



<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue: Knodishall Village Hall</b>

## 1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), Monica Pipe (MP), David Barber (Vice Chair) (DB), John Wayman (JW), Gordon Merfield (GM), Margaret Hancock (MH), Anthony Wright (AWR)

SCC Officers Present:, Andrew Woodin (AW)

Member of the Public: Gordon Crosby (GC)

Apologies: Cllr Jane Storey, Jane Hatton (JH), Diana Kearsley (DK), Roland Wilson (RW),

## 2. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF17/10)

**ACTION:** SCC will invite an East Suffolk Planner to future meeting to discuss a specific larger application.

- AW noted his department is being restructured, resulting in the loss of most of the business support team and hence SLAF's secretariat. Members expressed concern at this and BH offered to pursue the matter on the forum's behalf.

## 3. Declarations of interest – none were made.

## 4. Site Visit to Aldhurst Farm

- Members discussed the morning's site visit to the heathland creation scheme and discussed the potential linear route to Lovers Lane and zoned public access which was discussed earlier on site.
- SLAF welcomed the dialogue with EDF.
- AWR requested permissive path adjacent Valley Road should be dedicated as cycling path.
- Members welcomed the promised BR adjacent to Lovers Lane and reiterated this should be surfaced with safe crossing of Lovers Lane.
- SLAF proposed the route walked from Aldhurst Farm car park to Lovers Lane could be dedicated as BR now. Is this possible?
- **ACTION:** SCC will write to EDF on behalf of SLAF and thanks them for visit, welcome dialogue, reiterate the points raised on site and in the meeting and say they hope this dialogue can continue.

## 5. Coastal Access Update (Paper)

- AW briefed the meeting on Natural England's progress on establishing the England Coast Path in Suffolk. BH and RW will be briefed by NE on their first reports in August.

**Action** – BH to report back to the next meeting.

## 6. Network Rail Level Crossings (Paper)

- Gipsy Lane. NR have submitted the application to divert the path to SCC. AW reminded the meeting what diversion entails, including construction. SCC has made it clear to NR that they must conclude their negotiations with landowners prior to order making.
- GC told SLAF that the landowner may have concerns about how route will be maintained, and this needs to be discussed with him. It was noted FP should not be closed before diversion delivered.
- It was confirmed SLAF want to speak at the forthcoming Public inquiry.

**ACTION:** Take Halesworth off future update papers.

## 7. National Conference (Paper)

- BH fed back on different sessions and noted this is a useful networking forum.
- As part of this agenda item, AW explained ROW&A team will be suspending work on planning consultations to concentrate on improving the process and working with LPA's. If a leaflet is produced a draft will be sent to SLAF.
- SLAF reiterated need to meet planners too. Can this be considered, eg Half day conference DB noted Greenest County conference on 20/10/2017 and the importance of green access can be raised there.

## 8. Membership

- Recruitment was discussed and SLAF suggested adding forestry as a relevant interest, along with National Trust, wildlife, sport and running on ROW.
- Especially a health rep is needed.
- Please let AW know if considering stepping down.

**9. AOB** – GG noted that LAF 2007 regulations say the Appointing Authority must appoint a LAF secretary who is independent of the authority.

**10. Dates of Next Meeting** – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017, venue tbc. Members noted that if SCC is stuck for venues members may be able to help.

END

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings</b>
<b>Meeting: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Steve Kerr</b>
<b>Venue: SALC Offices, Unit 11a Hill View Business Park, Old Ipswich Rd, Claydon IP6 0AJ</b>

## Introduction

This paper updates the Forum on the main level crossings being addressed by Network Rail (NR) and Suffolk County Council (SCC), and progress on their Transport and Works Act proposals.



### Needham Market Gipsy Lane and FP6

Further to the updated provided at the Forum's last meeting on 20 July 2017, on 13 July 2017 NR submitted a rail crossing diversion order application for Gipsy Lane and rail crossing extinguishment order application for FP6 Needham Market/FP36 Creting St Mary.

Officers consulted on the applications at the end of July 2017. Various responses were received, including on behalf of the Forum. Although the feedback indicated there was no opposition to the closure of FP6 Needham Market/FP36 Creting St Mary (FP6 NM/FP36 CSM), objections have been received in relation to the proposed diversionary route for Gipsy Lane (FP39 Creting St Mary). Messrs Fayers have objected to the diversion onto their land and Mr & Mrs Turner have put forward an alternative preferred alignment for the section of path affecting their land, this being a footpath link that forms part of their outline planning application for 9 dwellings – see link below.

<https://planning.baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=ORZX90SHGVR00>

On 29 August 2017 NR also submitted their planning application for the culvert - see <https://planning.baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk/onlineapplications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OVFUBLSHIAR00>

Both these planning applications have attracted objections.

Unfortunately, despite efforts on the part of NR to agree a financial compensation package with Messrs Fayers, no agreement has, to date, been secured. NR have therefore approached the county council to seek authority for it to make the diversion order against

the landowner's wishes and pay the resultant compensation (to be entirely funded by NR). SCC have agreed to do this, as long as there is a costs agreement in place with the railway operator before any orders are made. Through this agreement, SCC will seek to indemnify itself against all potential costs arising from any compensation claimed or other costs incurred relating to administering the applications and making the orders.

Because there have been objections at the consultation stage, the county council's Constitution requires the matter to be reported to its newly formed Development and Regulation Committee. A report is therefore to be presented at its next committee meeting on 18 October 2017.

A copy of the report and appendices can be found by clicking on the following link.

<http://committeeminutes.suffolccc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=18/Oct/2017&c=Development and Regulation Committee>

Various parties have been written to, again including the SLAF, making them aware of the council's public speaking procedures at Committee.

### Halesworth Station - Barrow crossing



The county council is unaware of any further updates on this crossing since the Forum were last updated in January 2017.

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



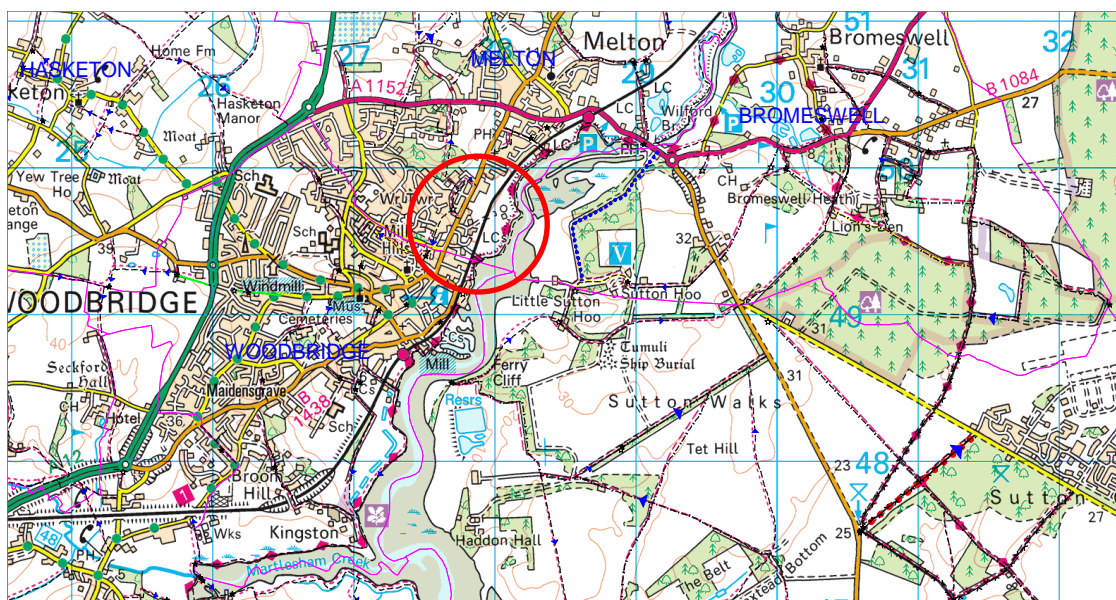
Further to the update provided in July, a public inquiry has now been arranged. The Inquiry will be held in the Legends Suite at Ipswich Town Football Club and will open at 10am on **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018**. On subsequent days, the Inquiry will start at 09:30 and will normally close each day by 17:00.

Officers attended a pre-inquiry meeting (PIM) at ITFC on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October. Some other key facts/dates announced were:-

- Objections have been received from Trimley St Mary parish council, Suffolk Coast & Heaths Project, Ramblers (Ipswich Branch) and several local residents. Representations were received from SCC, Historic England and a Mrs Bennett.
- Supporters include Hutchinson Ports, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Anglia Business Enterprise and various railway freight and shipping companies.
- Any Proofs or Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) will need to be submitted to the TWAU no later than 4 weeks before the Inquiry opens.  
Due to the complicating factors of the Christmas & New Year breaks and the fact that the deadline for submission would fall on Christmas Day itself, the appointed Inspector (Mrs Diana Lewis) has set the slightly earlier date of Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December as the deadline.
- Comments on Statements of Cases (SoC) are to be submitted no later than 6 weeks before the Inquiry opens i.e. by **11<sup>th</sup> December 2017**
- Any Rebuttals & responses to the Inspector's questions need to be lodged with the Programme Officer 2 weeks before the Inquiry starts. Again, due to the Christmas break the Inspector agreed this could be a little later and has set this deadline as the **15<sup>th</sup> December 2017**.
- NR has undertaken a further usage survey of the local PROW network and this will be made available by the applicant in November.

### Lime Kiln Quay/Sun Wharf Level Crossings

Further to the update provided to the Forum at its last meeting, when NR confirmed on 09/06/17 that there was no current intention to progress this project until the end of the current funding period (i.e. post March 2019), there are no further updates to report.



### General/Countywide

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

Further to the Forum's last update, and due to the implications of section 239 of the Local Government Act, the county council's holding objection was approved by Full Council at its meeting on 20 July 2017. Parties wishing to speak at the forthcoming public inquiry needed to have submitted their Statement of Case (SoC) by 13 July 2017. Due to the timing of this requirement SCC submitted its holding objection as its SoC, subject to formal ratification of the objection at Full Council.

To date, no formal communication has been received from the Transport and Works Act Unit (TWAU) of the Department for Transport (DfT), advising when the public inquiry for Suffolk is to take place but officers understand it is likely to be held in February 2018.

Officers met NR are currently scoping potential advocacy for the forthcoming public inquiry

The public inquiry for the 'Essex (and others) Level Crossing Reduction Order' opens on 18 October 2017 and runs for approximately 20 working days. That Order includes level crossings in the wider county of Essex but also in Thurrock, the Borough of Southend, the London Borough of Havering and Hertfordshire. A pre-inquiry meeting (PIM) was held on 9 August 2017 at Chelmsford Civic Centre. There are 60 crossings included in this Order and due to the wide geographic extent of these, the Inquiry will be held at various venues.

END – SK & AW/SCC Oct 2017

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at 14.00</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue: SALC Offices, Unit 11a, Hill View Business Park, Claydon, IP6 0AJ</b>

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

### Introduction

This paper further updates the Forum on the current state of play with the Felixstowe Branch Line Improvements Transport and Works Act Order, and is based on information provided by Network Rail's Senior Development Manager for the scheme.



As a quick recap Network Rail are proposing to close a number of foot crossing in the Trimley area along the Felixstowe Branch Line.

Level crossings pose the greatest risk to safety on the railway network. Closure of level crossings will help improve safety, reduce the number of accidents and also help to increase capacity of the network and maintain a robust railway timetable.

The proposals is further outlined in the section below but as a summary Network Rail are proposing to close six public footpath or bridleway level crossings, and one private vehicular user worked level crossing to improve safety and providing a replacement crossing point in the form of a public bridleway bridge at Gun Lane.

The level crossings which are proposed to be closed are located along or in the vicinity of the section of the railway that it is proposed to dual.

It is widely acknowledged that closure of level crossings is the most effective way to remove the risk. This is consistent with principals of prevention, namely

- Avoiding risks
- Combating the risks at source
- Replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or the less dangerous



In the nineteenth century, when the railways were constructed, many level crossings were provided because they were the cheapest form of making good the interruptions in land and public highways that resulted.

Level crossings were acceptable on a low speed steam-powered railway, but trains have become faster, quieter, and more frequent, and the law and society have rightly become more concerned with safety. A railway being built today would only ever include a level crossing in exceptional circumstances. The ORR's level crossing policy makes clear that any new level crossings should not be authorised other than in exceptional circumstances.

Further details on the safety specifics of the Felixstowe Branch can be found in the Statement of Case recently published for the TWAO and on request.

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/anglia/felixstowe-branch-line/>

## **The Proposal**

It is proposed to construct a bridleway bridge at the location of the existing Gun Lane Level Crossing. The bridge comprises a steel main deck span of 15.995m between column supports which will provide a minimum of 5.1m headroom, steel access staircases to the east of the structure, and steel access ramps to the west. The ramps slope at a gradient of 1:15, with 2m long intermediate landings every 333mm vertical rise. The ramps have a total length of 148m. The ramps and staircases are to be aligned parallel with the track. It is proposed to paint all elements of the bridge 'holly green'

A number of diversions are proposed to mitigate the impact of the closure of the level crossings. The diversion for each level crossing is illustrated in the image below.

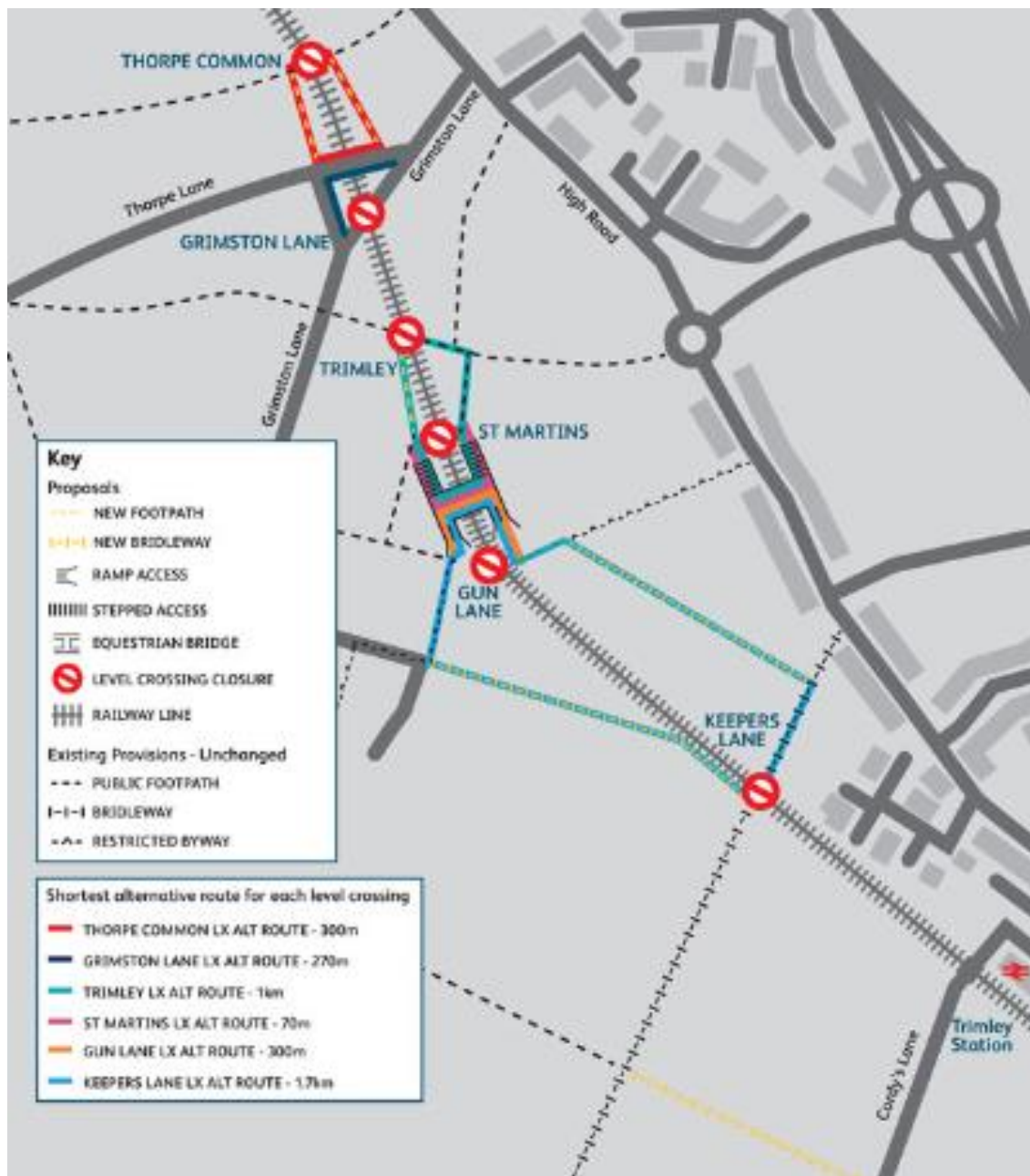
The Thorpe Common diversion is shown in red on the above and comprises creating two new public rights of way parallel to the railway line. Pedestrians would be able to cross the railway at the existing level crossing at Thorpe Lane (it is proposed to upgrade this level crossing to create double barriers for vehicles). When a train is passing and the vehicular barriers are down, pedestrians would be able to wait within an area of footway adjacent to the road.

The Grimston Lane diversion is shown in navy blue on the above plan. The proposed diversion is along existing roads and pedestrians would be able to cross the railway at Thorpe Lane in the same way as in the case of Thorpe Common.

The Trimley diversion is shown in turquoise on the above plan and comprises the creation of a new public right of way along the western part of the railway which would connect to St Martins Level Crossing which is at the foot of the proposed bridleway bridge staircase, providing a crossing over the railway. On the eastern side of the railway, the diversion would continue along existing PRowS; Public Footpaths 30 and 33 in the Parish of Trimley St Martin.

The St. Martins diversion is shown in pink on the plan and comprises a crossing over the proposed bridleway bridge. A new public right of way will be provided on the eastern part of the railway, parallel to the bridge that would link the stairs at the foot of the bridge to the

ramp, connecting Public Footpath 30 to Restricted Byway 28 (Gun Lane) without the use of the bridge.



The proposed diversion at Gun Lane comprises a crossing over the bridleway bridge, which is proposed to be sited at Gun Lane.

The Keeper's Lane diversion comprises the creation of a new bridleway along the western part of the railway that will connect Keepers Lane (Bridleway 22) to Grimston Lane. A new bridleway will be created from Grimston lane to Restricted Byway 28 (Gun Lane). This is aligned, in part, along restricted byway 27 (Track) Gun Lane. The diversion follows Restricted Byway 28 (Gun Lane) and crosses over the proposed bridleway bridge. On the eastern side of the railway, users would continue along Restricted Byway 3 (Gun Lane) (track) to Public Footpath 2 in the Parishes of Trimley St. Martin and Trimley St. Mary,

which is proposed to be upgraded from a footpath to a bridleway. The diversion continues along the upgraded bridleway to Keepers Lane (Bridleway 21 and 22).

In addition to the proposed diversions described above, as part of the package of enhancement and mitigation, Network Rail is also proposing to upgrade Public Footpath 1 in the Parish of Trimley St Mary, also known as 'Cordy's Lane' from a footpath to a bridleway to enhance circular routes for bridleway users in the area.

### **Next Steps**

The Secretary of State has requested a public inquiry into the Felixstowe Branch Line Improvements Transport and Works Act Order which will be held early in 2018 – further details on location and timings will be provided in due course.

Network Rail will present its case for the order and explain why it believes the proposals outlined in the draft order and the Statement of Case is appropriate. The inspector overseeing the public inquiry will evaluate the proposals Network Rail has made and will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State. We would expect a decision in summer of 2018.

END

AW (from information provided by Network Rail)/SCC Oct 2017

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: The England Coast Path</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at 14.00</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin/Annette Robinson</b>
<b>Venue: SALC Offices, Unit 11a, Hill View Business Park, Claydon, IP6 0AJ</b>

### 1. Progress on Establishing The England Coast Path (ECP)

The latest information on Natural England's (NE) coastal access website shows progress around the Suffolk coast as follows:

Harwich to Shotley Gate	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry	Stage 1: Prepare
Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey	Stage 1: Prepare
Bawdsey to Aldeburgh	Stage 1: Prepare
Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose

The Coastal Access Scheme describes the different stages as follows:

- Stage 1: Identifying issues and opportunities
- Stage 2: 'Walking the course'
- Stage 3: Draft proposals
- Stage 4: Consultation on draft proposals
- Stage 5: Final report
- Stage 6: Representations and objections
- Stage 7: Consideration & decision by the Secretary of State
- Stage 8: Preparation and commencement of rights
- Stage 9: Maintenance, management and monitoring
- Stage 10: Reassessment

Harwich – Shotley Gate:- The final report is well underway and likely to be out for consultation before Christmas.

Aldeburgh – Hopton:- The final report is being prepared, the lead officer is currently working on the Access & Sensitive Features Assessment for the many conservation sites on this stretch. Although aiming for before Christmas, it is likely that the final report will be out for consultation in the early New Year.

The two lead officers for these stretches met with representatives of SLAF, Barry Hall and Roley Wilson on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August to show them the draft route. The future promotion of the ECP was discussed, in particular how the new path should be launched in Suffolk.

The NE lead officers have started the remaining 3 stretches, gathering landowner data, local information from the Rights of Way team, visiting key sites and holding public drop-ins. Information leaflets have been published for each stretch.

Sally Fishwick, Natural England's Senior Adviser England Coast Path Delivery, met Andrew Woodin and Annette Robinson again on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October to discuss work on existing and new sections.

It is clear NE's accelerated work programme will have implications on area public rights of way staff time to assist NE, and the county council will need to be proportionate in the amount of time allocated to advising NE. The significant time put into advising on the first section from Aldeburgh to Hopton has assisted in staff being able to target those issues to concentrate on in the new stretches.

The new sections will of course include estuaries where there are local concerns around the impact of new coastal access rights on conservation. The forum has been strong in advocating the benefits of a continuous trail along the estuaries to NE, and will no doubt watch developments with interest.

The lead officer for the Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey section, Claire Cadman, had an initial meeting with Annette Robinson and Martin Williams (Area ROW team) to explore the key issues and gather local knowledge of the Deben estuary. She is keen to understand what recreational benefits there would be with a continuous path around the estuary compared with a ferry crossing at Felixstowe Ferry and is seeking views. **Members should give this their consideration and whether they wish to respond to Natural England on this point.** The only sections lacking any rights of way on the estuary are Ramsholt Marshes and near Sutton Hoo.

## 2. Future Management of the England Coast Path in the East of England

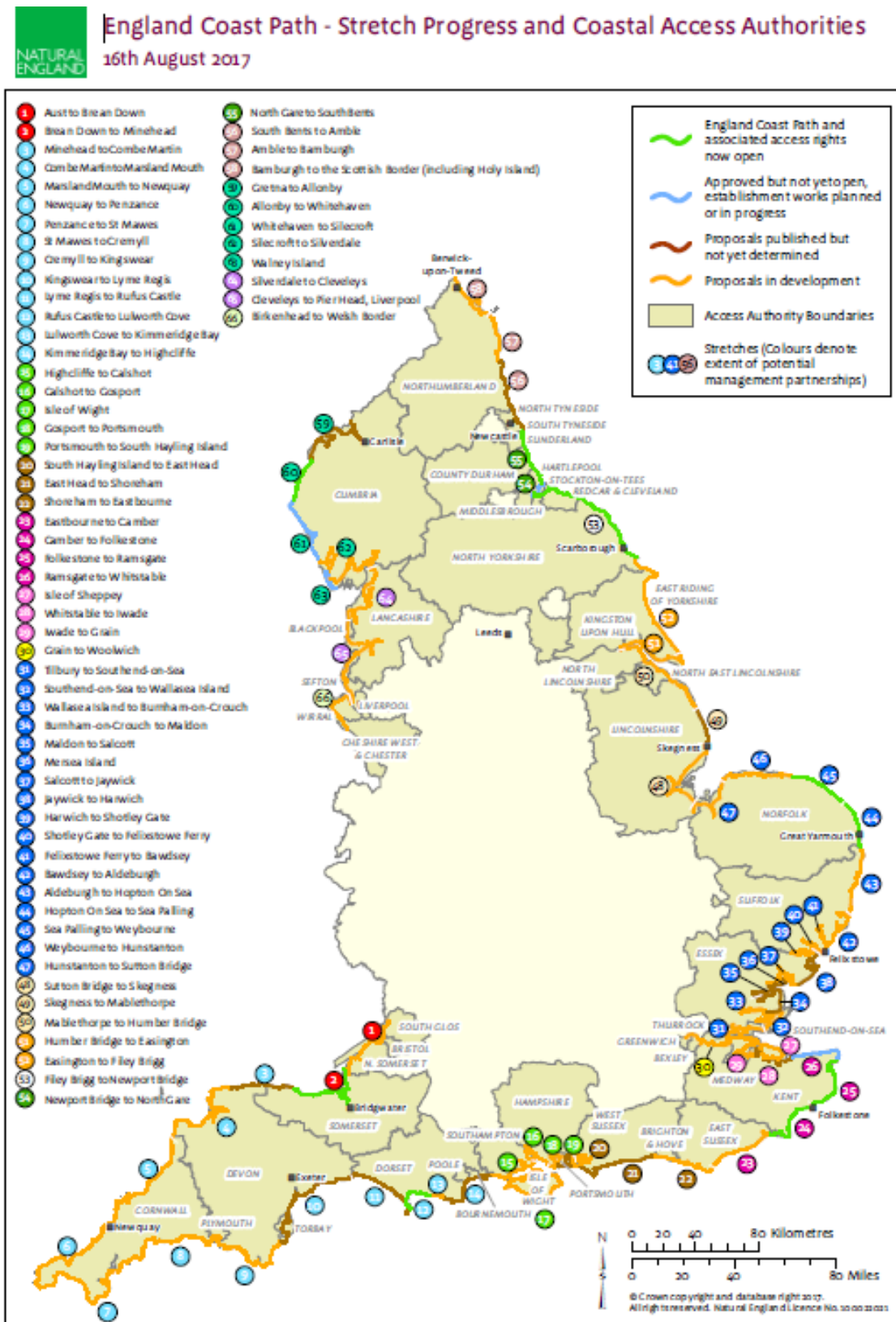
Officers from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex have continued their discussions on managing a regional coast path through a partnership. A funding bid was submitted to the HLF but has received negative feedback. Officers are now exploring other sources such as the Coastal Communities Fund and the RDPE.

## 3. Further information can be found at:

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

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

4. England Coast Path – Progress Map (as at August 2017)



<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: Suffolk Highways Restructuring</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at 14.00</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue: SALC Offices, Unit 11a, Hill View Business Park, Claydon, IP6 0AJ</b>

### 1. Introduction

Following a significant departmental restructuring, the Rights of Way & Access team became part of Suffolk Highways on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017. Suffolk Highways is a partnership between Suffolk County Council and Kier to provide an effective and efficient value for money service to maintain Suffolk's highways and improve Suffolk's infrastructure.

The restructuring has involved the creation of new teams and new posts throughout the organisation, the purpose of which is to transform the effectiveness of the partnership. More information can be found here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/how-were-working-for-you/>

### 2. Impact on the Rights of Way & Access Team

The effect on the Rights of Way & Access team is as follows:

1. Full integration into the Suffolk Highways SCC/Kier partnership,
2. Relocating the definitive map, area and green access teams to Suffolk Highways' offices in Ipswich, Rougham and Halesworth. It will be important for the green access and definitive map teams in particular to ensure continued liaison with key partners based in Endeavour House, Ipswich, for example Public Health and the Natural Environment team,
3. Converting the temporary Green Access Assistant post into a permanent post, funded from street works charges,
4. The loss of the green access team staff and subsequent recruitment,
5. Loss of direct business support.

Otherwise, the impact on the team was relatively low.

Budgets have not been affected, apart from the conversion of the Green Access Assistant post to permanent.

### 3. Recruitment of New Staff

The ROW & Access team is in the process of recruiting the following posts:

- I. A full time Rights of Way Officer in west area,
- II. A part time Rights of Way Support Officer in west area, where an appointment has been made but is not yet in post,
- III. Two definitive map officers, one part time and one full time,
- IV. A full time Green Access Manager, where an appointment has been made but is not yet in post

When the new Green Access Manager is in post, recruitment for the Green Access Officer, which is the last remaining vacancy, will start. The ROW & Access team welcomes David Falk as the new Green Access Manager.

Anna McGowan was appointed as the new Green Access Assistant on the 4<sup>th</sup> September, as part of the wider Suffolk Highways recruitment process.

#### 4. Effect on ROW & Access Team Work Programme

The inevitable disruption caused by the Suffolk Highways restructuring and staff vacancies has had an unavoidable impact on the work of the ROW team. In particular members will want to note interruptions in the following areas:

- Finalising the new ROWIP draft,
- Recruiting new members for the local access forum,
- Access improvement projects, for example the creation of an off road cycling route from Horringer to Bury St Edmunds,
- Responding to planning consultations and implementing better ways of working with planners to protect and improve public rights of way and other green access.

Interim arrangements have been put in place to cover priority work, for example planning consultations and priorities in the green access team.

To ensure high priority green access work receives proper managerial oversight, Alex Maher, from the definitive map team, is acting up pending the arrival of the new manager next month. The main focus of work is of course planning next year's walking festival, including sourcing a launch venue and organising the selection of walk for the programme.

END  
AW/SCC Oct 2017