this report. The suggested changes are shown as "tracked changes" to the original terms of reference approved in 2008. It is hoped that the revised Terms of Reference capture the spirit of comments made at the last meeting by Forum Members. The views of Forum Members are therefore requested.
- 1.2 Members' views are also requested on whether the current categories of interest groups and number of representative members within each interest group provide a good balance. It is also suggested that the nominating groups be invited to review their member representative(s) and named substitutes immediately following the Forum meeting to allow the list of member representatives and named substitutes to be confirmed for the next three years in advance of the following meeting when the Forum will elect their Chair/Vice Chair. Member guidance as to whether there should be any sub grouping within the interest groups when determining this member representation would also be appreciated.

2 Parish Forum Proposal (Draft)

- 2.1 As a direct response to comments received during the review about how the Broads Authority can improve its engagement with local communities, a number of options are being explored. One of these is a suggestion to establish Parish Forums and a draft proposal detailing how these could be implemented is attached as Appendix B to this report. This proposal is still evolving and the views of Forum Members are welcomed.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 The Review is due to be completed shortly and a final report will be presented to Broads Authority members in March. At the same time the Authority members will consider a revised Terms of Reference for the Broads Forum (subject to the views of Forum Members today). The final report will also include proposals for improvement to community engagement including Parish Forum and the views expressed by Forum Members today will be fed into that process.

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Broads Plan Objectives: Nil

Appendices: APPENDIX A – Revised Terms of Reference for Broads Forum (draft)
APPENDIX B – Parish Forum Proposal (draft)

Broads Forum

1 Terms of Reference

1.1 To act as a reference group to offer advice and comment on the Broads Authority's strategic aims and objectives and other key issues as they arise, including the Broads Plan, Broads Local Plan/Local Development Framework and Business Plan.

~~To provide a consultative forum to facilitate two-way communication between the Authority and other bodies and organisations which have an interest in the Broads and its wider catchment area.~~

1.2 To provide a consultative forum for discussion on all issues related to the management of the conservation, navigational, recreational, cultural and built heritage and planning policy issues related to both land and water based activities within the Broads and its wider catchment area.

1.3 To promote two-way communication and closer liaison and understanding between the Authority and the various ~~interest~~ bodies and organisations which have an interest in the Broads and its wider catchment area.

1.54 To have regard, when providing advice and comment, ~~the Forum shall have regard~~ to the general duty of the Authority to manage the Broads for the purposes of:

- (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.

1.65 ~~In providing such advice and comment the~~The Forum shall also~~To~~ bear in mind the Authority's requirement to have regard to:

- (a) the national importance of the Broads as an area of natural beauty and one which affords opportunities for open-air recreation;
- (b) the desirability of protecting the natural resources of the Broads from damage; and
- (c) the needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interest of those who live or work in the Broads.

2 Principles

2.1 The role of the Forum will be advisory only.

2.12 The Forum will consider strategic/significant issues only. ~~It and~~ will not be asked to consider detailed operational matters (such as individual planning applications), except where they may have significant strategic or policy importance.

2.23 Members of the Forum may propose items for discussion at future meetings. Nominating groups may also propose items for discussion through the Forum Members. Matters to be discussed at the next meeting will be identified either during the previous meeting or through consultation with the Chairman. In the latter case, a minimum of four weeks' notice should be given if the matter is likely to require the Authority to provide a report with background information.

2.34 The Forum will be a truly consultative body and its advice and views will be sought in advance of matters being considered by the Authority. As such, it-It will not be used merely as a rubber stamping exercise or to endorse decisions already taken.

2.45 Meetings of the Forum will be open to the public. Members of the public may ask pose a question for the Forum to debate or make a statement about any matter on the agenda by prior agreement with the Chairman. Such questions or statements should be submitted to the Chairman for consideration at least five working days before the meeting, to allow any agreed question or statement to be circulated to sufficient time for consideration by members in advance of the meeting. to allow them time to consider the question/statement.

2.56 The Forum will be accountable directly to the Broads Authority and a record of its proceedings will be received by the Authority. In addition, the advice or comments of the Forum will be reported to and taken into account by the appropriate committee(s) of the Authority in the decision making process. The Chair or Vice Chair will be invited to attend meetings of the Broads Authority to present the record of the Forum's proceedings.

2.7 The Forum will meet quarterly as part of the Authority's regular cycle of committee meetings, and on other occasions as may be required.

~~2.8 The role of the Forum will be advisory only.~~

3 Membership

3.1 The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from within the membership of the Forum. They will be persons an independent person appointed by the Broads Authority who ~~is~~ are able to command the respect of the ~~conservation,~~

~~navigation and recreational interest groups in the Broads area~~Forum Members and the nominating groups.

- 3.2 The Chair ~~and Vice Chair~~ will be appointed for a term of ~~three~~one years.
There will be no limit on the number of re-elections.
- 3.3 The balance of the membership will fairly and equitably reflect all the different stakeholder interests in the delivery of the Broads Plan~~, the three duties of the Authority as set out in paragraph 1.5 above.~~
- ~~3.4~~ The membership will fairly and equitably reflect the various interest groups on the Broads which do not have direct representation on the Broads Authority itself, and will give due weight to those interest groups with large membership.
- ~~3.45~~ Persons who are already members of the Broads Authority will not be eligible for membership of the Forum.
- ~~3.56~~ The membership will be of sufficient size to ensure that all the various interest groups are adequately represented and there is sufficient experience and knowledge of the various issues which relate to the management of the Broads, but will not be so large as to become unwieldy.
- ~~3.67~~ The bodies and organisations represented on the Forum (the 'nominating groups') will be grouped by category of interest (e.g. boating, cultural heritage, education). ~~The Forum will comprise member~~ The Forum will comprise member representatives of these various categories. ~~categories of interest groups which have an interest in the Broads and the work of the Broads Authority.~~
- ~~3.78~~ The member representatives will be appointed to the Forum by the nominating groups within each category of interest~~themselves~~. Where the groups are unable or unwilling to decide upon a person to represent them, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Forum and the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Broads Authority for determination. Nominating groups/organisations will be entitled to appoint named substitutes to attend meetings in the event that their member representative is unable to attend.
- ~~3.1089~~ Each nominating group will be invited to select a correspondent with whom their member representative will liaise to report Forum business and to represent the group's views at Forum meetings.
- ~~3.940~~ The nominating groups will be invited to review their member representative every three years, and in so doing ~~will be invited~~ to consider the member's attendance record and the extent to which he/she has liaised with and reported back to the organisations ~~groups~~ which he/she represents. If a nominating ~~group~~ is not represented by their~~its~~ member representative or named substitutes at three consecutive meetings, the matter will be referred by the Chair of the Forum to the nominating group to review their member representative/named substitutes.

- 3.104 The Chair of the Forum and Chairman of the Broads Authority may delete organisations from the lists of [interest nominating](#) groups where they cease to exist, and add successor and new organisations where it is appropriate to do so. However any wide-ranging review of the membership [or categories of interest or list of nominating organisations](#) must be reported to and agreed by the Broads Authority.
- 3.112 The Chairman ~~and~~ Vice-Chairman [and members](#) of the Authority may attend meetings of the Forum, ~~but in a non-voting capacity~~.
- 3.123 The Chief Executive, together with other officers of the Authority as appropriate, will if available attend meetings of the Forum to present reports and answer questions.
- 3.134 The Forum may, in respect of any particular matter or more generally, invite other persons or representatives of other organisations to attend meetings of the Forum and participate in discussions, but not to vote.

4 Amendments

- 4.1 Any amendments to the Terms of Reference, Principles and Membership of the Forum, (other than [the replacement of member representatives/named substitutes, as set out in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.9, or changes to individual changes to the lists of nominating groups as set out in paragraph 3.11 groups within a category of interest](#)), must be agreed by the Broads Authority following consultation with the Chair of the Forum and the Forum itself.

Community Engagement Options – Parish Forum Proposal

1. Broads Forum members will be aware that the Broads Authority has been considering the effectiveness of its community engagement mechanisms. The issue of strengthening community engagement and the Authority's presence in the community has been a key issue, highlighted through the work undertaken on the consultative review to date.
2. There appears to be widespread support for the idea of community or parish forums. The Authority has run some parish planning forum events in recent years, which have been well received and well attended by local communities. It has been suggested that this format be used, broadened to include all aspects of the Authority's work.
3. From the review feedback, a revised proposal for regular parish forums has been considered taking account of the following key drivers:
 - making them worthwhile, relevant and interesting to the community;
 - enabling wider Broads Authority (BA) member participation;
 - maximising accessibility.
4. Taking this into consideration, together with the feedback from the parish surveys, previous Broads Forum meetings, workshop staff interviews and research on best practice, the following suggestions for Parish Forums are proposed:

Format

- Four Parish Forums to be set up, with parishes grouped on a valley basis (to mirror the BA ranger team areas as far as possible)
- Each Forum to meet twice a year; in addition, a joint site visit to be arranged in the summer for all forums to somewhere of "Broads-wide" significance – this could be linked to the Annual Meeting
- Each Forum to be chaired by a local person (potentially a parish councillor); chair to be elected annually
- A member of BA Management Team or Management Forum to act as convener for each Parish Forum grouping
- All parish councils to be invited to Forum meetings, with members of the public or other local interest groups also welcome to attend
- Meetings to include opportunities for public question and answer sessions
- Meetings to be held in the evening in the Forum area at appropriate venues
- Meetings to consist of a mix of presentations, questions, and items of general interest to communities, e.g. broadband, funding opportunities,

- local projects, ranger plans, etc. Presentations, displays, etc from other partners encouraged
- Meetings to be publicised beforehand, including directly to parish councils and on BA website
 - Draft agendas to be published at least two weeks in advance of meetings, and final agendas to be published a week in advance of meetings
 - Formal minutes to be taken and published

Broads Authority Input

- BA members (Local Authority and Secretary of State Appointees) to be “assigned” to each Parish Forum area with a remit to get to know and champion the communities of that area
- BA Chairman and Vice Chairman to have a “roving role”
- Each Forum to have an identified BA convener (member of BA Management Team or Management Forum) who liaises with the Chairman of the Forum and oversees the organisation of the event and the agenda
- Each Forum to have its own web page/part of the BA website
- BA to publicise meetings/agendas widely
- BA officer attendance to depend upon the agenda, but would normally be the Convener, the area Ranger, a Management Team representative, and communications and strategy input as a minimum