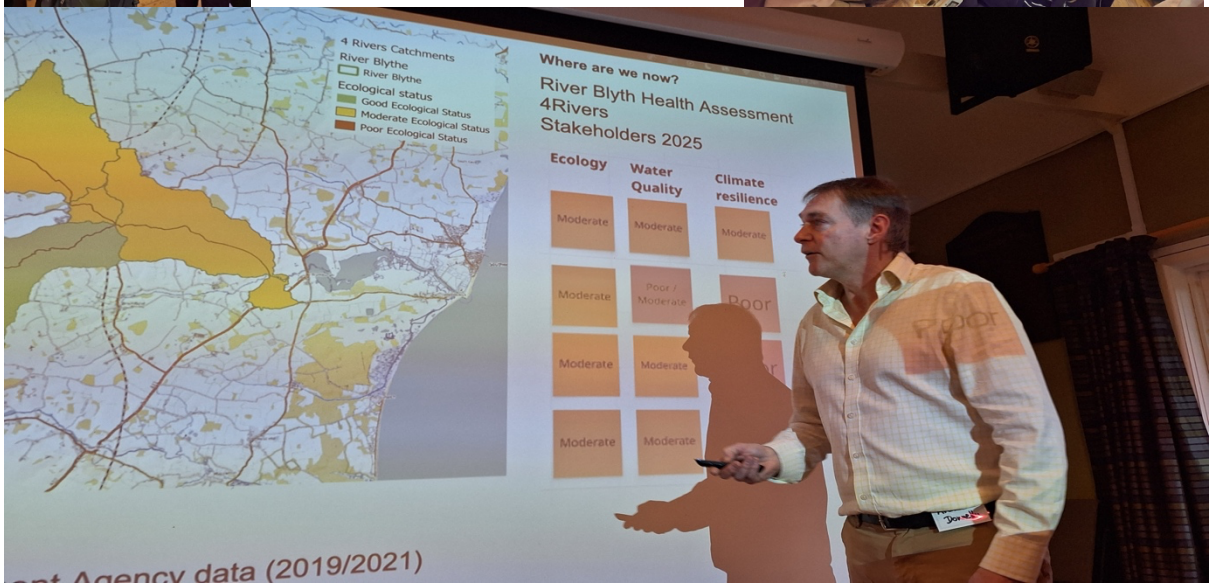
DEBEN CLIMATE CENTRE

RIVER BLYTH

FOUR RIVERS



EASTSUFFOLK COUNCIL

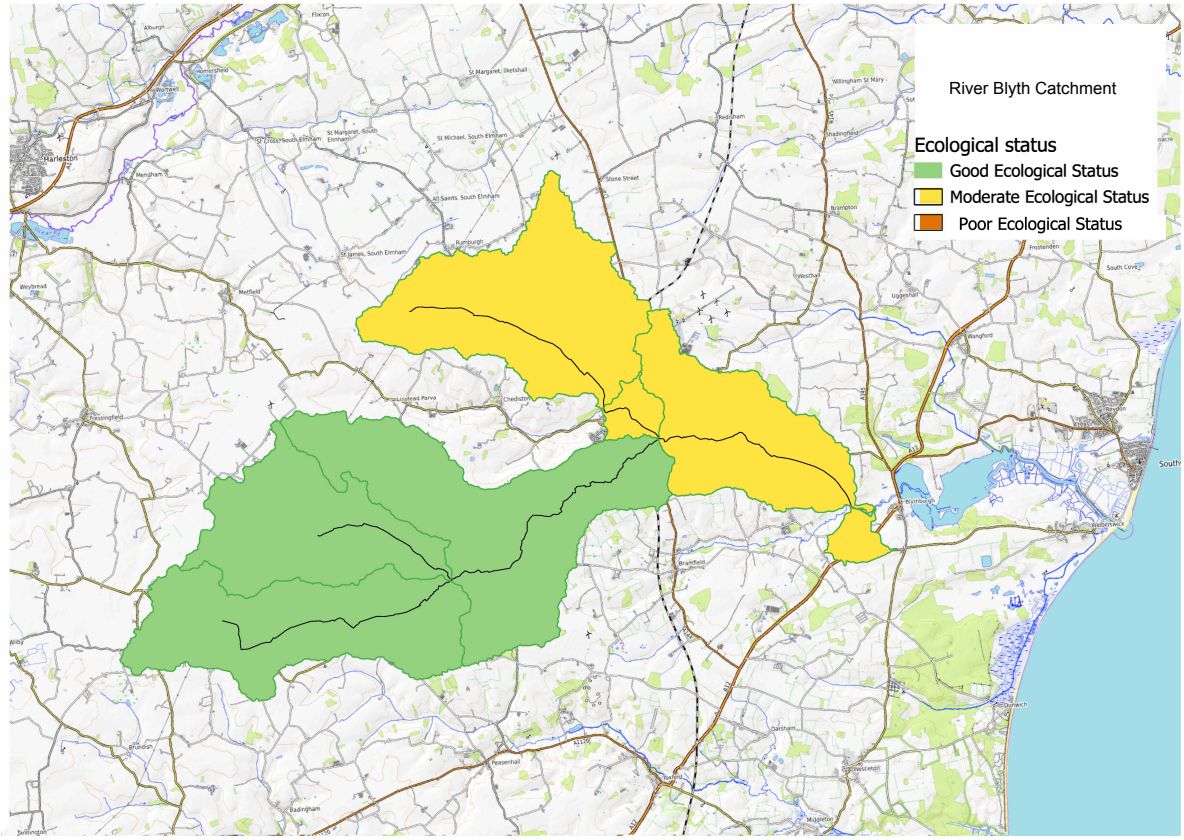
FUNDED BY EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

4 Rivers Restoration Project

River Blyth Workshop Report

A healthy river system with good water quality that supports thriving biodiversity, provides safe spaces for wildlife and people, and brings environmental prosperity through natural flood management and minimal pollution.

(vision for the Blyth created by the community)



The River Blyth Catchment and ecological status (2021) Source data: Environment Agency/DEFRA

April 2026

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What is the Four Rivers Project about?

Led by the Deben Climate Centre and funded by East Suffolk Council, it aims to accelerate the ecological restoration of the Rivers Blyth, Deben, Alde/Ore, and Waveney through community engagement. The project responds to a well-documented crisis in river health affecting water quality, biodiversity and flood/drought risk across Suffolk, mirroring nationwide challenges.

This first phase of the project gathers and grades on-the-ground, workable initiatives from stakeholders and the community in the Blyth river catchment that will improve biodiversity and water quality while developing flood-resilient communities, catalyse collaboration and scale up current citizen science activities.

Phase One – Stakeholder & Community Workshops

Stakeholders were engaged first, to provide a current situation assessment of each river's ecological status, and to identify threats, opportunities and potential initiatives for each of the four rivers. Stakeholders comprised both executives and technical staff from regulatory, advisory and political bodies such as the Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and Natural England, as well as Anglian Water and expert organisations such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk's Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (SFWAG) and the University of Suffolk.

The stakeholder results were shared with each river catchment community in four workshops – one for each of the Blyth, Deben, Alde/Ore and Waveney. Based on local on-the-ground knowledge and using MARISCO results-chain methodology and an Integrated Local Delivery (ILD) framework (*see appendix A*), each community reviewed stakeholder assessments and initiatives and then proposed their own initiatives. This formed an integrated set of initiatives for the River Blyth.

At the Blyth Community workshop were District and Parish councils, local community groups already active in the catchment such as the Wilder Wenhaston, Halesworth ASH Sustainability Hub and the Church Network as well as representation from farm clusters, landowners and stakeholders (*see appendix B for full list of attendees*).

How Healthy is the River Blyth?

Local expert from Wilder Wenhaston disputed the stakeholder assessment of 'moderate' ecological health, presenting evidence that the River Blyth is in poor condition with areas of extreme water quality degradation.

Sewage, not agriculture, is the dominant pollutant, running counter to the national picture, where agricultural run-off accounts for roughly 75% of nitrate loading. On the Blyth, the pattern is reversed – nitrate levels nearly triple downstream of Halesworth sewage treatment works (from 11mg/L to 32mg/L), and the sewage final effluent contributes around 13% of the river's total volume. E. coli counts spike dramatically at

sewage outfalls on both the main river and the Bramfield–Blythburgh tributary. The problem isn't just what goes into the sewage system – it's that the treatment infrastructure can't cope with what comes out.

The river is especially vulnerable because of its size and flow. The Blyth is small, slow and low volume, which means pollutants aren't diluted or flushed away as they would be in a larger river. This makes every input – every sewage discharge, every storm overflow – proportionally more damaging. The upper stretch from Laxfield to Heveningham was dry for most of the survey period even after a wet winter, which points to serious issues around water retention and abstraction.

Furthermore, the estuary has international significance as part of the Minsmere Walberswick SPA (Special Protection Area), is a RAMSAR site and forms part of the Suffolk Coast National Nature Reserve, pollutants carried downstream from upriver on a daily basis will be having a major impact.

The overall picture is of a river under serious pressure, primarily from sewage infrastructure that isn't fit for purpose, compounded by low flow, invasive species and declining official oversight with reduced regulation. While acknowledging this represents a more challenging baseline, participants welcomed the opportunity to address issues given strong community awareness and active groups.

(For summary of notes from Wilder Wenhaston and their survey of Non-Tidal Blyth see appendix C).

What are the Threats to the River Blyth?

Priority threats identified were water quality deterioration, flood risk and habitat degradation particularly from invasive species including Himalayan Balsam.

Community groups also highlighted threats including the stalled Blyford sluice project, pesticide use more broadly, and specific flooding pinch points at Goram Mills Lane and the B1123. There was some landowner resistance to beaver introduction due to concern about unforeseeable consequences.

There was a call to see neonics (neurotoxic insect pesticides) as a separate water quality issue to sewage sludge (either farm run-off from use on land or from sewage outfalls). However, it was suggested neonics have largely been removed from usage (on sugar beet); that other pesticides were generally being used in lower concentrations; that farmers do not have much power to decide on the amounts applied.

(*Marisco-rated threats for the Blyth are listed in appendix D*)

Resources and Opportunities

The overarching picture is one of significant untapped capacity – lots of willing organisations, diverse funding sources, and strong local networks – but a need for coordination to pull it all together effectively. Diverse and significant funding opportunities were highlighted. The message is clear: money is out there, but it's fragmented across many pots.

Funds: Anglian Water (Thriving Communities and farmer training imitative grants), Sizewell C (East Suffolk Trust), FIPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes), DEFRA Higher Tier Stewardship, the EA's Water Environment Improvement Fund, Essex and Suffolk Water's Blue Spaces Fund, Natural Environment Improvement funds, the Woodland Trust (free trees and hedges), Adnams, Lion Link, community trusts such as River Blyth Navigation Trust and local private benefactors.

Local networks:-The Blyth Valley Farm Cluster; links to schools and community groups; Wilder Wenhaston volunteer hedge planters, Blyth Woods tree nursery, and the Blyth Valley Churches network – 14 churches with land, clubs and community connections. Schools were highlighted as both a source of volunteers and an emotional driver for change. Swimming groups, walking groups, angling clubs, the Suffolk Birding Group and the Wildlife Trust all featured as potential engagement channels.

Community engagement and public awareness: ideas included using the Latitude Festival, Thorington Theatre, holiday letting companies and housing developers as routes to reach wider audiences; promoting walks with Blyth Valley farmers and using the Railway Footpath to connect people to the river. Opportunities with Latitude Festival and Adnams.

Political and institutional support: a supportive MP and councillors, East Suffolk Council rangers, Parish and Town Councils, and the East Suffolk Water Management Board.

Implementation capacity: Volunteer networks for tree planting and Himalayan Balsam removal, amenable landowners offering land access and re-wiggling opportunities, strong active community groups, school engagement and tourism potential.

(For full list see Appendix E)

Initiatives Proposed for the River Blyth

Initiatives were generated by teams of 5-6 participants. Each initiative was scoped out as a work package to analyse how it might be delivered and was then reviewed for likely impact and achievability (high, medium or low) and scored against these criteria (1 being highest). A full list is outlined in Table 1.

(*For further details of process, grading and a sample work package see appendix F).*

Grading key: Impact weighted		
Impact	Achievability	Rank
H	H	1
H	M	2
H	L	3
M	H	4
M	M	5
M	L	6
L	H	7
L	M	8
L	L	9

H=high M=medium L=low

C=community-initiated initiative
S=stakeholder-generated initiative

Table 1. Initiatives proposed for the River Blyth, ranked by impact and achievability

Team	Code	Title	Grade	Rank
Green	C1 (combined C1-4 + 6)	Campaign to resolve sewage treatment capacity + use of septic tanks	HH	1
Yellow	C1	Blythburgh to Halesworth footpath: Increased accessibility + connection + care	HH	1
Pink	C3	Online data hub accessible to community: important to have evidence and information to support decision-making	HH	1
	S1	Soil management: Essential	HM	2
Green	C5	Water meadows needed for biodiversity, flood alleviation. Nature, recreation, landscape.	HM	2
Pink	C5	Community awareness campaign about permeable/impermeable surfaces - paving stones, asphalt driveways, artificial grass: to deal with flood/drought issues. To encourage awareness of waterwise management around homes + buildings – water butts, swales, ponds	HM	2
Blue	C3	Remove Himalayan balsam: retain riverbank - stop erosion, increase biodiversity.	HL	3
Blue	C4	Water routes changing: Flood mitigation/ improved habitat	HL	3
	S8	Decanalisation of streams and ditches: could slow flow/restore flow but may lead to more flooding	HL	3

Blue	C1	Wildlife Woodland Connecting Corridors	MH	4
Blue	C5	Public awareness: To love and know our river	MH	4
Pink	C1	Reduce rubbish: from rivers/watercourses	MH	4
Pink	C2	Clearing drains/culverts on verges of rivers: to prevent flooding from road runoff	MH	4
	S2	Himalayan balsam eradication: Invasive - dominates and excludes natural vegetation. Impacts water quality, leading to erosion and reduced biodiversity (note: this is a repeat of Blue C3)	MM	5
	S5	Educating community about schemes in local area: Helps busy farmers with necessary administration - makes an interface with the community	MM	5
	S6	All together: Better public information, community engagement	MM	5
	S7	Riverside tree planting: increase biodiversity, landscape quality, shade and shelter for livestock, climate change adaptation	MM	5
Green	C7	Prevent flooding on Gorms Mill Lane (other sites possible)	MM	5
Yellow	C2	Remote Real-time monitoring: accuracy of data to identify + prioritise water quality improvements	MM	5
Pink	C4	Microplastic testing: to aim to reduce potentially harmful microplastics in the river	LH	7
	S3	Awareness - Source to Sea: Connection, community, identity, empowerment to action	LM	8

A wide range of initiatives, both physical nature-based interventions and capacity building were proposed including; rewiggling/decanalisation of tributaries back to their old courses, community and farm tree planting using free trees, coordination of Himalayan Balsam control (volunteers linking up to share information and manage it collectively), and the push for bathing water designation to persuade water company action on quality.

What are the Key Priorities for the Blyth Community?

The highest-priority actions for the Blyth — rated both high impact and highly achievable — focused on three areas: tackling sewage treatment capacity and septic tank issues, improving accessibility and connection along the Blythburgh to Halesworth footpath, and creating an online data hub for communities.

There was agreement that water quality - monitoring, testing and sharing data provides the basis to address sewage/septic contamination. This appears across multiple initiatives. In addition, the connectivity of habitats and walkways via a footpath would have multiple community and ecological benefits. The data hub would encourage stewardship and facilitate community groups to take and sustain action.

A strong second tier of priorities addressed soil management (rated essential), restoring water meadows for biodiversity and flood alleviation (eg. preventing localised flooding at sites like Gorms Mill Lane) and running a community awareness campaign around permeable surfaces — targeting paving, asphalt driveways, and artificial grass, while promoting water-wise measures such as water butts, swales, and ponds around homes.

Other important issues noted:

- Invasive species control particularly Himalayan Balsam requires immediate sustained action but is harder to deliver, as was decanalisation of streams and ditches — although one specific section of the river was suggested for rewiggling.
- Natural flood management through habitat restoration, tree planting and water course restoration offering multiple co-benefits.
- Community awareness and engagement to underpin long-term success of initiatives and sustain volunteer recruitment.
- Helping farmers navigate available schemes, improving public information, riverside tree planting for biodiversity and climate adaptation,
- Soil management improvements were viewed as essential but the constraints by farming economics and policy uncertainty were recognised
- More moderate, practical actions included creating wildlife woodland corridors, raising public awareness and love of the river, reducing rubbish from watercourses, and clearing roadside drains and culverts to prevent flooding from runoff.
- Lower-ranked but still valued actions included microplastic testing and building a source-to-sea awareness campaign to foster community connection and identity with the river.

What Factors are Critical for Success?

In the community's view successful delivery of the projects will depend on a few key factors aligning. Securing multi-year funding, navigating Environment Agency permits, and keeping landowners actively involved were all considered important. But equally a motivated volunteer base, good coordination across community teams, and steady political backing from parish to county level were highlighted.

Key points Included:

- Securing multi-year funding from identified sources (water companies, Sizewell, DEFRA schemes)
- Obtaining Environment Agency permits for river work and habitat restoration
- Building and maintaining landowner cooperation and participation
- Recruiting and retaining volunteer base through visible quick wins
- Coordinating between community teams to avoid duplication and share resources
- Maintaining political support at parish, district and county levels

Are there Barriers to Implementation?

In discussions around barriers to successful implementation of initiatives, it was acknowledged that many of the most impactful initiatives come with high upfront costs, long-term commitments or ongoing funding needs. The short-term costs of changing farm equipment for different soil management to the longer-term funding needed for sustained awareness raising campaigns work and keeping local facilitators funded were noted.

Key points included:

- Soil management change requires significant investment in equipment and systems with uncertain DEFRA funding future
- Stream re-wiggling and water course restoration face machinery costs and complex permit requirements
- Awareness campaigns need sustained follow-up and ongoing funding to achieve lasting behaviour change
- Himalayan Balsam eradication requires 5–10 year commitment with annual interventions
- Training local facilitators faces sustainability challenges without ongoing funding

Conclusions

The workshops brought together local knowledge and expert insight to create a series of practical, achievable actions for improving the river Blyth. The process brought the community together, encouraged stewardship for their catchment, and developed clear direction and priorities for accelerating the restoration of the river Blyth.

The community considers that the Blyth faces a more serious situation than official, or at least public domain assessments, suggest. Community-gathered evidence, particularly from the Wilder Wenhaston River Group's two-year survey, has established what Environment Agency monitoring has not: that sewage treatment infrastructure is the primary source of pollution in the non-tidal Blyth, that the river's ecological condition is poor, and that its small size and low flow make it exceptionally vulnerable to every discharge it receives. The estuary's international designations as a Special Protection Area and RAMSAR site make the downstream consequences of inaction all the more significant.

Against this challenging baseline, the workshops revealed a catchment with substantial capacity to respond. The breadth of organisations engaged – from farm clusters and parish councils to Anglian Water and the Environment Agency – demonstrates that the will for coordinated action exists. Funding is available across multiple sources, though fragmented. Volunteer networks are active and growing. Landowners are showing willingness to enable nature-based solutions on their land. And the community has produced a clear, graded set of initiatives that balance ambition with practicality.

Three priorities stand out. First, tackling sewage contamination at source is the single most impactful action suggested: through infrastructure investment, septic tank regulation and household behaviour change. Second, restoring habitat connectivity along the river corridor, including the proposed Blythburgh to Halesworth footpath, would deliver co-benefits for biodiversity, flood resilience and community engagement. Third, building a reliable evidence-base through continued water quality monitoring and data collection is essential to hold agencies accountable and direct resources where they will have most impact.

The barriers are real but not insurmountable. Permitting complexity, short-term funding cycles and the long-term commitment required for invasive species control all need sustained attention. What this process has shown, however, is that the Blyth's communities are willing to take action. The challenge now is to match that energy with the governance, funding and support needed to turn initiatives into lasting change.

The community's vision — a healthy river with good water quality, thriving biodiversity and safe spaces for wildlife and people — is achievable. But it requires a pace and scale of action that goes beyond project-by-project delivery toward whole-catchment coordination, sustained over years rather than funding cycles.

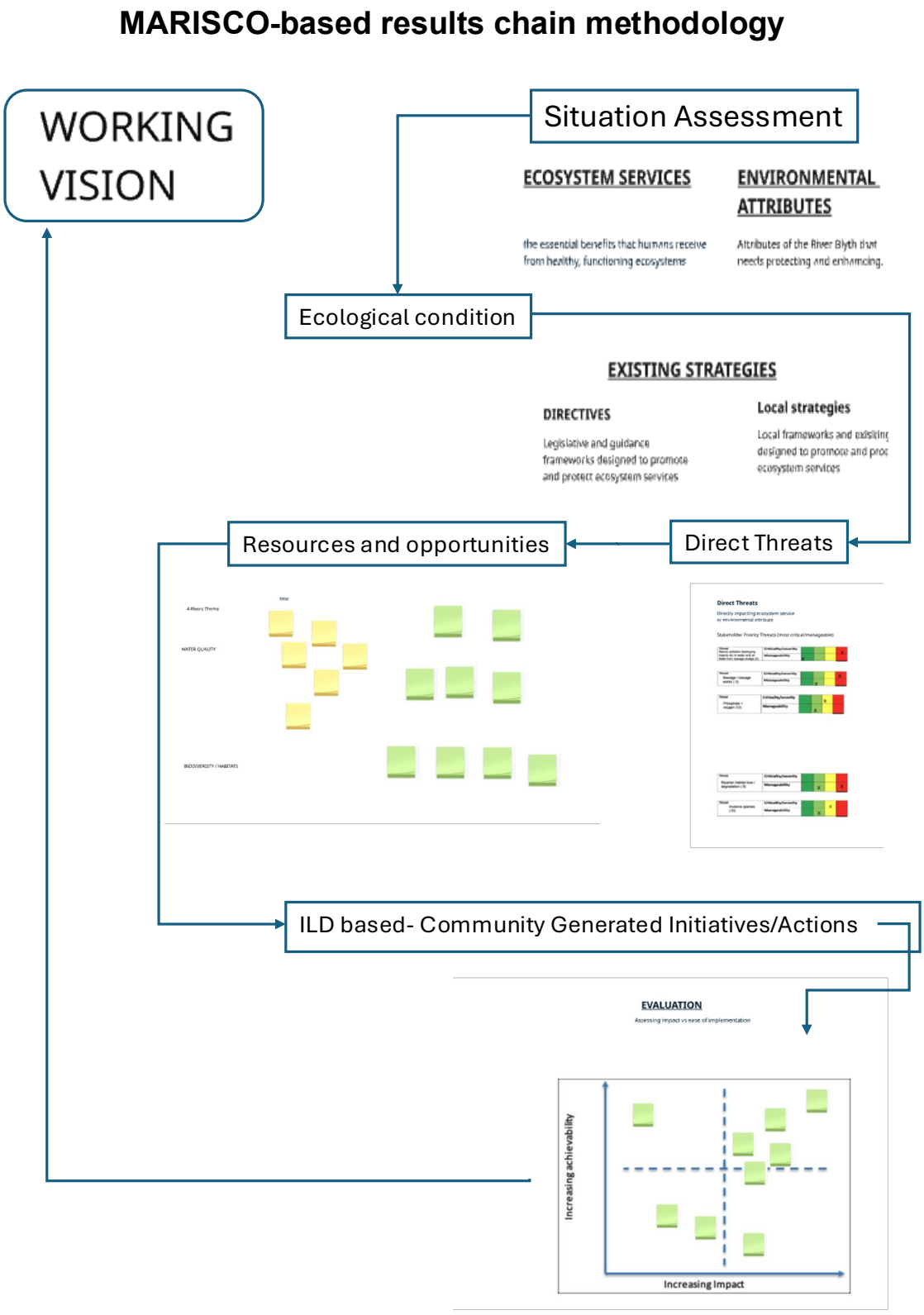
What's Next?

In consultation with both community groups and stakeholders, initiatives considered to be higher priority in terms of potential positive impact will be further scoped, costed and then worked up into practical projects. Budgets will be allocated and delivery plans drawn up with stakeholders and the community (to include people power, insurance, sourcing resources, permits and so on). Roll out of priority initiatives will follow.

Appendices:

A: Results-Chain Flow: Marisco-based methodology overview
B: Attendees by organisation
C: Speaker Synopsis & Wilder Wenhaston Report
D: Threats Assessment for the Blyth
E: Opportunities and Resources Identified
F: Initiatives Process, Grading, Assessment & Work Package Example

Appendix A: Figure 2. Results-Chain Flow: Marisco-based methodology overview



Appendix B: Table 3. List of Attendees at Stakeholder and Blyth Community Workshops

Alde and Ore Association	Aldeburgh & Leiston DC
Anglian Water	Blyth Valley Church Network
Blyth Valley Farmers	Blyth Valley Farm Cluster
Blythburgh PC	East Suffolk Council
Environment Agency	Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust
ESWAG	Forestry Commission
Halesworth ASH	Hall Farm Wenhaston
Heveningham PC	KADWAG
Kerr Farms	Laxfield PC
Lower Deben Owners Group	Natural England
Nature Network	National Farmers Union
Porters Farms	Reydon PC
River Blyth Navigation Assoc.	River Deben Association
Saxmundham Town Council	SWFAG
Southwold DC	Southwold and Reydon Society Suffolk
Biodiversity Info Service	Suffolk Climate Change Partnership
Suffolk County Council	Suffolk Naturalists Society
Suffolk Tree Wardens	Suffolk Wildlife Trust
University of Suffolk	Upper Alde Farm
Upper Deben Farm Cluster	Waveney River Trust
Wilder Wenhaston	Wilderness Reserve
Wrentham, Wangford & Westleton DC	

DC/PC = District Council/Parish Council

Appendix C: Speaker Synopses and Wilder Wenhaston Key Findings Report

State of the Blyth

- *River Fly* surveys have been conducted, giving an invertebrate score of about 5/10 - moderate in terms of the range and number of invertebrate species
- Riverbanks are overgrown with Himalayan balsam in particular, but also nettles. Balsam is problematic because, as well as virtually obliterating other plant species by spreading seeds easily, it dies down in the winter months, leaving behind bare soil which is then prone to erosion
- Duckweed is prevalent across the water surface, indicating high levels of phosphates and nitrates
- Catchment Sensitive Farming reported that nitrate levels have generally been below 50mg when testing has occurred on the Blyth

Wilder Wenhaston

- Testing the River Blyth's water quality since 2020, during Covid lockdown
- State of the river is poor
- Highlighted the role of households and their responsibility for what goes into the sewers, such as wet wipes and chemicals
- Impact of housebuilding without an improvement in infrastructure
- Noted that many sewage overflow releases were not in response to rain events
- Highlighted issue of Himalayan balsam

Findings from 2023-24 Report

- **Sewage is the dominant pollutant, not agriculture.** This is the report's most striking finding and runs counter to the national picture, where agricultural run-off accounts for roughly 75% of nitrate loading. On the Blyth, the pattern is reversed — nitrate levels nearly triple downstream of Halesworth sewage treatment works (from 11mg/L to 32mg/L), and the sewage final effluent contributes around 13% of the river's total volume. E. coli counts spike dramatically at sewage outfalls on both the main river and the Bramfield–Blythburgh tributary. The problem isn't just what goes into the sewage system — it's that the treatment infrastructure can't cope with what comes out.

- **The river is especially vulnerable because of its size and flow.** The Blyth is small, slow and low volume, which means pollutants aren't diluted or flushed the way they would be in a larger river. This makes every input — every sewage discharge, every storm overflow — proportionally more damaging. The upper stretch from Laxfield to Heveningham was dry for most of the survey period even after a wet winter, which points to serious issues around water retention and abstraction.

- **Nutrient pollution is driving eutrophication.** High phosphate and nitrate levels are fuelling algal blooms, excessive duckweed, and sewage fungus — all visible signs that the river is being choked. Anglian Water installed phosphate strippers at Halesworth in April 2024 and the initial signs are positive (duckweed has reduced), but nitrate removal is far more expensive and complex, and hasn't been addressed.

- **Biodiversity is impoverished.** Only 14 invertebrate species were found across six sites, with biotic scores well below those of a healthy river. Plant diversity is low, dominated by nutrient-loving species like nettles and Himalayan Balsam. Mallard was the only duck species recorded, and no breeding swans were observed. The picture is of a river that can sustain some life — otters and water voles were found from Heveningham downstream, kingfishers indicate fish are present — but one operating well below its potential.

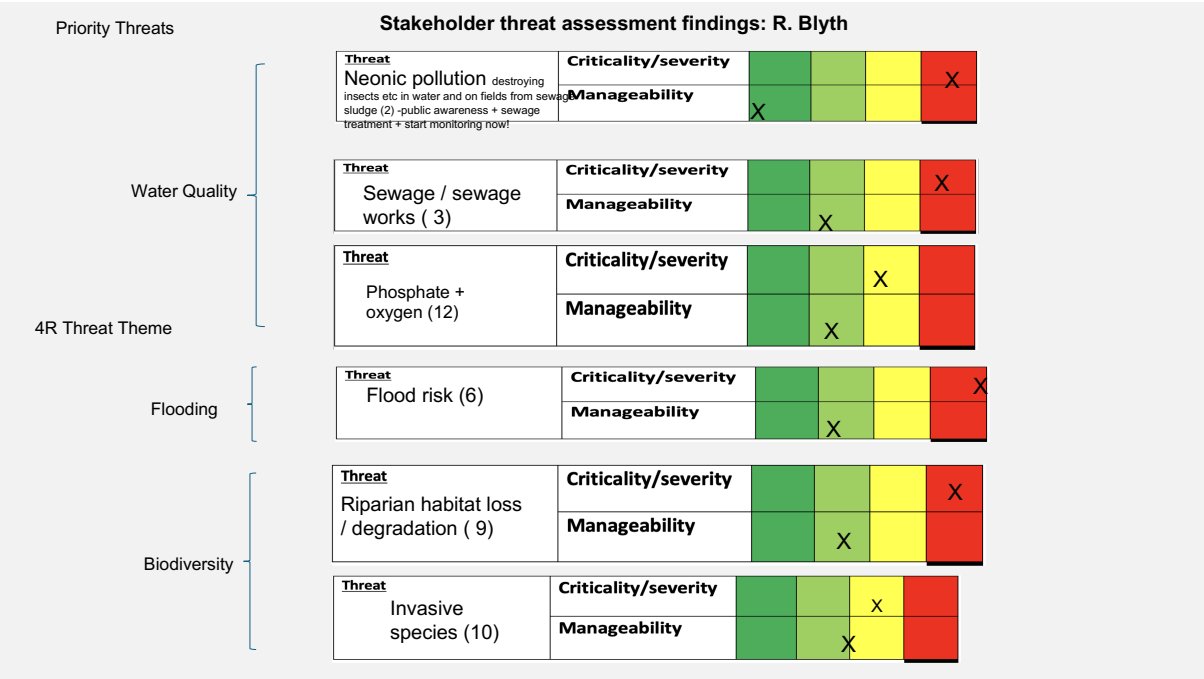
- **Himalayan Balsam is everywhere.** Present at virtually every survey site downstream of Heveningham Park, it smothers native plants in summer and leaves banks bare and erosion-prone in winter. This creates a destructive cycle: less diverse vegetation, more bank erosion, more silt in the river, worse conditions for aquatic life.

- **Combined sewage overflows are a persistent problem.** CSO spill hours on the Blyth jumped to over 273,000 in 2023. Anglian Water's target of 17% reduction by 2030 is described in the report as inadequate. A rainfall event of just 34mm in October 2024 triggered overflows lasting over 12 hours — a sign that the infrastructure lacks resilience, and that climate change and housing growth will only make this worse.

- **Forever chemicals are present.** Environment Agency data recorded fail status for mercury, PFOS and PBDEs in the Blyth — toxic persistent chemicals that bioaccumulate. This is flagged but not something the community monitoring was equipped to track in detail.

- **Official monitoring has declined.** The EA's own monitoring of the Blyth became very infrequent from 2016 onwards, which is partly what prompted the community to step in. The report makes the point that decisions are being made without adequate data.

Appendix D: Figure 3. Threats List Graded and Assessed by Stakeholders



NB Community noted Herbicides/Pesticides rather than neonics specifically were a threat.

Appendix E: Table 2. Resources and Opportunities noted by Community
- results of brainstorming activity listed by team colour

RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

BLUE	GREEN	PINK	YELLOW
Huntingfield Tree Planting - Jenny Blackmore	Divert course of tributary into old course - rewiggling	East Sizewell funding	Holton Pits Community Groups
Muntjac as food	EA's WEIF/ LWEG funding	FIPL	River Blyth Navigation Trust
Woodland Trust fund trees and hedges	Suffolk and Essex coasts and heaths Nat Landscape - potential finding pot	Anglian Water - thriving communities fund and events grant (1000/event)	Adnams - funding
Blyth Woods tree nursery	EA water environment improvement fund. River flood plan enhancement / ABHF? To undertake small scale riverside tree planting	DEFRA environment schemes	Latitude Festival - community engagement?
Wilder Wenhaston - voluntary hedge planters	DEFRA Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier	Wilder Wissett	Holiday Letting Companies
Funding locally - Sizewell funds and FIPL	Local swimming groups to get Blyth designated as a bathing river to drive water companies to clean upriver and monitor water quality (need suitable stretch of river)	Supportive MP and councillors	Thorington Theatre
Himalayan Balsam - working to identify locals to link up and manage / share info by volunteers	Previous work done by Blyth River Group -potential source of help, local residents association - Southwold Reydon Society	Lion Link	Sizewell C
Schools source of parents and emotional driver for change		Natural Enviro improvement funds	Lion Link
Public awareness - sewage		Private benefactors	Solar Farms?
RFCPL - Res Flood Coastal Erosion Floods - grants		Anglian Water - one place/farm business up to £600 or 10% training grant with link to WQ and management. For farmers where learning could help protect water quality.	Blyth Railway Footpath
Community planting using free trees		Essex and Suffolk Water. Blue Spaces Fund -access to water courses	Suffolk Birding Group
East Suffolk Water Management Board - drainage & funds			Housing Developers
Some BVC members open to walks through land			Wilderness Reserve
BVCG for farmers with links to schools and community groups			Wildlife Trust

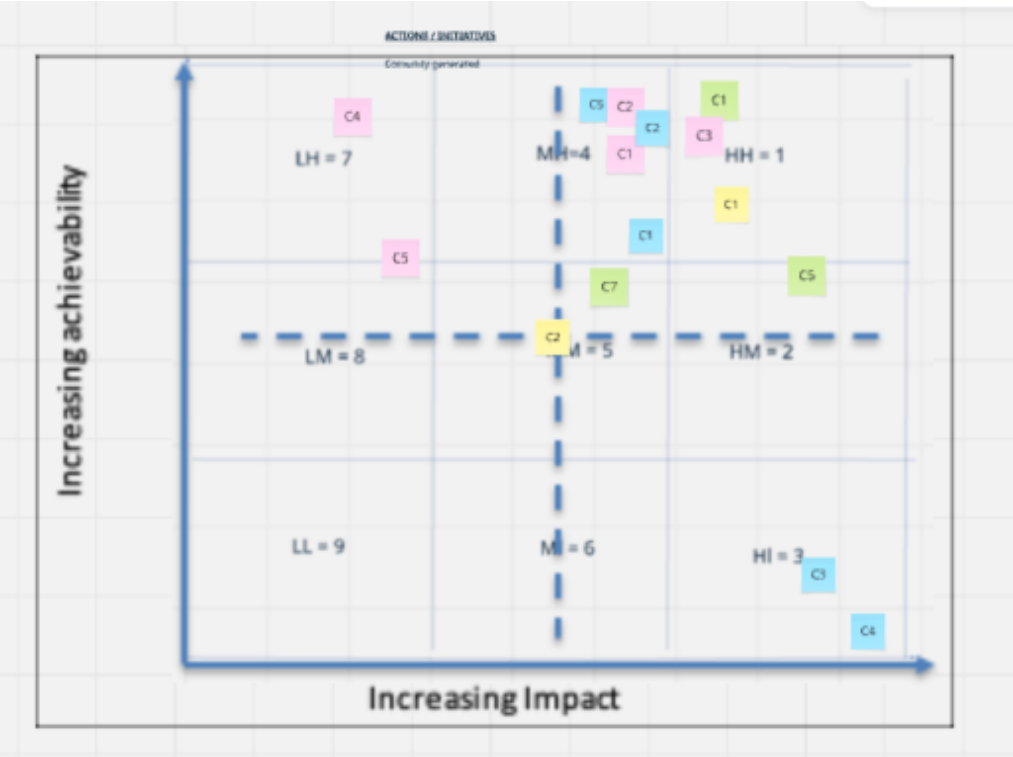
BVChurches - 14 churches in B Valley with clubs and land and community network and wild churchyards movement			Farming Community including agri contractors
Walks - promoting walks with BV farmers			Angling Clubs
			Parish Town Councils

Appendix F i: Initiatives: development and assessment process

Working in teams of 5-6 participants, each proposed initiative was scoped out as a work package to show how it might be delivered *(see example Fiv)*.

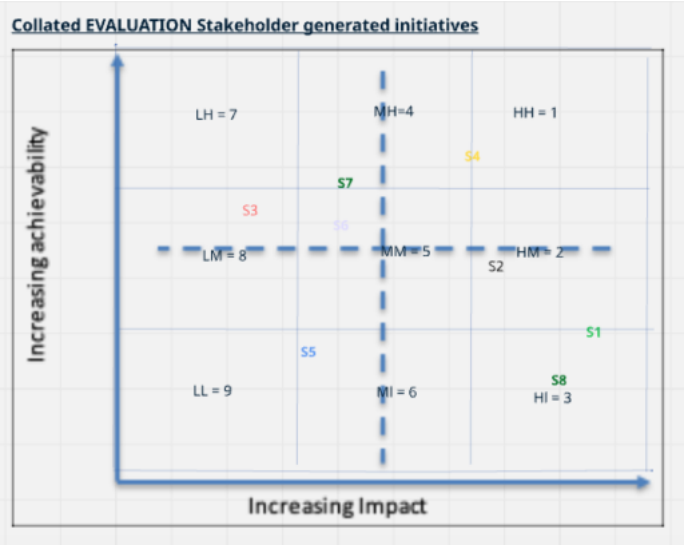
Initiatives were developed after discussion around the latest assessment of threats to the river, alongside the vision review and brainstorming of resources and opportunities available within the catchment. The list of initiatives suggested by the stakeholders was also assessed by the community teams. Each team examined how the list might be delivered by developing a topline work package for each proposed initiative. The teams then gave a qualitative assessment on each proposed initiative's potential to contribute to threat abatement and achieving their vision for the river by plotting the relative initiative positions on an impacts vs achievability matrix. Teams then brainstormed key gaps and developed alternative initiatives in the same way. In this way each initiative has both a delivery plan and an assessment of impact and ease of delivery.

Figure 5. Community-generated initiatives graded by impact/achievability



Team	Code	Project
Green	C1 (combined C1-4 + 6)	Campaign to resolve sewage treatment capacity + use of septic tanks
Blue	C2	Water Quality, Essential to healthy river
Yellow	C1	Blythburgh to Halesworth footpath: Increased accessibility + connection + care
Pink	C3	Data: Important to have evidence and information to help decision-making baselines
	S1	Soil management: Essential
Green	C5	water meadows needed for biodiversity, flood alleviation. Nature, recreation, landscape.
Pink	C5	Community awareness campaign about permeable/impermeable surfaces - paving stones, asphalt driveways, artificial grass: to deal with flood/drought issues. To encourage awareness of waterwise management around homes + buildings - waterbutts, swales, ponds
Blue	C3	Himalayan balsam: Retain riverbank - stop erosion, increase biodiversity
Blue	C4	Water routes changing: Flood mitigation/ improved habitat
	S8	Decanalisation of streams and ditches: Could slow flow/restore flow and may lead to more flooding
Blue	C1	Wildlife Woodland Connecting Corridors
Blue	C5	Public awareness: To love and know our river
Pink	C1	Reduce rubbish: from rivers/watercourses
Pink	C2	Clearing drains/culverts on verges of rivers: to prevent flooding from road runoff

Figure 6. Stakeholder-generated initiatives graded by impact/achievability



S1 Better soil management + health: reduce soil loss & retain water
S2 Balsam survey and eradication
S3 Awareness campaign: Source to the sea - travelling workshops/art/stories through each community
S4 Monitoring aquatic biodiversity above/below sewage outfalls
S5 Identify and train local facilitators to support to develop schemes, help landowners submit related funding opportunities + educate community
S6 Community engagement in individual water use + management
S7 Tree planting on farmland edges
S8 Rewiggling / decanalisation of streams/ditches

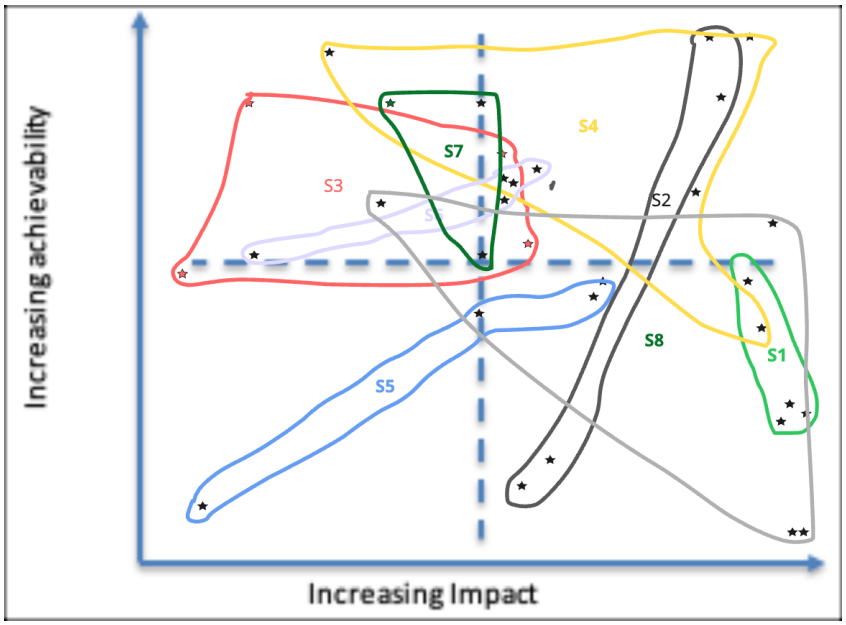
Fii: Grading Process

After the grading matrices developed they were then divided into 9 scored areas, weighted by impact, providing an initial initiative ranking i.e. the highest impact, easiest to achieve ranked highest. This allowed both stakeholder-generated initiatives and the additional community generated initiatives to be ranked and merged *(Table 1 main report body)*.

Fiii: Figure 7. Matrix Consensus Plot ("agreement-o-gram")

Stakeholder suggested initiatives were assessed by each community team generating their own matrix of impact vs achievability – a visual representation of their opinion on the initiative list. Collating these matrices into one plot enabled a facilitated discussion on where teams agreed ,and where and why they disagreed, on each imitative. Many key discussion points outlined in the main document of this report were identified. This allowed for very positive engagement between stakeholder representatives, land owners, parish councillors and community interest groups represented allowing for indepth discussion of perspectives.

Plots of community assessment of stakeholder suggested initiatives, where closeness of plots represents closer agreement of opinion, and elongated plots represents lesser agreement.



S1 Better soil management + health: reduce soil loss & retain water
S2 Balsam survey and eradication
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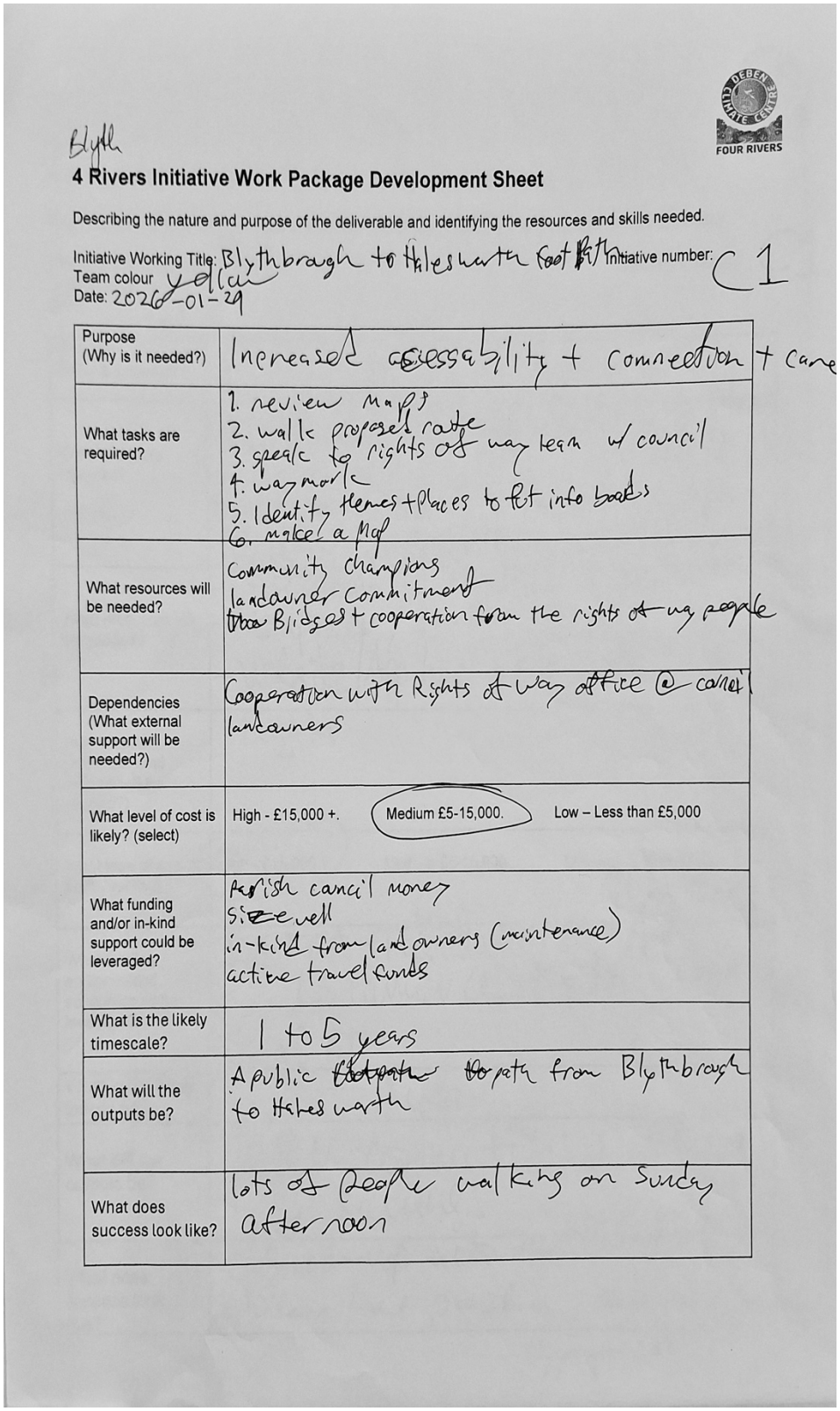
S5 Identify and train local facilitators to support to develop schemes, help landowners submit related funding opportunities + educate community
S6 Community engagement in individual water use + management
S7 Tree planting on farmland edges
S8 Rewiggling / decanalisation of streams/ditches

Fiv: Work Package Example



Blyth

4 Rivers Initiative Work Package Development Sheet

Describing the nature and purpose of the deliverable and identifying the resources and skills needed.

Initiative Working Title: Blythbrough to Hales worth foot path Initiative number: C1
Team colour Yellow
Date: 2026-01-29

Purpose (Why is it needed?)	Increased accessability + connection + care
What tasks are required?	1. review maps 2. walk proposed route 3. speak to rights of way team w/ council 4. waymark 5. Identify themes + places to put into books 6. make a map
What resources will be needed?	Community champions landowner commitment Bridges + cooperation from the rights of way people
Dependencies (What external support will be needed?)	Cooperation with Rights of Way office @ camc'l landowners
What level of cost is likely? (select)	High - £15,000 +. (Medium £5-15,000.) Low – Less than £5,000
What funding and/or in-kind support could be leveraged?	Parish camc'l money Sizewell in-kind from landowners (maintenance) active travel funds
What is the likely timescale?	1 to 5 years
What will the outputs be?	A public ~~footpath~~ bridpath from Blythbrough to Hales worth
What does success look like?	lots of people walking on Sunday afternoon

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Four Rivers Restoration Project

Restoring East Suffolk's River Landscapes - Workshop Report

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