

# Broads Authority

28 July 2023

Agenda item number 11

## Strategic priorities update for 2023/24 and draft strategic priorities for 2024/25

Report by Senior Governance Officer

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### Purpose

This report sets out the latest progress in implementing the Authority's annual strategic priorities for 2023/24 and starts the process for considering next year's priorities.

### Broads Plan context

The Broads Plan is a key part of the Authority's strategic framework.

### Recommended decision

- i. To note the progress in implementing this year's strategic priorities; and
  - ii. To consider the draft strategic priorities for 2024/25.
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Each year the Broads Authority identifies a small set of strategic priorities, which focus on projects that have high resource needs or a very large impact on the Broads, or that are politically sensitive. Setting these priorities helps target the Authority's resources and make the most of partnership working and external funding opportunities. Priorities are set each financial year, although some large-scale projects carry across several years.
- 1.2. In addition, Defra has introduced a new requirement for National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority to provide quarterly updates on deliverables against the Business Plan, as part of its grant funding agreement. These update reports on our strategic priorities are used by officers to comply with that requirement.
- 1.3. The latest update on the agreed strategic priorities for 2023/24 is in Table 1 below.

### Table 1

Strategic priorities 2023/24 – progress update

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p><b>1. Climate Change crisis response</b></p> <p>Aim: To implement the next steps of the various projects tackling climate change related issues, including the actions in the Authority’s Climate Change Action Plan.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Publish at least two editions of the Broadland Futures Initiative BFI newsletter, by March 2024.</li> <li>(ii) Hold at least two meetings of the BFI Elected Members Forum, by March 2024.</li> <li>(iii) Various technical deliverables from BFI consultant including the new hydraulic model, throughout 2023/24.</li> <li>(iv) Work with partners to secure funding and implement Phase II of the “Electrifying the Broads” project, by March 2024.</li> <li>(v) Deliver the actions set out in the Authority’s Climate Change Action Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Status: <b>on track</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the <a href="#">newsletter</a> published in June 2023.</li> <li>(ii) Meeting of the Elected Members Forum held on 10 July 2023, with a workshop to discuss the prioritisation of BFI objectives.</li> <li>(iii) On track.</li> <li>(iv) We have had discussions with the Canal &amp; Rivers Trust and Environment Agency to see what joint work can be done on boating electrification. Round 4 of the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition is expected to open in July 2023, we will reach out to partners to determine if we can submit a bid.</li> <li>(v) We are drafting a tender for the installation of solar panels at the Dockyard. We have launched a consultation with Visit The Broads members to identify opportunities to use funding from the Norfolk Investment Framework to support sustainable tourism.</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Strategic Services</p>
<p><b>2. Biodiversity crisis response</b></p> <p>Aim: Co-ordinate and implement with partners the development of strategies and projects, including the legacy of the peat project.</p>	<p>Status: <b>on track</b></p>	<p>Environment Policy Adviser</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>Milestones:</p> <p>(i) Endorsement of Norfolk &amp; Suffolk Nature Recovery Strategies – timings to be confirmed subject to further details expected from government.</p> <p>(ii) To implement the next steps of the Nature for Climate Peat restoration project within agreed budget and timeline, and review lessons learnt by June 2023.</p> <p>(iii) Complete site selection for potential restoration, and support the submission of Restoration Grant Application, if appropriate, by 26 May 2023.</p>	<p>(i) Meeting of the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership held on 16 May 2023, discussing roles and LNRS governance, with the Broads Authority as a “Supporting Authority”. LNRS to be published August 2024.</p> <p>(ii) NE approved the Broads Peat project extension to 31 August 2023; the project budget was revised to £1,125,831.</p> <p>Broads Peat project lessons learnt report completed as part of the annual report to NE.</p> <p>Awarded ~£400k from the Paludiculture Exploration Fund to deliver ‘FibreBroads’ led by Broads Authority, with Norfolk FWAG, Norfolk County Council, NUA, Wetland Products Foundation and Hudson Architects, with support from EA, Broads IDB, Fenland Soil.</p> <p>Lowland Agricultural Peatland Task Force Report launched by ministers on 29 June 2023, co-written by the EPA, with 14 recommendations for action.</p> <p>(iii) A restoration bid has been submitted for Buttle Marsh.</p>	
<p><b>3. Navigation IT</b></p> <p>Aim: To replace current tolls system and provide improved online functionality.</p> <p>Milestones:</p>	<p>Status: <b>delayed</b></p> <p>(i) Further to meeting with Management Team on 2 May to</p>	<p>Head of ICT/Collector of Tolls</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Develop timetable and specification by May 2023</li> <li>(ii) Progress workplan for 2023/24 as per agreed timeline.</li> </ul>	<p>report on discussions with other waterways, Navigation Committee were consulted re specific functionality on 8 June.</p> <p>There are ongoing discussions with a developer re the feasibility of updating our current internal system to run on the latest, cloud hosted, software platform.</p> <p>With the scope of the project almost complete, the full specification and tender preparation are scheduled for completion by March 2024.</p> <p>(ii) Ongoing</p>	
<p><b>4. Water Mills and Marshes</b></p> <p>Aim: Co-ordinate and implement with partners the WMM programme to latest agreed schedule and budget.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Monitor and report progress (July &amp; Dec 2023).</li> <li>(ii) Submit quarterly claims to National Lottery Heritage Fund (April/Jul/Oct/Jan).</li> <li>(iii) Complete individual project plans with project partners (June)</li> <li>(iv) Complete final project evaluations with external scheme evaluators (September)</li> <li>(v) Hold project legacy partner conference (November)</li> </ul>	<p>Status: <b>on track</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) All projects progressing well to adjusted plans</li> <li>(ii) Quarterly returns submitted on time and paid by NLHF.</li> <li>(iii) Most external partner projects now completed with individual project evaluations being conducted and submitted.</li> <li>(iv) External scheme evaluators have completed the final telephone interviews with project partners and participants. We are expecting the first draft of their report in August.</li> <li>(v) Planning for the Landscape Partnership legacy conference is</li> </ul>	<p>Broads Landscape Partnership Programme Manager</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
(vi) Prepare final project report	<p>ongoing. Conference will highlight the works accomplished since 2018 and look at planned legacy works and opportunities derived from the scheme.</p> <p>(vi) Evidence for the final scheme report is being gathered and collated.</p> <p>Work is nearing completion at Mutton’s Mill. The millwright is now lifting the new stocks and sails back into place on the mill.</p> <p>Repair work has begun at the drainage structure at the pumphouse at Strumpshaw Fen. This is due to be completed by the end of the summer.</p> <p>We are eagerly anticipating the arrival of Tom Williamson’s new book on history of the Broads, which is the final output from our work on the Broads Hidden Heritage Project.</p> <p>Our exhibition on the history of drainage windmills in the Broads in the museum of the Broads in Stalham is currently open to the public for its second season. It will remain open through October 2023.</p>	
<p><b>5. Local Plan for the Broads</b></p> <p>Aim: To review the Local Plan for the Broads for adoption in 2024 (estimated).</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <p>(i) Preparation of the Preferred Options version of Local Plan (with HRA and SA) consultation – towards consultation in autumn 2023.</p>	<p>Status: <b>on track</b></p> <p>(i) Policies are being drafted and taken to Planning Committee each month. Sites put forward for consideration are being assessed.</p> <p>(ii) On track.</p>	<p>Planning Policy Officer</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
(ii) Preparation of the Publication version of the Local Plan throughout 2024.		
<p><b>6. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)</b></p> <p>Aim: To run the FiPL programme and allocate Broads grants to farmers and landowners, and support the Broads and Norfolk Coast Land Management Board to allocate their funding.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Hold six Land Management Board meetings, by March 2024.</li> <li>(ii) Allocate all grant funding to projects, by December 2023.</li> <li>(iii) Engagement activities to showcase case studies funded through FiPL, by March 2024.</li> </ul>	<p>Status: <b>on track</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Held Land Management Board meeting on 5 June 2023. Six projects were approved by the Board in the Broads. In total there are 16 projects that have been approved so far this programme year.</li> <li>(ii) Defra have confirmed an increase in the programme budget, meaning that the grant pot for the programme is now £275,986.64. So far £158,841.78 has been allocated to grants.</li> <li>(iii) New staff member is joining as a full time Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer in August, to help with communication and delivery of the programme.</li> </ul>	<p>Catchment &amp; Farming Officer</p>
<p><b>7. Budget pressures</b></p> <p>Aim: To operate at a level in line with expected income.</p> <p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Use January budget report for 2023/24 and the three-year horizon to continue discussions</li> </ul>	<p>Status: <b>on track</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Work to start over the summer period on the 2023/24 budget.</li> <li>(ii) The Philanthropy Company has been appointed on behalf of the</li> </ul>	<p>Chief Executive &amp; Director of Finance</p>

Themes, aims and milestones	Progress	Lead officer
<p>with Defra officials on future funding levels.</p> <p>(ii) Further savings and additional income (including from external funding) for 2024/25 Budget (January 2024)</p>	<p>English National Parks and DEFRA to look at income generation opportunities.</p> <p>Draft second phase report received 10 July 2023, meeting to discuss scheduled for 14 July 2023.</p>	

## 2. Setting strategic priorities for 2024/25

- 2.1. The role of strategic priorities in our strategic “golden thread” is set out in appendix 1. The strategic priorities for 2024/25 will feed into the 2024/25 budget setting process.
- 2.2. The Management Team’s initial draft ideas for next year’s strategic priorities are listed below, as a starting point for members’ consideration:
  - Responding to climate change (Broadland Futures Initiative)
  - Biodiversity crisis response
  - Local Plan for the Broads
  - Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)
  - Tolls system replacement
- 2.3. It is important to remember that much of the Authority’s resources is already committed into the future: in providing statutory services such as navigation safety and tolls, planning, and undertaking essential works such as maintenance of the waterways.
- 2.4. Members’ views are welcome on the suggested priorities.
- 2.5. As part of the strategic priorities update report to the Authority in December, the agreed priorities for 2024/25 will be presented, together with expected milestones for reporting progress, wef April 2024.

## 3. Financial Risks

- 3.1. If the Authority fails to comply with any of its obligations in the Grant Funding Agreement, DEFRA may, at its discretion, reduce, suspend or terminate payments of grant, or require any part or all of the grant to be repaid.
- 3.2. Over-committing to additional work or priorities will have an adverse impact on the budget (see para. 2.3 above).

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: All

Appendix 1 – “Golden thread” strategic framework



# Appendix 1 – ‘Golden thread’ strategic framework

**Fig. 1**

‘Golden thread’ strategic framework

