

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	30 January 2013
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	West Suffolk House, West Suffolk House

		Paper Number
1.	3.00 Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 13/30
3.	Declaration of interest	
4.	3.10 Introductions	RP – verbal
5.	Wild Anglia	RP – verbal
6.	Network Rail	
	- Letter to Councillor Newman	LAF 14/01
	- Letter to Network Rail	LAF 14/02
	- Letter from Network Rail	LAF 14/03
	-	
7.	Storm / Flood Damage	LAF 14/04
8.	Regional LAF Chair and Vice Chair meeting	
	- DB report	LAF 14/05
	- Notes of meeting	LAF 14/06
	National LAF Conference	DF – Verbal
9.	Sizewell C	LAF 14/07
	- Estate principles	LAF 14/07 appendix 1 PROTECTED – NOT FOR CIRCULATION
	- Public access principles	LAF 14/07 appendix 2
10.	CAP Consultation	AW – verbal
	https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/267987/cap-reform-sum-resp-201312.pdf	
	http://www.fwi.co.uk/articles/19/12/2013/142607/cap-latest-defra-opts-for-12-modulation-rate.htm	
11.	Budget 2014/15	AW – verbal

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|-----|------|--|--------------|
| 12. | | Update / Correspondence | |
| | | - Mildenhall | DF – verbal |
| | | - Ipswich Chord update | AWr – verbal |
| | | - Web Mapping | AW – verbal |
| | | - 2014 Suffolk Walking Festival | DF – verbal |
| | | | Paper Number |
| 13. | 4.50 | Member's Topic/Any Other Business | |
| 14. | 4.55 | Public question time | |
| 15. | 5.00 | Dates & Venues of Future Meetings | |

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of meeting held at Elveden Village Hall on 17 October 2013
Meeting Date:	30 January 2013
Author/Contact:	Jill Christley
Venue:	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds

Morning

1. A11 presentation and site visit

Tim Betts, Construction Manager with Balfour Beatty briefed on the objectives and current position of the A11 improvement scheme. The scheme will complete the dualling of A11 between the M11 and Norwich, reduce congestion, increase capacity, improve road safety and journey time, and by-pass Elveden Village. Mr Betts described the underpass (which SLAF had been instrumental in securing), and showed pictures of its construction.

Afternoon

3. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Bryan Collen (Chair) (BC), David Barker (Vice-Chair) (DB), Melinda Appleby (MA), Annette Ellis (AE), Margaret Hancock (MH), Barry Hall (BH), Jane Hatton (JH), Cllr Diana Kearsley (DK), Ann Langley (AL), Gordon Merfield (GM), Alan Moore (AM), Monica Pipe (MP), Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Roland Wilson (RW), Anthony Wright (AWR).

SCC Officers Present: Jill Christley (minutes), David Falk (DF), Andrew Woodin (AW).

Apologies: Richard Powell (RP), Norman Southgate (NS), Mike Taylor (MT), John Wayman (JW).

BC thanked retiring members, Ann Langley and Norman Southgate for their contribution to the Forum.

New members Annette Ellis, Jane Hatton, Councillor Diana Kearsley and Roland Wilson were welcomed to the Forum. SLAF members and SCC officers introduced themselves and gave a brief outline of their interests in countryside access.

4. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF 13/24)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record.

Matters arising: SLAF were advised that the proposed cycle link from Ipswich to Alton Water was back on the agenda with new communication held with Ipswich Borough Council on creating the link.

5. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

7. Rights of way severance – Network Rail (NR).

AW explained that NR has a national project to improve safety and line speeds. The county council is an active partner in this in Suffolk and the county council shares concerns regarding line safety and speed. NR would like to close crossings, but SCC must look at the local picture and aim to find alternative solutions, such as replacing crossings for example with over- or under-bridges, re-routing of the rights of way network, and clearing vegetation to improve visibility for those using crossings. Several higher priority crossings have been identified. AW emphasized that it is councillors who are likely to have the final say on highway closures and provision of alternatives.

- **Great Barton BR12**

This crossing is on the Ipswich to Cambridge line. NR proposed to close the crossing and replace it with a ramped bridge. SCC agrees with this, however, Sustrans are concerned that a ramped bridge increases the journey distance for cyclists. Also, the turning landing proposed is insufficient for tandems, horses, mobility scooter users and families with children in buggies, Sustrans would like to see a 4.5m turning landing, allowing all users to use the bridge. Sustrans have proposed an earth embankment with a bridge, this is currently being considered by the minister.

ACTION – SLAF to write to National Rail to confirm structure and ramps will be useable by mobility scooters.

- **Needham Market Gypsy Lane**

Following two fatalities in this area this crossing has been given the highest priority. NR proposes to close two existing level crossings, and replace with a grade separated structure. These are well-used crossings, giving access between Needham Market and Creting St Mary and to Needham Lakes and local rights of way. Trains on the line at this point are restricted to 50mph. There are physical constraints here, making it difficult to fit in a ramped bridge. Due to various constraints, NR will not commit to a ramped structure and SCC is in discussion with NR and had urged them to consult the local community. Needham Market town council will be sending out a newsletter inviting views from the local community. AW explained that councillors will be deciding on proposals over the next few weeks.

- **Felixstowe Academy Hawkes Lane**

Planning conditions at Felixstowe Academy require the construction of a foot bridge. There is housing to one side of the line with the academy and further housing development proposed on the other. There will be no funding for a replacement bridge from NR, funding must be found locally. Under the consultation process an equalities impact assessment was carried out, and OPTUA, Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum and Felixstowe town council were consulted. SCC has decided to install a stepped bridge reflecting funding

constraints. SLAF expressed serious concerns at the effect on local users, including some having no alternative but to use the road.

SLAF discussed, and agreed that any new bridge should be accessible to all, including those using buggies and wheelchairs. With new housing and a Tesco store in the area there will be increased demand. A ramped bridge might help to reduce the number of students travelling by bus. BC offered to meet the local council to discuss.

ACTION SLAF agreed to write to NR and SCC, the local MP and David Ruffley MP to express its concerns and request a meeting to discuss the local community's need for access across the railway line at each of these sites.

8. SLAF Annual Report to Cabinet (LAF 13/27 & LAF 13/28)

The annual report was presented to cabinet, and was well received. Councillor Spicer particularly picked up on SLAF's comments on health and wellbeing strategy.

9. Countryside Access Development

- **DfT Safer Cycling (LAF 13/28)**

AW outlined the proposed works on the Mildenhall to West Row bridleway, (see LAF13/28). Revised proposals have the support of the respective County and District Councillors, the parish council and the British Horse Society. Steps and roped handrails down to fishing areas will be also installed as part of the scheme, and signage improved. Work had already started, with main construction starting in the week commencing 21/10/13.

AW explained that funding for the improvements had been secured from the Government's Cycle Safety Fund, which had been open to all local authorities and managed by Sustrans. SCC's bid demonstrated that it would meet the needs of all those legally entitled to use bridleways: including existing users and also cyclists, parents with buggies, and those using mobility scooters.

AWr confirmed Sustrans will sign off the project, and that it has been delivered in accordance with best practice, to suit all users.

Mrs Elizabeth Barrett, a member of the public who attended the meeting was invited to comment. Mrs Barrett was dissatisfied with the consultation that was carried out, and felt that it had been too short, and had not come to the attention of the horse-riding community in the area. Mrs Barrett was also concerned about cyclists and mobility scooters using the bridleway.

AW responded, explaining that under the terms of the funding all work had to be carried out by the end of the year, and that the consultation period was therefore restricted, but considered that the outcome would have been the same had more time been available. AW also pointed out that cyclists and users of mobility scooters have a legal entitlement to use bridleways. In addition, the bridleway will be improved, with overhead vegetation cut back to allow better headroom, and widened in places resulting in an overall improvement of the bridleway for horse-riders.

Mr Bryan Freemantle, a member of the public and former SLAF member pointed out that he had suggested the changes to the scheme in September.

JS commended DF and AWR on securing funding, and successfully negotiating a satisfactory compromise.

DB hoped any lessons on consultation would be learnt for future schemes and noted there is inevitable conflict in the countryside and that is what SLAF is there to help with.

AW also updated the meeting on the cycling scheme to construct a new cycle bridge over the A14 in Bury St Edmunds. Whilst the scheme is not lead by the Rights of Way team, it requires the improvement of a connecting byway, and proposals to prohibit vehicles from the byway are proving contentious.

AWR confirmed the bridge will be suitable for mobility scooters.

- **BALANCE**

DF briefed SLAF on BALANCE, a European Union cross-border project between Holland, Belgium and England. The objective of the project is to balance people with nature. In Suffolk the project is valued at £0.5m, with spend on access improvements over £106,000. This money has been spent on the Sailor's Path Project, boardwalks and new surfacing in Walberswick Marshes, improved access along Woodbridge riverside path, resurfacing Martlesham creek river wall and new long distance waymarkers for the Suffolk Coast Path, Sandlings Walk and Stour and Orwell Walk.

- **Ipswich to Alton Water**

This had been a BALANCE Project and landowner negotiations had stalled, but was now back on the agenda.

- **Heritage Lottery Fund**

SCC had secured funding for a Brecks Rides promotion to include waymarking, leaflets and guides.

SCC's application for funding to improve the Lark Valley path had been unsuccessful. It is hoped future improvements to sections of the path will be funded through s.106 payments from developers.

The Forum congratulated SCC on the work done, particularly The Sailor's Path Project.

10. **Stour and Orwell Forum Management Plan Survey**

BH advised the Forum that the survey had identified wildlife and landscape as being the most important factors. The most popular activities in the area are walking (75%) and cycling (20%). Chief problems are litter, loss of footpaths due to erosion and the use of footpaths by horse-riders and cyclists.

11. **Correspondence/Updates**

- **Wild Anglia**

Wild Anglia's manifesto had been published. New SLAF member and Wild Anglia chair, Richard Powell will be asked to brief on this at the next meeting. The local nature partnership looks at how nature is managed, it's aims are to

strengthen nature, create healthy, happy societies, create exemplary green spaces and generate economic growth.

- **Regional Chairs meeting**
DB will be attending the meeting.
- **National LAF Conference**
Details of the conference will be circulated as soon as they are available.
- **Web mapping**
SLAF had written to Simon Higgins (LAF 13/29) regarding mapping on the SCC web site. Mapping on the web will allow the public to know where they can legally walk etc, and will allow SCC to publish restrictions and cutting schedules. Members noted there had been no response.
- **LAF News**
Copies of Natural England's LAF News were circulated.
- **Coastal Access**
Norfolk county council's report on coastal access had been submitted to the Secretary of State, the outcome from this will be published in 2014. It was still unclear how estuaries would be dealt with. SLAF will need to take a particular interest in estuaries and erosion when Suffolk's turn comes.

12. Member's Topic/Any Other Business

MA: The new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) will come into force in the near future, following the end of the existing scheme. MA was concerned that permissive paths would be ploughed up, and expressed the need to monitor this.

13. Public Question Time

Mr Freemantle asked why SLAF had written (in October 2011) to the Highways Agency advising that no objection would be made to the proposed changes to the A11 non-motorised user underpass. Members responded they were pleased that in the end the underpass was kept at full height.

14. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings.

Thursday 30 January 2014
Thursday 10 April 2014
Thursday 17 July 2014
Thursday 16 October 2014
Venues to be advised.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Letter to Councillor Newman
Meeting Date:	30 January 2014
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	West Suffolk House

SLAF
Suffolk Local Access Forum

Councillor Graham Newman
SCC Cabinet Member
Roads and Transport

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Your Ref:
Our Ref: JC/SLAF
Date: 1 November 2013

Dear Councillor Newman,

From the Chairman of the Suffolk Local Access Forum.

I have attached with this letter a copy of a letter to Network Rail concerning the closure of public rights of way level crossings in Suffolk. The contents are self explanatory and clearly the county council has a significant role in influencing Network Rail's approach. I would ask that the county council takes a strong position on ensuring that any structures replacing public rights of way level crossings should be consistent with the current and foreseeable use of the path and that equalities requirements are met.

The other railway crossing discussed at SLAF's meeting on 17th October was the closure of the public footpath crossing at Felixstowe Academy. As you'll know, this is a scheme lead by the county council rather than Network Rail. The forum was very disappointed to learn that the county council intends to provide a footbridge crossing with steps only, for all the reasons given in the penultimate paragraph of my letter to Network Rail. Apart from existing housing and services to the north of the railway line, I understand the field opposite the academy is allocated for housing development and further on a new Tesco is proposed on the other side of the High Street. The public footpath provides a direct link to all this from the other side of the railway.

The point was also made at our meeting that in not providing for people with disabilities and mobility restrictions they will have no alternative but to use the local road network.

Is this the final decision? I would very much welcome the opportunity to discuss the Felixstowe crossing with you and understand better the council's reasoning in not providing an equalities consistent structure.

Yours sincerely,

Bryan Collen
Chairman, Suffolk Local Access Forum

Encl: copy of letter from SLAF to Network Rail

Providing independent advice on access to the countryside in Suffolk

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum

Title: Letter to Richard Schofield, Network Rail

Meeting Date: 30 January 2014

Author/Contact: David Falk

Venue: West Suffolk House

SLAF
Suffolk Local Access Forum

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Your Ref:
Our Ref: JC/SLAF
Date: 1 November 2013

Dear Mr Schofield,

From the Chairman of the Suffolk Local Access Forum.

I am writing on behalf of the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF). Local access forums are statutorily prescribed bodies, introduced by s94 and s95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Their main function is to advise their appointing authority as to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. Local access forums comprise appointed members who represent both users of local rights of way or access land and owners and occupiers of access land or land encompassing local rights of way. The forum also has members who represent the interests of people with disabilities and mobility restrictions.

The Government recognises and supports the important role of local access forums in contributing to improvements to greenspace, open access and connecting routes. These improvements contribute to local economic growth as well as the health and wellbeing of the population.

It is in this context that SLAF have been receiving regular updates on the progress of Network Rail's project to improve safety by closing level crossings in Suffolk wherever possible. SLAF fully supports the objective of improving public safety but believes this must be balanced with ensuring the public rights of way network remains accessible for everyone. Too many local public rights of way networks in Suffolk have been irretrievably severed by the construction of trunk roads over the decades and it is vital the same mistake is not repeated in the project to close level crossings.

At its meeting on 17th October 2013, the forum received an update on discussions between Network Rail and the county council to close three level crossings in Suffolk, on the Ipswich to Cambridge line. The first is at Great Barton on the cycle route between Thurston and Bury St Edmunds (National Cycle Route 51) and where Network Rail propose to construct an overbridge. Whilst having some concerns about the length of the proposed ramps, the forum's immediate concern was that the width of the ramp should be sufficient to allow for mobility scooters to be able to use the structure. I would be grateful for your confirmation on this point.

The other two crossings are in Needham Market and are public footpath crossings known as Gypsy Lane and Footpath 6. These give much more cause for concern. Footpath 6 is already the subject of a temporary closure on safety grounds, leaving the Gypsy Lane crossing as the only public off road access to the rights of way network on the other side of the railway, to Needham Lakes and the Gipping Valley path, and to the village of Creeting St Mary. The forum heard that Network Rail will not commit to a structure that will be accessible by those with mobility restrictions and that the

Providing independent advice on access to the countryside in Suffolk

county council has been lobbied vigorously by local people and the town council in this respect. (I would say here that it is unfortunate the county council has had to lead on these discussions with local people rather than Network Rail.)

I would like to strongly endorse the very clearly stated view of the forum that any structures replacing public rights of way level crossings anywhere in the county should be consistent with the current and foreseeable use of the path. This is especially so in and near towns and villages, where equalities requirements must be met and stepped only structures are simply not acceptable. To do anything else would be to fly in the face of both national and local policies to encourage healthy and sustainable access to services for everyone and to promote the enjoyment of the countryside and other green spaces.

In conclusion, should SLAF consider proper provision is not being made where a level crossing is being closed, it reserves the right to object to the relevant public path order.

Yours sincerely

Bryan Collen
Chairman, Suffolk Local Access Forum

Cc Councillor Newman, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member, Roads and Transport

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Letter from Network Rail
Meeting Date:	30 January 2014
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds



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08th November 2013

Dear Mr Collen,

Thank you for your letter dated 1st November 2013.

Firstly, I can confirm that the proposed overbridge at Great Barton is being designed to a minimum width of 3.5 metres. This will provide sufficient width for mobility scooters, in what will actually be a significant improvement to the current relatively narrow access gates and safety risk posed by crossing the railway at grade.

The Gypsy Lane (and Footpath 6) issue is slightly more complex. The current proposal is to provide a stepped footbridge on the line of Gypsy Lane and permanently close that level crossing along with the neighbouring Footpath 6 by summer 2014. Following the fatality at the crossing in August 2011, the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB), endorsed by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR), strongly recommended that the crossing should be closed. Since that time, Network Rail has secured and ring-fenced sufficient funding for a steps-free bridge or underpass at Gypsy Lane or Footpath 6 (it was recognised early on that one crossing point would be sufficient to facilitate the closure of both) and has been working with Suffolk County Council and our Design Contractors to investigate potential options.

In September 2013, the Designer submitted their Option Selection Report, the findings of which demonstrated that there are no reasonable and feasible steps-free options at either location. The primary constraint is the lack of land availability for construction of approach ramps on the western side of the railway, but there are a number of other issues around access for construction, drainage, length of approach ramps and visual intrusion of such a large structure.

The report went onto further recommend that a stepped solution at Gypsy Lane would be suitable when accounting for typical users and onward travel of those making use of the level crossing. A very short distance along the footpath, there is an awkward

narrow river bridge and long sections of un-made footpath across fields, which are not suitable for use by those with reduced mobility. A three day long survey completed in the summer of 2011 did not record any person using the Gipsy Lane crossing who would clearly have difficulty using a stepped footbridge. However, it is recognised that there is a national aspiration to improve accessibility; with the guidance of Suffolk County Council and as part of this scheme, Network Rail is therefore looking to improve the quality of access from the nearby Hawks Mill Street through the fields to the aforementioned footpath and the Gipping Valley River Path. It is our belief that this retains a reasonable form of access to the area for those who would struggle to navigate a stepped footbridge.

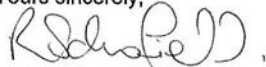
It should be noted that the stepped footbridge will be of a modular design and therefore provide passive provision for the future addition of ramps should the necessary land become available.

We have discussed the matter at length with Suffolk County Council and have submitted a position paper reflecting the above to which we're awaiting a response.

Network Rail does take the accessibility of routes over the railway very seriously, and is currently constructing several steps-free footbridges to replace level crossings or improve station accessibility throughout East Anglia; at Gipsy Lane, I hope you can appreciate that the decision to provide steps-only access is driven purely by physical feasibility rather than cost.

A meeting has been called in Needham Market for the evening of Wednesday 13th November, at which we intend to present our proposals to the Town Council and local residents. If possible, it may be useful for a member of the project team to meet with you beforehand to discuss the scheme in more detail; I have suggested he contacts SLAF directly at the email address provided.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Schofield

Route Managing Director, Anglia

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Storm/Flood Damage
Meeting Date:	30 January 2014
Author/Contact:	Annette Robinson
Venue:	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds

December 2014 Tidal Surge – Impact on public access to the coast and estuaries

The tidal surge on December 6th brought significant damage and disruption to the rights of way along the coast and up the estuaries. Water was funnelled up the estuaries and walls were breached and overtopped in many places.

On the day before the surge, the Area Rights of Way team put up warning signs on vulnerable, well used routes and on the subsequent days swapped these for ‘path lost’ or ‘path closed’ or ‘bridge washed away’, together with barriers. Where possible, we have carried out repairs, namely to lost bridges and broken boardwalks and by providing alternative routes.

We are now talking to the colleagues, the Environment Agency, local communities, landowners, partnership organisations, contractors and the Suffolk Coast & Heaths to understand priorities and to find ways forward.

The Environment Agency’s priority for action is primarily where properties are flooded and secondly where there is a threat to designated wildlife sites. They will not fund structural repairs to river walls outside of these priorities and they are unlikely to fund repairs to the surfaces of the rights of way carried by these walls. They are offering advice to landowners but will not necessarily be in a position to offer financial help.

Below is a summary of the areas that were damaged and the situation to date.

The Blyth Estuary

Robinson Marsh wall

The river wall from Walberswick village car park to the Bailey bridge was breached and scoured on the back face. EA have done a temporary repair as to leave the breach open would have put pressure on the estuary mouth and they will be monitoring it before carrying out any further work. The ROW team built a boardwalk around this to enable continued access along the river between Walberswick and Southwold and to protect the saltings.

The surface of this popular path was also damaged leaving it scoured and uneven. Repair work will be required.

Tinkers Marsh Wall

This wall breached just upstream of the Bailey Bridge. EA have done a temporary repair using a new technique devised by an Essex landowner but this does not restore the wall to its previous

height or width. We understand that Natural England plan to do a full repair which would enable the footpath to be re-opened.

The Alde & Ore Estuary

Snape river wall (north bank opposite Snape Maltings)

This wall was significantly overtopped, flooding homes and farmland. The footpath on the wall is very popular (Suffolk Coast Path and Sailors Path from Snape to Aldeburgh). It had been resurfaced in the last two years by the County Council and EA and it has been badly scoured or washed away along part of its length. There has been damage to the back face of the wall which EA will repair.

There is likely to be a bid for a capital scheme to raise the height of this wall, supported by EA, the Alde & Ore Estuary partnership, landowners and the local community. It is estimated that it could take 5 -10 years to develop, finance and implement a scheme. In the meantime, SCC may have to carry out repairs to make the surface fit for use.

Path from Iken to Snape Maltings

The boardwalks along this footpath were flooded but survived intact. A 5m footbridge was washed away and was replaced with a new bridge before Christmas at a cost of £500

Orford Area

South of the quay, there was some overtopping and a footbridge was washed out but this has been replaced by the ROW team.

Shingle Street

There was overtopping and a breach on the marsh wall at Shingle Street which flooded the road and grazing land. The wall carries a public footpath. EA repaired the breach the day after the surge.

The Deben Estuary

Martlesham Creek – North bank - footpath from Martlesham to Kyson Point, Woodbridge

The wall breached leaving the footpath unusable and flooding the grazing land behind. The path is a very popular linking path between Martlesham village and Woodbridge and is part of the Sandlings Walk. EA will not be repairing the breach. Overtopping also occurred, damaging the recently improved footpath surface.

The landowner is keen to repair the breach and to improve the structural strength and height of the whole length of the wall. He is seeking a partnership approach for funding and support for a scheme. In the meantime, the public footpath is unusable.

Martlesham Creek – south bank in front of Hill Farm

The footpath on the river wall is a popular circular walk. Three breaches occurred, two of which were repaired promptly by the landowner. The third breach is large and has an estimated rebuild cost of £50,000. The large breach sits on a part of the footpath which had already been breached

and lost in 1953, but the water flow affects the public footpath that links the river wall with the higher ground.

An assessment is needed as to how the water is flowing in this flood cell. There is interest from the landowner and the Deben Estuary Partnership to repair this breach.

In the meantime, the river wall path is a cul-de-sac and the linking path unusable. An alternative route has been set up with the landowner.

Waldringfield

The low wall upstream of the village carries a very popular footpath and was heavily overtopped flooding homes and washing away the surface. A capital scheme to raise this wall or to install a cross wall behind, is identified in the Deben Estuary Plan but will require matched funding. There is interest in the local community for a scheme. In the meantime, SCC may have to carry out repairs to the surface to make the path fit for use.

The Stour & Orwell Estuary

Levington Creek.

The creek wall has been breached in two places and the public footpath, the Suffolk Coast Path has been lost. This wall had also recently been resurfaced at the request of the parish council. One breach is large, low and actively tidal and as a result has flooded the land behind submerging a footpath with a timber boardwalk and washing out a 9m footbridge.

The landowner has been advised that EA will not be repairing the breach and he is now seeking quotes and ideas from contractors. The local community is very keen to see the two footpaths restored and a partnership approach to funding the work is likely.

Shotley marsh wall

This has been significantly scoured out in places leaving a thin, porous wall which is unsafe to use. The landowner has been advised to repair pending further discussions between the landowner, EA, NE and SCC on the existing project to create a managed retreat area behind this river wall.

The Open Coast

Walberswick marshes between Dunwich and Walberswick.

This area was significantly inundated and as a result, there has been a lot of damage to the recently re-surfaced footpaths on the tops of the marsh walls from Dingle Hill into Walberswick. The surface is uneven and muddy and will need resurfacing. Likely cost of re-surfacing is £25000.

Two footbridges were washed away but have been replaced together with a section of broken boardwalk, at a cost of £3200

DAR 24.01.14

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Regional LAF Chair and Vice Chair meeting – DB report
Meeting Date:	30 January 2014
Author/Contact:	David Barker
Venue:	West Suffolk House

Regional Meeting of Local Access Forums held on Friday October 25th

It made a change to travel by train from Elmswell although I had to taxi from the station at Cambridge as I had no idea where Shaftesbury Avenue was from the station.

I attended last Friday October 25th the regional LAF meeting. All LAFs were represented except Southend where no LAF ever got established.

Fiona Taylor of Natural England attended for the morning, the meeting was chaired by Michelle Gardiner of Essex LAF, who I believe is a regional representative. Fiona explained the Paths for Communities project had been fully committed it was oversubscribed with 9 of the 35 successful applicants in the east, only Stoke by Nayland was in Suffolk (might be worth a visit/meeting place). I think the Stoke by Nayland work was driven by safety issues, a new footway helping schoolchildren, also landowner support.

There appears very little money for future projects and to be honest 35 is a pretty insignificant number but better these than nothing at all. I suggested that future money is more likely if linked to Health and Wellbeing resources.

The Natural England Annual report of LAFs was mentioned, might I suggest we submit a small article and photo of the Elveden underpass for consideration for the report.

We went round the room to highlight concerns of LAFs

- 1) Essex Lack of local authority members with any understanding of Rights of Way! Officers also with little knowledge!
- 2) Beds ethnic minorities not using network.
- 3) Broads problem with appointment authority being different to Highway Authority.
- 4) Suffolk I mentioned concern with Network Rail wanting to close crossings without proper consultation; this was also mentioned by others.
- 5) Thurrock also Network Rail issues.
- 6) Herts problems with absentee landlords mainly big foreign national companies and unhelpful land agents!
- 7) Peterborough problem of out sourcing services and s106 money not delivering the outcomes.
- 8) Cambs Local authority restructuring when statutory rights of way work being sent elsewhere splitting of work.
- 9) Norfolk poor relations with county council and routine maintenance work not being done.

There was discussion on the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships many had very little contact (with Richard Powell joining SLAF this will not be the case in Suffolk).

When I listened to all the problems other LAFs have it is clear we are very lucky in Suffolk, they were surprised when I said we had the deputy leader of SCC and leader of the opposition on SLAF clearly this is not the case elsewhere.

Robert Johnstone of Essex gave a talk about some of the problems in Essex he said they have a major problem with planners many of whom have little knowledge of Rights of Way! He gave the example of Mayland where a block of flats have been built over a public footpath and 8 years on it has not been diverted. A car showroom built very close to a public footpath and no mention by the planners that it existed. He showed a slide of Highlands Country Park where the entrance sign obstructed the right of way and people had to walk in the road to around it and planning permission was given for it in the place!

We discussed frequency of meeting some met 6 times a year others 4.

The national conference had been split into 2 areas to save money and next year the split will involve Bristol on 4.2.2014 and Durham 7.3.2014 as you can imagine the eastern region were not impressed. All prefer one proper national conference.

I gave a report on the A11 underpass and said in future when new road schemes are proposed we have set the precedent for Rights of Way to be a serious consideration. I said how narrow the road appeared (not good for cyclists) also how short a distance, people had talked about the need for lights and anti-social behaviour but the fact it was only 22 yards made such things less likely.

In my view it was a very useful exchange of ideas on several related subjects.

David Barker 01.11.2014

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Regional LAF Chair and Vice Chair meeting – Notes of meeting
Meeting Date:	30 January 2014
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds

**East of England LAF
Chairs and Vice-Chairs' Meeting**

NOTES OF MEETING

25th October 2013

11.00am – 3.00pm

**Natural England, Eastbrook, Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge CB2 8DR**

Attendees:

Bob Wallace	Borough of Beds LAF
Pauline Hey	Central Beds LAF
Steve Bumstead	Central Beds LAF
Keith Bacon	Broads LAF
Roger Buisson	Cambs LAF
Robert Johnstone	Essex LAF
Ray Booty	Essex LAF
Liddy Lawrence	Herts LAF
Roger Thomas	Herts LAF
Seamus Elliott	Norfolk LAF
David Robinson	Peterborough LAF
David Barker	Suffolk LAF
Paula Watts	Thurrock LAF
Hazel Jarrold	Thurrock LAF
Angela Hennell	Natural England
Fiona Taylor	Natural England
Michelle Gardiner	East of England LAF Co-ordinator

Apologies:

James Russell - Borough of Beds LAF, Peter Medhurst - Broads LAF, Mary Sanders - Cambs LAF, Don Saunders - Norfolk LAF, Stephen Horner - Peterborough LAF, Bryan Collen - Suffolk LAF, Lynda Foster - Natural England

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
1	<p>Welcome and introductions Michelle Gardiner welcomed all to the meeting. All present introduced themselves.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of previous meeting held on 15th November 2012 Item 4 under Broads LAF should read 'recent cut back has made Norfolk County Council responsible for their care'. Item 4 under Essex LAF disabled access vehicle is a Boma.</p> <p><i>Matters arising</i> Permissive access had been suggested as a topic for the national conference held in February 2012 and it was felt this was still a relevant topic for the next national conference. Keith Bacon reported that he had been unable to book to attend the 2012 conference as there were no remaining places by the time he was sure of his availability. It was suggested that next time a place could be booked for a representative from his LAF and then delegate name confirmed nearer the time.</p>	
3	<p>P4C presentation – Fiona Taylor, Natural England Fiona delivered a presentation outlining the projects which have received Paths for Communities funding in the region. The East of England had a good number of successful projects compared to other regions. All £2 million of P4C funding has been allocated and the programme is now closed.</p> <p>Fiona congratulated all of the successful schemes and commented that it was very rewarding to deliver practical projects with so much involvement from local people. It is disappointing that the funding is not going to continue. The next edition of the P4C newsletter will include alternative sources of funding and application tips for projects that were not successful or did not apply in time.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that there is a lot of work required when applying for funding such as P4C and for some projects the timescale was not long enough. It is useful to have 'shovel ready' projects ready to go for when new funding streams open. There may be future funding opportunities through Leader money or Health and Wellbeing Boards etc, so it is important to engage with these groups.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would be good to have a P4C presentation at the next national conference as a debrief of the scheme and to celebrate the successful projects.</p> <p>Fiona left the meeting after her presentation to attend a launch event for a P4C project.</p>	
4	<p>Discussion: your feedback and comments on documents recently issued by Natural England The following points were raised:</p>	

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbreviations are overused and not fully explained in engagement plan etc. • When local authorities consult with Natural England, they tend to get advice on SSSIs etc but not on general access and PRoW issues. • Natural England has strong emphasis on protection of newts and stone curlews etc, but not on day-to-day creation and protection of PRoW. There was stronger influence when English Nature existed. • Natural England has a series of Standing Advice on their website which can be applied to any planning application, but not one for access. It would be useful to create Standing Advice for access issues. • Very useful to quote case studies and examples in communication. • Good that the engagement plan recognises the change in emphasis of LAF role to reflect the move from being purely strategic. • Positive step change is occurring in getting LAFs heard and in communication between LAFs and Natural England – thanks to Rob Leek. • Establish relationship with two new ministers – Dan Rogerson and George Eustice, invite them to next national conference. • LAFs can ask their local MP to table a question to present to minister in the House of Commons. 	
5	<p>Discussion: current issues affecting your LAF</p> <p>Essex LAF Lack of knowledge and involvement of officers and members from local authority. Lack of understanding can lead to cuts.</p> <p>Online map of PROW is not the definitive map in Essex.</p> <p>Borough of Beds LAF are currently producing a guide to educate officers and members in their area – this could be shared with all LAFs. Bob Wallace will circulate to all LAFs.</p> <p>Central Beds LAF Inclusion of all ROW users e.g. ethnic groups and young people – trying to engage with all and promote the benefits. Health benefits can be a good way to instigate interest or raising awareness in schools etc.</p> <p>Broads LAF Appointing authority and highways authority are different organisations. Positive relationship with appointing authority.</p> <p>Suffolk LAF Network Rail closing access to crossings. Some LAFs have had presentations from Network Rail at their meetings. Could be beneficial to have a regional approach to this issue, more co-ordinated approach using LAFs as consultees.</p>	BW

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
	<p>Thurrock LAF Lack of consideration for safe crossings.</p> <p>Herts LAF Absentee landowners, big holding companies operating from abroad with no regard to access. No funding available to pursue land ownership.</p> <p>Clarity needed on s106 funding, no strategic viewpoint. Local authority determining spend. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) being introduced by some local authorities e.g. Huntingdonshire District Council. Includes funding for green space so LAFs can be consulted.</p> <p>Peterborough LAF Local authority outsourcing services.</p> <p>Cambs LAF Appointing authority restructuring, staff changing and in different departments.</p> <p>Norfolk LAF Loss of funding for maintenance. No overall responsibility for ROW within the appointing authority, split into two sections with Trails separate Looking at alternative finding for LAF, possibly creating charitable incorporated organisation (CIO).</p>	
6	<p>LAF representation on LNPs in the region Former Defra minister, Richard Benyon, emphasised the importance of LAFs getting involved with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and Health and Wellbeing Boards.</p> <p>Michelle briefly defined the role of the partnerships and then provided an update on Cambs LNP on behalf of Mary Sanders from Cambs LAF. Mary is Cambs LAF's representative on the LNP. The LNP is facilitated by the officer from Cambs County Council who also supports the LAF. The LNP has had three meetings so far and a stakeholder conference, all building up towards the actual launch of the partnership. Mary is the only representative on the LNP concerned with access issues, so has an important role in flagging up access with regards to the significant level of development occurring in the county.</p> <p>Bob Wallace reported on the Beds LNP. This partnership has formed out of the Green Infrastructure group and includes representatives from RSPB, Environment Agency, Wildlife Trust, local landowners etc. The LNP does not have money, this is held by the LEP and Health and Wellbeing Board. The LNP has recently met for the first time, which Bob attended to represent Borough of Beds LAF. It is very early days yet and it will be interesting to see how things develop.</p> <p>Liddy Lawrence reported that the Herts LNP is more like a cabinet type</p>	

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
	<p>board and Herts LAF is therefore not invited to be represented. There is a local authority representative and the LAF could feed in to the LNP through this route.</p> <p>It is important for LAFs to keep informed about the progress of these groups if funding is going to be available in the future. The tourism route could be a way for Norfolk and Broads LAFs to engage with their LEP. Perhaps find out who the tourism representative is and see if they have any access knowledge.</p> <p>It was suggested it would be useful to discuss these groups further at the national conference.</p>	
7	<p>Development and PROW presentation – Robert Johnstone, Essex LAF</p> <p>Robert delivered a presentation using examples from his home parish of Myland to illustrate problems that can occur when planning applications are approved that affect PROW.</p> <p>Robert suggested the following would be beneficial in Essex and maybe other areas of the region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be more dialogue and joint working between the highways authority and the planning authorities e.g. sharing costs of advertising for PPOs. • Some planning officers have a lack of knowledge of PROW issues and need education e.g. a training seminar delivered at different locations around the region. • Definitive Map and Statement should be available for members of the public to view at all local planning authorities. • Guidance for planning officers to use online map of PROW (not Definitive Map in Essex). <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning officers should submit planning applications which affect PROW to highways authority for consultation. • Planning applications checklist should ask if PROW will be affected but this question is not always included on checklist e.g. not on Fenland District Council. • Parish councils support applications without realising they affect PROW or applications sent for consultation to incorrect parishes. • Ramblers are statutory consultees, area footpath secretaries respond to planning applications. <p>What more can we do as LAFs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAFs could take on education role for parish councils, officers and members. Rolling information roadshow. • Herts LAF have organised training for parish councils in the past. Not all parish councils are interested. 	

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise highways authority about planning applications to object to. • Get LAF representatives on relevant 'Friends of' groups that look at and respond to planning applications. 	
8	<p>Discussion: managing LAFs</p> <p>Essex LAF 6 meetings. Secretariat outsourced to voluntary sector. No member attendance at meetings.</p> <p>Broads LAF 4 meetings, 2 are combined with site meetings. Broads authority officer is secretary and 2 dedicated access officers support the LAF.</p> <p>Suffolk LAF 4 meetings. Suffolk County Council officer for secretariat.</p> <p>Thurrock LAF 6 meetings, 2 of which are public and 4 working group only. PRow officer is secretary. No member attendance at meetings.</p> <p>Herts LAF 4 public meetings, 2 working group meetings and 2 field trips. Herts County Council officer for secretariat. Head of ROW attends meetings. Officers and members at all meetings.</p> <p>Peterborough LAF 4 or 5 meetings, held in the pub! Contract worker for secretariat but arranged through local authority. Officer attendance at meetings, but no members.</p> <p>Cambs LAF 4 meetings now, reduced due to budget cuts. 2 held near Cambridge and 2 in the north of the county. Held in village halls or other public venues. Independent secretary. Supported by officer (Community Greenspaces Manager) and DM officers etc are invited to attend meetings. County level members attend.</p> <p>Borough of Beds LAF 6 meetings. Independent secretary. Officer support, used to provide secretariat. Funding not a problem at present. Current member not very supportive.</p> <p>Central Beds LAF 6 public meetings, 1 joint with Borough of Beds LAF. Held in different public venues. Appointing authority officer is secretary. Countryside Access Officer present at meetings and member attendance, but difficulty getting Luton member to attend.</p> <p>Norfolk LAF</p>	

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
	4 public meetings held at County Hall, 1 linked to site visit. Appointing authority officer is secretary. Main officer support is from Trails Development Officer. County level member attends. Members of the public attend. Some working groups. Looking at setting up a not-for-profit arm.	
9	<p>Future meetings and use of webinar</p> <p>Due to budget constraints, there will be split north/south national LAF events in 2014. The southern conference will be held on Tuesday 4th February 2014 at Bristol Natural England office. The northern conference will be held on Friday 7th March 2014 at Durham County Council Chamber.</p> <p>Attendees expressed disappointment that the conference will be split. It was felt that it is not possible to get the same feedback when two events are held and the informal social networking element is lost when there is no dinner and overnight stay. Michelle will report this back to Natural England.</p> <p>Attendees want face-to-face regional meetings to continue. Michelle had previously asked all LAFs in the region about how many meetings to arrange for 2013/14 and the majority of respondents had requested only one. However, attendees felt that it would be useful to have another meeting before the end of the financial year. This could perhaps be combined with a site visit to one of the successful P4C projects and open to all LAF members. All felt it important that Natural England staff also attend. Michelle to explore options.</p> <p>Fiona Taylor recently led a trial webinar session for East of England LAFs. Those present that had participated reported that it was a useful tool, which could be used in the future for specific single topic discussions or to get regional feedback for consultations etc. It was felt that webinars should be kept short and discussions well managed. Broadband speed and equipment availability are barriers to some people participating. Webinars should not replace face-to-face meetings.</p>	<p>MG</p> <p>MG</p>
10	<p>AOB</p> <p>David Barker reported that construction of the A11 underpass, which has been discussed at previous meetings, is now underway.</p>	

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Sizewell C
Meeting Date:	30 January 2014
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds

Paper: To Establish Core Principles to Protect and Improve Public Access on the Sizewell C Estate

Not for wider circulation

Introduction

Suffolk County Council is in the process of adopting a set of design, ecological and estate management principles to mitigate long lasting adverse direct and indirect impacts of Sizewell C on landscape character, cultural heritage and ecology. The purpose of the principles is to inform discussions with EDF and moderate the impact of the new power station by balancing the visual impact, enhancing the natural and cultural heritage, strengthening landscape character and improving public access both on and off the existing estate. A copy is attached.

Public Access

The ecological and estate principles naturally centre on bio-diversity, landscape etc, and it is felt a similar document focussing specifically on public access will help ensure the delivery of the county council's requirements in that regard. To be credible, the principles require the support of stakeholders and to that end the local access forum is requested to consider and comment on the attached draft. Once SLAF have advised the county council on the draft document, consideration will be given as to whether wider circulation is required.

Once finalised, the access principles will be submitted to the Sizewell C Joint Local Authority Group (JLAG). The JLAG was established in order to facilitate a joint local authority approach to the challenges and opportunities that will result from the construction and operation of the proposed new nuclear power station. The group consists of cabinet and locality members from both Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council. At its last meeting on 24th January, the JLAG welcomed the design, ecological and estate management principles, and enquired whether access principles would also be available. Nick Collinson, SCC Natural Environment Manager, explained access principles are being worked up and will be considered by the local access forum, and will be put before the JLAG at a later date.

The final version will be forwarded to EDF and used in future discussions with interested parties.

Attached:

1. SCC Sizewell C Estate Principles,
2. SCC Sizewell C Public Access Principles.

END

AW/SCC
January 2014

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Sizewell C
Meeting Date:	30 January 2014
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds

Sizewell C – Suffolk Principles for Public Rights of Way and Other Access

The production of these principles has been led by Suffolk County Council in consultation with the Suffolk Local Access Forum, the Ramblers and the Sandlings Safer Cycling Campaign

Background to Access Affected by the Sizewell Estate and Summary

1. The EDF Sizewell Estate is home to a network of public rights of way, open access and other access enjoying no official status. This access is highly valued by local people and visitors alike, and the protection and development of this access meets county council priorities to promote growth including through tourism, be the greenest county, improve the health and wellbeing of the population and promote sustainable and safe travel.¹
2. Public rights of way and open access are protected by law and cannot be interfered with unless a legal order or statutory restriction is in place.
3. National policy statements for national energy infrastructure projects include the following statements:

Section 5.10.6 of EN-1 advises *applicants will need to consult the local community on their proposals to build on open space, sports or recreational buildings and land. Taking account of the consultations, applicants should consider providing new or additional open space including green infrastructure, sport or recreation facilities...*

Section 5.10.16 of EN-1 states that the IPC [now PINS] *'should expect applicants to have taken advantage of opportunities to maintain and enhance access to the coast', including the 'implications for development of the creation of a continuous signed and managed route around the coast'.*

Section 5.10.20 of EN-1 notes that where green infrastructure is affected, *'the IPC [now PINS] should consider imposing requirements to ensure the connectivity of the green infrastructure network is maintained in the vicinity of the development and that any necessary works are undertaken, where possible, to mitigate any adverse impact and, where appropriate, to improve that network and other areas of open space including appropriate access to*

¹ Suffolk County Council Key Priorities; A Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Suffolk; Suffolk's Local Transport Plan

new coastal access routes'.

Section 5.10.24 of EN-1 recognises the recreational importance of '*rights of way, National Trails and other rights of access to land*' and states that the '*IPC [now PINS] should expect applicants to take appropriate mitigation measures to address adverse effects*' upon such features.

Section 5.13.4 of EN-1 notes that *where appropriate, the applicant should prepare a travel plan including demand management measures to mitigate transport impacts. The applicant should also provide details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling, to reduce the need for parking associated with the proposal and to mitigate transport impacts.*

Section C.8.78 of EN-6 (Volume II) suggests that '*possible mitigation measures might include siting certain elements of a station away from public footpaths and/or the provision of realignments to existing or planned rights of way*'.

4. The county council, therefore, expects EDF to ensure that the Sizewell Estate remains an access asset in the context of the wider Suffolk Coast, and ultimately enhances it.

Public and Other Access on the EDF Sizewell Estate

5. The county council believes the construction of a new nuclear power station at Sizewell should demonstrate the highest standards towards maintaining access during construction and ensuring a permanent legacy of improved access at completion. The county council acknowledges there will be disruption to access during construction and some routes may require temporary or permanent closure and the creation of new routes. Strategic routes and access, however, should be maintained on their existing alignments (whilst accepting that there may be occasions when works necessitate brief closures).
6. The extent of the existing access network within a 10kmx4km area based on Sizewell (stretching north to south from Minsmere to South Warren and inland to Leiston) comprises 87km of public rights of way, of which 18.2km are higher than footpath rights, approximately 6km of unofficial linear access and 243Ha of open access.
7. The extent and quality of this access is significantly greater than the county average (160% in the case of public rights of way) and this availability of countryside access is a significant attraction for visitors. Its value is enhanced by removing users from the network of local roads, some of which are unsuitable for non motorised users and whose use will increase significantly during the construction phase.

In Detail

8. Strategic access must be maintained during and after construction on the following routes:
 - i) The Suffolk Coast Path. This path is one of the primary walking attractions of the area and provides a vital north south route. There is no realistic alternative route.

- ii) Leiston Bridleway 19 (also known as Lover's Lane). This lane forms part of a linear and direct route from Aldeburgh to Westleton and Minsmere. There is no realistic alternative route.
- iii) The Sandlings Walk where it is not contiguous with the above two routes, ie, the current permissive link from the beach through Goose & Kenton Hills to join Leiston Bridleway 19.

9. Other access principles:

- i) An area near Leiston south of Sandy Lane should be made available for the public for informal recreation including walking dogs off lead in order to reduce the impacts on more sensitive habitat areas that already exist or are created through the landscape strategy.
- ii) Appropriate permissive public access (for cyclists, pedestrians and horse-riders) across the Sizewell Estate should be maintained as far as reasonably possible during construction and appropriately enhanced post-construction, including dedication as public rights of way.
- iii) Potential temporary or permanent closures and/or diversions affecting public access to and across the estate arising from construction should be minimised to reduce disruption, particularly the long distance routes such as the Suffolk Coast Path.
- iv) A safe walking/cycling route from Leiston and nearby accommodation sites to works and construction areas is required.
- v) A bridleway along or adjacent to old railway track from Leiston to Aldeburgh should be created, to give an off road route to Minsmere and a link between the campus site and local towns and villages. This should include provision along/adjacent to Lovers Lane where it is a road. This improvement will both support sustainable green travel during construction and be a legacy mitigation.
- vi) The permitted access to Goose and Kenton Hills and onto the beach should be retained during and after construction. This access should be created as a public right of way. Goose and Kenton Hills should be retained as amenity access.
- vii) The byway from Sizewell Hall to Thorpeness should be repaired to improve access to the disabled persons' holiday centre.
- viii) Improvement to the network of rights of way from Leiston and the campus site to the surrounding countryside are required, particularly access to the beach between Sizewell and Thorpeness and access from Leiston south to Thorpeness. This will help accommodate the expected increased use of the network.

AW/SCC
January 2014

END