

RE-EVALUATION Verifier's Report to the Evaluation Committee

Name of protected area: The Broads

Name of verifier: Bettina Kreisel

Bettina Kreisel

Date of submission of re-evaluation application by protected area: 17 January 2011

Date of verification visit: 11-14 April 2011

Date of completion of this report: 12 May 2011

NOTES FOR THE VERIFIER

Where is shown, verifiers are asked to indicate a score, using the following system:

- X Not relevant
- 0 Not happening
- 1 Weak – little action
- 2 Moderate – action happening in this area, sufficient at present
- 3 Good – significant action, totally satisfactory

A star * may be added to a “3” score to indicate an excellent example of best practice (3*).

Verifiers are asked to comment on individual questions to provide further information or explanation, keeping their answers concise. In particular, the reasons for any score under 2 should be briefly explained, highlighting any particular causes for concern.

The reasons for any score of * awarded should also be explained: what makes this an example of best practice? The star should be used sparingly, and only for outstanding initiatives or actions which can serve as models at the European level.

The format for this verifier's report is linked closely to that of the Application Report completed by the protected area. You should have received the Application Report in electronic format. You may copy information from the Application Report into this report to support particular answers where this is helpful.

If you do this, we would ask you to indicate very clearly (e.g. by use of a different typeface, highlighting, etc.) the text which has been copied from the Application Report.

Your own observations relating to the information provided by the protected area and gained on site are, of course, particularly important – the Committee will have the full Application Report available to refer to as necessary.

Please attach a list of any documents received from the protected area or presented during the visit which were not included in the original application.

Programme of visit, key sites and partners visited:

Please attach a full list of people interviewed and job titles as an appendix

Time	Location	Key issues discussed	People interviewed
10 April			
16:35	Norwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival Norwich airport • General introduction, itinerary and themes of verification visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruce Hanson, Broads Authority, Head of Tourism Development
18:00	Norwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrival at Maid's Head Hotel 	
11 April			
08.45	Norwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Departure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bruce Hanson (whole day)
09.30	Salhouse Broad Boat trip to Hoveton Great Broad Hoveton Great Broad, nature trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Canoe Hire operation ▪ Boat moorings ▪ Working in partnership ▪ Tourism strategy & forum ▪ Training ▪ Quality of boating facilities, services ▪ Canoe hire network ▪ Conservation, zoning, visitor management ▪ Visitor facilities ▪ Interpretation and information services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tobi Baker, Castor Estate, manager, Canoe hire business ▪ Simon Hooton, Broads Authority, Head of Conservation and Countryside Management • Rick Southwood, Natural England • Elaine Green, Natural England
12:00	Ranworth visitor centre Mooring restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visitor centres • E-boat guided tours • Working with partners to maintain guided services and visitor centres 	
12.30	Rollesby Broad "The Waterside", restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant, mooring, visitor facilities, boat trips, canoe hire • Creating quality • Green Tourism Business scheme • Broads Quality Charter • Broads Brand • Tourism forum & strategy • Working in partnership • Conservation management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Minors, owner "The Waterside", steering group member Tourism Forum • Hannah Grey, Warden Trinity Broads
14.00	Clippesby Hall Campsite, cycle hire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Green Business Scheme ▪ Campsite facilities and services ▪ Quality services of campsite ▪ Cycle hire network & activities ▪ Itineraries using public transport ▪ Working in partnership ▪ Tourism strategy & forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chris Haycock, sustainability manager campsite ▪ John Lindsay, owner, campsite
16:00	Fairhaven (woodland and water garden), South Walsham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visitor attraction ▪ Green Business Scheme ▪ Broads Quality Charter ▪ Working in partnership ▪ Tourism forum & strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Louise Rout, manager Fairhaven
19:30	Norwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrival at hotel 	

12 April			
09.00	Norwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Departure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bruce Hanson (whole day)
09:15	Norwich Broads Authority offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevance of the European Charter ▪ Tourism strategy & forum ▪ Action plan, future organisation ▪ Budget, funding ▪ Conservation ▪ Broads brand ▪ Website, visitor guide ▪ Communication strategy ▪ Interpretation strategy ▪ New interpretation technology ▪ STEPP project ▪ Communication with local stakeholders ▪ Feedback processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ John Packman, Broads Authority, Chief Executive ▪ Karen Sayer, Broads Authority, Head of Information & Design ▪ Clare Weller, Broads Authority, Head of Communications
12.30	Coldham Hall, restaurant, Mooring Wherryman's Way, Surlingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Green Business Scheme ▪ Broads Quality Charter ▪ Moorings ▪ Visitor distribution North-South ▪ Tourism strategy & forum ▪ Broads Brand ▪ Broads Tourism vs. Norfolk Tourism ▪ Regional marketing ▪ Working in partnership ▪ Wherryman's Trail, cycling, hiking ▪ Relevance of European Charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ David Linder, owner restaurant ▪ Lydia Smith, director Norfolk Tourism
14.45	Broadland Cycle Hire, Hoveton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cycle hire, facilities, services, itineraries ▪ Cycle network ▪ Visitor demands ▪ Cycle infrastructure and needs ▪ Tourism partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ John How, owner cycle hire
15:15	BeWilderwood, forest adventure park, Hoveton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visitor facility and services ▪ Quality management ▪ Green Businesses scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Martin, assistant, adventure park
16:15	Norfolk Broads Direct, boat yard Wroxham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boat hire, accommodation ▪ Boat quality development ▪ Tourism facilities, services ▪ Tourism partnership ▪ Green Tourism Business scheme ▪ Tourism strategy & forum ▪ Action plan, organisation ▪ Broads Brand ▪ Relevance of the European Charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barbara Greasley, owner boat yard, chair Broads Tourism / Tourism Forum
18		Arrival at hotel	
14 April	10:00	Departure, end of verification visit	

Overall Impressions

As an overall impression the the Broads Authority (BA) is still very actively engaged in fostering sustainable tourism. The successful combination of attractive water-based activities and wildlife experiences with safeguarding the high conservation value can still be seen as an exceptional strength of the area.

It was obvious that this protected area was especially proud of the progress made in context with the introduction of the Broads brand, along with the development of Broads Tourism as a partnership organisation. Moreover, the Green Business Scheme and developing quality in tourism were ever present subjects in the discussions during the visit.

The stakeholders I met were very enthusiastic about developing tourism in a sustainable way and working in partnership to promote the Broads region. The links of various stakeholders with the protected area are well established. All were identifying with the natural heritage of the area and the need to safeguard it as something special; which is also well reflected in the new brand.

Financial cuts of 20 to 30% in staff and budget have resulted in reorganising visitor centres, concentrating them from six to three which are run by the Broads Authority. The authority seeks to involve more partners to run tourism services and develop new funding models, which is also part of a pilot tourism project on the national level. This includes the vision that the main drive for the implementation of the action plan will come from the tourism businesses and stakeholders. In my view, this is implying a gradual withdrawal from the Authority's active leadership in tourism in connection with the sustainable tourism strategy.

Comments on the application from the Charter area and re-evaluation visit:

The Broads Authority submitted questionnaire, the tourism strategy and action plan beforehand well before so the visit could be well prepared. Other documents were handed out during the visit, or sent by email later. In addition, I found information and documents on the internet from the Broads Authority and other websites.

In preparation for the visit I sent a brief with the main issues I wanted to discuss as well as whom I wanted to meet. I recommended integrating subjects that the Broads Authority felt would illustrate the progress made in the past five years; show examples of what it thinks it is very good at; and where further advice on the framework of the Charter would be of help.

According to the brief, the Broads Authority put together a programme which was carefully planned. It also made sure that I spoke to stakeholders and visited places that I had not seen on the first visit. This was a good approach to avoid just repeating the previous visit but to widen my overall impression of the area. Bruce Hanson, Head of Tourism Development of the Broads Authority, accompanied the whole trip and many of my questions could be answered in discussions when travelling in between meetings.

The Broads Authority staff and all the stakeholders were all very cooperative and open in giving information I needed.

Verifier's assessment

Overall comment on the progress of the Charter area and its partners over the past five years:

The protected area has succeeded in developing the Tourism Forum into an active membership association called "Broads Tourism". A new brand for the region was established as suggested in the last verification. The region is now presented as a whole, overriding county boundaries and it identifies itself being a high quality sustainable tourism destination. The new website "www.enjoythebroads.com" gives an example of best practice of how to combine the presentation of special qualities and practical information for visitors in a very attractive way.

As to visitor management new agreements have been made including zoning for water skiing and voluntary arrangements to reduce disturbance for wildfowl in winter. Safety regulations for boating which include environmental codes are now also integrated as video clips on both the Broad Authority's and the new tourism website.

Progress has been made on involving partners in the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

Due to financial cuts there is a concentration on three visitor centres, strategically situated in order to reach as many visitors as possible. Guided tours by e-boat and solar boat and the How Hill visitor centre still remain exceptional highlights for bringing the visitor close to nature.

Main strengths (relating to the Charter process and related tourism activities in this Charter area)

Major progress has been made on the following issues:

- "Broads Tourism"
Broads Tourism has developed into a strong partnership organisation with a practical approach. It brings tourism businesses together and cements the partnership with a "Quality Pledge". They have made progress in bringing a joint approach to marketing activities, and though it is business orientated the Broads Authority is making a major contribution to their work and has an important role to play.
- The "Broads Brand"
The Broads Brand is the accepted corporate identity and design of the partnership which includes the special qualities of the landscape. It is communicated through a comprehensive design guide amongst partners.
- www.enjoythebroads.com
The new tourism website, which is very practical to use, includes the special qualities of the landscape and lists the members of the Quality Charter, Green Businesses. It also has a special page for people with disabilities
- "Green Business Scheme"
The nationwide scheme was promoted and a pilot for boating businesses was developed. There was an increase of accredited tourism businesses joining it.
- "Broads Quality Charter"
This is an on-going scheme awarding restaurants and pubs introducing bronze, silver and gold status for performance and the continued publication of an eating-out guide. It is to be extended in the framework of the nationwide "Taste" scheme.

- Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre
A well-run centre which offers a wide range of water-based activities, educational activities; it is a major attraction strategically located at the outskirts of Norwich city centre and able to reach large numbers of visitors and residents.

Moreover, strengths mentioned in the last evaluation were maintained:

- Water-based opportunities
for activities such as boating, sailing and canoeing
- Being close to nature
Attractive opportunities for being close to nature, and getting wildlife experiences on guided tours by e-boat, solar boat and self-guided trails
- Conservation management in partnership
 - bringing wetlands back to nature for conservation and enjoyment objectives
 - introduction of zoning for activities, areas open/closed for boating, voluntary restrictions
 - influence on and control of boating activities as the Broads Authority is the navigation authority which gives out the permits for boating
- Provision and quality development of moorings
Revision and implementation of a “Mooring strategy” to improve the infrastructures
- Access for disabled people
Also including boating and sailing activities as examples of good practice
- Cycle and canoe hire network
A network established by the Broads Authority with businesses working in close cooperation including training and the work on suggestions for routes and being a member of the tourism partnership
- Training programmes in traditional crafts
Programmes were continued with the help of funding. They have also tourism connections. This includes reed- and sedge-cutting and mill-wrighting programmes.
- Communication
The Broads Authority has developed a number of activities especially for local people, and also for visitors to find out what is going, with opportunities to contribute. This includes a newsletter and a visitor newspaper “Broadcaster”, feedback processes via the website and many possibilities of being involved in the Broads Authority’s planning processes which is well documented on the authorities website.

Main weaknesses (relating to the Charter process and related tourism activities in this Charter area)

The following points are not so much weaknesses but rather threats which could affect future development negatively:

- Forum changed into a business organisation
Though the foundation of Broads Tourism was a major step and has developed to be a strength of the region, a wider approach will be needed regarding the tourism forum. Local authorities and conservation organisations as well as heritage interests need to be further involved. Moreover, the tourism forum as it is now naturally focuses on issues connected

with the practical implementation by tourism businesses, such as marketing activities. The wider approach of tourism issues, e.g. education, training, interpretation, environmental projects, visitor facilities, infrastructure, visitor management etc., are not likely to be taken on by this organisation but will need an additional wider forum.

- Tourism and recreation issues split up within the authority
Many departments of the authority are involved in tourism and recreation issues (communication, interpretation, education, conservation, navigation, etc.). The post of recreation & tourism development – which will be the “STEP project officer” in the future – seems to be dealt with as something extra on top. It is in danger of being made redundant in the future though it was the main force for driving the tourism strategy and action plan forward. This is illustrated by the fact that the tourism strategy, action plan and implementation are not really integrated into the authority’s website (strategy of 2006, mention of the tourism forum of 2003) and in its overall implementation surveys and reports.
- Broads Authority’s presence and label
The new Broads Brand and also the new website integrates the Broads Authority’s values very well. The Broads Quality Charter is using the dragonfly (which is the symbol of the Broads Authority) in its logo. It thus makes the connection between the Broads Authority and accredited businesses in the context of sustainable tourism. However, the Broads Brand does not use the dragonfly in order not to mix up the Broads Authority with Broads Tourism being the responsible author.
There is the danger that the Broads’ identity with its special messages and offers steps back behind the brand and its potential as a special quality label is not used. For the visitor it is difficult to identify special offers, activities and facilities of the Broads and be aware of the Broads when in the area.

Moreover, these two fields would need further development:

- Signage
Signage - especially as to getting to water-based activities and making links from water based activities to land based attractions - is weakly developed.
- Cycling infrastructure – waymarking routes for cycling and walking
Cycling and walking are popular activities, also in connection with boating. Progress has been made with information on suggested routes. But the offer is still fragmented and the opportunities for cycling in quiet off road situations with no traffic are few.

Conclusions and recommendations for the Charter area:

- **The Broads needs to maintain a guiding role**

Working with partners can release the Broads Authority’s budget. The transformation of the Tourism Forum into “Broads Tourism” brought a more practical approach and it is more likely now that the members take the lead to go ahead with implementing parts of the action plan. New ways of operating visitor centres with partners are being developed.

However, tourism implies a lot of issues not only connected with tourism businesses.

The Broads Authority should maintain its key role in guiding the process of sustainable tourism development in the area. Many fields of its work are closely connected with tourism issues (e.g. information, interpretation, navigation, conservation, heritage, management, access, education). Thus it is important not only to create a well-working “cross-departmental” system but also to communicate tourism issues as a whole within and outside the Authority. It is also important to feed this continuously into the work of the Broads

Tourism and tourism forum.

Even when facing financial cuts, the Broads Authority cannot afford to withdraw staff from tourism and take a role of mere attendance at tourism meetings. It needs to continue its work of being the driving engine, and take a key role.

The future development of sustainable tourism will need an overall body which has the quality of all issues in mind and can act with an integrated approach. This will imply at least one dedicated member of staff for tourism in order to

- follow a cross-sectional approach within the Authority to get tourism and recreational issues together and communicate it to the forum;
- organise, steer and supervise the implementation of the action plan;
- monitor the results;
- find, motivate and supervise partners for implementation;
- widen the forum, bringing interest groups together;
- organise working groups focused on practical issues and implementation.

- **Organising and supervising the implementation process**

Apart from indicators which can measure the general effects of the actions it will be necessary as a part of the planning process that these actions are worked out in more detail, including the means of application and the steps to be taken. This is essential, not only for the steering of the implementation process but also for the re-evaluation, so it is clear what stage of implementation each action has reached.

The tourism strategy contains a chapter on structures for coordination and action as well as on monitoring which should serve as a guideline.

- **Widen the range of the forum and membership**

“Broads Tourism” is a successful approach for establishing a coordinating body in tourism development involving public and private stakeholders. Still, there is a danger of developing a “closed shop” focused on the business and marketing side, and the loss of the original idea of a wider forum where tourism issues can be discussed in the round.

This is also expressed by the organisation’s slogan “the voice of the tourism businesses” that works for bringing businesses together but does not work for a membership organisation with a wider approach. However, the membership meetings are still called “Broads Tourism Forum” and this title should be maintained in the future in order to give the signal that it is open to a wide range of stakeholders.

Broads Tourism should continue as an active coordinating body, and as a forum. As also expressed in the tourism strategy, it should seek to widen the range of interest groups and increase participation, especially of local community bodies and conservation organisations. This will also be of vital importance when implementing the action plan, where a wider range of partners is needed to support implementation and take responsibility for actions. This will also imply the raising of awareness of the Broads Plan being the framework for the tourism strategy.

In this context Broads Tourism or the Broads Authority should set up a wider steering group and maybe set up working groups for implementation.

For the future it will be advisable to regularly highlight the wider range of issues connected with tourism (e.g. interpretation, training, navigation, conservation management, biodiversity,

cultural heritage) for a broader forum.

- **Avoiding duplication**

Broads Tourism is working in the field of marketing where other organisations like Norfolk Tourism are major players. Broads Tourism fills a gap in order to cover an area orientated on the landscape and not on political boundaries. However, it will be important to avoid “double marketing” so it should build on the advantage that it covers a wider area than other organisations do. It should feed the information into other regional organisations to make use of, and thus contribute to, regional marketing and focus on the development of the tourism product in the area.

- **Highlighting the Broads – using it as a label**

The Broads Authority should seek that it is present and prominent in the area and in tourism communication. The tourism offers of the Broads Authority are something special and they should be highlighted as high-quality nature experiences provided by the Broads Authority. Moreover, other outdoor offers and guided services could be labeled if they meet quality criteria which could be developed in this context.

In addition, the Broads Authority’s activities in recreation and tourism cannot be seen in the tourism marketing context only. The offer of the Broads Authority is also about creating awareness of the natural and cultural heritage and conservation context, its products and facilities are connected with special know-how and finally the Authority is the key player responsible for management and planning.

There should be an integrated approach to communicate these aspects in tourism.

- **Development of cycling and walking**

More can be done for the development of promotion, packages and in making walking and cycling attractive tourism products connected with the qualities of the area. Especially long-distance routes, e.g. the Wherryman’s Way offers a potential to be more used and connected. For cycling a waymarking system, and access to safe routes with no traffic, would be desirable. A joint approach of the districts is needed which the Authority/Broads Tourism could take the lead.

- **Signage**

A strategy for and implementation of a signage system could improve connections between water- and land-based activities, and also as guidance to water-based activities.

- **Development of an integrated interpretation strategy**

In the planned integrated interpretation strategy it will be advisable to make cross-references to the communication strategy and the Broads Brand, and also to integrate other partners who are active in the field of interpretation (e.g. conservation organisations). This will be essential to make sure that the right messages come across, that the key themes are covered and that visitor centres can also complement each other.

- **Visitor management plan**

A spatial analysis including sensitive zones and zones of tourism interest, conflict, potential, etc., could contribute as a practical tool to future planning.

General information about the Charter area - Section A of questionnaire

I. Has full and clear factual information been supplied by the Charter area in answer to sections A1 – A14 of the Application Report framework? [3]

The Broads Authority has answered all the questions giving concise summaries so they contained the essential information needed. One could get a good overview.

II. Additional/amended information not contained in the protected area's application:

- Broads Tourism, Quality Pledge, membership renewal pack
- Minutes of Broads Tourism & executive committee 2009, 2010, 2011
- Minutes of Broads Forum (2/2011)
- List of members of Broads Tourism & Executive Committee, Broads Forum, stakeholder workshop
- Broads Authority Staff Structure Chart 2011
- Broads Brand Design Guide
- Enjoy the Broads – brochure
- Broads Outdoor Festival, Programme
- Newspaper article series April 2011 on Outdoors Festival
- Broadcaster - visitor guide 2011
- Broads explorer – e-newsletter, May 2011
- Broads Quality Charter – Eating out guide 2011
- Broads by Bike guide
- Discover the Broads – A guide to 12 days out
- selection of leaflets on tourism sites visited, regional tourism brochures
- Broads Plan, draft 2011
- Mooring strategy 2009
- Implementation and performance monitoring report 2007/2008
- Market opportunities from the Environment, 2006
- www.broads-authority.gov.uk
- www.enjoythebroads.com
- www.visitnorfolk.co.uk
- www.thebroadsbybike.org.uk
- www.outdoorsfestival.co.uk
- websites of the districts on tourism

III. Any information not available, and reasons for this:

It was not possible to get a list of attendance or minutes of the tourism forum which is mentioned to have discussed the tourism strategy (11 Nov 2011) – Nor was it possible to get an answer whether Norfolk Tourism is a member of the Broads Forum

only because it is not mentioned in the meetings of Broads Tourism.

IV. Are you satisfied that the information supplied is accurate? [2]

It was satisfactory on the whole, though documentation of meetings and membership was not easy to get hold of.

V. Are there any factual issues that might affect the eligibility of the protected area for re-award of the Charter?

No

Meeting the Charter principles - Section B of questionnaire

*Note: Areas in **grey shading** indicate particularly important points which are critical for successful evaluation. They correspond to the shaded areas in the Application Report. **NEVER type within the shaded area**, please.*

Principle 1 – Partnership with local tourism stakeholders

1.1 Briefly describe the current structure of the forum (or equivalent arrangement) through which the protected-area authority works with others on the development and management of tourism, including current size and membership, frequency of meetings, etc.: [2]

The Broads Authority has established more than one body which offers opportunities for stakeholders to contribute and discuss development issues. Broads Tourism (“The Broads Tourism Forum”) is the main body considered to be the tourism forum and responsible for the implementation of the strategy.

“Broads Tourism Forum” was established in 2003. It is focused on tourism development itself, especially in context with tourism businesses and marketing. In 2010 it changed its name to “Broads Tourism” in order to demonstrate the practical approach focusing on organising action and implementation.

Recently Broads Tourism has more than 50 members in total. It is organised as a membership organisation with an annual fee depending on the type of organisation and size of the business. The members are obliged to sign a “Quality pledge”. The idea of sustainable development and working in partnership involving a wide range of stakeholders is part of the association’s philosophy.

There are three members’ meetings (= forum) every year which are attended by about 20-30 members. Apart from the exchange and discussion the organisers try to motivate members to come by including inputs on current tourism themes.

The executive committee consisting of 12 members meets every month, with a general attendance of about 8 members.

The “Broads Forum” is another instrument of the Broads used for discussion and exchange with various stakeholders. It is not focused on tourism but covers the whole of the Broads Authority’s issues. Still many of them have connections with tourism in a wider than business context. (e.g. visitor management, access, navigation, education, information, cultural heritage) The Broads Forum meets on a quarterly

basis and consists of 25 stakeholders representing a wide range of interest groups.

There are also other forums for exchange like on local access or area groups based on river valleys which have regular meetings to discuss issues including tourism.

How has this forum developed or changed over the past five years (in terms of its work, membership and the partnerships within it)?

The forum changed to become the membership organisation “Broads Tourism” with an emphasis on tourism businesses and on practical action. The Broads Authority is still present and sends up to five members of staff to the meetings and is also member of the executive committee.

Membership numbers have risen steadily from 30 in 2008 to 48 which have already signed up for 2011. The renewal is underway at the moment and it is expected that in total there will be more than 50 partners.

Great achievements have been made in developing the forum into a body which is able to involve businesses and changing it more into a working group with a focus on business related projects (website, corporate identity, tourism products, communication etc.). This is also underlined by the implementation of a smaller steering group which meets more frequently.

Thus relations with businesses could be strengthened along with creating a Broads identity which is closely connected with the Broads.

Up to 2009 when the former strategy was presented at a meeting members were not really aware of its existence or the responsibility of the forum for implementing it (minutes of membership meeting in 5/2009). After this meeting the will to take ownership of the strategy grew and is now much stronger.

However taking a business focus had the consequence that businesses are the majority of the forum, and that the full range of interest groups is not really covered by this body. (e.g. local parishes, conservation, education, heritage).

Though various consultation bodies exist and a wide range of stakeholders are covered, a body is missing which focuses on tourism issues across various fields and covers the bigger picture of tourism with issues beyond the tourism business side. (e.g. training, water management, biodiversity, heritage, interpretation, tourism infrastructure, signage etc.)

1.2 Are local tourism enterprises involved? [3]

The majority of “Broads Tourism” are tourism businesses (46 out of 55 members) which is also reflected by its slogan “The voice for Broads tourism businesses”.

Tourism businesses in the wider Broads Forum are represented by their regional tourism and boating organisations. (3 members out of 25)

Please describe how the Charter area has progressed and strengthened relationships with local businesses:

Major progress has been made towards creating a strong identity for the area by establishing Broads Tourism as a membership organisation with a clear philosophy which is very much connected with the ideas of the Charter. As a result the “Broads

Brand” has been introduced and is already applied by many partners. It includes a guide for the corporate identity including texts, logos and photography which the members can use.

The new website and visitor guide are successful marketing tools which show the Broads region as a whole. Developing the forum into a membership organisation with an executive committee has resulted in a more practical approach and in strengthening the links to businesses. The fact that nearly all of the major tourism enterprises joined may serve as an indicator.

Have any schemes been set up to link businesses more closely with the Charter area/Charter implementation?

Such schemes are not obligatory for re-award of the Charter

See above:

- Broads Tourism as a membership organisation with a quality pledge and shared philosophy of partnership and sustainable tourism development
- Introduction of the Broads Brand as a corporate identity
- The continuation of the “Broads Quality Charter” as a quality scheme for restaurants
- Efforts to get businesses involved in the Green Tourism Business Scheme

1.3 Has involvement of the following key groups progressed satisfactorily over the past five years?

“Broads Tourism” as the main body involved in tourism development is very much focused on tourism businesses and concentrating on practical work with them. However districts, tourism organisations, cultural heritage and the church are also members and others get invited to the meetings.

In comparison the “Broads Forum” takes a wider approach in its work and thus involves a wider range of stakeholders coming from different interest groups.

1.3.1 The local community? [1]

Local communities are not as much present at “Broads Tourism”. One parish has entered as a member. The wider “Broads Forum” has four members from local communities.

1.3.2 Conservation interests? [2]

In “Broads Tourism” conservation interest is mainly covered by the Broads Authority itself. The Authority is always present with up to five representatives coming from different departments including conservation. Invitations are also sent out to other conservation organisations and Broads Tourism is seeking to involve them as members. The wider “Broads Forum” has three members from conservation organisations.

1.3.3 Wider (regional) bodies responsible for tourism, conservation and regional development? [2]

Five out of six districts are members of Broads Tourism. One of them – Norwich - is presented by its tourist organisation. Three of the districts are applying the Brand or at least the logo in their marketing (website).

Moreover the regional tourist organisation responsible for both counties is a member .

From the impression during the visit Norfolk tourism (covering one of the counties) has strong links with the Broads Authority and supports the tourism strategy. Still from the papers and meetings minutes I could not identify it as being a member of Broads Tourism but of the wider Broads Forum only.

The wider Broads Forum has three members presenting wider tourism organisations, two of them are also involved in Broads Tourism.

1.3.4 Any other key groups (please state which), either within or outside the formal partnership structure described above, which have been actively involved? [2]

As members in Broads Tourism (Forum)

- Broads spirituality (Broads Tourism)
- Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust (Broads Tourism)

As members in the wider Broads Forum

- Boating / water based recreational interest groups
- Land based recreational interest groups
- Fishing / angling interest groups
- Farming and landowning interest groups
- Education interest groups
- Cultural heritage / landscape interest groups
- Local charities

Principle 2 – Sustainable tourism strategy and action plans

Implementation over the past 5 years

2.1 Overall comment on the progress of the Charter area towards excellence in sustainable tourism, bearing in mind where it started from five years ago

The forum developed into a membership organisation Broads Tourism which takes a practical approach and succeeded in involving almost all major tourism businesses. Working in partnership is one of the purposes of Broads Tourism and the contents of the obligatory membership pledge reflect the ideas of sustainable tourism.

The Broads Brand has been introduced, is applied by a wide range of partners and is contributing to a shared identity and to the development as a destination.

The “Enjoy the Broads” website and marketing campaign which reflects the qualities and contains practical information for the visitor.

The continuation of quality development in the environmental context illustrated by

- the Moorings Strategy
- the introduction of an eco-boat design, more e-boats
- the increase of Green Tourism businesses
- the continuation of the Broads Quality Charter “Eating out Guide”
- the establishment of also big visitor attractions which follow a high quality sustainable tourism approach

Water Space Management Plans and zoning activities, voluntary arrangements have

been established and new areas have been taken under conservation management.

Increasing the number of opportunities to experience nature and water-based activities for the widest possible audience.

Development and restoration work at key heritage sites.

A recent newspaper article published in the context of the Outdoors Festival whilst the verification visit summarises the impression well:

“Not only was the Broads Authority responsible for turning the tide to help preserve this glorious wetland for future generations, but its commitment to sustainable tourism, in partnership ... has helped open land access to waterways... and made it possible to enjoy the quietly outstanding charms of a wildlife haven...” (Eastern Daily Press, 11th April 2011)

2.2 Could all of the planned actions be implemented? If not, how much of the action plan was implemented (estimate)?

An estimate was made that approximately 75 % of the action plan has been implemented. My impression was that this figure might be a bit optimistic, but I would agree to the estimate of 75% of the actions which have been at least addressed but some activity if they were not completed on the whole.

2.3 Main reason for the Charter area not being able to complete the full programme (if applicable)?

It was a very ambitious plan..., as we started out with very limited resources and it took some time to win over the Broads Tourism Forum. New action started especially in 2009 along with the funding of the STEP project and Broads Tourism as a more efficiently working forum. From the minutes of forum meetings it can be seen that it was not until May 2009 that the main aspects of the strategy were presented and the the forum became aware of its existence and their responsibility for implementation. Despite this situation some progress had been made up to that point.

2.4 What are the most positive achievements in your view?

The implementation of Broads Tourism as a membership organisation connected with the shared regional identity of the Broads Brand and the introduction of the new website “www.enjoythebroads.com”

2.5 What are the main challenges still faced?

Getting the districts and their tourism organisations on board with the Brand and into Broads Tourism, and involving a wider range of partners outside tourism businesses such as conservation organisations.

Maintaining the practical approach for businesses, along with creating a wide forum which covers a wider range of stakeholders - addressing all tourism issues in an integrated approach.

The danger of delegating tourism issues/actions to other partners with the Broads Authority just attending and gradually withdrawing from its role as a key steering partner in sustainable tourism.

Maintaining the Broads Authority’s role as a main engine to integrate different

stakeholders in all aspects of tourism and its role of steering and supervising the implementation of the strategy.

Cross-communication of issues connected with tourism between the departments of the Broads Authority, and feeding the results into the work of the forum.

Development of attractive packages: use of long distance trails, superior short breaks in connection with the Broads Authority's qualities.

Development of cycling and walking (infrastructure, signing, information).

Creating connections from water to land-based activities and attractions.

Development of an interpretation strategy and implementing an "interpretation family" in CD, contents and messages.

Monitoring results

2.6 Has the Charter area monitored the results of its action plan over the past five years? [2]

Some indicators can be taken from visitor surveys conducted when revising the tourism strategy. These can be compared to the one from five years ago.

Other data defined in the indicators are available and have been used for the assessment in the tourism strategy.

However a more systematic approach of monitoring the implementation is not evident. Future monitoring should look at the effects, but as a first step also monitor to what degree actions have been addressed and fulfilled. A better monitoring approach is also suggested in the new action plan.

Recommendations from the verifier and Evaluation Committee

2.7 Have the specific recommendations made by the verifier and Evaluation Committee at original evaluation 5 years ago been addressed? [2]

Please list the recommendations and give a score for each:

- Setting up a working structure [2]
- Raising the identity and ownership of the strategy and action plan [2]
- The Broads Brand for the whole region [3]
- Communication and interpretation strategy [2]
- Improved distribution of the Broads Authority's media in tourism [3]
- Develop packages [1]
- Networking visitor centres [2]
- Signage system [0]
- Visitor management plan & monitoring effects [2]
- Hiking and cycling map [2]

Resources for implementation

2.8 How did the budget available for implementation of the action plan develop over the past five years?

The budget was insufficient initially but the STEP programme has greatly increased it.

2.9 Were the financial resources available for implementation more, less or the same as originally planned?

In the last evaluation it was clear that the action plan contained a rough calculation along with priorities. There was no fixed funding scheme but ideas of where to apply for money and the plan to get partners involved for implementation.

2.10 Were they sufficient for implementation of the plan?

The Broads Authority states “yes” – and it is also my impression that a lot was achieved even though the budget was low and the staff limited. Of course more could have been done if there had been more staff resources – as suggested in the last evaluation report - and a higher budget.

2.11 Have there been changes in staffing levels, both in the Charter area generally and in the staff dealing with tourism issues, over the past five years?

It was mentioned several times during the visit that the Broads Authority had to face a reduction of 20-30 percent of its budget and staff.

2.12 Has the level of staffing affected implementation of the action plan?

No. However due to financial changes the head of tourism at the Broads Authority is financed on a project basis at the moment and it will be essential to find money for this post when the project is finished.

Plans for the next five years

Revision of strategy, new action plan

2.13 Has the tourism strategy been revised for the next five years? [3]

Yes. A comprehensive tourism strategy has been carried out. It includes

- Assessment including SWOT analysis, surveys, progress made since 2005
- Strategy with vision and objectives
- Action plan with 49 actions in the following fields
 - Brand awareness
 - Consistent quality
 - Geographical spread
 - Distinctive experiences
 - Waterway excellence
 - Environmental responsibility
 - Business climate
- Plan for implementation and monitoring the action plan

2.14 Has a new action plan been prepared for the Charter area and its partners? [3]

Yes. The revision of the strategy and action plan was carried out by a professional tourism consultancy (The Tourism Company, Ledbury) which had also developed the strategy/action plan for the previous five years.

2.15 How are the strategy and new action plan presented (in terms of documents)?

Strategy and action plan have been produced in one document (Word file). Graphic designing of the whole report will follow in order to produce a publication.

2.16 Briefly describe the process(es) and timetable(s) for both reviewing/revising the strategy and developing the new action plan with the partners, making reference to the forum or partnership structures described under question B1 above and the involvement of local stakeholders.

The strategy revision process took place from June–December 2010
It included an extensive research and consultation process:

- Analysis of tourism data, reports, policy documents, market research
- Analysis of responses to a public consultation on the Broads Plan
- Face-to face visitor survey
- Online-survey of tourism enterprises
- Structured interviews with key stakeholders and organisations

The strategy and action plan were discussed in two meetings of members of the Broads Tourism Forum/Broads Tourism:

- 11th November 2010 – Broads Tourism Forum / Broads Tourism
- 30th November 2010 – stakeholder workshop

The draft strategy was sent out to all consultees for consideration e.g. it was also presented and discussed in the wider Broads Forum.

The final version was published in January 2011.

2.17 How does the tourism strategy relate to the protected-area management plan?

The Broads Plan has been revised and is to be published in spring 2011. The draft is available as a download on the internet and there has been a wide consultation.

The Broads Plan works as the general strategic framework for the Broad's development. It covers tourism in an extra chapter. The strategic objectives and means to achieve are well related to the tourism strategy and there are many cross references to be found.

Moreover other chapters cover tourism and recreation issues complementary to the tourism strategy (e.g. Landscape and Cultural Heritage, Biodiversity, Agriculture and Land Management, Management of Navigation, Education and Interpretation, Volunteering) More cross-references to these could be made in the tourism strategy and also in the work of Broads Tourism creating a stronger awareness of the Broads Plan being the general framework to the strategy.

2.18 Are there any apparent contradictions between tourism and protected-area management objectives and actions?

No

Assessment (see notes in self-assessment questionnaire)

2.19 Has there been any further assessment of natural and cultural resources, their sensitivities (capacity) and opportunities for tourism? [2]

The tourism strategy contains a good overview of the natural and cultural resources in connection with tourism.

Steps have been taken to reinforce the landscape character of the area.

A survey has been completed of all listed and scheduled heritage assets to identify those most at risk.

Though zones of limited and no access exist and there is an on-going monitoring, these surveys do not include statements of carrying-capacity. The question of e.g. how many boats are seen as an optimum as to ecology as well as to tourism is frequently risen at meetings.

2.20 Has there been any further assessment of visitor patterns and needs? [3]

A visitor survey which can be compared to the one of 2005 was carried out in the context of the tourism strategy. It resulted in 1027 completed questionnaires. Moreover other sources of visitor data were available and used. The strategy contains a detailed chapter on visitor profiles and their response.

2.21 Has there been any further assessment of future visitor markets offering potential? [3]

Detailed chapters on the market context and future target markets are covered in the tourism strategy. Moreover a study on the market opportunities of the environment was carried out.

Implementation

2.22 Does the new action plan include an indication of phasing/staging of action over time? [2]

There is a rough first grid as to stages and priorities. The action plan also contains a table in which all 49 actions in 7 fields of objectives are listed. One column indicates in which year the main effort for implementation should be taken. 29 actions are indicated as having priority. When it comes to implementation each action will need further detailing as to sub-targets, means and work-stages.

2.23 Does the action plan indicate the relevant stakeholders or partners for each action? [2]

Yes, for each action the principal stakeholders which may be relevant for implementation are listed. Amongst other stakeholders like local authorities, tourism organisations, conservation or heritage bodies either the Broads Authority or the Broads Tourism Forum/Broads Tourism are listed in the vast majority of the actions. This illustrates the vital importance of both bodies for actively taking part and surveying the implementation process and the need for the Broads Authority to carry on with investing staff in this issue.

2.24 What is the size of the budget that the protected-area authority is devoting to the implementation of the new action plan per year, excluding staff costs?

£ 200.000 is budgeted over the next two years, to augment the STEP budget, but the budget beyond that is undecided.

What is this as a percentage of its total budget?

The total budget for 2010 / 2011 is £ 6.7 mio

2.25 Have funds been provided (or are they being sought) from other sources?

Yes, additionally to the STEP project

- Interreg Two Seas project will provide for € 500.000
- Rural Development Programme for England
- Sustainable Development Fund

2.26 Do you judge the level of funding already secured/applied for to be sufficient to meet the action proposed? [2]

We will always want more money – there is always something else to do!

As in the last verification it is early days at this stage since it is not clear what additional funding will be found. Also the actions are only roughly calculated so far and make approximately a total of £ 2.4 mio for implementation. A great deal of the action plan can be implemented and is already dedicated to the programmes mentioned above (STEP/Two Seas)

2.27 What is the staffing that the protected-area authority is devoting to the implementation of the action plan?

One full post (Head of Tourism Development) Also other parts of the administration are partly working in tourism issues (e.g. communication, interpretation, education, visitor services, conservation management, navigation).

Revision of the staff structure meant that the “Head of Tourism” has been cancelled in 2011 and is now called “STEP project officer”. At this stage it was not clear whether the Broads Authority will continue with this post in the long term when STEP/Two Seas project has finished.

It will be essential to have a main responsible staff member for bringing the tourism threads of the different departments in the Authority together, as well as to guide and supervise the tourism action plan and the strategy in the long term.

2.28 Is staffing being provided from other sources?

No, but much work is done in partnership with other organisations.

2.29 Do you believe the action proposed can be implemented with this level of staffing?

I think the post of the Head of Tourism Development has to be continued by all means possible. Especially when the Broads Authority wants to maintain its leading role in steering and implementing the sustainable tourism strategy. There is also the need to more cross-communicate tourism issues of the various departments and bring them together in an integrated overview. (e.g. the official Broads Authority's website still mentions a forum of 2003 and the former tourism strategy)

Commitment of partners

2.30 Is there a good indication of commitment from other partners to implementing the new action plan? [2]

The key partner is the Broads Tourism Forum. Since the ownership of the sustainable tourism strategy with the Broads Tourism Forum/Broads Tourism has improved there is also a rise in awareness that it is the body which is responsible for carrying on with the implementation of the action plan. This intention was clear from the meetings and the people I met during the visit.

Planning has not got beyond this stage and it is also in this context that the implementation process will need Broads Authority staff to steer and supervise it, to find partners for projects, delegate work and set up project orientated working groups.

2.31 Does the Charter area have any formal arrangements with partners for implementation of this action plan?

No. But Broads Tourism is very much identifying with the strategy and willing to take a lead.

Monitoring results

2.32 Have indicators been identified for monitoring the results of the strategy/new action plan? [2]

General indicators have been defined for the effects of the actions. Apart from this the strategy suggests a more systematic approach on monitoring the implementation of actions and gives guidelines.

2.33 Comment briefly on the planned level and methodology of monitoring.

The action plan suggests key indicators for monitoring in the following fields:

- Volume and spread of tourism
- Visitor satisfaction
- Tourism enterprise performance and satisfaction
- Community reaction
- Environmental impact

Additional surveys apart from the existing data on visitors and enterprises will be needed. The action plan includes a chapter on “monitoring” which recommends that more attention should be paid to the monitoring process in the future and suggests guidelines for surveys which include:

- Making use of the existing data on volume and value of tourism

Undertaking surveys on:

- Visitors feedback
- Performance and opinion of tourism enterprises
- Local communities feedback
- Physical checks on visitor flows and impacts

Apart from these indicators for measuring the general effects of the actions it will be necessary as a part of the planning process for the actions to be worked out in more detail - including the methods to be applied and steps to be taken. This is essential not only for the steering of the implementation process but also for the re-evaluation to note what stage of implementation each action has reached.

Addressing key issues

Specific action that the Charter looks for in the action plan, Principles 3 to 10

A: *Progress over the past five years*

B: *Level of implementation of action plan*

C: *Planned activity in new plan*

Principle 3 – Protecting natural and cultural heritage

3.1 Monitoring impact on flora and fauna and controlling tourism in sensitive locations A [2] B [2] C [2]

Much effort has been spent on management and development programmes for conservation, which also included bringing extensive areas of wetland into conservation management and new Water Space Management Plans. Wildlife is monitored and mapped also in the context of wide areas being under European designation for their nature conservation interest.

From comments in the documents (e.g. Broads Plan, meetings Broads Forum, Broads Tourism) sometimes the need for a closer look at potential carrying capacities is mentioned. The Broads Plan mentions a decrease of biodiversity in some places – not necessarily to do with visitors.

However the increase of visitor numbers of more than 1 mio since 2005 shows the need for further monitoring which is also suggested in the action plan.

3.2 Encouraging activities, including tourism uses, which support the maintenance of historic heritage, culture and traditions A [2] B [2] C [3]

There are on-going activities of training programmes on the disappearing skills of traditional trades such as reed and sedge cutting and millwrighting which have played a major role in shaping the cultural landscape. Also restoration work has been done and a listed building plan and action plan have been worked out.

In the future heritage sites and themes shall be more linked to tourism products.

3.3 Action to control development (including tourism) which would adversely affect the quality of landscapes, air and water; use non-renewable energy; and create unnecessary waste and noise A [3] B [3] C [3]

The Broads Authority is the planning authority for the Broads. Especially with the “Local Development Framework” – with its planning policy documents – and “The Planning for Real” project the authority developed means to steer spatial development. This aspect is well covered but looks more part of other Authority strategies than the tourism strategy.

The tourism action plan mentions an action to protect landscapes and biodiversity from intrusion by tourism or other purposes.

3.4 Action to reduce tourism activities which adversely affect the quality of landscapes, air and water; use non-renewable energy; and create unnecessary waste and noise A [3] B [3] C [3]

Much progress has been made in involving businesses in the Green Tourism Business Scheme which is also prominently promoted in visitor information and on the tourism website. Also some high quality major tourism businesses and attractions are part of the scheme and can serve as examples of good practice.

Safety codes and environmental behaviour for boating are integrated in the information such as the tourism newspaper “Broadcaster” and shown as video clips on the tourism website.

A boat hire company is piloting adapting the Green Tourism Business Scheme with special criteria applying to boating, and along with e-boats some boats with environmentally friendly design are in place.

These issues as well as sustainability management shall be further developed and promoted.

3.5 Encouraging visitors and the tourism industry to contribute to conservation (e.g. “visitor payback” schemes) A [2] B [2] C [3]

The Broads Charitable Trust was established. This will manage the money raised by the planned visitor payback scheme. The establishment of the visitor payback scheme will be part of the STEP project.

Principle 4 – Meeting visitor needs/quality of experience

4.1 Surveys to measure visitor satisfaction A [2] B [2] C [3]

A visitor survey has been made in the course of the first and the new tourism strategy - it shall be continued. Moreover visitor surveys in visitor centres will be continued and they are suggested in the monitoring of the action plan.

4.2 Assessment of future visitor markets and their needs A [3] B [2] C [2]

A market survey has been carried out in the course of the first and the new tourism strategy. A market assessment is not part of the action plan, but actions were related to the findings of the market research. (specific marketing for niche markets, making use of the Olympics 2012)

4.3 Specific provision of facilities and information for disabled people

A [3*] B [3] C [3]

The Broads still is very much engaged in access for disabled people and information on this. With its water-based opportunities for disabled including sailing it is still outstanding and can serve as an example of good practice. The issue is actively promoted - e.g. it is presented prominently on the new website as an issue on its own. The offer covers: accessible boats, boardwalks, key attractions, braille nature trail, sailing activities, accessible website. A new fully accessible cruiser has been introduced. Also recent developments of tourism attractions have taken care of easy access issues.

Since the 'access for all' approach has not yet reached every aspect of the visit, the action plan envisions further development and training of e.g. accommodation in this respect.

4.4 Provision of facilities for economically disadvantaged people

A [3] B [3] C [3]

The Broads Authority is engaged in the MOSAIC project which aims creating links between minority groups and national parks by providing special programmes and events. It is part of the on-going STEP project and the continuation is part of the action plan.

4.5 Action to monitor the quality of facilities and services

A [2] B [3] C [2]

The members of the "Broads Quality Charter" which has quality criteria for restaurants including food, services, environment, interior etc. are checked annually. A new grading system has been introduced.

The Broads Authority's Mooring Strategy containing quality criteria, analysis and action for quality development has been developed with stakeholders and was revised in 2009. It serves as a key tool to monitor and further develop quality.

4.6 Action to improve the quality of facilities and services

A [3] B [2] C [3]

The members of Broads Tourism have to sign a "Quality pledge" as a general commitment which is not audited so far. Nevertheless it is a new tool to further motivate quality development.

Moreover the "Broads Quality Charter" is contributing to quality development of services, product and infrastructure in the restaurant sector. The scheme is still successful and widely promoted amongst visitors. The number of members is stable. Some quit the scheme when they had to pay for the verification, but new members have signed up. It will be carried on applying the nationwide "Taste" accreditation.

The quality of moorings has been further developed.

“Significant investment has been made” in major new developments of high quality tourism attractions including new attractions (a restaurant with leisure activities, a nature-based adventure park, based on the theme of the forest & bog) and the development of existing attractions (a garden) which all offer high quality. They are part of the Green Tourism Business Scheme and also members of Broads Tourism. They can all serve as examples of good practice in the field of private businesses following a successful high quality and sustainable tourism approach (BeWILDerwood, the Waterside, Fairhaven Woodland and Water Gardens)

“Consistent Quality” is one of the major fields of future action and many actions address this issue.

Principle 5 – Communication about the area

5.1 Sensitive promotion of the Charter area as a destination using authentic images and reflecting capacity/needs of the area, including times and locations A [3] B [3] C [3]

In general the promotional material of the tourism stakeholders is fulfilling this principle well. Regulations - especially for boating - are included in material like the Broad’s Tourism website and the Broadcaster.

Much progress has been made in connection with the new brand established for the Broads. It contains [appropriate sensitive images and messages and is being incorporated by tourism enterprises in their promotional material for 2011.](#)

Actions planned:

- [Spread the use of the Broads brand identity](#)
- [Maintain a Broads promotional campaign linked to the brand](#)

5.2 Influence on the promotional activities of others (region, enterprises, etc.) A [3] B [3] C [3]

Major progress has been made in this field. With Broads Tourism a big step has been made getting more partners into a joint approach in marketing. Along with the introduction of the Broads Brand the direct influence on tourism promotion has risen.

A design guide delivers logos, texts and photography and serves as a practical tool to steer promotional activities. Three of six districts and a good number of the members of Broad Tourism are already using the images.

Actions planned:

- [Spread the use of the Broads brand identity](#)
- [Maintain a Broads promotional campaign linked to the brand](#)

5.3 Provision of clear information material on where to go and what to do when in the area (guides, maps, websites – relevant languages) A [3*] B [2] C [3]

Much progress was made in developing a new website "www.enjoythebroads.com". It

can serve as an example of good practice:

- it is easy to read with a clear structure
- the very good portrait of the special natural and cultural qualities
- the connections for practical tourism use
- it has accessibility and green tourism as special themes
- it involves the tourism businesses

Moreover a new brochure containing attractions, things to do and see was published. However the former tourism map “Broads Mini guide” was not reprinted and it would still be useful, since it was very practical to use as it contained listed attractions combined with a more detailed map like the one in the brochure. A better map would also serve the intention of the tourism strategy to strengthen the links (water/land, city/protected area, North/South, nature/heritage)

On the whole the Authority wants to reduce printed information and has invested in modern technologies (web, e-guides, newsletter etc.) The approach of “less paper production” will be followed in the future, and the range of information and interpretation material will be reviewed.

A communication strategy for the Broads is about to be finished.

The review of tourism signing has not been taken on, and so far is not a part of the new action plan. It would still be advisable to integrate the development of tourism signing in the context of visitor management also, making links to attractions. Strategic planning is essential in this context especially as the Broads Authority wants to follow its approach of a reduced “panel presence” in the landscape.

Future actions in the action plan include:

- to strengthen information at moorings
- to show the full spectrum of wildlife experiences
- to provide orientation material on the whole of the Broads, creating more links
- to further promote walking and cycling

5.4 Provision of accessible information centres/points for visitors and local people A [2] B [2] C [2]

Due to financial cuts the Broads Authority has seen its own visitor centres reduced down to three. The other three will be continued by other partners (local authority, conservation organisation). The revision of visitor centres has been part of the former action plan.

The three remaining centres were strategically well chosen using two major gateways (city, boating hot spot, railway connection) and the third with How Hill at one of the Broads’ more peaceful natural highlights open to visitors. The visitor centres offer attractive opening times and a good range of services and connected activities including guided tours on e-boats and an indoor presentation on the Broads’ qualities.

How Hill with its attractions can still be seen an example of good practice combining outdoor experiences, interpretation, guided services and wildlife experiences.

5.5 Process for ensuring others (especially tourism enterprises) provide good information A [2] B [2] C [3]

“Broads Tourism” now exerts ‘peer pressure’ on member businesses through its Members Pledge.

Some key brochures are widely distributed in the area and the distribution has

improved.

- The newly developed: Enjoy the Broads – Broads Tourism brochure listing visitor attractions
- Broadcaster – tourism newspaper of the Broads Authority and its partners
- Eating Out Guide – listing businesses of the Broads Quality Charter

Planned actions:

- [Work with enterprises to improve local knowledge, visitor welcome and customer care.](#)
- [Promote the Broads Tourism Quality Pledge](#)

5.6 Provision of guiding services and an events programme for visitors and local people, including groups and schools A [3] B [2] C [3]

The Broads Authority works with and supports a number of organisations in the Broads to provide environmental education. Forest schools are taking place at the new visitor gateway of Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre.

Guided e-boat trips open to all start at visitor centres and are offered by the Broads Authority and other organisations.

The “Fun in the Broads” programme offering a wide range of nature and culture based guided activities of the Broads Authority and various partners (April-October) was continued.

As to new activities the “Outdoors Festival” – listed in the new action plan - was launched in May 2011. Its intention is to raise awareness of the area’s outdoor opportunities and qualities. It lasts nine days and covers a wide range of activities including walking, cycling, boating, art and photography including at places normally not open to the public. The festival is a shared initiative of the Broads Authority and Broads Tourism as main bodies.

In the future the programmes will be maintained.

Principle 6 – Tourism products relating to the Charter area

6.1 Provision/development of tourism offers (special events, holiday programmes, etc.) involving the discovery and interpretation of natural and cultural heritage A [3*] B [2] C [3]

The Broads Authority has continued with its popular interpretation programmes including guided tours on e-boats and a solar boat. The service especially in combination with strategically located visitor centres and exceptional surroundings is an example of good practice. (*)

Also other organisations (mainly conservation and heritage) are active in this field. New private businesses have also been developed offering guided tours and interpretation

New technology was introduced in interpretation including a modern giant touch

screen based programme “Wildlife Explorer” which will be installed in the three visitor centres. It includes top photography and video which is its main visual focus, regarding the text the information is more factual than interpretative. The other innovative new tool is an e-guide application for the i-phone using augmented reality interpretation.

Walking and cycling routes: the bike & canoe hire network initiated by the Broads Authority is still working. For cycling a brochure has been published suggesting itineraries and the leaflet with the overview is presented in Enjoy the Broads. Suggestions for walking tours including things to see on the way are now available on the Enjoythebroads website.

However walking and cycling could be further developed and promoted as suggested in the former and future action plan.

“Distinctiveness” remains a major field of action for the future. Actions include

- the revision of interpretive material
- the development of an integrative interpretation strategy
- the interpretation, linking of heritage themes and sites
- further development of walking and cycling opportunities
- the development of packaged breaks connected with special qualities
- the continuation of a year round programme of events

6.2 Effective promotion of these offers A [3] B [2] C [3]

The offer is well presented by promotional material. The Outdoor Festival is promoted through its own website, which is well linked to other tourism websites mentioned. The distribution of information was improved.

Future action includes

- clarification of the full spectrum of opportunities to see and enjoy wildlife at all levels
- better promotion of heritage sites and themes
- maintaining the promotion of a year round programme of events
- promoting packaged breaks connected with special qualities
- better promotion of opportunities for walking and cycling

Principle 7 – Training

7.1 Providing or supporting training programmes for staff of the Charter area, in sustainable tourism A [2] B [2] C [2]

This is an on-going part of the Authority’s work. No special action was indicated either in the former or in the future action plan.

7.2 Providing or supporting training of other organisations and tourism enterprises in sustainable tourism A [2] B [2] C [2]

The Authority has put on a number of training events throughout the period. These have included ‘Greening the Broads’ workshops on the Green Tourism Business

Scheme, and the 'Green Sky Thinking' conference (November 2009)

Future actions include:

- Strengthen engagement of enterprises in sustainability management
- 'Welcome Host Gold' training course including specific information about the special qualities of the Broads environment
- Work with enterprises to improve local knowledge, visitor welcome and customer care

Principle 8 – Community involvement and maintaining local quality of life

8.1 Involving local communities in the planning of tourism in the area

A [1] B [1] C [2]

The local community has been consulted in the development of the Broads Tourism strategy. The management plan as the planning framework including tourism and also other strategies which have tourism connections like access are widely consulted by the local communities.

However local communities are barely present on both the Broads Tourism/Tourism Forum and also on the stakeholder workshop preparing the strategy. The engagement of local community bodies in Broads Tourism is suggested in the tourism strategy as being important for further implementation.

8.2 Communication between the Charter area, local people and visitors

A [3] B [3] C [3]

Being the major planning authority the Broads Authority has established and continued a well-working communication and consultation system with the public. Public question times are possible at any of the committee's meetings and consultation processes on planning documents are part of this system.

- Well-advertised public meetings every year
- Posting news-sheets to every household in the area, inviting dialogue
- Website including feedback processes, showing all planning documents
- Communications manager
- Press releases – (e.g. a whole series on the Outdoor Festival)
- Broadcaster annual newspaper containing comprehensive range of information relevant to visitors and residents alike
- Visitor surveys

These processes shall be continued in the future. Further action includes

- Increasing local awareness and understanding of tourism issues
- Raising local residents' awareness of the Broads product
- Maintaining dialogue between tourism enterprises, landowners, investors and planners

8.3 Mechanisms for identifying and seeking to reduce any conflicts that may arise

A [3] B [3] C [3]

The Broads Authority's communication includes well-established opportunities to give feedback such as public question times and feedback processes within the websites. Planning documents are subject of a wide consultation process and are distributed and published on the authority's website (though the tourism strategy of 2011 is not on the website yet).

Moreover the wider Broads Forum as well as Broads Tourism offer opportunities to contribute and discuss.

"Planning for Real" was a project to get stakeholders together discussing planning issues in individual development projects from the environmental and tourism side of view.

This approach will be continued. The new strategy suggests a systematic approach for feedback processes from the local community, enterprises and visitors in order to monitor success.

Principle 9 – Benefits to the local community

9.1 Promoting the purchase of local products (food, crafts, local services) by visitors and local tourism businesses A [2] B [2] C [2]

The quality of the food offer has improved, with increased use of local produce and establishment of the Broads Quality Charter as a sustainable and nationally recognised accreditation.

Future action includes to promote and expand the Broads Quality Charter - Taste scheme.

9.2 Encouraging the employment of local people in tourism A [1] B [1] C [2]

Participation in skills development and training was part of the old action plan, but there was no significant progress. City College Norwich is one of only a small number of Centres of Vocational Excellence for training in the hospitality industry in England. The reality is that the local industry struggles to find sufficient quality staff.

Training for existing and future staff is again an action in the new action plan.

9.3 Development of tourism in association with traditional economic activity (e.g. agriculture) A [3] B [3] C [3]

The Authority has continued and developed further its engagement supporting disappearing traditional skills closely connected with the landscape and cultural heritage assets such as millwrighting, reed and sedge cutting, including programmes with educational and tourism uses.

These programmes will be continued. The more prominent use of cultural heritage in the tourism product connected with training to be continued is part of the action plan.

Principle 10 – Managing visitor flows

10.1 Keeping a record of visitor numbers over time and space, including feedback from local tourism enterprises A [2] B [2] C [3]

Visitor surveys and an enterprise survey have been carried out since 2005. Moreover a boat census is conducted every four years at 20 locations throughout the Broads. There are continued exit surveys from visitor information centres.

The action plan recommends a more systematic approach as to feedback processes and monitoring and gives guidelines for this. (see 2.33)

10.2 Creating and implementing a visitor management plan A [2] B [2] C [2]

A visitor management plan was proposed in the last strategy and in the recommendations of the Charter verification. Some new arrangements have been made including zoning for some activities and also voluntary arrangements.

Future visitor management mostly addresses geographical spread and creating links to Norwich and to the southern Broads which can contribute to release visitor pressure from other areas.

Monitoring and maintaining appropriate zoning is included in the action plan. Surveys of sensitive areas are an on-going task. However a spatial analysis including sensitive zones and zones of tourism interest, conflict, potential, etc., could still contribute as a practical tool for future planning.

10.3 Promoting use of public transport, cycling and walking as an alternative to private cars A [2] B [2] C [3]

Opportunities for cycling have been further developed and promoted by the canoe and cycle hire network in cooperation with the Broads Authority. They are promoted on the new Broads Tourism and the Broads by Bike websites. But there Broads Tourism does not link to Broads by Bike and the proposed routes are not available as downloads here.

More can be done on the development of promotion, packages and making walking and cycling attractive tourism products connected with the qualities of the area. For cycling a waymarking system and access to safe traffic free routes would be desirable. Especially long distance routes e.g. the Wherryman's Way offer more potential to be used and connected.

Hoveton and Norwich as locations of visitor centres were also chosen because of their railway connection. An exceptional private initiative "Clippesby Hall" (campsite, cycle hire, cottages) has developed and published a tour guide suggesting itineraries for "12 days out" using public transport.

The promotion of public transport and the further development and promotion of

walking and cycling is included in the action plan.

10.4 Controlling the siting and style of any new tourism development **A [3] B [3] C [3]**

As the regional planning authority the Broads Authority has succeeded in developing useful tools for guiding and advising development activities. The "Local Development Framework" and the project "Planning for Real" are key activities to involve and inform stakeholders about the policy and regulations connected. BeWilderwood and Waterside as large scale tourist attractions have been closely working with the authority and follow a sustainable approach.

As a future action this approach shall be followed: [Maintain dialogue between tourism enterprises, landowners, investors and planners](#)

The Wider Picture – Section C of questionnaire

C1 Examples of excellence and best practice

Please mention briefly the best examples of excellence or best practice you have seen in this Charter area (by cross-reference to the above questions if appropriate)

- The introduction of the “Broads Brand” and the work of the tourism business membership under the umbrella of following a quality approach and disseminating a Brand which includes the special qualities of the landscape.
- The website www.enjoythebroads illustrating natural and cultural qualities, its practical use and special focus on green businesses, accessibility and members of the Broads Quality Charter.
- Access for disabled people with boat trips, walks and facilities, and the available information on this.
- The product of wildlife experience in its “small is beautiful” approach with guided tours on e-boats and a solar boat and the facilities at How Hill/Barton Broad which work as nature based focal points for the visitor offering an attractive combination of complementary nature orientated activities and tourism facilities.
- The “Outdoors Festival” is just taking place when this report is written so I cannot say whether it was successful. However I would guess it was. From the programme and its presentation it is evident as an exceptional joint approach of various stakeholders in raising awareness of the outdoor tourism offer and special qualities of the landscape.
- The activities in the Green Tourism Business Scheme in which 12 businesses qualified already.

- Working in partnership on landscape scale conservation management

C2 Marketing and promotion of the Charter

Is the protected area helping to promote the Charter, e.g. in its publications, website, etc.?

Yes, the logo of the European Charter is used in all the key publications such as the website, Broadcaster visitor newspaper, Enjoy the Broads and Eating Out/Broads Quality Charter brochures.

C3 Experience of working with the Charter – final comments

In the interview during the visit the Broads chief executive put it like this: "Sustainable development takes a long time. It takes time to persuade people and getting them involved, to implement actions and to see their effects. The Charter has helped to give this approach a consistency in tourism." The other interview partners saw the Charter as being important in order to achieve acknowledgement on the European level, to get people involved, as a motivation to move on with the process and to get an outside view on the performance.

The Charter process forces us to think very hard about exactly what we are doing and what we wish to achieve. ... enabling us to put forward a coherent plan of action that has the validation of a European institution. It provides a practical framework that can encompass all of our tourism activities in a straightforward way that businesses can understand." (Head of Tourism, Broads Authority)