

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	20 October 2016
Author/Contact:	Sophie Morling
Venue:	Stutton Community Hall

		Paper Number
1.	14.00 Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 16/16
3.	Declaration of interest	
4.	Coastal Access Update (paper)	LAF 16/17
5.	Network Rail Level Crossings (paper)	LAF 16/18 Appendix A & B
6.	Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Boundary Review	
7.	Access Developments Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update on ROWIP b. Update on Walkers are Welcome 	
8.	Public Question Time	
9.	Dates for 2017 Meetings	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of meeting held at SALC, Claydon on 21 July 2016
Meeting Date:	20 October 2016
Author/Contact:	Sophie Morling
Venue:	TBC

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), David Barker (Vice Chair) (DB), Annette Ellis (AE), Monica Pipe (MP), Anthony Wright (AWR), John Wayman (JW), Margaret Hancock (MH) , Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Jane Hatton (JH), Gordon Merfield (GM)

SCC Officers Present: Sophie Morling (SM) (minutes), Andrew Woodin (AW), Steve Kerr (SK), Claire Parker (CP)

Guest Speakers: Kim Thirlby (KT)

Member of the Public: Gordon Crosby (GC), Mervyn Holden, Jim Richards (JR), Tony Fayers (TF)

Apologies: Roland Wilson (RW), Diana Kearsley (DK).

2. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF16/05)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2016 were reviewed and confirmed to be an accurate record.

DB advised whilst it was good that SLAF had West Suffolk Council give an informative presentation at the previous meeting, we need this from the other Local Planning Authorities in Suffolk. AW advised that it was a case of juggling meeting time and other presentations, eg on Network Rail's level crossing proposals, but agreed it is a priority.

3. Declaration of interest – None

4. Presentation on Coastal Access – Natural England

TK updated everyone with the progress of the Coastal Access Scheme:

Cromer to Sea Palling agreed, Sea Palling to Great Yarmouth is approved but not yet in operation, and in Suffolk Hopton to Aldeburgh and Harwich to Shotley sections are in progress [the report accompanying this item had more information]. Each section takes around 3 years from start to finish.

KT expanded upon the section of coast path west of Harwich and the issues faced.

KT advised stakeholder engagement tends to focus on 4 items:

- a) Ferries – people are asking why they are not spending money on this,
- b) Lack of available detail,
- c) Land manager information on sensitive sites and keeping disruption to a minimum.
- d) Dogs – control and walking of dogs and needing to find the right solution for this, including clear signs.

KT noted whatever NE propose has to fit with the scheme.

Discussion took place around dogs and owners and how the legislations are sending mixed messages and how dog owners are confused as to what they should and should not be doing. Also the signs are not clear enough, especially in sensitive areas and are putting children, elderly and other animals at risk. KT advised that he has a document with strict guidelines he has to follow regarding this.

AW raised the issue regarding arson at the Wrabness cabins and how with more walkers in the area in the winter, this might deter people from doing this.

SK asked about if any landowners have objections, how are these dealt with. KT advised that in the report they have to submit to the Sectary of State to approve the route, everything from objections to approvals are included. DEFRA make sure the report matches the criteria and can either approve, reject or approve with conditions. Only landowners can object formally to the proposals.

5. Coastal Access Update

BH, AE and MH attended a meeting with Norfolk and The Broads LAFs in Beccles last month to discuss matters of mutual interest, including management and promotion of the coast path. AE said more promotion of the coastal access needs to be done. The note of this meeting will be circulated with these minutes.

6. Network Rail Level Crossings Paper

Gipsy Lane – SK advised that Network Rail's flow monitoring within the culvert and modelling works has now finished and SCC is awaiting the results. Suffolk County Council are working with their own engineers for costing improvements it believes are required to the route connecting to the culvert.

TF, land owner, mentioned to the group that more needs to be done with the upkeep of the River Gipping, as it is blocked with fallen trees, branches, rubbish. Expensive equipment has been used, but this has not solved the problem.

DB asked TF if the River Gipping was cleared out properly, would this prevent the flooding – TF answered yes it would. GC said that this is not maintained enough and due to rules and regulations the Environment Agency cannot touch this.

BH agreed that Great Barton and Cotton are to be removed from future versions of the report as these have been approved now.

Halesworth – SK liaising with Highways with regards to the proposal to close the private crossing at the statin and using alternative routes on public highway.

Trimley – SK said that the proposal so far is that 6 PRoW crossings be extinguished and replaced with a bridle bridge built. SCC is also working with Network Rail with regards to alternative footpaths in the location. So far, SCC believes this scheme demonstrates that PRoW level crossings can be closed and replaced with acceptable alternative routes, if the investment and commitment by NR is there.

AWR asked that bridleways are upgraded to include easy accessibility to cyclists, mobility users and equestrian. SK said that Network Rail would pay for the upgrades, but regarding some this would be 1 in 15 with landing, where it should be 1 in 20 with no landing to meet with the DDA act.

AW said these are early days with Trimley and have not been made public as yet. BH said that when they have been made public he will do a response on behalf of SLAF.

Appendices A and B on the current Transport and Works Act Order were discussed – BH, DB, DK, AW and SK met in Bury and went through every single crossing and made comments regarding each one. SK said that if it says 'no comment' this means further information is required before making comment. BH asked the members in attendance if he has missed anything off the list, object or would like to add anything – everyone happy with this.

Discussions took place around the Parnell Lane crossing at Elsmwell.

Somerleyton – AW mentioned a consultation NR are undertaking to improve or replace the swing bridge at Somerleyton. There are various options, but if any members knew the area and would like to comment on the proposals would they please let him know.

Actions: 1. SCC to confirm SLAF's interim TWAO response is now final, 2. Members to let AW know if they have any interest in the Somerleyton proposals.

7. Ipswich Docks & Upper Orwell Crossings

SK showed the information via the Suffolk County Council website to the members, which involves three new crossings, one of which will accommodate private vehicular use, and all three will have access for pedestrians and cyclists.

AW advised that if members would like to comment, please email the SLAF mailbox and AW will collate the responses and pass it on - slaf@suffolk.gov.uk

8. Rights of Way Improvement Paper

CP reminded members that the second ROWIP paper is due in December, and SCC will shortly start to draft it.

CP said that the consultation has been a success with over 800 responses to the survey and Ellie Tudor is collating the information.

BH asked that this is discussed at the October meeting for members to make comments, and thanked CP and Ellie Tudor for the work.

JS said how pleased she is with the responses to the consultation, and how impressive it is compared to other consultations.

9. SLAF Annual Report

CP went through some missing data on the report with the members. The report will be submitted to SCC's Cabinet in September. JH commented how large new developments can impact negatively on bridleways and JS wondered whether LPAs should consult SLAF on some consultations.

10. General Paper

There were no matters arising.

11. Any Other Business

MH mentioned the new ferry for the Felixstowe area to get to Harwich for the crossing to Holland. The new ferry is not DDA compliant and asked if Suffolk County Council has agreed any funds for this, as it is mentioned on the leaflet? This also included Babergh District Council's logo.

Action: AW to find out if funds had been agreed?
AE will forward to Babergh District Council

Public Question Time – No questions from the public.

Dates and Venues of Future Meetings - 20 October 2016, Venue TBC

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: The England Coast Path
Meeting Date: 20th October 2016
Author/Contact: Claire Parker for Andrew Woodin
Venue: Stutton Community Centre

Background

The Government has put additional funding in place over the next 5 years, to make sure that the England Coast Path (ECP) is completed by 2020. Natural England (NE) has a duty to create a continuous walking trail around the entire coast of England, with wider access to beaches and open land as appropriate.

1. Progress on Establishing The England Coast Path

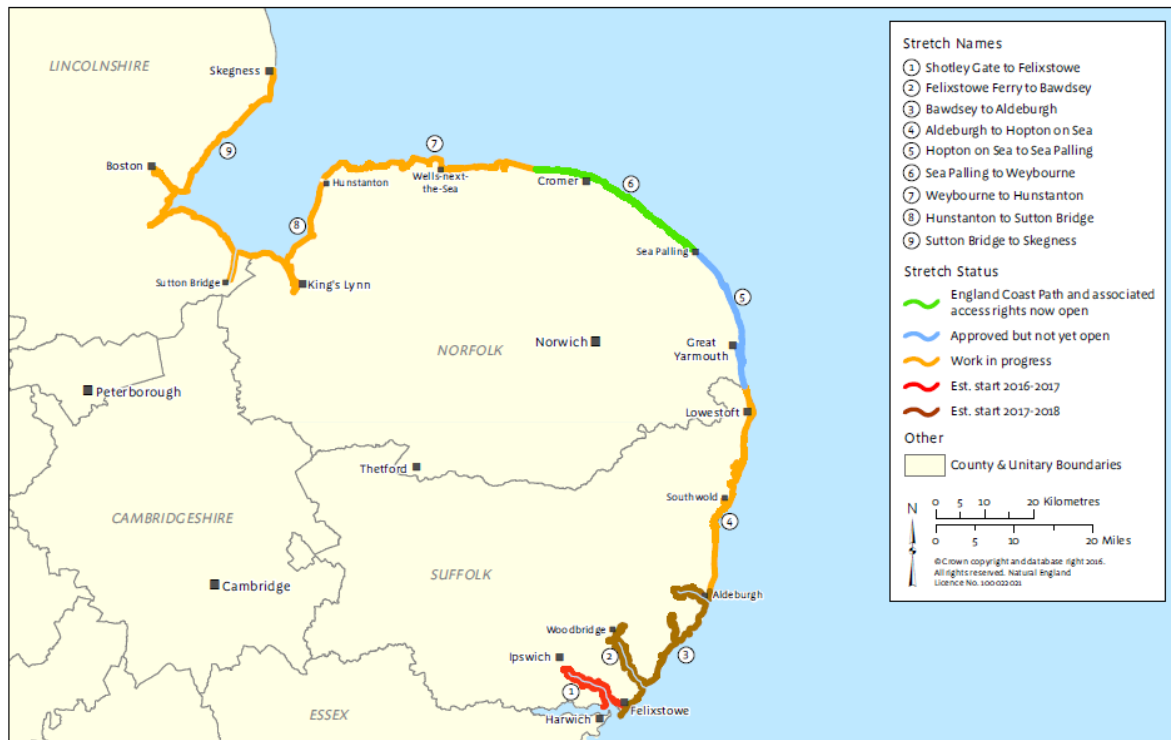
The latest newsletter from Natural England (September 2016) states:

Location	Current Activity*	Further Detail	Next Milestone
Essex Harwich - Shotley Gate	Stage 2 & 3: Develop and Propose	Site visits and meetings with landowners to discuss alignment options.	Finalise and publish our proposals in spring 2017.
Suffolk / Norfolk Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea	Stages 2 & 3: Develop and Propose	More detailed site visits and meetings with stakeholders and landowners to discuss alignment options and protection of sensitive features.	Finalise and publish our proposals autumn 2017.

Coastal Access Map – East Coast

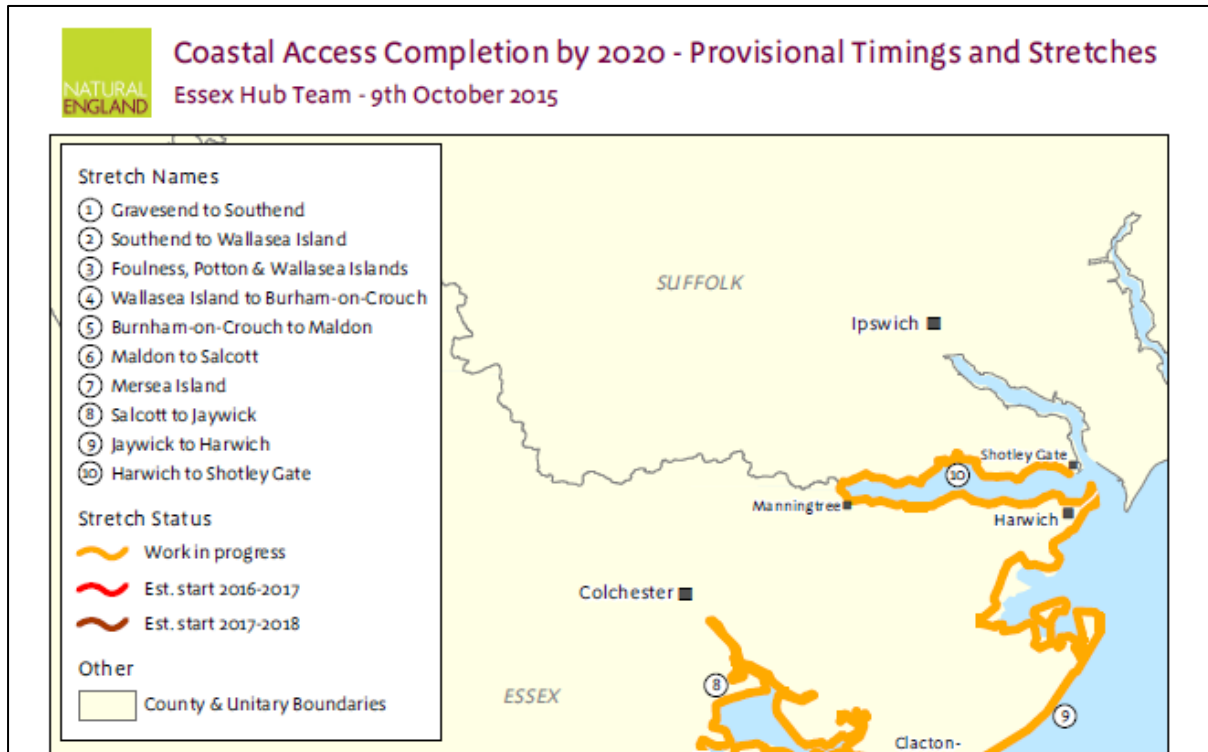


Coastal Access Completion by 2020 - Provisional Timings and Stretches
 East Hub Team - 15th March 2016



Further information here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-in-the-east-of-england>

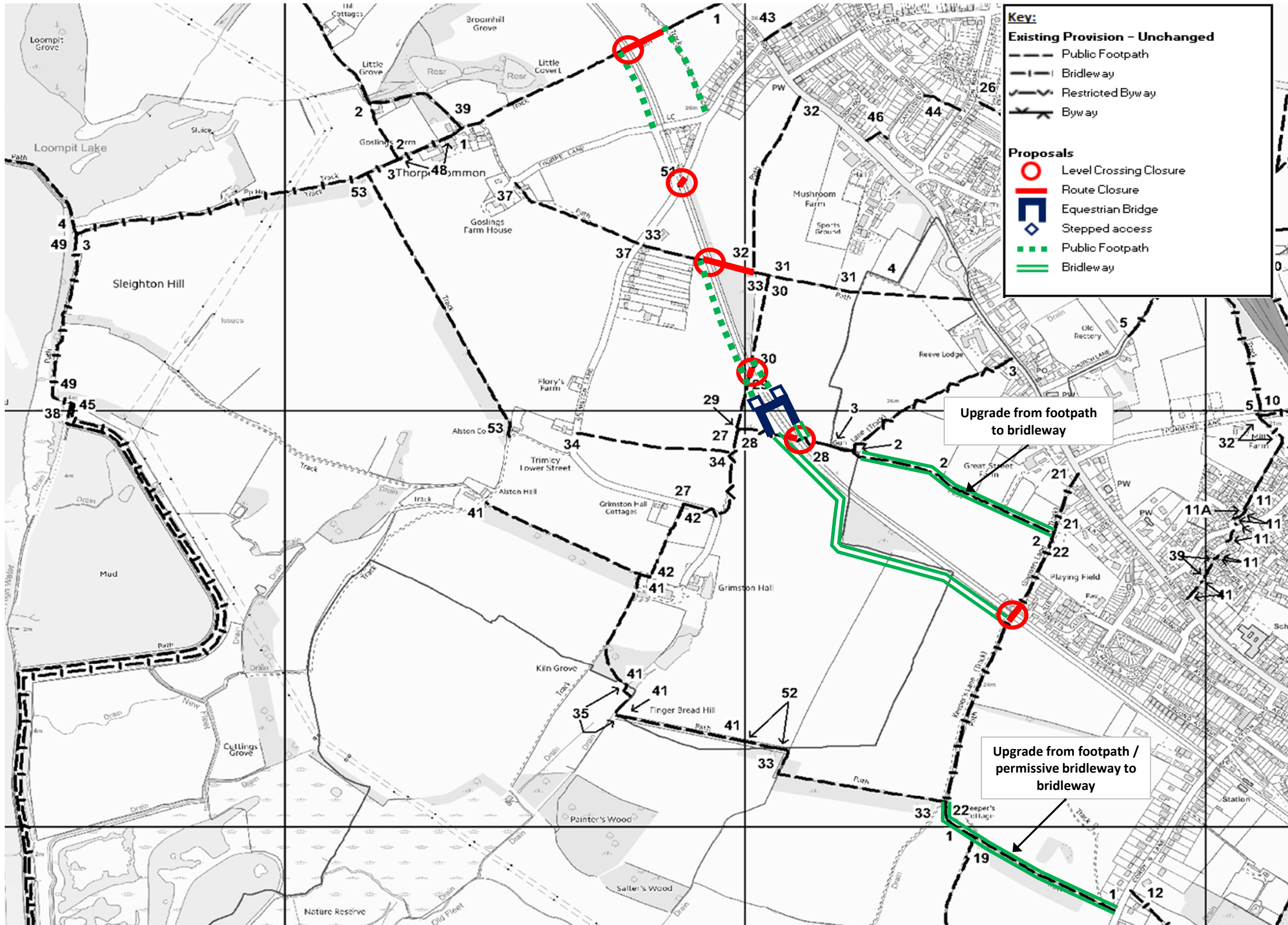
Cont.

Coastal Access Map – The StourMiscellaneous

The Scheme (methodology) for establishing coastal access can be found here:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327964912746496?category=50007>

END
AW/SCC July 2016





'In terms of headroom, the county council considers the minimum headroom option of 1.925 m to be unacceptable. However, the upper limit of 2.0 m, whilst significantly sub-standard, is on balance, considered acceptable for public use.

Turning to the frequency of potential flooding, if the 2m option were to result in the culvert flooding 4 or 5 times a year, SCC also considers this risk to be tolerable.

This agreement is subject to the design for the culvert including a maintenance regime for both the structure and any required clearance following flood episodes. This has previously been raised by SCC at the Design Panel meetings.

With regards to the design of the culvert structure itself, the county council requests that it have the minimum impedance on water flows through both culverts and would be happy to discuss this further.

On a final note, the county council needs to understand how all the other factors raised at the options consultation stage and the Design Panel meetings are being addressed by Network Rail. These include assessing the safety impact of diverting the public onto the cycling facility alongside Stowmarket Road, revising the length of the current 30 mph speed restriction and relocating the bus stop.'

Officers have now received and assessed the feasibility report from Suffolk Highways on the necessary works and associated costs relating to the proposed upgrading of the diversionary route proposed by NR, to allow for cycling connectivity between Needham Market, Creting St Mary and Stowmarket. The works include surfacing, a new boardwalk/causeway along part of FP 3 Creting St Mary, together with the replacement of the existing footbridge over the River Gipping. The report has yet to be discussed in any detail with NR but initial discussions have indicated that NR would be prepared to fund the scheme, as long as this does not prejudice or delay the delivery of the footpath diversion via the culvert.

A further Design Panel meeting has also been arranged for 3 November, at which NR and their consultants will be presenting the outcomes of the flood modelling study and providing further updates on the wider scheme.

Halesworth Station - Barrow crossing



Further to the site meeting held on 23 June, various actions were agreed to improve the connecting paths, including the provision of lighting on both routes. Although NR were initially clearly intent on closing the crossing, there has been a great deal of local opposition to this and NR are currently weighing up other options. A press article appeared in the EADT in early August that stated that the HM Chief Inspector of Railways visited the station and the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) has written to Network Rail and asked it to consider the installation of various safety measures to mitigate the current risks at the crossing, including for example, a footbridge or the use of miniature warning lights. Theresa Coffey MP supports the action of the ORR and considers the crossing should be kept open.

Felixstowe Branch Line Improvements – Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO)

As part of the Felixstowe Branch Line Project, SCC officers met with NR in June. NR have stated that this project will increase the capacity of the Felixstowe branch line to 45 freight trains per day in each direction (the line currently operates 32 freight trains in each direction). In order to increase the capacity the scheme will involve the following works:



- Installation of a new double junction at Westerfield Junction
- Bi-directional signalling at Derby Road
- New approximately 1.6km extension to the Trimley loop
- Upgrade of 4 half barrier level crossings to full barrier level crossings
- Closure and diversion of foot crossings in the Trimley area
- Associated signalling, power and telecoms works

NR state the benefits of the project are:

- Nationally important infrastructure project
- Benefits the Port
- For every extra train, 60 lorries are taken off the road, this will reduce congestion on the A14
- The new infrastructure will improve the reliability of the passenger service
- Improves the safety of the railway corridor.

As one of the project remits, NR are proposing to close or divert 5 rights of way crossings via a TWAO application to the Secretary of State for Transport. The reasons given are as follows:-

- In order to improve the safety of the railway and reduce the risk to rail users and members of the public, Network Rail is closing crossings across the network.
- Because the rail traffic across the level crossings along the Felixstowe branch line will increase, the risk of an incident has significantly increased.

- The new track layout means there is a risk that trains will block a crossing or affect the sighting at a crossing.
- The new double track section will be bi-directional therefore there is a risk that users will expect a train from one direction rather than both or a train from one direction will block the view of the train from the other direction.

The package of crossings to be closed/diverted are set out below and will include the provision of a grade separated structure, in the form of a ramped bridleway bridge. Following further meetings and dialogue with NR, the county council has provisionally agreed a package of level crossing rationalisation – see Appendix A.

- Grimston Lane – FP51 Trimley St Martin
- Trimley – FP33 Trimley St Martin
- St Martin – FPs 29/30 Trimley St Martin
- Gun Lane – RB 28 Trimley St Martin
- Keepers Lane – BR 22 Trimley St Mary

The principal landowners are NR and Trinity Estates. Via their representatives, Bidwells, Trinity Estates are seeking some revisions to the scheme, which are largely being resisted by NR. A further meeting has been arranged with county council officers for the end of October to discuss their suggestions/concerns. The Forum shall be updated on the outcome of this meeting in due course.

General/Countywide

NR's Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Strategy - Transport and Works Act Order

NR undertook their second round of consultations during September, again holding three public exhibition events across the county. This consultation presented their preferred option for each crossing, based on the consultation feedback from the first consultation phase and their own traffic censuses and Road Safety Assessments (RSA). The consultation deadline closed on 7 October and officers are meeting NR and their consultants on 19 October to discuss the results of the latest consultation exercise and the outcomes of the further RSA work and traffic censuses. Despite repeat requests, NR have not yet supplied this information but have assured SCC that this information, although perhaps incomplete, will be provided at, or in advance of, the meeting. Officers also met internally on 12 October to review each crossing and the feedback from the first consultation, and to consider the maintenance and protection implications resulting from the proposals. SCC has no strong objection to the majority of the proposed diversions but has significant concerns at 6 or 7 crossings.

The Forum wrote to NR at the beginning of October advising it would only be responding to the second consultation after its meeting on 20 October and that in the meantime it was lodging a holding objection.

END – SK & AW/SCC October 2016