

Response to the Draft Broads Plan 2004

Many of our members, including committee members, have responded individually to the Draft Broads Plan. It is not possible to write a comprehensive and detailed response from the Broads Society in a way that satisfies the opinions of every member, or even every committee member. There are some observations, however, which the majority of the Society will support.

Generally, we welcome the policies and ambitions outlined in the Plan, and believe it forms an excellent basis for managing the Broads in the next decade. It will be essential for the Broads Authority to *'take ownership and delivery of this service'* (**Opportunities, page 7**) by bringing all the planning control services in-house.

We would like to raise some specific comments:

- 1. Navigation:** we were surprised at the apparent 'soft-peddling' of the Authority's responsibility to 'protect the interests of navigation'. We would suggest that all mentions of *'Tourism and Recreation'* be amended to read *'Navigation, Tourism and Recreation'*. In this, we are in broad agreement with the Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association's comments on this matter, and endorse their request to add a further **Guiding Principle page 13/14:** *'The Broads' navigable rivers, broads, waterways and dykes will be maintained in good, sustainable order, will be improved and/or developed.'*
- 2. Alien invasive species:** many of our members have noticed the sharp decline in ground nesting birds, due mainly to mink. We would like to see the *complete eradication of mink* to be included in **Aims for next 20 years** and **Objectives for the next five years (page 22)**. Similarly, we strongly support action against alien species but feel it should go further than mere 'support' for development of regional strategy (**page 41**) After twenty years of mink roaming freely, we need a more emphatic approach.
- 3. Fen restoration and management:** it would be very diplomatic to mention, wherever possible, both sailing and environmental advantages wherever they overlap in the plan. A case in point is that the advantages for sailing should be recognized in the aims and objectives in fen management. We also suggest a further **Aim for next 20 years (page 25):** *Sailing conditions are improved by the removal of bankside scrub and trees.*
- 4. Dredgings:** since one cause of silting is leaf-fall, *'Removal of bankside scrub and trees'* should be included in **Opportunities (page 6)**
- 5. Tourism and recreation:** some recognition is needed to balance the interests of the hire boat and tourist interests with those who live and work in the area but have no direct involvement with either activity. A suggestion would be to extend **Guiding Principle 4 (page 13)** to include *'..whilst bearing in mind the interests of those not directly involved in the tourist industry.'*

6. **Broads Society partner status:** we were disappointed to find just one mention of the Broads Society as a partner in the **Action Plan**, in connection with '**soft culture and social history**'. We suggest adding the Broads Society as partners in the following areas: **Develop a GIS- based vision for the Broads (page 35); Complete a strategy for the conservation and management of the distinctive landscape of The Broads (page 35); Develop and implement a strategy for the monitoring, restoration and management of rivers and broads (page 41)** – this in particular would be important for our 'Broadsword' groups; **Develop a communications strategy (page 52)**.

Finally, the Broads Society fully supports the vision for the Broads Authority, as set out on page 12. We are committed to working closely with the Broads Authority and other partners in achieving the considerable ambitions set out in the Plan.

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Chairman
The Broads Society
July 2003