


Broads Plan 2004


A strategic plan to manage
the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads



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Foreword from the Chair

Professor R K Turner



Our environment, upon which we all depend, is in a constant state of change. Due to the pressures imposed by all aspects of modern life and economic activity over the last century, these changes have become more rapid and extensive and, therefore, more noticeable. The Broads is far from immune from this transformation, so careful and prudent management will be required to conserve and sustainably use its assets. Managing the rate of change in order to satisfy the many interest groups that live or work in the Broads, or visit or merely appreciate from afar its unique characteristics, is the key challenge for the Broads Authority and its partners. As interdisciplinary scientific research continues to improve our understanding of the Broads, this management task will become better informed.

The Authority's vision for the Broads, which is shared by many other interest groups, is an environment that is conserved, but not merely to forever fossilise the natural systems, traditional activities and heritage landscapes. Rather the aim is to allow for organic growth and changing human requirements and preferences. Promotion of a

greater public understanding of the uniqueness of the Broads, therefore, is a continuing commitment and will help in the overall process of ensuring that future generations receive the environmental, social and economic bequest that is their right. At the core of our vision is the acknowledgement that human activities, if they are to be sustainable, depend on the continued health and functioning of the Broads environment. Boating and other forms of recreation, for example, are intimately dependent on a good quality environment, but equally the continued existence of such activities is a prime component of the local environs in terms of landscape, cultural heritage and amenity. An area largely devoid of humans and their activities is not the Broads, nor for that matter is it any of the other national parks in Britain.

Putting the vision into practice will require 'partnership' and 'consensus' in order to engage all interested parties in implementing this new Broads Plan. Partnerships must be built on trust and accountability. The Broads Authority has made, and is continuing to make, organisational changes to increase transparency and participation in order to enhance trust across all interests, while also ensuring best value. This Broads Plan, which is supported by a separate Action Plan, provides the foundation and direction for our future efforts to retain and enhance the precious gift that is the Broads.





Heigham Sound opens up into the largest of the broads - Hickling.

1 Introduction

About the Broads

The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads is the UK's premier wetland, a unique and internationally important landscape that has been shaped and nurtured by its inhabitants since at least Roman times. Broads are shallow, reed-fringed lakes that originated as great pits dug for peat to provide fuel during medieval times. In the 14th century these peat diggings flooded and became part of an extensive communication network for transporting fuel, building materials including reed for thatch, and livestock and their products, especially wool. Fishing and wildfowling were also significant elements of this predominantly agricultural economy. The traditional cargo craft during these times were keels and later, from about 1600 onwards, wherries, a few of which can still be seen on the Broads today. Summer grazing of the marshes became more extensive from the mid-18th century onwards when windmills were first erected for drainage purposes.

The advent of the railways in the mid-19th century, followed by that of vehicles in the 20th century, brought river-borne commerce to an end. The railways made the Broads accessible to visitors and by the late 19th century it had become popular as a tourist destination for boating holidays. While agriculture remains an important part of the Broads' economy and is heavily subsidised by Government to protect the traditional landscape of the grazing marshes, tourism is now a major driving force for the local economy. It is estimated that the value of tourism to the Broads in 1998 (£146.6 million) represented nearly 10% of what tourists spent in the entire East of England, which is among the top three tourism regions in England¹.

The thriving local economies of the Broads have been based on the wealth of its natural resources and the quality of its environment. Increasingly, and particularly during the 20th century, the capital and quality of the wetland resource became eroded due to changing agricultural practices, increasing residential populations and pressures from water-borne tourism. The impacts of these changes became manifest in major habitat losses - unmanaged fens were being colonised by scrub and grazing marshes were being turned into arable land. In addition, water quality was poor due to high levels of pollutants and suspended sediments from sewage, agricultural fertilisers and pesticides, and soil from erosion.

In 1947 the Broads was included in a list of mainly upland areas in England and Wales proposed to Government for establishment as national parks. The Hobhouse Committee recognised that '... the Broads have a special



Top: 'Gathering water lilies' - this photograph taken by P.H. Emerson in 1886 captures much of the essence of the Broads as a place for people to enjoy nature.

Above: Advertisement from the 1930s – the railways first brought tourism to the Broads.

claim to selection as a National Park quite apart from their natural beauty, by reason of their holiday and recreational value and the interest of their plant and animal life.' Ten of the 12 proposed areas were subsequently established as national parks under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. However, the Broads did not proceed due to the multiplicity of different authorities responsible for planning and managing the area, strong commercial pressures and the anticipated high costs of management.

¹ *The economic impact of tourism in the Broads Hire Boat Industry Study Area 1998.* East of England Tourist Board, 2000.

It was not until 1978, after various intervening administrative arrangements involving county and district councils, river authorities, Great Yarmouth Port and Haven Commissioners and other interest groups, that a Broads Authority was set up as a Joint Local Authority Committee in recognition of the national importance of the area for its landscape, nature conservation and recreational value. A decade later, in 1988, the Broads was established as a member of the UK national park family under the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (**Map 1: Location of the Broads and other national parks in the UK** page 51). This legislation is tailored to meet the specific additional interest of protecting navigation in the Broads. The Broads Authority came into permanent existence the following year.

Special features

The Broads is part of a network of protected landscapes, defined by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas² as:

Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinctive character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.

Parts of the Broads have been designated specifically for landscape, nature conservation and their cultural features under a range of national and international legislation, which is considered in subsequent chapters. Additionally, the executive area is included within the Broads Environmentally Sensitive Area.

The boundary of the Broads is tightly drawn around the flood plains and lower reaches of the three main rivers -

Mahakam Lakes, Indonesia, like the Broads, is also part of the global network of Living Lakes.



the Bure, Yare and Waveney. It encompasses an area of 301 km² - a mainly open, undeveloped landscape of water, fens, marshes and woodland, but including some built-up areas, notably waterside villages and the peripheral urban areas of Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. There is a short coastal strip at Winterton, which overlaps with an outlier of the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an estuary at Breydon Water. Most of the land in the Broads is privately owned, including large tracts belonging to the wildlife trusts, RSPB and the National Trust. The Authority owns very little land (less than 200 ha). The catchment of the Broads is very much larger, extending across 3,173 km² (**Map 2: Broads Authority executive area, catchment and overlap with North Norfolk Coast AONB** page 52).

The extensive inland waterway system, comprising 190 km of navigable, lock-free rivers and permanently open water bodies, is a major attraction. These water bodies, many of which are broads, range in area from 0.7 ha to 173 ha and in depth from less than 1 m to 2.5 m. Some are gradually being filled in by vegetation while the margins of others are retreating.

The special features of the Broads, its natural and cultural heritage, and the ways in which they provide for local communities and economies, are described in more detail in the relevant chapters of this Plan. Particularly important is the role of the Broads, as a member of the UK family of national parks and global network of protected landscapes, in demonstrating how wetland resources can be managed sustainably for the benefit of nature and people.

About the Broads Authority

The Broads Authority is a Special Statutory Authority established under the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act of 1988 with a general duty to manage the Broads for the purposes of:

- conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Broads;
- promoting the enjoyment of the Broads by the public; and
- protecting the interests of navigation.

None of these three purposes takes precedence.

² Guidelines for Protected Areas Management Categories. IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, 1994.



Under the Act, in discharging its functions, the Authority must also have regard to:

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

Local Planning Authority

The Authority is the local planning authority for the Broads, with responsibility for planning, conservation, development control and enforcement. Planning applications for the development or other use of land are determined in accordance with policies in regional and local development plans. The Broads Local Plan 1987 is due to be reviewed in 2004 and replaced by a portfolio of Local Development Documents.

Planning seeks to achieve a balance between conserving what is special and valued about the Broads' environment and meeting needs for new development. It is applied within the context of anticipating the needs of future generations, ensuring that there will continue to be places where people will enjoy living, working and visiting.

Our planning system is an important part of our democracy. It provides a mechanism for people to express their views about the future of their neighbourhood and areas in which they have a particular interest. The Authority is mindful of the importance of ensuring that its planning system is as open and transparent as practicable.

Navigation Authority

The Authority is also a harbour and navigation authority, being the third largest inland navigation authority in the country after British Waterways and the Environment Agency. Its navigation responsibilities include: public safety provisions for navigation and boats; and maintenance of the navigation, including moorings, dredging and marking.

The navigation area under the Authority's responsibility is defined in the Broads Act. It includes all those stretches of the Rivers Bure, Yare and Waveney and their tributaries that were in use for navigation by virtue of any public right of navigation at the time of the passing of the Act. It excludes the Haven, which remains under the jurisdiction of the Great Yarmouth Port Authority. The Haven extends from the Port of Great Yarmouth as far inland as Breydon

Water and the lower reaches of the Bure, Yare and Waveney. The transfer of jurisdiction to the Broads Authority of the navigable waterways of Breydon Water and these lower reaches has been discussed with the Executive of the Great Yarmouth Port Authority. It is felt that there is potential for an agreement to be reached. The transfer of jurisdiction will require a Harbour Revision Order.

Key external challenges, responses and opportunities

The Broads is subject to a number of key external factors, many of a policy or legislative nature, which are driving change and will have a major influence on its future. Understanding and anticipating such factors is vital in order to manage change proactively rather than respond to it reactively. These range from the global issue of climate change, with its many impacts, to the fundamental changes that are taking place nationally in the rural economy, particularly with respect to the declining contribution of agriculture and the growing economic importance of tourism. Included are local management issues, such as the disposal of dredgings, which are subject to the provisions of various European directives as well as national legislation. These factors are examined in Figure 1.1 and cross-referenced to guiding principles and priority objectives that appear later in this Plan.

In essence the underlying challenge is to manage the rate of environmental change in the Broads. The water and related habitats are unstable; they have a tendency to change in ecological condition over relatively short periods of time. Climate change, and social and economic pressures add to the potential changes and speed of change, so the management challenge is considerable. Part of the solution will be to develop a more integrated and holistic approach to management, whereby management strategies are deployed at the catchment scale and beyond. Ultimately, such strategies will depend on changes in human patterns of behaviour and use of the environment.

Above: Small Tortoiseshell butterfly

Right: Halvergate Marshes - the special character of the landscape and its biodiversity is conserved under the Broads Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme.

Figure 1.1 **Analysis of key external challenges and opportunities facing the Broads**

[Guiding principles and priority objectives that address the challenge are indicated in square brackets.]

Challenges	Opportunities
Environmental change	
<p>Climate and sea level [12-13; LL2, LL3, LL5]</p> <p>The Broads is particularly exposed to the impacts of rising temperatures, sea levels and wind strengths, and changes in the distribution and frequency of precipitation. Such impacts are likely to include changes to habitats and infrastructures, and they will require sustainable approaches to management. Major threats include: flooding from tidal surges; and a break in the coastal sea defences between Sea Palling and Winterton, which would inundate the entire Upper Thurne area.</p>	<p>In the long term, climate change will provide opportunities for wetland creation in and around the Broads and, with it, new opportunities for biodiversity, tourism and public enjoyment. These opportunities will need to be considered in conjunction with the management of the adjacent shoreline.</p> <p>Meanwhile, implementation of the 20-year Broadland Flood Alleviation Project has begun. This is designed to address flooding from tidal surges, allowing for projected rises in sea level. The project is a vital mid-term holding operation, providing flexibility for modification of prescriptions during its life and time to improve knowledge about impacts of climate change in order to plan better for the longer term.</p> <p>The Shoreline Management Plan process for the Broads' stretch of the Norfolk Coast will examine the risk of flooding and its management.</p>
<p>Modern society [1-8, 11, 13; LL2, LL8-12]</p> <p>The countryside of the future will be shaped by trends in the global economy and by the influence of the distinctive history and character of English society – its social structure, governance and attitudes to the countryside. A recent study by the Countryside Agency³ explores the future of the countryside in terms of who will live there, how rural people will earn their living and what will be the quality of life in the countryside. Likely trends in the countryside and, therefore, in and around the Broads include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more households, occupied largely by the middle class and middle aged but becoming more ethnically diverse; • more working people, commuting longer distances on improved transport networks and teleworking part-time from home; • more sustainable farming, accompanied by more diversification of farmed countryside and a continuation of the present exodus from farming; • more investment and business in countryside towns and their hinterlands; • more tourism, bringing jobs and money; • more traffic congestion, and measures to address it becoming more fraught with difficulty; • more constitutional autonomy as regional government becomes more important; • more interplay between factors promoting community and those causing social fragmentation; • farming as the basis of meaning in the countryside will have largely given way to a mosaic of different visions held by traditionalists (keen to maintain the traditional, rural way of life), idealists (seeking the rural ideal), pragmatists (looking for a better quality of life) and visitors (in search of enjoyment). 	<p>A number of these trends, such as increasing residence and work in the countryside and the growth in tourism, are likely to underpin the revival of rural economies. They will need to be tempered by policies and measures that address issues such as sustainable development, agriculture, tourism, transport, social exclusion and crime.</p>

³ The State of the Countryside 2020. The Countryside Agency, 2003.



Challenges	Opportunities
International legislation	
<p>Cultural landscape - its importance [LL6]</p> <p>The special landscape of the Broads, which supports a wealth of wildlife and diversity of economic and social activities, underpins its designation under the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act. However, the national and international importance of the Broads' landscape has not been evaluated. Arguably, it is one of England's most extensive industrial monuments but much of the archaeology is unknown. Above ground it features a distinctive landscape and built heritage that is probably unique within Europe. Below ground, in archaeological terms, it is considered to be still largely unspoilt, with more to offer than anywhere in the UK and possibly Western Europe.</p>	<p>The World Heritage Convention (Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972) is an appropriate instrument for ensuring that the value of the Broads as a cultural landscape is widely recognised and protected. It provides for the designation of natural and cultural properties of 'outstanding universal value' as World Heritage Sites. There are specific provisions for including cultural landscapes, representing the combined works of nature and man, on the World Heritage List. The case for including the Broads on the World Heritage List has yet to be developed.</p>
<p>Habitats and Birds Directives [WH3, WH4, WH5, WH7]</p> <p>The European Community Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, 1992, provides for the protection of habitats and their species and, where necessary, their restoration to favourable conservation status. This is achieved partly by the establishment of a community-wide network of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which form part of Natura 2000. The Directive requires proposed developments not connected to the management of such sites and likely to have a significant effect to be subject to an appropriate assessment. Developments may not proceed if found to adversely affect the integrity of sites, unless there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, in which case compensatory measures must be taken. These provisions also apply to Special Protection Areas (SPAs), established under the Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds, 1979, and also included within Natura 2000. The challenge of achieving favourable conservation status of habitats and species of European importance extends throughout European Union territories, beyond the Natura 2000 network.</p> <p>These directives provide a robust framework for conserving biodiversity and, in particular, for managing waterspace and flooding within European sites. In the longer term, climate change impacts may affect the interests of some European features within designated sites. Thus, it is important to develop integrated approaches in partnership with other organisations that go beyond boundaries, including those of the executive area of the Broads, to conserve such features.</p>	<p>Competent authorities are responsible for implementing the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations, 1994, which transform the Habitats Directive into national law. The Broads Authority and other bodies, such as English Nature, have statutory roles and responsibilities as competent authorities for delivering Government's international obligations.</p> <p>About 24% of the Broads has been designated as European sites, within the overlapping boundaries of the Broads SAC and Broadland SPA, as described in Chapter 5.</p> <p>The Habitats Directive, along with the Water Framework Directive (see below), is a powerful instrument that is helping the Authority to meet its statutory duties, particularly with respect to restoring habitats and species of European importance to favourable conservation status within the Broads. However, new mechanisms and more integrated management approaches will need to be developed to achieve favourable conservation status within a sustainable development framework that takes into account ecological change and multiple uses.</p>
<p>Water Framework Directive, 2000 [WH1, WH3, WH6]</p> <p>This European Community Directive establishes a framework for the protection of inland, coastal and ground waters by progressively:</p>	<p>This new catchment-based approach to water resource management is critically important for the future well-being of the Broads, which is dependent on it receiving sufficient good quality water from its wider catchment.</p>

Challenges

- preventing further deterioration to aquatic ecosystems, and terrestrial and wetland systems dependent on them;
- promoting sustainable water use;
- reducing discharges and emissions of hazardous or potentially hazardous substances; and
- reducing pollution of groundwater.

The Directive was transformed into domestic law through the Water Framework Directive (Implementation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003. River basin management plans have to be published by December 2009 and waterbodies must achieve good status by December 2015. Thereafter, plans must be reviewed every six years.

Opportunities

The Directive provides a major opportunity for the Authority and its partners to work closely with the Environment Agency, which is responsible for implementing the Directive, and introduce the necessary controls in the catchment to restore the rivers and broads to good status and to help maintain the navigation.

The Broads falls within the Anglian River Basin District. Opportunities will be sought to develop a Supplementary Plan for the Broads and its catchment, in accordance with the Regulations, to augment the river basin management plan for this district.

Dredgings - their disposal

[TR15]

Parts of the rivers and broads are subject to dredging from time to time to keep the waterways open to navigation and, in some cases, to improve water quality by removing pollutants held in the sediment. The disposal of dredgings is an increasing problem due to a range of legislation that prevents an holistic, sustainable approach to the return of silt to its original source.

At present, the Waste Management Regulations 1994 provide for the disposal of dredgings to licensed landfill or, via exemptions, to the bank side, to benefit agriculture/ecology, or for land reclamation.

In future, landfill may be the only option for dredgings, which is both unsustainable and costly. Continued use of sites lying within Sites of Special Scientific Interest is no longer compatible with the Authority's duties under the CROW Act. Volumes for bank side disposal are likely to be reduced, and spreading on agricultural land is likely to be reduced to a thin layer in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones under the provisions of the Nitrates Directive, with no consideration of net ecological benefits. Furthermore, the Landfill Directive treats all dredgings as liquid waste, which will be banned from licensed landfill from 2005. Theoretically, therefore, dredgings would need to be pre-treated to remove the water content prior to disposal as landfill.

Siltation is part of a natural process, but the high rates of siltation in parts of the Broads reflect the extensive area in the catchment that is arable. In the longer term, through Environmental Stewardship schemes, there is a real opportunity to reduce the rate of siltation and, therefore, the frequency of dredging.

Dredgings are currently treated as waste. More innovative approaches are required that take into account the value of dredgings for agriculture, habitat creation and, particularly in the case of the Broads, for flood embankments. The Broadland Flood Alleviation Project affords some opportunity for the sustainable disposal of dredgings, and this is recognised in the Project's Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The Authority is working with the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to explore environmentally and economically sustainable solutions that are based on a more holistic approach to the legislation. This will inform a Sediment Management Strategy that is being developed.

Dredging works at Five-Mile Bend on the River Yare





Challenges	Opportunities
National Legislation	
<p>Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, 2000 [WH1, WH3-7, TR10-13]</p> <p>The CROW Act extends the public's ability to enjoy the countryside while providing safeguards for landowners and occupiers. It creates a new statutory right of access to open country and registered common land, gives greater protection to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), provides better management arrangements for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation.</p> <p>The Act requires local highway and national park authorities to set up Local Access Forums to advise on improvements on access for purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment. Improvements must take into account the needs of disabled people.</p> <p>The Act also requires public bodies, such as the Authority, to further the conservation and enhancement of features of interest in SSSIs. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target with the Treasury to achieve favourable condition in 95% of SSSIs by 2010. English Nature has a major role in delivering this target. There are 28 SSSIs in the Broads, covering 24% of the executive area, of which 58% are currently recovering or in favourable condition.</p>	<p>Opportunities for increasing access to open country are mainly limited to Registered Common Land as there is very little 'open country' (mountain, moor, heath or down) in the Broads. Moreover, the wetland habitat of the Broads is not easily accessible in many areas.</p> <p>The Authority has established a Local Access Forum to advise on the improvement of public access to land for open-air recreational and enjoyment purposes. Its remit includes issues relating to public access to water. Opportunities will be explored through Rights of Way Improvement Plans in liaison with Norfolk and Suffolk county councils.</p> <p>Particularly important to the Broads is Section 98 of the CROW Act. This places a specific duty on relevant authorities (ie any public body or person holding public office) to have regard to the three statutory purposes of conservation, public enjoyment and navigation for which the Authority is responsible.</p>
<p>Disability Discrimination Act [TR13, UB2]</p> <p>This Act creates rights for any individual defined by the Act as a disabled person not to be unjustifiably discriminated against in employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services, and in the selling or letting of land or property.</p>	<p>A range of new initiatives and projects provide good opportunities to address current inadequate provisions for disabled people. These include plans for a new national park centre for the Broads, Barton boardwalk and the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project.</p>
<p>Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 [LL9]</p> <p>This Act introduces powers that reform and speed up the planning system. Provisions include quicker and more effective processing of planning applications, and greater predictability of planning decisions.</p> <p>The Broads Local Plan 1997 will need to be replaced by Local Development Documents. These should articulate a vision for the area, based on local diversity and needs, which is agreed by the community and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>These reforms enable strategies concerning the use and development of land, such as those contained within the Broads Plan and district community strategies, to be linked through the planning system. This could affect economic regeneration and development, housing, education, health, waste, energy, recycling, protection of the environment, biodiversity, transport, culture and social issues.</p>

Bittern - the number of birds breeding in the Broads is increasing due to various habitat restoration projects.



Challenges	Opportunities
National Policies and Initiatives	
<p>Broads Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Scheme [WH6]</p> <p>The Broads ESA Scheme provides special payments to farmers to manage their land to conserve the landscape, biodiversity and the historic environment, and to promote public access. The Scheme, based on voluntary uptake, was originally designed to stem the conversion of the grazing marshes to arable. Subsequently, it became more tailored to enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>The Scheme, which covers 43,190 ha, is critically important to the Broads as it encompasses and extends well beyond the Broads Authority's executive area. It has been crucial in retaining the grazing marsh landscape, although less successful in enhancing biodiversity. Uptake of the 24,000 ha eligible for management agreements is very high, having reached 82% since the Scheme's introduction in 1987.</p> <p>The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is currently reviewing all agri-environment schemes. It will introduce a new form of Environmental Stewardship. This will comprise Entry Level Environmental Stewardship (ELS), open to all farmers to help safeguard the fabric of the countryside as a whole, and Higher Level Environmental Stewardship (HLS) which will replace existing Countryside Stewardship and ESA schemes.</p>	<p>The Authority welcomes the new ELS and HLS schemes. It also supports the possible inclusion of resource protection and flood defence as objectives within such schemes, and the introduction of more effective measures to benefit biodiversity.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the new HLS will include the existing Broads ESA. In addition to meeting the objectives of the scheme, it is a vitally important mechanism for delivering the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, particularly with respect to reducing diffuse agricultural sources of pollutants.</p> <p>A key opportunity, therefore, is to ensure that valley sides are included within the new HLS and that land throughout the rest of the catchment is entered into the ELS, so that the Broads is better protected from diffuse pollutants. The new HLS will also be valuable in helping to meet Biodiversity Action Plan targets.</p>
<p>UK Biodiversity Action Plans [WH7]</p> <p>The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity includes measures to develop national strategies and action plans to conserve, protect and enhance biological diversity. The Government's commitment to conserve the complete range of UK habitats and species is set out in the 1994 UK Biodiversity Action Plan. This provides a framework for the production of habitat and species action plans, with a target to reduce the decline in biodiversity by 2010.</p> <p>Five priority habitats and nineteen priority species earmarked for conservation action occur within the Broads. Further habitats and species will become priorities as the programme progresses.</p>	<p>The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process provides a mechanism for the Authority to work in partnership with others to enhance the conservation status of these priority habitats and species. Funding opportunities are available to implement BAPs. An example is the EU LIFE Programme, which has supported two habitat enhancement projects for bitterns in the Broads.</p>
<p>Port Marine Safety Code and Boat Safety Scheme [TR5, TR7]</p> <p>The Port Marine Safety Code represents the national standard against which the policies, procedures and performance of harbour authorities are measured. For purposes of meeting the standard of the Code, it is obligatory for measures to be taken that reduce all risks associated with port marine operations to 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable'. The Authority has undertaken a Formal Safety Assessment, which concluded that</p>	<p>The Port and Marine Safety Code and Boat Safety Scheme will raise safety standards for the benefit of those using the waterways. Boats in poor condition will be obliged to meet minimum standards set by the latter. The former will be regularly reviewed to identify new hazards and minimise their risks via the Safety Management System.</p>

Challenges

there is a high level of navigational safety. Its Boating Safety Management Group is responsible for establishing and operating a Safety Management System to manage risks associated with boating/marine activities to 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable'.

The Boat Safety Scheme is a national scheme, initially developed by British Waterways, Broads Authority and the Environment Agency, that provides for good and safe boat building practice and maintenance. It is concerned principally with risks of fires and explosions to third parties and applies to all powered and hired craft, or those carrying fuel or fitted with domestic appliances. Boats are subject to independent examination by authorised inspectors at least once every four years. The Scheme is legally enforceable by the relevant navigation authorities. The Authority will need new legislation or byelaws to implement the Scheme, with provisions to exempt traditional Broads boats from parts of the Scheme. A key issue will be the management and disposal of old boats that fail the Scheme.

Opportunities

The Boat Safety Scheme is due to be introduced by the Authority in three phases: with large hire and private motor boats in April 2005; all remaining hire craft and medium-sized private motor boats in April 2006; and all remaining craft, including sailing boats, in April 2007.

Waterways for Tomorrow

[most objectives in Chapter 6]

This policy document produced by the former Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions in 2000 sets out proposals for the future of inland waterways in England and Wales. Government wishes to promote a modern, sustainable and integrated approach to their use. It also wants to encourage innovative uses such as water transfer and telecommunications. Navigation authorities are challenged to conserve the waterways for which they are responsible, while maximising opportunities that waterways offer for leisure and recreation, education, freight transport, and for urban and rural regeneration.

The Authority works closely with the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC) and the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA), of which it is a member, on navigation and waterway recreation issues.

Waterways for Tomorrow provides an important policy framework for progressing many initiatives in the Broads. For example, the Authority and partners within the tourism and boating industries have together developed a strategic plan for the boating holidays industry, which is of critical importance to the local and regional economy. An action plan is now being implemented via a Boating Holidays Project. The Broads' navigation area touches on the urban areas of Great Yarmouth and central Norwich, both characterised by urban decay and social exclusion, where tourism can provide a vehicle for regeneration.

Modernisation of local government

[annual Business Plan]

Among the modernisation measures introduced by Government are:

- Best Value - An initiative that requires public bodies to improve continuously in the exercise of their functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It is effected through the preparation and implementation of an annual Best Value Performance Plan that is audited. This is being augmented, from 2004 onwards, by a corporate self-assessment process that will also be audited.

The Authority is developing a performance management framework for the delivery of Best Value. This involves setting strategic objectives and priorities, from which services and actions are developed. The new Broads Plan will provide the basis for determining high-level, strategic objectives for the Authority.

The recent Best Value review of the Planning Service is timely in the light of Government's modification of the planning system. It is likely to result in the Authority taking ownership of its delivery of this service.

Left to right: Sustainable development - Electric Eel (quiet, emissions free), reed and sedge thatch for new boatsheds, wind energy



Challenges

- Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) - An initiative that aims to deliver integrated, accessible, inclusive and accountable public services by 2006 using electronic means, such as telephone, fax, email, Internet and video.
- Beacon Council Scheme – An award that promotes high quality public services by identifying and sharing good practice in pre-selected areas of work. The Scheme is open to all public bodies, including national park authorities.

The Authority is currently working with the Audit Commission, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the other national park authorities to develop a new Best Value review framework that will be proportionate to size and tailored to meet the specific requirements of national park authorities. This is likely to be based on a corporate self-assessment and action plan every three to five years, which would be subject to peer review and inspection. The first self-assessment is likely to take place in 2004.

Opportunities

IEG provides the Authority with the necessary resources to introduce the technologies, systems and equipment needed to achieve electronic government.

If successful in its application to the Beacon Council Scheme, the Authority will be awarded funds to share its good practice in sustainable tourism and learn from the initiatives of others.

Review of national park authorities

[Development Programme]

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) undertook a review of English national park authorities in 2002, focusing on policy, governance, sponsorship and resources. Recommendations of particular relevance to the Authority include:

- amending the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 so that the first two duties of the Broads Authority are consistent with those of the other national parks⁴, while retaining unchanged the third duty to protect the interests of navigation;
- maintaining representation but reducing membership to around 20 in smaller national park authorities, as in the case of the Broads, with three-fifths local representatives and two-fifths national appointees; and
- examining issues specific to the Broads in a further study by DEFRA.

⁴ Thus, expanding: *the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty to include wildlife and cultural heritage; and the promotion of enjoyment by the public to understanding and enjoyment of special qualities by the public.*

The findings of the further study are in line with the Authority's Development Programme and they include:

- a reduction in the Authority's membership to 21;
- a clear case for primary legislation to ensure that the Authority can meet its obligations under the Port Marine Safety Code; and
- a review of the Authority's boundary.

The further study does not support the Authority's view that Government funding is required for its navigation responsibilities.

Unlike other navigation authorities, the Broads Authority is not publicly funded for its third, navigation function, despite costly dredging and safety management requirements. The Authority will be seeking further opportunities to make its case for public funds to support part of its navigation duties, taking into account the public safety aspects of managing one of the busiest navigations with a tidal rise and fall and the exceptional costs of dealing with contamination in the River Yare.

Sustainable development

[Guiding Principles 1-11; TR1]

The Government is committed to achieving a better quality of life for everyone through its sustainable development strategy. It reports annually on progress, based on 15 headline indicators. National parks are widely regarded as potential role models for sustainable development.

Government has set up a Sustainable Development Fund, shared equally between the eight national park authorities in England, to enable local communities and other organisations

The Authority's commitment to sustainable development is embodied in a set of Guiding Principles (Chapter 3) that will guide the long-term management and development of the Broads, based on the Government's sustainable development strategy.

The Authority's Sustainable Development Fund provides a real opportunity for harnessing the interests, skills and enthusiasm of local people and communities to develop sustainable



Challenges

to make a difference in national parks by achieving social, economic or environmental sustainability. Young people in particular are encouraged to become involved in the scheme.

Tourism and recreation underpin the economy of the Broads. A key challenge is to manage them at environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable levels, while ensuring that they remain economically viable. An important part of such management is to promote an image of the Broads as a national park with a wealth of special features and areas of tranquillity for people to enjoy quietly.

Opportunities

initiatives that benefit the Broads. The Fund also provides opportunities to secure matching funds from other sources, notably the Broads & Rivers LEADER+ Programme with its focus on the Broads.

The Authority is seeking accreditation under the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, which provides a framework and label for developing and marketing a more sustainable approach to tourism and recreation. The Charter aims:

- to increase awareness of, and support for, Europe's protected areas as a fundamental part of our heritage that should be preserved for, and enjoyed by, current and future generations; and
- to improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, which takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors.

Regional Initiatives

Rural Revival

[annual Business Plan]

Protected landscapes, notably national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), have a potential role as models for delivering new objectives for countryside policies and paving the way for the transformation of the current centralised Common Agricultural Policy into locally flexible, common rural policies, given their:

- strong brand image;
- track record in piloting;
- commitment to sustainable development;
- significant influence over two major economic assets - environmental land management and tourism;
- integrated brief, and long experience of working in partnership; and given that
- they are accountable, innovative and responsive with highly skilled staff.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is keen to examine the funds available through the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and England Rural Development Programme to deliver part of its Rural Revival agenda through protected landscapes. The challenge is to establish a new environmental and cultural economy grounded in the special qualities of national parks and AONBs.

A Joint Statement of Intent to Cooperate between the Protected Areas of the East of England and Local, Regional and National Government is currently being developed by the Broads Authority and the four AONBs (Suffolk Coasts and Heaths, Norfolk Coast, Chilterns and Dedham Vale) in consultation with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA), Government Office for the East of England, Countryside Agency, Rural Development Service, Forestry Commission, English Heritage, English Nature, Environment Agency, and East of England Regional Assembly.

The Joint Statement of Intent identifies potential areas of action. Currently, EEDA is not able to commit new funds or target assistance to any of the protected landscapes in the East of England because its targets are directed at the bottom 25% of wards, as measured by GDP per capita. These wards do not fall within the Broads or any of the AONBs. Some support, however, is available via regional funds or county economic partnerships, to which EEDA is providing funds. Closer consultation is required on issues of joint interest.

About this plan

Under the terms of the Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Act, the Broads Authority is required to prepare and publish a plan (to be known as 'the Broads Plan') and review it at least once every five years. Although its production is the responsibility of the Authority, the Broads Plan is for everyone with a stake or interest in the future of the Broads – including landowners, residents, businesses, Government organisations, trusts and charities, visitors and volunteers.

The process

Independent consultants were engaged early on in the process in order to guide its design, facilitate dialogue with stakeholders and raise the credibility of the exercise. In order to secure wide support for preparing and, importantly, implementing the next Broads Plan, considerable efforts were made to ensure that the process was **transparent, participatory and inclusive** from the outset. Thus, the process was designed to:

- bring together a wide range of organisations and individuals to create a common purpose and collective responsibility for the future of the Broads;
- generate consensus around a set of objectives, based on a shared vision for the future of the Broads; and
- engender a strong sense of ownership among organisations and individuals in the objectives of the Plan.

The process was spread over two years and comprised a number of key phases:

- initial planning and design, including identification of stakeholders;
- engagement with stakeholders, through public meetings, facilitated workshops and community events, to identify and address key issues;
- preparation of a draft Plan, accompanied by a three-month period of formal public consultation; and
- finalisation and launch of the Plan.

The Authority's Strategy and Resources Committee oversaw the process. Regular input was received from the wider Broads Authority membership and from the Broads Forum, which represents a spectrum of interest groups in the Broads. The development of the Plan also benefited from being reviewed by an advisory group of national experts. Over 80 organisations and interest groups were involved in the process.

The Plan

The Broads Plan sets out a vision and long-term (20-year) aims for the future of the Broads. It also specifies

short-term priority objectives to address during the five-year period of a supporting Action Plan. The Broads Plan also identifies a set of Guiding Principles to direct the decisions of the Authority and actions of others in its implementation. The final section outlines how the Broads Plan will be implemented and identifies a mechanism, measures and tentative set of indicators to monitor and evaluate its progress.

The Action Plan sets out specific actions to be undertaken over the next five years for each objective identified in the Broads Plan. Lead organisations and partners are clearly indicated against actions, which are costed if additional resources are likely to be required by the Authority or its partners for their implementation.

In both the Broads Plan and Action Plan, issues, aims, and objectives are organised under four main themes: **Living Landscapes, Water, Habitats and Wildlife, Tourism and Recreation, and Understanding the Broads.**

The first two themes focus on the natural and cultural assets of the Broads, which need to be conserved and enhanced in accordance with the first duty of the Authority in the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act. The Living Landscapes chapter covers the large-scale visionary aspects of the landscape; it includes cultural aspects, such as the built heritage; and it also considers the needs of those who live or work in the Broads, which is a subsidiary duty of the Authority under the Act. The Water, Habitats and Wildlife chapter covers the natural and semi-natural habitats and their wildlife. The Broads ESA Scheme, which is important for safeguarding both landscape and biodiversity, is also considered in this chapter. The third theme relates to the other two duties of the Authority to promote the enjoyment of the Broads by the public and to protect the interests of navigation. The fourth theme relates to all three purposes, though much of it is focused on promoting enjoyment through understanding the special qualities of the Broads.

The structure of this Broads Plan reflects to a large extent the process by which stakeholders were involved in the identification of issues and the development of aims and objectives to address them. However, it has also been necessary to integrate issues in order to achieve an holistic approach, particularly at the landscape scale.

Most of the 16 aims and 151 policies in the 1997 Broads Plan have found their way into this Broads Plan as guiding principles, objectives and actions, either directly or in an amalgamated form. Those that have not are likely either to have been addressed during the life of the 1997 Plan, or are no longer applicable.

2 Vision for the Broads in 2024



What do people value about the Broads?

During the Broads Plan review process, notably at the 2002 Annual General Meeting, people were asked to identify the special qualities or features of the Broads that they most valued. The responses demonstrate that people love the Broads for a wide variety of its features, many of which are often valued because of their inter-relatedness to each other. Common responses included: the wide, open, living landscape of the Broads with its winding waterways and big skies; the abundance and diversity of nature, some of which is unique to this wetland; the opportunity for boating, especially sailing, and the chance to experience the magnificence of traditional craft; and the sense of space, tranquillity and wildness. Also valued was the local character of the Broads, with its beautiful churches, windmills and quiet villages, and the range of opportunities on land and water for all to enjoy these special qualities. Moreover, the opportunity to experience these qualities of a national park by boat is a unique attraction of the Broads.

Vision for the Broads

A shared vision for the Broads has been developed from that in the 1997 Broads Plan, based on feedback received from stakeholders. During the life of this Plan, this vision will be reviewed and developed in more visual ways, using Geographic Information Systems that take into account the likely impacts of climate change over the next 100 years.

The Broads . . .

An unrivalled naturally functioning wetland ecosystem of international natural and cultural importance, with a landscape that: comprises a mosaic of interconnecting rivers and shallow lakes, fens, marshes, wet woodlands, mud-flats and coastal dunes; supports a wealth of plants and animals; and reflects historic patterns of human activity over many hundreds of years.

A place where people live or work in harmony with its natural and cultural qualities and where the local economy is sustained through small and medium-sized enterprises: building and hiring boats; providing services and accommodation, and producing food and other products locally to meet the needs of visitors; harvesting the fens; and farming livestock on the marshes.

A place where people come to enjoy quietly the special qualities of this wetland landscape: exploring the waterways by boat; exploring on land the extensive network of footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways; and pursuing a range of recreational activities that are compatible with its special qualities, environmentally sensitive and socially acceptable, such as sailing, canoeing, fishing, bird-watching and visiting historic sites.

A changing place that, in response to increasing climate and human influences, reflects an increasingly harmonious interaction of people with nature, where local communities enjoy economic prosperity through engagement with the natural environment.

A place where opportunities are sought to enhance and expand the wetland ecosystem, while also seeking to provide wider associated social and cultural benefits, such as flood management and quiet areas for peaceful recreation.

And, importantly, a place treasured for its seclusion and wildness and which provides, in the words of the late Norfolk naturalist Ted Ellis, 'a breathing space for the cure of souls'.

(Adapted from the 1997 Broads Plan.)

