

Planning Committee

13 February 2026

Agenda item number 7.2

BA/2025/0370/FUL Approach To Carpark Off Fen Lane, Beccles

Report by Assistant Planning Officer

Proposal

Installation of 3 cycle charging boxes

Applicant

Beccles Town Council

Recommendation

Approve Subject to conditions

Reason for referral to committee

Broads Authority involvement

Application target date

16.02.2026

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1. Description of site and proposals

- 1.1. The application has been submitted by the Town Council. The site lies at The Quay car park, in Beccles, east of the River Waveney. The Quay forms part of the established riverside area at the northern edge of the town, characterised by a mix of recreational, leisure and mooring-related uses, including private moorings, boat hire facilities, and riverside parking.
- 1.2. The immediate surroundings include a surfaced car park and footpath providing direct access to the river and quay, with associated café facilities located to the west. To the north, the site is surrounded by marshland with the River Waveney providing open views across to the Suffolk countryside and floodplain. The area has regular visitor activity, particularly during the summer months, and serves as a key gateway to the Broads network for both private and hire craft.
- 1.3. The car park is largely level and surfaced in gravel, with the proposals relating to a small, grassed area at the entrance to the car park.
- 1.4. Access to the car park is by Fen Lane, a small bridge over a dyke and then into the gravelled car park. North of the car park is the A146, which is a busy road, providing access to the town of Beccles. To the east of the site are further marshes, and the Morrisons supermarket off George Westwood Way which runs to the south.
- 1.5. The site lies within Flood Zone 3, as defined by the Environment Agency’s flood mapping, and is also adjacent to the Beccles Conservation Area.

2. Site history

- 2.1. No relevant history for this site.

3. Consultations received

Environment Agency

- 3.1. No objection.

BA Landscape

- 3.2. The car park is close to the industrial/commercial area, and benefits from some natural screening from trees and surrounding vegetation. The colour of the proposed structure will mean its appearance is not overbearing. The proposals would result in the loss of a small area of grassland, and my preference would be for the structure to be placed closer to the Beccles signboard, as grouping these features could reduce the sense of landscape clutter. However, there might be a practical reason why this is not possible, and overall, I do not have an objection.

BA Historic Environment Manager

- 3.3. The proposed location is to the north-east of the Beccles Conservation Area and given the scale of the development and the distance between the two it is unlikely that there will be any impact on the conservation area. The design of the units has been slightly simplified, and this is considered to be an improvement. It is considered that this is an appropriate location, being located in proximity to a number of other small-scale structures and in a transitional area between the town and the marshland beyond. It is in relatively close proximity to a commercial area which is also less sensitive in townscape and landscape terms. The preference for the material for the units would have been timber but due to the requirement for them to be theft and fire proof, it is understood that this is not possible. It is considered the graphite-coloured recycled plastic is an acceptable compromise in this instance. I therefore have no objection to the proposal.

Cllr Sarah Plummer

- 3.4. This application can be determined by the Head of Planning (delegated decision). This is a project being undertaken by Beccles Town Council/Fenland Charitable Trust and I fully support it.

4. Representations

- 4.1. Broads Society - The Broads Society fully supports this application for 3 cycle recharging boxes which will provide sustainable tourism opportunities for both visitors and locals in the Southern Broads area.

5. Policies

- 5.1. The adopted development plan policies for the area are set out in the [Local Plan for the Broads](#) (adopted 2019).
- 5.2. The following policies were used in the determination of the application:
- DM11 – Heritage Assets
 - DM15 – Renewable Energy
 - DM16 – Development & Landscape
 - DM21 – Amenity

- DM29 – Sustainable tourism and recreation development
- DM43 – Design
- SP5 – Historic Environment

6. Assessment

- 6.1. The main issues to be considered include the principle of the development, the impacts on neighbouring amenity, the landscape and the design of the proposed development. This report will also include an assessment of the potential tourism and recreation improvements, along with the renewable energy benefits.

Principle of development

- 6.2. The installation of electric bike charging pods aligns with the Broads Authority's commitment to promoting sustainable transport options and reducing carbon emissions in the region. Given the increase in the use of electric cycles, particularly on rural routes within the Broads, the provision of these charging facilities supports an evolving industry that encourages environmentally friendly travel alternatives.
- 6.3. The Local Plan places an emphasis on enhancing sustainable infrastructure that minimises ecological impact while promoting tourism and accessibility within the area. The charging pods would enable cyclists to extend their journeys, thereby increasing accessibility to the Broads' natural and cultural attractions, without reliance on motor vehicles. This provision aligns with the Authority's sustainability objectives by reducing fossil fuel dependency and supporting eco-tourism initiatives.
- 6.4. Furthermore, the installation of electric bike charging pods is consistent with national policies set out in the NPPF (chapter 14) that encourage alternative modes of transportation, particularly those that are low in environmental impact. By enabling longer journeys, these facilities contribute to the region's sustainable tourism objectives and provide additional utility for both residents and visitors. The principle of this development is therefore considered acceptable

Impact on the landscape

- 6.5. The proposed pods are small in scale, appropriately sited on a small grass area, adjacent to the existing car park, containing uses associated with travel in one place. This layout effectively conserves the local landscape, as the pods are positioned to minimise visibility from surrounding areas, preserving the traditional, open character of the Broads landscape. Additionally, the car park is a public space where traffic and cyclists moving are a common sight. Therefore, it is considered that the application is acceptable in terms of Policy DM16 – Development and Landscape.

Amenity of residential properties

- 6.6. Policy DM21 requires that all new development must ensure a satisfactory level of amenity for occupiers and users. In this case, the proposed pods are situated within the car park setting, screened by shrubs and several large trees. While the pods will be

visible from the road and the public car park, they are not of a height to have a significant visual impact. The proximity of Fen Lane and adjacent footpaths ensures safe, convenient access to the pods. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy DM21 – Amenity.

Design

- 6.7. Policies DM43, SP5 and DM11 of the Broads Local Plan collectively require that all development achieves a high standard of design which integrates effectively with its surroundings, reinforces local distinctiveness and landscape character, and preserves or enhances the historic environment.
- 6.8. The electric cycle charging pods are functional units with a contemporary appearance. Their design has been developed to balance practicality, safety, and visual appearance.
- 6.9. In terms of materials, the pods will be finished in a black mock timber plastic cladding. While not a natural timber product, this material has previously been accepted by the Authority on other similar schemes across the Broads and is now considered an appropriate and established finish for this type of infrastructure. The colour and texture provide a muted, recessive appearance that works well within natural and visitor environments, while offering significantly improved fire resistance and durability over genuine timber.
- 6.10. The proposed materials and design therefore represent a practical and contextually suitable solution, ensuring safety without detracting from the character of the area or the setting of nearby heritage assets. The development will read as a small-scale addition within the existing site context and will not result in harm to the appearance of the area or the special qualities of the Broads.
- 6.11. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with Policies DM43 (Design), SP5 (Historic Environment) and DM11 (Heritage Assets) of the Broads Local Plan.

Renewable Energy

- 6.12. Policy DM15 supports renewable energy technology. The proposed cycle charging pods are minor in scale compared to traditional renewable energy developments like solar farms or wind turbines. The pods are designed with a flat solar panel roof that provides renewable energy to power the internal equipment and will not require extensive ancillary infrastructure like power lines or storage buildings, which the policy stipulates should be evaluated in proposals. Since these pods are compact and do not interfere with sensitive biodiversity areas or cultural heritage, they do not compromise the Broads' environmental or visual character. Given the pods' scale and location, they meet the intentions of DM15 by supporting renewable energy infrastructure without altering the landscape's distinctive qualities.

Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Development

- 6.13. Policy DM29 deals with sustainable tourism and recreation development, and consideration must be given to both the locational and design principles laid out in the policy. The proposed pods are sited within an area of hardstanding associated with a popular area and a public car park. This aligns with criterion (ii) of the policy, which supports development that is closely associated with existing visitor sites. Additionally, the pods offer sustainable access, being specifically intended to support cyclists, which aligns with the policy's aims. Given the compact size of the pods and their siting within an area of existing hardstanding, they are unlikely to create significant additional demand on the highway network. There is also sufficient existing parking for both cars and cycles, meeting criteria (vi) and (vii).
- 6.14. The placement of the pods does not impact on dark skies, as they do not include bright lighting, and they are carefully sited to avoid harm to the landscape character or local wildlife habitats. By supporting eco-friendly transportation, the pods also contribute positively to the area's environmental quality, aligning with criterion (viii).
- 6.15. The design and scale of the pods are appropriate to their setting, aligning with criterion (ix). They are small, non-intrusive structures that do not affect navigation or the open nature of the surrounding landscape, meeting the requirement for compatibility with local character.
- 6.16. The installation of the pods is compatible with the objectives and detailed requirements of Policy DM29. Their location and their support for sustainable tourism enhance accessibility for cyclists without detracting from the unique qualities of the Broads landscape.

Other issues

- 6.17. The installation of electric cycle charging pods represents a positive step forward in supporting sustainable transportation options within the Broads. As an evolving industry, electric cycle charging infrastructure is becoming increasingly important for promoting eco-friendly travel. The manufacturer, Intelligen, and other partners, have outlined plans to expand this network, installing additional charging pods in sites across the Broads network and beyond, which would enhance accessibility for cyclists and encourage a shift toward greener forms of transport in the area. The installation of these pods in the current location is a forward-thinking measure that aligns with the Authority's sustainable tourism objectives and broader environmental goals.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. In conclusion, the proposed electric cycle charging pods have been assessed against policies DM11 (Heritage Assets), DM15 (Renewable Energy), DM16 (Landscape), DM21 (Amenity), and DM43 (Design). The pods are strategically located within an existing car park. This siting minimises their impact on both the landscape and visual amenity, ensuring compatibility with the key landscape characteristics. They contribute positively to tourism infrastructure while encouraging eco-friendly transport options as outlined above. Given this, the installation of these pods is therefore acceptable

8. Recommendation

8.1. Approved subject to conditions:

- Three Year timeframe for commencement
- In accordance with the approved plans and material details.

9. Reason for recommendation

9.1. The placement of three electric cycle charging pods at The Quay car park in Beccles is in accordance with NPPF guidance and Policy DM11, DM15, DM16, DM21, DM29, DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads and is considered acceptable.

Author: Callum Sculfor

Date of report: 20 January 2026

Appendix 1 – [Location map](#)

Appendix 1 – Location map

BA/2025/0370/FUL - Approach To Carpark Off Fen Lane Beccles Suffolk NR34 9BH



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