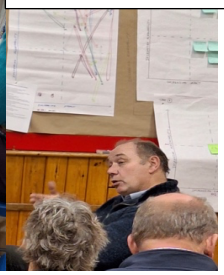
DEBEN CLIMATE CENTRE

FOUR RIVERS

RIVER DEBEN



EASTSUFFOLK COUNCIL

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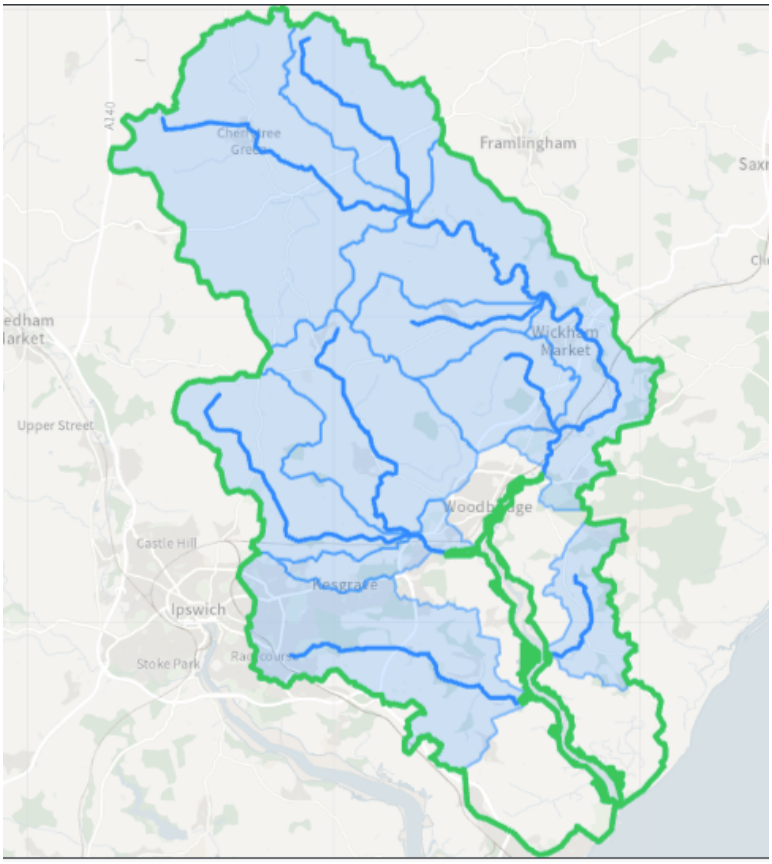
4 Rivers Restoration Project

River Deben Workshop Report

A safe, clean and climate-resilient river, protected and valued by its communities. Through natural flood management, restored habitats, improved soil and water quality and collective stewardship, the Deben will reduce flood risk, support thriving wildlife, and strengthen environmental and social prosperity for the region.

(Vision for the Deben created by the community)



The River Deben Catchment (source: Environment Agency/DEFRA)

April 2026

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What's 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 Deben, Alde/Ore, Blyth 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 Deben 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 bodies such as the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Forestry Commission, East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and Natural England, as well as expert organisations such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust, SFWAG and the Suffolk Naturalists Society.

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

The Deben Community workshop was attended by District and Parish councils, local community groups already active in the catchment such as the River Deben Association, Transition Woodbridge and Debenham Green Team, as well as representation from farmers, landowners and some stakeholders (*for full list of attendees see appendix B*).

How Healthy is the River Deben?

Both the ecological condition and flood resilience of the Deben were assessed by stakeholders as moderate to poor, suggesting the River Deben is in a more degraded state than Environment Agency public domain data reports (Catchment Data Explorer[1]) which present a 'moderate' condition.

Water quality suffers from nutrient pollution (phosphates, nitrates etc), bacterial contamination, and pesticides including neonicotinoids. The climate resilience of the Deben Catchment is also poor. Despite this gloomy report, some upper catchment

areas show improved biodiversity and water quality, providing models for restoration elsewhere.

It was acknowledged that a great deal of work is already underway on the river to improve water quality, flood resilience and biodiversity with many active groups, highlighted by the Recovering the Deben from Source to Sea catchment partnership.

The focus of activities on the Deben is currently water quality monitoring, addressing E. coli, nitrates and phosphates with regular monitoring by the Deben Climate Centre volunteers and ongoing across the catchment. Priority areas to focus on include natural flood management projects, riparian planting, and detailed work with Anglian Water on sewage upgrades.

(For summary of notes from speakers on river catchment status, see synopses in appendix C)

What are the Threats to the River Deben?

Decreasing biodiversity, poor water quality and, in an increasingly extreme climate, the risks of flood and drought were seen as key direct threats contributing to poor overall ecological health of the river Deben. Point source pollution from sewage works was considered critical and manageable, as was ineffective application of herbicides and nutrient on farms. Flooding events in a number of communities was considered manageable through nature-based interventions which would also tackle riparian habitat degradation.

A key threat identified as critical but more difficult to manage is the issue around water abstraction for agriculture and other use, due to a complex permitting system and the inability to manage the system to capture and store water during periods of extreme high flow for use during low flow.

There was debate on the threat level from invasive species such as Himalayan balsam due to the quality of data available. Other factors considered as threats, but outside of scope of this project, included climate change and the global food production system.

Abstraction was also discussed as a threat; with water taken from tidal and non-tidal stretches of the river resulting in lower flows and increased concentrations of pollutants.

(*Marisco rated threats for the Deben are listed in appendix D*).

Resources and Opportunities Identified

It was acknowledged that there is a wide range of active, knowledgeable local community groups and networks that may accelerate the delivery of initiatives, as well as many diverse and significant funding opportunities.

Local networks: Active Parish Councils and Tree Wardens network with access to landowners, 5 Parishes working together in the West Deben Cluster to develop a Biodiversity Action Group Volunteer, strong networks for tree planting with Suffolk Tree Wardens in position to coordinate. Much potential for awareness raising and education through active community groups including Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Birding group, Angling groups and Farm Clusters.

Funds: Anglian Water (Thriving Communities and farmer training imitative grants), Sizewell C (East Suffolk Trust), DEFRA Higher Tier Stewardship, private sector Biodiversity Net Gain and Nature First East Suffolk Council (small grants).

(*for full list of resources and opportunities from workshop brainstorm, see appendix E*)

Initiatives Proposed for the River Deben

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 Deben, ranked by impact and achievability

Team	Code	Project	Grade	Rank
GREEN	C1	Tree and hedgerow creation	HH	1
GREEN	C4	Small scale specific site silt removal & thinning overgrown vegetation	HH	1
PINK	C1	Working with agencies	HH	1

PINK	C4	Replicate Deben initiatives across Lark, Fynn etc	HH	1
BLUE	C1	Hub for processing needs of community groups	HH	1
BLUE	C3	Engagement with LNRS strategy	HH	1
	S2	NFM: high-flow abstraction storage reservoirs.	HH	1
	S4	Increasing/improving habitat: good riparian corridor / connecting existing woodland / Floodplain meadow restoration	HH	1
	S5	Farm ponds	HH	1
	S9	NFM: Vegetated Buffer strips	HH	1
	S14	Mapping of system funding	HH	1
	S23	NFM - tree planting upper catchment	HH	1
GREEN	C3	Community water management, education & implementation	HM	2
PINK	C3	Classification for Bathing Status	HM	2
PINK	C5	Estuary banks	HM	2
BLUE	C4	Code of conduct in Deben Valley	HM	2
	S3	Upgrade STW phosphate strippers	HM	2
	S6	Managed aquifer recharge : opportunities to recharge	HM	2
	S7	Barrier removal	HM	2
	S8	Re-meandering the river mid-catchment	HM	2
	S10	Local Resource Options scheme to take high flow water, store & redistribute in low flows for both environmental benefit + abstraction in summer.	HM	2
	S11	NFM: Beavers	HM	2
	S16	NFM slowing the flow: sediment, attenuation ponds in upper and mid catchment	HM	2
	S19	NFM: Increase size of buffer zones	HM	2
	S20	Silt traps	HM	2
GREEN	C5	Silt management – impact on the tidal area	HL	3
YELLOW	C1	Protect knowledge – understanding the Deben	MH	4
YELLOW	C2	Strategy	MH	4
	S1	NFM: Slowing the flow: Leaky dams, upper catchment	MH	4

	S12	Community engagement / behaviour change	MH	4
	S17	Greater access to tree wardens	MH	4
	S21	Mink being managed	MH	4
	S22	Monitoring biodiversity in river above and below sewage outfalls	MH	4
	S24	Reinstating lost ponds (ghost or zombie) from the clay land plateau to restore biodiversity & act as collecting points for water rather than transfer into ditches	MH	4
GREEN	C2	Reed bed filtration system	MM	5
PINK	C2	Communication, education	MM	5
BLUE	C2	Access to River Deben	MM	5
	S18	Keep signal crayfish out (monitoring program)	ML	6
	S13	Mapping all areas used for recreation and assess public health risk to push through improved water quality	LH	7
	S15	Himalayan balsam control - removal	LL	9

The highest-priority initiatives focus on capturing and slowing water in the upper catchment and building the community coordination needed to deliver at scale — funding access, agency relationships and knowledge sharing. The emphasis on replicating Deben work across the Fynn and Lark is significant — it signals a catchment-wide perspective rather than a single-river focus, and an appetite to scale what works rather than start from scratch in each tributary. The need for better coordination and tools to simplify and increase community engagement is a consistent and strong message.

Twelve initiatives were ranked both high impact and high achievability. These divide into two clear strands. The first is practical, nature-based intervention in the upper and mid catchment: high-flow abstraction reservoirs (though how achievable this is was questioned by the more qualified engineers and land managers), habitat and riparian corridor improvement, farm ponds, vegetated buffer strips and tree planting. The second focusses on building capacity through community infrastructure: creating a hub for community groups, establishing tree and hedgerow planting programmes, improving collaboration with agencies, replicating successful Deben initiatives across the Fynn and Lark tributaries, engaging with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and mapping available funding.

A substantial second tier of initiatives was graded as high impact but moderately achievable. These include more ambitious engineering work such as re-meandering, managed aquifer recharge and barrier removal, alongside sewage-related interventions like upgrading phosphate strippers and increasing buffer zones. Bathing water classification, a code of conduct for the Deben Valley and community water

management education also sit here. These are considered worthwhile but face greater regulatory, financial or logistical hurdles.

A third group was seen as moderately impactful but highly achievable — leaky dams, community engagement, biodiversity monitoring, mink management, reinstating ghost ponds and greater access to tree wardens. These represent relatively low-cost, quick-win actions that could build momentum and demonstrate progress.

Lower-priority initiatives include reed bed filtration, communication and education, river access improvements and signal crayfish monitoring.

Perhaps most telling is where community capacity building scored in the grading. A hub for community groups, engagement with the LNRS, mapping of funding and better agency relationships were all ranked highly. In effect, the tools and structures for getting things done matter as much as the interventions themselves.

What are the Key Priorities for the Deben Community?

Participants agreed most around the need to restore river function and resilience across the catchment through nature-based solutions and stronger community and landowner engagement. This approach will lead to improved water quality, biodiversity and decreased flood risk. Making it easier for people to get involved emerged as a central concern. Processes need simplifying — particularly for landowners and farmers — through clear strategies, accessible information and straightforward project management plans. Also agreed is the need to improve access to information, funding and cross-agency coordination.

Priorities include:

- Reconnecting river to floodplains and improving habitat connectivity
- Increased natural flood management in the upper catchment: more leaky dams, attenuation ponds, farm ponds and silt traps
- Expanded water quality monitoring and interventions with a focus on phosphate strippers
- More tree planting, woodlands for water and accelerated shifts to agroforestry and regenerative farming
- Better community engagement through recreational access, positive storytelling about future impacts to sustain momentum, and local stewardship
- Improved access to data driven hydrological baselines and invasive species mapping
- Simplification of funding and permissions guidance
- More cross-agency partnerships (EA, Anglian Water, Natural England, local councils and universities) allowing more joined up thinking and management across the catchment.

Anecdotally, raised reed beds are valued as natural filtration systems with a role in silt management, though it was noted their effectiveness drops in winter. At household level, water butts for summer storage and winter flood mitigation, sustainable urban drainage to reduce run-off from impermeable surfaces, and woodland thinning to encourage new growth were all seen as practical solutions to current problems.

Increasing public access to the river was considered both important and difficult. However, pursuing bathing or recreational water status was proposed as a lever to drive improvements.

Topsoil erosion around Waldringfield and poor water quality in the Lark and Fynn were flagged and accessing information about funding was described as consistently difficult, with Greener Waldringfield's five-parish hub cited as a practical response.

What Factors are Critical for Success?

There was a clear message that success will depend on sustained multi-stakeholder collaboration, simpler and reliable funding mechanisms, better landowner engagement and effective community communication and capacity building.
This includes:

- Stronger sustained partnership governance with clearer roles among agencies landowners and communities
- Accessible, long-term funding and better support for grant application processes
- Landowner buy-in through technical support and financial incentives
- Increased community education (e.g. around water literacy) and supporting local champions

Are there Barriers to Implementation?

Barriers to success were seen as mostly bureaucratic - the complexity of processes and unclear funding schemes. Data gaps were highlighted in the decision-making processes where there are competing land use pressures (e.g. agriculture vs habitat) but more importantly the lack of longer-term maintenance agreements and funding for initiatives. Initiatives were seen as relatively easy to install where appropriate but risky for landowners to keep funding and maintaining long-term.

Key points included:

- Poorly understood permitting processes deterring land managers – “just do it” vs regulatory risk

- Fragmented, short-term funding that is difficult to access
- Data gaps – particularly around invasive species (e.g. Himalayan balsam mapping required)
- Long term maintenance liability and unclear ownership of NFM assets (e.g. silt traps, dams and reedbeds
- Competing economic interests for landowners, clearer incentives needed that align to local catchment priorities
- Much more coordination across changing landscape of councils and multi-stakeholders

Conclusions

The workshops brought together local knowledge and expert insight to create a series of practical, achievable actions for improving water quality, biodiversity and flood resilience in the River Deben catchment. What they revealed is a river in a more degraded state than official data suggests, yet one surrounded by an unusually strong network of community groups, landowners and organisations already delivering real results on the ground.

The strongest consensus is around nature-based solutions at catchment scale – tree planting, farm ponds, buffer strips, habitat corridors and natural flood management – with twelve initiatives ranked as both high impact and highly achievable. These split into two strands: practical interventions to slow water, restore habitats and improve soil health; and the community infrastructure to make delivery possible, including a hub for community groups, funding mapping, and better agency collaboration. The tools for getting things done matter as much as the initiatives themselves.

A recurring message is the need for system change – more agroforestry and regenerative farming, better use of academic expertise such as the University of Suffolk's work on aquifer recharge, and making funding information far more accessible. The ambition to replicate the Deben successes in water testing across the Fynn and Lark, combined with growing landowner and parish council collaboration across the catchment, signals real appetite to scale what works.

Healthy disagreement on issues such as beaver introductions, phosphate stripper installation and the reliability of nature-based solutions reflected the complexity of catchment management rather than a lack of commitment. Unresolved questions around abstraction rights, invasive species mapping and long-term maintenance of NFM assets will need addressing as initiatives move forward. The shift to unitary councils adds further uncertainty to an already shifting environmental landscape.

The barriers are familiar: fragmented short-term funding, bureaucratic permitting, data gaps, and the need for farmers to have confidence in long-term support payments before committing. What came through most clearly is that the knowledge, willingness and community energy already exist in abundance. The missing elements are

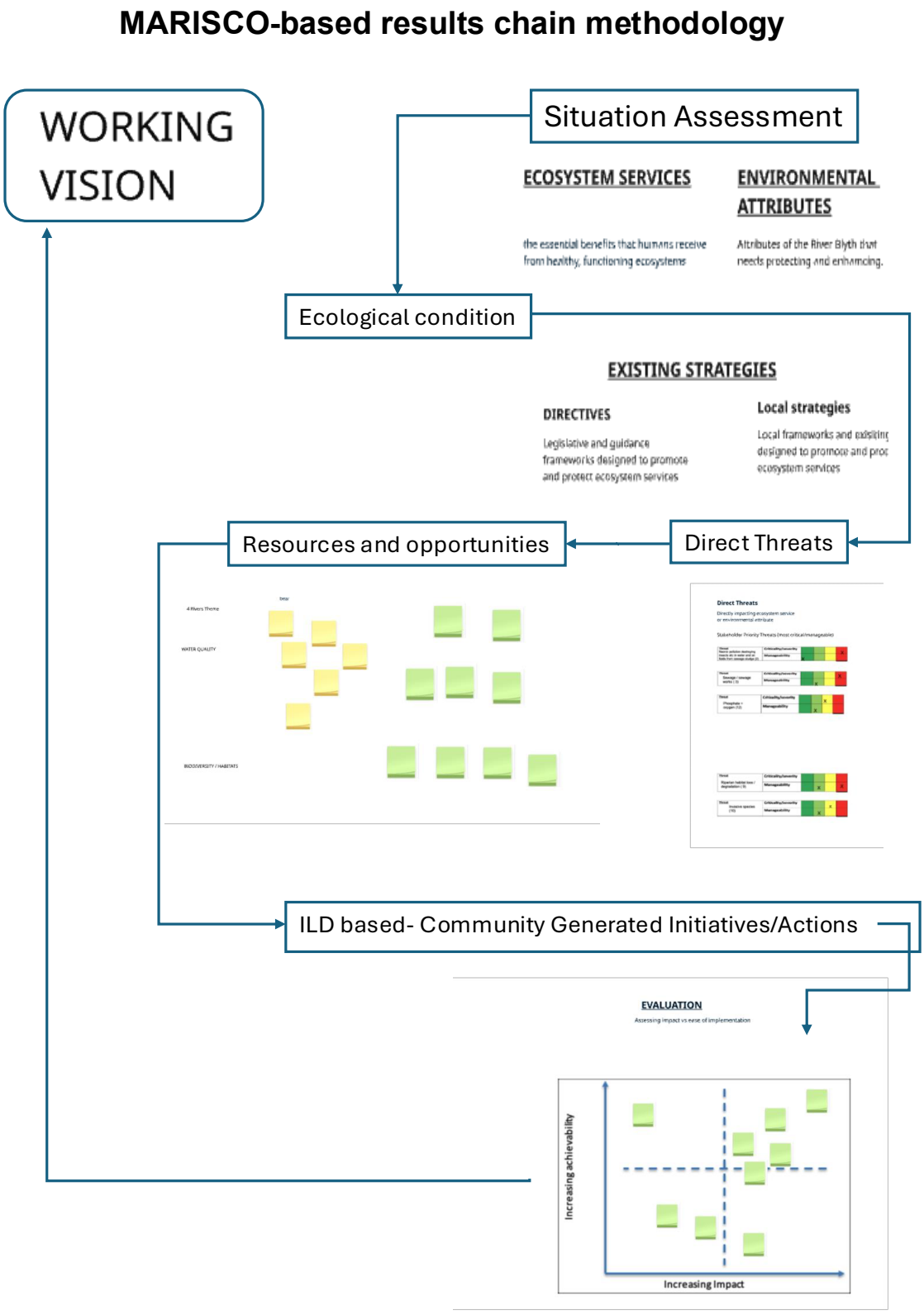
coordination, funding stability and simpler processes – exactly the connective role the Four Rivers Project is positioned to provide.

What's Next?

In consultation with both community groups and stakeholders, priority initiatives will be scoped out, costed and then worked up into practical projects. Budgets will be allocated and workable plans drawn up with stakeholders and the community (to include manpower, insurance, sourcing resources, permits and so on). Roll out of priority initiatives will follow.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Figure 1. Results-Chain Flow: Marisco-based methodology overview



Appendix B: List of Attendees at River Deben Stakeholder and Community Workshops

Alde and Ore Association
Anglian Water
Blyth Water Testing
Blyth Wilder Wenhaston
Deben Estuary Partnership
Debenham Green Team
Debenham Parish Council
East Suffolk Council
Environment Agency
Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust
ESWAG Forestry Commission
Greener Waldringfield
Helmingham Hall
Heveningham Hall
KADWAG
Kerr Farms
Kyson Fairways Committee
Lower Deben Owners Group
Martlesham and Purdis Farm
Melton Parish Council
Mid-Suffolk and Babergh Nature Recovery
Natural England
Nature Network Officer
National Farmers Union
Orwell and Villages Parish Council
River Deben Association
Saxmundham Town Council
SFWAG
Suffolk Climate Change Partnership
Suffolk County Council
Suffolk Naturalists Society
Suffolk Otters
Suffolk Wildlife Trust
Transition Woodbridge
Tree Warden
Ufford Parish Council
University of Suffolk
Upper Alde Farm
Upper Deben Farm Cluster
Waveney River Trust
Wilderness Reserve

Appendix C: Speaker Synopses - River Catchment Status

Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust – Recovering the Deben from Source to Sea

The Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust has been working with communities across the Deben catchment since 2023, with the ambition of reconnecting the river from source to sea. The partnership brings together landowners, industry and community groups, and is developing an Action Plan built around four priorities.

- Valuing water and land resources, including a cost-free water literacy programme to help communities understand why water is a scarce resource in the region
- Improving habitat connectivity through woodland planting to slow flow
- Investigating barriers to fish migration — 23 structures have been identified along the Deben, with a long-term vision of seeing trout running the river again
- Natural flood management using nature-based solutions.
- A major focus is Debenham, where 80 properties flooded during Storm Babet. Working with multiple organisations and landowners around Earl Soham and Aspalls, the Trust is delivering leaky dams and attenuation ponds to capture water near the source and slow flow downstream, with the first pond (10,000m^3 capacity) planned for 2025.
- Water quality in the Deben estuary is under investigation in partnership with Natural England, looking at whether poor water quality is contributing to habitat decline in the SSSI, with potential sources including sewage, water from the Netherlands, and port activity.
- A pilot nutrient attenuation pond at Sutton Hoo will create new freshwater standing water habitat.
- The River Deben Function Study and Restoration Plan — a hydrogeomorphological baseline study — will measure the impacts of interventions and assess what is needed to restore the river

Deben Climate Centre - Water Testing on the Deben

The Deben Climate Centre, working with the University of Suffolk, is running a comprehensive water quality monitoring programme across 70 sites in the catchment, covering the Deben, Fynn and Lark from Debenham to Bawdsey.

- Monitoring covers dissolved oxygen, phosphate, nitrates, ammonia and E. coli.
- E. coli levels are generally acceptable during summer low-flow periods, though stagnant pools around Debenham have shown high readings; winter months see significantly higher contamination driven by increased rainfall and sewage releases
- Phosphate monitoring has driven real change – Anglian Water has responded by installing phosphate strippers at Debenham, Charsfield and soon Rendlesham, which are proving both economical and effective, though elevated levels persist in the lower Deben.

- Nitrate pollution follows a different pattern, linked primarily to agricultural fertiliser use, with levels spiking after rainfall events and particularly during flooding.
- More work is needed to persuade Anglian Water to put in tertiary treatment of the outfall at Martlesham Creek.
- Water abstraction is noted as a threat to water quality too, the practice quietly draining the River Deben of its resilience: low river flows in summer, combined with significant abstraction for public water supply and farming irrigation, concentrate pollutants like E. coli and phosphates to dangerous levels.
- Water quality also directly impacts bathing water status in areas on the river. To maintain Designated Bathing Water Status (gained in 2023 on the Waldringfield stretch of the river) which compels the EA to monitor water quality weekly during the bathing season, water quality must be continually monitored and improved.

For further detail on water quality, read the reports here:
https://www.debenclimate.org/water-quality

For detailed water quality testing results by location go to:
River Deben Water Quality Dashboard or view results on Tableau.

Lower Deben Owners' Group

The Lower Deben Owners Group (LDOG) was galvanised into action by Storm Babet flooding in 2023, and has since been building a productive working relationship with the Environment Agency.

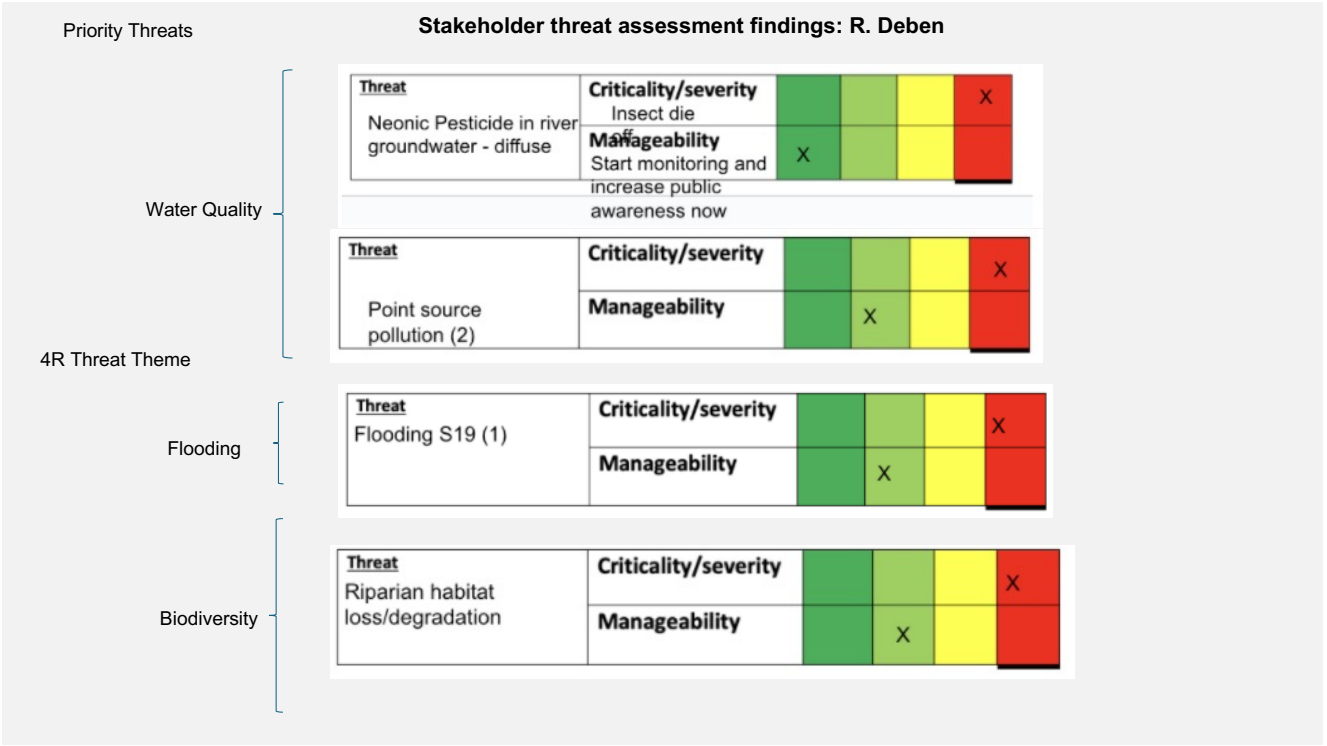
- Members walked the riverside to document conditions and consulted directly with the EA on issues identified
- Key priorities include reconnecting the river to its floodplain, where channels have become heavily restricted — the EA has agreed to fund some reconnection work
- A breach at Sink Farm, Ufford, has diverted the river onto the floodplain via a bypass route
- Silting along the lower reaches is restricting flow, with application in for desilting permits
- Sluice maintenance and usage need addressing
- Funding is being sought for feasibility studies to progress these priorities
- The relationship with the EA has shifted significantly — from difficult in the early stages to collaborative and productive
- LDOG welcomed the emergence of the Upper Deben Owners Group (UDOG), bringing representation close to full coverage across the catchment

Helmingham Hall Natural Flood Management – Land Manager's Perspective

Practical, nature-based land management highlights low-tech approaches that deliver real results alongside a call for systemic change in how land and soil are valued.

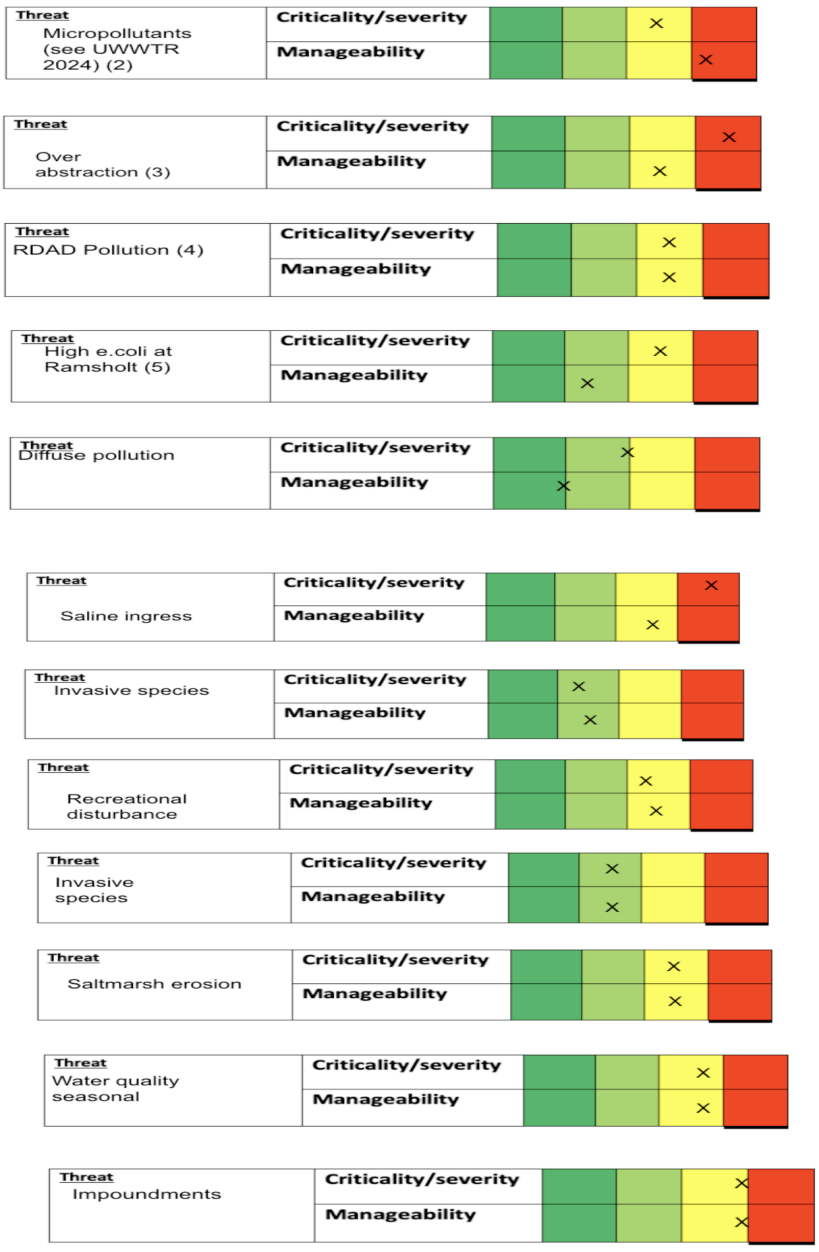
- Leaky dams built from trimmed or downed branches have been installed across woodland areas to slow water flow, with few downsides beyond occasional washout of smaller structures
- Following Storm Babet, excess water was captured on the land using a dam as part of stewardship responsibilities
- Silt removed from ponds and waterways is piled on banks rather than disposed of, saving costs and conserving what is essentially alluvial soil or topsoil washed from fields
- Other measures include agroforestry, farm ponds and water meadows, though farmers need greater confidence about support payments for these kinds of initiatives
- An application has been made to introduce beavers to the estate
- The permitting process is seen as overly bureaucratic and time-consuming, creating too many hurdles for land managers who want to act
- Agroforestry — integrating trees into managed production land — was stressed for its multiple benefits including carbon capture, flood protection and soil health, but the broader call was for landowners to shift from thinking about crop value alone to long-term custodianship
- Fertiliser application is a significant concern: roughly 60% is applied correctly, 20% overapplied and 20% underapplied. Where soils are degraded, both soil and fertiliser are lost, with phosphates — a finite resource — running off into rivers
- Soils with high organic matter hold more carbon, water and nutrients; historically, the most fertile soils were located in floodplains
- A system change is necessary to address these interconnected issues of soil health, water quality and land management

Appendix D: Threats Assessment for the River Deben - Priority Threats Graded and Assessed by Stakeholders



ii. Additional Secondary Threats

Stakeholder Secondary Threats (less critical/manageable)



E: Table 2. Resources and Opportunities noted by community – results of brainstorming activity listed by team colour

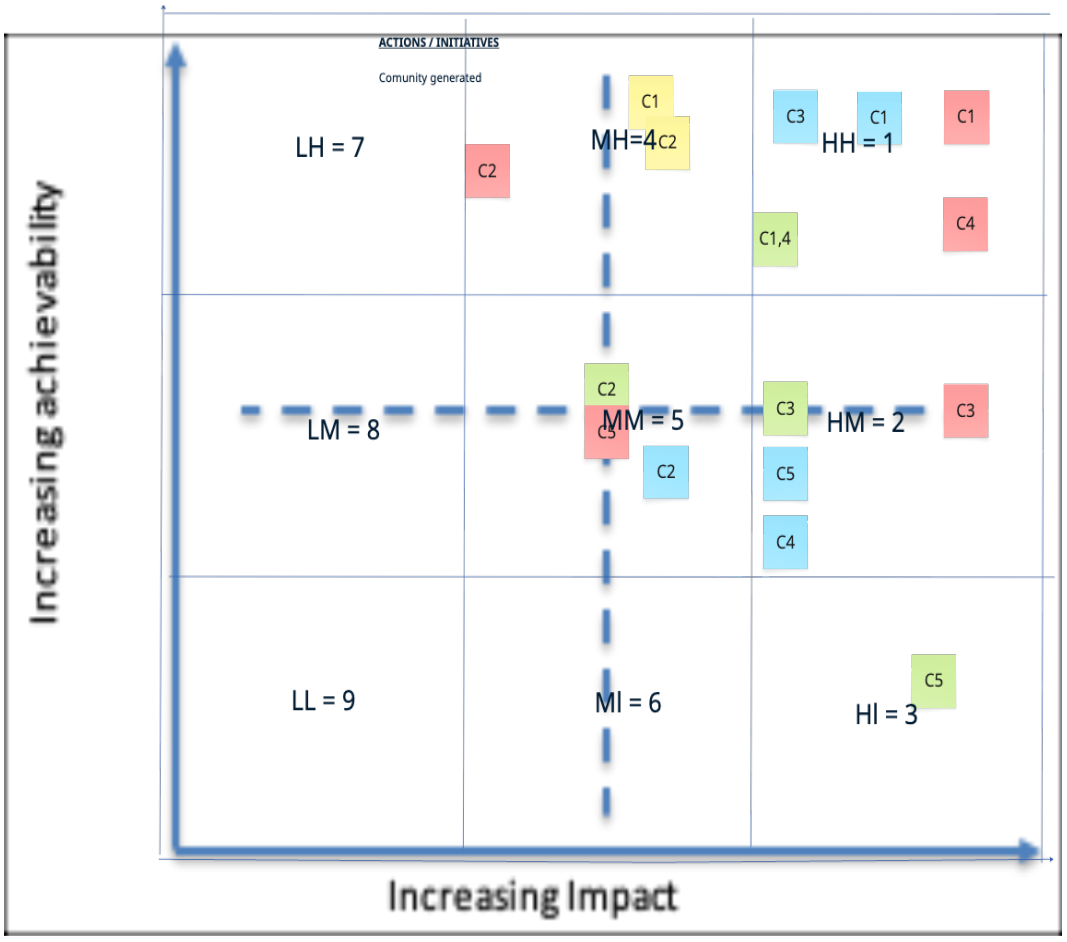
RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES				
	BLUE	GREEN	PINK	YELLOW
Relating to Parish Councils	5 Parish Group - West Deben Cluster.		5 Parish Cs working together at Trimley and	
	Magic maps		PC have access to local farmers	
			Focus on soil health	
Partnership			P approach to emphasise benefits	
			EA cooperation replicate in upper Deben	
			SWT	SWT
			Harness/tap public support	
Funding		Nature First ESC - small grants		Countryside
		Sizewell Enviro Fund - lareg		East Sizewell Fund
				Anglian Water Thriving
				Water Environ
				BNG
				SFA payments
				CIL - held by PCs,
	NSIP mitigation funds			
	FIPL funding			
Expertise				Suffolk CC Floods and
				Regional Flood and
				Mid Suffolk Upper
				sufflok cc and east
				Water Resources East
Tree Planting	Wooded debris and trees- letting the river	East suffolk council strategy		Suffolk tree wardens
	Paying farmers?	Working with Woodland trust		Suffolk riparian tree
	Rougher woodland	Forestry commission help with		
		Suffolk tree warden community		
Farmers and Land access	District county councils access	James Hayward (Knows Guy)	Support for upper deben farm cluster	
		Deben landowners - water	Support for lower deben farm cluster	
	District council farm clusters - via district	Ann Westover (tree warden		
Community and education	Access parish council's voluntary groups -	nature at work		Greener Waldringfield
	Increase number of otter cameras - for	Continuing with schools/parish		
		Ground work east + East suffolk		
	RFCPL - Res Flood Coastal Erosion Floods -		Anglian Water - one place per farm business up	Blyth Railway Footpath
	Community planting using free trees		Essex and Suffolk Water have funds but are	Suffolk Birding Group
	East Suffolk Water Management Board -			Housing Developers
	Some BVC members open to walks			Wilderness Reserve
	BVCG for farmers with links to schools and			Wildlife Trust
	BVChurhces - 14 churches in B Valley with			Farming Community
	Walks - promoting walks with BV farmers			Angling Clubs
				Parish Town Councils

F: 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.

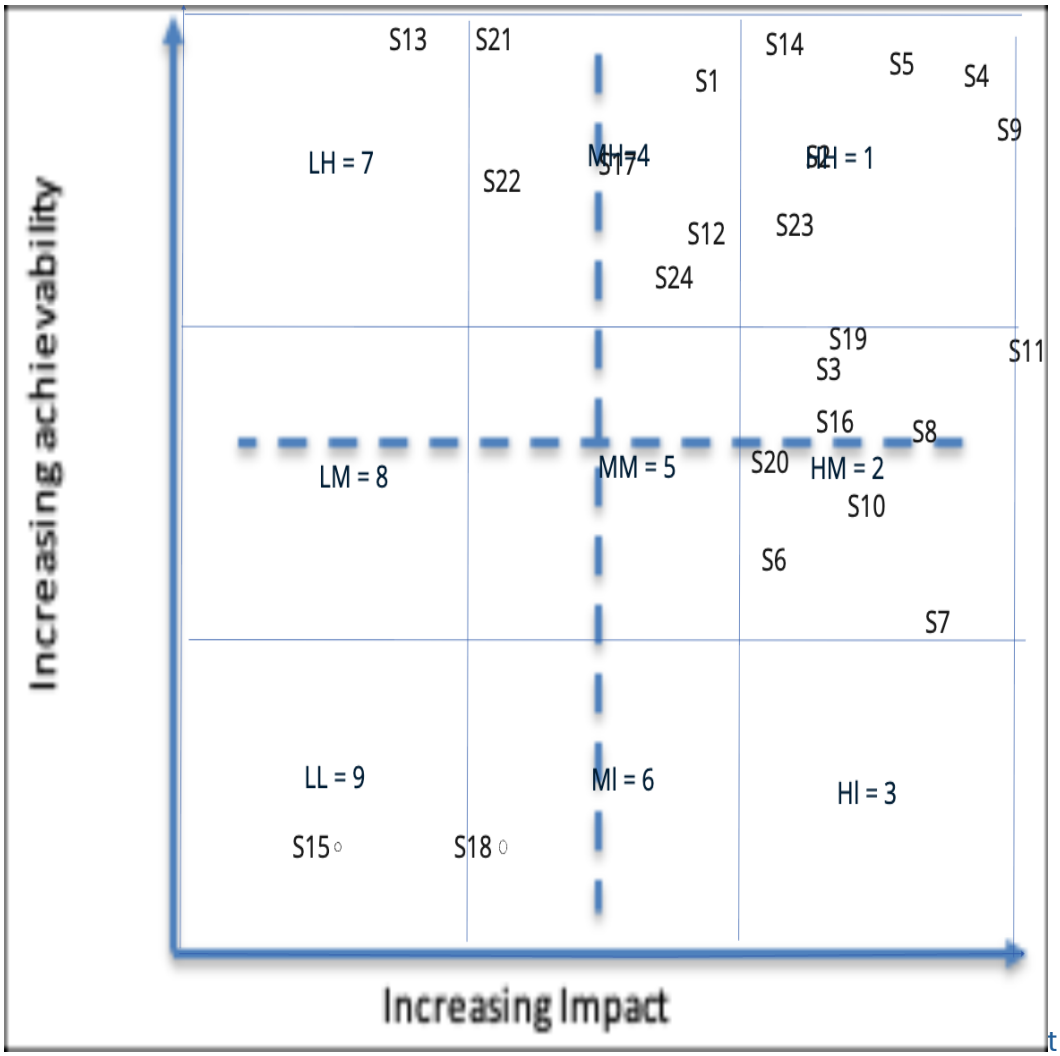
Figure 2. Community-generated initiatives review of impact/achievability



Teram	Code	Project
GREEN	C1	TREE AND HEDGEROW CREATION
GREEN	C2	REED BED FILTRATION SYSTEM

GREEN	C3	COMMUNITY WATER MANAGEMENT EDUCATION & IMPLEMENTATION
GREEN	C4	SMALL SCALE SPECFIC SITE SILT REMOVAL & THINNING OVERGROWN VEGETATION
GREEN	C5	SILT MANAGEMENT - IMPACT ON THE TIDAL AREA
PINK	C1	WORKING WITH AGENCIES
PINK	C2	COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION
PINK	C3	CLASSIFICATION FOR BATHING
PINK	C4	REPLICATE DEBEN INITIATIVES ACROSS FYNN, LARK ETC
PINK	C5	ESTUARY BANKS
YELLOW	C1	PROTECT KNOWLEDGE - UNDERSTANDING THE DEBEN
YELLOW	C2	STRATEGY
BLUE	C1	HUB FOR PROCESSING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY GROUPS
BLUE	C2	ACCESS TO RIVER DEBEN
BLUE	C3	ENGAGEMENT WITH LNRS STRATEGY
BLUE	C4	CODE OF CONDUCT IN DEBEN VALLEY

Figure 3. Stakeholder-generated initiatives graded by impact/achievability



Code	Project
S1	NFM: Slowing the flow: Leaky dams, upper catchment
S2	NFM: high-flow abstraction storage reservoirs.
S3	Up grade STW phosphate strippers
S4	Increasing/improving habitat: good riparian corridor / connecting existing woodland / Floodplain meadow restoration
S5	Farm ponds
S6	Managed aquifer recharge : opportunities to recharge
S7	Barrier removal
S8	Re-meandering the river mid-catchment
S9	NFM: Vegetated Buffer strips
S10	Local Resource Options scheme to take high flow water, store & redistribute in low flows for both env. benefit + abstraction in summer.

S11	NFM: Beavers
S12	Community engagement / behaviour change
S13	Mapping all areas used for recreation and assess public health risk to push through improved water quality
S14	Mapping of system funding
S15	Himalayan balsam control - removal
S16	NFM slowing the flow: sediment, attenuation ponds in upper and mid catchment
S17	Greater access to tree wardens
S18	Keep signal crayfish out (monitoring program)
S19	NFM: Increase size of buffer zones
S20	Silt traps
S21	Mink being managed
S22	Monitoring biodiversity in river above and below sewage outfalls
S23	NFM - tree planting upper catchment
S24	Reinstating lost ponds (ghost or zombie) from the clay land plateau to restore biodiversity & act as collecting points for water rather than transfer into ditches

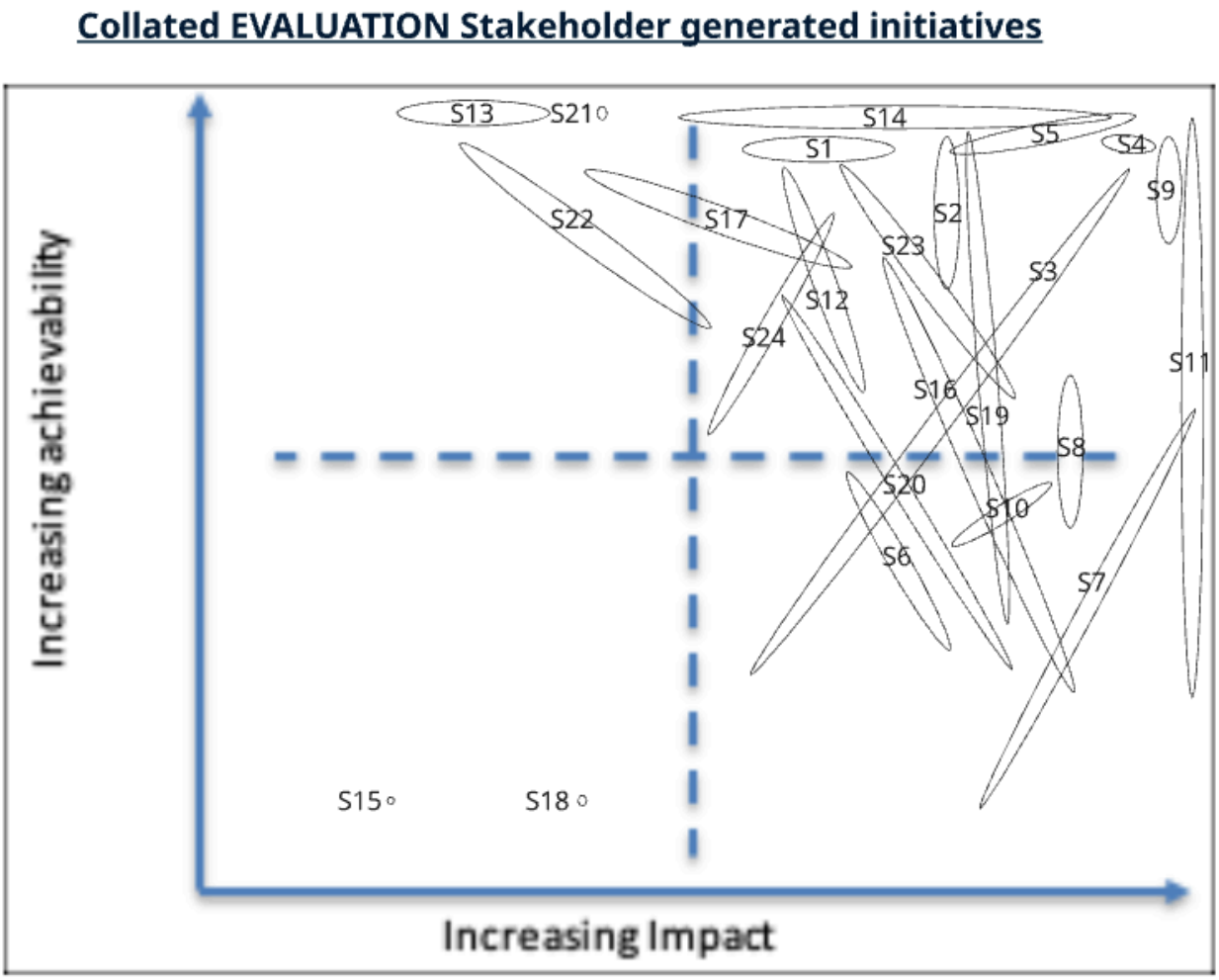
ii: Grading process

The matrices 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).

iii: 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 of the key discussion points outlined in the main document of this report were identified. This allowed for very positive engagement between stakeholder representatives, landowners, parish councillors and community interest groups represented allowing for in depth discussion of perspectives.

Figure 4. Community assessment of stakeholder suggested initiatives, where closeness of plots represents closer agreement between teams.



Code	Project
S1	NFM: Slowing the flow: Leaky dams, upper catchment
S2	NFM: high-flow abstraction storage reservoirs.
S3	Up grade STW phosphate strippers
S4	Increasing/improving habitat: good riparian corridor / connecting existing woodland / Floodplain meadow restoration
S5	Farm ponds
S6	Managed aquifer recharge : opportunities to recharge
S7	Barrier removal
S8	Re-meandering the river mid-catchment
S9	NFM: Vegetated Buffer strips
S10	Local Resource Options scheme to take high flow water, store & redistribute in low flows for both env. benefit + abstraction in summer.
S11	NFM: Beavers
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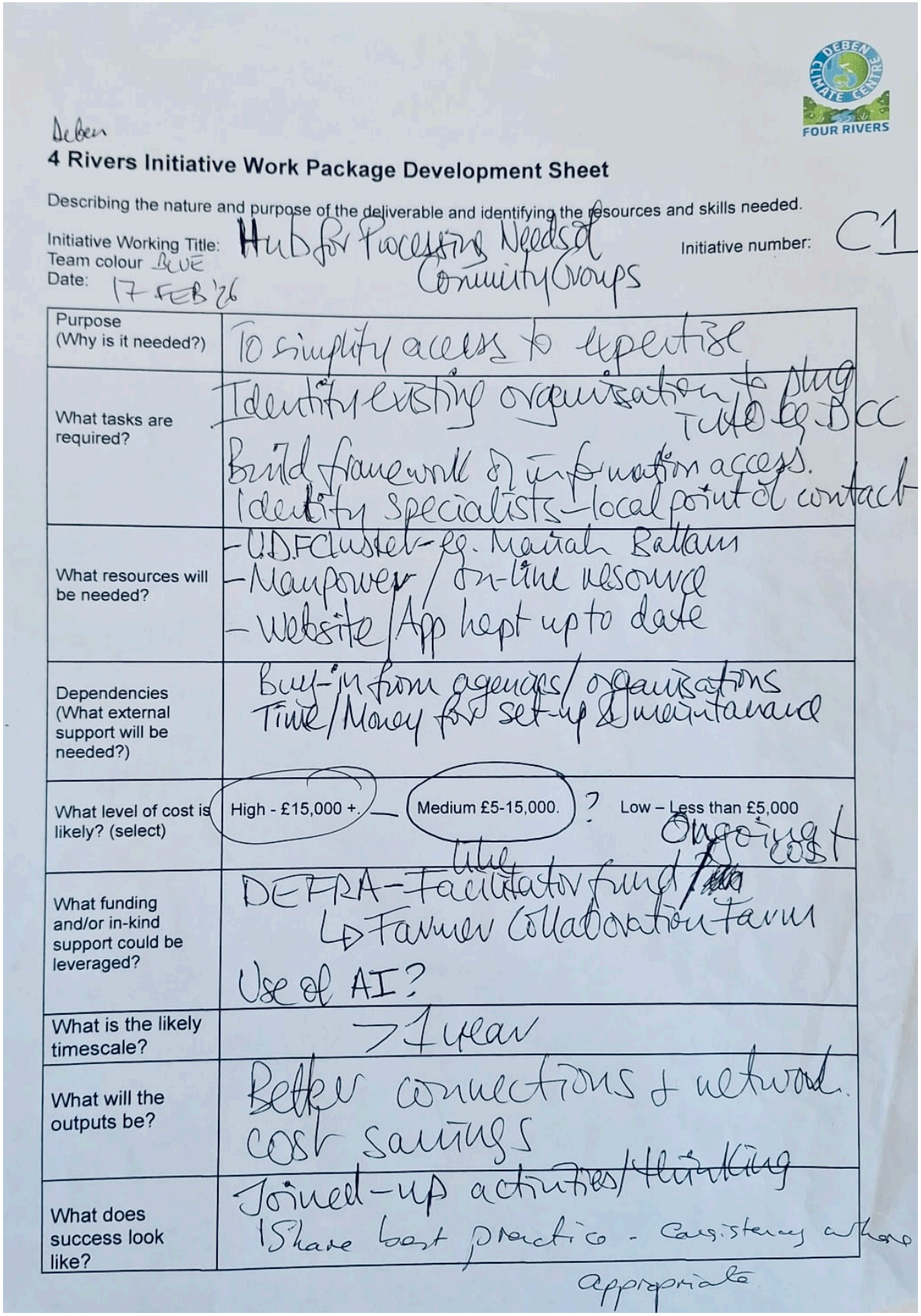
iv: Work Package Example



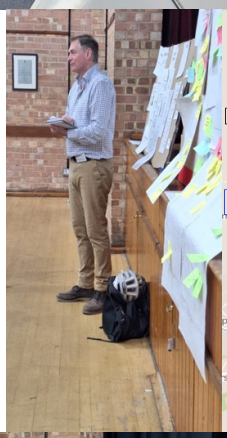
Deben

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: Hub for Processing Needs of Community Groups
Initiative number: C1
Team colour BLUE
Date: 17 FEB '26

Purpose (Why is it needed?)	To simplify access to expertise
What tasks are required?	Identify existing organisation to plug into eg BCC Build framework & information access. Identify specialists – local point of contact
What resources will be needed?	- U.D.F Cluster - eg. Mariah Rattam - Manpower / on-line resource - Website / App kept up to date
Dependencies (What external support will be needed?)	Buy-in from agencies / organisations Time / Money for set-up & maintenance
What level of cost is likely? (select)	High - £15,000 +. — Medium £5-15,000. ? Low – Less than £5,000 Ongoing cost
What funding and/or in-kind support could be leveraged?	DEFRA - Facilitator fund like ↳ Farmer Collaboration Farm Use of AI?
What is the likely timescale?	> 1 year
What will the outputs be?	Better connections & network. cost savings
What does success look like?	Joined-up activities/thinking Share best practice - Consistency where appropriate




Debenham - 9 samples ranging from 0.10 to 0.72 mg/litre
7 sites dry - see separate map
Phosphate as P Results
- 1st September 2025
Phosphate as P - mg/litre
At or above 1 mg/litre
0.11 to 0.99 mg/litre
Less than 0.1 mg/litre
Natural England "healthy river" is
max. 0.1 mg/litre Phosphate as P
Debenham
Earl Soham
Framlingham
Winston
Parham
Farnham
Marlesford
Blaxhall
Tunstall
Charsfield
Bredfield
Eyke
Witnesham
Woodbridge
Playford
Sutton Heath
Rushmere
St Andrew
Sutton
Hollesley
Brightwell
Hemley
Alderton
Bucklesham
Nacton
Kirton
Bawdsey
Levington
Falkenham
Woolverstone
Deben Climate Centre
August 2025

DEBEN CLIMATE CENTRE

Four Rivers Restoration Project

Restoring East Suffolk's River Landscapes - Workshop Report

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