

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Anna McGowan</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Phoenix House, Ipswich</b>

			<b>Paper Number</b>
1.	14:00	Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.		NE Review of CROW Restrictions (closed session)	<b>Verbal (DF)</b>
3.		Minutes of previous meeting	<b>LAF 18/06</b>
4.		Declaration of interest	
5.	14:15	Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings	<b>LAF 18/07 LAF 18/07A (AW)</b>
6.	14.45	The England Coast Path	<b>LAF 18/08 LAF 18/08A LAF 18/08B (AW)</b>
7.	15.00	Consultation on DEFRA’s Report Health and Harmony	<b>LAF 18/09 (RW)</b>
8.	15.10	The Future For Food, Farming and the Environment	<b>LAF 18/10 (AW)</b>
9.	15.20	Ramblers Urban Manifesto	<b>Verbal (RW)</b>
10.	15.25	ROWIP	<b>Verbal (DF)</b>
11.	15.35	Recruitment – Green Access Team	<b>Verbal (DF)</b>
12.	15.40	Correspondence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSPB Woodland Management</li> <li>• Broads LAF</li> </ul>	<b>Verbal (DF) Verbal (DF)</b>
13.	15:50	Public Question Time	
14.	16:00	Dates & Venues of Future Meetings	

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Jennifer Green</b>
<b>Venue: Brandon Country Park</b>

### **1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping**

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), John Wayman (JW), Margaret Hancock (MH), Roley Wilson (RW), Monica Pipe (MP), Diana Kearsley (DK), Jane Hatton (JH),

SCC Officers Present: Andrew Woodin (AW), David Falk (DF), Anna McGowan (AM), Jennifer Green (JG)

Apologies: Jane Storey (JS), Anthony Wright (AW), Gordon Merfield (GM), David Barker (DB)

### **2. OA Restrictions Review (Closed Session)**

- Meeting by Webinar with Natural England on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The outcome was existing restrictions remain for 5 years, although there was a drop in stone curlew numbers in the Brecks. Coastal curlews are thriving.
- Claire Dickson to meet Elveden forest manager about land access issue regarding Brecks Trail. Claire to arrange annual meeting.

### **3. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF17/20)**

- Barry Hall wrote to Natural England about the treatment of estuaries in coastal access, and his letter and Natural England's response were circulated with the papers.
- The recruitment of a Green Access Officer is with the county council's HR dept.

### **4. Declaration of interest**

- No declarations

## 5. Network Rail

- **Gipsy Lane** – AW updated the meeting. There was a meeting between the county council and Network Rail on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Planning permission has been granted for the conversion of the culvert to an underpass.
- RW asked who pays for flooding debris clearance. AW responded Network Rail will pay SCC a commuted sum for this.
- AW advised no detailed design about culvert is available yet, and noted Steve Kerr is leading on this issue.
- **Transport & Works Act Order** –AW briefed meeting on the latest position on this very complex project. SCC is in the process of submitting its supporting evidence to the inquiry.
- SLAF – BH has written and submitted SLAF proofs of evidence and will appear as witness
- AW handed NR proofs of evidence to BH – the deadline for rebuttals is 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- **ACTION** - When SLAF PI date is fixed, circulate date to members
- The Ramblers – RW updated meeting on RA objection. Local FP secretaries are the lead on expressing view on a crossing proposal and whether to object. National office involved and has instructed counsel. Grounds of objection are similar to SCC and SLAF e.g. safety and unsuitable alternatives.

## 6. Annual Report to Cabinet

- BH updated meeting. The report was well received.

## 7. ROWIP 2 Draft

- DF noted a lot has been done to prepare ROWIP2. That needs pulling together. DF talked through Paper 18/02
- DK noted importance of setting timescales. The ROW action plan was also presented
- AW requested feedback on the policy and action plan
- **ACTION** – DF to provide a read-able draft by next SLAF meeting
  - Members to let DF have any comments on the policy and action plan.

## 8. England Coast Path

- NE continuing with work developing 3 sections of coastal path
- Their first report is due to be published early 2018, first of the reports will be Stour
- The proposed regional partnership with Essex and Norfolk was discussed.

- RW stated the importance of one person to taking a lead on regional partnership.  
**ACTION:** DF to follow up on Coastal Path report.

## 9. SLAF Recruitment

- BH noted he raised this at cabinet and the need to appoint new members
- DF advised recruitment late Spring (2018) and mentioned walkers are welcome as a possible recruiting ground for community involvement.
- AW said he was keeping note of existing expressions of interest
- DF asked members to let him know of any interest. Possible 16 members?

## 10. Correspondence:

**Rights of Way: Restoring The Record** – a book has been sent to SLAF on how to add ROW to the definitive map. Volunteers needed, researching historic record/claims to add to definitive map. AW will keep the guidance book for loan to interested members.

**Invitation from Essex LAF** – Invitation by Essex County Council to reconvene original forums. members agreed to accept this invitation. **ACTION:** AW to respond to ECC.

## 11. Public Question Time

## 12. Dates & Venues of Future Meetings

- Next SLAF meeting 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018
- **ACTION** – Jen to book Museum of East Anglian Life Stowmarket

**A.O.B**

END

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings</b>
<b>Meeting: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Steve Kerr</b>
<b>Venue: Phoenix House, Ipswich</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 Gypsy Lane and FP6**

Further to the update provided at the last Forum's meeting, NR approached the Council prior to the start of the Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Order Inquiry (13 February 2018) to request whether SCC would be able to give high priority to drafting the rail crossing diversion and extinguishment orders. The driver for this request was NR's

concerns regarding the timeline for delivery of the project against committed funding within the current Control Period (CP5). The timing of this request was both unfortunate and frustrating, as the lead officer on this case was already committed to concentrating on the Transport and Works Act Order inquiry. In order to expedite the Gypsy Lane case, SCC therefore asked NR to draft the Orders. These were then checked by council officers at various stages. There was a great deal of toing and froing between the applicant and the council to ensure the Orders were correctly drafted. The Orders were eventually made on 4 April and advertised on 12 April 2018. One of the affected landowners is objecting to the diversionary route onto his land and SCC will be undertaking an assessment of the compensation due.

The following article also appeared in the EADT and Ipswich Star on Thursday 12 April, the day the orders were advertised.

<http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/authorities-stand-by-controversial-needham-market-level-crossing-replacement-plans-1-5473008>

The Council has also entered into a costs indemnity agreement with the applicant, to ensure all its costs are met. These include officer time spent to date, advertising costs and future compensation and potential inquiry and lands tribunal costs.

### Halesworth Station - Barrow crossing



NR have not provided SCC with any further update relating to the above crossing.

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



As scheduled the Inquiry opened on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 at the Legends Suite at Ipswich Town Football Club.

Hutchinson Ports UK Ltd and Councillor Newman supported the Order, whilst objectors included Trimley St Martin Parish Council, The Ramblers Association and users of the local PROW network.

The following website link provides further information, including all the Inquiry documents. The Inspector's report and Secretary of State's decision is now

awaited.

<http://www.hwa.uk.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Inquiry-Documents-List-26-1-18.pdf>

### General/Countywide

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

Further to the Forum's last update, the public inquiry for Suffolk opened at 10 am on 13 February 2018 at Ashlar House, 23 Eastern Way, Bury St Edmunds IP32 7AB. For the latest information and Inquiry Programme see

<http://suffolk-level-crossings.persona-pi.com/>

The Inquiry has, to date, met for 4 weeks at various locations (Ipswich, Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds). The Council objected to 8 of the 23 level crossing proposals, and several of these have already been largely debated (S01 Brantham Sea Wall, S02 Brantham High Bridge, S22 Weatherby, S27 Barrells, S31 Mutton Hall and S69 Bacton). The Inquiry reconvenes on 19/20 April, 30 April – 4 May and 22 – 25 May. The two remaining crossings to which SCC has objected (S23 Higham and S25 Cattishall) will be dealt with in the week commencing 30/04/18. Due to one of NR's principal witnesses being unavailable due to sickness when the Inquiry sat in March, his evidence relating to various crossings will be considered when the Inquiry resumes on 19 April and again, when it reconvenes at the end of the month.

In addition to its crossing specific objections, the Council has raised concerns regarding:-

- NR's lack of engagement in undertaking joint site visits
- NR's reluctance to pay any costs incurred to date or any incurred at the future detailed design stage, when reviewing the applicant's engineering designs for new footbridges and lengths of carriageway and footway.
- NR's reluctance to pay SCC a 60-year commuted sum for all assets inherited in the event the Order being granted. NR have agreed to pay a 60-year commuted sum for bridges but consider a reduced framework period should be applied to the remainder of the asset.
- The lack of any cross referencing in the Order to a signed Side Agreement (SA).

On the matter of costs reimbursement, NR argue that there is no requirement under the TWA rules for the promoter of the Order to have to pay any objectors' costs, save where it is shown there has been unreasonable behaviour on the part of the applicant.

Many of the objectors, including the Ramblers Association, SLAF and the county council have made strong arguments that the definition and application of the 'suitable and convenient' test for replacement diversionary routes, as set out in the Transport and Works Act guidance, can only be properly assessed if the alternative routes have been properly inspected along their whole lengths. The highway authority does not consider the applicant has undertaken such a proper assessment.

When challenged as to whether a proposal is indeed considered 'suitable and convenient', NR have argued that any issues identified at this stage can be addressed at the detailed design stage, once the Order has been granted. The highway authority has expressed concerns adopting this approach.

SLAF's Proof of Evidence is attached to this update.

Cambridgeshire's Inquiry closed on Friday 23 February 2018 and the Inspector's report and Secretary of State's decision is now awaited. Further information can be found via the following link:

<http://bailey.persona-pi.com/Public-Inquiries/Cambridge/Programme/16.%20Draft%20Programme%20-%2014.02.18.pdf>

Following adjournment of the Inquiry into the Essex (and others) Level Crossing Reduction Order' on Friday, 20th October 2017, the Inquiry will resume on Tuesday, 25th September 2018 at the Civic Centre, Chelmsford.

END – SK & AW/SCC April 2018



<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title: Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings</b>	
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Steve Kerr</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Phoenix House, Ipswich</b>

**Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWA): The proposed Network Rail (Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction) Order**

**Proof of Evidence to the Public Inquiry submitted by the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) Chairman Barry Hall MRTPI (Rtd), BA (Hons)**

**Objector Reference OBJ/23**

**Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF)**

Local Access Forums were created under Section 96 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) with the purpose of advising other statutory bodies on the improvement of public access to land for the purpose of open air recreation and enjoyment. The LAF (England) Regulations 2007 extended this to cover issues related to the functional and utility access by non-motorised users for travel to work or school.

Members of SLAF are appointed by Suffolk County Council and under the regulations are required to maintain a reasonable balance of interests between users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and owners and occupiers of access land or land over which PRoW exist. Members appointed to SLAF represent various interests but do not represent specific groups. Further information about SLAF can be found on:

[www.suffolkrightsofway.org.uk/suffolk-local-access-forum](http://www.suffolkrightsofway.org.uk/suffolk-local-access-forum)

I have been a member of SLAF for seven years and was elected Chairman in October 2015. Prior to retirement in 2004 from SCC I had for many years been in its then Countryside Section involved in access to the countryside being involved in various countryside projects, management of country parks and picnic sites and the development of long distance and circular walks within Suffolk much of which involved working with colleagues involved with PRoW's. Following the passing of the CROW Act I was heavily involved in the setting up and operation of SLAF, involvement in the signing on the ground of Open Access Land and preliminary work on SCC's first Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP).

**SLAF and The proposed Network Rail (Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction) Order**

SLAF responded to both of Network Rails (NR) consultations and the lack of any response to our objections and suggestions has meant that eleven of our objections are included for consideration at this Inquiry, although I now understand that NR have withdrawn SO5 – Pannington Hall. The main reasons for SLAF objections to the proposed closures and diversions relate to:

- Loss of off-road routes and their replacement with on-road diversions which are often on narrow winding country roads often with narrow verges containing drainage grips.

- A substantial increase in the length of the walking route as a result the proposed alternatives to the crossing closure. As these alternatives are mainly on NR or private land it is difficult to fully assess their suitability for use by walkers
- The ongoing maintenance cost to SCC once these alternative routes are put in place.

The Suffolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006 – 2016 “In Step with Suffolk” was based on six objectives which included:

- Provide a better signed, maintained and accessible network
- Provide and protect a more continuous network that provided for the requirements of all users.
- Develop a safer network
- Improve promotion, understanding and use of the network.

The SCC RoWIP is currently being reviewed and SLAF has had input into the revision. With the demand for new housing in Suffolk being reflected in Local Plans and planning applications for housing at many settlements along then rail corridors in the county, the need is to enhance people’s access to the countryside not restrict it so it can be used not only for recreation but as a route to schools and community facilities. The use of PRow’s are also a key element of the health and wellbeing agenda. SLAF feels that NR proposals do not reflect these needs.

The Department of Transport publication “A TWA Guide to Proceedings” states that where alternatives are proposed where a right of way is to be stopped up then “if an alternative is provided the Secretary of State would wish to be satisfied that it will be a convenient and suitable replacement for existing users”.

The proposed closures where SLAF have issues are because:

- The proposed diversions do not add to the enjoyment of the countryside by walking long distance alongside a railway track
- The alternative routes frequently involve a vehicular bridge on a narrow road with a minimal verges and sight lines.
- Alternative routes may involve structure that could pose issued for families with children in buggies and those with mobility issues.
- The use by NR of a TWA mean has bypassed the normal rights of way diversion procedures that allow wider public consultation and site visits.

The proposed crossing closures that SLAF raised issues with during the consultation process are reiterated here but it should be noted that some were not objecting to the closure itself but contained suggestions for mitigating the impact. There has been no feedback from NR to these suggestions.

### The objections of SLAF to the TWA.

These were set out in our letter to the Secretary of State for Transport of 2 May 2017 and restated here:

#### SO1 – Brantham Sea Wall

Whilst the proposed route is acceptable we would like to see the river path remain open as it well used by local birdwatchers.

#### SO2 – Brantham High Bridge

No explanation given for the change of route east of the railway line which now appears to use a private road and field margins. Has its impact on landowners been assessed? We do support the linking path footpath proposed alongside the A137 to Brantham Bridge.

#### SO4 – Island

We do not object to the deletion of the alternative footpath on the south side of the Capel St Mary road but still feel that narrowness of the road bridge for pedestrian use has still not been addressed.

#### S12 – Gooderhams

The possibility that the existing stiles should be replaced by kissing gates at the Cow Creek crossing should be considered given that Fords Green and Bacton are also being closed, which could lead to greater use of that crossing.

#### S13/S69 – Fords Green & Bacton

These two proposals should be considered together. Although some attempt has been made to reduce the use of the B1113 for pedestrians it is essential that that a proper footway is established along Broad Road for safety reasons.

#### S22 – Weatherby

From Network Rail's survey, this is obviously a very well-used crossing even if it is not a public right of way. The suggested alternative route alongside a busy road and using a narrow under bridge is not acceptable. Also the suggested use of 2m high steel palisade fencing to stop trespass once the crossing is closed would be a visual intrusion.

#### S23 – Higham

The suggested diversion uses existing roads with inadequate verges. To reduce safety concerns we suggest that the possibility of putting a field edge path behind the group of houses by the war memorial should be investigated.

S25 – Cattishall

We have consistently commented that the crossing should remain until developer funded footbridge in place and the underpass opened.

S27/S28 – Barrels/Grove Farm

These two proposals should be considered together. The alternative routes involve a significant amount of road walking and the moving of the footpath 5 Thurston from its position on the Definitive Map to alongside the boundary of 'Pheasants' has been done without consulting the landowner.

S31 – Mutton Hall

The proposal to use the narrow road overbridge near Butts Farm is unacceptable. We have suggested to Network Rail that it would be more sensible divert the path south of the railway line westwards and use the underbridge on Captains Lane.

Conclusion

A SLAF sub-committee looked closely at all the suggested closures put forward by NR and it was only after careful consideration that they recommended to a full meeting of the forum that those particular crossing closures set out in this proof of evidence should be included in the objection letter. SLAF was also concerned at the amount of time that the small SCC rights of way team with a limited budget had to put in in order to respond to the TWA; at the expense of progressing other vital rights of way related work such as the revision of the RoWIP.

SLAF would ask that assurances are given by NR at this inquiry that all costs associated with any extinguishments and diversions accepted by the Secretary of State are fully funded by them to a specification agreed with SCC and a commuted sum provided to allow on-going maintenance in the future.

Barry Hall

Chairman of The Suffolk Local Access Forum

January 2018

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: The England Coast Path</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin/Annette Robinson</b>
<b>Venue: Suffolk Highways Phoenix House, Ipswich IP1 SNP</b>

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

The latest information from Natural England's (NE) on its progress for the ECP in Suffolk and Norfolk is shown on their website. The links give access to more detail.

<b>Stretch name</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<a href="#">Harwich to Shotley Gate</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Bawdsey to Aldeburgh</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Hopton-on-Sea to Sea Palling</a>	Open to the public
<a href="#">Sea Palling to Weybourne</a>	Open to the public
<a href="#">Weybourne to Hunstanton</a>	Stage 4: Determine
<a href="#">Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Sutton Bridge to Skegness</a>	Stage 4: Determine

The details on Natural England's website is worth looking at, for example for Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry the maps shows the extent of the section as being the length of the Orwell estuary, and likewise the Alde and Ore for the Bawdsey to Aldeburgh section.

The stages to establish Coastal Access have been simplified as follows:

#### **Stage 1: Prepare**

Initial preparations will begin for the implementation of a new stretch. Natural England will:

- define the extent of the stretch
- ask key organisations about their ideas or concerns about the stretch
- consider the current public access use and the options for the route

#### **Stage 2: Develop**

At this stage, Natural England will:

- speak with local landowners and other legal interests on land that may be affected to:
  - ask for views on where they think the route should go
  - offer to 'walk the course' and explain initial ideas
  - discuss any local issues that might need to be addressed
- speak with relevant organisations to make sure that any important sensitive features are protected

### **Stage 3: Propose**

Natural England will finalise proposals for the England Coast Path on this stretch and publish them in a report to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

### **Stage 4: Determine**

After the report has been published, there's an opportunity to comment on the proposals. At this time:

- anyone who wishes to comment can make a representation on the report
- owners or occupiers can submit an objection relating to particular aspects of the proposals

See the guidance about how to comment for more information.

Once the period to comment on the proposals has ended, the Secretary of State will decide whether to approve the proposals in Natural England's report. When making a decision, any representations or objections that have been submitted will be considered along with the recommendations from the Planning Inspectorate.

### **Stage 5: Open**

The Secretary of State approves the route of the England Coast Path on this stretch.

Preparations are then made on the ground and the necessary legal paperwork is completed. Once complete, the new public rights of access will come into force on the stretch.

The the link to the relevant part of website is [here](#).

## **2. The Stretches in More Detail**

### **Harwich to Shotley Gate**

Further information on the Harwich to Shotley Gate stretch has been provided by Natural England in report and map format and is included at appendix 1.

### **Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry**

Natural England report:

- Work is currently focussed on Walk the Course visits with landowners. The majority have now been contacted. Discussions continue on a couple of large complex sites where new routes may be possible
- Highways visits to take place over the next couple of weeks
- Work on the assessment of sensitive features continues – this will pick up once all the landowners have been visited and thoughts about potential route options start to develop. Approx. 2/3 of the route will be able to use existing PROWs.
- Use of estuary discretion will be a focus over the next few weeks also.

### **Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey**

Natural England report:

- Familiarisation of stretch nearly complete – just areas with no existing public access still to visit, awaiting land owner contact / permissions
- Walk the Course with landowners – one of main tasks for next couple months. Efforts focussing on those areas with no/poor existing access.
- Ongoing meetings/work with stakeholders – e.g. Suffolk Ramblers report for stretch just received
- Access and sensitive features appraisal – another main task over next couple of months. Working with internal colleagues as well as gathering external advice and opinion to help inform route alignment
- Ongoing consideration of ferry & estuary discretion
- Publication date – Dec 2018.

### **Bawdsey to Aldeburgh**

Natural England report:

- Site visits with landowners completed/ planned in the next month at Orford Ness, Boulge Hall Marshes, Alde/Ore and Butley River
- Highway assessments complete
- Mapping of small section
- On-going evidence gathering in relation to nature conservation issues, coastal management, coastal processes, engagement with stakeholders and partners
- The current timescale is to publish in about a year. Natural England note not all landowners have been contacted yet and request that if any think they have been missed then they should contact Natural England (the county council can provide contact details).

### **Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea**

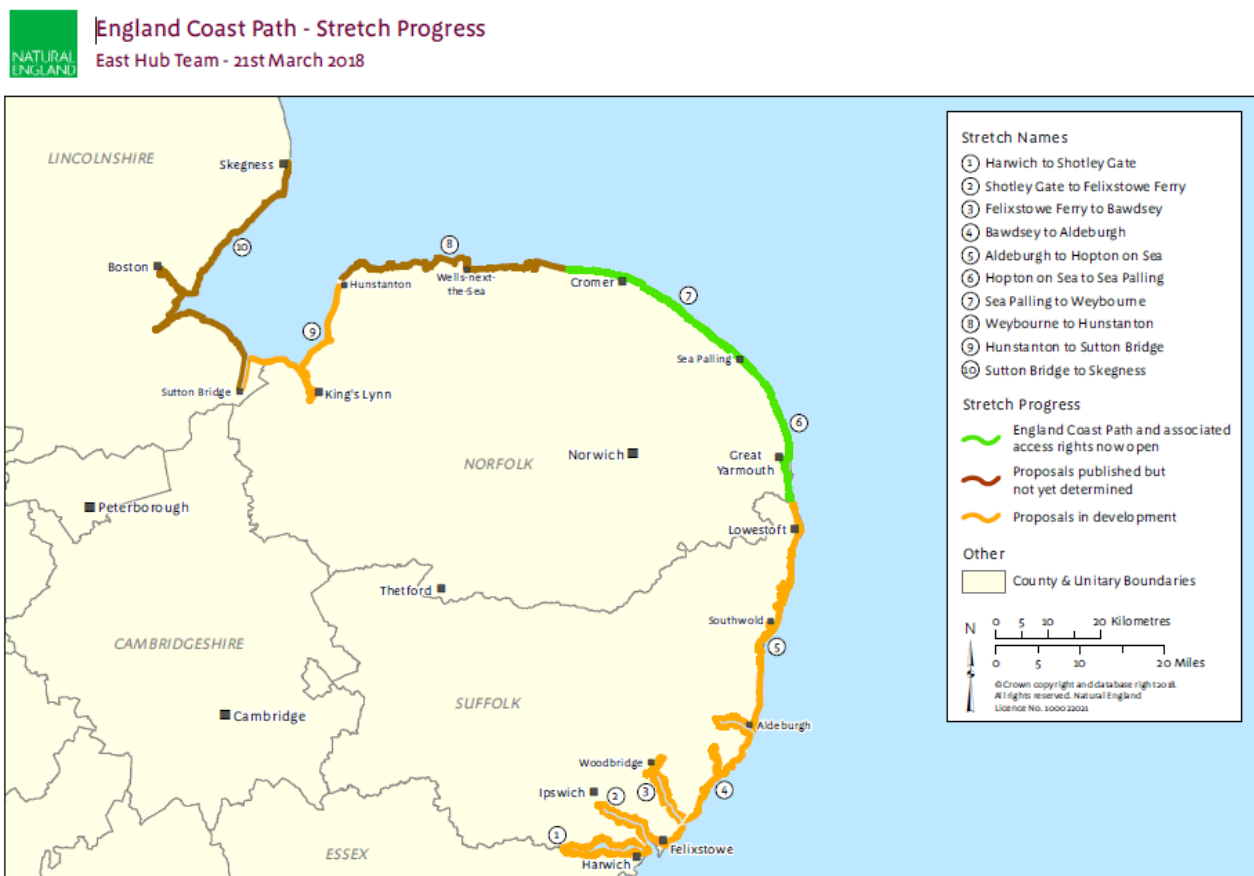
## Natural England report

- Key site visit to Easton Barents to look at Optional Alternative Route nature conservation concerns
- Last three nature conservation appraisals close to completion
- Mapping to be updated once nature conservation concerns addressed
- Report to be completed once mapping updated
- A meeting has been arranged a meeting with the local Ramblers' in May
- Natural England is looking to publish this summer **and would welcome the opportunity to meet with the LAF again at the meeting after April's.**

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

Officers from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex will meet again later this month to discuss future management of the ECP, including the establishment works, branding and possible sources of external funding to promote a regional coast path.

### 4. England Coast Path – Progress Map for the East



END  
AW/SCC April 2018



<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title: The England Coast Path – Appendix 1A</b>	
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Phoenix House, Ipswich</b>

### **England Coast Path – Harwich to Shotley Gate stretch (Stour estuary)**

#### **Update for Essex Local Access Forum, Suffolk Local Access Forum, Essex Ramblers and Suffolk Ramblers – Feb 2018**

Our anticipated publication date has recently been postponed from March to late spring 2018, mainly due to the need to:

- avoid clashing with the public consultation on the proposed extension to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- work around recent staff resourcing issues;
- accommodate location-specific complications that came to light when we sent letters and maps to landowners and occupiers, describing what we propose to include in our report to the Secretary of State.

Maps outlining our proposed alignment are attached. Listed below are some points to help you understand our thinking, and to highlight some of the constraints we have had to take into account.

I should stress that this note and accompanying maps set out our current thinking, but this is subject to change between now and publication of our report, particularly if we receive new information.

Please note that we propose a 'Section 25A' exclusion to cover the entire estuary. This would remove all saltmarsh and intertidal mud from 'spreading room' because these areas are deemed unsuitable for safe public access. This would have the added benefit of protecting sensitive wildlife.

The entire estuary is subject to Special Protection Area and Ramsar wetland site status, which we have taken fully into account when formulating our proposals.

Following along the Essex bank of the estuary, working from Harwich towards Manningtree:

1. **Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston.** You will hopefully agree that the start of the trail within this stretch is well placed, being close to the shore and to Harwich old town. Unfortunately, from here we have to propose alignment to the landward side of the railway because of the amount of excepted land to the seaward side, and because there is no footway, or suitable substrate on which to establish one, along the A120.

The proposed route exploits the excellent views from the Dovercourt footbridge, but we will need to provide signs to warn less mobile trail users of the steep steps ahead, and identifying an alternative, level route. The Hangings is an attractive, traffic-free continuation of the route, with some good views of the estuary in places.

2. We are prevented from proposing a route close to the shore in the vicinity of **Harwich International Port and Haltermann Carless'** refinery, because these are excepted land types.
3. **Between the treatment works (Ray Lane) and Copperas Wood** we propose a brand new section of path on arable field edge. We are particularly pleased with this proposed new link, which is on high ground with some good views. It provides a much more direct option than the current detour into Ramsey, or along the hazardous B1352.

4. We propose that the trail goes through the attractive Copperas Wood to the south of the railway, then picks up the shoreline to go west along the existing Essex Way.

Note: We propose a restriction to exclude dog walkers from spreading room within that part of Copperas Wood which is north of the railway line. This is because it is important to avoid disturbance of birds on the adjacent saltmarsh and mudflat. If approved, this measure will reinforce existing management by the RSPB.

5. The trail follows the Essex Way along the shoreline as far as Stone Lane. There was much local enthusiasm for a route westwards of this point, through the Balhaven huts site. After much deliberation we decided we were unable to propose this because the huts must be regarded as second/ holiday homes. The *Coastal Access Scheme* says the curtilage of such homes is excepted land, and we took the view that the perimeter hedges define the curtilage of the two communal areas. Having acknowledged the need for alignment to the south of these areas as well as 'The Coign', and to provide a convenient route for trail users, the best option was to adhere to higher ground, which has very good views in places.
6. Going through Wrabness Nature Reserve we decided to follow the existing Essex Way very slightly inland for a short distance, to allow the Essex Wildlife Trust to deny access to the shore if they were so minded in the future, to reduce the undoubted adverse impact on foreshore birds of dogs off leads. This route also facilitates use by those who are less mobile (one of the few rural areas on the stretch where this is possible), as the existing paths in the reserve are tarmacked, and provide easy access to the shoreline hide.
7. At Ragmarsh Farm we adhere to a route that is just within/ just outside field edges, and utilising the beach at the western end. In recognition of this being inundated during the highest tides of the year, we also propose an optional alternative route on 'cliff top' (although it is only a metre or so high here).
8. Again, there was much local enthusiasm for re-establishment of a shoreline/ cliff-top route all the way from Bradfield to Mistley (the old 'Pilot's Path' or 'Cliff Path', which was apparently blocked many years ago). Unfortunately, we were unable to propose this due to the lack of railway crossing points and the private gardens at both ends of this ribbon of land. Having looked hard at all the options, we concluded there was no safe route south of the railway line, other than the Essex Way, which at this point has the advantages of being attractive in its own right, and offering some excellent views of the estuary.
9. Approaching Mistley Heath, we propose a brand new section of trail around the north side of the village, which again offers good views and also avoids the hazardous crossing of the double-blind bends in Heath Road, in the centre of the village.
10. In Mistley we propose that the trail departs from the B1352 and is located on Mistley Quay for a short distance. There is local enthusiasm for this, and we believe it is a safer option than the B1352, despite (or perhaps because of) the lack of clarity over traffic and pedestrian areas on the quay. The quay provides an interesting perspective on 'coastal' commercial activities, historic buildings, and excellent views across and along the estuary.

Note: This is one area where we are still working with the landowner and Essex County Council to identify precisely the right alignment, which may well ultimately be different to that shown on the map.

11. After passing through the attractive heart of Manningtree, we propose alignment along the very popular Skinner's Wall (seawall), which takes walkers to the A137 and across to Suffolk. We are keen to implement a significant enhancement here: extension and re-grading of the access ramp part way along the seawall. This would facilitate access to the seawall by those with limited mobility, and those pushing buggies, etc. However, there are engineering constraints and we are in the process of assessing the costs, which must be proportionate to the benefits to the public if this project is to go ahead after approval of the report.

#### Following the Suffolk Bank from White Bridge (Lawford/ Cattawade), to Shotley Gate

1. As the first estuary crossing point, we propose alignment along the A137 for a short distance, before heading eastwards along Factory Lane. The route passes a large rectangle of what was low-lying grassland, which could potentially have become one of the few large areas of 'spreading room' on the whole stretch, although we had concerns about safety here. Late in 2017, however, the breaches in the seawall, which had started to open up in 2013, were dramatically enlarged, exposing the field to the tides. It has remained tidal since then, and we envisage including it within our proposal for S25A exclusion.
2. We envisage more or less following the existing Stour and Orwell Walk through the Brantham industrial area and adjacent proposed housing development. The land to the seaward side is eroded (and hazardous in many places). Suffolk County Council are in negotiations with St Francis Group about a slightly different alignment for the PRoW at the end of Factory Lane, compared with the existing walked route (itself some distance from the definitive PRoW). We propose the existing walked route as the initial route for the trail, but that it should move to the same alignment as the new PRoW as and when the latter is established.
3. Rail 'at grade' crossing or bridge? We propose alignment over the footbridge here, because Network Rail intend closing the crossing and we acknowledge the safety issues associated with this high speed section of line. There are excellent views from the bridge and on the path down to the seawall on the alignment shown. We do not propose alignment tight to the SE side of the railway cutting/ embankment (i.e. to join the seawall closer to the existing rail crossing), because it would be tortuous for walkers and we are also concerned to avoid disturbance of birds nesting in the reedbed adjacent to the crossing.
4. Between Brantham and Stutton Ness, we propose alignment along seawall and cliff top throughout, with roll-back applied to ensure the route is not lost to erosion. This contrasts with the current alignment of the Stour and Orwell Walk, which is on the beach as it approaches Stutton Ness.

Note: The short length of seawall at 'The Rough' (Stutton Park) is in a very poor state and could be over-topped at any time. The landowner has proposed to re-build the seawall, and we intend to propose alignment on it, on this basis. Failing that our proposed route would be to the landward side of the The Rough.

5. Proposed alignment of the section between Stutton Ness and Markwells Farm, was one of the most challenging, ultimately involving Natural England's Area Manager and Operations Director (South), as well as Coastal Access national colleagues. The inland alignment was ultimately favoured because of a number of factors:
  - a) The intertidal mudflats are particularly valuable for feeding birds, as the area is currently one of only two undisturbed areas on the Suffolk bank.

- b) We could only have recommended that a shoreline route be open for 5.5 months of the year. This is primarily because of redshank, which we need to protect when on passage, as well as when wintering. Unlike many waders, redshank will feed relatively close to shore when constrained by the tide, but remain sensitive to disturbance.
- c) The saltmarsh close to Markwell's Farm, and the adjacent arable field, are both especially important for roosting birds.
- d) The seawall between the saltmarsh and adjacent field (the obvious route for a shoreline path) is in a very poor state, with inundation of the lower part of the field being increasingly likely over the coming years.
- e) Privacy issues arising from any potential higher ground route near Stutton House/ Markwells Farm.
- f) Issues surrounding excepted land status, particularly re 'parks and gardens' (historic parkland), and the 'domestication' of shoreline land.
- g) The presence of an established, attractive, inland route (albeit not quite as convenient and not as 'coastal' feeling).

6. From Markwell's Farm to Lower Holbrook we propose alignment along the existing Stour and Orwell Walk, i.e. through a private garden and along the more recent of the seawalls (currently well walked, despite it not being PRow).

Note: Due to information recently received, we may need to make a small adjustment to the route within this section.

7. Between Lower Holbrook and Erwarnton Ness, there are long lengths of existing PRow which have long since been undermined by coastal erosion. We envisage the trail being aligned on cliff top in most places where this occurs, with roll-back being applied. There are two areas where the proposed alignment deviates a little way inland. This is to avoid private gardens, beach/ foreshore alignment, and disturbance of roosting birds on small areas of saltmarsh at high tide.
8. Between Erwarnton Ness and Shotley Gate we propose adherence to seawalls and cliff top. There is an extensive area of valuable saltmarsh habitat, but it is difficult for people and dogs to gain access to it, so the birds are relatively insensitive to disturbance from the seawall.

Note: we will need to revisit alignment at Shotley Gate, the lower of the three parallel PRowS having been severely impacted by recent coastal erosion, which has undermined the gabion sea defences. It is likely we will propose the route that meanders along the cliff, part way up its face.

I hope that is helpful, and would be pleased to respond to any comments/ thoughts about the above, by 'phone or email.

**Kim Thirlby**

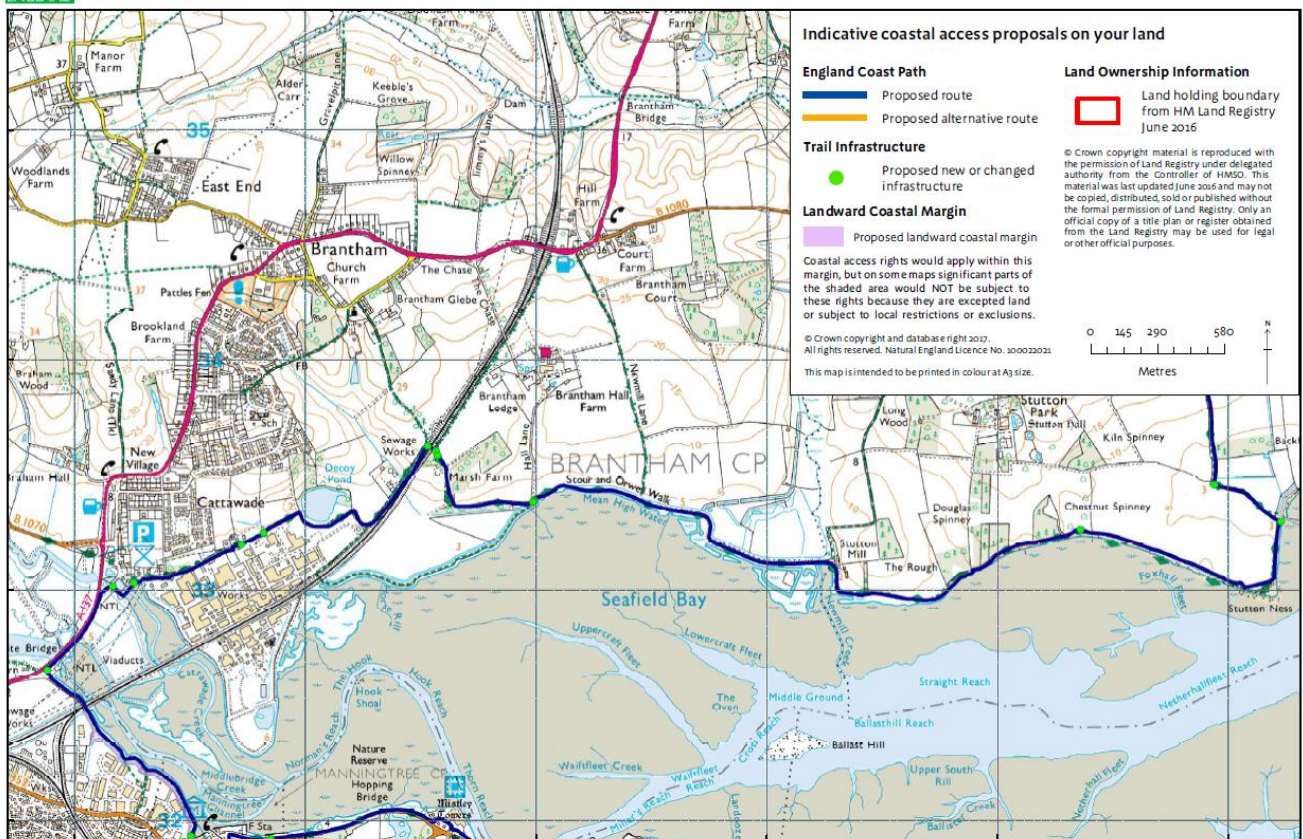
Lead adviser, Harwich to Shotley Gate Stretch  
01206 298372 / 07887 452845 / [kim.thirlby@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:kim.thirlby@naturalengland.org.uk)

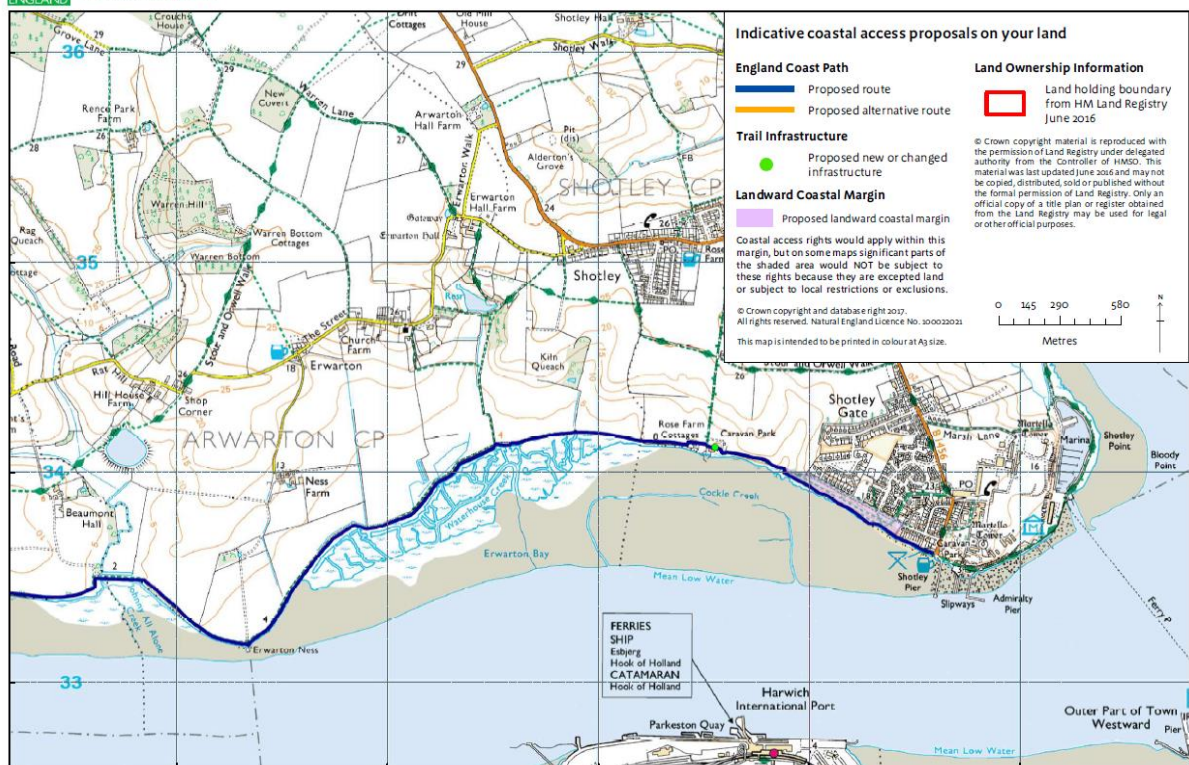
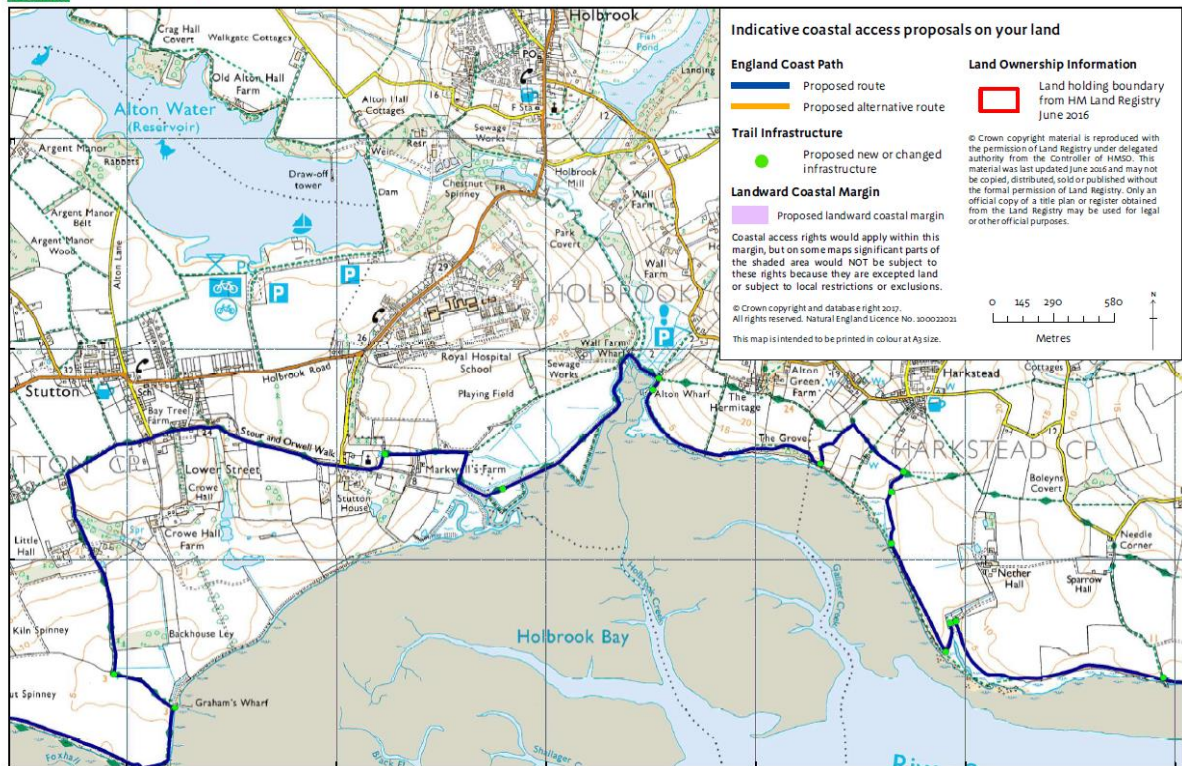
<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title: The England Coast Path – Appendix 1B</b>	
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Phoenix House, Ipswich</b>



Coastal Access - Harwich to Shotley Gate  
 Indicative coastal access proposals  
 29th January 2018

Map 1 of 3





<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Consultation on DEFRA's Report Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit.</b>
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Roley Wilson</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Phoenix House, Ipswich</b>

Participants in the consultation are asked to respond via a questionnaire. This has the usual faults of a questionnaire where the author guides the respondent towards a given set of choices often none of which express what a respondent may want to say about the topic.

An example is where you are asked to state what are the most important 3 out of 6 options one of which is public access. Some of the others include animal welfare and protection of crop, tree, plant and bee health. As if any of them were mutually exclusive or had a hierarchy.

The report acknowledges that 'farmers and land owners can have a vital role to play in providing a deeper connection with the countryside', 'improve public health through access to clean air and exercise'.

Each topic is dealt with in its own section with a set of questions to respond to. Section 6 deals with enhancing the environment and talks of the 'creation of wetland and woodland'. Section 8 deals with supporting Rural Communities and acknowledges the value of tourism.

Access to the countryside comes in Section 5 under Public Money for Public Good. Some of the relevant sections are copied below:

Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

Agriculture and farming practices shape our rural historic environment, our distinctive landscape features and our historical monuments [EC:55-6]. The conservation and enhancement of our cultural heritage contributes directly to a healthier environment, benefitting people, offering support to thriving rural economies and national prosperity.

Woods and forests offer many benefits to society and the economy. They offer the potential for very significant benefits in carbon sequestration; provide outdoor spaces for exercise and recreation; and also contribute to improving agricultural productivity and rural business diversification.

With agriculture accounting for more than 70% of land use in the UK, farmland forms an important amenity value for those who are accessing it and farmers and land managers can have a vital part to play in facilitating a deeper connection with the countryside. This may be through the maintenance of public rights of way, which can improve public health through access to clean air and exercise, for instance horse riding or providing opportunities for recreation and tourism. In 2010, England's National Parks accumulated 104.2 million visitor days and attracted spending of £2.2 billion.

The UK's unique landscape also makes it a widely sought after location for film and television, thus providing an important advantage for the UK's creative arts industry over its international competitors. Initiatives such as Open Farm Sunday can also act as an important vehicle to educate the general public about where their food comes from and the natural environment.

Elsewhere there is an acknowledgment of the value of more than 116 thousand miles of Rights of Way consisting of Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways and of the value of biodiversity in farmland birds and plants. It notes that the Government is committed to planting 11 million trees through the 25-Year Plan.

All of these pronouncements are to be welcome. What is not highlighted is how so many of them are or could be interlinked to Public Access. By example, the provision of more forest land with public access

and legislation to provide access to much of the existing forest land to which the public have no access would achieve the aspiration for public access. However, that needs to be linked to the creation of new public rights of way often through farmland to connect to these forest areas.

The provision to increase Biodiversity would encourage more public access but the areas in which this is done may have a lack of public access.

Public access needs to go alongside many of these other statements of the good things associated with our countryside. It should not be seen as one of the considerations that may or may not be able to compete in some sort of priority list. A statement such as "Access to all land covered by this policy by means of both new and existing Public Rights of Way, should be encouraged and supported unless there is strong evidence that harm will be caused to the intentions of the policy." This is where payments to farmers could be directed both for creating new paths and the maintenance of existing paths. Whilst we have in the past welcomed permissive paths they do not provide the certainty for continued access which the creation of new public rights of way do. Local authorities would need to take the lead here in, identifying what the priorities are for new and existing paths. Payments should not go to farmers for creating paths where there is no need.

It is also important to make the point that 'Public Money for Public Good' does not provide all the provision needed to deliver the outcomes where other agencies with no access to this money have a role to play. The policy could at least acknowledge there will be a need in delivery to engage other sections of government in delivery of the outcomes and to make provision for their ability to do this. The areas of planning and enforcement are two obvious ones.

There seems to be an emphasis on stating the value of our National Parks. Whilst they must be valued Public Access should not be seen as applying predominantly to them. Local is important. Links from urban to the countryside are important. They support a Green Economy in lowering transport miles and can provide access for more disadvantaged groups who do not have the financial ability to access many, of what for them, are distant National Parks. Regular access to local facilities and the benefits coming from that are relevant to all groups. In the past suggestions have been made for charging entry to National Parks. We should remain suspicious of anything that does not support equally a universal provision of Public Access.

Increased provision of access for all should be identified as a desirable outcome. The statement that we have 116 thousand miles of Public Access makes no acknowledgement of its condition or accessibility by the less physically able or those constrained by the accompaniment of young children.

It is acknowledged this is a consultation document on a policy and not a strategy for implementation. However, it should be flagged up that for a policy to be effective in delivery it needs to acknowledge the interlinking dependences of many of these ideas and the need for it to be complemented by other departments and agencies of national and local government incorporating the fundamentals into their policy along with the funding to achieve them.

It is to be hoped the next stage will engage all interested parties in a discussion of how to deliver the policy with measurable targets and timescales.

SLAF should perhaps welcome many of the elements of the report and point up how they are interdependent and need not be and in fact should not be seen in some sort of hierarchy. State the policy must acknowledge the need to be complimented by other departments and agencies of Local and National Government. As well as emphasising the importance of linking urban with rural and increasing access for all. With perhaps local authorities being the arbiter of where there is a need for improved public access that will receive payments. They will need financing to carry out this role, hence the point of the joined up approach. This will be difficult to achieve via the questionnaire and views submitted outside this format may lack the quantification and subsequent tabulation that is likely to follow the consultation procedure.

END



<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: The Future For Food, Farming And The Environment</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin/Annette Robinson</b>
<b>Venue: Suffolk Highways Phoenix House, Ipswich IP1 SNP</b>

### 1. Introduction

The Government is seeking views on how leaving the European Union and the Common Agricultural Policy might create the opportunity to reform existing policy and regulations.

### 2. The Consultation

The following documents may be found on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment>

- Consultation paper,
- Annex A: Stakeholder proposals,
- Annex B: Current Countryside Stewardship Options - Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Items,
- The Future Farming and Evidence Compendium.

The consultation questions may be found on Citizen Space (online consultation tool) here: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/farming/future-of-farming>

Responses should be received by **8 May 2018**.

### 3. Discussion Papers

David Barker and Roley Wilson have submitted two discussion papers for consideration, which are attached as appendices 1 and 2, and these were circulated to members earlier this month. SLAF is asked to decide whether the forum should respond to the consultation, and if so how.

One option might be for a working group to produce the final response. The existing working group for Agri-Environment Access Schemes, which covers this area, comprises David Barker and John Wayman and to give a balanced perspective access interests should be represented. Clearly, Roley Wilson has also expressed his interest.

Officers will be happy to contribute their advice.

Appendix 1 (By David Barker)

Post Brexit Agricultural Policy Document SLAF draft response

1. Last week Michael Gove launched the Command Consultation paper which will lead to the Agriculture Bill that will form the basis of Post Brexit Agriculture and Environment policy.

Responses are best by email using the link provided and answering a standard question.

2. The theme is Public Money for Public Goods. There are 5 suggestions areas.

- I. Environment
- II. Better plant health and animal welfare.
- III. Improved Productivity and Competitiveness.
- IV. Rural resilience.
- V. Improved Access to the Countryside.

3. I suggest SLAF stick to the core subject Improving the Publics Access to the countryside.

4. I would like to comment that Capping of Payments to the largest claimants is a double edged sword often the biggest estates employ a lot of people and are part of local communities, I am not sure reducing the funds to the larger claimants will help public access.

5. Permissive Access has been available in the past under the 10 year Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and indeed the Countryside Commission ran pilots back in the 1990's. Improved access has been a component of Countryside Stewardship until EU rules put a stop to it, with the UK being outside the EU our Government has the opportunity to have its own policy. I suggest some examples of Public Money for Public Goods.

- I. Farmers and Land managers are paid from any new policy to look after the Rights of Way they control, this would take the cost away from Suffolk County Council who would still have the role of maintaining the network but this would place the cost on the landowner to obtain from the Agricultural Act. Farmers could also I suggest claim for capital expenditure for maintenance and improvements.
- II. Permit farmers/land managers the opportunity to claim for additional permissive footpaths, bridlepaths and cycle tracks, this would need to be on competitive tender basis because clearly some routes are more likely to be used than others. It might be local Rights of Way advisors need to be consulted.
- III. Particular emphasis on linking existing routes or new circular routes. The payment must be realistic to ensure good uptake.

- IV. Allow wider recreational areas for public use these have been part of previous schemes. The payment would include costs for cutting and maintaining in sensible condition otherwise the take up will be minimal.
6. I am sure there are other situations that maybe SLAF members could suggest.

David Barker 09.03.2018.

Appendix 2 (By Roley Wilson)

Consultation on the Department for the Environment Food & Rural Affairs Report Health and Harmony: the future for food ,farming and the environment in a Green Brexit.

1. Participants in the consultation are asked to respond via a questionnaire. This has the usual faults of a questionnaire where the author guides the respondent towards a given set of choices often none of which express what a respondent may want to say about the topic.
2. An example is where you are asked to state what are the most important 3 out of 6 options one of which is public access. Some of the others include animal welfare and protection of crop, tree, plant and bee health. As if any of them were mutually exclusive or had a hierarchy.
3. The report acknowledges that ‘ farmers and land owners can have a vital role to play in providing a deeper connection with the countryside’ ‘improve public health through access to clean air and exercise’
4. Each topic is dealt with in its own section with a set of questions to respond to Section 6 deals with enhancing the environment and talks of the ‘creation of wetland and woodland’ Section 8 deals with supporting Rural Communities and acknowledges the value of tourism.
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7. Woods and forests offer many benefits to society and the economy. They offer the potential for very significant benefits in carbon sequestration; provide outdoor spaces for exercise and recreation; and also contribute to improving agricultural productivity and rural business diversification.

8. With agriculture accounting for more than 70% of land use in the UK, farmland forms an important amenity value for those who are accessing it and farmers and land managers can have a vital part to play in facilitating a deeper connection with the countryside. This may be through the maintenance of public rights of way, which can improve public health through access to clean air and exercise, for instance horse riding or providing opportunities for recreation and tourism. In 2010, England's National Parks accumulated 104.2 million visitor days and attracted spending of £2.2 billion.
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13. Public access needs to go alongside many of these other statements of the good things associated with our countryside. It should not be seen as one of the considerations that may or may not be able to compete in some sort of priority list. A statement such as " Access to all land covered by this policy by means of both new and existing Public Rights of Way, should be encouraged and supported unless there is strong evidence that harm will be caused to the intentions of the policy." This is where payments to farmers could be directed both for creating new paths and the maintenance of existing paths. Whilst we have in the past welcomed permissive paths they do not provide the certainty for continued access which the creation of new public rights of way do. Local authorities would need to take the lead here in. Identifying what the priorities are for new and existing paths. Payments should not go to farmers for creating paths where there is no need.
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government in delivery of the outcomes and to make provision for their ability to do this. The areas of planning and enforcement are two obvious ones.

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18. It is to be hoped the next stage will engage all interested parties in a discussion of how to deliver the policy with measurable targets and timescales.
19. S.L.A.F. Should perhaps welcome many of the elements of the report and point up how they are interdependent and need not be and in fact should not be seen in some sort of hierarchy. State the policy must acknowledge the need to be complimented by other departments and agencies of Local and National Government. As well as emphasising the importance of linking urban with rural and increasing access for all. With perhaps local authorities being the arbiter of where there is a need for improved public access that will receive payments. They will need financing to carry out this role, hence the point of the joined up approach. This will be difficult to achieve via the questionnaire and views submitted outside this format may lack the quantification and subsequent tabulation that is likely to follow the consultation procedure.

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