ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Sincere appreciation goes to all those who contributed to the creation of this Landscape Conservation Action Plan. Particular thanks goes to the BFER Partnership Chair, Tina Cunnell, for her constant support and encouragement, and Terry Osbourne of Claritie CIC for his boundless enthusiasm and creativity. Thanks also to the team at Suffolk County Council, including Sue Roper, Tim De-Keyzer, and Phil Watson, for their time spent reviewing, commenting and contributing. My deepest gratitude also to all our Partners’ lead officers, consultants and volunteers (especially Imogen Radford, Tim Holt Wilson, James Stephens and Pat Reynolds), who contributed so much to the development of the projects. Last but not least thanks go to those members of the public who took part in the various events and consultation activities and helped shape the objectives of the BFER LP Scheme.

**Nick Dickson**  
BFER Scheme Development Manager, 2019
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Brecks’ Fen Edge and Rivers landscape has always been a crucial conduit for biodiversity and human settlement, economic activity and movement of goods and people in an otherwise dry landscape. The presence of water has been fundamental to how the landscape of the whole of the Brecks has been settled and developed.

The Scheme area has been selected to include the key Fen Edge area, River Corridors and important freshwater areas, and the greatest concentration of heritage assets. The history of settlement and land use means that these assets, with their opportunities and stories are on the doorstep of most of the population, yet despite or perhaps because of this they often remain unacknowledged and overlooked.

Conservation effort in The Brecks National Character Area has long-focused on the internationally important heaths and forests, but legacy development work from the Breaking New Ground (BNG) Landscape Partnership Scheme identified significant risks to the heritage of the nearby Fen Edge and River Valleys landscape, with knock-on effects on the wider landscape from changing land-use, pollution, increased abstraction of water for housing and industrial development and intensive agricultural practices.

This, coupled with the continuing increase in informal recreation in a landscape with few rights of way, but vast areas of Open Access land, creates an urgent need for a joined-up approach to engaging communities, land managers and key decision makers so that the unique heritage of these landscapes that have been hidden in plain sight, is properly understood, valued and protected.

As a result of the BNG legacy work, extensive surveys, research and consultation with local communities, heritage professionals and other stakeholders, a narrative for The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme has evolved. This led to an agreed set of priorities, an exciting and engaging set of projects, with a sustainable legacy, in line with the National Lottery Heritage Fund’s priorities and outcomes for Landscape Partnerships Schemes.

This LCAP focusses on heritage conservation in this landscape within the Brecks that research currently indicates has the most pressing set of threats and issues, through a bespoke set of projects delivered by a partnership with a wide range of expertise. It continues the momentum gained through Breaking New Ground’s work in the heart of The Brecks landscape and delivers aims and objectives for The Brecks Fen-Edge & Rivers LP Scheme that can be sustained into the future.
PART 1: THE SCHEME PLAN
INTRODUCTION
The Brecks’ Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme (BFER LPS) is a new Landscape Heritage Scheme for the Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks which will build upon the legacy of the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership Scheme (2013-17) to continue to develop and re-focus engagement, public awareness and positive action on the heritage of The Brecks’ fen edge, river and wetland landscapes in this unique part of East Anglia.

Whilst Breaking New Ground supported communities to celebrate and conserve the heritage of shifting land use that created the iconic heathland and forest mosaic at the ‘heart’ of The Brecks landscape of today, the BFER LPS will reveal how the rivers, freshwater habitats and fenland edge provide the life blood for wildlife and people in the area.

The network of fenland fringe, freshwater habitats and river corridors are the conduit for biodiversity and have driven settlement of an otherwise hostile landscape. They are a critical part of the 1000km² Brecks National Character Area, fundamental to its unique biodiversity, habitats and cultural heritage. Delivery activities will support communities to conserve, enhance and celebrate this often-overlooked landscape.

Recognising the importance of this watery landscape in understanding and protecting The Brecks heritage was a key legacy of BNG and has been reinforced by the Freshwater Habitats Trust which rated The Brecks as one of Britain’s top landscapes for freshwater wildlife.

Their work confirmed that the area is particularly significant for its rare and biodiverse chalk streams, networks of ancient Pingo ponds and fluctuating meres.

In our very first analysis of freshwater areas, The Brecks immediately popped up as one of the top 20 areas in England and Wales. Its freshwater wildlife truly is exceptional and ranks alongside areas such as the New Forest and Norfolk Broads in its importance.”

https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/research/important-freshwater-areas/brecks-ifas/
The story of water is also fundamental to how The Brecks landscape was settled; from earliest times, Iceni tribes, to Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and Viking through to the medieval ages. Today the area boasts many internationally significant heritage sites including Roman fen edge settlements and early Anglo-Saxon villages such as West Stow.

Development and agriculture continue to be a significant influence on the wetlands and associated heritage of this fragile landscape. With anticipated major housing growth over the next decade, pressures on all the freshwater sites in The Brecks are likely to increase, through changes in water quality and quantity and increasing recreational pressures.

Never was there a more opportune time to harness local people’s passion and energy to tell the story of how water and wetlands have helped shape this area and equip them to be able to carry this forward into its future.

SCHEME DEVELOPMENT

The BFER LPS is the result of extensive legacy development work undertaken through the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership Scheme, including a series of presentations, surveys and workshops involving 51 local organisations, and many members of the public. This resulted in the report ‘Towards extending heritage excellence, collaboration & inclusive civil society engagement in The Brecks’ produced by Big Society Funding CIC.

It identified The Brecks’ Fen Edge and River Valley landscape heritage and water resources as being under significant threat from a variety of issues: increasing informal recreation, large scale domestic and industrial development, climate change, modern farming practices and invasive non-native species.
The report recommended that a new Landscape Partnership Scheme should be set up to take advantage of the momentum generated by Breaking New Ground, focusing on the threats and opportunities in the adjacent Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape.

AIMS AND PRIORITIES

The aims of The Brecks’ Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme are to:

- Understand, reveal, and celebrate the heritage of The Brecks’ fenland edge, rivers and wetlands and raise awareness of the impact of water resource issues on them.
- Restore lost ponds, rivers, their margins and other sensitive freshwater habitats.
- Reconnect people to the landscape by providing improved opportunities for access including new links, circular walks and recreation activities based on or around water.
- Create a legacy of an improved sense of place, with communities more engaged in heritage and given the skills to maintain, manage and restore the landscape into the future.

Over the 5-year delivery period (2020 - 2024 Incl.) the Partnership will deliver a minimum of 24 projects by:

- Working with partners and communities, the Scheme will help explore and raise awareness of the water resource issues, restore key rivers and habitat corridors, discover and celebrate the historic links between human settlement and water, and contribute to developing the area’s sense of identity.
- Working with organisations including the Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Partnership, sub-catchment partnerships, Freshwater Habitats Trust, Norfolk Rivers Trust, Environment Agency, volunteers and ‘citizen science’ projects, the Scheme will survey important water bodies for quality and quantity, mapping where water is most impacted, and identifying opportunities for positive action.
- Supporting partners to work with volunteers to deliver priority improvements to the most sensitive sections of rivers in the Scheme area, and to link networks of high-quality habitats. This will include work on re-establishing migration routes for native trout and eels, riparian habitat restoration schemes, and reconstruction of lost (ghost) Pingo ponds – a unique Brecks freshwater habitat.
- Delivering education and skills training, engaging with schools, landowners, communities and volunteers to highlight the value and sensitivity of water resources in the area, creating a legacy of awareness, keeping heritage crafts alive and improving conservation skills.
- Identifying gaps in the Rights of Way network and opportunities for access improvements, the Scheme will work with partners and communities to deliver new circular walks and linear trails along the river corridors. These will link communities to each other and the wider landscape.
- Improving participants health and well-being by delivering innovative improvements to the interpretation of heritage features, including waymarking, signage and providing guided activities and walks, the Scheme will improve opportunities for informal recreation.
This Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) has been written by Nick Dickson, the BFER Scheme Development Manager, in consultation with scheme partners and relevant experts. It draws upon additional reports prepared by communications consultants Landscape Communication and community engagement consultants Claritie CIC. Several specialist feasibility studies relating to river improvements were also commissioned from Atkins Ltd by scheme partners the Environment Agency, which inform the river restoration projects.

The BFER LP development phase and the production of this LCAP was overseen by the BFER LP Board, whose members contributed their time and expertise to the development of the scheme.

THE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN (LCAP)

This LCAP is intended to be used by different audiences in different ways:

**By the National Lottery Heritage Fund:** The LCAP is the main ‘supporting document’ included with the second-round submission. It provides the detail to enable NLHF to be sure its money is going to be used wisely and that NLHF’s interests and reputation will be protected. The LCAP also shows how the scheme will contribute to the nine Landscape Partnership programme outcomes.

**The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership:** The LCAP will provide everyone involved in the BFER partnership with an overview of the full scheme, helping partners to effectively oversee delivery.

**The Scheme manager:** The LCAP is effectively the scheme manual that will enable delivery to start as soon as NLHF issues Permission to Start and will provide a clear steer to the Scheme delivery team.

**Delivery partners:** The LCAP is the basis of the Delivery Partners’ agreement with the partnership Board, setting out what they will do, and the financial and other support they will receive from the Scheme. The detailed project plans (LCAP Part 3) will provide additional details, ensuring effective delivery of individual projects.

**The landscape:** The LCAP ‘speaks for’ the landscape and will be of value in the future whether or not all of the projects are successfully completed. It is intended to be an authoritative and comprehensive source of information encompassing all aspects of the area’s heritage.

**Beneficiaries and the wider public:** The LCAP indicates, during the life of the LP scheme and beyond, what we set out to achieve, why, and how. It is the core document against which the Partnership’s work and the Scheme legacy will be evaluated.

THE BFER BOARD

Suffolk County Council is the principal partner of the BFER LP Scheme and has hosted the Scheme Development Manager. The County Council will be the signatory for the Heritage Lottery grant contract and the employing organisation for the Scheme Manager and core delivery team.

The BFER Board is a working group of partners with collective responsibility for the successful development and delivery of the scheme (Appendix 1). It brings together individuals from local authorities, archaeological, conservation, government advisory, amenity, education and local communities with a wealth of expertise and experience. A Partnership Agreement, setting out
the terms of the partnership has been signed by all partner organisations represented on the board.

The BFER Board’s current Terms of Reference are:

1. To share collective responsibility for the preparation and implementation of a Landscape Conservation Action Plan for Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers and to ensure real benefits are made to the landscape of The Brecks. The Board will be supported in this by the BFER Scheme Manager.

2. To advise on the development, implementation, and funding of the BFER scheme.

3. To make decisions on specific matters referred to the Partnership Board by the BFER Scheme Manager.

4. To provide a forum for discussion for BFER and to ensure engagement and participation is as wide as possible in the delivery of the BFER scheme.

5. To ensure partner organisations dedicate sufficient resources to development and delivery of projects for which they are responsible.

During the development phase the board met quarterly to steer and review progress with the Scheme, the development of this document, and the projects for inclusion in the Scheme.

The BFER LP Chair for the development phase is Tina Cunnell, Town Clerk of Thetford Town Council, and the Vice Chair is Martin Bowes, the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) Project Manager for Anglia Water. All board members hold senior positions in their respective organisations and are thereby able to ensure the long-term support and engagement in the successful delivery of the Scheme.

The make-up of the Board will be reviewed at the start of the delivery phase to ensure the most suitable representation of partners and stakeholders in providing oversight of scheme delivery.

PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

Participation

The wide participation of groups and individuals in the activities developed and delivered through the lifetime of the Landscape Partnership will be encouraged and supported through social media, newsletters and web content as well as specific events. The Landscape Partnership will engage with many local interest groups, community support and education organisations, businesses, families and individuals.

The multi-sector, multi-disciplinary approach of BFER is key to delivering the aims and objectives of the Scheme and will ensure that it delivers holistic outcomes, and a legacy that is far greater than the sum of the individual projects.

Volunteer participation will be encouraged through the provision of a bespoke volunteer hub, with participants engaged from local communities, interest groups and expanding partners volunteer groups. New groups will be developed at West Stow Anglo Saxon Village and Thetford Town Council. Significant interest has also been shown from local businesses that run volunteering days for staff, such as the local councils, Tesco and Aviva, as well as military personnel at RAF Honnington.
Consultation

Consultation and feedback on the proposals was sought throughout the development process from a wide range of stakeholders, including the public, landscape professionals, local businesses and visitors.

Claritie CIC have helped to identify the key audiences for the BFER LPS and carried out research to understand the needs and expectations of those audiences. Research was undertaken and reports produced covering the following areas: Audience Development; Physical Access; Technological Access; Skills Training; Education and Learning; Interpretation.

A public conference and consultation event was held in March 2019 at the Carnegie Rooms in Thetford. This event was attended by 93 delegates that included members of the public, and professionals from all sectors with an interest in The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers’ landscape heritage.

Speakers covered the background and objectives of the proposed scheme and some of the main themes of this LCAP.

Partners also contributed a variety of exhibits, displays and information on the proposed delivery projects, providing opportunities for attendees to ask questions, influence project design and delivery.

The event also include some fun participation activities including making your own ‘Aquatic Art’.
DElIVERY PARTNERS

A key number of organisations are formal partners in the scheme, having signed the BFER Partnership Agreement and are represented on the BFER LP board (Appendix 2). Many more organisations and community groups will be engaged in the delivery of projects, participation in events, or in celebration of the Scheme area’s heritage.

Project design will enable active engagement of new partners in delivery and support the formation of new partnerships in order to enhance the scope of the projects and help secure a sustainable legacy of community involvement and up-skilled heritage groups more able to access external funding.
PROJECT DELIVERY AGREEMENTS

In addition to the BFER Partnership Agreement, partners involved in project delivery will be required to sign up to a Project Delivery Agreement. This will ensure consistency of delivery, and a joined-up approach across the Scheme. It will set out the agreed project outputs, budgets, match funding and expected outcomes. This document will also include details of reporting and monitoring requirements, procurement, claims, use of branding and acknowledgement obligations. It will also include the requirement to attend certain scheme-wide activities and events that will ensure a joined-up approach to delivery and legacy development.

STAFFING SCHEME DELIVERY

The scheme will be delivered by a core delivery team hosted by Suffolk County Council. The team will consist of:

Scheme Manager

Role:
To manage delivery of the BFER Landscape Partnership Scheme programmes and projects. To ensure effective and timely financial management, reporting and claims including recruitment and management of delivery team members.

- Oversee the delivery of the Scheme to an agreed timeframe, meeting agreed milestones, and providing appropriate evidence and feedback to NLHF and the Scheme Board on a quarterly basis.
- Ensure proper financial management to SCC as well as to Heritage Lottery Fund financial standards
- Managing partner organisations with wide ranging priorities to ensure a joined-up approach to scheme delivery.
- Ensuring continued engagement and support from all local authorities and other scheme partners
- Ensure that all match-funding is secured on time to balance the overall budget
- Management of delivery team for the duration of the scheme
- Ensure all partners are properly acknowledged and all contributions celebrated

Project Officer

Role:
To support delivery of the BFER Landscape Partnership Scheme programmes and projects. To liaise with project delivery partners to ensure a joined-up approach to the interpretation of the landscape, natural, cultural, and historical heritage of the Scheme area for the benefit of residents and visitors.

- Work as part of the delivery team to take forward the aims and objectives of the Scheme
- Be responsible for the day to day operations and delivery by partners along with delivery of projects led by the team
- Manage and develop a range of delegated projects including monitoring, evaluation and project promotion
- Supervise and manage contractors, volunteers and trainees in the course of project implementation
- Give talks and attend partner events as part of promoting the Scheme
- Generate publicity for the Scheme, typically by use of press releases, a regular newspaper column, interviews with local press and radio, and presentations
- Liaise with funding partners, community groups, individuals and other staff to effectively monitor and report on the progress of projects
- Ensure that all those involved in delivery comply with appropriate Health and Safety policies and procedures.
Technical Support Officer

Role:
To undertake a comprehensive range of administrative duties including finance and data management to support the efficient delivery of services within the BFER team, including day-to-day responsibility for maintaining social media, and web content.

• Administer business processes and procedures.
• Provide an efficient and customer focused first point of contact.
• Provide information about the Scheme to partners, volunteers and the public
• Administer Scheme website and social media ensuring prompt and appropriate responses and up to date web content and events information
• Contribute to external communications, e.g. Scheme Newsletter or presentations, this may include using PowerPoint, web-based tools etc.
• Place orders for supplies and services including purchasing on behalf of partners.
• Provide a range of information, research and reports as required, including processing financial or statistical information.
• Organise meetings, booking rooms and equipment, inviting attendees, collating and circulating meeting papers, handouts, taking minutes etc.
• Contribute to the design and development of specific administrative systems and associated databases or spreadsheets.
• Provide an efficient administration and/or financial support service, this may include supporting specific partners, meetings or groups.
• Administer group email boxes.
• Maintain Scheme records and filing systems, including electronic systems.

The core delivery team will be employed by Suffolk County Council who will also provide back-office support including HR, IT, and procurement. Thetford Town Council will provide office space for the team as a contribution to the partnership. This will be in Thetford town centre, which provides a convenient and accessible location for participants and partners and is the location for many public participation events. The delivery team will also have the opportunity to hot-desk with partners, including at West Stow, as required, enabling effective support for delivery, communications and promotion activity across the Scheme area.

Additional facilities provided by Thetford Town Council will include meeting and workshop spaces, a conference facility and exhibition spaces. The support of the Town Council will ensure there is continued access to information, guidance and opportunities created by the scheme long after the formal delivery period has ended.

West Stow Anglo Saxon village
KEY DOCUMENTS²

Several documents have been produced during the development phase that provide information to support the production of this LCAP.

These documents are available on the scheme website www.brecks.org:

The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape: Identifying Important Freshwater Areas

This describes the results of an ‘Important Freshwater Areas’ analysis for the whole of The Brecks National Character Area to inform the definition of the NLHF-supported Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers (BFER) landscape project area.

Important Freshwater Areas are locations of regional or national importance for freshwater biodiversity typically comprising groups of important freshwater habitats or wetlands, or areas with significant concentrations of freshwater Species of Conservation Concern.

The Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks Landscape Character Assessment³

The integrated Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) produced through the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership was revised in 2016.

This is the first detailed landscape characterisation of the whole of The Brecks that has been produced at this scale.

It describes the landscape types within the NCA and provides guidance to help conserve enhance and restore the distinctive landscape characteristics of The Brecks.

The BFER Scheme area includes two of the distinct landscape character types identified by the LCA:

- Settled Fen, and
- River Valleys

The Brecks Special Qualities Report⁴

The Brecks’ special qualities study articulates the character and qualities that make The Brecks landscape so distinctive.

By observing, describing and analysing the special qualities of The Brecks it provides the vocabulary needed to help others understand and appreciate The Brecks and support effective policy, advocacy and planning to reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve and enhance its special character.

Three of the Special Qualities particularly relate to the BFER LP area; the river valley settlements; the intimate ‘secrecy’ of the river valleys; and the undiscovered treasure trove of early historical evidence.

² http://www.brecks.org/BFER/key-documents
³ http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/assets/LCAP/BrecksLCA2.pdf
      http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/assets/LCAP/Brecks-Special-Qualities-Annexes.pdf
The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Audience Development and Learning Report

This report identifies the needs of people, so they are given opportunities to experience, learn about, enjoy and appreciate the landscape heritage of The Brecks. It informs this Landscape Conservation Action Plan by identifying new opportunities for providing health benefits through outdoor activities, facilitating improvements to education and learning, access to the landscape, heritage and biodiversity and removing the barriers which prevent such access.

The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Access and Interpretation Report

This assesses the accessibility of the landscape for all and identifies opportunities for removing the barriers that prevent access to the natural and built heritage (involving those who might experience these) and developing new opportunities for connecting communities to the wider landscape.

The ideas from the Round 1 Application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for developing and implementing improvements to physical access have been considered.

Access and Recreation Opportunities Report

This is an assessment of the existing Rights of Way network, identifying opportunities for addressing missing links and providing new access in areas with sensitive biodiversity or habitats, or near to historic assets. It includes locations in or near to the Special protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) where there are very few Rights of Way, including Cavenham, Tuddenham, Lackford, and Flempton, or no Rights of Way at all, such as in Hengrave.

Consultation took place on access opportunities, anticipated future development, and potential impacts on Biodiversity and historic assets with District Council Planners and heritage professionals.

The report also sets out new mechanisms for agreeing priorities for Access, a methodology for considering provision for planned new development areas, and the need for Biodiversity and Archaeology Impact Assessment as a key part of early Access planning processes.

The Brecks Historic Landscape Characterisation Report

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) mapping provides detailed spatial information about types of land use in today’s landscape, with reference, where possible, to their historical roots. This is done through the building of a digital map that draws on data in modern and historic maps, aerial photographs and other historic
environment information. The flexibility of the digital map enables it to be used in a variety of forms, colours and scales. This enables patterns to be observed and analysed, leading to an enhanced understanding of the origins and development of the landscape, which in turn will be a useful tool for BFER delivery projects, and as a legacy for landscape and heritage professionals and decision makers in the Brecks.

HLC mapping was developed under the aegis of English Heritage in the 1990s and 2000s. Work was on a county basis and at different times, with the result that there are significant differences in the technologies and methodologies between HLC datasets. This means there are significant differences in the way neighbouring counties have been characterised.

Up until now Brecks has been split between the Norfolk and Suffolk HLC datasets, which have important differences in their methodologies and the level of historical interpretation. The Suffolk approach has been deemed to be more useful to The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme and therefore the purpose of the current project is to provide unified HLC mapping for the Brecks National Character Area (NCA) as a whole. The final product will be made available to both Norfolk and Suffolk County Archaeology departments and planners and will also be accessible through the BFER scheme website.

Proposal for Measuring the Social Impacts of Brecks Projects
As a key part of this bid we will seek to measure the social impact that projects are having on participants, local communities and stakeholders. In order to measure, monitor and evaluate this impact a systematic, planned and well considered approach is required to ensure the data is robust and rigorous.

This document sets out the approach and consideration towards a measurement plan for the BFER project outcomes.

Key themes of impact measurement will include but are not limited to:
- Engagement
- Connection to heritage
- Accessibility
- Skill base
- Sense of place

OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS

The following documents are existing key resources used for developing this LCAP

Brecks Biodiversity Audit¹

http://www.uea.ac.uk/~e313602/biodiversity_audit/wpimages/Breckland%20Biodiversity%20Audit.pdf

National character Profile: 85. The Brecks⁴

http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4282581

GAPS AND LIMITATIONS

The considerable extent of man’s influence over the 1000km² of The Brecks landscape means that there is a volume of important heritage and associated needs related to its management, conservation, interpretation and accessibility that cannot be addressed by one Landscape Partnership Scheme alone. The landscape Character Types are too varied, and the needs too diverse. Activities and funding would be too diluted, and wider engagement difficult. By subdividing The Brecks National Character Area into key landscape types, the landscape heritage issues can be addressed in a more focussed and therefore accessible manner.

After concentrating its delivery on the heart of the Brecks landscape – Heathland Mosaic and Forest Plantations - the successful Breaking New Ground LPS and legacy development work highlighted the urgent need to extend conservation efforts on the heritage of the Fen Edge and Rivers landscape: developing our understanding of and creating new access to their unrecorded heritage; and engaging local communities in these activities.

This LCAP therefore focuses on heritage conservation in that landscape within the wider Brecks, because research currently indicates that it has the most pressing set of threats and issues, through a bespoke set of projects delivered by a partnership with a wide range of expertise. It continues the momentum gained through Breaking New Ground in the heart of The Brecks landscape and delivers aims and objectives for The Brecks Fen-Edge & Rivers LP Scheme that can be sustained into the future.

There will inevitably be gaps in our knowledge of the area and the communities and groups that would most benefit from engaging with our activities. To counteract this, the BFER delivery team and partners will regularly review new data, to ensure conservation activities are effective and all groups are being targeted for participation.

The BFER LP will also include the provision of a relatively small 3rd party grant scheme (£50,000) which gives the delivery phase significant flexibility to ensure that new opportunities for effective engagement and delivery are not missed.

SUMMARY

• The Brecks Fen-edge & Rivers Partnership has strong local representation, clear governance and well-defined responsibilities, and has engaged widely with heritage experts, partners and other stakeholders throughout the development phase.

• Suffolk County Council is the signatory to the NLHF contract, will host the delivery team and has a strong track-record of successful landscape partnership delivery.

• Considerable wider consultation (including with Public Health organisations), research and strategy development have been carried out during the development phase to inform this Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP).
THE BRECKS FEN EDGE AND RIVERS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP
LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN

THE SCHEME AREA
THE BRECKS FEN EDGE & RIVERS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME AREA, AND THE BRECKS NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA (INSET)
Consistently overlooked in a landscape that is famous for being sandy and dry, water has been the driving force behind The Brecks’ unique heritage.

On the western edge of The Brecks, the dry landscape changes dramatically into fenland where ditch networks, despite being intensively farmed and increasingly disconnected, still have isolated freshwater hotspots supporting endangered species. The recent Brecks Landscape Character Assessment and Special Quality Report, shows the area as having once been a coast-like boundary onto vast wetlands, creating a unique biodiversity, history of settlement and land-use, resulting in a distinct culture that has been mostly lost or forgotten.

UNDERSTANDING THE AREA

The Scheme will focus on the western Brecks’ Fen Edge and Rivers landscape, located on the borders of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, concentrating on its key freshwater habitats and river valleys that provided the conduits for biodiversity and early settlement of an otherwise hostile landscape.

The approximate size of the BFER Scheme area is 215km²

Thetford is the main town, located on the A11 in the centre of The Brecks. Brandon, Mildenhall and Lakenheath are the only other settlements of any size, though the larger towns of Swaffham to the north and Bury St Edmunds to the south lie just outside the core area. Further to the south and west are Cambridge and Ely, both centres of significant population and with rail and road links to London. Along with Norwich 25km to the east, these areas provide a large percentage of current visitors to The Brecks.

There are several major roads through the landscape – the A11 dual carriageway, A1065, A134, A1066, A1075, and A1088.

BOUNDARY SELECTION

The BFER Scheme area boundary has been defined through a combination of factors, including Landscape Character and The Freshwater Habitat Trust’s Important Freshwater Areas report, to ensure that the area meets the NLHF criteria, and that the most impacted heritage assets are targeted.

The Scheme boundary has been further refined by focussing on The Brecks’ important freshwater areas and river corridors and other considerations including:

- The key Brecks Fen Edge & River landscape types as defined in the Landscape Character Assessment: Settled Fen and River Valleys;
- The major designated sites for aquatic and rivers’ edge wildlife, geology and archaeology;
- The key areas of historic settlement and industrial river-based activity;
- The key centres of population and main areas of deprivation on The Brecks’ river corridors - Thetford and Brandon.

The Scheme area not only represents a defined landscape type within the wider Brecks Landscape Character Area, but also:

- Links to the key gateway communities for recreational access in Bury St Edmunds;
- Comprises areas within the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, and Breckland District Council, and West Suffolk District Council;
- Includes areas of the major estates including: Elveden, Euston and Shadwell estates;
• Includes the major development area of Thetford with potential links to measures for mitigation and the need to generate awareness of the landscape heritage of The Brecks with current and future communities;
• Provides access opportunities that connect to the national long-distance trail of the Peddars and Icknield Ways;
• Links with the known current and planned delivery of the Water Framework Directive; Forest Design Statements; the Forestry Commission’s Recreation and Access Strategy and the Thetford Growth Point Strategy.

THE ‘BUFFER ZONE’

Just outside the Scheme area, and surrounding The Brecks, are several communities that are known to engage with and have a significant impact on heritage in the area; primarily through informal recreation. These include Bury St Edmunds, Swaffham, Downham Market, Watton and East Harling. As well as the main communities within the Scheme area, these communities will all experience significant growth during the delivery period and beyond, and many more visitors will come into The Brecks for recreation. While project delivery will happen within the LP boundary, it is recognised that the buffer zone communities are a significant audience that the scheme should engage with to raise awareness of the area’s heritage, its importance for biodiversity and its sensitivity to disturbance.
THE BRECKS FEN EDGE AND RIVERS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP
LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN

THE BRECKS FEN EDGE AND RIVERS - ITS HERITAGE AND PEOPLE
The landscape of the Brecks offers many contrasts.

Firstly, there is a marked contrast with the adjoining claylands of Norfolk and Suffolk to the south and east, where instead of the sinuous field boundaries and small and irregular fields of the ‘ancient countryside’ of the claylands, the Brecks have a preponderance of straight-edged large fields with geometric shapes that result from 18th-century and later enclosure. The roads also have a planned appearance with straight lines and many cruciform junctions. The roads are often lined by tree belts and pine lines rather than hedges and the trees are conifers, not the deciduous oaks, ashes etc of the clayland hedges.

Secondly, there is a contrast with the fenlands to west. Here the contrasts are a change to black peaty soils instead of light sandy ones, and a change from pine lines to straight drainage channels, giving a more open and flatter landscape. There is also an inversion from water conservation in a dry landscape to water removal in a wet landscape.

But the contrasts are not only with these external landscapes, there are also significant internal contrasts in the Brecks. The most striking is the difference between the large and dry interfluvial areas on the one hand and the narrow river corridors and the fen inlets on the other.

The Little Ouse has one of the tightest corridors with very narrow landscape-type polygons that contrast strongly with the large polygons of the flanking landscape types. Meadow originally alternated with areas of wet woodland or alder carr in the more poorly drained areas.

The fen tongues on the west side reach surprisingly far into the heartland of the Brecks, bringing with them very different landscape types. There is a gradual transition from true fenland to wet riverine grassland.

Water was the essential resource in The Brecks throughout history. Whether it was the Fenlands to the west, which created almost coastal communities along The Brecks edge, or the river corridors running into the Fens through the dry heart of the area. Essential watercourses for centuries, The Brecks rivers were vital for drinking water, as food sources, for irrigation, and powering mills, and many reaches were made navigable for industry and transportation.

THE NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BRECKS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (LCA): SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

During its development extensive consultation took place with landscape and heritage professionals from all the partner organisations as well as planning representatives from all the district planning authorities to ensure accuracy and the adoption on the LCA as a tool for informing landscape and heritage planning decisions.

Along with the accompanying document, The Brecks’ Special qualities Report, the studies promote the unique landscape character of The Brecks, the variety of different landscapes within the area and provides a record of what is distinctive and special within each landscape type, as well as landscape elements and features that are particularly vulnerable to change. It also provides an integrated assessment of the character and sensitivity of these landscapes, along with guidance for directing landscape change to conserve and enhance distinctive landscape character.

Taking the existing landscape character assessments as a starting point, The Brecks LCA identifies nine landscape character types, which together describe the landscape character of The Brecks NCA.
Landscape Character Types

The core distinctive landscape types of The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape are the narrow River Valleys, and the Settled Fens.
RIVER VALLEYS

Distinctive landscape characteristics

- Lush, small scale landscape defined by shallow river valleys with a subtle sense of enclosure
- A mix of peat, sandy and alluvium on flat valley floor; often drift deposits of sand and gravel on flat or very gently sloping valley sides
- Diverse mosaic of wetland habitats surrounding headwater springs and alongside river channels, including areas of reedbed, carr woodland, marsh and fen
- Small irregularly shaped floodplain pastures, divided by a network of ditches and dykes, contrast with surrounding arable fields
- Curving narrow rural roads and tracks often define the edge of the floodplain
- Concentration of historic sites, reflecting a long history of human settlement and intervention
- Settlements are sited on floodplain edge, often at historic crossing points
- Gravel extraction, resulting in extensive lakes and reedbeds
- Intimate, tranquil landscape

Landscape character

The River Valleys landscape type defined in the Landscape Character Assessment describes all the river valleys within the Scheme area.

The valley floodplains of the Rivers Wissey, Thet, Little Ouse (with Black Bourn) and Lark are predominantly pasture, although there are areas of wet meadow, fen, reedbed, alder/willow carr and wet woodland, which create a diverse, small-scale mosaic of valuable wetland habitats within the linear river valley corridor. The distribution of archaeological finds demonstrates that these river valleys have been the focus for human settlement since Mesolithic times, demonstrating the importance of proximity to water in the relatively dry landscape of The Brecks.

There are Mesolithic sites along the Lark and Little Ouse and pottery scatters from the Bronze Age that suggest the edge of river valleys were favoured as sites for settlement. The pattern of scattered farmsteads along river valleys persisted throughout the Iron Age. Excavations at West Stow by the River Lark suggest a small self-sufficient farmstead with animal husbandry based on cattle.

The gravel river terrace deposits provided dry riverside sites for settlement in places like Thetford, where the Iron Age castle was strategically sited to control the fords where the ancient Icknield Way crosses the Rivers Ouse and Thet.
Many clustered riverside settlements, such as Brettenham and Icklingham, originated as river fording or bridging points and other hamlets developed around medieval mills. Villages, farmsteads and halls were always sited on the higher land on the edge of the floodplain or on higher ‘islands’ of gravel within the valleys as at Santon House (and church) on the Little Ouse.

Small stone or brick bridges are attractive landmarks throughout the River Valleys, often at the centre of historic villages. Traditional building materials are red brick and flint, visible in historic walls, churches, halls and farmsteads throughout the river valley landscapes.

During the 18th and 19th century, parkland landscapes were developed in many river valleys, for instance at Shadwell and West Harling (on the River Thet), Didlington, Hilborough and Bodney (on the River Wissey) and West Stow Hall (on the River Lark). Lakes, woodlands and groups of specimen parkland trees are remnant features in many valleys.

The floodplain landscapes are defined by curving historic field boundaries and often by narrow roads and tracks. Floodplain meadows are divided by wet ditches or dykes that in places are lined by trees or scrubby hedges supplemented by post and wire fencing. The floodplain land is commonly subdivided by dykes set at right angles to the river channel, forming a distorted ‘ladder’ pattern.

The valley grassland usually forms part of a larger agricultural land holding, with larger fields on drier, elevated land and there are sometimes arable fields on land that has been drained on the upper fringes of valleys. Remnant former commons, heathland and medieval warrens such as Cavenham Heath (on the River Lark), Snarehill Warren (on the Little Ouse) and Mundford Common (on the River Wissey) developed on free draining terrace gravels with acidic soils and suggest the diversity of historic land use within the river valleys.
SETTLED FEN

Distinctive landscape characteristics

- Completely flat and low-lying landscape of peaty soils on the margins of the Fens
- Small-medium rectangular paddocks and fields, separated by reed filled drainage ditches
- Patches of Carr woodland provide some enclosure and break the geometry of the field pattern
- Scattered scrub along roads and some field margins
- Pony paddocks and small holdings
- Unsettled, but often fringed by settlement on the more elevated margins of the Fens and The Brecks

Landscape Character

A completely flat, low lying landscape on the eastern margins of the Fen Basin along the lower reaches of the Rivers Lark, Little Ouse and Nar near to their confluence with the extensive floodplain fens of the Fen Basin. Small areas of Settled Fen are found on the far western edge of the Scheme area at Hurst Fen (north of Mildenhall), Wangford Fen, the lower Little Ouse (west of Brandon) and part of Marham Fen.

These areas have an underlying micro-topography of sandy hummocks and peat-filled hollows, covered by a desiccating surface peat layer that gives the area the appearance of a flat plain. Most of the land is at sea level, but small sandy islands and ridges may rise to about 4m above sea level. The black, peaty soils vary from very sandy, where underlying sand ridges are close to the surface, to almost pure peat over the deeper hollows.

From post-glacial times the edges of the Fens were a focus for settlement and archaeological excavation at such sites has revealed finds that date from the Mesolithic period onwards. They would have been close to water and to a variety of different habitats and hunting grounds, but on land that was sufficiently dry for settlement.

The marginal Settled Fen areas would have been on the cusp of the productive pasturelands and the marshy fen. They were unsettled but would have been an important part of the mix of landscape types which formed a productive parish. Following drainage, the land was allotted in small parcels and this relatively small-scale pattern of agriculture, small holdings and paddocks remains today. It is very different to the vast scale of the open arable landscapes of the central fens to the west.

The hydrological changes in the area reflect improved drainage in the wider fen basin, along with abstraction of groundwater sources. The pattern of change varies from one locality to the next. For instance, the hydrology of Hurst Fen and Eriswell Lode Fen was relatively unaffected by 18th and 19th century drainage schemes, but
these marginal fens became drier as a result of the construction of the Cut-off Channel in the early 1960s. This flood relief channel runs some 27 miles northwards from the River Lark at Barton Mills to Denver and intercepts the waters of the Rivers Lark, Little Ouse and Wissey, carrying them directly to the complex of sluices at Denver.

There is a striking contrast in character between the sandy heathland and plantations of The Brecks and the flat, pastures, paddocks and reed-filled ditches of the Settled Fen. The transition to the expansive, arable farmlands of the wider fen basin is more gradual, but the small-scale pattern and scruffy, marginal character of the Settled Fen landscape is distinctive. Areas close to larger settlements are dominated by pony paddocks and small holdings, while the more remote parts of Wangford Fen are small pastures and arable fields, always surrounded by reed-filled ditches. The fields are partially enclosed by scrub and gappy hedgerows and the area has a rather unkempt appearance, particularly on the fringes of settlements, where the sheds, signs and fences associated with smallholdings and horsiculture are sometimes prominent.

The pattern of rectangular fields is interrupted by areas of Carr and wet woodland, which are of high biodiversity importance. Overall the Settled Fen seems fairly enclosed, with a scruffy character. Belts of poplars are occasional prominent features on some field margins and small conifer plantations are encroaching along the eastern margins of Wangford Fen.

**WATER IN THE BRECKS**

The Brecks is a relatively dry region when compared to the surrounding landscapes and is often quoted as having the lowest recorded rainfall of any area in the UK.

Therefore, the running and standing water bodies in The Brecks, including the R. Little Ouse, R. Lark, R. Wissey and various streams, meres, lakes, ponds, ditches, springs and fens (Figure 3), are particularly easily impacted by abstraction, pollution, changes in land-use and development.

Data on aquatic habitats is generally scarce, and even more so on small waters: headwater streams, ditches, ponds, springs and flushes.

Currently only small a proportion of the waterbodies in The Brecks are monitored for the Water Framework Directive, essentially the main rivers and larger tributary streams and two lakes (Stanford Water and Thompson Water).

As part of the LCAP development work the Freshwater Habitats Trust undertook an Important Freshwater Areas assessment to review existing information and propose a strategy to address data gaps, potentially by engaging communities in citizen science data gathering as part of future projects.
The Cam and Ely Ouse Management Catchment

Within the Cam and Ely Ouse catchment the Great Ouse River drains an area of approximately 3,600 square kilometres extending from Swaffham in the north to Royston and Saffron Walden in the south and from Potton in the west to Attleborough in the east. The Great Ouse, in this catchment, is fed by four main tributaries:

- The River Cam, which receives water from the River Granta, the South Level Lodes, the River Rhee and Bourn Brook.
- The River Lark
- The Little Ouse and its tributaries which include the Thet and the Sapiston/Black Bourn
- The River Wissey

The area is characterised by the East Anglian Chalklands in the south, Brecklands in the north and the South Level fenland to the west of the area. The catchment is predominantly rural and includes high-grade agricultural land. The main urban areas within the Cam and Ely Ouse are Cambridge, Royston, Saffron Walden, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Ely and Swaffham. The area is rapidly developing with significant population growth planned or already taking place.

The catchment also supports a number of nationally and internationally important water-related sites that are of exceptional value.

The Lark

The River Lark rises as a chalk stream to the south of Bury St Edmunds and flows North west through Mildenhall to the South Level. Its tributaries include the River Linnet, Culford Stream; Cavenham Stream; Tuddenham Stream and the River Kennet.

The area is mainly rural, with many small villages and the market towns of Bury St Edmunds and Mildenhall. Land use is diverse with tree belts and woodlands. In the Lark valley the dryness of the soils has limited land-use and historically there were extensive heaths. Cavenham Heath is the largest survivor and is now a National Nature Reserve (NNR).

Source: Environment Agency

https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/OperationalCatchment/3249/Summary
The Little Ouse and Thet

The upper reaches and tributaries of the River Thet and the River Sapiston extend as far as Attleborough and Elmswell before their confluences with the Little Ouse at Thetford and Euston. The Little Ouse flows on to the South Level just north of Lakenheath. This catchment is characterised by Breckland and woodlands with varied land use including forestry and agriculture. The catchment is important for local, national and internationally protected species and habitats including eel, otter and water vole as well as one of the few remaining populations of the native white-clawed crayfish within the River Thet.

The Wissey

The Wissey rises as a chalk stream east of Bradenham and flows in a westerly direction for 35 miles until it joins the Great Ouse. The area is mainly rural, with the market towns of Swaffham and Watton in the east and the village of Stoke Ferry in the west. Agriculture is the main land use with cereals as the major crop. The value of these crops means that, in summer, up to 14% of the arable area may be irrigated using water from the river or groundwater. The catchment is a key water source for public water supply and irrigation.
THE CUT-OFF CHANNEL

The Cut-off Channel is a man-made waterway which runs along the eastern edge of the Fens in Norfolk and Suffolk, England. It was constructed in the 1950s and 1960s as part of flood defence measures, and carries the headwaters of the River Wissey, River Lark and River Little Ouse in times of flood, delivering them to Denver Sluice on the River Great Ouse. In the summer months, it’s flow can be changed to enable it to be used as part of a water supply scheme for drinking water in Essex.

These functions are possible as the result of major landscape engineering. The channel crosses 35 miles of the eastern part of the fens from Downham Market to Mildenhall, with many sluices controlling the flow along the way. Beyond The Brecks, the majority of the flow is piped underground before arriving in Essex.

Northwards flow for flood protection*

It is estimated that 40% of flood waters in the Fens come from the three rivers that flow through The Brecks (the Lark, Little Ouse and Wissey). This demonstrates the importance of the cut off channel for flood prevention in the fens.

When the Great Ouse Cut Off Channel is flowing northwards for Ouse Flood Protection, the water flow starts at the Lark Head Sluice on the River Lark at Barton Mills, when the sluice is open. There are four weirs to control the water levels during the considerable fall between the Lark at Barton Mills and the Little Ouse at Hockwold.

At Stoke Ferry, the River Wissey flows in an aqueduct over the Cut Off Channel.

The Cut Off Channel then flows northwards and intersects the River Little Ouse at the Hockwold Sluice at Hockwold, and then intersects the River Wissey at the Wissey Sluice at Stoke Ferry, and thence to Denver Sluice.
At each of these intersections, the Cut Off Channel goes underneath the Little Ouse and Wissey rivers in a siphon or U-tube and can draw water from the two rivers when the appropriate sluice gates are opened and closed.

Southwards flow for Ouse-to-Essex water transfer

Essex regularly suffers from droughts in summer. In 1964 it was realised there was insufficient water to support expansion, development and growing consumer demand in south Essex. In 1968 it was proposed to reverse the flow and use part of the Cut Off Channel to take surplus fresh water southwards from the Great Ouse at Denver Sluice and deliver it down to existing reservoirs in Essex.

The Ely Ouse To Essex Water Transfer Scheme was completed in 1971, taking water down to Abberton Reservoir 87 miles south, and to Hanningfield Reservoir 90 miles south. Although existing watercourses are utilised for about two-thirds of the distance, a new tunnel and new pipelines and storage tanks all had to be built.

When the flow of the Cut Off Channel is reversed southwards for Ouse To Essex Water Transfer, water is diverted through the Diversion Sluice at Denver and flows up the Cut Off Channel, through the siphon under the River Wissey at Stoke Ferry, to the Blackdyke Intake at Feltwell between Stoke Ferry and Hockwold.

Water is extracted from the Cut Off Channel at Blackdyke Intake, where it plunges 90 feet down a huge shaft into a long tunnel under the hills and under the A11 near Newmarket, to Kennett Pumping Station. At Kennett, water is pumped 280 feet up to the surface again, then by pipeline under the hills by the A14 to Kirtling Green Outfall and Kirtling Brook, where it joins the River Stour to Wixoe Pumping Station near Haverhill. From Wixoe Pumping Station, water flows by various means to the Essex reservoirs.

BFER projects focussing on river improvements will add connectivity for species into the other rivers connected to, and via, the Cut-off channel including the Little Ouse and Lark.

SHAPING THE LAND

Geology

The Brecks lie on the broad band of chalk that extends diagonally across England from the Chilterns to north-west Norfolk. Generally, the chalk is upstanding as a gentle ridge, but The Brecks lie on a slight depression between Newmarket and Swaffham where the chalk forms a low plateau, 15-30m above sea level. This plateau was scraped and shaped by the Ice Age glaciers, particularly the Anglian glaciation in which lobes of ice extended right across Suffolk to the northern edge of the London Basin. The glaciers gouged out the relatively soft, older Mesozoic rocks to the west of the chalk to form the fen basin and transported huge quantities of these clays to the east and south, where they were dumped to form the chalky boulder clays (Lowestoft Till) of central Norfolk and Suffolk.

The ice sheets left a relatively low, gently undulating chalk plateau, which rises to the north. The deposits of chalky boulder clay and outwash gravels left by the retreating Anglian glaciers vary in thickness and composition. On The Brecks the deposits are relatively thin and sandy; to the east they are very much deeper and more clayey. The thick boulder clays of central Suffolk have formed higher land and the main rivers of The Brecks – the Nar, Wissey, Thet/Little Ouse and the Lark flow westwards from these more elevated clay-lands, cutting through the low dry chalk plateau of The Brecks, before flowing into the fen basin.

After the Anglian, there was a further sequence of warmer interglacial and freezing glacial periods, but the glaciers formed during the two subsequent glaciations did not reach further south than the Norfolk Coast. The Brecks were untouched by these later ice sheets, but the repeated freezing and thawing that occurred in the periglacial conditions suffered by areas to the south of the glaciers were particularly influential on the thin chalk soils of The Brecks. Here the surface layers of chalk and glacial till deposits were shattered by alternate freezing and warm conditions. Mildly acidic rainwater gradually dissolved and leached the chalk from the surface layers leaving an insoluble surface residue of sand – in many areas the sand layer is only 1-2cm thick, but in places deep layers of sand may have been formed by wind-blown drifts, for example, in the Elveden area it may be as much as 5m deep!

Local erosion (in part by wind) has created ridges of chalk alongside troughs filled with sand and
the contrasting soil types often produce striking variations in vegetation, with bands of acid-loving heather separated by chalk grassland. Areas where these contrasts occur are known as the ‘patterned ground’ and the variations are even visible on arable land as crops grow more vigorously on the chalky, moisture-retaining soils.

The Brecks river valley systems were formed by glacial outwash at the end of the Anglian glaciation, the last time that ice sheets extended as far as The Brecks. The glacial meltwaters carved shallow valleys into the chalk plateau, draining westwards to the fen basin from the more elevated boulder clays of central Suffolk and Norfolk. Drifts of sand and gravel were often deposited by the glacial meltwaters on the valley sides and have had a strong influence on valley soils, on early colonisation and on the development of agriculture and mineral workings. In places the glacial drift material is overlain with peat dominated soils and associated areas of heathland and common.

PINGOS

The freeze-thaw pattern of the periglacial climate also led to the development of ground ice depressions, commonly known as ‘pingos’. These circular hollows, filled with water or fen vegetation typically occur in clusters, as at Thompson, Foulden and East Harling Commons. Pinos developed when groundwater froze, expanded and heaved the ground’s surface up to form mounds with a central core of ice.

When the ice subsequently melted during the warmer inter-glacial periods, the mounds collapsed to leave circular water-filled depressions, sometimes with sandy ramparts around the rims. Fluctuating meres, such as those at Fowlmere and Ringmere, may also have formed during the post glacial period. They are karstic formations which are often fed by springs so that water levels fluctuate according to the degree of groundwater saturation in the chalk.
THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

The settlement pattern in the Scheme area is predominantly one of nucleated settlements of medieval origin, but with a tendency in more recent times for these to straggle out along the access roads.

The long-standing water resources of the river and fen corridors have meant that they have been a focus for human settlement, with most of the major villages and towns in the Brecks being sited in these corridors. The substantial reorganisation of the landscape in the 18th and 19th centuries also resulted in the creation of isolated farmsteads to serve the newly-created land units. Some isolated farmsteads originated as lodges on the huge rabbit warrens that once dominated the driest areas. Isolated churches are also a notable feature, particularly in the Norfolk part of the Brecks. These point to changes in the settlement pattern over time, with settlements in marginal positions contracting or entirely failing. Some, as at Buckenham Tofts, are in or near parkland suggesting that parkland creation was a factor in changes to the settlement pattern.

The Brecks has numerous extant or relic landscape parks, mostly dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, and mostly sited in the river corridors. The world wars of the 20th century eroded the economic viability of many of the houses within these parks, leading to their demolition and the subsequent conversion of several of these parks to military use. The military presence is now a strong factor in the Brecks, with the large airfields of RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath, the Stanford Training Area (STANTA), together with smaller units such as RAF Feltwell, and Barnham, Bodney and East Wretham Camps. Disused airfields, such as that Methwold have been utilised for industry. Due to the dryness of much of the Brecks, water reservoirs are frequently encountered.
CONNECTING PHYSICAL CHARACTER AND LAND USE HISTORY

The unique biodiversity of The Brecks stems from the region’s free-draining, nutrient-poor sandy soils and its micro-climate, which is relatively dry with extremes of temperature.

The combination of drought, low rainfall, hot summers and cold winters has led to the development of steppe-type vegetation and to an agricultural system that used the infertile soils for grazing and rabbit warrening while the alluvial river valley soils were used for more intensive cropping and fen products.

From the 1920s, large areas of heathland and low value arable land were forested. At the same time, with the use of fertilisers and irrigation, arable cultivation on the better land became increasingly intensive. The diverse mosaic of fens, reed-beds, marshes and wet meadows within the river valleys has depleted as a result of drainage, reclamation, flood control and groundwater abstraction.

The scale and diversity of semi-natural habitats has been reduced, but the remnant areas of species-rich grassland, woodland, heathland, fen, marsh and reedbed form a valuable network, which sustains an exceptionally diverse flora and fauna.

PEOPLE WITH A STAKE IN THE LANDSCAPE

People are known to have inhabited The Brecks Fen Edge and River corridors for more than 400,000 years, and the rich history of the landscape has been shaped by the human response to a landscape of infertile, sandy soils and a relatively dry climate. For a timeline of Land use history see Appendix 3.

COMMUNITIES

The population of The Brecks is estimated to be approximately 138,600, providing a significant audience for engagement and participation in the Scheme. As previously outlined, The Brecks landscape spans a large area of West Norfolk and Suffolk and includes several larger towns including Thetford, Mildenhall and Brandon. Communities just outside the Scheme area, and which therefore impact the landscape through recreation or other activities, and which are also potential beneficiaries of landscape heritage improvements and engagement activities, include Bury St Edmunds, Swaffham, Downham Market, Watton and East Harling.

An estimated 67% to 74% of residents live in rural areas, and it is estimated that 70% of households within The Brecks are deprived on at least one measure. A significant number report feeling disconnected from the landscape and its heritage.

Relative to other lower tier local authorities, all Districts in the Scheme area have seen their deprivation rankings worsen over the past 10 years, and Breckland District by 45 places nationally. In 2015 the Index of Multiple Deprivation showed that Bury St Edmunds and Mildenhall had worsened and are now also in the most deprived 20% of areas in England.10

Thetford, with a population of 27,269, is the largest town and sits in the centre of the new Brecks LPS project area. Its population includes a high proportion of European agricultural immigrants and the Thetford Abbey ward, among others, falls within the most deprived 10% of communities in England.

The Norfolk County Council’s 0-19 District Profile Report for Breckland (2015) examined key socio-economic factors affecting children and young people aged 0-19. It states that of the 29,330 0-19-year-olds in Breckland (which does not cover

the whole of the new LPS area), 1700 have English as Another Language (EAL); significantly Polish and Portuguese.

It also records 4,230 children as residing in workless households, but the extent of deprivation and poverty varies widely across the region.

As in many areas, reducing childhood obesity is a priority, for example Swaffham, just outside the scheme area exhibits the highest rates of child obesity, with 40% of children being overweight.

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<th>Place</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Born in the UK</th>
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<td>15,358</td>
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<td>Lakenheath</td>
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<td>Brandon</td>
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<td>Bury St Edmund</td>
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<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methwold</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WIDER PARTNERSHIPS

More than 60 organisation and individuals took part in the early development of the BFER LP proposals and stage 1 application, and many have gone on to support the development of the projects contained in this LCAP in varying degrees. Many others will engage with the delivery of the Scheme through consultation, participation or delivery. Additional organisations not directly involved in scheme delivery will be supported to become more sustainable and will be encouraged to develop projects for funding through the BFER 3rd Party Grants Fund.

Organisations already identified as potential new partners for delivery and/or grant support include Catch 22, an education initiative providing an individual learning and training experience while enhancing employability skills for 16-19-year-olds who do not want to stay in a traditional academic environment. Another group working with young people are the Breckland Youth Advisory Board (YAB): a body of young people and professionals that meet on a bi-monthly basis. The aim of the YAB is to identify issues that impact on young people and to play a strategic role in meeting these needs through the commissioning of services, lobbying on behalf of young people and influencing decision makers.

EDUCATION

Both Norfolk and Suffolk operate a two-tier system of Primary and High schools. Pupils transition at the end of Year 6 when they are 11 years old. The LPS area has a total of 26 schools. 21 are Primary and 5 are High schools. There are a total of 8,156 students attending schools within the BFER boundaries.

Many schools find it difficult to engage with local heritage and struggle to finance transportation. When resources are available many will choose to go further afield as this is often seen as better value for money.

THE PLACES PEOPLE VISIT

A recent study commissioned by Visit Norfolk shows that The Brecks area has a very low recognition rate among potential visitors from outside of Norfolk/Suffolk. The 4% figure only rises to 10% when the respondents are shown the area on a map. Contrast this to the 45% that recognised The Fens when prompted or the 23% that recognised South Norfolk.
It consistently comes last in other key categories:

Is the least likely attraction for children to want to visit;

Has the least stay time duration;

Has the least numbers of visitors - with peak times being February and March - well outside traditional visitor peak months.

A Visit Suffolk report shows that Bury St. Edmunds visitor figures increase during the months of February and September. This places the town firmly in the out of season visit category. Only 2% of visitors to the Bury area come to see heritage.

(Source: Visit Norfolk and Visit Suffolk)

It is generally believed that Heritage within the project area is not attracting anywhere near its potential visitor numbers. However, it is difficult to ascertain exact numbers to many existing sites due to their nature. These sites include Thetford Priory and Warren Lodge where no numbers are collected.

Determining how local communities interact with heritage sites is extremely difficult due to lack of available information. In keeping with national trends, it is likely that many sites rely on relatively local school visits to maintain visitor numbers. This pattern will be reflected at other types of site or attraction such as nature reserves. It must therefore be the aim of this Scheme to promote and facilitate visits to all heritage and wildlife sites within the area by adding to the school visitor numbers and creating a robust local community visitor base.
CULTURAL HERITAGE

The cultural importance of The Brecks biodiversity and distinctive landscape character have been well documented and commented on by naturalists, diarists, poets and social commentators through the ages.

“The Travelling Sands... that have so damaged the country, rolling from place to place, like the Sands in the Deserts of Lybia, quite overwhelmed some gentleman’s whole estates.”

John Evelyn (1668)

It was in Thetford that Thomas Paine, the radical writer much celebrated in America and France, was born. The son of a corset maker, he was born in Market Street and went on to write a number of papers including ‘Common Sense’ that was said to sway American opinions in favour of independence, and ‘Rights of Man’ which called for a democratic republic. He was, as a result, forced to leave England, receiving a hero’s welcome in France and there helped to draft the 1793 French constitution.

Other notable writers are the 17th century diarist John Evelyn; the 18th century poet George Bloomfield who wrote the poem ‘Thetford’; Mary Mann, née Rackham (1848–1929) who wrote a series of gritty portrayals of local life, and DH Lawrence called ‘Norfolk’s Thomas Hardy’; Michael Home, who was a prolific writer of fiction before writing a series of books on life in The Brecks during Edwardian and inter-war years; and W G Clark who wrote one of the seminal books on The Brecks entitled ‘In Breckland Wilds’.

Thetford

O’Thetford! round thy flow’ry fields I’ve strolled, From Tutti-Hill’s eminence and Croxton’s height, Have view’d thine ancient ruins with delight, Thy sloping hills and wooded vallies gay, Whose silv’ry Ouse meand’ring winds his way.

George Bloomfield (1757–1831)

Virginia Woolf wrote in her journal

“Often in London shall I think of Thetford, and wonder if it is still alive,” adding that “No one would notice if the whole town forgot to wake up one morning.”

This ... he who has once vibrated with the thrill of the heathland is never quite the same again ... It fascinates but few, but those who have once come under its spell are ever after its slaves.”

W G Clark, In Breckland Wilds (1925)
More recently, Booker Prize double-winner Hilary Mantel set part of her novel ‘A Change of Climate’ (1994) in the area, describing the famous pine rows and how

“the bowed, arthritic pines that line the roads creep to the edges of the small towns ... they gather round the new housing estates, like witches at a christening.”

More modern media have also had a lasting impact on the area. The television programme ‘Dad’s Army’ was filmed in and around The Brecks and a statue of Captain Mainwaring sits in Thetford town centre and is a popular attraction for visitors. Thetford and the wider project area is also home to a number of museums including the Dad’s Army Museum, Charles Burrell Museum and Ancient House Museum that all make a significant contribution to the preservation, promotion and interpretation of the area’s heritage.

MANAGEMENT OF THE LANDSCAPE

Local authorities, statutory agencies and wildlife and heritage organisations have long recognised the unique characteristics and value of The Brecks.

The area was first identified in the Hobhouse Report (1947) alongside many other landscapes that would become Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), though such a designation has never been formally attributed to The Brecks. It’s position, across multiple administrative boundaries, has perhaps contributed to the area not having been put forward for consideration in more recent AONB reviews, and continues to contribute to a disjointed approach to its management.

The Brecks fen edge and rivers landscape is part of the National Character Areas defined by Natural England and described in National Character Area Profile 85: The Brecks (2015). This profile includes a Statement of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) that influences a number of the proposals for this scheme, including engagement and support for landowners to restore connectivity of key habitats; enhancing management of wetland habitats and river corridors; and promoting the links between geological sites, archaeology and biological interest to achieve a wider understanding of the importance of the Brecks.

Other than management implications relating to small scale designations of specific sites or features, much of the management of the landscape is dictated by planning legislation, agricultural stewardship schemes and the policies of landowning organisations and other landowners.

Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the RSPB and the National Trust developed a Suffolk Nature Strategy in 2015 which includes the Brecks. Suffolk’s Nature Strategy describes the challenges and opportunities our natural environment faces in contemporary Suffolk. It puts forward 25 recommendations that place the importance of our wildlife and landscapes in the context of economic growth and our own health and well-being. Many of its recommendations are also reflected in the proposals put forward in this LCAP.

More recently Norfolk County Council’s focus has been on Green Infrastructure. This recognises the importance of connecting habitats and the need to mitigate against the potential for cumulative growth in the area to result in an increase in recreational disturbance. The engagement and access development activity delivered as part of this scheme will support practical habitat connectivity work and raise awareness of issues around recreational disturbance.
THE BRECKLAND BIODIVERSITY AUDIT (BBA)

The Breckland Biodiversity Audit (BBA) (2012) was commissioned by the Norfolk and Suffolk Biodiversity Partnerships, Plantlife, Forestry Commission, Brecks Partnership and Natural England, and undertaken by the University of East Anglia.

It collated over 1m individual species records from over 90 taxonomic groups and drew on the expertise of more than 200 naturalists to find out what biodiversity there is in Breckland, where it is found and how it can be managed and protected.

The BBA identified priority species for conservation, including large numbers of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), Red Data Book (RDB) and range-restricted species and demonstrated the outstanding importance of The Brecks for UK biodiversity.

BBA recommendations for management of wetlands: fen, pingos and meres include:

- Scrub and woodland should be largely removed from fen and wetland sites;
- A range of grazed and tall vegetation structures should be created;
- On large wetland complexes this may be achieved by flexible extensive grazing, while on smaller or wooded sites mechanical management may be required;
- Sites should no longer be considered in isolation, but management priorities should be considered that strategically integrate across multiple sites in the landscape;
- Adjacent sites should be combined into larger contiguous integrated units.

It stated that resilience of biodiverse sites will be enhanced by developing connectivity networks that are best delivered by:

- Buffering existing track-ways and track verges with cultivated margins through agri-environmental agreements in the arable landscape;
- Creating broad ruderal and disturbed highways (for The Brecks’ specialist species that require bare ground) for invertebrate and plant dispersal (by percolation) through the landscape.

It should be noted that these recommendations corroborate the conclusions in the government commissioned Lawton Report, ‘Making space for Nature’ (2010)\(^\text{11}\) that called for a ‘more, bigger, better and joined-up’ approach to habitat management.

The Brecks Biodiversity Delivery Group (BDG), made up of a variety of conservation focussed organisations, meets regularly to review activity and revise BBA delivery priorities, but has limited ability to attract funding or deliver projects. The BFER LP and BNG before it, play an essential role in delivering some of this groups’ objectives.

CURRENT LOCAL AUTHORITY PRIORITIES

The BFER LP will deliver a range of projects and activities that support Local Authority objectives and will seek to engage with all of those agencies currently delivering outputs in the scheme area that would benefit from a more joined up approach. This will not only enable delivery to be more efficient and effective, but also create a legacy of wider and more effective LA outputs post-delivery of BFER.

1. Both Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils offer a wide range of cultural activities through the records centres and libraries, where the general public can access local archives, archaeology, and the arts. BFER will seek to work with all relevant services to grow the network of partners, but also to increase participation in existing activities. In particular BFER will engage with other major projects, including the NLHF funded ‘The Hold’ project where there are direct opportunities for collaboration in the ‘Suffolk Stories’ strand of delivery).

2. Norfolk Futures Council Strategy 2018-2021 includes aims to develop skills through training and apprenticeships. BFER will seek to link its heritage skills training with existing Training and apprenticeship schemes in both Norfolk and Suffolk.

3. Suffolk County Council’s Public Health Strategy particularly focuses on giving children the best start in life. It targets education, obesity and mental health concerns (10% of children suffer from mental health issues). It highlights the importance of encouraging the public to increase their physical activity in the natural environment and ensuring that older people are being active and involved in the local community.

4. Norfolk and Waveney Health and Wellbeing Board’s ‘Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018 -2022’ outlines a framework that is based on bringing existing strategies together. One of the priorities is promoting engagement and involvement to tackle inequalities in communities, which is clear across The Brecks. The strategy aims to target obesity, health and vulnerability.

5. Norfolk’s Living Well - a public health strategy for Norfolk 2016-2020 similarly highlights the need to tackle obesity, mental health issues, health inequalities as a result of poverty and isolation and preventable illness in later life by increasing physical activity, active travel and health education. It also highlights the importance it places on working with partners to deliver necessary services.

Both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils policies and practices in place that are geared to supporting the concept of using the landscape and heritage to promote physical and mental wellbeing. This is an area of delivery where BFER is able to directly contribute, and support engagement to create a legacy of more sustainable connections between conservation organisations and public health organisations.

KEY NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

The following local, national and international strategies and policies all have potential influence on heritage and land management in the BFER scheme area. Most will have influenced the development of BFER delivery projects. Where possible BFER will seek to align with relevant aims and objectives in these documents.

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
- The European Habitats Directive and European Birds Directive - 39% of The Brecks is designated either Special Protection Area (SPA) or Special Area for Conservation (SAC) (see section 5. Statement of Significance)
- The Strategic Framework for Tourism in England 2010-2020
- Norfolk Rural Development Strategy 2013-2020
- West Suffolk Rural Vision 2031
- Suffolk Heritage Strategy 2014
- Suffolk Nature Strategy 2016
- Thetford Waterspace Study 2017
- Upper Wissey Catchment Plan
- Suffolk County Council Recognition for The
Brecks: Securing a Sustainable Future 2006
• Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Thetford Area Action Plan
• Transforming Suffolk Suffolk’s Community Strategy 2008-2028 Suffolk Strategic Partnership
• Thetford Green Infrastructure Strategy
• St Edmundsbury Green Infrastructure Strategy
• St Edmundsbury Borough Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) 2010
• Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP)
• Breckland DC Adopted Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document
• Forestry Commission: Thetford Forest Access and Tourism Strategy 2006
• Breckland District Council: The Sustainability Appraisal Report Local Development Framework
• Forest Heath District Council Cultural Strategy 2010 – 2015
• Keystone Development Trust: A Profile of Brandon
• Keystone Development Trust: A Profile of Thetford
• Moving Thetford Forward
• The River Basin Management Plan


SUMMARY

Though not designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the area is recognised as an important and unique landscape with a significant number of priority species and heritage assets.

The focus of heritage management has tended to be on the ‘heart of the Brecks’ including the Pine-lines, Heathland Mosaics and Forest Plantations rather than those areas, such as the river corridors, where most settlement and human activity has taken place.

The watery elements of the landscape have not been celebrated by writers and artists as much reinforcing the perception that they are less significant.

There is considerable evidence from the research for this scheme and previous surveys, that there is a great need for, and interest in, the provision of opportunities for people to learn more about and get involved in the care of this part of the Brecks landscape.

There is a considerable legacy of heritage volunteering through groups involved with the BNG LPS, with a wealth of potential for that to continue as well as by develop new audiences in all aspects of the delivery of the BFER Scheme.

The aims and approach of the BFER has a strong alignment with a range of key policies and strategies that are relevant to the area.
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
This section describes what is important about the range of heritage within the landscape of the BFER area, why it’s important and to whom it is important. There are many different ways in which the heritage of The Brecks matters, and it is through the understanding of this significance that the crucial heritage elements that define the landscape character can be identified, and priorities for the Scheme established.

**LANDSCAPE**

River Valleys: What’s important and why?

The river valleys are relatively lush with naturally high groundwater levels. These spring-fed wetlands support rich aquatic habitats, with an exceptionally diverse range of species, including some that are rare and of national importance. These include the native white-clawed crayfish (in the Little Ouse), otters and water voles. Parts of the headwater fen habitats are of international importance, with aquatic flora and invertebrate species that are adapted to the nutrient-poor, chalky water and fluctuating levels of flow. Within the river valleys, the diverse mosaic of wetland habitats includes reedbeds, grazing marsh, floodplain meadows, carr woodland and unimproved grassland, all connected by a network of ditches, dykes, tributary streams and water courses.

Gravel extraction has been a significant influence within river valleys where there are extensive terrace gravel deposits, most notably in the valley of the River Lark, but also at Ickburgh (River Wissey) and near Thetford (Little Ouse). The resulting large pools and reedbeds form part of the mosaic of wetland habitats on the valley floor; at Lackford, the gravel pits are a Local Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), designated for both dragonflies and wintering waterfowl.

All the River Valleys have a small, intimate scale which contrasts with the surrounding typically large-scale landscapes of The Brecks, but the character of the individual river valleys varies. The valleys of the Thet and Little Ouse are well wooded and the western part of the Thet valley is dominated by the plantations of Thetford Forest. Away from the influence of the larger settlements of Brandon and Thetford, these river valleys seem narrow and secluded. The valley of the River Lark has a broader floodplain and a larger scale, with extensive heathland near Icklingham. The Black Bourn has a deeply rural character, with attractive open views to the surrounding farmland and parkland at Euston Hall. The valley system of the River Wissey also has a small-scale character, but here the tributary river valleys are secluded, with a secretive, almost domestic scale.

The narrow, secluded River Valleys that thread through the Brecks are exceptionally sensitive landscapes because their small-scale, diverse landscape mosaic can easily be overwhelmed by development and by local changes in land use or water quality and flow. This vulnerability is heightened by the narrow form of most river valleys and their subtle landform, which means that their intimate landscape character can be disrupted by changes in adjacent landscape types.

Sections of the River Valleys are in good condition, with an intact lowland river valley assemblage of natural water course and historic landscape elements, including alder carr, floodplain meadow and fen. However, in places the small-scale landscape pattern is disrupted by mineral extraction, linear built development and by the realignment and widening of adjacent roads.
The traditional land management system of the river valleys is cattle grazing, but many relatively inaccessible, small valley floor pastures are neglected and peripheral to any form of active agriculture. They are in poor condition due to under grazing and scrub encroachment or their use as horse paddocks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape character sensitivity</th>
<th>Visual sensitivity</th>
<th>Landscape value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The intimate scale and diverse character of the River Valleys is vulnerable to change as the</td>
<td>In general, the River Valleys have a secluded character which is distinctly more</td>
<td>Key components of landscape value are:</td>
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<tr>
<td>distinctive small-scale pattern of these landscapes is finely balanced and can easily be</td>
<td>enclosed and smaller-scale than the surrounding Brecks landscapes. Views are</td>
<td>• Exceptionally valuable spring-fed wetlands and headwater fen habitats, some of which are of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overwhelmed by changes in the proportion or scale of individual elements. In addition, the</td>
<td>typically enclosed by the hedgerows, woodland, carr woodland and groups of trees</td>
<td>international importance and included within the Breckland SAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typically narrow form and subtle topography of the River Valleys ensures that they are very</td>
<td>on the valley floor and along rural lanes. Churches and village buildings are often</td>
<td>• Concentration of semi-natural wetland habitats, including many SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensitive to changes in adjacent landscapes.</td>
<td>surprise landmarks in local views.</td>
<td>• Numerous historic bridges and riverside settlements, mills and halls – conservation areas and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally distinctive and sensitive landscape features are:</td>
<td>There are strong contrasts in the visual character and accessibility of the</td>
<td>clusters of listed buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small-scale, diverse mosaic of riparian and wetland habitats which contrasts with</td>
<td>different river valleys, depending on opportunities for views from local roads and</td>
<td>• Important archaeological sites, including Bronze Age, Romano-British and Saxon settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surrounding larger scale landscapes</td>
<td>bridges.</td>
<td>• Remnant historic landscape parklands, e.g. Didlington and Shadwell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sinuous edges of floodplain, river and marsh, defined by curving tracks, roads and</td>
<td>Since the majority of Brecks settlements are sited on the fringes of the River</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>hedgerows</td>
<td>Valleys, these landscapes provide the setting and focus for local views and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Historic bridges and villages at crossing points</td>
<td>corridors of movement for a relatively high proportion of residents and visitors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Subtle landform and narrow form of river valleys</td>
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</table>
SETTLED FENS: WHAT’S IMPORTANT AND WHY?

As previously stated, the edges of the Fens were a focus for settlement as they were sufficiently dry, yet close to water and a variety of different habitats and hunting grounds. Several hoards of Bronze Age metalwork have been found from area of the Fen edge, including sites on the edge of the Rivers Wissey and Little Ouse. Some archaeologists suggest that they are the relics of ritual ceremonies where valuable weapons and implements were thrown into the marsh. Such finds demonstrate the importance of the fen edge landscape to the early settlers.

The small-scale geometric pattern of the landscape is vulnerable to change and is generally highly visible from local roads. Areas with a relatively high proportion of woodland are able to accommodate some change, but much of the woodland within the Settled Fen is wet woodland, of high biodiversity value and even these areas are small in scale. Overall this is a vulnerable landscape, of high biodiversity value, in areas that are under pressure for change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape character sensitivity</th>
<th>Visual sensitivity</th>
<th>Landscape value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale, untidy and ‘remnant’ character which is under pressure for change from adjacent development and land uses. Vulnerable to change because signs, structures and even new planting can cumulatively change and easily overwhelm the characteristic small-scale landscape pattern.</td>
<td>Much of the Settled Fen is visible from adjacent roads and there are often views across the Settled Fen to adjacent landscape types. There is very little scope to accommodate landscape change without fundamentally changing the proportion and scale of the landscape pattern. The open Settled Fen landscapes of Wangford Fen and the lower Little Ouse valley have particularly high visual sensitivity.</td>
<td>Parts of the Settled Fen (at Hurst Fen, Wangford Fen and the Little Ouse Valley) are within the Breckland Special Protection Area and contribute to the habitats of the stone curlew, nightjar and woodlark. Overall, the most valuable ecological habitats are the fen, reedbeds, wet grassland, wet woodland and carr, which are S41 UK priority habitats. The Neolithic settlement site at Hurst Fen, the Romano-British settlement site at Leylands Farm, undated earthworks on the edge of the Little Ouse river and the Saxon occupation site at Chequer Meadow, Brandon are all scheduled ancient monuments of national importance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The international significance of the Brecks has been recognised by the fact that 40% of The Brecks National character Area is covered by statutory conservation designations relating to Biodiversity, Geology and History. These include sites of international, national and regional importance.

When in 2015 Natural England described The Brecks as a National Character Area (No.85 The Brecks)12, they stated that:

“The area has an ages-old identity, a very particular land use history and a richly distinctive wildlife, which sets it apart from all surrounding landscapes.” National character Area Profile 85. The Brecks, Natural England (2015)

With its unique mosaic of lowland acid and calcareous grassland, lowland heathland, wetland habitats, arable land, and forest habitats, The Brecks has a particularly high concentration of rare species. Overall, it was reported by the Breckland Biodiversity Audit (BBA) that

- At least 12,845 species have been recorded.
- Of these, 2,149 are priority species for conservation in The Brecks, many more than previously realised.
- 28% of all the priority BAP species in the UK occur in The Brecks.
- 72 species have their UK distribution restricted to or have a primary stronghold in The Brecks.

Although The Brecks has long been recognised for its distinctive biodiversity, the BBA was the first time that the number of regional specialist species has been quantified. It showed that there have been worrying extinctions and recent declines in some priority species.

Remaining habitat is fragmented, species are isolated in small sites, and the landscape is hostile to dispersal among these. Climate is demonstrated as already changing, with milder winters and increased winter rainfall in recent decades. Nitrogen deposition is a severe threat, as semi-natural habitats have received 1-2 tonnes of Nitrogen per ha over the last century.

- 15 species previously recorded in The Brecks are believed to be extinct in the UK or England.
- The BBA collated recent records for 10 other species considered to be extinct nationally, giving hope that these may survive in The Brecks. These now need urgent survey to confirm their status.
- A further 25 species are thought to have been lost from the region (locally extirpated) although they persist elsewhere in the UK.
- For seven well monitored vascular plant taxa restricted to The Brecks, more than half of the populations (54%) have been lost (since 1985).

The BBA also analysed the ecological requirements of the 2000+ priority species in The Brecks to provide guidance for their conservation. This recognised the importance of open water, littoral margins and open fen habitats as being vitally important to Brecks biodiversity. Significantly however, it also shows that biodiversity records remain low in this area and addressing this is crucial to improving our understanding and the recognition of its importance, and how water and associated biodiversity has influenced the landscape.

Brecks meets Fens at Lakenheath. © Anglia TV news

IMPORTANT FRESHWATER AREAS

In the interim analysis of Important Freshwater Areas, undertaken by Freshwater Habitats Trust, Breckland was one of approximately 20 areas in England and Wales recognised for their exceptional freshwater biodiversity, including the project area of The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Scheme.

"This ranks the region alongside areas such as the New Forest and Norfolk Broads in its importance for freshwater biodiversity."

Freshwater Habitats Trust, (2018)

Although The Brecks are drier than the nearby Important Freshwater Areas (e.g. The Fens, the Norfolk Broads), the quality and diversity of its wetlands means that it supports exceptional freshwater biodiversity. The Brecks is particularly known for its pingos, natural ponds that were formed by freezing and thawing of upwelling groundwater during the last glacial period, the fluctuating meres, its valley fens and for chalk rivers and streams.

The Brecks’ pingos are amongst the most species rich freshwater environments in Western Europe.
A large proportion of The Brecks is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), including several SSSIs which are water-dependent\(^1\). It’s also important to note that SSSIs not designated for their aquatic or wetland habitats can also support priority freshwater habitats and species of conservation concern, or indeed be supported by them.

Several SSSIs in The Brecks are of international importance and are designated as Special Areas for Conservation (SACs), all of which are water-dependent. The Brecks has four National Nature Reserves, including Cavenham Heath, in the Scheme area, which is also an SSSI and encompasses wet woods, fen, water meadows and riverbanks. In addition to the statutory designations the majority of The Brecks region is also designated as ‘Living Landscape’\(^1\) areas by both Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

At the regional and county level, The Brecks includes areas designated as Local Nature Reserves, including the Great Eastern Pingo Trail, and County Wildlife Sites. There are also many sites owned and/or managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Wildlife Trust, as well as one National Trust site. Often these locally designated sites are abutting or at the same location as sites with national designations. Unsurprisingly, there is also significant overlap between priority habitats and designated sites.

HABITATS OF PRINCIPAL IMPORTANCE (PRIORITY HABITATS)

The location of aquatic and wetland priority habitats in The Brecks was established using the national dataset of habitats of principal importance from www.data.gov.uk.

Aquatic and wetland priority habitats in The Brecks include chalk rivers, ponds, lowland fen, reedbeds, and floodplain grazing marsh, rush pasture, and lowland meadows.

A brief description of each priority habitat type in The Brecks is given below:

- **Chalk rivers:** There are a number of chalk rivers in The Brecks including the Little Ouse River, River Wissey, River Nar and River Lark.
- **Ponds:** The Freshwater Habitats Trust’s (FHT) draft dataset for priority ponds shows that some 23% of the ponds in The Brecks are likely to have priority status. There are also three of FHT’s ‘Flagship Ponds’\(^1\) sites.
- **Lowland fens:** There are small areas of fen scattered around The Brecks. These are the remains of what was once more extensive fen habitat and still support outstanding important concentrations of freshwater biodiversity. Some of these sites are designated as SSSIs but many are not. Fens tend to suffer from fragmentation, and/or poor management (particularly lack of extensive grazing), and/or nutrient pollution from surrounding agricultural land.
- **Floodplain grazing marsh:** There are many areas of floodplain grazing marsh mapped in The Brecks. This habitat type is shortly to be reclassified by Natural England ‘floodplain wetland mosaic’ and is intended to be treated as an area which will be a priority for freshwater and wetland habitat restoration and creation.
- **Lowland meadows:** There are many patches of lowland meadow in The Brecks. More can be
found in Norfolk than in Suffolk. Areas adjacent to existing lowland meadows are potentially locations for new freshwater habitat creation.

- **Purple moor grass and rush pasture**: The mapping shows four small areas of this habitat in The Brecks.

- **Reedbed**: Small areas of reedbed habitat are dotted throughout The Brecks, one of the largest examples being at Cavenham Heath NNR along the margins of the river Lark. Also included in the BFER scheme area is Lakenheath Fen, a very large area of reedbed nature reserve located on the Fen Edge.

- **Priority headwaters**: These are areas where it is considered that small streams are likely to be in good ecological condition based on the occurrence and extent of low-intensity land use. Priority headwater areas are mostly concentrated in England’s upland areas and only make up a very small proportion of the lowland headwater resource. The Brecks is one of the largest areas in lowland England where streams are considered likely to be priority headwaters.

### WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE CLASSIFICATION: HIGH STATUS SITES

The various elements of Water Framework Directive classification can be looked at singly to identify High status sites for those elements. None of the 27 waterbodies in The Brecks surveyed for Water Framework Directive are classified as High for their overall ecological quality. There are 14 waterbodies with High status for invertebrates, 2 with High status for macrophytes and 4 with High status for phosphate.

Waterbodies with High Water Framework Directive status (shown in blue) for invertebrates (left), macrophytes (centre) and phosphate (right) in The Brecks.

Waterbodies with High Water Framework Directive status for invertebrates (left), macrophytes (centre) and phosphate (right) in The Brecks.
PRIORITIES FOR FRESHWATER BIODIVERSITY

The prioritisation of Important Freshwater Areas in The Brecks is shown on the map below. In total, eleven areas were identified in The Important Freshwater Areas Report which are high priorities for freshwater biodiversity.

The Important Freshwater Areas mapping helps to facilitate a focused approach to restoration and conservation works on freshwaters in the project area.

Broadly, the Important Freshwater Areas show those locations where protection of existing habitats and species is a priority and indicates the areas of search for projects to extend these habitats or species ranges.

SUMMARY OF DESIGNATED SITES

The BFER scheme area has a significant number of formally designated heritage sites, including sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) of which 25% are water related, and touches on two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and a Special Protection Area (SPA). The Historic Environment Record (HER) for the Scheme area is dense with many Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other historic records, many of which related to the river corridors and early settlements or the industrial heritage. Further details can be found in Appendix 4.
Historic Environment sites in the BFER area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Number of Sites</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>‘Other’ historic river features</td>
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Ecological Designations in the BFER area

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<td>Norfolk</td>
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National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) overlaying SSSIs in The Brecks, including those considered water-dependent marked in purple.

There are 55 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in The Brecks of which 37 are in the scheme area. Many of which are considered water dependent. These sites are of national importance.

SACs and SSSIs including those considered to be water dependant marked in purple.

- Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) totalling 7,548ha – for inland dunes with important open dry grassland habitats, dry heathland, semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland on calcareous substrate and habitats associated with the fluctuating meres.

- Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, which includes Foulden Common, Great Cressingham Fen and Thompson Common – for their calcium-rich spring fed vegetation and transitions to reed swamp and other fen and wet grassland types.

- Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC, which includes Market Weston and Hopton Fens for their calcareous fen and purple moor grass vegetation on calcareous, peaty or clayey soils.

- Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) for the conservation of breeding populations of woodlark, nightjar and stone curlew.
County Wildlife sites, Wildlife Trust and National Trust boundaries.

Priority ponds and Flagship pond sites in The Brecks.

Aquatic and wetland habitats of principal importance in The Brecks.
THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The Norfolk and Suffolk Historic Environment Records include details of thousands of archaeological finds and features which represent the full breadth of human history, from the earliest times to the present day. We owe our knowledge to the large number of antiquarians, archaeologists, historians and metal-detectorists who have worked extensively in the region during the last 150 years or more, but the discoveries made to date only represent a small percentage of the total archaeological record and we still have much to learn.
The BFER Scheme area contains a series of nationally significant heritage sites, which tell the story of the human occupation and exploitation of the fen edge and the important role which the region’s rivers and landscape played in their continued survival. Many of the gravel pits and quarries dug in the region since the 19th century have revealed traces of very ancient human activity. At East Farm, Barnham, archaeological excavations have uncovered flint artefacts, such as hand-axes and other flint tools, as well as animal remains, including the carapaces of terrapins which swam in the rivers 400,000 years ago. More significantly still, at both Barnham and nearby Beeches Pit (West Stow), archaeologists have revealed some of the earliest evidence in Europe for the deliberate use of fire by early humans, an event which marked a major turning point in human evolution.

More recent episodes in our human past were revealed during the excavation of Lynford Quarry in 2002, when the bones of at least nine complete mammoths and associated stone tools were discovered. These represented the remains of a butchery site used by Neanderthals some 60,000 years ago and provided a rare and vivid insight into human exploitation of the riverine environment during the last ice age.

The Neolithic flint mine complex at Grimes Graves dates from 4000–2300 BC and is one of only six known examples in the country. The deep shafts sunk into the chalk represent the exploitation of natural seams of flints on an industrial scale, using antler picks and shovels made from the shoulder blades of cattle. The lunar-like landscape of the site indicates the presence of over 400 mine shafts, and flint from the site was traded across a large area.

During the Iron Age, the region became one of the heartlands of the East Anglian Iceni tribe, whose most famous leader, Boudica, led a revolt against the Roman occupation of Britain in AD 60. The impressive earthworks of Thetford castle have their origins as an Iron Age hillfort, which was constructed on a promontory overlooking a river crossing. Thetford is also the site of an elaborate Iron Age and Romano-British temple complex, which comprised a series of concentric square enclosures and was partially excavated between 1980 and 1982.

Fison Way is also the discovery site of the Thetford Treasure, a hoard of 4th-century Roman jewellery, which is now in the British Museum. However, even this is eclipsed by the Mildenhall Treasure, a large hoard of 4th-century silver Roman tableware of exquisite workmanship, which includes a great decorative dish weighing over 8kg which now forms the centrepiece of the British Museum’s Roman collections. The hoard was discovered by a ploughman in 1942 but was not recognised for what it was until 1946, and the story of the discovery became the subject of a book by Roald Dahl. All of these finds serve to demonstrate the extent and sophistication of the Roman presence in East Anglia, which included numerous villas and a Roman town at Icklingham. The latter is notable for the discovery of a lead vessel decorated with a Christian Chi-Rho symbol, one of very few indications of Roman Christianity known in the region.

The withdrawal of the Roman influence and the migration of the Anglo-Saxons in the early decades of the 5th century radically changed the character of the region. These new settlers navigated the North Sea and entered the region via the numerous navigable river channels which entered The Brecks from the west. They established new settlements along these river corridors, the most famous of which was extensively excavated at West Stow in the 1970s and the site of which is now the subject of an ongoing archaeological experiment testing different designs of Anglo-Saxon buildings. In addition to settlements, the Anglo-Saxons established extensive cemeteries, such as the large cremation cemetery at Lackford, which contained several hundred pottery
cremation urns, and the richly-furnished burial ground at RAF Lakenheath, which included a horse with lavish harness and bridle buried alongside its rider.

During the course of the Anglo-Saxon period much of the order and pattern of the landscape which we still recognise today was established. This includes the locations and names of settlements, and the networks of roads, lanes, parishes and fields. Very few archaeological sites from this period survive, as most are now buried beneath later settlements, but a spectacularly well-preserved example of an Anglo-Saxon settlement was excavated on the outskirts of Brandon in the 1980s. This site was almost certainly an early monastery and seems to have met its end as a result of the Viking incursions into the region.

The Anglo-Saxon chronicle for the year AD 869 records that the Viking army spent the winter in Thetford, before defeating and executing the last East Anglian king, Edmund. This led to the establishment of a period of Viking rule, during which East Anglia was part of the Danelaw and Thetford became an important Danish settlement. The remains of a wealthy Viking burial were excavated in Santon Downham in the 19th century, and the Viking influence in the region is due to be explored as one of the many heritage projects in the proposed scheme.

The martyrdom of King Edmund also gave rise to the establishment of the major monastic house in Bury St Edmunds, on the southern edge of the study area, which was one of the largest abbey churches in Christendom and attracted pilgrims from across western Europe. During the medieval period, the abbey was instrumental in the events of Magna Carta and the abbey owned extensive tracts of land within west Suffolk, over which it exerted a strong influence.

Following the Norman Conquest of 1066, Thetford emerged as a rival to Bury St Edmunds, and the Norman cathedral was established in the town in
1070, before being moved to Norwich in 1094. This period also saw the establishment of Thetford’s first castle, at Red Castle, and this was replaced in the 12th century by the short-lived motte and bailey castle at the eastern end of the town. The surviving motte is the second-largest artificial mound in England, after Silbury Hill near Avebury.

Outside the towns, the importance of water in this arid landscape led to medieval and post-medieval settlement being primarily nucleated, with villages clustered along the river valleys and fen-edge wetlands to the west of the central dry plateau. The terrestrial and riverine landscapes were extensively exploited for agricultural purposes, while the rivers were a source of sustenance, a means of transportation, and a powerful force which could be used to drive mills and other machinery. Many material traces of the intensive exploitation of the region’s rivers survives within the riverbeds themselves and adjacent riparian landscapes, and these too form the focus of heritage and conservation projects as part of the proposed scheme.

The conflicts of the 20th century have also had a very strong influence on the region’s landscape, most obviously through the establishment of major airfields, as at RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall. The former has its origins in the First World War, with the current airfield having been constructed in 1940. The latter was established in the 1930s and served throughout the Second World War and beyond. Both airfields played significant roles during the Cold War, too, and at Barnham we have the extant remains of one of the most recent Scheduled Monuments in the National Heritage List for England, a Cold War atomic weapons store which was used to store nuclear warheads during the 1950s and 1960s.

Overall, the historic environment of the study area reflects some half a million years of human interaction and exploitation of this crucial interface between the low-lying fens to the west and the arid Breckland to the east. Sites such as those discussed here, as well as many thousands of others which are known about from archaeological discoveries and historical sources, allow us to understand something of the rich human story of the region, but also act as a microcosm of the wider national picture. Many of the heritage projects proposed as part of this project will give these important stories the attention they deserve and present them to new audiences, while other projects focus on uncovering new sites and new information which will better inform our understanding of this incredibly significant part of the East Anglian region.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BFER HERITAGE TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Brecks is not widely known or understood. The area is often only experienced by many as tree-lined avenues as they cross it by road or rail to other destinations and is often thought of by people from the settlements and from outside the area as the ‘Thetford Forest area’. The almost invisible river valleys and easily missed water bodies are almost entirely overlooked. This lack of understanding and awareness is not helped by a myriad of brands, information points, historic pamphlets and very little common message that promotes a sense of place.

Equally, the history and many of the special qualities of The Brecks are accessible in terms of subject and variety, however, with a few recent exceptions, they are often poorly signposted and interpreted and there is no joining up between site and venues to help build a story. Therefore, The Brecks is only beginning its journey as a significant landscape place in the public consciousness.

Car ownership is a significant factor in people’s ability to visit beyond the towns. Most people use their own car. Though walking and cycling are popular, this tends to be mainly very local routes or for those who drive to a location to then walk or cycle. Use of public transport is very low and this is often raised as a key limiting factor in the area generally, especially for the elderly and young.

It consistently emerged that the main attraction of The Brecks is its rural tranquillity and a place to walk, picnic and just enjoy being outdoors. Recreation is and will continue to develop as one of the most valued reasons for engaging with The Brecks Landscape. What is often overlooked is how some of the same assets were used in the past. Swimming in the rivers is one of the main ways that generations of local people learnt how to swim, and it is by the rivers that many families would have picnics and engage in fun activities. In Thetford the River Little Ouse even had a Lido built into the river bank, where generations of Thetford school children learnt to swim right up until the 1970s. Just 45 years later, all that remains is three rendered walls and many local people with lots of happy memories and stories of their time swimming in the river. While perhaps less formally, this experience is repeated at many locations throughout The Brecks.

However, today it is also clear that many people just drive through the area and do not visit at all, whilst others tend to only go to the main settlements and key ‘organised’ attractions, of which perhaps the most common is the Thetford Forest Park.

Walking, wildlife-watching and outdoor activities tend to be important, but it is also evident that with the exception of High Lodge, children’s play and activities are not significant. The impression is generally of an older or ‘specialist’ audience beyond the main attractions.

Equally clear is that the main attraction of The Brecks for the minority ethnic groups is work, and their visits are most often to be to places where they can socialise with friends. Their local knowledge tends to be poor and focused on the settlements. They also commonly to work long hours for low pay, so their recreational opportunities are more limited.
SUMMARY

**Landscape:** The River Valleys and Settled Fen landscapes have a small, intimate scale which contrasts with the surrounding typically large-scale landscapes of The Brecks’ Forests and Heathland Mosaic landscapes. Gravel extraction has been a significant influence within river valleys where there are extensive terrace gravel deposits, yet they are exceptionally sensitive landscapes because their small-scale, diverse landscape mosaic can easily be overwhelmed by development and by local changes in land use or water quality and flow.

**Natural Environment:** The international significance of the Brecks has been recognised by the fact that 40% of The Brecks National character Area is covered by statutory conservation designations relating to Biodiversity, Geology and History, yet there is no formal landscape designation – although Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty status was considered in the 1949 designation process. The Freshwater Habitats Trusts ranks the region alongside areas such as the New Forest and Norfolk Broads in its importance for freshwater biodiversity.

**Historic Environment:** The Norfolk and Suffolk Historic Environment Records include details of thousands of archaeological finds and features which represent the full breadth of human history, from the earliest times to the present day. The BFER Scheme area contains a series of nationally significant heritage sites, which tell the story of the human occupation and exploitation of the fen edge and the important role which the region’s rivers and landscape played in their continued survival.

**Communities:** The Brecks is not widely known or understood. The area is often only experienced by many as tree lined avenues and is often thought of as the ‘Thetford Forest area’. The almost invisible river valleys and easily missed water bodies are almost entirely overlooked. What is in danger of being forgotten entirely is how some of the same assets were used in the past. Swimming in the rivers is one of the main ways that generations of local people learnt how to swim, and it is by the rivers that many families would have picnics and engage in fun activities.
THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES
As explained previously, many other areas of highly distinctive landscape in England have National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or National Park status, which The Brecks does not. Compounding this problem is the fact that there are two county administrations and four district councils, each with their own priorities. The lack of oversight at a landscape scale, to address major influences such as scarcity of water on the waterbodies, leaves the biodiversity and heritage of the area at greater risk.

The historic environment is also very rich in the Scheme area, with nationally significant artefacts and sites of all periods surviving within its boundaries. An often-disjointed approach to how it is managed has resulted in sites being poorly recorded, with much of the historical heritage under increasing pressure from changing land use.

The Heritage Fund’s Landscape Partnerships programme limit of around 200km², presents an opportunity to focus on a key landscape type within The Brecks and support organisations and partners to deliver meaningful outcomes and legacy more effectively. These factors create a unique opportunity to tell the story of the landscape, enhance and conserve the heritage through engagement with communities through a wide range of projects.

A significant number of individual sites within the Scheme, totalling over 40% of its area, are protected as SSSIs, SACs and SPAs. The lack of formal designation at a landscape scale however is arguably the greatest threat to its heritage, and one which also provides the greatest opportunities for The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme to make a real difference to how decision makers and local communities perceive, value and manage this special landscape.
IMPORTANT FRESHWATER AREAS

Designations afford some protection to these sites, particularly those with statutory designations that are owned or managed by nature conservation NGOs or by sympathetic landowners. However, even well-managed freshwater designated sites are commonly exposed to damaging impacts from their surroundings, particularly due to hydrological or water quality impacts, and atmospheric deposition and non-native species. For example, intensive land-use around some fen sites is bringing in nutrient and other pollutants via inflow streams or groundwater. Underdrains in fields in the upstream part of fen catchments can also affect hydrological processes. A long-term vision is necessary to address these issues through e.g. land purchase and/or de-intensification of the upstream catchment, supported by agri-environment schemes, so that water quality and hydrology can be restored.

In the short-term, actions are needed to ensure we have better, and more up to date records to ensure that the freshwater biodiversity of those sites is protected so that the risk of extinction is reduced. So, for example, if the SSSI unit is very small and grazing may not be possible, active management by volunteers or contractors should be considered to maintain the habitat for the nationally rare species at these sites, until the long-term vision can be realised.

A recent advice note from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Managers (CIEEM) on the lifespan of ecological reports & surveys¹⁶ states that most surveys over 12 months old, and certainly all over 3 years old need to be updated to be valid. This provides significant incentive for partners and volunteers to engage in immediate, and long-term work update and improve environmental records for the Scheme area. This will ensure the most effective use of resources and minimisation of negative impacts from BFER activities in the long term.

CONSERVING THE CHARACTER OF THE RIVER VALLEYS

Settlement in The Brecks has historically been concentrated along the river valleys and the narrow, small-scale valley landscapes which form part of the landscape setting of historic village centres. Views from and along the valley floor are vulnerable to any large-scale development within the riverside villages and along the valley-side roads as described in more detail earlier in this document.

Land use changes have the potential to disrupt the characteristically diverse, small-scale patterns of fields and habitats on the valley floor. The loss of traditional grazed floodplain pastures and the creation of small horse paddocks and associated structures can also significantly degrade the quality and condition of the river valley landscapes. Pastures that are inaccessible or of marginal economic value may be left unused and become colonised by wet woodland and scrub.

The continuation of traditional agricultural practices is integral to the character and condition of the river valley landscapes and grazing is often critical to the successful management of important wildlife sites in the landscape. The conversion of grassland to arable production as a result of drainage and ‘shaving off’ areas of grassland on the drier, outer fringes of valley pastures reduces the scale and integrity of the river valley landscapes. Arable reversion, through agri-environment schemes, or with expansion of livestock enterprises, can help to maintain the character of this landscape and deliver ecological benefits.

The river valley landscapes contain a mix of wet and plantation woodland and it is important to conserve a balance that is appropriate and in keeping with the distinctive local character and level of enclosure of each river valley landscape. While wet woodland is an important part of the habitat mix, excessive creation of plantation woodland should be avoided.

Where possible, field layouts should be designed to reflect the historic pattern of boundaries and field shelters and material storage areas should also be located to minimise their visual impact.

The small-scale, often irregular pattern of valley floodplain meadows is a distinctive feature of the river valley landscapes, which is vulnerable to changes in drainage and land use. Opportunities for conserving these field patterns include:

- Conserving the small-scale historic field pattern, particularly on the fringes of riverside settlements
- Giving priority to the conservation of the curved and sinuous boundaries, marked by hedgerows and trees, that often occur on and along the edge of river floodplains: many are historic, species rich hedgerows which conserve the rural, enclosed character of the valley and some mark abandoned meanders or the course of former tributary streams
- Conserving and manage the network of ditches and dykes on the floodplain, which connect and maintain riparian and wetland habitats along the floodplain.
Abstraction of water from The Brecks’ rivers and chalk aquifer has increased over recent years, leading to insufficient levels for agriculture and the conservation of the valuable wetland habitats along the river valleys. This has led to drying out of upper and middle sections and riparian zones, but also to accumulation of silt and changes in the aquatic vegetation structure. In addition, high nutrient levels are a problem in many of the rivers and can lead to prolific algal growth and associated dissolved oxygen problems, particularly during period of low flow. Such water stress problems are exacerbated by the erratic and extreme climatic events associated with climate change.

Opportunities for managing water levels and water quality include:

- Recognising the role of river valleys for the storage of floodwater and aquifer recharge by encouraging the use of floodplains for these purposes so that the floodplain grasslands contribute directly to aquifer recharge into the chalk in areas where overlying glacial deposits are permeable.
- Working in partnership with farmers to encourage the uptake of agri-environment options that promote catchment sensitive farming, by harvesting and conserving water, protecting watercourses and preventing water quality deterioration by reducing diffuse pollution.
- Managing agricultural practices that could result in damage to water quality, including manure and slurry applications, particularly soil erosion and sedimentation in flood conditions due to intensive pig rearing.
- Increasing grassland strips along field drains and water courses in areas of arable land to capture sediment and nutrients.
- Creating buffer areas between points of potential nutrient input and sensitive riparian habitats.

CONSERVING THE CHARACTER OF THE SETTLED FEN

There is pressure for built development on the fringes of some parts of the Settled Fen, but the small-scale pattern of landownership and pressure for new structures, caravans, signs, changes to garden curtilage and property extensions, as well as a range of temporary commercial uses, can result in change that is visually intrusive. This is particularly a problem where smallholdings and houses are located adjacent to roads.

Opportunities for minimising negative impacts of adjacent development include:

- Conserving existing mature trees and woodlands and hedgerows, which form a backdrop to new structures and signs.
- New planting of native broadleaf species, designed to integrate development within the scale and character of the landscape, reflecting the existing pattern of fields.
- Conserving the small-scale network of ditches, reeds and scrub that forms the characteristic boundary to fields.
- Avoiding earthworks and changes to the local (completely flat) landform.
- Avoiding linear development along the narrow roads and lanes.
- Minimising visible changes to the surrounding agricultural landscape, as land use changes (including the introduction of garden boundaries, lighting and other suburban features) have the potential to be visually intrusive.
- Using building materials that are appropriate for the style of existing buildings.

The narrow roads and rural lanes are the most accessible parts of the Settled Fen and views from the roads to the surrounding landscape are highly sensitive to change. Opportunities to improve
the integration of road and utility infrastructure developments include:

- Planting new hedgerows alongside new or altered roads to integrate these changes within the former small-scale landscape pattern, although some of the Settled Fen roads are not currently enclosed by hedgerows and in these situations the pre-existing land cover pattern should be re-established.

- Avoiding modification to the existing hydrological system and the network of ditches and dykes that typically surround fields and run alongside roads.

- Avoiding traffic calming measures and signage in rural locations that could have an urbanising effect.

- Designing small scale infrastructure such as signage, lighting and interpretation boards with simple forms and appropriate local materials so that it is well integrated within the surrounding landscape. The use of visually intrusive and unnecessary signage should be controlled.

As with the River Valleys Landscape, over abstraction of water from The Brecks’ rivers and chalk aquifer has increased, along with flood management measures designed to get the water away quickly. This has led to drying out of former wetland habitats in the Settled Fen, as well as to the accumulation of silt and changes in the aquatic vegetation structure.

Fragmentation of ecological networks and changes in land use have the potential to change the balance and quality of land uses and detrimentally affect sensitive landscape elements with the Settled Fen. Opportunities for land management practices that will conserve and enhance distinctive landscape character include:

- Managing and buffering existing trackways and track verges in accordance with cultivated agri-environmental prescriptions which are likely to involve no fertiliser or herbicides.

- Considering strategic management that buffers and links multiple woodland sites of biodiversity value into large contiguous networks.
The Scheme Plan  |  The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership

- Conserving and enhancing the character, quality and connectivity of woodlands, shelterbelts and field hedgerows, thus maintaining and increasing the overall proportion of woodland to arable fields within the overall landscape pattern.
- Enhancing the diversity of woodland and farmland habitats by woodland management to improve the age structure and species composition of woodlands and plantations.

**CONSERVING THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE**

Comparison with the Ordnance Survey maps of the 1880s shows that valley woodland has increased in the last 100 years, probably resulting from lack of management and a deterioration of drainage. Areas of alder and willow coppice are often neglected and overgrown, creating a think inaccessible tangle and hiding the narrow river corridors from view.

Aerial photography also suggests that the decrease in active management of the riparian areas has changed many areas from meadow to habitats more in the nature of rough pasture.

Archaeological material is our only source of information for almost all of the last half a million years of human occupation in The Brecks, only being complemented by written records from the Roman period onwards, and even then, only patchily until the end of the first millennium AD. The buried archaeological resource is finite and, once eroded, cannot be regenerated or recreated.

Most of the archaeological fieldwork conducted today is development-led and undertaken as part of planning process. Whilst this means that the archaeological record of areas experiencing a lot of development is increasingly well understood, it also means that areas with high archaeological potential which are more sparsely developed, such as the BFER area remain relatively poorly understood in many cases, and certainly not in a wider landscape context.

West Stow Anglo Saxon Village has an important but currently unrecognised relationship with the river Lark.
Current understanding of the historic environment of The Brecks region is largely informed by discoveries made by amateurs, be they archaeologists, historians or metal-detectorists. Their labours have been aided by the landscape being largely undeveloped and characterised by large open arable fields along the river valley sides and fen edge, meaning that archaeological deposits are not sealed beneath later features and that they can be recognised as surface-scatters and cropmarks within open fields.

However, agricultural cultivation is a double-edged sword, for while the action of the plough brings archaeological material to the surface where it can be recovered and recorded without the need for invasive fieldwork, the same ploughing is gradually destroying the buried archaeological resource.

The damage to archaeological sites caused by agriculture is therefore a significant environmental issue for this landscape, as shown by the Scheduled Monuments at Risk Survey: East of England report. This report demonstrated that where Scheduled Monuments were concerned, agriculture had been responsible for 10% of all cases of destruction and 30% of all piecemeal cumulative damage to ancient monuments in the preceding 50 years. If the scope of these findings were to be expanded to include non-Scheduled archaeological sites, the potential impact on the archaeological resource is very great. Damage is not just caused by regular ploughing; episodes of deep-ploughing, conservation related soil inversion, and ground disturbance works have the potential to damage archaeological deposits severely, while field-drainage works and the conversion of pasture to arable also have dramatic negative effects.

This Scheme represents a fantastic opportunity to engage with a large number of enthusiastic volunteers with an interest in archaeology and history. By providing a supervisory framework, equipment and training, it will be possible to deliver a suite of volunteer-led activities aimed at improving our understanding of the extent of archaeological heritage within the study area. This will be a significant result in and of itself and, in turn, it will allow the potential for damage from development, changing land use and agricultural practices to be properly assessed and managed. This information can then be used to inform future designations and land management advice in order to:

- minimise the cultivation of important archaeological sites or parts of sites;
- reduce the deepening of cultivation caused by erosion and peat shrinkage;
- avoid the desiccation of organic material caused by drainage;
- prevent damage to uncultivated sites caused by visitor wear; and
- inform the planning process and prevent damage from inappropriate development.

In addition to focussing on the buried archaeological resource, several of the proposed projects encompass the standing remains of former structures and buildings associated with the exploitation and management of the watercourses within the study area. The study and recording of these features will ensure that

Brooches from a Viking burial at Santon Downham on the Little Ouse river

they are better understood and knowledge of their presence and significance will enable their ongoing preservation to be factored into relevant management decisions. In some cases, it is proposed that these structures and buildings will be surveyed and interpreted, enabling those most at risk to be considered for conservation for future generations and ensuring that knowledge of them and their history is not lost.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that, were it not for the opportunities presented by this Scheme, none of these investigative or restorative works pertaining to buried archaeology or standing structures would be undertaken. This would be to the significant detriment of our knowledge of the historic environment of The Brecks and carries the significant risk of heritage assets being damaged or irretrievably lost without their being properly recognised, recorded or understood.

By National Character Area, The Brecks has among the highest percentage of sites categorised as either Medium or High risk (Pic: Monuments at Risk Survey, Historic England)
GEOLOGY

The south-eastern Fenland margin was one of the most heavily settled parts of prehistoric Britain.

The Fenland Project (1976-1996) investigated, discovered and catalogued archaeological sites in the BFER project area. It showed that peat wastage (through drainage) and deep ploughing were leading to their ongoing destruction. Recent publications such as the ‘Strategy for Water and Wetland Heritage’ (Historic England, 2012) and have outlined the threats to this peatland heritage and set out an agenda for trying to address them. Peat wastage also contributes to a release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, so contributing to climate change.

Many people are not aware that the south-eastern Fenland margin has contributed valuable evidence for life in prehistoric Britain. Layers of peat and alluvium have allowed many archaeological sites to be preserved. Finds of well-preserved ‘bog oaks’ and evidence for former meres and tidal channels are a reminder of the wetland landscape of the earlier Holocene.

The Brecks Fen edge and river valleys have also provided nationally important archaeological evidence of life in the Palaeolithic period. Although people are fascinated by early humans such as the Neanderthals, and even though the Palaeolithic age comprises 99% of the human past, it is poorly understood by the general public.

Through the delivery of a programme of workshops and day-schools the scheme has an opportunity to engage landowners and raise awareness about the archaeology and geoarchaeological contexts in the area, and what can be done to conserve vulnerable subsurface features and peat beds; and offer wider audiences an opportunity to find out more about human occupation and the changing environment in this area over the last 10,000 years as well as the contribution that the Fen edge and Brecks river valleys have made to Palaeolithic archaeology since Victorian times.

HERITAGE CRAFTS AND SKILLS

Needs and opportunities research was carried out into the extent of heritage craft skills. It Of the 65 million people living in England today, it is estimated that only 30,000 make a living from heritage crafts. There are a number of issues affecting the viability of many heritage crafts and as a result a large proportion of them have either become rare or ‘extinct’. However, some heritage crafts and skills are still considered viable and have a good number of skilled and knowledgeable craftspeople keeping them alive.

The main issues affecting the viability of so many traditional British skills and crafts include lack of training and recruitment; an ageing workforce; loss of craft skills; market issues; supply of raw materials; small business issues; changing legislation; lack of awareness; changing methods and funding cuts (Heritage Crafts Association). Surprisingly few opportunities exist to learn a traditional craft or skill within the Thetford region. At the time of writing, there is only one college course offered that relates to regional heritage conservation.

Other opportunities exist outside the region for those able to apply for scholarships and fellowships as part of work-based employment, or to those able to travel further afield for continuing professional development. Reed/sedge cutting and wood turning courses do not appear to exist in the area, although some skilled practitioners do offer the opportunity to interested individuals to shadow them at work.

A very limited range of traditional crafts and skills courses are offered by alternative providers; the main provider being Orchard Barn environmental...
Education CIC (who delivered several popular and successful built heritage skills training opportunities through the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership Scheme). OBee CIC offers a range of traditional carpentry and woodworking short courses but given the great diversity of traditional crafts and skills that once existed, only a minor proportion can still be learned locally.

Early in the development phase, it became apparent that West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village, sited within West Stow County Park, provides a unique opportunity to undertake riparian craft skills training with an emphasis on green woodworking and river focussed skills such as coracle making, and construction of eel traps and other goods woven from willow growing along the riverbank.

It also has:

- A considerable amount of woodland adjacent to the River Lark that needs managing
- Excellent facilities including a classroom and outdoor learning areas
- Experience in undertaking heritage and skills training and,
- The aspiration to extend its current craft skills offering to feature other Ages in history.

After consultations with other key partners it was agreed that West Stow should feature as the Heritage Training Centre for the project. This did not mean that all elements of the training and skills requirements had to take place at West Stow. It does however, mean that the centre could provide key elements such as training volunteers in conservation, restoration and management of the rivers and surrounding areas.

It could also continue to deliver green wood working skills and could also incorporate lock and millwrighting skills such as (in-river) masonry, woodworking and wrought metalworking skills within its portfolio.

**ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES**

Informal recreation, health and well-being

The River Valleys offer superb opportunities for formal and informal recreation. They are the focus for settlement and the natural starting point for walks and cycle routes, and often have a long history of use by communities for getting around, swimming or picnics. They provide good access to nature, along with opportunities for environmental education and understanding heritage. However, there is a risk that the landscape could be overwhelmed by visitor pressures, with subsequent loss of their characteristic intimacy and tranquillity. Opportunities for improvements to access include:

- Managing visitor pressures at popular and sensitive sites by investing in high quality infrastructure and interpretation, which meets the different needs and levels of use of a range of visitors.
- Managing levels of potential disturbance by diverting promoted access routes away from sensitive habitats.
- Providing high quality interpretation at larger riverside centres, such as Thetford and Brandon and at visitor centres.
- Investing in and encouraging the use of multi-user routes that take people into the river valleys and surrounding landscapes without their cars.
- Reconnecting communities to the rivers, through sharing stories of recreation in the rivers, re-establishing locations for swimming and delivering safe, guided opportunities for new audiences to access the rivers in a safe manner.
FACILITATING ACCESS TO HERITAGE

Major settlements in the scheme area are predominantly along the river valleys. Historically the river corridors provided key links to communities, either on the water or via riverside tow-paths, supporting settlements and facilitating trade.

Unlike the rest of Norfolk and Suffolk however, the rights of way network is sparse within The Brecks with many local communities having little, if any formal access provision. Approximately 13% of Suffolk is within The Brecks, however the area provides only 7.59% of Suffolk’s Rights of Way network.

The focus on the populations health and well-being is increasing, with access to the countryside being seen as key to provide an opportunity for healthy outdoor activity.

Demand for development growth is high in the project area, with well over 10,000 homes projected in the parts of the Forest Heath, Norfolk Breckland Local Plans that relate to the area of the Scheme. More detail about the planned grow of the area is provided in the ‘Growing Communities’ section.
Opportunities for improvements to Rights of Way access provision include:

- Opportunity for the scheme to engage with partners to forward-plan future access opportunities in a way that is sensitive to the heritage, agreeing mitigation strategies with appropriate authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). This represents an opportunity to pilot a more joined-up approach to access planning and mitigation in the wider Rights of Way network.

- To better manage access to, and use of routes through sensitive areas, particularly in the Special Protection Area and Special Conservation Area, by the provision of appropriate waymarking and more targeted interpretation that includes seasonal information relating to sensitive species and habitats. Raising awareness of historic landscape through the promotion of trails. Using various forms of media to promote managed access and the connection between the natural environment and archaeology.

- Engagement of volunteers for carrying out surveys of routes and collecting data from strategic routes regarding use and potential impact on species and heritage. Engagement with local communities to raise awareness of biodiversity and archaeological sensitivities relating to access. Managing access to avoid detrimental impacts by limiting the spread of visitors to Open Access areas.

- Provision of new access to communities with little or no current Rights of Way, restoration of routes in line with original tow path alignments and re-establishing historic access. Establishing new circular walks of varying lengths throughout the Scheme area to encourage new audiences which would link communities within river valleys through new off-road access and provide improved informal recreation opportunities.

- Provision of a series of community-based launch events and a programme of health walks linked with other partners to encourage health and well-being supporting those who are currently not engaging in outdoor activities.

DIGITAL ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION TO SUPPORT ENGAGEMENT WITH HERITAGE

The Brecks is famous for being remote and ‘off-grid’, but this has significant impacts on the ability to provide effective interpretation that takes advantage of new technology. Scheme development has identified an opportunity to install solar powered Wi-Fi networks at remote locations that provide high value digital interpretation content including films, images, audio content and education packs.

“We will be supporting organisations to embed digital thinking in every project”


The new interpretation provision will include a wide variety of heritage interpretation information including videos, oral histories and audio tours as well as quizzes, games, images and schools’ packs, much of which has previously only been available on a limited basis, or off-site on the internet.

By establishing a new interpretation networking group and providing content development training and support, the scheme will enable the delivery of significantly more varied content, accessible by new audiences using new technology, and act as a benchmark for future provision of heritage information.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

BFER provides a significant opportunity to raise awareness of the issues facing The Brecks water resource. Through engagement with landowners and communities, the scheme will be able to engage with land managers on the topics of abstraction and diffuse pollution; providing support for practical changes in practices, and funding for physical measures such as the installation of silt traps or other such interventions. By engaging with communities, the issues of water use, wastage and pollution can be raised and addressed at a landscape scale for the first time. The engagement with schools in the scheme area presents a real opportunity to engage younger people and create a legacy of communities that are more aware, and able to make informed decisions to positively impact the landscape.

Through partnership with the Breckland Youth Advisory Board, the scheme will ensure that young people are not just able to have their voice heard but can influence how the engagement and participation opportunities are shaped and delivered.

EDUCATION

Over the past ten years, the Oxford Junior Dictionary has removed a plethora of words connected to the natural world including kingfisher, bluebell, acorn and conker. Oxford’s Dictionaries reflect language as it is used, and these missing words are just one indicator of the extent to which children have become disconnected from the natural world over the last 40 years. This lack of connection is a critical concern because children need nature. They are more confident, physically and mentally healthier, more able to deal with stressful situations, and have increased self-esteem when they have regular engagement with the outdoors and nature (Natural Childhood, National Trust 2012). The ‘Natural Childhood’ highlights some significant concerns about children’s disconnect with nature:
• Less than a quarter of children regularly use their local ‘patch of nature, compared to half of adults when they were children.
• Fewer than one in ten children regularly play in wild places.

The Wildlife Trust’s Report ‘Every Child Wild’, based on a 2015 YouGov poll of parents and children found that:

• Fewer than 10% of children play in natural areas. When today’s adults were children the figure was 40%
• Less than 50% have been to a wild place with school to learn about wildlife in the past year
• Over 50% have never found frogspawn in a pond in the wild

Traditional wildlife education provision by the Wildlife Trusts in the Scheme area has been a paid for service, creating a barrier to engagement by some schools, and reducing opportunities for those students that might benefit the most. By working in partnership with the Trusts and supporting wildlife and natural heritage education (for all ages) BFER has an opportunity to make a real difference to knowledge and awareness levels in the local community. The length of the delivery period also presents an opportunity for strong relationships to be forged between schools, teacher and communities and the Wildlife Trusts.

A joined-up approach across the BFER Landscape Partnership and beyond

Through partnership working, this Scheme will support organisations to make decisions that positively impact threats to the landscape and heritage that are not being addressed by any other organisation or group (such as the centrally funded landscape management organisations that do this in the Broads National Park (The Broads Authority) and in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB Management Units)). As a partnership organisation the BFER LP is of a scale suitable to unlock significant match funding from the Environment Agency which can only be accessed for community-led projects delivering improvement to the river corridors in the project area.

By building on the experience and lessons gained by partners organisations, and staff working with other LPs, this scheme has a significant opportunity to harness enthusiasm and momentum generated in local communities, and in schools on the fringes of this landscape. This will help to build capacity within those communities to create a sustainable legacy of awareness and practical activities that will have a lasting impact.

The unique opportunity presented by this Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) is to deliver projects that join together the many disciplines and areas of interest in heritage. Audiences previously only engaged in one type of activity can be made aware of and encouraged to participate in others. Partner organisation with one specific focus will be supported and encouraged to work with others, often with different viewpoints or priorities to deliver projects that transcend traditional siloed approaches. The communication and awareness generated has proven spin-off benefits for long-term cooperation and multi-disciplinary outcomes.

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES (CALD)

The number of Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities in the LPS area may well represent one of the largest barriers to participation in the Scheme area. Participation by this group often depends on their level of English. Those for whom English is a 2nd, 3rd or even 4th language, can often find language a barrier to engagement. Even those that have good working English often lack the confidence to go out or get
involved. This is true even when the activity on offer is free or very useful for them.

There are several opportunities relating to these issues that this Scheme will be able to address, which include motivating the younger, school age family members to bring relatives and friends along to supported engagement activities and events. This will build trust and enable the participants to feel part of the BFER community. Events will be held in school holiday periods when family members are often desperate for something organised to occur.

There are currently limited opportunities for organised immigrant community groups within Thetford or the immediate surrounding area to engage with landscape and heritage, and this scheme will provide new and exciting opportunities for engagement at key ‘Hub’ locations throughout the project area.

The next 10 years are predicted to see significant housing growth and population uplifts in the scheme area. Thetford has 5,000 new homes in development with 950 houses planned at Mildenhall (from a district new build total of 7,000). Brandon is also earmarked for significant housing growth. The planned closure of RAF Mildenhall means an additional 4,000 homes are expected to be built on that site. Bury St Edmunds is also planning for a further 6,500 houses, with 1,200 being built on the margins of the project area, in Fornham parish. Not only do development works risk damaging recorded heritage, but increased populations will exacerbate potential for recreational disturbance and pressure on habitats and water resources.

The Chalk aquifer beneath The Brecks currently provides 70% of river flow, but it is also a major source of potable and irrigation water. The

Brecks has the lowest annual rainfall in the UK, and consequently has 20% of the UK abstraction licences and 30% of UK irrigation licences. This leads to insufficient levels for agriculture, desiccation of wetland habitats and river valleys, accumulation of silt, and changes in the aquatic vegetation structure. High nutrient levels from run-off leads to prolific algal growth and low oxygen, particularly during periods of low flow. Water stress problems are exacerbated by climate change, which will also lead to further increases in abstraction, while recharge rates of the aquifer will decrease.

The eastern region is the driest in the UK and most rural communities rely on underground water reserves either through mains supply or private boreholes. Future water availability will have a significant impact on local food production, affecting the economics of farming and the food industry. (RURAL VISION 2031, St Edmunds borough Council (2014))

As previously outlined, in dry years the rivers also supply the Great Ouse Groundwater...
Scheme, transferring groundwater to reservoirs in the Northern Thames Basin to meet public water demands in Essex and Cambridge. This will increase with further planned development throughout the south-east of England, with the potential to further exacerbate the issues.

This significant housing growth and population increase in and around the area presents an urgent need to engage those new audiences to raise awareness of water resource and heritage issues, to ensure that new and existing communities have the knowledge and tools to ensure that future decisions respect this unique heritage.

**NATURE AND HEALTH – OPPORTUNITIES TO ADDRESS HEALTH AND WELL-BEING THROUGH ACCESS TO HERITAGE**

It is clear that the national burdens of ill-health in affluent countries are growing, and many forecasts show worrying trends for rural areas such as The Brecks. Much of this is now due to the ways of living adopted by large proportions of the population, which educational campaigns are struggling to address. The direct costs to the NHS and indirect costs on the wider economy are also increasing: the annual costs of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, dementias, physical inactivity and loneliness exceed tens of billion per year.

There is now a pressing need for programmes and projects that will influence communities to make healthier choices around food and drink consumption, physical activity, engagement with natural places, and engagements with others. Many of these burdens have grown substantially in just the past generation and are forecast to continue to increase. In 2015/16 8.9% of patients on Suffolk GP practice registers were recorded as having depression (aged 18+). Applying this to the forecast population for 2037 could mean there are an extra 6,000 people with depression between 2017-2037. In 20 years’, at current admission rates, there will be an estimated 90 additional admissions to hospital each day - 33,000 over the course of a year in Suffolk18: BFER has an opportunity through project delivery to support the work by local authorities and public health groups to reverse these trends to create better well-being for all.

The University of Essex has undertaken over a decade of research into the contexts, effects and outcomes of green exercise and nature-based interventions, showing in a wide variety of contexts that physical activity in the presence of nature improves health and well-being. This research found all groups did benefit: all ages, genders, ethnicities and social classes respond positively to green exercise.

All types of natural environments are beneficial: from urban parks to biodiversity-rich areas, from small local to large landscapes, from domesticated gardens to the farmed and wild. The phrase ‘dose of nature’ was coined to articulate that exposure to green exercise is analogous to a medical dose to the body, improving mental health.

Ancient House Museum’s Teenage History Club - © Norfolk Museums Service
The natural environment is now understood to provide vital health services as well as other environmental services.

It has also been shown that greener environments are reducing social inequality and having particularly positive impacts on mental well-being, that physical labour is important for health and longevity, and that those more connected to nature have greater the life satisfaction.

Exposure to nature reduces internal stress markers and produces healthier cortisol profiles. Life-course and longitudinal studies (e.g. Caerphilly men, Dunedin, Maudsley and Cambridge cohorts, Milwaukee nuns, Harvard alumni) have shown how choices on behaviours, consumption and mental states directly affect health and well-being over many decades, demonstrating the value of early interventions on children whose cognitive outcomes are improved when regularly exposed to activity in natural places (playgrounds, gardens, woodlands, nature reserves).

Working with Public Health focussed partners, BFER will deliver a series of health and well-being linked activities and undertake formal evaluations of the outcomes, providing new opportunities to unlock Health funding for landscape heritage related activities.

**SUMMARY**

The Scheme area has been shown to be subject to significant pressure on a unique heritage, from a variety of sources. Most significant of these are development and recreational pressure and the intensification of agricultural practices which threaten to disturb sensitive habitats and species, increase the abstraction and pollution of water resources, as well as continue to damage the historic environment and character of the landscape.

Much of the Brecks’ heritage is only made possible by the presence of the fen edge and river valleys that helped influence settlement and land-use over thousands of years. Changing perceptions and raising awareness of the crucial role of the fen edge and rivers landscape, and of its own particular heritage is so important in addressing the balance and ensuring that the entire Brecks Landscape will be managed sustainably into the future.

Through a variety of projects these threats to the landscape heritage can be addressed by engaging with the key stakeholders and audiences to discover and celebrate heritage, to create a sustainable legacy of healthier communities who are more aware of the area’s importance, and more able to make informed contributions to future management. Young people can be re-connected to the landscape and its heritage through appropriate activities delivered in partnership with schools and youth groups.

Schools usually have to pay for sessions with the Wildlife Trusts and by removing that barrier to engagement, a new partnership approach can be created allowing schools and the Wildlife trusts to work in depth and consistently over a number of years with specific schools close to key nature reserves in the BFER area. This will create a bond between the schools and the site, fostering long-term engagement for conservation and learning benefits.
THE VISION
THE BRECKS FEN-EDGE & RIVERS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP’S VISION

To stimulate the interest, engagement and participation of its local communities in the discovery, enjoyment and conservation of The Brecks’ rivers, wetlands and fen-edge heritage, laying the foundations for those unique characteristics and qualities of that landscape to be valued, conserved and sustained into the future.

The BFER LP vision will be achieved by:

- Conserving, restoring and enhancing the rivers and riparian biodiversity through the installation of fish passes, removal of impoundments and restoration of significant areas of river habitat.
- Reconnecting people to the landscape by engaging communities in Citizen Science activities to raise awareness of and monitor the condition of waterbodies and rivers, and the biodiversity contained therein.
- Reconnecting people to the landscape heritage by exploring, recording, and celebrating natural and cultural heritage through interpretation, learning, arts and wide-ranging activities programmes
- Improving access to the river corridors and wider landscapes, and providing opportunities for more diverse audiences to partake in outdoor activities to create an improved sense of place, and support health and well-being
- Supporting local heritage groups to develop and become sustainable in the long-term through skills training and through the provision of a small grants fund to deliver small-scale high value projects that meet the BFER aims and objectives
- Facilitating legacy of long-term landscape heritage management by restoring lost heritage skills, and empowering communities to be more involved in landscape management decision making and delivery of positive activities on the ground

The BFER LP vision is a response to the need for action to address the significant threats to water resources and associated heritage of The Brecks’ Edge of the Fens and River Valleys landscape.

The Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership successfully demonstrate the capacity of landscape scale projects to reconnect communities with the landscape in the heart of The Brecks and proved that there was real enthusiasm to harness this momentum to engage in other areas.
There are currently no formal partnership working arrangements taking an integrated approach to managing, restoring, or celebrating The Brecks landscape heritage, and the BFER Scheme will take advantage of growing local and national interest in the regions’ archaeological heritage. It will put this overlooked landscape within The Brecks National Character Area on the map and create a potential for economic development by raising awareness and creating opportunities for informal recreation that enables sustainable tourism and day-visits.

**BFER DELIVERY PROGRAMMES**

The Scheme’s aims and objectives will be delivered by four programmes with a series of interlinked projects delivering NLHF priority outcomes (see below). The programmes will be supported by the core delivery activities to enhance coherence and enable effective delivery across the Scheme. This will include a joined-up approach to volunteering, promotion and celebratory activities.

- **Restoring the Water: Supporting Biodiversity**
  - Lark Restoration, Little Ouse Restoration, Barton Mills Sluice, Whilst Palms, Sea to Chalk, Riparian Landowner Advice

- **Revealing the Rivers: Community Connections**
  - Water’s Colour, Celebrating River Heritage, Accessible Rivers (x5), Healing waters

- **DELIVERY**
  - Scheme Management, Promotion, 3rd Grant Fund, Volunteer Hub and Engagement Programme

- **Under The Surface: Discovering Heritage**
  - Archaeology, Geology, Tales from the River, Industrious Rivers, River Raiders, Digital Interpretation

- **Working Waters: Heritage Skills for the Future**
  - Citizen Science, Craft Skills, Watery Wildlife Education, Supporting Partnerships, Work Placements, Youth Training scheme
RESTORING THE WATER: SUPPORTING SPECIES AND HABITATS

- Focussing on River restoration projects in key locations to improve river morphology and flow, supporting species and habitats.
- Installation of fish-passes and lowering sluice gates to enable improved movement of species, alongside education activities and creation of improved passage for canoeing.
- Restoring lost ponds and attempting to bring back to life ancient water bodies filled in by changing land-use, thereby restoring biodiverse freshwater areas and enabling better connectivity of habitats.
- Engaging with riparian landowners to support management of the river valley habitats and reduce diffuse pollution, by creating a multi-agency advisory group and delivering farm advisory visits with funding for effective intervention work.

UNDER THE SURFACE: DISCOVERING HERITAGE

- Engaging communities in discovering Brecks geology, and archaeology: through day-schools; workshops and lectures.
- Discovering the story of the fen edge and rivers by discovering stories from local, social and cultural history, and connecting them to the present through oral histories recording and archive research activities.
- Uncovering the historical uses of Brecks Rivers, including the industrial and as a route for raiders and armies, involving archive research and surveys of river structures.
- Creating new digital access to heritage interpretation throughout the Scheme area and remote sites as well as creating a one-stop-shop for heritage resources and BFER scheme information and outputs through a Scheme website (www.brecks.org)
WORKING WATERS: HERITAGE SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

- Surveying and mapping The Brecks’ Important Freshwater Areas through citizen science Projects to better understand habitat loss, pollution, and rare species distribution and inform restoration works
- Engaging communities in the exploration of riverside archaeology, to better understand and protect heritage through guided activities including surveys; field-walking; geophysics; and mass participation events
- Exploring and celebrating the Rivers’ craft skills to better understand how communities lived by the rivers, support education activities, and teach heritage crafts, supporting local community groups and individuals to develop new skills that create a legacy of sustainable heritage conservation activities in The Brecks
- Training young people in heritage conservation skills and providing opportunities for work experience.
- Delivering curriculum linked schools’ engagement to celebrate the area’s unique heritage and develop a better understanding of water resource, and biodiversity issues
- Delivering training for heritage conservation groups to become more sustainable, giving them the skills to develop, engage volunteers and access funding. Creating a legacy of stronger communities and enabling communities to make better, more informed decisions about their landscape including the skills to sustainably manage their landscape heritage in the long term

REVEALING THE RIVERS: CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

- Reconnecting people to the landscape through arts activities to engage new audiences and foster an improved sense of place and understanding of its unique heritage, and bringing awareness of water resource, and biodiversity issues into mainstream public awareness by involving communities and new audiences
- Celebrating The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers heritage in the wider landscape through exhibitions and diverse, fun engagement activities including festivals, fairs and arts events,
- Supporting healthy outdoor lifestyles by providing a range of active participation opportunities including wild swimming and other imaginative events designed to encourage new audiences
- Enabling improved access to the landscape through identification of ‘missing access links’ and the creation of new routes trails and physical access opportunities including disability access, and mental health and well-being support for hard to engage audiences
- Supporting and developing a volunteer network to recruit, train, encourage and celebrate volunteers and volunteering throughout the BFER partnership and the Brecks.
- Providing opportunities for the delivery of small, flexible projects to be delivered by community groups through a 3rd party grant fund.
The proposed projects have been designed to link to the Heritage Lottery Fund’s 9 LP programme outcomes[^19] (Appendix 7) that will each contribute to the realisation of the vision and achieve the priorities for the scheme. Each of the BFER delivery programmes consist of a number of project strands, which are summarised in part 2 of this LCAP, and which will be delivered by Scheme Partners or specialist providers. All of these projects will be achieving outcomes against multiple NLHF objectives, both under the old framework (against which this scheme has been developed), and the new NLHF strategy framework launched in 2019.

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<th>REF</th>
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<td>⚫</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
<td>Healing Waters: Breathe in The Brecks</td>
<td>⚫⚫</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>Volunteer and Engagement programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3rd Party Grant fund</td>
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</table>

19. The 9 outcomes were part of the previous programme outcomes at the point of BFER Stage 1 submission, prior to the rebranding to National Lottery Heritage Fund, and the revised strategy launched in early 2019.
THE BRECKS FEN EDGE AND RIVERS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP
LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN

CHANGES
The fundamental focus and objectives of the scheme have not changed from the 1st round application. However there have been a number of changes to projects and delivery methodology during the stage 2 development process that have improved the scheme in a number of ways. These changes have come about as a result of the development surveys and audits, as well as a recognition of the wider opportunities presented by a landscape scale approach to heritage conservation, and the changing priorities of funders, partners and stakeholder and communities.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The partnership has grown throughout the development phase. Development activity including project meetings, local press coverage, a Scheme conference and consultation event and social media activity has raised awareness of the scheme’s ambitions and new opportunities have been unlocked. New partners in the Scheme include Breckland District Council, who are now represented on the BFER Board, and new delivery partners Bush Adventures UK, the Brandon Arts Centre and the Outdoor Swimming Society, as well as a variety of other community, history and arts groups who will play an active role in project delivery.

Young people are also fully represented now through the inclusion of the Breckland Youth Advisory Board and consultation with young people throughout delivery will help influence the scheme outputs and ensure that partners engage in the most productive and effective manner. CALD communities will be engaged through the Keystone Development Trust and the inclusion of other local organisations such as Unity in Diversity CIC, and the Portuguese newspaper Jornal as Noticias, which is based in Thetford.

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND REPORTS

In addition to the development work set out in the Scheme Development Plan, and outlined in ‘Key Documents’, additional areas of work were identified that have contributed significantly to the final Scheme Plan. This includes the development of a formal GIS mapping strategy that will benefit the delivery of the ‘Supporting Sustainability’ project by creating a level playing field for all partners and volunteers to access, using and creating digital mapping to support project planning and delivery, and engagement and education across the scheme and as a wider legacy. A formal Communications Strategy has also been developed to improve the Scheme delivery significantly and ensure that all partners contribute to promotion and engagement effectively. Both the Mapping Strategy and Communications Plan are included in the ‘Supporting Documents’ for this LCAP.

PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

There have been some changes to the range of projects initially proposed. These have been the result of the development process and reflect opportunities to improve the Scheme by only including projects that will be effective, efficient and value for money. The final choice of projects for inclusion was the result of discussion with the NLHF Senior Grants officer, Scheme Mentor and the BFER Board.

The proposed Common Crane Nest Camera project will not be included as this was deemed not to deliver enough outputs/outcomes in relation to cost. The money saved will be put towards the BFER Engagement Programme to ensure connectivity of activities across the Scheme (see below).
The Digging the Ditches project did not in the end get the full support of the landowner, although significant engagement and training elements are now included in the Fen Edge and River Valleys Archaeology project instead. No suitable outputs were identified for the Wissey and Gadder Access Improvement project, although the BFER delivery team will continue to work with the Norfolk Local Access Forum to identify opportunities for access improvements, and support applications to the Scheme’s 3rd Party Grant Fund.

Some projects have changed or merged with others to ensure the best possible outputs, while providing best quality and effective use of resources.

The Audience engagement strategy has identified an improved approach to engagement of hard to reach audiences and a new project will seek to deliver activities at key locations around the scheme area. These ‘Activity Hubs’ will bring new audiences into the landscape in a ‘soft’ and supported manner, aiming to give participants the confidence to get involved in other activities and will sign-post them to further opportunities for participation. There will be a particular focus on engaging young families and CALD communities.

The volunteer Hub project has been developed to not only provide a joined-up framework for promoting, engaging and training volunteers for engagement across the scheme, but will also deliver a number of celebratory events that value the volunteer support and strengthen the network as part of the scheme’s legacy. An annual event will celebrate volunteer activities, including volunteer awards, provide updates on projects, and offer an opportunity for other groups and volunteers to get involved in BFER. This project will work towards creating a legacy of a sustainable volunteer network for the Brecks.

A scheme wide Engagement Programme will focus on creating strong links between all the projects, supporting partners to provide a range of accessible activities that give opportunities for all audiences to engage with all of the projects. This will facilitate group visits to practical work sessions and supported opportunities for audiences that
might have barriers to engagement; educational opportunities for groups of all ages; scheme-wide interpretation and promotion outputs created by participants – including blogs and videos, developing content for social-media and the scheme website / newsletter.

Full details of changes to individual projects are set out in Part 2 of the LCAP, the Project Plan Summaries.

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND STRATEGIC FUNDING FRAMEWORK 2019 – 2024

It should be noted that the development of the BFER LP Scheme has taken place during a period that the Heritage Lottery Fund has gone through a significant change as set out in their new Strategic Funding Framework 2019-202420. The new strategy reflects the need to respond to a changing environment, including less certainty in their income levels and changing expectations in society. It also set out the change of name to National Lottery Heritage Fund, the name now used throughout this document.

While BFER has been developed under the previous framework guidance, happily all of the new objectives, areas of focus and even campaigns are represented in the new scheme. This demonstrates the significant benefit of landscape scale approach to heritage conservation and engagement, which truly delivers a significantly broad range of benefits. In particular BFER responds to the new emphasis on Health and Well-being as a fundamental element of inclusion, as well as the desire to make funded organisations (in our case the wider partnership and community organisations) more resilient. BFER will deliver a significant legacy of community and partner organisations being more sustainable and more able to attract and manage volunteers, as well as being supported to access external funding.

Digital interpretation capabilities will also be developed through a joined-up approach to digital mapping as well as the creation of a new network of stand-alone Wi-Fi interpretation facilities at remote heritage sites.

“We want to encourage exciting new approaches and partnerships between organisations working in heritage and those with broader health and wellbeing aims.”

National Lottery Heritage Fund

Heritage collections will also be brought into the light through projects that add modern dimensions to their interpretation and make them accessible to new audiences.

All of the work of the scheme, in particular the awareness raising and promotional aspects, promote the enhancement of The Brecks’ communities’ sense of place. This in turn supports the emerging Brecks landscape brand, which in turn supports tourism and economic development by establishing the area as a destination for discovering a unique and accessible heritage offer.

20 https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/attachments/Heritage%20Fund%20-%20Strategic%20Funding%20Framework%202019-2024.pdf
Further development of project outputs and volunteer engagement opportunities as well as new match funding from existing partners have enabled the scope and content of the projects to grow, whilst improving on the % match funding proposed in round 1.

A greater focus on engagement and supporting communities and partner organisations has resulted in a reduction in the capital costs of the scheme. This money has instead been invested in the development of training and volunteer led activities that will deliver the same level of heritage conservation and restoration outputs in a more inclusive and sustainable manner.

While the NLHF grant amount requested remains the same as that in stage 1, the total budget for the BFER LP Scheme has increased by nearly 4%. This is the result of the identification of further cash contributions from the Environment Agency,

Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk Council as well as a number of smaller contributions from other partners including Norfolk County Council, Breckland District Council and the Thomas Payne Trust.

The value of volunteer contributions and non-cash match funding compared to those identified in the stage 1 application have also increased significantly. The latter as a result of clarification from NLHF that, with the exception of the host partner, the value of existing staff time engaged in BFER project delivery may also be counted.

This additional match funding has enabled many projects to further develop the delivery outputs and widen the scope of the project outcomes to make the entire scheme more accessible and engaging, while having a stronger legacy development focus that will ensure partners and local communities are upskilled, and activities more sustainable.

### Changes from stage 1

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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FINANCES
BREAKDOWN OF DELIVERY COSTS

### Scheme Total Budget

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<th>Project costs</th>
<th>NLHF Grant</th>
<th>In-kind</th>
<th>Volunteer</th>
<th>Cash</th>
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<td></td>
<td>£2,678,920</td>
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<td>£480,873</td>
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<th>Capital costs</th>
<th>Activity costs</th>
<th>Other costs</th>
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<th>NLHF grant</th>
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<td>£ 405,100</td>
<td>£ 308,613</td>
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<td>Outcome for people</td>
<td>Under the Surface</td>
<td>£ 27,500</td>
<td>£ 92,046</td>
<td>£ 72,370</td>
<td>£ 191,916</td>
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<td>Working Waters</td>
<td>£ 19,900</td>
<td>£ 257,786</td>
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<td>Revealing the Rivers</td>
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<td>£ 185,175</td>
<td>£ 869,175</td>
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MANAGING THE COMMON FUND

Suffolk County Council will be the applicant/grantee and signatory to the contract with NLHF, and will be responsible for overall management, administration and finances for the BFER LP Scheme.

Board members will not have any individual financial liability for decisions made by the board. The BFER Scheme Manager will be employed by Suffolk County Council and will have day-to-day responsibility for running the project. Budget, risk, and activity reports will be presented at the regular Board meetings.

MATCH FUNDING

Partners and scheme volunteers will contribute a mixture of cash, non-cash and volunteer-time contributions to the BFER Scheme. The value of these contributions are anticipated to be at least 44% of the total scheme value, which will be counted as match funding against the grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Cash contributions can include cash payment made directly to the Partnership to support scheme delivery, or cash expenditure by a partner organisation towards the delivery of specific BFER project outputs. The latter can be evidenced by the provision of appropriate invoices or evidence of payment (i.e. financial statements).
As stated above, NLHF have confirmed that non-cash contributions from existing staff of partner organisations (i.e. the value of staff time) will be accepted as non-cash match funding. However, NLHF will not accept existing staff time from the Applicant/Grantee.

**RECORDING NON-CASH CONTRIBUTIONS**

Non-cash, or In-Kind contributions from partners will be recorded using a BFER Non-Cash reporting form. This can include existing staff time for delivering BFER projects, venues, equipment and materials that would normally be charged for. The form will be submitted with appropriate evidence as part of the quarterly claims and reporting process.

**PAYMENTS TO PARTNERS**

Unless otherwise arranged at project start, partners will be paid agreed delivery costs in arrears on submission of a BFER Partner Claims Form accompanied by appropriate evidence of spend and invoices that enable the BFER delivery team to reclaim expenditure from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

**REPORTING AND CLAIMS**

Partners will be required to report their delivery activities on a quarterly basis and submit financial claims to the BFER delivery team for processing and payment. Payment will be subject to receipt of appropriate evidence of spend, unless otherwise agreed. The BFER team will then reclaim funds from NLHF against the approved purpose of the grant.

**PROCUREMENT**

Procurement will be according to National Lottery Heritage Fund Rules and those of the host organisation. Where there are differences in approach the more stringent option will be taken. The Scheme Manager will ensure that best practice guidance is followed by all partners and that clear auditable records are kept by all partners.

Partners will also be encouraged to follow Suffolk County Council’s Green Procurement Guidelines, environmental Guidance and Social Value and Sustainable Procurement Policy[21].

THE BRECKS FEN EDGE AND RIVERS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP
LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN

LEGACY
A Scheme Legacy Strategy will be developed and implemented during the delivery period to ensure continuation of outputs and partnership working. Project delivery partners will identify resources and plan to maintain the project outcomes for an NLHF agreed minimum period during project development and all projects will seek to maximise opportunities for legacy.

This section sets out how the BFER Partnership will work throughout the delivery period to ensure that an effective mechanism for partnership working beyond the delivery period is achieved, which will continue to draw in funding for ongoing heritage, landscape and community projects for the benefit of the Scheme area and the wider Brecks.

Sustainability is at the heart of the BFER LP. The scheme and the projects to deliver it have been designed to have a lasting impact on the landscape, its heritage and communities.

**LEGACY THEMES**

The main legacy themes delivered by the Scheme will be:

- building social capital;
- skills development and life-long learning through engaging schools and creating awareness and confidence through training for all audiences at all levels;
- creating a sense of place through increasing awareness and participation;
- ongoing activity stimulated by projects that carry on beyond the life of the Scheme and its delivery area;
- long term conservation of structures and habitats through creation of guidance and long-term landowner support;
- accessible archived records and reports; new and improved access routes and accessible information for all in a variety of formats.

The Scheme Delivery Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating legacy and sustainability across the delivery projects and in accordance with the SCC Environmental Policy.

The BFERLPS will ensure sustainability and a legacy for the scheme by supporting and strengthening existing partnerships through the delivery of multi-organisational co-operative projects. It will also continue to develop new networks and communications processes that will encourage partners to learn from each other and deliver projects together, allowing cross-fertilisation of ideas and working practices that translate into multi-faceted and shared resource approaches to landscape and heritage work, which foster productive and lasting relationships.

The proposed location for the Scheme Office (Thetford) of will create a lasting benefit in terms of visibility of the Scheme, its benefits and
outputs. The Town Council will provide a long-term point of access to information, guidance and interpretation resulting from the scheme and will be able to co-ordinate and respond to opportunities for future continuation of elements identified through the delivery phase.

The BFER LP will actively seek to create new partnerships by engaging with other sectors, such as health, business and visitor economy and will seek to identify new sources of funding for ongoing delivery of landscape scale conservation projects in The Brecks by working with partners to develop a long-term strategy. It will also support partners to actively develop new projects and apply for funding during Scheme delivery.

Successful delivery of the scheme’s aims, and objectives will increase the sustainability of managing the area’s landscape heritage in the future. It will strengthen Partnership working practices and enable them to continue to deliver the recommendations of this plan long after the formal end of the scheme.

This will involve maintaining a high profile for the scheme and making it an essential component of local and regional strategies and plans for the delivery of sustainable landscape management, heritage conservation and community engagement and participation.
EVALUATION
This section outlines the process by which the BFER LP will evaluate the success of the delivery projects – both internally between the project delivery partners and the BFER team and externally through the engagement of a suitable contractor.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Scheme delivery activity will be monitored by the Scheme Manager throughout the delivery period. Progress meetings will be held with project delivery leads and delivery progress reports submitted as part of the claims process. This delivery activity will be reviewed against agreed milestones to identify risks, issues or opportunities for improvement. A scheme-wide progress report will be submitted to NLHF and the BFER board on a quarterly basis, and actions for improvement discussed, which can then be fed back to the delivery teams.

The Scheme will be allocated a landscape heritage specialist by NLHF to monitor scheme progress and report to the Senior Grants Officer responsible for supervising the Scheme. This, in conjunction with the reporting by the Scheme manager to the Senior Grants Officer and the Scheme board will ensure that progress is monitored continuously and effectively throughout the delivery period.

An external contractor will be engaged by the Scheme manager to plan and undertake independent evaluation works early in the delivery period and be involved at key milestones. This will include a large-scale mid-point evaluation that engages with partners, volunteers, participants, and beneficiaries. This contract will also lead to a full evaluation report at the end of the project, which will tell the story of the Scheme and evaluate the success or otherwise of the BFER LP as a whole. This report will also be used identify lessons for future heritage management in The Brecks, for partners, future NLHF programmes and for those working in the Scheme area and the wider Brecks.

The BFER Project Manager will consolidate all of the evaluation elements to produce a final report at the end of the programme to meet NLHF requirements.

This work will provide additional third-party oversight and allow particular successes and opportunities to be highlighted and any difficulties to be identified formally and addressed before the end of the Scheme.

The success of project delivery will be evaluated in five ways including: before and after surveys; gathering output data; reports from project leads; evaluation reports; and a health and well-being evaluation (Appendix 6).

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

It is recognised that there could potentially be conflicts of interest in the preparation of the project management review by the delivery team. Therefore, BFER will use an external evaluator to carry out this review as part of the mid-point
evaluation – choosing a company with appropriate project management expertise and knowledge of NLHF programmes to evaluate and report in accordance with NLHF guidelines.

The Scheme Board will also have an opportunity to review management activities and overall scheme management at quarterly board meetings (see Scheme Delivery Timetable in LCAP section 2).

STAKEHOLDER REPORTING

The BFER Project Manager will report quarterly to NLHF on the progress of the programme, and to the Partnership Board. This internal communication will allow the Scheme to identify what is working well, what challenges the Scheme is facing and how they can be overcome, as well as share information, experience and skills to maximise the effectiveness of the programme. BFER LP will report at least annually to volunteer and other programme partners at the volunteer celebration event. Regular progress meeting with partners will also enable issues to be raised and discussed throughout the life of the Scheme and beyond.

Stakeholders will be encouraged to engage through online feedback mechanisms throughout the life of the scheme and at events.
THE BRECKS FEN EDGE AND RIVERS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP
LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN

ADOPTION
AND REVIEW
ADOPTION

This Landscape Conservation Action Plan was formally adopted by The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Partnership Board on 10th April 2019.

The Board will meet to review progress throughout the delivery period until the end of the BFER LPS in 2024.

MAKING THIS PLAN AVAILABLE

Board members all hold a copy of this plan and supporting documents and electronic copies will also be held by the Suffolk County Council Environment Service.

This Plan, and the Landscape Character Assessment, and Audits and Survey Report that were commissioned to support it will be available on the scheme website www.brecks.org.

REVIEW

The Scheme delivery Manager will facilitate the review of this LCAP during the life of the BFER LP with a view to achieving additional funding for its continued development and execution beyond the life of the scheme. During the period 2020-2024 the Partnership Board will carry out a formal review of this plan after the mid-term evaluation. The progress of the engagement and legacy work will also be reviewed, and the board will give further consideration how best to take this work forward thereafter.
INTRODUCTION

This section of the Landscape Conservation Action plan provides non-technical summaries of the 24 projects that will be delivered as part of the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme. It includes a timetable for delivery of the various elements of the scheme, a summary of outcomes, income and spending.
## DELIVERY TIMETABLE

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<td>Sea to Chalk: Restoring Sea Trout and Eels</td>
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<td>Little Ouse River Improvement</td>
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# PROJECT OUTCOMES

## NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND OUTCOMES TABLE

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<th>REF</th>
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<th>Outcomes for heritage:</th>
<th>Outcomes for people:</th>
<th>Outcomes for Communities:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>better managed</td>
<td>in better condition</td>
<td>identified/recorded</td>
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</table>

### 1. Outcomes for heritage:

**With our investment, heritage will be:**

1a better managed

1b in better condition

1c identified/recorded

### 2. Outcomes for people:

**With our investment, people will have:**

2a developed skills

2b learnt about heritage

2c volunteered time

### 3. Outcomes for communities:

**With our investment:**

3a negative environmental impacts will be reduced

3b more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

3c your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit

#### Key:

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
The table below shows connections between projects.

Although all BFER projects will benefit from being a part of the wider partnership, and the promotion and increased awareness and opportunity that will generate, individual projects will also directly support and contribute to each other’s outputs and outcomes to varying degrees.

### Outputs and outcomes can be shared to support engagement or raising of awareness of Landscape, Heritage, or Scheme activities

### Outputs and outcomes provide opportunities for cross project support and engagement

### Outputs and outcomes are directly linked or interdependent

---

**PROJECT CONNECTIVITY TABLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BFER Project Name</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<th>6</th>
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**Degree of engagement with:**

- 1: Directly support and contribute
- 2: Provide opportunities for support and engagement
- 3: Outputs and outcomes are directly linked or interdependent
## DELIVERY BUDGET

### Scheme Total Budget

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<th>Brecks Fen Edge &amp; Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme</th>
<th>PROJECT COSTS</th>
<th>NLHF GRANT</th>
<th>IN-KIND</th>
<th>VOLUNTEER</th>
<th>CASH</th>
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### Project Budgets

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<th>In-kind</th>
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NON-TECHNICAL PROJECT PLAN SUMMARIES

PROGRAMME 1.
RESTORING THE WATER:
SUPPORTING SPECIES
AND HABITATS
Programme 1: Restoring the Water
Supporting Species & Habitats

1.1 River Lark Channel Restoration
1.2 Sea to Chalk: Restoring Sea Trout and Eels
1.3 Little Ouse River Improvement:
1.4 Barton Mills Sluice
1.5a Lost Ponds: Reinstating Ghost Pingo (main site)
1.5b Lost Ponds: Reinstating Ghost Pingo (opportunities)
1.6 Riparian Landowner Advice
BPFR Scheme Area
Rivers
Ponds
The Brecks
The Brecks 3km Buffer

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### River Lark Channel Restoration

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** River Lark Catchment Partnership

| **SUMMARY** | The River Lark chalk stream is a unique and important habitat of which there are very few worldwide. Over time, the Lark has become degraded and cannot support the rich and varied wildlife it once did. This project will undertake significant river restoration on the River Lark, between Fornham upstream and beyond Mildenhall, and will galvanise community and volunteer participation leading to more sustainable community-based river management. Workshops and training opportunities will teach, organisations and volunteers the skills required to look after the rivers over a 5-year period, sustainably building a group that can continue to care for the rivers. |
| **LOCATION** | The River Lark |
| **AUDIENCE** | The participants for this project will be from local communities and engaged through various societies, clubs, public and private sector organisations, businesses as well as individuals. The project will raise awareness of activities through the RLCP, the BFER Scheme activities and the wider BFER Engagement Programme |
| **NEED** | For many communities proactive engagement with the River and its care has not featured as a need, the traditional view being that public agencies cater entirely for that. However the modern approach to rivers and water resources management is dependant on significant stakeholder participation. BFER development work has identified that substantial work on the river banks and channel is needed to restore the river section to a more natural profile and flow, improving ecological quality, supporting priority species and creating new spawning areas for fish. Data collected by the Environment Agency shows that 92% of the Lark Tributaries are at ‘less than good’ status with some water bodies at poor and bad status. |
**AIMS**

To improve the morphology and habitat quality of many stretches of the River Lark by restoration works to naturalise the river banks and channel.

To improve 5km of degraded river with at least 1.2km of restoration works.

To support and train volunteer groups in river restoration activities and wider river management.

**ACTIVITIES**

- Downstream Lark River restoration: Mildenhall to Icklingham
- Upstream Lark River restoration: Icklingham to Fornham
- Expand and consolidate active Mildenhall group
- In-river heavy machine works contract
- River restoration Training
- Planting Marginals at restoration sites
- River Access restoration: Paths surveying and light maintenance

**OUTPUTS**

- Engaging and developing volunteer groups
- 1.2 linear km of restoration works
- Delivery of additional restoration elements along 10km of river
- River Monitoring and works evaluation document
- 4x river restoration workshops
- 500 linear metres of bankside marginals planted.
- PRoW Path surveying along Lark River banks with annual side clearance works

**OUTCOMES**

- High impact in-channel modifications improving flows and habitat
- An expansion of the pool of river restoration volunteers for sustained Lark River management and maintenance
- Restoration volunteers gain skills and experience
- Sustainable community participation
- Wide scale river naturalisation
- A better understanding of restoration processes
- Volunteers engaged in providing long term improvements to riverside access

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**Risks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-completion of BFER Fish Pass Project</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Work with EA to prioritise restoration activities and mitigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient volunteers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>BFER and RLCP partners can assist in volunteer recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowner consents denied</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>RLCP will prioritise obtaining landowner consent and early programme work will take place where consent is agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Availability of specialists to undertake work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of specialists to undertake work</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Scheduled work well in advance of delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse weather</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Scheduling of works packages will be used to mitigate adverse weather</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sea to Chalk: Restoring Sea Trout and Eels

**DELIVERY PARTNER(S):** Environment Agency and Norfolk Rivers Trust

**SUMMARY**

Sea trout and eels are iconic species in Brecks rivers and indicators of their health. This significant infrastructure project will remove in-river structures and create fish passes on the R. Lark to enable the free flow of native wild brown trout and other river species and includes provision for improved canoe and recreation access to this stretch of the river.

It will also link with other Schools engagement activity to provide a unique opportunity to jump start a new cycle of sea - river migration and raise awareness and support for their ongoing conservation by:

- Raising and releasing eels with schools, delivering fishing activity events, and undertaking visits to schools with mobile fish tanks, releasing stock fish into local rivers;
- Working with catchment volunteer groups to monitor the river and plan sustainable conservation work programmes focussing on support for migratory fish species.

**LOCATION**

Mildenhall: Turf lock TL7081174250, Gas pool TL7099274261

**AUDIENCE**

The audiences for this project are all local citizens through their various societies, clubs, public and private sector organisations, businesses as well as individuals.

The immediate improvements to fish passage at Mildenhall will have its greatest visual effect to the amenity of the area. The wider effects of the project will be felt throughout and beyond the Lark catchment.

All this work can become a resource for education to enable future generations of what can be achieved by collaborative working, and there is ecosystems on their own doorstep that need protecting.

**NEED**

The River Lark chalk stream is an important habitat, providing a unique environment for diverse species. The introduction of Navigation and milling destroyed the majority of its unique characteristics and although Navigation has long since gone it remains scared by its past.

The Mildenhall complex of structures are the first impassable structures on the river lark and are the key to providing fish access to the sections of the River Lark that will be restored by other BFER projects.

Sea trout and eels are iconic species in Brecks rivers and indicators of their health, but abstraction and impoundments prevent these fish migrating up river to spawn, and prevent movement of material along the river, which sustains good quality habitat necessary for successful spawning.
AIMS

To remove in-river structures and create fish passes on the R. Lark to enable the free flow of Native wild brown trout and other river species includes provision for improved canoe and recreation access to this stretch of the river.

Improve Fish and Eel Passage at Turf Lock and at Gas Pool sluice.

To restore Eels to the Rivers in the Scheme area.

Engage young people with their native wildlife and facilitate learning about life cycles, food chains, habitats and water quality.

Raise awareness of how people’s actions can impact the water system and how they can help improve water quality in their local area.

ACTIVITIES

Construction of fish passage solutions at Turf lock and Gas pool complex.

Species and flow Monitoring.

Raising awareness in local communities and with stakeholders.

Schools engagement and development of Eel rearing programme.

Set up of Eel rearing tanks and delivery of schools’ programme.

OUTPUTS

Connectivity enabled for coarse and migratory species to access upper reaches of the river Lark.

Electrofishing surveys and DNA sampling of caught fish to confirm origin.

Monitoring of fish passage using DIDSON camera.

6x 2 in-school lessons and 6x 1 river visits with schools.

OUTCOMES

Return of migratory fish including eels and wild trout.

Upstream and more sustainable fish populations.

Improved fishery and increased amenity value.

Outcomes monitored to ensure effectiveness of the project.

Local communities and stakeholders more aware of issues relating to fish passage and native migratory fish.

120+ Young people will have learned about and engaged with a critically endangered species.

People more aware of how their actions directly impact the aquatic system and how they can help improve water quality.

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permits not granted</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The scope of the design brief was set around development consultations/restrictions, these are being factored into the designs to ensure there are no delays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowner Permission</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Land owners have already been engaged with at the start of the scheme and are supportive of the objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget cuts</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>The budget has been forecast and prioritised within the whole of East Anglia WEIF budget. Budget holders are aware of importance of the scheme and the match funding being proposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The works are being planned at the end of the summer when flows are at their lowest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to get consent for release of Elvers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>The consent process will begin formally in year 1 and allows enough time for barriers to be overcome, and/or alternatives to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of buy-in from local schools</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>This project will be incorporated into the wider school engagement activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Little Ouse River Improvement

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** Environment Agency

**SUMMARY**
The Little Ouse was impounded in the 1600’s for Navigation. Although it has since ceased between Brandon to Thetford, the remaining structures have impounded the river along all its reaches preventing connectivity. To allow passage between structures they need removing or modifying.

This project will install a Larinier fish-pass, and canoe pass at Brandon Staunch, which will provide a vital link in restoring the watercourses Upstream and enabling Sea Trout and coarse fish to access their natural breeding grounds. It also links to the fish pass constructed downstream at Denver, which is allowing migratory species into the system.

**LOCATION**
Brandon Staunch TL7785086696

**AUDIENCE**
The fish pass at Brandon will have a great visual effect creating a new interest point for locals who use the river corridor, it will allow canoeists passage down through the structure. It will benefit the fishery Upstream with knock-on benefits for the local economy.

All this work can become a resource for education to enable future generations of what can be achieved by collaborative working, and there is ecosystems on their own doorstep that need protecting.

**NEED**
The River Little Ouse chalk stream is a unique and important habitat of which there are very few worldwide. The chalk stream globally is a very rare type of river with a unique ecology. There is estimated to be only 210 chalk streams in the world, of which 160 are in England. The River Little Ouse is the heart of the Brecks, linking many areas of recreation, and important habitats.

The EA has identified key structures that would benefit modification or removal to provide a longer term sustainable migratory population of fish. Brandon Staunch is first impassable structure on the river Little Ouse.

Data collected by the EA shows that the Little Ouse and Tributaries are at ‘Moderate’ This data is based on routine samples of ecological and chemical elements. The reason the Little Ouse is not achieving good status is due to pressures such as physical modification, rural diffuse pollution, point source pollution (e.g. phosphates from water recycling centres), invasive species, and impoundments.

By improving elements of the river, it will generate an increase in awareness of the environment within the riparian corridor, making its restoration more sustainable and providing a base for education within the catchment.
AIMS

The aim of the project is to construct a single flight Larinier Fish pass that can provide passage for canoes as well.

The Objective is to improve Fish, Eel and Canoe Passage at Brandon Staunche without increase to flood risk

Demonstrate project success through monitoring

Raise awareness of issues relating to impoundment of rivers and barriers to free movement of migratory fish species

ACTIVITIES

Completion of Topographic Survey to enable construction and completion of Outline designs

Upstream and Downstream Water level monitoring including hydraulic analysis and flood modelling to confirm design

Produce detailed designs of a fish and eel pass at Brandon Staunche (including canoe passage)

Provide drawing for construction and tendering purpose

Full sign off for EA National Fish Pass Panel, submit an Environmental Permit to the EA and apply for construction under the permissive development

Construction of Larinier Fish Pass and Canoe pass summer 2020

OUTPUTS

Topographic Survey to enable construction setting out

Upstream and Downstream Water level monitoring

Hydraulic analysis and flood modelling

Detailed designs of a fish and eel pass (including canoe passage)

Full sign off for EA National Fish Pass Panel and application for construction

Construction of Larinier Fish Pass and Canoe pass summer 2020

OUTCOMES

Free passage enabled for coarse and migratory species to the Upstream reach

More sustainable fish populations Upstream

Return of eels and wild trout Upstream

Improved fishery

Increased amenity value

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permits not granted</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Externally permitted development rights will be applied for in 2019 from West Suffolk Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowner Permission</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The works is on a partners’ land who we already have an agreement with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget cuts</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The budget has been forecast and prioritised within the whole of East Anglia WEIF budget, if the overall budget is cut there is enough protection from other projects being frozen before it affects the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The works are being planned at the end of the summer when flows are at their lowest. Automatic gate is sufficient to manage flows.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Barton Mills Sluice**

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** Environment Agency

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**SUMMARY**

The project will lower Barton Mills Sluice, a drop leaf, gate permanently. The aim of the project is to improve connectivity Upstream and Downstream of the weir, improving fish passage, allowing safe passage for canoes, restoring the Upstream channel back to a more natural chalk stream and improving connectivity of Tuddenham stream.

**LOCATION**

- Barton Mills TL7269173837
- Lark Head sluice riffle TL7310973867
- Tuddenham stream riffles TL7337373697
- In channel restoration TL7378173732 TL7419773648, TL7451773538, TL7508473484, TL7336873568

**AUDIENCE**

The audience types for this project are all local communities through their various societies, clubs, public and private sector organisations, businesses as well as individuals.

The immediate improvements to the new reach Upstream of Barton Mills will have its greatest visual effect to the users of the Lark Valley way, and will create a new focal point for people to see large scale restoration. It will allow access to the river Upstream of Mildenhall by canoe without having to cross the A11 and it will benefit the other projects delivering improvements to the reach.

The wider effects off the project will be felt throughout and beyond the Lark catchment. It not only aids the recovery of reach upstream by improving the fishery it can become a resource for education to enable future generations of what can be achieved by collaborative working, and there are ecosystems on their own doorstep that need protecting.

**NEED**

Barton Mills is currently impassable to all species and canoes, by changing its operation passage is improved allowing access for aquatic species to planned restoration work further upstream.

Data collected by the EA shows that 92% of the Lark Tributaries are at ‘less than good’ status with some water bodies at poor and bad status. This work will form part of a package of interventions to support improvement.

By improving elements of the river, it will generate an increase in awareness of the environment within the riparian corridor, with more groups wanting to input into making its restoration sustainable and providing a base for education within the catchment.
AIMS

The aim of the project is to lower Barton Mills Sluice, carry out in-channel restoration and reconnection of the floodplain Upstream of Barton Mills.

Collect data and carry out a test lowering and present the results to Natural England and stakeholders

Plan and implement a phased lowering in the deliver phase

Plan exact locations and implement restoration measures, liaise with landowners for exact access points

Monitor the changes

ACTIVITIES

Lowering of Barton Mills Sluice to allow coarse and migratory species to pass through Barton Mills

Enablement of canoe passage

Creation of new accessibility (for aquatic species) to 3.5km of previously impounded river

Restoration of chalk stream features

Creation of in-channel features

OUTPUTS

Lower Barton Mills sluice

In-channel restoration works including:

Install gravel ripples just downstream of the area of Lark Head Sluice and upstream of the Tuddenham Outfall

Bank modification of five areas to create in-channel features

Gravel re-instatement for fish spawning habitat and increase natural populations of chalk stream macro invertebrates

OUTCOMES

Improved Fish and Eel Passage at Barton Mills sluice and impoundment to 3.5km of river removed

Improved fishery resulting from new fish passage (including Sea Trout and Eel)

More sustainable fish populations Upstream and means to escape in times of distress

Return of spawning habitat and natural cover

Increased amenity value and increase in recreation including safe passage for canoes and improved fishing

Improved channel morphology in the River Lark and Tuddenham Stream

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permits not granted</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The EA Project Manager has already obtained consent ‘in principle’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowner Permission</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Land owners have already been engaged and are supportive of the concept. The full plans and mobilisation routes will be confirmed with them at project start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget cuts</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The budget has been forecast and prioritised within the whole of East Anglia WEIF budget, if the overall budget is cut there is enough protection from other projects being frozen before it affects the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The works are being planned at the end of the summer when flows are at their lowest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lost Ponds: Reinstating Ghost Pingo

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** Norfolk Wildlife Trust

**SUMMARY**
Pingos are relict landscape features formed where the retreat of permafrost during the last Ice Age led to melting and the collapse of ice mounds to form depressions which subsequently filled with water to form ponds. In Norfolk, these depressions are classically found in the Fens and the Breckland valleys, and while these features are found elsewhere in the UK (in Wales, the Thames Basin and Cumbria), they are nationally very rare.

This project will aim to bring 14 lost ‘ghost’ pingos back to life; improve our understanding of pingos through citizen science; and disseminate best practice to ensure effective conservation of this unique resource; better understand the distribution of pingos within the Brecks; demonstrate how to re-instate ghost pingos and share learning related to pingos to a range of audiences.

**LOCATION**
Thompson Common – Watering Farm TL919949

**AUDIENCE**
Land managers, conservation organisations, academics, interested individuals and communities local to ghost pingo sites.

**NEED**
Sites with pingos frequently support important fen vegetation. Fens have declined significantly during the last century, both nationally and across Europe, and are now a UK priority habitat. Several pingo sites within the scheme area contribute to the suite of SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites which are notified for the quality of their fen vegetation. Its value to nature conservation has also been recognised by its Special Area of Conservation and Special Site of Scientific Interest status.

Following recent re-introduction work it is now one of only two sites in the UK where the Northern Pool Frog species is present.

It is likely that many pingos have been destroyed or reduced to ghosts in the landscape as a result of drainage, the expansion of agriculture and afforestation. The result is that the remaining pockets of pingos often exist as isolated islands within a landscape dominated by intensive agriculture and forestry. This means that the rare species they support are confined to specific sites with the attendant risks in terms of potential loss and extinction.

The unique and irreplaceable origin of the pingos means that it is essential that we conserve this finite resource. There is an opportunity to extend the resource at this location to allow potential growth of species populations (including the pool frog) and consequently increase long-term resilience.

In the wider scheme area, there is a need to further identify the extent of the potential ghost pingo resource and undertake strategic reinstatement of pingos.
AIMS

The Lost Ponds: Reinstating Ghost Pingos project aims to map, understand and recreate the ghost pingos lost from the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers landscape area, enabling species expansion and movement across the countryside.

Learning from the project will be disseminated to landowners and others in the region to facilitate future pingo reinstatement.

ACTIVITIES

Identifying the Ghosts
Re-Instatement of Ghost Pingos at Watering Farm
Re-Instatement of Ghost Pingos in the Wider Countryside
Production of a comprehensive guide for land managers on pingo management, restoration and reinstatement

OUTPUTS

Two ghost pingo identification workshops
Hydrological monitoring equipment installed, and cored soil samples taken.
Guidance provided to inform reinstatement of ghost pingos
14 pingos excavated
A report on the observed biological recolonisation of the reinstated pingos (plus associated hydrological data) produced.
Habitat conservation (e.g. weed control, scrub clearance)
Monitoring and cored soil samples taken, with comparative assessment and ecological and hydrological data collection
Wider engagement with local land managers and celebration of the project and volunteers
A Guide will be produced for Land Managers with a launch event for landowners and conservation organisations

OUTCOMES

6 volunteers trained in geological and mapping skills
Additional sites for reinstatement identified
Future conservation action will be better informed – e.g. improved protection of key sites; improving ecological connectivity mapping for the area.
34 volunteers engaged in recording biological recolonization, habitat conservation works and collecting ecological and hydrological data
A new guidance resource to inform effective conservation action in the future

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes to Staffing – impacts on quality of delivery</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Delivery of project shared between several NWT staff and external partners and contractors. Good Knowledge transfer in existence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of specialist contractors to undertake work</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Good relationships exist with known specialist contractors and the project timescale allows work to be scheduled well in advance of delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse weather conditions</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The five-year project delivery period allows for project elements to be delivered in subsequent years if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of volunteers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>If volunteers cannot be recruited from the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape area, NWT will advertise the opportunities to its current volunteer base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ghost pingos are successfully reinstated</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>The preliminary work at Watering Farm has identified 26 ghost pingos. The pingos selected for reinstatement will be those which monitoring indicates will be most likely to succeed. Pingo reinstatement in the wider countryside will benefit from learning and experience gained from project delivery at Watering Farm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Riparian Landowner Advice

**DELIVERY PARTNER(S):** Norfolk Rivers Trust, working with Natural England, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Norfolk Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), Suffolk FWAG, Natural England, RSPB, NFU

**SUMMARY**
There are currently numerous organisations seeking to deliver valuable, area-specific advice to landowners and agricultural managers, and a great interest in reviewing the mechanisms for providing advice using a mutually inclusive approach. Because of the special nature of the Brecks, it provides a unique set of needs and issues for land managers that are not being met by current provision.

This project will develop a steering group with partner organisations, to pilot a scheme delivering over 3 years, a joined-up bespoke land management advice that adds value to existing stewardship, at a significant time of change.

It will create a legacy of landowners more aware of the natural heritage assets they manage, more able to access support and funding to manage those assets, and a network of advisory organisations more able to work effectively in partnership to deliver bespoke advice in the Brecks Landscape.

**LOCATION**
BFER Scheme area

**AUDIENCE**
The project will engage with a variety of audiences to raise awareness and promote catchment sensitive, and environmentally responsible farming. These will include Landowners/Land Managers, Agricultural Advisers and Agronomists, Non-Government Organisations, Local Authorities and Parish Councils, Water Companies, Agri Supply Chain Businesses.

There may also be opportunities for volunteers to engage with landowners to carry out monitoring and surveying of biodiversity gains resulting from this project.

**NEED**
The Brecks is a nationally important area for freshwater habitats whilst also being a crucial area for food production and farming. The Brecks include rare chalks streams including the river systems of the Wissey, Lark and Little Ouse and open water features such as fluctuating meres, pingos, ponds, fens and meadows which are all impacted by surface and groundwater systems.

For many land managers however it is difficult to know where to access information and advice services that enable them to manage those areas effectively. There are currently many organisations delivering advice but not in a joined-up approach. This can lead to land managers be unsure of what organisations offer what advice and what grants might be available. It can also lead to organisations offering contrasting information focussing on different priorities.

This project will act as a pilot for an integrated advice mechanism delivered by various organisations, that includes catchment sensitive farming, management of sensitive biodiversity, archaeology, and any future Environmental Land Management Schemes as set out by Defra and Natural England.
**AIMS**

To provide a joined-up approach for delivering bespoke land management advice for the Brecks' riparian landowners.

To create a new partnership between the 5-6 different organisations delivering, or seeking to deliver valuable, area specific advice to landowners and, managers in the project area.

To review the mechanisms for providing advice and establish a joined-up approach where there is one hub to go for specialist and technical environmental advice.

**ACTIVITIES**

One to one Farm Visits

Engage with Land Managers across the Brecks Areas

Facilitate knowledge exchange events and communications package

Create Advisor and Farmer Catchment group

Develop case studies through advice service

Deliver water and soil interventions

Identify additional match funding opportunities

Create habitat connectivity mapping

**OUTPUTS**

35 Farm visits and Reports

Regular Information being communicated to at least 500 land managers across project time scale

9 Events across 3 years.

Guidance package created

2 Meetings per year (10) for Steering Group

3 Case Studies

10 Interventions to be implemented in priority areas

Collaboration with funders and other stakeholders to bring in extra funding

Online Mapping system produced for landowners and stakeholders

**OUTCOMES**

Land Managers better informed and kept up to date with issues, advice services, local representatives

Enhanced collaboration and sharing of data and advice

Economic and wider benefits promoted to farmers implementing water quality and biodiversity

Improve water quality and biodiversity

Other stakeholders to sharing best practice and better link between local businesses, the supply chain and land managers

Better understanding for future planning of land management techniques and options.

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### Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Landowner Interest</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Build relationships with stakeholders and steering group early. Land managers are already being involved in planning of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative action from advisory organisations</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Organisations have been involved from early on with the development stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of money for interventions</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>External private sector money has been confirmed for year 1 and 2 with more being sought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity of current Agri Environment schemes that will not allow for land management changes or interventions</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ensure continuous engagement with Natural England and keep all stakeholders up to date.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROGRAMME 2.
UNDER THE SURFACE: DISCOVERING HERITAGE
Programme 2: Under the Surface
Discovering Heritage

2.1 Hidden Heritage: Discovering Geology and Archaeology
- Field trip locations
- Lecture venues
- 2.2 Tales from the River
- 2.3 Industrrious Rivers
- 2.4 River Raidsers
- 2.5 Digital Interpretation: Heritage Hotspots (+ 1 roaming + 1 TBC)

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Hidden Heritage: Discovering Geology and Archaeology

DELIVERY PARTNER: Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership

SUMMARY
This project will deliver a linked set of three day-schools and a lecture series of associated talks covering the unique archaeology and geology in the Scheme area. A variety of experts will be on hand in the day schools to raise awareness of and explain the complex lines of evidence which are woven into our understanding of the prehistoric settlement and landscape of the area. The lecture series will tie in with the ‘Celebrating River Heritage’ Project to reach a much wider audience.

LOCATION
Various throughout the Scheme area

AUDIENCE
These Hidden Heritage Day Schools and talks aim primarily to engage with people interested in nature and prehistory.

The Day Schools and talks will be a mixture of specialist presentation and experiential encounter.

They will reach existing, new and wider audiences, including those under-represented audiences. They will develop and improve engagement with heritage for local people through publicising opportunities to be involved in other BFER initiatives, and for visitors, the Day Schools will contribute to raising awareness of archaeological heritage and Earth heritage and the need for their conservation, which is something they can take home with them, potentially to benefit their locality.

Publicity materials for BFER projects will include information in Polish and Portuguese and translated web pages will be made available.

NEED
Geology is often overlooked as the key influencing factor for landscape heritage. Recent projects demonstrated significant interest from communities and landowners to understand local geology and there exists an opportunity to raise awareness, influence land managers and decision makers through a variety of activities.

There is a very low level of general awareness of the contribution that Earth heritage / geodiversity makes to the landscape of the Brecks Fen edge and river valleys. Few people know that the area has nationally important prehistoric sites. Landowners and managers are often be unaware of the significance and vulnerability of the archaeological sites and geoarchaeological contexts beneath their land surface.

The Fenland Project (1976-1996) investigated, discovered and catalogued archaeological sites in the BFER project area and showed that peat wastage (through drainage) and deep ploughing were leading to their ongoing destruction.
Recent publications such as the ‘Strategy for Water and Wetland Heritage’ (Historic England, 2012) and have outlined the threats to this peatland heritage and set out an agenda for trying to address them. Peat wastage also contributes to a release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, so contributing to climate change.

Many people are not aware that the south-eastern Fenland margin has contributed valuable evidence for life in prehistoric Britain; that layers of peat and alluvium have allowed many archaeological sites to be preserved.

The Brecks Fen edge and river valleys have provided nationally important archaeological evidence of life in the Palaeolithic period. Although people are fascinated by early humans such as the Neanderthals, and even though the Palaeolithic age comprises 99% of the human past, it is poorly understood by the general public.

**AIMS**

To introduce participants to the geology, archaeology, geoarchaeology and palaeoenvironments of the Fen edge and associated Brecks river valleys, from 500,000 years ago to the present day.

Drawing on a wealth of nationally important and lesser-known sites, the project will use talks/lectures, fields trips and artefact handling sessions to celebrate the history of prehistoric archaeological research and interpretation; explain the story of fluctuating environments and human settlement over the last 500,000 years; explain to land managers the archaeological value of Fen edge peat and alluvial deposits so that they will understand and conserve it.

**ACTIVITIES**

Fen Edge Archaeology for Land Managers Day School, ‘Burnt Mounds and Bog Oaks’ - Day School and Palaeolithic archaeology Day School including:

- Introductory presentations,
- Field trips to relevant sites.

A set of five talks/lectures communicating the information generated by the Day-Schools to five local history, wildlife and community groups. The talks will be enhanced with a handling collection of flint tools and other specimens.

Day-school and Presentation content made available on-line

**OUTPUTS**

3 Day Schools including 3 field trips to at least 12 significant sites in the Scheme area

75 people introduced to Holocene prehistoric archaeology and environment, human occupation and the evidence for Palaeolithic human life

5 Talks/lectures delivered as part of a heritage lecture series with 125 people introduced to Earth heritage

New online resource created to celebrate the Brecks’ Hidden Heritage

**OUTCOMES**

Land owners will have an improved understanding of archaeology and the range of threats to its integrity and preservation.

More people will be able to recognise archaeological artefacts and geological specimens and relate them to their original context in the landscape.

More people will be aware of, and able to appreciate the Earth heritage dimension to landscape, archaeology and wildlife.

A legacy of online Geology and Archaeological heritage information made available for future learning.

---

**Risks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal of Mildenhall Museum facilities</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Other suitable sites in place - West Stow, Holywell Row village hall. Borrow handling specimens from another source e.g. Moyses Hall Museum collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of access by a landowner</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Divert field trip to alternative locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad weather</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Carry out contingency planning for cancellation and later repeat in early May.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unforeseen budgetary arising</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Use contingency budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2

**Tales from the River**

**DELIVERY PARTNER(S):** This project will be almost entirely delivered by a volunteer project manager, supported by the BFER team, with specialist input for a variety of training workshops.

**SUMMARY**

The project will involve young people and adults in gathering and celebrating stories and folklore about river recreation (especially swimming and other watery activities) in the Brecks’ rivers in the past and present, using research, oral history and gathering a variety of media.

This information will all be compiled and presented in a variety of engaging ways, aimed at a variety of audiences, and will include an exhibition, a film and storytelling. A legacy of on-line content will be produced and will be formally archived. The project will link with other projects in the region, including the NLHF supported ‘Suffolk Stories’ Project - part of the new ‘The Hold’ Record Centre in Suffolk. It will also inform and be informed by other BFER projects including Healing Waters and Celebrating River Heritage.

**LOCATION**

Various throughout the Scheme area.

**AUDIENCE**

Work with: Groups organising young people, including Girlguiding, Scouts, Woodcraft Folk, ATC, etc.

**NEED**

Changing attitudes to outdoor swimming and recreation in local rivers has shown a need to understand the history of swimming and other recreational uses of the rivers, including the way these activities thread through generations and how participation and attitudes have changed over time, as part of the history of the use of our rivers. Need to revive the connection between communities, their rivers, landscapes and heritage.

**Thetford spa. Credit Frank Meeres**
AIMS
This project aims to uncover a wide range of local stories about the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers including oral histories, myths and legends.

It will celebrate how people engaged with the rivers and how they have been used for recreation activities in the past and present.

Young people and adults will be supported to tell their stories, and these will be brought to life through exhibitions, films and story telling.

ACTIVITIES
Training in archive research, oral history interviewing, gathering stories and views, gathering and editing photos and videos, making films.

Presenting stories and preparing an exhibition and educational material.

Celebrating Tales from the River
Contributing to other BFER awareness raising events

OUTPUTS
20 workshops including: Archive research (3x Adults, 4x Youth groups), Oral history recording (1 Adult, 2x Youth groups), Photography (1x Adult, 1x Youth Groups), Exhibition curation and development Youth Groups (2).
Youth film-making workshops (6)
Youth storytelling development training and Filming sessions (4)
Celebratory events including pop-up exhibition, film screening, and story-telling events (6) of which one will be delivered by Youth Groups.
Digitisation of community cine-film to produce a film celebrating recreation on the rivers past and present.

OUTCOMES
A diverse group of adult and young people will have learnt new skills and engaged in heritage in a new way.

Participants will have worked with professionals to prepare an exhibition with educational material, performed storytelling and produced a film.

The project will have created a body of local information on history and identified current concerns of adults, older and young people, which can inform other projects.

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough adult volunteers to do the archive and oral history research</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Targeted and wide publicity, stressing opportunities and benefits of being involved. Make sure that volunteers are supported, trained, motivated, managed and valued. Regularly monitor and evaluate participation, with systems in place to give early warning of potential problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough people to interview</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Targeted and wide publicity and use of local networks, such as those listed above in relation to volunteers, plus school alumni, local community groups and networks, suggestions from young people and research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people might not want to be involved</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Involve appropriate partner youth groups, create interest, use the experience of local young historians to inspire and give practical advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skills among young people</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Provide good quality training, use the experience of local young historians to give practical advice and help deliver training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport issues</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Use venues near where they live and those used by partner groups, encourage car-sharing, pay expenses or provide transport where needed and appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety during filming outdoors in or near water</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Risk assessment in advance. Assess participants at start of activity and only allow them to do activities suitable to their skills, and work with partner groups to ensure they are supervised. Have emergency plans in place to deal with problems such as cold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding issues</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Use appropriate procedures and the experience of partner groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Industrious Rivers

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** The Breckland Society

**SUMMARY**
This project will focus on the history of trade and other activities along the rivers of the Brecks, from Roman times to the present day, researching and documenting the development of related activities and infrastructure and ground-truthing the extent and condition of existing industrial archaeology.

Outputs will be celebrated through a variety of media, including a report, digital mapping and exhibition material to raise awareness and celebrate the vital role of rivers in the Brecks.

**LOCATION**
BFER Scheme Area

**AUDIENCE**
This project will engage a wide variety of audiences, including local interest groups, local councils and volunteers during the activity phase. The outputs and exhibitions will be designed to be accessible by all, including young people and schools, as well as other non-specialists to raise awareness and generate a greater interest in interest in local history.

By connecting with other projects, including ‘Celebrating Brecks Heritage’ the exhibitions will also have a much greater reach.

**NEED**
Rivers are increasingly important for biodiversity, flood risk management, agriculture and recreation, resulting in increasing damage to heritage structures relating to the navigation and industrial past of Brecks rivers.

The project will address a current lack of awareness of how important the rivers of the Brecks have been in the area’s prosperity and in the development of towns such as Brandon and Thetford, as well as help improve existing low levels of understanding on the location, role, function and condition of riverside structures and of how to care for them in future.

It will ensure that the remnants of the rivers’ industrial heritage are identified, recorded and where appropriate, interpreted, protected and conserved.

The engagement of volunteers and passing on of fast disappearing lock repair and millwrighting skills is crucial to ensuring that the importance of this element of Brecks heritage is not lost. Raising awareness of their existence and the story of their role in creating the modern landscape will also increase understanding of landscape history and the importance of water in the landscape past and present.
AIMS

To explore the history of trade and development along the rivers of the Brecks by documenting the structures (mills, races, staunches, jetties, warehouses etc) and researching and interpreting the commercial activities that helped shape the economic and industrial profile of the area.

Raise awareness of this history and explain why it is important through practical recording, conservation work, new interpretation, written and on-line material.

Improve practical knowledge and specific skills that will help ensure better understanding and management of surviving heritage structures in future.

Create more of a sense of place, and better awareness of the importance of the industrial archaeology and heritage of the Brecks rivers.

ACTIVITIES

Landowner and volunteer training days on river history, history of trade, types of river feature, fieldwalking, industrial archaeology recording and practical conservation skills.

Archival and fieldwork research by volunteers into the river trading history of the Brecks.

Production of illustrated report on river trading history.

Volunteer-led survey of surviving heritage features along the rivers.

Conservation work to river heritage features.

Production of interpretation panels on river history and heritage.

Production of heritage feature database and online resources.

OUTPUTS

5 River History training days (history, river features, fieldwalking and recording) days for volunteers, including Landscape History workshop supported by the University of East Anglia.

5 River Heritage skills workshops, including millwrighting, Lock repair (in-river brickwork, blacksmithing) to teach 100 owners and volunteers the skills necessary for maintaining river heritage features.

Illustrated report on the history of the river trade in the Brecks.

Digital mapping and survey/gazetteer of river heritage features.

4 river heritage features/sites (including one mill site) cleared, consolidated, interpreted and made accessible to the public.

4 x interpretation panels at relevant river heritage sites.

Online resources archive.

OUTCOMES

Greater awareness of the importance of river history and trade.

Improved knowledge and practical skills among volunteers, local people and heritage managers and professionals.

Conserved heritage features on the ground.

Planners, land-managers and decision makers more aware of the heritage and its role in the landscape history.

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of volunteer participation</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>This project will be promoted through the central BFER volunteer engagement activity. The Breckland Society will lead on this project and have already begun signing up volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not able to get landowner consent to access sites</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Survey work can be carried out remotely and/or using lidar, mapping and aerial photography.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
River Raiders

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** The Breckland Society

**SUMMARY**

This project will focus on exploring the story of a key yet little-known chapter in the Brecks’ landscape’s history through a research and fieldwork project delivered by Breckland Society volunteers.

It will explore the history and impact of the Vikings in the Brecks; they arrived via the area’s rivers and in 864/65 overwintered on the banks of the Little Ouse at Thetford. It was from here that they launched their successful campaign first across East Anglia and then right across England.

The activities undertaken will include archival research and practical fieldwork, resulting in an illustrated report, interpretation panel and online resources.

**LOCATION**

Various.

**AUDIENCE**

Local communities, interest groups, visitors, schools.

**NEED**

There is a recognised disconnect between communities in the Brecks and the local landscape heritage.

By uncovering the importance of the Brecks in the nationally significant story of the Viking invasion and bringing it into much greater local focus the project will help create more of a sense of place, and awareness of the importance of the landscape features and heritage.

The engagement of volunteers and communities in the process of discovery and celebration will further help to create a legacy of improved heritage skills and a new source of information for interpretation and learning.

Santon - Viking brooches from burial
AIMS

Exploring the stories of key elements in the Brecks’ landscape history through a series of research and fieldwork projects delivered by Breckland Society volunteers, including research and practical field work, celebratory booklets, exhibitions, and online resources, this project will;

- Explore the use of the Brecks Rivers as corridors for movement and trade pre-1066
- Uncover the history and impact of Vikings in the Brecks
- Raise awareness of these stories through new interpretation, written and on-line material
- Create more of a sense of place, and awareness of the importance of the landscape features and heritage.

ACTIVITIES

Training for 15 volunteers in archaeological archive research and archaeological site investigation skills

Research components to include research into Viking place names, agricultural and settlement patterns and identification of key local sites associated with Viking history and heritage.

Archaeological Site Research training days (2)
Archaeological Archive research workshops (2).

Volunteer led heritage research

Production of Brecks River Raiders report booklet

Production of online interpretation material and GIS mapping

Production of online interpretation material including a map of Viking place names

Production of River Raiders Exhibition of new material contributing to the Celebrating River Heritage Project’s formal museum led Viking Exhibition

OUTCOMES

Volunteers trained in archive research and supported to uncover and celebrate lost heritage stories.

Awareness raised of nationally significant stories of trade and movement of people and armies along the Brecks rivers to create more of a sense of place, and awareness of the importance of the landscape features and heritage.

A long-term on-line information resource accessible by all

Risks

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of volunteer engagement</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Significant interest has been shown during project development phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The BFER engagement element will focus on promoting this project with local history groups and through is awareness raising programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient material/evidence</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The development phase has uncovered a lot of archive material, and this project will link with local museums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A regional focus on Viking activity over the next few years means that material will be available from wider afield to illustrate the Brecks story if local material is not readily available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Digital Interpretation: Heritage Hotspots

**DElIVERY PARTNER:** BFER Delivery Team

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**SUMMARY**

The project will transform the quantity and quality of interpretation content available at key sites and will be promoted to other scheme partners and heritage providers in the project area through launch events and information sharing opportunities.

This project will provide (at least 5) digital (InfoPoint) visitor interpretation points for remote heritage sites in the projects area. Visitors will be able to connect to these points with smart phones or tablets as if they were browsing the public web, and access or download interpretation content.

The new interpretation provision will include a wide variety of heritage interpretation information including videos, oral histories and audio tours as well as quizzes, games, images and schools’ packs, much of which has previously only been available on a limited basis, or off-site on the internet.

---

**LOCATION**

West Stow Anglo Saxon Village, Lakenheath Fen RSPB reserve, One other location (TBC), Ancient House Museum & 1 mobile unit for events

---

**AUDIENCE**

Site visitors at all the locations that will be installing a unit, including schools. The roaming unit will allow a wide variety of audiences to access interpretation and project information at BFER activities and events as well as at community led events that BFER will be attending to promote the scheme and engagement opportunities

---

**NEED**

The Brecks is famous for being remote and ‘off-grid’, and the availability of interpretation material has suffered as a result.

New technology allows for the provision of wired or solar powered Wi-Fi networks at remote locations to provide up-to-date high value digital interpretation content including films, images, audio content and education packs.

This will provide much needed additional interpretation of often overlooked heritage features in the landscape, where there is no mobile phone or data signal, or even mains power.

The availability of this digital content makes it possible to have unlimited heritage interpretation resources made available for all audiences in a variety of media and languages.
Aims

To transform the quantity and quality of interpretation content available at key sites in the project area

By providing digital interpretation access at remote sites in the BFER project area using stand-alone Wi-Fi transmitters

To enable Digital content to be accessed at BFER engagement events, greatly increasing the resources available to participants and helping to raise awareness of the scheme and wider opportunities for involvement

Activities

Installation of 4 static info-point units and 1 mobile unit for BFER scheme events and activities.

Design and installation of bespoke Brecks/BFER and site-specific heritage interpretation material for a variety of audiences including schools and foreign language.

4 digital interpretation development and product support/review workshops

Ongoing product support

Outputs

4 Brecks heritage sites provided with digital heritage interpretation facilities.

1 mobile unit

Design work to style the InfoPoint content with the branding of both the BFER project and the partners

A programme of 4 workshops - along with InfoPoint staff - to help the partners understand InfoPoint and how they might best use it for interpretation

A partners’ support group to develop content and ensure continued improvement through information sharing

Graphic design and production of interpretation panels to accommodate the units

BFER partners upskilled more aware of opportunities to better interpret remote locations

Product & interpretation support

Outcomes

New audiences more aware of Brecks heritage and able to access a wider range of interpretative material at remote locations.

Schools more able to access heritage education content

Site managers more able to share complex information with visitors

Those with limited mobility or other impairments more able to engage with heritage through more readily accessible information

A reduction in the use of hard copy interpretation materials (maps/leaflets etc)

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of match funding from partners</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The units could be funded through other mechanisms, and/or alternative partners sought to participate in the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology provider unable to supply or maintain equipment</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>This project could be delivered using alternative technology, although the proposed units are considered the best value and most reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of user take-up</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The project partners and BFER scheme will undertake a co-ordinated approach to promoting the new interpretation provision through all the on-line, social media and press channels to ensure awareness. In addition, there will be new signage at the participating sites highlighting the Wi-Fi points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology rendered obsolete</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The units are designed to be compatible with any advances in Wi-Fi technology and will remain accessible by any type of hand-held device capable of wirelessly connecting to the internet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**2.6 Scheme Website and Info Hub**

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** BFER Delivery Team

**SUMMARY**

This project will provide the public facing gateway to the BFER LPS and the rich variety of engagement opportunities, access improvements and information resulting from the delivery projects and beyond.

It will establish an online portal using the www.brecks.org URL to link information from and access to previous landscape partnership and large-scale heritage projects in one place creating a sustainable one-stop location for Brecks Landscape Heritage.

It will deliver key engagement and promotion activities identified by the BFER comms strategy using social media activity via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

**LOCATION**

On-line

**AUDIENCE**

The website will be designed and managed to have relevant content, and be accessible for a wide variety of audiences including scheme participants, visitors to the area, schools and specialist interest groups. It will provide technical data and mapping resources for specialist activity and volunteers working at all levels. It will also be translatable for culturally and linguistically diverse communities and accessible for those with disabilities.

**NEED**

The audit work carried out during project development identified a need to further develop a joined-up approach to the provision of technological access to the Brecks. Currently the on-line information resource for the area is disjointed without a clear brand identity for the area, and this project will provide a ‘one-stop’ digital hub for all the Scheme outputs and a vehicle to link wider information resources from partners and previous landscape scale projects.

Utilisation of the latest IT and web-based technology will attract new audiences and enable existing audiences to engage with the Scheme and the Brecks information resources more effectively.
AIMS
To create the main web site and on-line facilities for the BFER LP with a host of interconnected pages to promote the scheme,

To provide project details and information including images galleries, enable event and volunteer booking and links to other Brecks related resources - an on-line one-stop location for Brecks Heritage information

To use social media to communicate the scheme’s objectives, heritage information and opportunities for involvement to new and existing audiences

To provide a legacy of accessible heritage information

ACTIVITIES

Develop BFER Website

Deliver Social media engagement to raise awareness of the Scheme and opportunities for engagement

Create GIS Mapping Data resource for Scheme outputs

Create events information and booking resource

Create BFER newsletters and archive

Provide links to other Brecks Landscape Heritage information

OUTPUTS

BFER LP Scheme web site (www.brecks.org)

Access to all the delivery projects’ on-line information resources and databases

Provide details of walks, trails, and associated interpretation

Access hub for schools’ interactive material, and learning resources

Social media content and volunteer /partner blogs

Creation of a long-term resource and archive for BFER GIS data

Links to partner websites

Links to other Brecks resources

OUTCOMES

Creation of a central point to access information about the landscape and heritage of the BFER LPs area

Promotion of volunteer engagement and participation opportunities

Promotion of Schools information and education resources

Engagement of local communities and visitors to the Brecks

Raised awareness of Heritage and landscape in the Scheme area

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excessive staff input required to maintain the web-site</td>
<td>MED</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>Project Partners will be able to manage and maintain individual project pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No long-term host can be found for the site</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>In the event of no host being found the information will be transferred to the ‘OneSuffolk’ website where it can still be accessed, but may lose a degree of functionality until alternative hosting can be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of engagement</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>The website will be linked to partner websites and promotion activity will direct on-line traffic to the site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROGRAMME 3. WORKING WATERS: HERITAGE SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE
Programme 3: Working Waters
Heritage Skills for the Future

- 3.1 Citizen Science: Testing The Water
- 3.2 Fen Edge & Rivers Archaeology
- 3.3 Heritage River Crafts: Living on the Edge
- 3.4 Watery Wildlife Education (delivery locations)
- 3.5 Supporting Sustainability
- 3.6 Supporting Placements & Youth Training

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Citizen Science: Testing the Waters

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** Freshwater Habitats Trust

**SUMMARY**
Testing the Waters is a Citizen Science project to raise awareness of habitat loss, pollution and rare species, involving people in practical activities to get new information about the project area through surveys, using cutting edge Environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling of ponds, streams, ditches and river headwater streams, and rapid water quality test kits that make visible pollution that is otherwise invisible and largely unknown.

Results will be mapped to identify water quality and dispersal of key red list species in the project area to facilitate improved awareness and better conservation management practices. Workshops, activities and events for families, including curriculum linked schools’ engagement, will be provided.

**LOCATION**
The project will take place throughout the BFER area

**AUDIENCE**
Children and students: we will provide activities suitable for school children and students revolving around water testing and new eDNA survey methods.

Groups with barriers to accessing outdoor environments including those in social or health care systems. We will work with the project partners to make initial contacts with these groups including: Greenlight Trust, Local Health Authorities, Suffolk CC, local care providing organisations.

Local residents, both in more isolated rural communities and urban centres (e.g. Thetford, Bury St Edmunds) and those with some existing experience of outdoor activities. The latter vary from those who have some interest in outdoor activities (e.g. walking in the countryside to those who have previously helped out with environmental NGO projects, including Catchment Partnerships.

**NEED**
Monitoring is crucial for understanding the status of freshwaters and whether they are improving or declining. Most freshwaters are not monitored (particularly the ponds, small streams and ditches that support most species and include some of the highest quality sites).

Getting data on freshwaters is often expensive and technically challenging for community conservation groups and land managers, and to date little reliable monitoring data in freshwater has been collected by non-specialists.
**AIMS**

To create monitoring networks for endangered freshwater species and the extent of clean unpolluted water using simple but sophisticated citizen science survey methods, providing a baseline for the long-term monitoring of water quality and the distribution of key red list freshwater species in the project area.

To increase awareness in a range of audiences of the distribution of protected freshwater species and priority freshwater habitats, facilitating better conservation management practices.

To increase people’s engagement with and understanding of the exceptional freshwater heritage of The Brecks, apparently one of Britain’s driest landscapes but also one of the most important areas for freshwater biodiversity.

**ACTIVITIES**

- Designing the monitoring network
- Recruiting volunteers.
- Training volunteers in the use of water pollution test kits
- Survey of the freshwaters of the BFER project area
- Survey using multi-species eDNA test kits
- Co-ordinating and supporting volunteers and collecting the results
- Creating water quality mapping
- Feedback and interaction with the volunteers
- Production of resources for schools and students
- Using the data to improve the freshwater heritage of the project area

**OUTPUTS**

- Monitoring network plan
- 9x pre-survey training workshops
- 2x Co-ordinated water quality surveys
- 1x eDNA survey
- Water quality mapping
- 2x Water quality feedback workshops
- 1x Water quality report and leaflet including on-line resources
- 1x Schools pack
- 1x technical report for council members, planners, policy makers and statutory agencies

**OUTCOMES**

- Sites network selected for monitoring
- 150-300 volunteers have gained surveying skills, including eDNA
- 3-5 Schools (c. 350 students) have participated
- 25-50 people from groups that have barriers to engagement have engaged, and at least 10 volunteers will have used the eDNA kits
- A group of volunteers will have been trained and available for future follow-up surveys
- Areas of opportunity for improvement and connectivity identified
- A monitoring network created
- A baseline for future monitoring created
- Information for schools and students on the survey of all main types of freshwater
- Integration of the volunteers work into the statutory processes

**Risks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too few volunteers are recruited</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ensure wide communication in the LPS and the region to maximise publicity about the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal disease outbreaks (e.g. Foot and Mouth) prevent access to the countryside</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Focus work on areas where there are no livestock. The Brecks has quite large areas (forest, villages, towns) where surveys would still be possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very wet or cold weather makes freshwaters more difficult to access in the spring of each year.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>If there is a very wet or cold spring, freshwaters may be a little more difficult to access (due of snow, frozen water, or flooding), and with the large numbers of sites involved it is possible to change locations and survey dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety risks</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>We provide Health &amp; Safety training for volunteers and recommend that all working by water is done in pairs. Note that volunteers do not need to go in the water to undertake the survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This project will deliver volunteer training in non-intrusive archaeological survey techniques, including geophysical survey and fieldwalking, and associated finds identification and processing.

The results of this training will reveal the extent and condition of buried archaeology at key sites in the project area focusing on the Lark Valley.

This project will also explore under-investigated sites and the peripheries of known sites to stitch this historical landscape together, revealing how the river and its surrounding landscape were used through time.

These activities will enable the local community to access and interpret their newly discovered heritage and contribute to the constantly evolving story of Prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon communities in the river valleys. Nationally important archaeology in this area includes the known site of West Stow Anglo-Saxon village, which has earlier Iron Age settlement activity; the Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery at Lackford, where this community was possibly buried; Icklingham, a focus of Roman activity; and the mysterious Black Ditches at Cavenham.

Primarily along the river Lark corridor with opportunities for wider surveying and engagement in other parts of the Scheme area in including at Oxborough Hall and Thompson Common.

The local population of Brecks Fen Edge & River Lark Valley area

Students, school children and their teachers, New groups who have not engaged with heritage before, Local amateur heritage organisations including local metal detectorists, Local landowners, Local and national researchers of all levels. There will be a small fee to ensure attendance at the onsite activities, the younger audiences (ages 10-18 years) will be given priority when issuing places for training.

This archaeologically rich area in the Lark Valley is home to nationally important heritage, however the majority of archaeology is unprotected and at high risk of destruction due to development, erosion and arable cultivation. There is a need to identify the full extent of these important archaeological sites before the evidence is destroyed.

The investigation of archaeology in Suffolk is currently reactive and heavily development-led which divorces communities and individuals from discovering, investigating and understanding their archaeological heritage.

There is a need to train and make the public aware of responsible archaeological investigation methods and best practice to ensure that the public feel empowered and supported to conduct independent investigation while following responsible methods and respecting the preservation of buried archaeology.
This project is an opportunity to create new links between heritage conservation, informal recreation and health and well-being. In doing so the project builds upon Suffolk County Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2012-2022, which strives to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Suffolk.

### AIMS

To engage with local communities to explore the true extent and wealth of their local archaeology in the Fen Edge & River Valleys.

To reveal how past communities used and lived within these landscapes.

To train volunteers to use modern Geophysics equipment to explore, understand and record hidden heritage.

Create a Legacy of communities, landowners and planners more aware of archaeological heritage and given the tools to continue to survey and record historic sites.

### ACTIVITIES

5 x on-site geophysical survey training sessions for volunteers at West Stow, Lackford, Icklingham and Cavenham Black Ditches.

6 x Offsite finds processing and ID sessions.

Best practice guidance documents.

Interpretation panels and a temporary exhibition at West Stow visitor centre, with geophysics plans and fieldwalking finds on display.

Annual Celebration Event to present each year’s findings.

### OUTPUTS

c. 120 volunteers trained

11 training workshops totalling 55 days, over 4 years

2 x up-to-date guidance documents made available online

Exhibition and Interpretation panel(s)

5x celebration Events

### OUTCOMES

Heritage will be better identified and recorded, and the county Historic Environment Record will be enhanced.

Heritage will be better managed and stronger links created between local groups, landowners, volunteers and heritage professionals.

45,000+ People will have learnt about heritage and people will be more aware of their heritage.

Better interpretation leading to a stronger feeling of pride and belonging.

Communities and landowners will be more engaged in decision making processes.

Volunteers will have learnt skills

### Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social: Lack of volunteer participation or engagement from communities or target audiences</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Publicise opportunities and activities through online channels, social media and local press. Promote activities among partners and target groups. Engage with other local projects. Regularly monitor and evaluate volunteer participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal: Permissions and consents are withdrawn for reasons including Brexit</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Liaise regularly with landowners and report on the results and benefits of project activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical: Agricultural calendar, risk on arable land and adverse weather</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>All activities will fit around the agricultural timetables on arable land. Ensure pre-planning and liaising with the landowners and contractors. Ensure contingency plan is built in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational: Lack of skills to deliver project activities</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Project activities will be led by a professional contractor who will be selected by an open tendering process to ensure the right skill for the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 3.3 Heritage River Crafts: Living on the Edge

**DELIVERY PARTNER(S):** West Suffolk Council, West Stow Country Park and Anglo-Saxon Village Trust

| SUMMARY | This project will work with volunteers to restore the riverside alder and willow woodlands at West Stow Country Park to improve habitat and biodiversity and reconnect the Anglo-Saxon Village to the river that dictated its location, provided resources and communications/connectivity to the wider region and beyond. It will enable visitors to see the river from the settlement site, which is currently isolated from its landscape due to high fencing and unmanaged woodland. Workshops in woodland management will improve the access to the river and the resources generated from these will be re-used as materials for the experimental archaeology and heritage craft workshops, as well as providing, materials for wider river conservation projects. These will include river-based crafts, such as boat building, as well as the construction of an authentic site-specific Iron Age round house using materials from the river corridor. The Iron Age round house will become a ‘working’ building and offer a base for skills workshops, as well as provide a unique education centre for future generations. By running workshops and setting up a new Country Park heritage volunteer group the project aims to enhance the visitor experience by enabling the public to directly experience the past and also understand the vital role of the River Lark in influencing the lives of all past communities. |
| LOCATION | West Stow Country Park and West Stow Anglo Saxon Village (WSASV) |
| AUDIENCE | Local primary schools including Risby and Great Barton, Students, school children and their teachers, Local amateur heritage organisations, Local landowners, Local and national researchers of all levels, Local interest groups and individuals. |
| NEED | Wet woodlands are a rare habitat type in the Brecks, and very little of it is in positive management. The skills to undertake effective management are being lost by landowners and local communities, alongside a variety of associated craft skills that rely on the products harvested from wet woodlands. There is an urgent need to manage the riparian woodland at West Stow, which is currently in poor condition and a barrier to visitors experiencing the whole country park in its original landscape context. There is a recognised need to train people in heritage skills that are at risk of being lost, and an opportunity to create a sustainable volunteer group, capable of becoming West Stow Country Park ‘Champions’, continuing a legacy of outputs in line with Suffolk County Council’s Volunteering Strategy, 2015 and the Council for British Archaeology Strategic Objectives, 2016-2019. |
Heritage and woodland management skills workshop usually have a high cost to attend, preventing under-privileged individuals in the local community from attending. Therefore there is a need to provide these types of workshops at a lower cost.

**AIMS**

To engage local communities through woodland management, experimental archaeology and heritage crafts workshops, reconnecting West Stow’s Anglo-Saxon and Iron Age settlement sites with their river valley.

To address the currently inaccessible and invisible Iron Age heritage of the riverside site and enhance West Stow Country Park to enable it to be a centre of learning excellence and enhance the visitor experience.

To enable visitors to see the river from the settlement site.

To restore the riverside alder and willow woodlands at West Stow Country Park to improve habitat and biodiversity.

**ACTIVITIES**

Access Improvement and clearing the view

‘Using local materials to build the past’ workshops

Iron Age round house reconstruction and dressing,

Creating an Anglo-Saxon ‘dug-out’ boat

Heritage river crafts workshops

Creating a new heritage volunteer group

Volunteer engagement and celebration events

**OUTPUTS**

2 workshops to build trackway.

5 weekend woodland management workshops.

3 workshops for planting Hazel over 3 years.

1 new trackway built, new access to river maintained.

10 workshops to build Iron Age round house,

4 workshops for school groups to build and dress round house.

5 workshops per year for 3 years dressing the round house.

3 free story telling sessions a year

2 coracle building workshops

1 round house built as a working building for next c.25 years

A new country park wide heritage group created

5 annual Volunteer engagement events

**OUTCOMES**

At least 50 volunteers will be directly engaged in woodland management workshops

Heritage will be better interpreted and explained

The environment will be better managed, and people will develop skills in woodland management and heritage crafts.

People will have had an enjoyable experience and learnt about heritage through direct participation.

More and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

People will learn about heritage through direct participation as well as more broadly for visitors of West Stow.

People will have volunteered time through direct participation.

The local economy will be boosted, the Iron Age round house will provide another attraction encouraging tourists and visitors to West Stow and Suffolk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social: Lack of volunteer participation or engagement from communities or target audiences.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Promote activities among target groups, and existing partner volunteer networks. Regularly monitor and evaluate volunteer participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials: Lack of quality recycled materials for some activities.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Include a contingency in the budget to supplement the materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access: River edge floods and some areas would become inaccessible.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Path will be closed for health and safety, work will be delayed and activities rescheduled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety of working with the public outside in woodland and by river.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Full risk assessment will be undertaken Volunteers will be trained appropriately.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Watery Wildlife Education

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Wildlife Trust

### SUMMARY
Norfolk and Suffolk Wildlife Trusts will work intensively with four key primary schools and surrounding communities in the Brecks, Fen Edge and Rivers project area to introduce the staff and children to the wealth of watery wildlife in their local countryside. The five-year project will enable the Trusts to work in-depth with the schools and community groups, building confidence in the outdoors and inspiring learning about the nature around them.

Wildlife workshops for group leaders and teachers will provide greater understanding and knowledge about the local wildlife sites and build confidence in self-guiding children’s groups. School /group visits will help build detailed wildlife knowledge in the young people in the community and why their local area is so special. The project will establish a legacy of continued engagement of the participant schools in local conservation, and education materials will be made available online for wider use.

A Watery Wildlife calendar, promoted to all Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers schools, will help spread the word about what can be seen when and where, helping to encourage people venture out to see the wildlife of the wet Brecks.

### LOCATION
Delivery will take place at four schools in the Scheme area (TBC), and outdoor activities will be focussed at Thomson Common, a key site for Pingo Ponds, and Knettishall Heath on the Little Ouse.

### AUDIENCE
School children in the Scheme area and wider landscape, local communities close to key wildlife sites and other interested groups and individuals.

### NEED
Over the past ten years, the Oxford Junior Dictionary has removed a plethora of words connected to the natural world including kingfisher, bluebell, acorn and conker.

Oxford’s Dictionaries reflect language as it is used, and these missing words are just one indicator of the extent to which children have become disconnected from the natural world over the last 40 years. This lack of connection is a critical concern because children need nature. They are more confident, physically and mentally healthier, more able to deal with stressful situations, and have increased self-esteem when they have regular engagement with the outdoors and nature.

The Wildlife Trust’s Report ‘Every Child Wild’, based on a 2015 YouGov poll of parents and children found that fewer than 10% of children play in natural areas and over 50% have never found frogspawn in a pond in the wild.

Schools usually have to pay for sessions with the Wildlife Trusts and this project enables a new partnership approach to work in depth and consistently over a number of years with specific schools close to key nature reserves in the BFER area. This will create a bond between the schools and the site, fostering long-term engagement for conservation and learning benefits.
**AIMS**

Inspire in-depth learning in young people from four local communities about the watery wildlife in the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers area

Build confidence of teachers and group leaders to visit local wildlife sites with young people through the delivery of a series of focused workshops

Raise awareness in the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers area of the designated wildlife sites and their importance

Build upon the partnership between Norfolk and Suffolk Wildlife Trust established during the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership

**ACTIVITIES**

Schools education programme: Delivering hands-on outdoor aquatic wildlife themed sessions at reserves and in schools

Educating the Adults: Delivering a programme of Teacher and adult focussed workshops

Spreading the word: Delivering a School Outreach programme

Linking Communities with nature on their doorstep: Walk with the Wardens programme

Local Wildlife awareness: Developing a Brecks Wildlife Calendar

**OUTPUTS**

Watery Wildlife education programme:
- 16x sessions over 4 years, 4 schools
- 16x Water themed wildlife workshops for adults
- 4x All School Activity days (4 all day sessions in the 4 project schools).
- 4x specialist guided walks / reserve open days - with wider partnership involvement & activities.
- The production of 2,000 Brecks Watery Wildlife calendars which highlight when and where to see Watery Wildlife
- 20x Assembly presentations engaging with approx. 2,000 pupils

**OUTCOMES**

4x schools engaged in core Education programme and All-School Activity Days (480 children, approx. 120 children per school)

20x Scheme area and wider Brecks Schools (2,000 Students) more aware of Brecks Natural heritage

Communities near key wildlife site more aware of their natural heritage (approx. 160 people). Children and adults will have learnt and gained a better understanding of the unique important freshwater sites and associated wildlife.

More, and a wider range of local people will have engaged with and become inspired about their local wildlife.

Both NWT and SWT will have built long-lasting relationships with the schools close to the wildlife sites

Education volunteers will have learnt new skills and given time helping to support group visits.

More teachers and group leaders will be confident, and better able to teach about local wildlife.

Both NWT and SWT will have built on-going relationships with the schools close to the wildlife sites

More people encouraged to get out and see wildlife, across the Brecks throughout the year.

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**Risks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools unwilling to engage with the project</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Initial interest has been confirmed by enough schools. If the schools do not fully engage then the offer will be widened to additional community youth groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor weather impacts</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The majority of sessions will be delivered during the spring and summer. Alternative sites will be used temporarily to be able to continue the learning process or the session will be rescheduled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project partnership breaks down.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The education teams at NWT and SWT have worked well together on multiple projects. Senior management at both Trusts will meet to form a solution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting Sustainability

**DELIVERY PARTNER:** Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Partnership (Anglian Water)

### SUMMARY

The project will deliver a series of collaboration and training workshops across the five years, engaging with the Catchment Partnerships and volunteer groups to build capacity, facilitating the creation and up-skilling of new and existing partnerships within the Brecks wider landscape and enable the development of fund-raising skills which will ensure partnership sustainability and legacy beyond the project. Each year will focus on a different theme of partnership development, with guidance and advice being provided as a resource annually.

Alongside these activities, the project will also deliver the recommendations of the BFER Geo-Spatial Mapping Strategy which will allow project partners to map their various projects and share it with partners and other audiences.

### LOCATION

Various in the scheme area

### AUDIENCE

Organisations involved in the delivery of the BFER Scheme. This includes existing partnerships, those wishing to form a new partnership, individuals with complimentary works, the wider volunteer pool within the programme area.

### NEED

Local Catchment Partnership structures exist for the main rivers within the bid area (Wissey, Little Ouse and Lark), however these are still developing into sustainable delivery vehicles and are not yet aligned with the wider landscape heritage ambitions within this scheme.

BFER is formed of interconnected, projects with multiple partners – There is a huge amount of benefit from identifying additional collaborative opportunities between these during the life of the bid. This project will support existing and developing partnerships, and organisation to address three needs:

- Aligning BFER LP ambitions with existing Catchment Partnership delivery.
- Creating collaborations between partners to enable more efficient delivery throughout the life of the bid.
- Developing and up-skilling partners and community groups to become sustainable and capable of delivering long term river conservation activities.

The results of the BFER Geo-Spatial Strategy Survey identified that there are potentially hundreds of GIS users across the organisations contributing to the BFER project.

Development work identified a need to:

- Use a wide range of data, both held by BFER organisations and externally, some that are openly-available, and others with cost/licence implications
- Communicate with the generally public via a web mapping portal
- Support organisation to use QGIS or to migrate to QGIS
- Learn and improve GIS skills, particularly at Introductory and Intermediate levels in order to fulfil project objectives and create new datasets
- Collaborate and discuss using GIS for Environmental, Landscape, Heritage and a range of other topics
AIMS

Enable and support the development and formation of new partnerships

Enhance understanding of the partnership development process through facilitated workshops and the creation of 5 “how to” guides;

Deliver the GIS mapping strategy to facilitate delivery of project objectives, promote collaboration and communication, and ensure a lasting project legacy;

Build delivery and fund-raising capacity within partnership groups and co-develop future funding bids;

Develop a legacy structure to enable delivery long after the life of the bid BFER scheme.

ACTIVITIES

Up-skill partners to make the most of opportunities to develop new and existing partnerships

Provide support to aid the progression of partnerships towards delivery

Identify additional funding opportunities for partnership ambitions

Support partnerships to create a funding bid for a ‘post-BFER’ partnership project

Create annual volunteer and partnership guidance documents (virtual)

The Delivery of the Geospatial Mapping Strategy

Source, format and prepare relevant GIS data to share with project partners

Provide online mapping support

Produce bi-annual Geospatial newsletter

Create 2 x web-maps (for public and project partners)

Prepare and run annual QGIS training and workshops (7)

Geo-spatial co-ordinator

Co-ordinate training and workshops and other ad-hoc tasks

OUTPUTS

10 training and knowledge events including:

- yr1: new partnership structures (x2 workshops),
- yr2: working in partnership (x2 workshops),
- yr3: building resilience (x2 workshops),
- yr3: building resilience (x1 workshop),
- yr4: fund raising (x2 workshops), plus application support
- yr5: legacy (x1 workshop),

5 themed Partnership development guidance documents including on-line

Strategic Review of Partnership Needs (legacy development)

At least 5 partners supported to develop and apply for external funding for ‘post-BFER’ projects

Year 1: 1-day introductory QGIS training, plus 3 x 1-day workshops

Years 2-5: 1-day QGIS training (progression or refresher), 1 x 1-day workshop

OUTCOMES

All BFER partner organisations offered the opportunity to benefit from supported development training

Increased capacity of partnerships to coordinate activities

Organisations supported in prioritising and planning activities

Enhanced understanding within partnerships of fundraising potential

Increased capacity of partnerships to deliver projects

A legacy of at least 5 new externally funded projects

The GIS Mapping strategy will

- Avoid disjointed approaches to land & heritage management;
- Enable sharing of information
- Establish common data standards
- Provide unified approach to mapping
- Create a best practice network
- Train partners and volunteers and support existing NGO’s to engage with community mapping outputs.
- Allow the general public and project partners to explore maps and data via a website

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff changes within project delivery organisation (Anglian Water)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Agreement that the project will be written into team deliverables 2020-2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor partner attendance at workshops throughout the scheme</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Events will be planned around partner needs and advertised well in advance to maximise attendance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting Placements & Youth Training

**DELIVERY PARTNER(S):** BFER Delivery team and partners including contracted training delivery

**SUMMARY**
This project will co-ordinate the placement of students with Partner organisations and seek additional opportunities throughout the BFER project delivery period. It will fund training and equipment bursaries and seek to provide match funding for existing schemes to provide heritage focussed work experience for students and opportunities for those ‘not in employment, education, or training’ (NEETs), graduates and those seeking a career change.

It will raise awareness of heritage-based careers and opportunities within the Scheme area and wider Brecks with higher education providers and employment support organisations.

A contracted Youth Training element will deliver specialist supported heritage management skills training to traditionally excluded audiences, including those with Mental Health, Substance Misuse, Special Education Needs and those Not in Education Employment or Training.

**LOCATION**
Placements will be hosted by partner organisations, with a focus on roles that are relevant to the heritage in the Scheme area. The Youth training element will be focused at West Stow Country Park.

**AUDIENCE**
Local students, Local heritage and landscape management organisations and interest groups.

**NEED**
There is a recognised skills gap for heritage focused careers in the scheme area. A significant focus has been on the Forest industry and Agriculture as well as a strong focus on the Brecks Heathland biodiversity. There has been little focus however on the water-based heritage and this has resulted in fewer training opportunities for careers that support this.

BFER has an opportunity to address this need by supporting partners to engage young people and adults seeking a career change to develop experience and skills in the area. The lack of funding to support training and real-life working experience can be addressed by working with existing work experience and training providers to create a training support and funding resource that removes risk from host organisations and in turn supports BFER scheme aims and objectives.

Young people from traditionally disengaged audiences struggle to engage in the traditional mechanisms for training and accessing careers. The youth training element will provide an alternative, supported avenue for engagement by building confidence, and delivering practical skills training.
AIMS

To support young people and adults to gain experience in heritage jobs by providing funding for skills training.

To link with and support local work experience and paid work placement/apprenticeship schemes to create heritage focussed opportunities.

To improve the available resource of people seeking careers in heritage in the Scheme area and wider Brecks by enabling partners to engage young people and adults in work experience and/or paid internships.

To raise awareness of heritage-based career opportunities in the Scheme area.

To support traditionally hard to engage audiences in a supported programme of heritage skills training.

ACTIVITIES

Development of the BFER work placement programme

Support partners to become more able to provide work experience through Health & Safety training support, Risk Assessment co-ordination and provision of PPE and other materials.

Develop new links to existing work experience and apprenticeship providers and co-ordinators to ensure maximum benefit and opportunity.

Raise awareness of water focussed heritage careers.

Engage with higher education providers to create new links between educators and employing organisations.

Youth training courses delivering a heritage management qualification.

OUTPUTS

At least 20 young people/adults provided with work experience opportunities.

On-line water heritage careers resource created with links to employing organisations.

Partner organisations better equipped and more able to continue to support work placements.

9x Youth Training courses, delivering riparian woodland management courses for participants from the following groups: Mental Health, Substance Misuse, SEND and NEET or at risk of NEET.

OUTCOMES

Improving understanding and knowledge about the heritage and its importance.

Young people and adults helped towards a career in heritage.

Young people and adults helping to care for their heritage.

Raised awareness of heritage issues and careers opportunities in the Scheme area.

A minimum of 63 participants from hard to reach groups in receipt of heritage skills training.

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failure to identify sufficient work placement opportunities</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Engage with partners identified during development to confirm opportunities. If still problematic, engage with other organisations outside the BFER partnership including Department for Work &amp; Pensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to engage with potential beneficiaries</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Engage with employment support organisations, local Higher education providers and local authority teams to attract candidates from a wide audience base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to attract additional funding support</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Engage with Local Authority teams to ensure all opportunities have been identified. Record all partners' existing staff time in supporting placements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROGRAMME 4. REVEALING THE RIVERS: CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES
Programme 4: Revealing the Rivers
Connecting with Communities

4.1 Water's Colour: Community Art
4.2 Celebrating River Heritage (Exhibition locations)
4.3 Accessible Rivers: Improving Access

4.4 Healing Waters: Breathe in The Brecks
- Healing Waters: Outdoor Swimming
- Healing Waters: Activity Hubs

4.5 Volunteer and Engagement programme
- Key Volunteering locations
- Key Engagement locations
- 4.6 3rd Party Grant Fund
- BFER Scheme Area
- The Brecks
- The Brecks 3km Buffer

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4.1 Water’s Colour: Community Art

**DELIVERY PARTNER(S):** BFER and various community Arts partners including West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village (WSASV) and the West Suffolk Arts Centre (WSAC)

**SUMMARY**
This project will celebrate the landscape and its unique heritage through engagement with diverse audiences, delivering a series of fun and enlightening community arts activities, events and workshops. Outputs will be interesting, innovative and varied, created using a wide variety of media including painting, photography, music, sound and creative writing shared on-line, at local exhibitions and adding ‘colour’ to other Scheme projects’ outputs.

Previous Schemes have demonstrated significant opportunities for raising awareness of sensitive habitats and species by engaging new audiences through provision of community arts opportunities including poetry, botanical art, and community activities. Contemplative and communal arts activities have been shown to benefit mental and physical well-being in participants through the act of creating as well as sharing and exhibiting works.

The outputs from these activities help to encourage a wider audience to view the landscape in a different way.

**LOCATION**
Throughout the Scheme area

**AUDIENCE**
This project will engage a cross section of audiences including young families, and people considered hard to engage. Some elements will focus on providing those with mental health or loneliness issues an opportunity to engage on social activities

**NEED**
Many communities in the project area have been shown to have significant levels of deprivation, and people from those communities are known to benefit from positive opportunities to engage in Art activities. Engagement with the Arts has been proven to benefit participants’ mental and physical wellbeing, and by providing arts engagement activities with specific heritage or biodiversity themes more people and a wider range of people will benefit in a sustainable manner.

One third of the UK’s Biodiversity Action Plan species are found in the Brecks and there is an opportunity to raise awareness of the rich aquatic biodiversity of the area to new audiences, through art.

Involvement with the local community in discovering the landscape, raising awareness and understanding of issues regarding the water resource and its heritage helps to ensure its preservation, and by engaging directly with the public through interpretive art the BFER scheme is broadening its appeal to a wider audience.
AIMS

To celebrate the distinctive visual landscape of the projects area through a variety of arts activities, and by doing so to engage with audiences not traditionally involved in heritage.

To connect new people to the landscape and create opportunities to learn new skills and provide activities that promote mental and physical wellbeing.

To enhance enjoyment of the Fen Edge & Rivers, by encouraging audiences to look at the landscape in new ways through outdoor activities and a variety of exhibitions.

To raise awareness of the river corridors, aquatic species and unique habitats of the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers landscape.

Through ‘sound art’ to create an immersive experience for the audience which helps them to view their environment with fresh eyes adding to their enjoyment of it.

To inspire people to look deeper into the history of their everyday environment and appreciate or value it more.

To offer absorbing and valuable skill-building opportunities to participants and volunteers.

To offer an accessible and participatory creative experience for all.

ACTIVITIES

WSASV - 21 heritage arts workshops engaging 246 participants

WSAC – 2 projects engaging community in research & creative development through interactive art installations

BFER – 8 creative writing workshops engaging 80 people in discovering the landscape through creative writing, and celebrating the landscape through reading events and online

Flexible Delivery – 20+ Arts events and workshops linking to all BFER projects and outputs to create a joined-up celebration of scheme outputs through art.

OUTPUTS

More than 350 people engaged in core Arts projects engaging people in a celebration of the BFER landscape through Art.

Celebratory events and exhibitions in the project area and neighbouring communities to showcase the Landscape heritage to new audiences

3 new on-line ‘Art’ galleries created, celebrating Photography, Creative Writing and Art.

Flexible output Arts activities and exhibitions linking projects and celebrating BFER heritage

Activities engaging at least 300 people from hard to reach audiences

OUTCOMES

People more engaged in landscape heritage

New awareness of landscape issues in local communities and those living further afield

People having improved mental wellbeing and confidence through engagement in art activities

A resource of on-line creative materials that celebrate the landscape

A legacy of new artistic interpretations of landscape and heritage, creating an improved sense of place and perspective on the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social: Lack of volunteer participation or engagement from communities or target audiences.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Publicise opportunities and activities through online channels, social media and local press. Promote activities among target groups. Engage with other local projects, community groups, and existing partner volunteer networks. Regularly monitor and evaluate volunteer participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety of working with the public outside</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Full risk assessment will be undertaken. Volunteers will be trained appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme weather conditions.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Some activities can be moved under shelter, or rescheduled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational: Staff turnover.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ensure a clear work plan is put in place which identifies tasks and progress. Ensure accurate record keeping and reporting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Celebrating River Heritage

**DELIVERY PARTNER(S):** BFER delivery team working with Ancient House Museum, Suffolk Archaeological Service and the Breckland Society

**SUMMARY**

During the period of East Anglia’s Viking contact from the 9th to 11th centuries, Thetford prospered. Straddling the Thet and Little Ouse rivers, the town became one of the largest settlements in the country, later acquiring the sobriquet ‘Ancient Capital of East Anglia’.

This project will deliver a series of exhibitions and activities that unlock the historical archives in Norfolk and Suffolk to celebrate lost stories from the history of the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers LP area.

By working in partnership with Museums in the Scheme area as well as Norfolk and Suffolk Counties’ Records Centres, Historic Environment Services and Archaeological Services, the project will engage with local interest group such as the Teenage history Club in Thetford, the Hockwold History Group and The Breckland Society, the project will explore the little-known story of how Vikings came to the Brecks using the main rivers, to bring new awareness of this and other stories to local communities.

**LOCATION**

Ancient House Museum, Thetford with links to other museums in the scheme area and beyond

**AUDIENCE**

This project will engage all key audiences, providing opportunities for exciting active engagement for all ages, including those normally considered hard to engage. Local groups include Hockwold History Group, Lakenheath Heritage Group, Brandon & District History Group and the Teenage History Group.

**NEED**

Recent heritage projects in the wider landscape have demonstrated a need for, and great interest in, the promotion of the distinctive nature of Thetford and the Brecks and reconnect communities to their heritage.

The role of the rivers in shaping the landscape over centuries has mostly been forgotten and many of the stories have been lost by local communities. This project will address the need to reconnect communities to their river heritage and help build a better understanding of, and pride in the landscape’s river heritage.
4.2

**AIMS**

To engage local communities and visitors in the rich heritage of the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape through a series of exhibitions that bring to life little known aspects of the area’s history.

To celebrate the little-known aspects of the Brecks heritage, including the story of the Vikings in the Brecks.

To unlock the vaults and make archives available to communities by supporting local museums to exhibit fragile artefacts.

To deliver a series of 5 local mobile exhibitions celebrating the Fen Edge and River corridors, working in partnership with museums in the project area.

**ACTIVITIES**

A Brecks Viking heritage exhibition at Ancient House museum, unlocking archives and presenting artefact loaned from regional and national museums.

A Brecks industrial heritage exhibition at Ancient House museum, unlocking archives and presenting artefact loaned from regional and national museums.

A programme of family and early learning activities providing free activities on Anglo-Saxon and Viking history (2) as well as River Industries (1) linked to the wider BFER education and school engagement.

A River Heritage lecture series.

Volunteer engagement through knitting and a community curator programme.

**OUTPUTS**

2x Year-long exhibitions celebrating the story of Vikings in the Brecks, and linking with the River Raiders project outcomes.

4x early learning history sessions for under 4s to engage younger children in heritage and celebrate exciting stories of local history.

3x River heritage family activity days to engage young families in heritage through fun interactive engagement opportunities.

A series of 10x evening talks on Brecks River heritage to inform and promote pride in local heritage and a better sense of place.

**OUTCOMES**

Brecks River Heritage celebrated.

Raised awareness of the role of Brecks Rivers in local history.

People more engaged in Heritage.

Schools more engaged in local heritage and with local heritage organisations.

Local volunteer groups and individuals more engaged in local heritage.

**Risks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inability to source exhibition material</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Potential contributors have been engaged during the development period, and enough variety exists in archives to ensure that there will be sufficient resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to attract audiences</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>The main exhibits will take place in a well-known local museum, and promoted through their usual channels, with the addition of BFER promotion, social media and involvement of local communities. Links to other projects will ensure this element is part of a bigger picture of heritage celebration including the arts to generate wide interest from diverse audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of volunteer and community engagement in research and design</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>This project will benefit from other BFER projects focussing on heritage stories, which will ensure cross-over of participants and interest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Accessible Rivers: Improving Access

**DELIVERY PARTNER(S):** Suffolk Rights of Way, Thetford Town Council, RSPB, Bush Adventures, Keystone Development Trust

**SUMMARY**

This project is a conglomeration of the 5 access improvement opportunities for rivers in the Scheme area.

**THE RIVER LARK:**
It will create public access improvements to the 7.5km River Lark corridor. It will deliver new circular trails and establish sustainable links to long distance trails that remove recreational pressure on the Special Protection Area (SPA).

**THE CUT-OFF CHANNEL:**
Public access improvements and new provision of 9.2 km of permissive routes

**THE RIVER BLACKBOURN:**
Connecting RAF Honnington to Local communities and provide accessible Health walks for communities with associated interpretation and leaflet.

**THE LITTLE OUSE AND THET:**
Raise awareness of the town’s unique river heritage through community focussed engagement activities; Re-connect Thetford to the river for recreation; Promote water-based activities and deliver have-a-go sessions for the community

**THE LITTLE OUSE AT LAKENHEATH:**
Improve access for visitors to Lakenheath Fen for visitors with disability and limited mobility by making tracks, ramps, hides and viewpoints accessible, and upgrading waymarking and signage across the site

**LOCATION**

Access projects will focus on making new connections and accessible circular trails throughout the scheme area in both Norfolk and Suffolk. Routes will link communities, creating gateways to larger settlements outside the scheme area and linking to national long-distance paths.

**AUDIENCE**

Local communities, Health Walks participants, visitors to local area generated through promotion.

The Little Ouse heritage trail will go through three of the most deprived neighbourhoods in East Anglia, creating a gateway to engagement in heritage and outdoor recreation.

Engagement will be supported by local GP referrals, the Keystone Development trust who currently work with local Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, and Bush Adventures CIC who work with youngsters at risk of social exclusion.
NEED

RIVER LARK (SUFFOLK):
This project represents an opportunity to work in partnership with landowners to restore riverside access and for Hengrave Parish to create new access opportunities where no current rights of way exist.

These are also significant missing links in connecting the River Lark corridor to Bury St Edmunds, a significant ‘gateway’ site.

THE CUT-OFF CHANNEL (SUFFOLK/NORFOLK):
This is an under used access resource and there is currently no formal access at Lakenheath or south of the village of Eriswell to Mildenhall. This access spine and its connecting routes will connect the communities and maximise the S106 (development infrastructure levy) funding available for a new bridge to connect Lakenheath community with access routes to the west.

THE RIVER BLACKBOURN (SUFFOLK):
There is currently no promotion of access along the section of the River Blackbourn. Communities know little about the history of the river valleys and its biodiversity and historical significance and this project would enable communities to connect to the landscape and heritage.

Active promotion through walks leaflets, interpretation and guided walks will provide confidence to new walkers.

THETFORD LITTLE OUSE & THET (NORFOLK):
Active promotion through walks leaflets, interpretation and guided walks will raise awareness and provide confidence to new walkers in deprived parts of the town.

There is a proven opportunity to promote river heritage, engage Thetford residents and raise awareness.

LAKENHEATH LITTLE OUSE (SUFFOLK):
Improving the access at this location would greatly improve the shorter circular route from the visitor centre to the New Fen viewpoint.

At present waymarking on the reserve is either out of date, absent or limited to temporary laminated sheets. Visit England have commented on the lack of comprehensive directional signage and this project will also install permanent way markers and finger posts to clearly mark out visitor routes.

AIMS

To connect local communities with the River Lark corridor, the Cut-Off Channel, the River Blackbourn valley, via provision of new public access, interpretation, engagement and promotion.

Releasing access pressure on neighbouring Special Protection Area (SPA).

To contribute to public health and well-being through the provision of a programme of launch events, guided walks and activities.

Re-connect Thetford to the river for recreation and education and promote water-based activities.

Deliver a new Heritage trail linking the town centre to the historic landscape and raise awareness of the town’s unique river heritage.

Reach out to new audiences.

To improve access for visitors to Lakenheath Fen for visitors with limited mobility.
ACTIVITIES

RIVER LARK:
Provide new linear route and guided circular walks, interpretation panels and walks leaflet
Walks Launch activities and health walks programme

THE CUT-OFF CHANNEL:
Provide new linear route and multi distance walks leaflets
Provide new interpretation panels
Health walks programme
Guided circular walks
Provide easy access furniture along routes
Provide access link to Brandon and Lakenheath station

RIVER BLACKBOURN:
Provide new linear route and multi distance walks leaflets
Provide new interpretation panels
Health walks programme

OUTPUTS

RIVER LARK:
3 new Interpretation panels
linear walks leaflet
3 x multi-distance circular walks
Provide two new health walks link to Suffolk Health Walks, including guided walks
Light touch restoration to old tow path as part of Icklingham and Hengrave circular walks
10 guided walks events
Bespoke waymarking and replacement of furniture

THE CUT-OFF CHANNEL:
New footbridge
Formalisation of access.
New linear walks leaflet
2 new Interpretation panels
3 x multi-distance circular walks
Provide two new health walks link to Suffolk Health Walks, including guided walks
10 guided walks events
Bespoke waymarking and replacement of furniture
Creation of Lakenheath to Brandon off road cycle access

RIVER BLACKBOURN:
Multi distance circular walk and leaflet.
Interpretation panel.
Bespoke waymarking and replacement of furniture
Multi distance trail run leaflet.
3 guided walks events
1 guided trail run

THETFORD LITTLE OUSE AND THET:
A 5-year programme of ‘River Festival days’, river activity events & workshops
Interpreting the historic Lido.
New river access paths and trails
A celebration of the town’s heritage as the Brecks’ only Spa town.
Volunteer engagement and training

LAKENHEATH FEN LITTLE OUSE:
Improve path surface
Create a stone ramp
Create a new Fen ramp
Install new waymarking
Launch event for limited mobility users with guided tours

THETFORD LITTLE OUSE:
A 5-year programme of ‘River Festival days’, river activity events & workshops
Interpreting the historic Lido.
New river access paths and trails
A celebration of the town’s heritage as the Brecks’ only Spa town.
Volunteer engagement and training

LAKENHEATH FEN LITTLE OUSE:
1330 meters of path improved for disabled access
25 meters of new stone track at Joist Fen and 18 meters of stone surfaced ramp
Construct a 2-meter-high sloping ramp to improve access to the river footpath.
Put in 19 signs or posts to clear mark our visitor routes across Lakenheath Fen
Launch event for limited mobility users with guided tours
OUTCOMES

RIVER LARK:
Raise awareness of access opportunities, local heritage and biodiversity of river valley.
Local people involved in increasing access.
Increasing access and confidence to new users.
Improvements to 7.5 km of linear river path

THE CUT-OFF CHANNEL:
Provide off-road access to vast rights of way network to the north west (over 15km off circular off road links)
Additional access provision to 9.2km of footpaths.
Providing a green access corridor.
Improved access to local network.
New audiences engaged / enabled to access local walks and cycle routes.
Promotion through rail provider (Abellio).

RIVER BLACKBOURN:
Raise awareness of local heritage and biodiversity of river valley.
Improve access to local network.

Local people involved in increasing access.
New audiences engaged
MOD personnel working alongside local community in increasing access.
New audiences supported and encouraged to access local trail runs and landscape.

THETFORD LITTLE OUSE AND THET:
The establishment of a large-scale annual River Festival in Thetford
Establishment of a river activity venue
A 20% reduction in the antisocial behaviour reports along the riverside.
Creation of new links (physical and social/community) between deprived areas of Thetford and the town centre
New links established with local GPs

LAKENHEATH FEN LITTLE OUSE:
Better access to Mere Hide and Joist Fen viewpoint for less able visitors or families with children in buggies

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landowner consent withdrawn</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Maintain good relationship and communications. Annual review with landowner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor take up of volunteering opportunities</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ensuring good promotion of volunteer opportunities. Continued communication with parish councils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash funding withdrawn by charities</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Look at other funding opportunities through S106 for surrounding area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed release of S106 funding delaying the Lakenheath bridge construction</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>The legal required timeline is still within the overall scheme delivery period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor engagement with MOD personnel</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Hold regular update meetings to continue good relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in elected Politicians may change support for project</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>As part of councillor inductions in May they will be briefed on positive impact of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning may be denied</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>In-principle consent in place. We have a second site available if this site is rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match funding not achieved</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Match funding applications for additional activities to be submitted early in the delivery period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation not achieved</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>A pilot river has taken place during the development period showing that there is considerable interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4

Healing Waters: Breathe in the Brecks

**DELIVERY PARTNER(S):** BFER Team / Imogen Radford (Outdoor Swimming Society Volunteer) / West Stow Country Park

**SUMMARY**
This project will connect communities to the Landscape through a programme of community health focussed activity. It will engage with a wide range of audiences, but elements will focus on, supporting those with mental and physical health issues, and those who are socially isolated or excluded through illness or addiction. Activities will include the creation, conservation and restoration of wetland, riparian woodland, and wild space as well as more traditional accessible outdoor activities.

It will seek to push at increasingly opening doors at NHS trusts and other health care providers to create new links and partnership to benefit communities. It will link with GPs, Health support groups and County initiatives including Active Norfolk and Active Suffolk. It will provide the basis for the BFER scheme’s ‘Health Benefits’ monitoring and evaluation aspirations by providing an evidence base for demonstrating the benefits of outdoor activities.

This project will also engage people with outdoor swimming in the Brecks through a series of swimming events, training of volunteer Open Water Swimming lifeguards and the formalisation of wild-swim locations. It will engage with a variety of audiences to reconnect people to the joy of swimming outdoors, enabling them to enjoy the water safely and to mitigate risks.

**LOCATION**
Activities will take place all over the Scheme area, including the BFER Delivery Hubs, focussing on making events and activities accessible and linking participants to the landscape and heritage.

Possible venues for swimming include traditional locations such as Thetford lido (river pool), Barnham Cross Common, St Helens, Knettishall, Lynford, Hockwold common, Brandon staunch, subject to agreement.

**AUDIENCE**
This project is aimed at all ages and will seek to engage with those who do not normally recreate in the countryside, providing safe opportunities to learn and take part in a fast-developing active pastime, including: Local community, Schools/colleges, Volunteers, Special interest groups, Disadvantaged groups.
There is now a pressing need for programmes and projects that will influence communities to make healthier choices around food and drink consumption, physical activity, engagement with natural places, and engagements with others.

It has also been shown that greener environments are reducing social inequality and having particularly positive impacts on mental well-being, that physical labour is important for health and longevity, and that those more connected to nature have greater the life satisfaction.

Studies have shown how choices on behaviours, consumption and mental states directly affect health and well-being over many decades, demonstrating the value of early interventions on children whose cognitive outcomes are improved when regularly exposed to activity in natural places (playgrounds, gardens, woodlands, nature reserves).

Although outdoor swimming is now rising in popularity, it has for decades been outlawed and discouraged, resulting in generations losing knowledge and ability to participate. Meanwhile, young people have carried on the tradition of flocking to local swimming spots in the rivers in the summer. They are key to the heritage and to the future of this activity and involving them in training and passing on safety advice to others is likely to be the most effective way to get messages across to other young people.

There is an acknowledged need for people to be supported to swim outdoors and enjoy watery recreation, in order to realise the benefits for physical and mental health of outdoor swimming, including helping to tackle issues of obesity and lack of fitness. Some of the benefits are only now beginning to be understood, publicised and studied.

In the Scheme area there is a need for more swim places to be formally recognised and created. This is because of the growing numbers of people and expanded provision of housing in Thetford and other places in Breckland; because there are too few recognised, known or suitable places that are accessible hence high demand at the few that are currently accessible; and because many people are not participating in outdoor swimming and other healthy watery activities that might otherwise benefit, because of fears, attitudes, access problems, need for information and guidance.
Aims
To provide opportunities for communities to reconnect to the landscape and heritage through a programme of healthy outdoor activities.
To engage people in healthy outdoor activities, including learning to enjoy the waters safely and with care for the environment; and in mapping, recognising, establishing and publicising suitable places to swim or for other recreational uses of the rivers.

Activities
Breathe in the Brecks Activities include:
The Digital Biathlon - an event for all the family geared to discovering and photographing local habitats over a two-mile course.
Themed walks through the Brecks and particularly those areas newly unlocked by BFER access routes.
A programme of 4 seasonal walks a year, (min) 20 people per walk, inspiring a healthy mind and body by the waters’ edge, including: mum and toddler walk, mental health walks, dementia groups, wheelchair accessible.
Production of Walks leaflets
Holistic approaches to healing - ancient, traditional and modern approaches to healing and wellbeing events held.
Outdoor swimming delivery will include:
Engagement and consultation activities - Workshop bringing together local landowners and managers, conservation, business, representatives of river users to discuss access, safety environmental and other concerns, and practicalities, with input from landowner and safety organisation body VSCG/Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group.
Consult and involve these stakeholders from the start, in selecting and agreeing the places to be used for watery events and training and the areas to be surveyed. Where appropriate do joint risk assessment in advance of activities. Ongoing discussions throughout the project.
Plan and prepare - Risk assess potentially appropriate places for training/events, including looking at related practicalities such as parking. The locations will be suitable for age of group and swimming ability, and where possible will have a sloping entry and shallow and deeper water, and they will be natural waterways – such as rivers and lakes - with risks that can be assessed and discussed as part of the swim training.

Carry out bathing water quality testing (involving volunteers/students to collect samples).
Recruit volunteers to help run the swim training and swim event.
Training - Open Water Lifeguard Qualification training for children and young people.
Training sessions to introduce adults, young people and families to outdoor swimming.
A small-scale swim event, to introduce local people to participating in competitive open water swimming, preceded by an open water coaching session, targeted at those who have not previously participated in the sport.
Training volunteers who will be surveying the rivers for swimming in risk assessment and safety by the water.
Training on how to map using QGIS (delivered through the Binary Flows Project).
Form a small team of volunteers to carry out the river surveying and mapping activities.
Mapping - Surveying the rivers and a lake for places for swimming and other recreation:
Carry out an assessment/survey of rivers in order to find suitable beaches or places for swimming.
Mapping the findings of the survey, to put together a digital map using QGIS, including:
detailed findings from assessment/survey
historic information from Tales from the River and other projects
old maps
current OS maps
other relevant information, for example relating to conservation.
Collate and assess findings - Consider and discuss the findings from the survey and mapping.
Consider places suitable to recognise and publicise on OSS wild swim map/Brecks swim map/swim walks/other suitable platforms

Consider places to establish as swimming places, including need for signage, infrastructure, or facilities there or nearby

Design and produce signage and interpretation -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 outdoor activity events over 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= 1500 attending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 (at least) volunteers engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20x Seasonal Walks per annum at West Stow County = 300 attending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x workshop for local landowners and managers etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8x swim intro training events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x small-scale swim event involving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathing water quality testing at the location for each river/lake event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x 3-day open water lifeguarding qualification training for 12 young adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 x life-saving training programmes for young people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A more active and healthy community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased footfall and better-informed visitors to BFER Delivery hubs including Oxborough Hall and West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People more aware of outdoor swimming benefits &amp; opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to suitable swim and recreation places will have been widened, enabling participation in affordable, healthy, fun exercise locally for young people, families and adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People more able to risk assess outdoor swimming &amp; undertake the activity safely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A diverse group of adults and young people will have learnt new skills and engaged with the rivers of the Brecks in a way that is new to many of them and that is safe and that respects the environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produce signage to place at key swim locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put in place infrastructure or facilities if appropriate, or signpost to nearby facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce educational materials, leaflets, display materials, website and social media material,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate and publicise the project by participating in Thetford River Day and other events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Thetford River Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of signage with heritage information (from the Tales from the River project) and safety advice at up to four sites, publicise suitable places for watery recreation – all with appropriate consents from landowners or others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x safety near water and recognising swim places training for volunteers .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a map of rivers showing historic, current and potential swim places with a detailed assessment of each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor swimming in the Brecks guidance will be produced using resources developed by this and other projects, especially Tales from the River, to promote a message of safe and environmentally friendly swimming and recreation.</td>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young adults and young people will have learnt risk assessment, life-saving and lifeguarding skills that they can use to help and teach others and to spread understanding of safe and environmentally friendly use of the rivers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There will be improved understanding, skills and confidence of local people, and enhanced involvement of community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowners more aware of outdoor swimming and safety obligations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowners and others with a stake in the rivers will have engaged with the project to generate shared positive outcomes combining access with safe and responsible recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 3 new swim places established.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unable to recruit target number of volunteers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>The project has a strong engagement programme within the community leading to high recruitment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety for swimming training and events</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Risk assessment in advance; select suitable locations for specific activities. Participation only for those booked in advance. Assess participants during recruitment process, including a requirement to complete a medical questionnaire about relevant pre-existing conditions. Brief them on risks. Assess participants at start of activity. Use sufficient numbers of experienced and suitably qualified trainers and fully brief volunteers and supporters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough people wanting to participate in training and events</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Targeted and wide publicity and use of local networks, such as those listed above in relation to volunteers, plus local community groups and networks. Emphasise the benefits and skills resulting from attending training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowner concerns or reluctance to be involved</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Involve them from the start, discuss concerns, consult and allay fears. The workshop at the beginning of the project will be done jointly with a well-established organisation of landowners and safety organisations (VSCG).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental concerns about safety for young people in outdoor swim activities</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Allay concerns by explaining that there are qualified lifeguards and trainers and trained volunteers, risk assessment, first aid etc. present for those below a certain age (age tbc)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volunteer and Engagement programme

DELIVERY PARTNER(S): BFER Delivery team supported by contracted delivery providers

SUMMARY
This project will enable engagement across the BFER scheme. It will link all project activity by developing a Volunteer Management Programme and Delivery Hubs with associated activity programmes that will enable participants to engage in all of the main BFER themes.

There will be three new Learning and Engagement hubs developed at key heritage locations to assist in the delivery of the project and provide opportunities for new and hard to engage audiences to take part in supported family activities focusing on BFER heritage.

It will also deliver the Scheme’s Volunteer Management Programme, that will manage all aspects of the BFER volunteer experience including recruitment, training, Health and Safety, and transportation. It will also include a promotion and communications programme with annual scheme-wide celebration events to foster a positive experience and create a legacy of well trained, experienced and motivated volunteer pool for the Scheme area.

LOCATION
Activities will focus on West Stow, Thetford, Lakenheath or Oxborough Hall. The volunteer engagement and promotion activities will be managed on-line from the Scheme Office in Thetford.

AUDIENCE
Potential volunteers and participants for engagement will be sought from:
- Local community
- Special interest groups
- Schools/colleges
- Disadvantaged groups
- Volunteers

NEED
A key element of the BFER aims and objectives is to engage with the community on a landscape level, enabling them to experience heritage first hand.

Well-equipped Delivery Hubs will reduce the need for public travel and enable more local people, and those from traditionally disconnected audiences to engage with the project.

Because the project requires a large number of volunteers to be recruited and trained, the provision of a volunteer hub is crucial and will allow the process to be centrally managed and maintained.

The scheme and Volunteering opportunities will need to be well co-ordinated and managed, and volunteer recruitment will need to be systematic, with appropriate consideration of needs and abilities to ensure a positive outcome for the volunteers and partners alike.

The scale of engagement will also require effective data management as well as the creation of suitable mechanisms for keeping volunteers informed of opportunities for participation and training, managing transportation needs.

It will also be important to properly celebrate the input of volunteers to ensure continued engagement and retention of those volunteers by scheme partners post BFER delivery.
AIMS

To develop three geographically diverse Delivery Hubs, with a variety of satellite locations.

To Provide support to the delivery projects across the Scheme.

Develop and deliver a series of activities that encourage experience and learning of topics identified within each programme theme.

Attract a diverse audience

Signpost further opportunities for involvement

Create a legacy of improved engagement

Develop a volunteer base

Manage volunteering opportunities, recruitment and retention of volunteers, training and transport

Manage Volunteer mailing lists and communications.

ACTIVITIES

Recruitment of delivery partner

Establishing delivery hubs to act as centres engagement

Promotion of Activity Hub events and engagement opportunities.

Delivery of 140 events to engage diverse audiences

Co-ordination of volunteer programme activities

• Opportunities

• Recruiting process

• Induction and training programme

• Evaluation and monitoring programme

• Support and retention.

• Organise 5 annual Scheme-wide celebration events

Delivery of engagement/volunteer communications strategy

OUTPUTS

Promotion of BFER events and activities

Communications Strategy

Delivery of BFER Engagement programme across the scheme and through 3 key Delivery Hubs including 140 events/activities

Creation of on-line Volunteer and engagement resource, bookings management systems

Recruiting 80 volunteers to assist with the Activity Hub programmes

Recruiting 60 volunteers to assist with Healing Waters

Signposting volunteers to opportunities for participation

5 Volunteer celebration events.

Communications outputs (Blogs/Vlog/Newsletters)

Managing transportation for volunteers and participants as required

OUTCOMES

More people from more diverse audiences will be aware of Brecks heritage, and will have engage in heritage related activities or volunteering.

More people will have been enabled to volunteer for the project and are properly motivated, trained, informed and managed.

Those not normally able to get to landscape heritage events, able to engage.

Project news and outcomes can be displayed

A legacy of local community events can continue to be developed and delivered.

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough people volunteer</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>The project has a strong engagement programme within the community leading to high recruitment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The volunteer process is mis-managed</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Tried and tested codes of volunteer management have already been prepared and will be strictly monitored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated Hub sites become unavailable.</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Project development process has identified a range of suitable alternative sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to recruit target number of volunteers</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>The project has a strong engagement programme within the community leading to high recruitment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3rd Party Grant fund

DELIVERY PARTNER(S): Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership

SUMMARY

This project will provide opportunities for communities and local organisations to apply for funding to enhance, restore or celebrate heritage in the project area, supporting heritage, building capacity and sustainability.

The BFER 3rd Party Grant Fund will offer grants of between £500 and £2,500 for projects that will conserve, enhance, celebrate and increase understanding of the historic landscape of the scheme area.

It will enable small projects to gain funding, developing confidence and expertise in local heritage and community organisations, and enable BFER outputs to have some degree of flexibility that ensures any new opportunities for high quality outputs and outcomes can be supported during the 5-year delivery period.

Project criteria will include a 25% match funding requirement to ensure value and commitment from the applicants.

LOCATION

Grant applications will be invited from all groups and organisations for activities that are delivered in, or significantly impact heritage in the BFER scheme area. Guidance will be provided for applicants that sets out the specific requirements.

AUDIENCE

The fund will be open to all partners, community groups, schools and interest groups in the Scheme area.

NEED

Previous LPs have proven the need to have a flexible resource within the scheme to maximise opportunities to add value and deliver outputs and outcomes that may not have been apparent during development.

Most LPs report low cost projects achieving high value result through community led, small grant aided delivery projects.

Many small, heritage focused groups report a lack of confidence and knowledge that is a barrier to achieving external funding. This project will encourage and support applications from small and new groups to create a legacy of more sustainable funding for those groups.
AIMS
To ensure flexible delivery and outputs not identified during scheme development by providing funding for small community led projects.
To further the aims and objectives of the BFER LP by delivering projects that benefit heritage, people or communities.
To build funding application experience and confidence in community groups leading to future applications from other sources.

ACTIVITIES
Set up BFER Board grant awarding subcommittee
Review and confirm grant application guidelines and application pro formas
Promote grant scheme
Manage 4x funding windows for applications
Support applicants, and application process
Support delivery of up to 18 3rd Party Grants

OUTPUTS
BFER Grants Awarding panel established
Up to 18 grants awarded
Up to 18 outputs delivered that meet BFER and NLHF aims and priorities for either Heritage, People or Communities (or all three).

OUTCOMES
Conservation and enhancement of key heritage features of the Scheme Area
Improved understanding of, and engagement with the local heritage and conservation
Communities more aware of and more engaged in heritage
Local community groups and interest groups engaged in decision making about their heritage and landscape
Applicants more confident at accessing external funding and more able to undertake additional funding applications.

Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Impact</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of take-up of grant funds</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>MED</td>
<td>The BFER grant will be publicised on all partner web sites and through local media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient diversity of project applications</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Promote opportunities for funding directly to potential applications/organisations/interest groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects not completed by end of delivery period</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Project timing will be assessed as part of the awarding process. Plan grant awards to take place during yrs 1-4, with completion planned for mid-year 5. Support and monitor grantees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of match funding achieved.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Awarding committee to ensure a wide spread of projects are funded with emphasis on those that bring adequate match funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Towards extending heritage excellence, collaboration & inclusive civil society engagement in The Brecks’ Big Society Funding CIC.

Audience development report: Claritie CIC (2018)
Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks: Landscape Character Assessment, Sheils Flynn (2013)
http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/what-is-bng-2/
Brecks’ special qualities: An analysis of identity and sense of place, Sheils Flynn (2016)
http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/what-is-bng-2/
Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment, (2008) Suffolk County Council
www.suffolklandscape.org.uk
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4282581
Thetford Historic Environment Assessment, Breckland District Council (2009)
The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature, DEFRA (2011)
A nature and wellbeing act: a green paper from the wildlife trusts and the RSPB, (2014)
## APPENDIX 1: THE BFER SCHEME DEVELOPMENT BOARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk County Council</td>
<td>County Councillor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection</td>
<td>Richard Rout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk County Council</td>
<td>Head of Natural Environment</td>
<td>Tim De-Keyzer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thetford Town Council</td>
<td>Town Council Clerk</td>
<td>Tina Cunnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Suffolk Council</td>
<td>Service Manager (Operations Leisure and Culture)</td>
<td>Damien Parker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breckland District Council</td>
<td>Locality Team Leader</td>
<td>Stefan Clifford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brecks Interest groups/societies (The Breckland Society)</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>Pat Reynolds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowner representative (Euston Estate)</td>
<td>Estate Director</td>
<td>Andrew Blenkiron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Representative (IES Breckland School)</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>Leigh Foster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Partnerships (Anglia Water)</td>
<td>CaBA Project Manager</td>
<td>Martin Bowes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity Representative (Norfolk Wildlife Trust) (Suffolk Wildlife Trust) (RSPB)</td>
<td>Senior Grants Officer, Director of Conservation, Reserve Manager</td>
<td>Kate Aldridge, Ben McFarland, Dave Rogers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Conservation representative (The Norfolk Rivers Trust) (Freshwater Habitats Trust)</td>
<td>Director, Director</td>
<td>David Diggens, Dr Jeremy Biggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Agency</td>
<td>Environment Programme Manager</td>
<td>Lou Mayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural England</td>
<td>Brecks Team Leader</td>
<td>Catherine Whitehead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2: KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

The following organisations play a major role in the delivery of the BFER Scheme either as Project Delivery Partners or key influencing organisations that will support and advise on Scheme delivery.

**Suffolk County Council**
Suffolk County Council (SCC) is the administrative authority for the county of Suffolk, England. It is run by 75 elected county councillors representing 63 divisions. It is a member of the East of England Local Government Association. SCC is the host organisation for The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership. The Council provides core funding and is the signatory to the NLHF delivery grant, hosts the delivery team, providing significant management support, and back-office services including IT, HR and Finance.

**Thetford Town Council**
Thetford Town Council (TTC) provides local services, help and support for residents, local businesses, organisations and events. TTC will host the BFER LP Scheme delivery office and is a key delivery partner for access improvement and community engagement in Thetford and the surrounding area.

**West Suffolk Council**
For several years, Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council have been working together as West Suffolk. This arrangement will be formalised in early 2019. The Council contributes to BFER core funding and will provide one of the key engagement sites at West Stow Country Park and Anglo-Saxon Village.

**The Environment Agency**
The Environment Agency (EA) is a non-departmental public body, established in 1995 with responsibilities relating to the protection and enhancement of the environment in England. As part of the BFER LP it is funding significant river restoration projects on the Lark and Little Ouse through the Water Environment Improvement Grant Scheme, and supporting educational outputs.

**The Breckland Society**
The Breckland Society was set up in 2003 to encourage interest and research into the natural, built and social heritage of the East Anglian Brecks. It is a membership organisation working to help protect the area and offering a range of activities to those who wish to see its special qualities preserved and enhanced.

**Anglia Water**
Anglia Water, along the River Trust host the Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Partnership (CamEO). CamEO is a collective group of like-minded individuals and organisations, working together to improve the rivers and surrounding land of the Wissey, Little Ouse, Thet, Lark and Cam, which ultimately forms the Ely Ouse catchment.

**Norfolk and Suffolk Wildlife Trusts**
Charities working to protect and enhance county wildlife and wild places including reserves. The Trusts are working together in the BFER Partnership to deliver wildlife conservation activities and education engagement outputs with schools and adults.

**Freshwater habitats Trust**
Aims to protect freshwater life for everyone to enjoy. Its vision is that: all threatened freshwater plants and animals have recovered and developed sustainable populations. The UK has a functioning network of freshwater habitats: The Freshwater Network. It will deliver Citizen Science engagement that links all Important Freshwater Habitat conservation activities in the scheme area.
Norfolk Rivers Trust
Restoring, protecting and enhancing the water environments of Norfolk for people and wildlife. The NRT will work with partners to deliver a new joined up approach to catchment sensitive farming advice for landowners in the scheme area, and contribute to the BFER education programme.

RSPB
The RSPB is the country’s largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home and secure a healthy environment for wildlife. It will work with partners to deliver improvements to digital interpretation and disability access to a key wildlife site in the scheme area.

Natural England
Natural England is a non-departmental public body in the United Kingdom sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It helps to protect England’s nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide. It will support partners to deliver conservation outcomes through support and advice.

Norfolk and Suffolk Farm Advisory Groups (FWAGs)
The Farming & Wildlife Advisory Groups (FWAGs) help farmers by providing trusted, independent environmental advice. Working in partnership they will help deliver a joined-up approach to catchment sensitive farming advice for landowners in the scheme area.

Euston Estate
The Estate has around 6,260 acres which are farmed ‘in-hand’ by the Euston Farms. Farm management has been described as ‘traditional meets modern’ where commercial farming dovetails with conservation measures. The estate will work with partners to deliver and promote catchment sensitive farming in the scheme area.

IES Breckland School
IES Breckland is an international school, situated in the heart of Brandon and will be a key BFER influencer and partner for education outreach and learning activities delivered by BFER.

River Lark Catchment Partnership scheme
The River Lark Partnership is a group of organisations and individuals that have come together to enable a cohesive approach to the environmental challenges facing the River Lark. RLCP will be a key delivery partners for river restoration works in the river Lark.

Keystone Development Trust
Keystone is one of the biggest development trusts in the Eastern Region and one of the largest development trusts in England. Keystone delivers a diverse range of projects and services responsive to the needs of the local community. It will provide the use of a key Hub location at Riversdale House in Thetford and will be a key partner for promoting engagement opportunities.

Bush Adventures UK
BAUK provides emotional and educational development alongside adventurous outdoor activities for kids, teens and adults. They will be a key delivery partner for active river engagement events.

Breckland District Council
Breckland District is a second-tier local government authority that sits below Norfolk County Council. The council will support and advise on BFER delivery, providing non-cash contributions and identifying opportunities for accessing additional funding.

Breckland Youth Advisory Board
The Breckland Youth Advisory Board is a body of young people and professionals. The aim of the YAB is to identify issues that impact on young people and to play a strategic role in meeting these needs through the commissioning of services, lobbying on behalf of young people and influencing decision makers. The YAB will be a key BFER influencer and link to meaningful engagement with young people.
Other organisations involved in Scheme development that have expressed an interest in working with the BFER Partners to deliver projects include:

| Ancient House Museum (Norfolk Museums Service) | Lakenheath Heritage Group |
| Arka Skills Thetford | Little Ouse Catchment Partnership |
| Art Branches CIC | Mildenhall Museum |
| Big Society Funding | Mildenhall Town Council |
| Brandon Arts Centre | Ministry of Defence |
|Brandon & District Local History Group | National Trust |
| Brandon Town Council | Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service |
| Brecks Biodiversity Delivery Group | Norfolk County Council Trails Service |
| British Trust for Ornithology | Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership |
| Buglife | Norfolk Ponds Project |
| Bury Trout Club | Plantlife |
| Catch 22 | River Lark Angling Preservation Society |
| Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards | Rojoart Unbuilt Studio |
| English Heritage | Shadwell Estate |
| Forestry Commission | St Edmundsbury Borough Council |
| Green Light Trust | Suffolk Geodiverstiy Partnership |
| Historic England | Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service |
| Hockwell History Group | Unbuilt Studios Project |
| Iceni Botanical Artists | Unity in Diversity CIC |
| Jornal as noticias | |
APPENDIX 3: TIMELINE: LAND USE HISTORY

EARLY SETTLERS

The rich history of The Brecks has been shaped by the human response to a landscape of infertile, sandy soils and a relatively dry climate which is underlain by chalk bedrock. Significantly, parts of the Upper Chalk strata are packed with flints, which ensured the area was attractive to early settlers following the last glaciations.

Mesolithic (c.8300 – 4000BC)

The Brecks is exceptionally rich in flint evidence from this period which suggests that Mesolithic communities settled along the river valleys, beside the meres and on the edge of the fen basin, for instance at Wangford. Scatters of flints and microliths on higher, drier land may relate to the sites of temporary hunting camps.

Neolithic (c.4000 – 2100BC)

The lighter soils of The Brecks were favoured by the early farming communities of the Neolithic period, but the distribution of flint artefacts suggests that settlement remained concentrated along river valleys and the fen edge. Communities lived in small farmsteads, clearing the surrounding woodland, cultivating wheat and barley and keeping pigs, goats, sheep and cattle. A sudden decline in the proportion of elm in the mixed oak-alder-elam woodland and a marked rise in grass, heather and herb pollens suggests that the landscape became more open at this time and that areas of heathland had developed.

Bronze Age (c.2100 – 700BC)

Woodland clearance continued as more land was cultivated and grazed by stock. Riverside sites continued to be favoured for settlement, but the land was less intensively used than in other more fertile parts of the country, where Bronze Age settlement was associated with land division. Items of metal, copper and bronze indicate trade links with continental Europe and the development of new more decorated styles of pottery may suggest the emergence of a more hierarchical society.

Iron Age (c.700 BC – AD43)

The Iceni tribe were dominant in The Brecks and the surrounding regions at this time and retained administrative and some political autonomy after the Roman invasion. However, the balance of power shifted after the death of the Iceni ruler (Prasutagus) when the Romans asserted their authority. In retaliation, Prasutagus’ widow, Boudicca, led a famous revolt against the Romans – she was eventually defeated, but not before her army had overrun several newly established
Roman towns. Boudicca is still regarded an important local heroine in The Brecks.

There were major defended enclosures at Thetford. Thetford Castle is close to the crossing of the rivers Thet and Little Ouse and may have had a control function over movements and trade. Excavations at nearby Gallows Hill suggest that this site was a tribal ceremonial centre (rather than a farming site) perhaps indicating that such defended sites were not only used for military purposes.

Romans (AD c.43 – AD 410)

Having overthrown the Iceni, the Romans established a regional centre at Caistor St Edmund in Norfolk. They established a network of roads which may include the Peddar’s Way. Within The Brecks, local market centres at Icklingham, Throxton, Hockwold and Brettenham developed at road and river crossing points. Excavations at Icklingham have revealed a linear spread of features including a building with underfloor heating, two cemeteries (one at each end of the town), pottery kilns, a possible pagan temple and a 4th century church.

MIDDLE AGES

Anglo Saxon (AD c.410 – 1066)

Migration from north-west Europe led to the emergence of an Anglo-Saxon culture, with new rituals, styles of pottery, metal work and burial practices. Evidence for the character of Early Saxon settlement is provided by excavations at West Stow, an Early Saxon settlement on the slopes of the Lark Valley. They indicate a farming community with seven groups of buildings, each centred on a timber ‘hall’ and each likely to represent a family unit.

A number of defensive boundary ditches are likely to date from the Early Saxon period, including the Devils Dyke to the south-west of The Brecks, the Foss-ditch and the smaller Black Ditches, which are aligned across the Icknield Way near the River Lark at Cavenham Heath. The exact purpose of these defences is not known as they face different directions, but they suggest that communities were living under the threat of attack and were keen to define the edges of their territories.

A wealthy settlement which dates from this Middle Saxon period has been excavated at Brandon on the edge of the Little Ouse. Over twenty timber buildings have been excavated, including large halls a church and two burial grounds. The finds suggest an aristocratic, literate community as they include metal stylus for writing and a gold plaque depicting John the Baptist which is likely to have been part of the cover of a book. The settlement was abandoned by AD 900, perhaps because of rising water levels or perhaps as a result of Viking invasion.

During this period, a rising population and increasing mobility led to the development of a more hierarchical settlement pattern. Viking raids became frequent and Edmund, the East Anglian king was killed in one of the conflicts.

Thetford had long been an important local trading centre, but in the late Saxon period it grew and prospered, despite at least two devastating Viking raids. It was a centre for pottery production, clothmaking and leather working and had its own mint. In 1066 Thetford had 943 privileged burgesses and 13 churches and, by the early eleventh century, the town had become one of the largest and most important towns in England. The East Anglian bishopric was relocated to Thetford from North Elmham in 1075.
Medieval (1066 – 1550)

Farming communities in the medieval Brecks used an ‘infield-outfield’ system of cropping that was typical of that part of East Anglia, but quite different from the classic three field system used throughout the Midlands.

The presence of medieval watermills along The Brecks valleys suggests that grain was produced locally but maintaining soil fertility depended on careful management of sheep flocks. Sheep were grazed on the heaths during the day and then ‘folded’ on fallow arable land to manure it overnight. This system required communal work and medieval fold-courses were often defined by markers and dykes.

Overall, the settlements described at Domesday persisted and population densities in The Brecks were lower than in other parts of East Anglia, with an average of only 15 tenants per 100 acres, as opposed to over 30 in many parts of Norfolk and Suffolk.

MODERN TO POST MEDIEVAL (PRESENT DAY - 1550)

The modern pattern of land holdings in the scheme area and the wider Brecks has been defined by large-scale landscape change which dramatically altered the medieval landscape. In the 20th century these were predominantly military influences, as well as the development of post-war conifer plantations. In the 18th century the large landed estates

Landed estates

The Brecks had several landed estates from the 15th and 16th centuries, but the subsequent increase in the popularity of hunting led to a proliferation of estates in the area. By the early 17th century the open heaths near Thetford were used for hunting, including by King James I, who bought King’s House in Thetford for his use during hunting excursions. The major increase in landed estates came in the 18th century, when landscape parks and hunting became fashionable. The relatively low land prices, abundance of game and low population density of The Brecks attracted many new landowners at this time including Sylvanus Bevan at Riddlesworth and Stephen Payne Galway at West Tofts.

Shooting was an important pastime on the estates and Elveden was particularly well known. Trees were planted in vast numbers – as cover for game, but also to provide visible boundaries to the estates in a relatively open landscape. The construction of these parks obliterated the earlier medieval farming patterns and sometimes led to the demolition of nearby villages as at Lynford.

The larger landholdings had advantages over the small-scale medieval field systems in that there was scope for economies of scale and for making use of the latest innovations, particularly new crops such as turnips and extensive marling techniques. The farmers were also able to rationalise sheep farming, providing more manure for soil improvement. Overall there was an increase in ‘brecking’ – temporary cultivation of heathland at this time.

Conifer forests

Despite the extensive planting on landed estates, The Brecks remained a relatively open landscape until after World War I, when a national shortage of timber led to the 1919 Forestry Bill. By this time persistent agricultural depression had reduced the price of land and much of the ‘improved’ land had been abandoned. Extensive blocks of land were acquired by the Forestry Commission at a relatively low price, including Brecks estates such as Elveden and Downham Hall. Early planting was predominantly Scot’s Pine, but Corsican
Pine was later more widely planted. Early plans for substantial broadleaf plantings were not fully realised as it was found that species such as beech, oak, American red oak and birch did not grow easily on the infertile soils and in the relatively harsh climatic conditions of The Brecks.

Military sites

The Brecks became important for military use in World War II, when the flat topography and relative isolation of the area led to the development of ‘expansion period’ airfields at Mildenhall, Feltwell, Honington and Watton. The large scale of The Brecks and the low density of population also made the area suitable for bombing practice. The military remains a major influence in The Brecks, with a vast area of heathland used for military training. Local village communities in the area that was to become the Stanford Training Area (STANTA) were initially told they were being evacuated on a temporary basis, but the use of live ammunition has meant that it is not safe for people to live there and the area has since been subject to compulsory purchase.

The current decline in military activity on the airbases will lead to significant housing development in those areas in the future.

Industry

Whereas traditionally the areas of the dry, sandy soil of The Brecks were farmed for crops only for a short time before being allowed to revert to heath; now it is sustained by fertilizers and irrigation and a range of high value vegetable crops is produced and form a key element of many of the farm businesses in the area.

Today The Brecks is a major producer of vegetables and cereals with nearly 68% of the area cultivated in 2009. Cultivation methods are intensive, and harvesting is labour intensive.

Much of their casual cultivation and harvest work was done by travelling folk until quite recently, but farmers have become more concerned about the ability of the casual workforce to produce consistent results, while buyers have become increasingly demanding. European migrant workers have taken the place of the casual labour as they have demonstrated the appropriate skills combined with a maturity not widely available among local school leavers. They have also been able to contribute new cultural knowledge, experience and ways of thinking. Indeed, many in the migrant workforce have higher level skills that are not being utilised.

It is possible that during the delivery period for this Scheme, the impact of the UK’s decision to leave the European Union may affect this relationship and another change in cultivation practices occurs.

The impact of farming upon the Breckland economy is much greater than the 3,200 jobs in the agriculture sector. The majority of local food manufacture jobs are accounted for by the production and preservation of meat and meat products; this also impacts upon The Brecks’ higher than average local concentration of specialist and non-specialist food retailers and wholesalers.

There are also several hundred jobs which can be identified as associated with the farming industry, in such sectors as manufacture of animal feed, fertilisers, and agricultural machinery, wholesale of agricultural machinery, veterinary activities, and agricultural real estate and letting.
APPENDIX 4: SUMMARIES OF DESIGNATED SITES

Special Protection Area (SPA)
1. Breckland SPA

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
1. Breckland SAC
2. Norfolk Valley Fens SAC

National Nature Reserves
Weeting Heath 136Ha. Adjacent to the R. Little Ouse
Cavenham Heath 204Ha. Adjacent to the River Lark

COUNTY WILDLIFE SITES (CWS)

Suffolk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>area in Hectares</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rushford Heath (R. Little Ouse)</td>
<td>41.4Ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfen Carr Heath (R. Little Ouse)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Euston Park (R. Blackbourne)</td>
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<tr>
<td>River Blackbourne Meadow (R. Blackbourne)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barnham Meadow (R. Little Ouse)</td>
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<td>Bush Heath</td>
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<td>Land adjacent River Thet</td>
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<td>Land adjacent to Foulden Hall</td>
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<td>North of Waterhouse Plantation</td>
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<td>Register Covert &amp; Golt Plantation</td>
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<td>Watermill Broad (Cranwich Pits)</td>
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APPENDIX 5: REASONS FOR NOT ACHIEVING GOOD STATUS (NAGS) AND REASONS FOR DETERIORATION (RFD)

THE CAM AND ELY OUSE MANAGEMENT CATCHMENT

Reasons for not achieving good status and reasons for deterioration in this Operational Catchment

This table shows the number of reasons for not achieving good status (RNAGS) and reasons for deterioration (RFD), split by sector.

<table>
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<th>RFD</th>
<th>RNAG</th>
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</table>

THE LARK

Reasons for not achieving good status and reasons for deterioration in this Operational Catchment

This table shows the number of reasons for not achieving good status (RNAGS) and reasons for deterioration (RFD), split by sector.

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<thead>
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<th>Sector</th>
<th>RFD</th>
<th>RNAG</th>
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<td>Local and Central Government</td>
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## THE LITTLE OUSE AND THET

### Reasons for not achieving good status and reasons for deterioration in this Operational Catchment

This table shows the number of reasons for not achieving good status (RNAGS) and reasons for deterioration (RFD), split by sector.

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<th>Sector</th>
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<th>RNAG</th>
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## THE WISSEY

### Reasons for not achieving good status and reasons for deterioration in this Operational Catchment

This table shows the number of reasons for not achieving good status (RNAGS) and reasons for deterioration (RFD), split by sector.

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<td>Urban and transport</td>
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<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 6: EVALUATION

The following methods will be used to evaluate scheme progress:

BEFORE AND AFTER SURVEYS

These will capture information on local people’s uses, attitudes and knowledge of the Landscape Partnership area, and will enable the Scheme to assess whether the programme’s activities have made a difference to this. Extensive surveys of local people, visitors, businesses and schools were carried out during the development phase, and others will be conducted in the final months of the Scheme to enable before and after comparisons.

GATHERING OUTPUT DATA

The individual project providers (or the BFER team itself, where appropriate) will be responsible for capturing output data for their project. The project admin team will collate the data using a database, and produce a report using the standard ‘Output Data Form’ spreadsheet. This will allow BFER to capture (and to compare with predicted) the numbers of the outputs being achieved by the programme, including:

- reports, plans and guidance written;
- area of conservation and enhancement
- Biodiversity records submitted
- archaeological sites identified / investigated;
- archives and collections created;
- numbers of school visits, community events, festivals, leaflets, and other participation,

access and learning activities;
- numbers of volunteers, including volunteer hours and demographic information;
- training days completed

REPORTS FROM PROJECT LEADS

At the completion of each project (and at key milestones if the project is one of the longer ones), the individual project providers (or the BFER team itself, where appropriate) will produce a report. This will allow BFER to create a narrative of the programme as a whole and the individual projects within it, including stories about how the project has engaged with individuals and groups, and, crucially, the difference it has made to people, landscape and heritage

EVALUATION REPORTS

For those projects which involve people (events, school visits, performances, volunteering and so on) the Scheme will use standardised evaluation forms to gather basic demographic information, and to capture people’s experiences – what they learned, whether events were well delivered, whether they would repeat or recommend the experience and so on.

Project delivery partners will be explicitly required to record qualitative experiences and ‘Golden Quotes’ (the particular phrase or comment that speaks volumes) – as well as more formal data as required by NLHF. This feedback will be used both during the programme (to review and improve the programme) and as quantitative data at the Scheme’s completion.
HEALTH & WELLBEING

Existing, well-tested survey methodologies will be assessed for compatibility with BFER activities and deployed to evaluate the impact on mental and physical health and well-being of activities on participating members of the public. These will include assessments of mental health status and change; well-being bench-marked against national data; connectedness to nature; and mindfulness outcomes.

All data will be collected anonymously, and no data will ever be passed to a third party. Data will be kept in its original format in a secure office. Data will only be used for research purposes. In the instance of publication, data will remain anonymous.

This research will enable the Partnership and supporting organisations to assess the impact of visits to heritage sites and engagements in activities on long- and short-term health of individuals and groups, and to calculate the impacts on health costs foregone (the societal costs saved by engaging in healthy behaviours).
APPENDIX 7: HLF OUTCOMES

‘Heritage Lottery Fund’ Landscape Partnership
Scheme Outcomes:

1 Outcomes for heritage:
   
   **With our investment, heritage will be:**
   
   1a better managed
   1b in better condition
   1c identified/recorded

2 Outcomes for people:
   
   **With our investment, people will have:**
   
   2a developed skills
   2b learnt about heritage
   2c volunteered time

3 Outcomes for communities:
   
   **With our investment:**
   
   3a negative environmental impacts will be reduced
   3b more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage
   3c your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit