

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	Thursday 25th October 2018
Author/Contact:	Anna McGowan
Venue:	The Pykerrell Inn, High Street, Ixworth IP31 2HH

		Paper Number
1.	14:00 Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	14.05 Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 18/17
3.	14.10 Declaration of interest	
4.	14:15 Welcome to new members and round table introductions	
5.	14:25 Sizewell C presentation by EDF	Verbal - GM
6.	14:55 Network Rail update – paper	LAF 18/18 LAF 18/18A LAF 18/18B - AW
7.	15.05 Coastal Access update	LAF 18/19 LAF 18/19A - AW
8.	15.20 SLAF Working Groups	LAF 18/20 - AW
9.	15:30 SLAF Annual Report	LAF 18/21 LAF 18/21A - DF
10.	15:40 Brexit update	Verbal - DB
11.	15:40 Walberswick Bailey Bridge	Verbal - AW
12.	15:50 Public Question Time	
13.	16:00 Dates & Venues of Future Meetings	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of Meeting
Meeting Date:	26th July 2018
Author/Contact:	Anna McGowan
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall, Walberswick

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Barry Hall (Chair) (BH), Gordon Merfield (GM), Monica Pipe (MP), Roland Wilson (RW), Anthony Wright (AWR), Margaret Hancock (MA), Cllr Jane Storey (JS).

SCC Officers Present: Anna McGowan (AM) (Minutes), David Falk (DF), Annette Robinson (AR), Andrew Woodin (AW),

Natural England Officers Present: Jonathan Clarke (JC), Araminta Jackson (AJ)

Apologies: David Barker (DB), Cllr Diana Kearsley (DK), Jane Hatton (JH), John Wayman (JW)

2. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF18/11)

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2018 were reviewed with following amendments and updates on action points:
MH apologies were not recorded.

Network Rail -S25 Cattishall crossing, this has been raised with the developers who have been ticked off for closing the track.

ECP a full Site Visit was undertaken prior to this meeting.

ROWIP was a draft with 5 key headings but now contains 3 main themes under Corporate Headings will be redrafted with case studies and will be ready by next SLAF meeting.

3. Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. The England Coast Path

AW presented his report and JC gave an outline of the ECP developments in Suffolk, there are some parts still at the walking stage. Shotley Gate to Harwich is at the most advanced stage. All info is on the Natural England website. Discussions are ongoing with Norfolk and Essex on a regional path, but it has been decided not to bid for funding yet due to delays in ECP delivery.

There are a lot of routes on hold. JC explained the Sweetman Case – a legal case which illustrates how the ECP route is assessed to protect sensitive species, which requires a signed form that there has been no disturbance. If there is a disturbance – need to

separate out and ask what can be done further, and inevitably this needs to go to Court. Whilst the end result will be the same, this is another layer of processes to follow and involves DEFRA lawyers.

AW and AR had teleconference with Sally Fishwick of NE. Progress has been delayed due to staff changes. AR works closely with NE. Training is still required to get ROW Officers up to speed on the maintenance work, as SCC will be maintaining the ECP once it is completed and handed over from NE.

The meeting also heard about 'Optional Alternative Routes' to the ECP and discussed how these would be maintained.

AW noted estuaries are still under discussion and it is up to SLAF whether this needs to be revisited with NE. The first crossing point of the estuaries ie. ferries are being favoured by landowners, but ferries are seasonal.

On the morning Site Visit, defects of rust have been identified on the Bailey Bridge (on ECP), and a survey estimated at £25K, is required for the Bailey Bridge which is SCC's responsibility. This amount is almost 10% of SCC's Capital Budget which has been increased to £225K. Should the survey reveal that significant repairs are necessary there is a big question as to how such repairs could be funded. JS suggested that the local council(s) can contribute. Many people and local businesses benefit from use of Bailey Bridge. Suffolk Highways would lead on any repairs and refurbishment.

JC highlighted that there are differences between the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk in terms of working with their respective officers – Suffolk officers get charged out to work with NE, whereas Norfolk do not charge for their officer time.

GM expressed concern that the ECP is secondary to the development of the windfarms being installed at Bawdsey by Scottish Power that will impact on estuaries, through the digging and boring beneath the ECP with attendant diversions. AR gave assurances that she is involved with the route and that paths will be reinstated

Action SLAF to write to NE again, to reinforce the view that estuaries are to be followed and that SLAF aware of continued pressure to use ferries.

Action DF to include Bailey Bridge maintenance in SLAF Annual Report.

RW expressed interest for the Ramblers to be involved with the management ECP through a 'Friends of ECP'; and going to make a bid for partnership funding despite delay.

5. Recruitment

DF gave a verbal report. The SLAF needs up to 6 more members.

An advert has been sent to the Advertising Team in SCC for a proof read and check, with a deadline for 24th August 2018. Advert welcomes those with a background in disability and health issues. Interviews will be held in the first week of September. It is hoped there will be new members for next SLAF meeting in October. SLAF members asked to seek out potential members and BH said he has someone in mind. DF to approach Public Health Team, the Forestry Commission and the National Trust. MP said she knows someone from

the Papworth Trust with background in disability issues, who could check access on trails. RW knows a Rambler who lives in Essex but rambles in Suffolk who he will approach.

Action – DF to circulate advert.

6. LAF Regional Meeting

BH referred to the paper, which was circulated after the LAF Regional Meeting to its members, and not written by BH. This meeting saw a good turnout, only Peterborough was missing. It was useful for getting ideas and there were topics with Natural England.

Essex LAF appeared not to have the same level of support as other authorities.

Norfolk have a charity to access funding – match funding.

They have submitted their views to the DEFRA Consultation.

AW noted councils are waiting for guidance, which has been delayed by Brexit, on how to meet the 2026 deadline for ROW on map, and waiting for introduction of combined Order Making for Modification Orders and Highways Act Orders.

Will reconvene in January 2019.

7. Norfolk LAF Meeting 18th July

BH gave a verbal report. RW, DK and BH were not invited to the meeting itself, but to the follow on .

NLAF have a huge number of members – 22 people net. Presently, Norfolk is not subjected to Network Rail issues yet, but the coastal path was discussed as was a Suffolk Wildlife Trust project at Carlton Marshes.

The ECP was discussed.

AW noted he had met with SWT, Sustrans and the Broads Authority regarding Carlton Marshes to encourage cycling out of Lowestoft, round SWT land to Broads Authority Land. DF said these links were crucial. SCC need to do Order Making. There was a presentation on Breaking New Ground Project which has been completed. Fen Edge Project started- at Stage 1 Lottery funded application. This project will include the River Lark to Bury St Edmunds. AW noted that SCC ROW will be involved and has met with Claire Dickson (ROW Officer) about improving access along the River Lark, and she has met with British Sugar. RW has looked at sections of the Fens, which are maintained well.

RW said it was good to attend and to share best practice which combines into a continuous dynamic. MP asked for dates of next LAF Regional.

Action – AM to invite BNG Nick Dickson to future Meeting to discuss Fen Edge Project. Representatives at each other's meetings to benchmark.eg. Network Rail so this overlaps with Regional Meeting.

8. The Future For Food, Farming And The Environment

SLAF's comments were sent to DEFRA, as detailed in the paper.

Michael Gove has since talked about a new environment White Paper to follow up to the 25 year Environment Plan.

9. Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings

Gipsy Lane

AW provided updates from the paper submitted by Steve Kerr. SCC still working with Network Rail regarding Gipsy Lane. There has recently been a fatality, which reinforces that this access should be closed, however there are still delays with the landowners and the case is complex with ongoing problems regarding Network Rail's discussions over compensation. There are a number of objections and these have been submitted to the Secretary of State, which could lead to a Public Inquiry.

There will be a meeting with landowners next month, to discuss a narrower different route – which could still pose its own problems, so is SCC sticking to the same route.

Felixstowe

No further update other than still awaiting the Inspector's report and the Secretary of State's decision.

Countywide Transport and Works Act Order

The 4 month Public Inquiry has finished and SCC could not have done more to justify its objection to the closure of 8 of the crossings.

There is still some work ongoing with the countywide order, and officers believe the Secretary of State may wait for all 3 counties to finish before issuing his decision.

Essex will start theirs in September and have twice as many crossings.

Decisions could take up to a year.

10. Sizewell C

AW and AR gave an update on Stage 1 consultation and associated level crossing closures. AR has attended meetings with Network Rail and EDF. If Sizewell C chooses to use rail for its main transportations of cargo and freight, this will place additional stress on the network crossings. Risk assessments have been carried out and options have been put forward. AR made firm comments on the crossings proposals that EDF do not want to see- ie. Woodbridge, to be kept open with lights and warnings as AR did not accept the proposal of a bridge. SCC taking sensible but firm approach to the diversions proposed. EDF may pay for some SCC officer time.

The Stage 3 public consultation starts early next year, and environmental and transport workshops (for commuters and tourists) will be held. Officers will find out more about how access is being covered with a Transport Workshop.

Legacy issues were discussed and in particular the creation of a linear cycle path from Aldeburgh to Minsmere and beyond. RSPB cannot get visitors to their Minsmere Site sustainably from Leiston. A cyclepath from Aldeburgh to Leiston /Minsmere would address some of the issues.

EDF have offered to come to the SLAF October meeting.

Action SCC to ensure EDT attend the October meeting.

11. SLAF Annual Report

Key topics to be listed, including last October's Meeting paper: context and maintenance of Bailey Bridge to be written up and presented by September; Sizewell C – Aldhurst Farm; Regional LAF; Planners on the next LAF and key issues of Districts to be included; How access is factored into Local Plans.

Action David Falk - SLAF still want a LPA to attend a future meeting. DF will put this on the agenda for his proposed awareness raising workshops with LPAs.

12. Public Question Time

There were no Public Questions.

13. Any Other Business

AWR raised that the new housing on the old bacon factory site in Elmswell has ROW signs put up pointing back to the railway since the footpath level crossing closure. There is no alternative route.

Quarry in Elmswell – Lawn Farm, want to expand on line of existing Bridleway, will it still be protected?

GM said that the Sandlings path at Snape towards the forest and Wantisden has no side path. This path gets very busy during Farmers Market days. SCC officers will investigate these points.

DF provided an update on the Suffolk Walking Festival (12 May – 3 June), thanking AM who joined the Green Access Team in September, for putting this year's event together. This year's Walking Festival has had more walks and events than previously with the most sponsorship and the most participants. Surveys conducted after each event revealed very high satisfaction. All Walk Leaders stated they would like to be involved in next year's festival. 85% of walkers came from Suffolk Walkers with many stating they had discovered new areas of Suffolk. The Cambridge Model was used to analyse economic impacts and findings were that the Festival injected £176K into the local economy on a £13K cost. The cost is shared between all authorities, sponsorship and ticket sales. This represents a 12:1 return on investment. Plans are in hand for 2019 with efforts to provide more family friendly events and attracting further sponsors. Promotion of the 2019 Festival will include the Theatre Royal Bury, and also linking in with the Orwell Challenge Walk.

14. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

25th October 2018, possibly at the Woolpit Cricket Club

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings
Meeting: 25th October 2018
Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin
Venue: The Pykkerell Inn Ixworth, High Street Ixworth IP31 2HH

Introduction

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



Needham Market Gipsy Lane and FP6

Orders to divert the public footpath from the Gipsy Lane level crossing, and extinguish the unused footpath level crossing to the south east were made on 4 April and advertised on 12 April 2018. By the end of the objection period on 10 May 2018, 14 objections had been received to the Gipsy Lane rail crossing diversion order and 5 to the extinguishment. The diversion order affects two land holdings. North of the operational railway, the landowner's family has submitted several objections to both Orders.

A local inquiry will be held into the objections between 4 – 7 June 2019, and the Creting St Mary Village Hall has been provisionally booked for this.

The landowner has put forward an alternative alignment that would take the proposed footpath off his private agricultural track and be located hard up against NR's boundary fence. This would also then be fenced on its northern side. In addition, the landowner has requested a reduction in the footpath width, from the 3 metres proposed in the Order to 2 metres, but has also made it clear that he will not allow NR to erect a vehicular gate in the secondary fence line, which NR would require to allow them to maintain the culvert

structure. Discussions are ongoing whether alternative route proposal is a feasible option, and an assessment of compensation will be made for both this proposal and the footpath diversion as laid out in the order. If another diversion order is to be made this will require further advertising and consultation, and in any event it is likely NR would require a variation of their planning permission for the culvert and the current diversionary route. NR have time limited funding for this project under the current control period (CP5) which terminates in March 2019.

The landowner is also currently challenging the validity of a private Deed of Grant (DoG) that was entered into with NR several years ago, which allows NR to use his track in order to undertake maintenance of the culvert and the operational railway above. The landowner is also objecting to the closure of the Gipsy Lane crossing and to use of the culvert as part of the diversionary route. This is largely based on the impact the diversion would have on their agricultural operations, wildlife, environmental and security concerns, and the impact the closure would have on their current access and emergency access requirements

The landowner has raised his concerns with local councillors, and with Jo Churchill MP's office. A site meeting with the MP, Network Rail, the landowner and the county council took place on 7th September, where the landowner's family and Network Rail put forward their positions and the landowner's alternative diversion proposal was discussed.

Andrew Woodin, for the county council, explained the council wants the new footpath to be the best it can be for the public, to mitigate what it considers to otherwise be a substandard alternative route. The local tracks are used by residents for a short healthy walk, including those who are ageing and may have mobility problems, and the county council wants to replicate that facility.

It was further explained the county council would want to make sure width, surface and fencing details are in the public interest, but the option is one the council could work with in principle. AW made it clear, however, that Network Rail is the effective client in this matter and it is for them to decide whether to push on with the order as made or decide it was worth putting all the additional time and expensive into designing the landowner's proffered option.

The MP stated she understood the county council's need to minimise maintenance liabilities and she understood the county council is a "third party" in this project. She also raised the matter of mobility scooter users wanting to use the new route.

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



Following the public inquiry in January 2018 into the replacement of a number of PRow level crossings with an overbridge, the Secretary of State has decided to make the Order with modifications. The conclusion sets out that the Order is justified on its merits and there is a compelling case in the public interest for making it on the basis of enabling full operational and safety benefits to be secured as part of the wider scheme to improve Felixstowe Branch Line, which together with the substantial economic and public safety case are matters that weight heavily in favour of the scheme. The Secretary of State is satisfied that the adverse impacts, particularly in relation to the visual impact on users of the level crossing, would be outweighed by the substantial public benefit of the scheme.

The decision letter is appendix A, and further information has been provided, attach as appendix B.

General/Countywide

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

No decision on the TWAO has been made yet. Essex's public inquiry, which is for the last of the three regional orders, started on 25th September 2018, and is likely to last some months. Logically, one would expect the Secretary of State would await the inspectors' recommendations from all three inquiries before coming to a decision.

The most contentious of the proposed crossing closures was the Weatherby crossing in Newmarket. On 16 April 2018, during the public inquiry, Mr Smy, a resident of Newmarket, submitted a formal application for a restricted byway which would link Granary Road with Cricket Field Road by the Weatherby crossing. The application was allocated a high priority and the investigating officer recommended a definitive map modification order be made to add a public footpath to the definitive map and statement. The officer's report was considered by the county council's Development and Regulation Committee on 16th October 2018, at which both representatives of the local community and Network Rail made oral submissions to the committee in favour of, and objecting to, the application. The committee approved the officer recommendation and an order to record the public footpath will be made in due course. The inspector for the county wide TWAO will be advised of the committee's decision.

At a national level, discussions to improve dialogue between Network Rail and local highway authorities (LHAs) on the closure of PRow level crossings have resumed. A meeting took place at Network Rail's HQ in Milton Keynes on 5th October, with a view to finally agreeing a memorandum of understanding to improve working practices between Network Rail and LHAs where PRow use level crossings on the rail network in England and Wales. The meeting was positive and Network Rail appeared keen to improve relations generally with LHAs, which of course is in their interest when their stated ambition is improve safety at crossings, and where possible close them.

END – AW/SCC October 2018

Appendix A



Appendix B

R:\Transport & Infrastructure\Rights of Way\Working Docs\A Woodin\Trunk, Major Roads & Rail Crossings\Rail\Trimley TWA Update 17.10.18.pptx

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings
Meeting:	25th October 2018
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	The Pykkerell Inn, High Street, Ixworth IP31 2HH

Trimley TWA Decision Letter 14-08-2018



Department for Transport

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Your Ref: WHITED/292050.000058

14 August 2018

Dear Sirs,

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992: APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL (FELIXSTOWE BRANCH LINE IMPROVEMENTS - LEVEL CROSSINGS CLOSURE) ORDER

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State for Transport to say that consideration has been given to the report of the Inspector, Ms Diane Lewis BA (Hons) MCD MA LLM MRTPI who held a public Inquiry between 23 to 26 January 2018, into the application made by your clients' Network Rail Infrastructure Limited ("NR") for:

(a) the Network Rail (Felixstowe Branch Line Improvements – Level Crossings Closure Order to be made under sections 1 and 5 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 ("TWA"): and

(b) direction as to deemed planning permission, to be given under section 90(2A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("the Planning Direction").

2. The Order and the Planning Direction, if made, would authorise NR to close six pedestrian level crossings (two of which can currently also be used by private farm vehicles) and construct a replacement bridleway bridge, provide associated environmental mitigation and carry out upgrades and diversions to the local public rights of way network. The proposals are located in the County of Suffolk within the Parishes of Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary and forms part of a wider scheme to increase capacity on the Felixstowe Branch Line Railway and secures public safety and reduces risk to the rail network.

3. Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the Inspector's report. The Inspector's conclusions are set out in paragraphs 9.1 to 9.114 and her overall conclusions are set out in paragraphs 9.115 to 9.1.121 of the report. The Inspector's recommendations are set out in paragraph 10.1 of the report.

4. In making this application, NR complied with the publicity requirements of the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules

2006 ("the 2006 Rules"). Further NR served copies of the application and the accompanying documents on the persons specified in the 2006 Rules and made the documents available for public inspection. As also required by the 2006 Rules, NR displayed and published notices giving information about the application and how to make representations to it and served notice on those whose rights over land would be extinguished under the Order.

Summary of Inspector's recommendations

5. The Inspector recommended that the Order should be made, subject to modifications, and that a direction be made deeming planning permission to be granted for the works authorised by the Order, subject to planning conditions.

Summary of the Secretary of State's decision

6. For the reason given in this letter, **the Secretary of State has decided to make the Order with modifications, and to give the planning direction, subject to the conditions set out in Annex 1 to this letter.**

Secretary of State's consideration

7. Careful consideration has been given to all the arguments put forward by, or on behalf of, the parties. The Secretary of State's consideration of the Inspector's report is set out in the following paragraphs. Where not stated in this letter the Secretary of State can be taken to agree with the Inspector's findings as set out in the Report, the reasons for the Secretary of State's decision are those given by the Inspector in support of the conclusions and recommendations. All paragraph references, unless otherwise stated, are to the Inspector's report ("IR").

Aim and need for the Network Rail (Felixstowe Branch Line Improvements – Level Crossings Closure) Order ("the scheme")

8. The Felixstowe Branch Line ("FBL") provides a passenger and freight railway link between the East Suffolk Line at Westerfield Junction and Felixstowe Town Station. NR have set out that the scheme is part of a wider scheme to provide for dual tracks on the FBL to allow the Port of Felixstowe to operate a greater number of rail freight services. NR noted that the enhancement to the FBL, known as the wider scheme, has four main elements: dualling of the Branch Line at Trimley; upgrading a number of vehicular level crossings and replacing existing single barriers with double barriers; the closure of six level crossings located along or in the vicinity of the proposed construction of the second track; and the provision of a replacement crossing point in the form of a brideway bridge at Gun Lane (IR 4.5). Two previous Orders granted under the Transport and Works Act (the Felixstowe Branch Line and Ipswich Yard Improvement Order 2008 and the Felixstowe Branch Line (Land Acquisition) Order 2014) provided the powers for the first and second elements of these works with further powers for the additional works being sought through this Order scheme (IR 4.6).

9. NR set out that it is their policy to close level crossings where possible, being the most effective way to reduce risk on the network and to eliminate risk at individual level crossings. This policy is in line with the Office of Rail and Road's strategy to encourage

crossing closure and to ensure NR works to achieve the highest risk reduction possible (IR 4.16). The Secretary of State notes the Inspector's views that the six level crossings at issue are all passive crossings where the onus is placed on the user to decide when it is safe to cross and that as a result of the dualling work the conditions affecting such a decision would change significantly with regard to factors such as number and frequency of train movements, speed and bi-directional operation and that personal risk would therefore increase (IR 9.13).

10. The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector's view that the Order scheme would meet the objective of completing the wider proposals to improve the Branch line and address the identified increased risks to safety that would result from the construction of a second track. The Secretary of State agrees that it would be difficult for NR to proceed with the wider scheme without the level crossing closures (IR 9.19). The Secretary of State is therefore satisfied that the aims and need for the scheme are clearly established.

The main alternative options considered by NR the reasons for choosing the proposals comprised in the scheme.

11. The Secretary of State notes that NR concluded that there was no alternative to closing the six level crossings for reasons of safety, cost benefit and operational efficiency and that a new crossing should be provided to address the impact on users of the Public Rights of Way network ("PRoW"). The Secretary of State notes that whilst there was no disagreement to this, concern was raised about the location and type of crossing (IR 9.23).

12. The Secretary of State notes the Inspector's consideration of these issues (IR 9.23-9.31) and that a range of matters, were taken into account by NR in determining the location of a new railway crossing and that options were developed through consultation primarily with Suffolk County Council (IR 9.24). The Secretary of State notes that an optioneering process was also applied on the proposed design of the bridge that would be expected to accommodate the safe combined usage of people on foot and less able persons, cyclists and equestrians. He further notes that in addition to this basic requirement, a set criteria was established by reference to the relevant standards and guidance, including those relating to construction, access dimensions and clearance of rail (IR 9.26).

13. Overall the Secretary of State concurs with the Inspector's view that the applicant has given proper consideration to alternatives in developing the design of the scheme and during the application process in response to objections. He agrees with the Inspector that the steel bridge, in association with proposals for the PRoW network, performs best against the evaluation criteria (IR 9.31).

Consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"), national transport policy, and local transport, environmental and local planning policies

14. The Secretary of State notes the Inspector's consideration that the Order scheme, when properly considered as an integral element of the wider scheme, is fully supported by national policy in the NPPF with regard to promoting economic growth and the delivery of the necessary enabling infrastructure. Since the Inspector's report was received, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ("MHCLG") published in July 2018 an updated version of the NPPF. Whilst the Secretary of State recognises that the Inspector's considerations are based on the previous version of the NPPF, he is content

that the Inspector's considerations and recommendations are still relevant and that nothing in the current version of the NPPF changes his view of the Inspector's recommendation. He further notes the important contribution that would be made to the regeneration and growth of the local economy through the development of the Port of Felixstowe is fully supported by development plan policy (IR 4.41 and IR 9.32).

15. The Secretary of State notes that the ability to shift more freight from road to rail would accord with national policy in this regard and would also address the key aim of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan ("LTP") and development plan policies to improve efficiency and capacity of strategic rail and road routes (IR 9.33). The Secretary of State concurs with the Inspector's views that overall the proposals are fully in accordance with policy on sustainable economic development and promoting sustainable transport (IR 9.34). However, the Secretary of State notes that some objectors raised concern about the compatibility of the bridge with some policies, including those in place to protect the Suffolk Coast and Heaths area of outstanding natural beauty ("AONB") (IR 9.36).

16. The Secretary of State notes the Inspector's consideration of these issues and agrees with the Inspector's reasoning set out in her consideration of the issues (IR 9.32-9.42). In particular, the Secretary of State notes that the Inspector considered that there is a good level of consistency with national and development plan policy to conserve the historic environment and aspects of the natural environment, most notably the AONB and ecology (both issues are considered further below). He also notes that the Inspector considered that there is less consistency regarding design, particularly in relation to appearance, local distinctiveness and visual amenity but agrees that the proposed landscape mitigation is critical in this respect. The Secretary of State agrees that ensuring public safety through the closure of the six level crossings is the overriding consideration in seeking a positive improvement in people's quality of life and accepts the Inspector's view that a good level of accessibility to the countryside would be maintained and that there is an acceptable level of consistency with policies to promote the social dimension of sustainable development (IR 9.41)

17. Overall, the Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector's conclusion that when all matters are considered, the scheme would promote a sustainable form of development consistent with the NPPF and that the scheme is consistent with the LTP and that no conflict arises with the AONB Management Plan (IR 9.42).

The adequacy of the Environmental Statement (ES)

18. The Secretary of State is satisfied that the ES submitted with the Order application was completed in accordance with the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 and that statutory procedural requirements have been complied with (IR 4.54 and IR 9.43). The Secretary of State confirms that in reaching his decision that he has complied with the requirements of paragraphs (a) to (c) of section 14(3A) of the TWA relating to the consideration of the ES.

Likely impacts of closing the six level crossings and construction of the new brideway bridge on land owners, local businesses, local residents, the public, equestrian users and statutory utilities

Noise and air pollution

19. The Secretary of State notes that the assessment of noise and vibration was scoped out of the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") due to the distance between the main bridge construction area and the nearest receptors and the minimal work required at the level crossings. He further notes that works to the bridge would be conducted during core working hours and the activities to remove the crossings will be of short scale duration. The Secretary of State notes in the Inspector's report that the nature of the works proposed is such that no significant operational noise or vibration effects will be expected and has no reason to disagree with this (IR 4.57 and IR 9.44).

20. The Secretary of State notes that monitoring data and background mapped data provided by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Suffolk Coastal District Council indicate air pollution concentrations at the proposed work locations are likely to be below Air Quality Strategy objectives. The Secretary of State also notes the Inspector's view that once operational the proposed works will not directly release any emission to air and are unlikely to generate vehicle activity and therefore air quality impacts would be limited to dust during the construction phase. The Secretary of State is however satisfied that this would be avoided and minimised and that this is secured by conditions of Planning Policy. (IR 4.58 and IR 9.45).

Ecology and archaeology

21. The Secretary of State notes that NR's ecological assessment considered the combined impacts of the Order and wider scheme and delivered a combined mitigation strategy (IR 4.71). The Secretary of State notes that the Inspector was satisfied that the Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1 screening report identified that the proposed works either alone or in combination with any other plan or project would not be likely to result in any significant effects on the integrity of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area and Ramsar. The Secretary of State is satisfied that no additional avoidance or reduction measures were taken into account at the screening stage. The Secretary of State notes that the Inspector having taken into account the comments of Natural England and Suffolk County Council is satisfied that the screening report is a reliable assessment and that no Appropriate Assessment is required (IR 4.71 and IR 9.46). The Secretary of State agrees with that assessment.

22. The Secretary of State notes that the Inspector concluded that construction of the bridge would result in the loss of habitat and potential disturbance to species but that the adverse impact on ecology would be capable of being minimised and that the proposed restoration planting and hedgerow enhancement would offer the prospect of securing long term biodiversity gain. The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that with these considerations in mind the impact on ecology would be acceptable (IR 9.47).

23. The Secretary of State notes that there are a number of listed buildings within some 500 metres and a Scheduled Monument ("SM") designated as a heritage asset of the highest significance (IR 2.6). The Secretary of State notes that the closest proposed works to the SM will be the upgrade of the status of Footpath 1 (IR 4.74). The Inspector agreed with Historic England that this and the proposed bridge would have a low impact on the

setting of the SM and would not harm its significance (IR 7.5 and 9.48). The Secretary of State has no reason to disagree with this conclusion.

24. The Secretary of State notes that extensive buried archaeological remains have been identified and that there is the potential for the scheme to have a varied degree of direct or construction related impacts. The Secretary of State notes that Suffolk County Council were satisfied that the necessary archaeological work would be secured through appropriate planning conditions (IR 7.3). The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that on this understanding (that is, the incorporation of appropriate measures in the design and construction planning together with the intention to gather further information, develop a written scheme of investigation and continued dialogue) should ensure the impact on archaeology is minimised and would be acceptable (IR 9.49 and IR 9.102).

25. The Secretary of State notes that in the locality of the site the historic environment is enhanced by a number of designated historic assets, including Grimston Hall. The Secretary of State notes the Inspectors conclusion that the trees along the front driveway together with the retained vegetation and woodland would be sufficient to prevent the bridge having a negative impact on the views and setting of the property. The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector's view that there would be no harmful impact on the significance of this designated historic asset (IR 9.50).

Landscape and visual amenity

26. The Secretary of State notes that the closure of the level crossings and the associated removal of the stiles and gates would have a limited effect on the landscape and no effect on visual amenity (IR 9.52), but notes the concerns raised by objectors in relation to the bridge and its impact on the landscape. The Secretary of State notes that NR considered that the severity of change on the local landscape character would be most noticeable just after completion of construction in year 0 due to removal of woodlands and hedgerows and would result in an overall significant effect. By year 15 NR considered that mitigation planting would reduce the magnitude of change so the overall impact would not be significant (IR 4.68).

27. The Secretary of State notes that construction of the bridge would directly lead to a loss of woodland and the introduction of a prominent man made steel structure into an open countryside area (IR 9.54). The Secretary of State also notes that the Inspector considered the choice of location, where accessibility is prioritised, is not able to be achieved without vegetation removal (IR 9.55). He notes the Inspector concluded that in relation to landscape character, balancing all the various factors, the Bridleway Bridge would not protect landscape character but that the impact would be localised (IR 9.56).

28. While in relation to visual amenity the Inspector concluded that the bridge would be highly visible in the years immediately following construction and result in serious harm to visual amenity (IR 9.57) the Secretary of State takes the view that this needs to be balanced against the other factors which are considered further in this decision letter and concluded at paragraph 46.

Setting of the AONB

29. The Secretary of State notes that the new bridge would be located close to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and that concerns were raised about the impact on the setting of AONB (IR 9.58). The Secretary of State notes NR's conclusion that construction of the bridge would result in a small scale indirect but negative effect on the characteristics of the AONB but that by year 15 the mitigation planting would provide effective screening which would result in the setting of the AONB being largely the same as the baseline condition and the magnitude of change would be reduced to not significant (IR 4.65 and IR 4.69). He further notes the Inspectors conclusions that: the bridge would not enhance or conserve the setting of the AONB; would detract from views out of the AONB; and that the impact would occur during and after construction.

30. The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that a key consideration is the impact of the scheme on the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB (IR 9.58). The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that whilst the bridge would result in a noticeable and negative change within the setting of the AONB, the impact would be negligible in relation to the special qualities of the AONB (IR 9.59).

Appearance and design of proposed new crossing

31. The Secretary of State notes that the Inspector considered that the steel bridge would appear as a relatively large, engineered structure more suitable to a urban rather than countryside setting and that the length of the ramps, height of the bridge and its partial enclosure would be the most visually dominant element (IR 9.60). The Secretary of State notes the Inspector's consideration of the matters contained in IR 9.62 – 9.64. He agrees with the Inspector that whilst the bridge would not be visually attractive or reflect the identity of the local surroundings, it has been developed through a rigorous design process that has balanced a number of sometimes conflicting requirements and site constraints and that the landscape plan will offer the means of achieving a degree of harmony with the surroundings. The Secretary of State therefore agrees with the Inspector that on the given parameters, a reasonable design outcome has been achieved (IR 9.65).

Safety

32. The Secretary of State notes that the Inspector considered that NR provided convincing evidence to the Inquiry to demonstrate the closure of the level crossings would result in a much safer environment along the railway line, reducing risk to all users of the PRoW network as well as benefitting the safety of those operating and using the railway (IR 9.66). The Secretary of State further notes that the proposed bridge has been designed to comply with the standards and guidance to enable safe use by all, including equestrians (IR 9.69).

33. The Secretary of State notes the Inspector's conclusion, that the proposed bridleway bridge has been designed to be safe for equestrians and that for residents and walkers, the bridge would offer a safe option to cross the railway. The Secretary of State therefore agrees with the Inspector that overall the scheme would result in a substantial improvement in safety (IR 9.70).

Impacts on private vehicular crossing rights at Gun Lane and Keeper's Lane

34. The Secretary of State notes that the Gun Lane and Keeper's Lane vehicular crossings serve agricultural land on both sides of the railway. He further notes that the Felixstowe Branch Line and Ipswich Yard Improvement Order 2008 (S.I 2008/2512) already provides for the powers to close the Gun Lane Crossing but that this scheme will allow for the closure of Keeper's Lane (IR 4.86, IR 4.87, IR 9.71). The Secretary of State notes that the removal of vehicular rights across the railway would result in agricultural traffic using public highway to access farmland (IR 9.71) and that concern was raised about the impact of this on the farm and local residents and about a lack of provision of an adequate alternative (IR 6.35-6.37).

35. The Secretary of State notes that available data shows that general vehicle usage over both crossings over a five year period since 2012 was very low. He notes that the Inspector considered that the alternative vehicular routes would have to utilise the crossings at Thorpe Lane and at Trimley Station on Cordy's Lane, which may be less convenient and time effective but that in the absence of any contrary evidence there would be little if any material impact of the ability of landowners or tenants to carry on their business as a result of the loss of private vehicular crossing rights (IR 9.73). The Secretary of State has no reason to disagree with this conclusion.

Impact on Users of the PRow Network

36. The Secretary of State notes that the Inspector set out that the closure of six level crossings would result in the loss of six direct, short links to get across the railway (IR 9.74). Whilst the evidence was the PRow network was used primarily for recreation and enjoyment of the countryside, the Secretary of State takes account that there were concerns raised about the inability to take short health walks, less attractive and convenient routes and severance to the community (IR 9.75). The Secretary of State notes that the objections were mainly in relation to the closure of crossings at Keeper's lane, Thorpe Commons and Trimley (IR 9.76). The Secretary of State notes the Inspector's consideration of these matters at IR 9.77-9.80. The Secretary of State acknowledges the most noticeable adverse impact for users of the PRow network would be for regular pedestrian users of the Keeper's Lane crossing and recognises that some people, including equestrians, may choose not to use the Bridleway Bridge (IR 9.81).

37. The Secretary of State considers that in relation to the likely impacts of closing the six level crossings and the construction of the new bridleway bridge these matters have to be placed within an overall balance involving a number of competing factors (IR 9.117) which are considered further in this decision letter and concluded at paragraph 46.

Mitigation Measures

38. The Secretary of State takes note of the Inspector's consideration of the mitigation matters. The Secretary of State acknowledges the Inspector's conclusion that the Construction Environmental Management Plan ("CEMP") would be essential to ensuring that appropriate mitigation measures are adopted and best practice is followed to minimise adverse construction impacts (IR 9.82). He is satisfied that this has been secured through condition 5 of the deemed planning permission. The Secretary of State recognises the

additional mitigation measures for the Order scheme which include a landscape restoration plan, a suite of control measures for ecological receptors and conditions of the deemed planning permission (IR 4.90 and IR 9.82)

39. The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that the mitigation measures are reasonable and well considered given the location of the bridge, the provisions underlying the proposed PRow diversions and the necessity of an inclusive bridge design and that the adverse environmental, social and to a lesser extent economic impacts through the closure of the level crossings have been largely addressed satisfactorily through the proposed mitigation (IR 9.87 and IR 9.93).

40. Under section 14(3AA) of the TWA, the Secretary of State is required to describe the main measures to avoid, reduce and if possible, remedy the major adverse environmental effects of the scheme. In this case he considers that the main measures to mitigate the effects of the scheme are those set out in the Environmental Statement and those secured in the planning conditions, set out in Annex 1 to this letter, including the CEMP.

Conditions to be attached to the Deemed Planning Permission

41. The Secretary of State notes that the planning conditions appended to the report were subject to discussion and refinement during the public inquiry following comments from the Local Planning Authority and Suffolk County Council (IR 9.96). The Secretary of State agrees with the changes to the revised conditions proposed by the Inspector as set out in IR 9.97 to IR 9.102 and included in Appendix 2 to the Report. The revised conditions which the Secretary of State intends to attach to the planning direction are set out in Annex 1 to this letter. The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that the conditions would be necessary and relevant (IR 9.105) and is satisfied that they meet the tests in paragraphs 55 and 56 of the NPPF. The Secretary of State has added one further condition to make clear that where a condition allows for the Local Planning Authority to make amendments to deal of the scheme as submitted and approved, these must not give rise to material, new or materially different environmental effects as assessed in the ES.

Compulsory Purchase Powers and Funding

42. The Secretary of State notes that the land to be acquired permanently or temporarily for the construction of the scheme is defined on the land plans, works plans and public rights of way plans (IR 4.102). MHCLG's Guidance on the Compulsory Purchase Process and the Crichel Down Rules (2015) indicates that the acquiring authority will need to be able to show that the scheme is unlikely to be blocked by any physical or legal impediments to implementation, including any need for consent. The Secretary of State accepts the Inspector's findings that funding for the scheme will be met through NR's Strategic Freight Network (SFN) fund and a contribution from the Port of Felixstowe. The Secretary of State concurs with the Inspector's view that there is a high probability of funds being allocated from the SFN fund (IR 9.113) and is satisfied that there is no physical or legal impediment that should block the scheme.

43. The Secretary of State notes that the Inspector considered that there is justification for land and rights in land to be acquired temporarily to enable the scheme to be constructed and permanently to: provide for the bridge; upgrade and make alternations to the PRow

network; and to carry out environmental mitigation (IR 9.109). The Secretary of State concurs with the Inspector that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the compulsory acquisition and use of land for the purposes of the Order scheme and the land and rights specified are required in order to secure satisfactory implementation of the scheme (IR 9.111).

Consultation procedures

44. The Secretary of State has noted that matters were raised about the public information event preceding the submission of the application and the failure of Network Rail to engage in meaningful consultation (IR 9.2). The documentary evidence and details of the pre-application consultation demonstrate that NR satisfied the requirements of Rule 10(2)(d) of the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006. In addition, formal and informal consultation with statutory consultees, landowners and stakeholders was carried out over a period of nine months. It was noted that some 2,250 residents were informed of the public event and wider publicity would have been achieved through the involvement of interest groups (IR 9.3). The Secretary of State acknowledges the Inspector's conclusions that all the available evidence indicates that NR has complied with the necessary statutory requirements, that no prejudice has been caused and that the procedural matters raised by objectors are not well founded (IR 9.6). The Secretary of State has no reason to disagree with the Inspector's assessment of these matters.

Secretary of State's overall conclusion and decision

45. The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that for all the reasons given above, the Order is justified on its merits and there is a compelling case in the public interest for making it on the basis of enabling full operational and safety benefits to be secured as part of the wider scheme to improve the Felixstowe Branch Line which together with the substantial economic and public safety case are matters that weigh heavily in favour of the scheme. The Secretary of State is satisfied that the adverse impacts particularly in relation to the visual impact on users of the level crossing, would be outweighed by the substantial public benefit of the scheme.

46. Taking into account also the consistency of the proposals with relevant policies, the availability of funding and the measures proposed to mitigate the environmental effects of the scheme, the Secretary of State has decided to make the Order with modifications set out below and to give the planning direction subject to the conditions set out in Annex 1 to this letter.

47. The further modifications that the Secretary of State has made to the Order which do not affect the substance of the Order as it was considered at the Inquiry are;

- Article 3 - minor drafting changes have been made;
- Article 8 – the notice provisions from the Housing and Planning Act 2016 have been incorporated;
- Article 13 and Schedule 8 – the provisions regarding the modification of the vesting declaration provisions have been removed. There does not appear to be sufficient justification for general provision as made in relation to the scale and delivery

- requirements of the HS2 rail project under the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017 in relation to the more limited requirements of this Order scheme.
- Article 20 – the model clause wording has been used. It is unclear why NR need the powers provided for in the original drafting of article 20(1);
 - The tables in Schedules 2, 3, 5 to 7, and 9 have been subject to minor changes and formatting within the tables.

Notice under section 14 of the TWA

49. This letter constitutes the Secretary of State's notice of his determination to make the Order with modifications, for the purposes of section 14(1) (a) and section 14(2) of the TWA. Your clients are required to publish newspaper notices of the determination in accordance with section 14(4) of the TWA.

Challenge to Decisions

50. The circumstances in which the Secretary of State's decisions may be challenged are set out in the note attached at Annex 2 to this letter.

Distribution

51. Copies of this letter are being sent to those who appeared at the inquiry and to all statutory objectors whose objections were referred to the inquiry under section 11(3) of the TWA but who did not appear.

Yours sincerely,



Natasha Kopala

Annex 1

CONDITIONS WHICH THE SECRETARY OF STATE INTENDS TO ATTACH TO THE DIRECTION AS TO DEEMED PLANNING PERMISSION**Interpretations**

In the following conditions -

"the Development" means the works authorised by the Order and this Direction as to deemed planning permission.

"the Environmental Statement" is the document subjected with the application of the Order as required by the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006.

"Geo-Archaeological Watching Brief" means a brief which the contractor will adhere to, to monitor any excavations or intrusive works.

"Local Planning Authority" means Suffolk Coastal District Council.

"the Site" means the area on which the Development can be carried out.

"Woodland Area" means the land shaded green in Figure 7.1 of the Environmental Statement (ES Volume 2) between Trimley Level Crossing and Keeper's Lane Level Crossing.

"Written Scheme of Investigation" means a scheme which outlines the archaeological features and deposits which are (a) known to exist at the date of submission of the scheme, and (b) those that at the date of submission of the scheme are reasonably considered to potentially exist, and proposes a structure for investigating them using appropriate techniques and methods of recording where required.

"the 2008 Order" means the Felixstowe Branch Line and Ipswich Yard Improvement Order 2008.

"the 2010 Planning Permission" means the planning permission granted by Suffolk Coastal District Council in relation to the 2008 Order and issued on 25 August 2010 (Ref C10/0544).

"permanent works" means the proposed bridleway bridge.

Planning conditions**Time Limit to Implement the Permission**

1. The Development must commence before the expiration of 5 years from the date that the Order comes into force.

Reason: To ensure that the development is commenced within a reasonable period of time and in accordance with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Plans and Drawings

2. The Development must only be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents, or any amendments thereto as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Sheet No.1 Site Plan
 Sheet No.2 Site Plan
 Sheet No.3 Site Plan
 Sheet No.4 Site Plan
 Sheet No.5 Site Plan
 Sheet No.6 General Arrangement Drawing (Sheet 1 of 2)
 Sheet No.7 General Arrangement Drawing (Sheet 2 of 2)
 Sheet No.8 Plan of Proposed Bridge
 Sheet No.9 Elevations (Elevation A-A)
 Sheet No.10 Elevations (Elevation B-B).

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Landscaping scheme

3. (1) No commencement shall be made on the Development unless and until a landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include:
- a) Any proposed boundary treatments and fencing;
 - b) Any trees or shrubs to be planted, including the location, number, species, size and planting density;
 - c) A landscape specification setting out planting methods, soil depths and conditions; and
 - d) A landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas.
- (2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply in relation to any part of the Site in respect of which development has been undertaken pursuant to the 2008 Order and/or the 2010 Planning Permission.

Reason: To ensure appropriate landscaping of the Development is provided in a timely manner.

Implementation and Maintenance of Landscaping and Ecological Enhancement

4. (a) All landscaping works must be undertaken in accordance with the relevant landscaping scheme approved under Condition 3. Planting must take place no later than the first available planting season after the completion of the permanent works.

(b) Any tree or shrub planted as part of an approved landscaping scheme that within five years of the date of planting, is removed, dies or becomes in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or seriously diseased, must be replaced in the first available planting season with a specimen of the same species, to a size equivalent to the surrounding healthy specimens that were planted at the same time.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory implementation of the landscaping and ecological enhancement measures.

Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

5. No development shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP must be developed from Appendix A4.1 of the Environmental Statement Volume 3. The CEMP must detail the adoption and use of best practical means to reduce the effects of noise, vibration, dust, site lighting and shall incorporate a Waste Management Plan. All works must be undertaken in accordance with the approved CEMP or any amendments thereto as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residents and amenity during construction of the Development.

Core Working Hours

6. The core working hours for all construction activities and any traffic movements to or from the Site must be limited to 0800 to 1800 hours Monday to Friday and none on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays, except:
 - Where continuous periods of operation are required, for example during railway possessions and during concrete pouring.
 - For the delivery of abnormal loads to the Site which may cause congestion on the local road network.

Prior notification must be given to the Local Planning Authority for construction activities and traffic movement where such activities or movements fall within the above exceptions.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

Lighting during construction

7. Details of the location, height, design of any activity sensors and the luminance of all floodlighting used during construction, together with a programme for removal of the floodlighting at the end of the construction period, must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the Development. Measures to limit obtrusive glare to nearby residential property and to minimise sky glow must be incorporated in the design of the floodlighting. The installation, use, operation and removal of the floodlighting must be in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

Land Contamination

8. Any contamination discovered during the construction phase of the Development must be remediated in accordance with a remediation plan that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Environmental Protection Team at the Local Planning Authority must be notified in writing at least seven days prior to any removal or encapsulation of any contaminants.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination both during the construction phase and to future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the Development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other off-site receptors.

Phase 1 Ecology Surveys

9. (1) Subject to paragraph 2 below, if the Development has not commenced before 1 January 2019, no development shall commence until a Phase 1 habitat survey of the Site has been undertaken to determine whether any species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are likely to be present. Details of the survey must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If any protected species are found to be present no part of the Development that would affect such species shall be commenced until an acceptable mitigation strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any part of the Development where such species are present shall not be commenced or carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved strategy.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply in relation to any part of the Site in respect of which development has been undertaken pursuant to the 2008 Order and/or the 2010 Planning Permission.

Reason: To ensure that any species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 that may enter and use the Site in future are protected from Development.

Temporary Bat Corridor

10. Works to the Woodland Area to the Trimley (east) side of the railway must not take place until the details of a temporary artificial bat corridor and timescale for its provision have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The temporary bat corridor must be provided in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that bat species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are protected.

Historic Environment

11. Construction of the bridge component in the Development, including all associated preparatory works, must not commence until a Written Scheme of Investigation and Geo-Archaeological Watching Brief have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Written Scheme of Investigation and Geo-Archaeological Watching Brief must be implemented in accordance with the approval.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that does not negatively impact historic features.

Bridge Surface

12. No works in respect of the bridge must be commenced until details of the hard surfacing of the bridge have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The hard surfacing must be carried out as approved.

Reason: To ensure that the bridge is of an appropriate surface.

Approval and implementation under these conditions

13. Where under any condition the Local Planning Authority may approve amendments to details submitted and approved, such approval must not be given except in relation to changes where it has been demonstrated to the Local Planning Authority that the approval sought is unlikely to give rise to any materially new or materially different environmental effects from those assessed in the Environmental Statement.

Reason; To provide for certainty in the approvals and implementation process and in the interests of proper planning.

Annex 2

RIGHT TO CHALLENGE ORDERS MADE UNDER THE TWA

Any person who is aggrieved by the making of the Order may challenge its validity, or the validity of any provision in it, on the grounds that—

- it is not within the powers of the TWA; or
- any requirement imposed by or under the TWA or the Tribunals and Inquiries Act 1992 has not been complied with.

Any such challenge made be made, by application to the High Court, within the period of 42 days beginning with the day on which notice of this determination is published in the London Gazette as required by section 14(1)(b) of the TWA. This notice is expected to be published within three working days of the date of this decision letter.

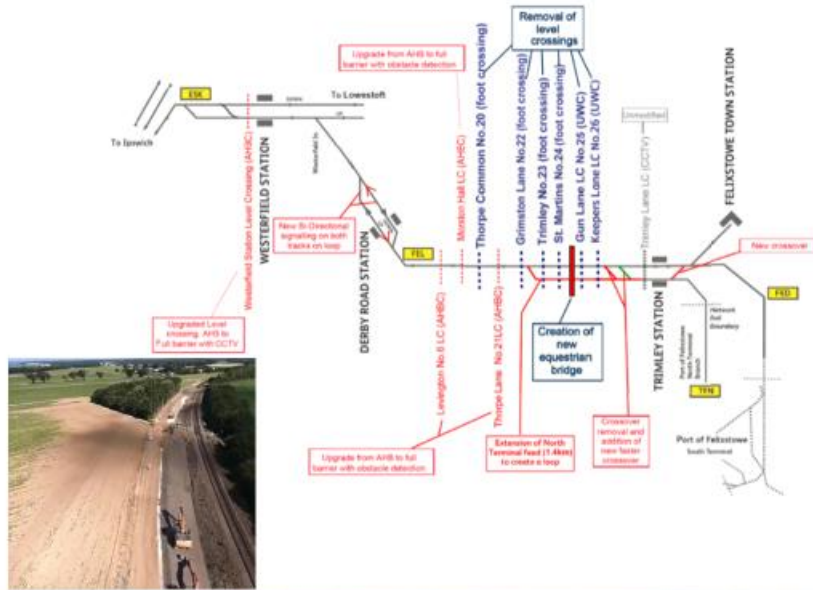
A person who thinks they have grounds for challenging the decision to make the Order is advised to seek legal advice before taking action.

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings
Meeting:	25th October 2018
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	The Pykkerell Inn, High Street, Ixworth IP31 2HH

Trimley TWA Update 17.10.18



Scope Overview



A better railway for a better Britain

Progress: Programme Update



Duration (hrs)	2017					2018					2019					Total																										
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M		A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D																	
28						2	1	3			1	1	1	1							3	3	4	3	1	1						1	2	2								30
33											4	2	4	5	3	3	4	1								2					2	2									32	
52																															1	2	2								5	
57													2																							3						
72																															1					1						
129																															1					1						

Civils & Structures	Surveys					Site setup, Veg Clearance					Embankment widening, Haul Road Construction, Minor Civils					Bridleway Bridge Installation														
Permanent Way / Track																Pway - Installation of Track and Signalling Infrastructure														
Level Crossings																Footpath Level Crossing Closures					4no. LX Upgrades									
Signalling	Signalling Integrity Testing																				Signalling Test and Commissioning									
Close Out																										Entry in Service				

A better railway for a better Britain

Progress : Photos



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Progress : Photos



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Progress : Photos



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Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: The England Coast Path
Meeting Date: 25th October 2018
Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin
Venue: The Pykkerell Inn Ixworth, High Street Ixworth IP31 2HH

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 in the table below give access to more detail, but please note the website was last updated on 21 March 2018 (the website has not been updated since the last time SLAF met).

Stretch name	Progress
Harwich to Shotley Gate	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
Bawdsey to Aldeburgh	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
Hopton-on-Sea to Sea Palling	Open to the public
Sea Palling to Weybourne	Open to the public
Weybourne to Hunstanton	Stage 4: Determine
Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
Sutton Bridge to Skegness	Stage 4: Determine

Natural England's website shows the sections being developed in Suffolk including the estuaries.

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

Natural England has provided the following details of progress on establishing the coast path in Suffolk.

The Sweetman case (reported previously to SLAF) continues to play out and cause delays to publishing new sections of route. The new Access and Sensitive Features Assessment (ASFA) process will initially consider the route and then

assess whether there is any adverse impact. If there is a potential impact then the proposed mitigation will be considered separately. Natural England will have had all the necessary discussions beforehand and so this is a slightly different way of getting to the same place ie. an ECP route that doesn't cause significant impact once mitigation measures are put in place.

Parts of the country where the route has been published recently is because no mitigation was needed.

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – Laura Chellis & Araminta Jackson. Last updated 01.10.18

Stage 2 (Develop) – underway

- Walk the course visits - all key landowners seen and the preferred route is clear at all but one location
- Trimbling is key focus for October
- Highways assessments complete
- Sensitive Features Assessment now the main focus - site visits and calls with ROs.
- Discussions continue at one large and complex site
- Publication date likely to be Spring 2019

Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey - Minty Jackson & Giles Merritt. Last updated 01.10.18

- Currently the main focus of activity is meeting key landowners along the stretch, particularly where there are currently gaps in existing public access,
- Also meeting key stakeholders such as Suffolk CC, NT and Deben Estuary Partnership.
- Completed most of the highway safety assessments with Suffolk CC.
- Access and sensitive features appraisal – now liaising with nature conservation colleagues as well as gathering external advice and opinion to help inform route alignment.
- Breeding wildfowl survey results from SWT completed and identifies section between Ramsholt and Bawdsey as important for a number of species. This will have important implications on our decision regarding alignment here.
- Ongoing consideration of ferry & estuary discretion.
- Publication date likely to be Spring 2019.

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh – David Waldram, Fiona Taylor and Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 1.10.18

- ASFA started with RO collecting and collating data
- Walk the course visits taking place
- Main focus is investigating issues and potential alignments arising from WTC. Not all landowners have been contacted about possible routes.
- Two sections Trimbled
- Publication due summer 2019

Aldeburgh to Hopton-On-Sea (AHS) – David Waldram and Fiona Taylor. Last updated 01.10.18

- Stage 2 / 3
- Letters sent to landowners with outline of emerging proposals and maps - dealing with issues that have arisen
- Resolving alignment issues including landward margin
- Preparing legal restrictions, exclusions and dedications where required
- Working on protection of designated sites with Responsible Officers. Following the result of the *People over the Wind* case, Natural England is working closely with local authorities, developers and other partners to make sure the implications of this ruling are properly understood. In most cases, we already work with developers at the pre-application stage on options to reduce or minimise impacts on protected sites. This ruling simply requires us to carry out a more formal assessment of their mitigation measures. We are continuing these conversations at an early stage will ensure this process is streamlined and any additional delays are minimised
- Writing Chapters for report aiming for publication autumn/winter 2018
- Project Board to look at whole stretch prior to publication tba

Harwich to Shotley Gate (HSG) - Kim Thirlby and Patrick Welsh. Last updated 01.10.18

- Initial proposals letters were sent to landowners in autumn 2017, outlining what we propose to include in report to Secretary of State.
- Following realignment of the route in 3 locations, revised proposals letters were sent out in May 2018, with no new issues arising.
- Report overview and chapters are largely drafted, as is Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal.
- Publication continues to be postponed, due to uncertainty caused by *People Over Wind/ Sweetman* court ruling and its potential implications for our procedures (applies to all yet to be approved stretch rpts).
- Meanwhile, we have been reviewing our proposals for exclusion of access under S25A to ensure they are based on sufficient evidence. We still propose to recommend exclusion of access over the majority of saltmarsh and intertidal mud throughout the estuary, but have amended our proposals in some areas already popular for access. We will be undertaking limited consultation shortly.
- We have also revised much our our early Trimble/ GIS data to improve accuracy.
- Publication now due to be in 2019. Exact timing dependent on extent of revised procedures noted above.

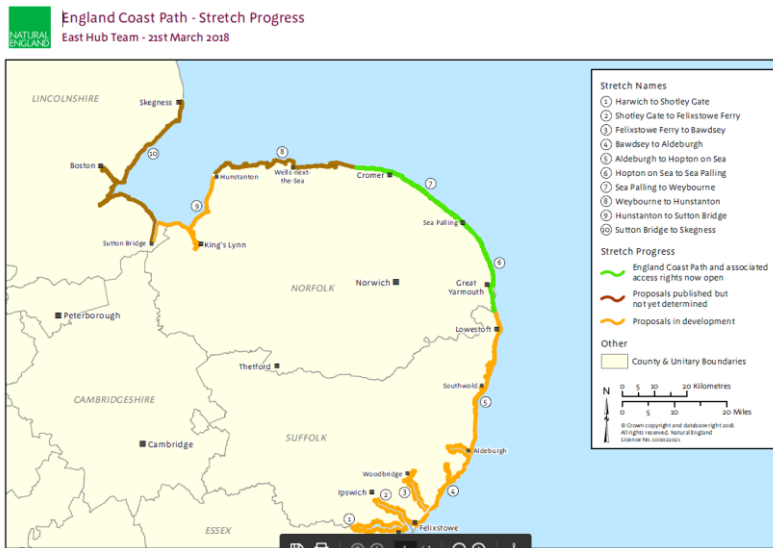
3. SLAF's Role in Influencing Route of the Coast Path

Following SLAF's meeting in July, and discussion around the use of estuaries for the route of the coast path, the chair wrote to Natural England and the letter is attached as appendix A.

4. Future Management of the England Coast Path in the East of England

Officers from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex will reconvene their discussion on managing and promoting a regional, rather than county based, coastal path in December.

5. England Coast Path – Progress Map for the East



END
AW/SCC October 2018

App A:



Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	The England Coast Path
Meeting:	25th October 2018
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	The Pykerrell Inn, High Street, Ixworth IP31 2HH

SLAF

Suffolk Local Access Forum

Sally Fishwick, Senior Adviser
Natural England
Eastbrook
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8DR

SLAF

C/O Green Access Team
Rights of Way and Access Development
Suffolk Highways
Phoenix House
3 Goddard Road
Ipswich IP1 5NP

Tel: 01473 260159

Email: slaf@suffolk.gov.ukWeb: <http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum>

Your Ref:

Our Ref: BH/AM

Date: 23rd August 2018

Dear Ms Fishwick

Re: English Coast Path – Suffolk

On behalf of the Suffolk Local Access Forum I would like to thank Jonathan and Araminta for attending our meeting at ~~Walberswick~~ on 26th July and explaining the process of identifying a suitable route which meets Natural England's criteria and is also as far as possible acceptable to the landowners. I was also pleased to note your acknowledgement of the help received from Annette Robinson from the County's Rights of Way team which in the long term will save unnecessary duplication when implementing the route on the ground.

However, SLAF members were concerned that some of the Suffolk estuaries may not be included due to the intransigence of some large landowners. Our view is that the path will provide an asset for the public and therefore should, subject to exempt land, include all Suffolk estuaries. The uncertainty of relying on ferries particularly out of the main tourist season and with restricted hours of operation has already been passed on to you, and to this we should also include the vagaries of weather, tides and mechanical breakdown. We therefore would again like to stress that the path should include the estuaries up to the first land crossing point as not only does this give the walker a different experience, but also allows them access to better public transport links, overnight accommodation and refreshment opportunities thus boosting local business income. We look forward for the opportunity of commenting on the suggested route of the path at the consultation stage.

Yours sincerely

Barry Hall
Chair Suffolk Local Access Forum

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Working Groups
Meeting:	25th October 2018
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	The Pykkerell Inn Ixworth, High Street Ixworth IP31 2HH

Introduction

With an intake of new members, the local access forum may wish to review the membership of working groups. Working groups are small groups of members that can be focus on topics and, if necessary, meet or discuss business in between SLAF meetings. For example, the Network Rail working group lead the way on formulating SLAF's response and ultimate objection to Network Rail's countywide Transport and Works Act Order. The working groups were last reviewed on 20/4/17.

Existing Working Groups

Topic	Membership
Network Rail	Barry Hall, Roley Wilson, Diana Kearsley
Sizewell C	Barry Hall, Anthony Wright, Roley Wilson
Forests and Woodlands	Gordon Merfield, Anthony Wright, Jane Hatton
Open Access	Barry Hall, Gordon Merfield,
ROWIP and Suffolk Walking Strategy	Roley Wilson, Jane Hatton, Diana Kearsley, Monica Pipe
Coastal Erosion and Access	Barry Hall, Roley Wilson
Planning and Development	Jane Storey, Jane Hatton, Anthony Wright
Agri-Environment Access Schemes	David Barker, John Wayman

END – AW/SCC October 2018

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	SLAF Annual Report 2017-2018
Meeting:	25th October 2018
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	The Pykkerell Inn, High Street, Ixworth IP31 2HH



Agenda Item #

Cabinet

Report Title:	Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2017/18
Meeting Date:	11th September 2018
Lead Councillor(s):	Councillor Mary Evans
Local Councillor(s):	All Councillors
Director:	Aidan Dunn, Interim Corporate Director for Growth Highways and Infrastructure
Assistant Director or Head of Service:	Mark Stevens, Assistant Director Operational Highways
Author:	David Falk, Green Access Manager

Brief summary of report

- As required by the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2002 I have pleasure in submitting the fifteenth Annual Report of the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) to Suffolk County Council as the highway authority. SLAF acts as an independent body to advise the Council on matters relating to rights of way and countryside access. It is also a statutory consultee for Natural England on mapping of open access land and plans and policies produced by a wide range of organisations. This report is a summary of SLAF activities between August 2017 and July 2018.

What is Cabinet being asked to decide?

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Cabinet is asked to accept the 2017/18 Annual Report of the Suffolk Local Access Forum and to note the report's recommendations and the action that the Council is taking to address these recommendations. |
|---|

Reason for recommendation

3. The Suffolk Local Access Forum is required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to submit an annual report on rights of way and access matters to the Council. The Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs guidance states: "We would expect the authority to respond positively to the forum's annual report and to say what actions they have taken on the advice and recommendations of the forum."

What are the key issues to consider?

4. The key issues raised by the Suffolk Local Access Forum 2017/18 report are as follows:

- a) **Investment** – As reported in previous years the forum believes rights of way and countryside access are of significant importance in contributing to the successful and sustainable delivery of Council Priorities, specifically 2017-2021 priorities of: inclusive growth; health care and wellbeing; and efficient and effective public services. The forum believes rights of way and countryside access also support the priorities and efforts of Public Health and the Most Active County programme, the activities of the counties' Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), the role of the counties 2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), and the Greenest County agenda. The Suffolk Local Access Forum would like the authority to recognise the importance of "green" access and retain appropriate levels of investment in public rights of way as an efficient and effective use of public funds to maintain use of this service.

The forum stresses the importance of maintaining specific strategic links. This includes the Bailey Bridge connecting Southwold Harbour with Walberswick, which at a site visit on 26th July 2018 to hear about the England Coast Path, members were advised requires an expensive inspection.

The forum also stresses the importance of the authority maximising benefits from the planning process in securing funds and commitments to enhance the rights of way and access network.

Response: The Council recognises the role that green access plays in meeting Council priorities as detailed above. It recognises its impact on enabling and encouraging more active and healthy lifestyles and more resilient communities. It recognises that green access supports sustainable travel options and enhances the county's tourism offer and will endeavour to maintain appropriate levels of funding to support front line use of this service.

- b) **Network Rail (NR)** – Last year's annual report identified SLAF's strong concerns over the policy by Network Rail to close rights of way level crossings with the view these threaten equality of access, potentially excluding significant sections of the population from accessing the countryside. SLAF were very pleased to be able to give evidence at the public inquiry into the Suffolk Transport and Works Act Order on 16th March 2018 and present their objection to the closure of 10 crossings. SLAF believe this demonstrates again their value to the county council, who of course were also objectors to the order. The forum support officers' efforts with specific regard to crossings in Newmarket, Needham Market and Felixstowe.

Response: The Council welcome and support SLAFs efforts in this area and share their keenness to maintain effective public access for non-motorised users

and will continue to seek solutions to rights of way level crossings to the benefit of all concerned. The council is especially appreciative of SLAFs involvement in the Suffolk (TWAO) public inquiry.

- c) **The England Coast Path:** SLAF see the delivery of The England Coast Path and its status as a national trail, as an important opportunity to promote tourism in Suffolk and will continue to work closely with SCC on ensuring the trail creates an excellent visitor experience.

SLAF also supports the discussions officers are having with Essex and Norfolk County Councils to promote and manage a regional coast path which should add value to the path. SLAF's main concern is that Natural England should include estuaries in the trail, which should not be reliant on seasonal and sometimes unreliable ferries.

Response: The Council recognises the opportunities the England Coast Path brings to Suffolk and are committed to work with partners to ensure it delivers the best experience for all users of it.

- d) **The Suffolk Local Access Forum** provides a cost effective statutory advisory service to the Council and other organisations by raising issues regarding public rights of way and countryside access.

Response: The Council acknowledges the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and important role performed by the Suffolk Local Access Forum with its focus on countryside access and recognise the experience and expertise the forum offers in relation to health and wellbeing, communities, sustainable travel, tourism and the rural economy.

What are the resource and risk implications?

5. The Suffolk Local Access Forum considers that the Council should maintain an effective level of funding for rights of way and access maintenance and improvement. The Interim Corporate Director for Growth Highways and Infrastructure will consider and discuss with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs the appropriate level of Suffolk County Council funding for the public rights of way and access network in looking at the priorities for Council revenue and capital budgets, recognising the contribution to healthy and sustainable communities and the benefits to the rural economy that these can provide.

What are the timescales associated with this decision?

6. Not applicable.

Alternative options

7. Cabinet could change the responses given by Suffolk County Council to the recommendations from the Suffolk Local Access Forum or could suggest additional issues that it would like the forum to explore over the coming year.

Who will be affected by this decision?

8. Officers acting on these recommendations and potentially users of public rights of way, land managers and communities within Suffolk.

Main body of report

9. The Work of SLAF

The forum met at quarterly intervals during 2017/18 to discuss a wide range of issues that had arisen from consultations, presentations, papers, reports and site visits.

Meetings were as follows:

19th October 2017 – SALC Offices, Claydon

18th January 2018 – Brandon Country Park, Brandon

26th April 2018 – Phoenix House, Ipswich

26th July 2018 – Walberswick Village Hall, Walberswick

Members of the public are able to attend meetings and have the opportunity to raise items or comment on issues discussed or related to countryside access. Local parish councils are alerted to SLAF meetings in their area and invited to attend. A full list of members is in Appendix A.

10. Administering SLAF

The SLAF is an independent body with its own letter heading and PO address box, an independent email address and a dedicated page on One Suffolk; <http://www.suffolkpublicrightsofway.org.uk/suffolk-local-access-forum/>

11. Suffolk County Council's Rights of Way and Access team administers the forum. The cost for servicing SLAF for 2017-18 was approximately £1,500. This includes secretariat services, hire of meeting rooms, site visits and member travel expenses. The cost has remained static for the past 8 years and is excellent value.

12. SLAF Activities in 2017/18

a) Network Rail (NR)

Last year's annual report identified SLAF's strong concerns over the policy by Network Rail to close rights of way level crossings with the view these threaten equality of access, potentially excluding significant sections of the population from accessing the countryside. SLAF were very pleased to be able to give evidence at the public inquiry into the Suffolk Transport and Works Act Order on 16th March 2018 and present their objection to the closure of 10 crossings. SLAF believe this demonstrates again their value to the county council, who of course were also objectors to the order. The forum support officer's efforts with specific regard to crossings in Newmarket, Needham Market and Felixstowe.

b) The England Coast Path

Natural England are currently working on delivering The England Coast Path in Suffolk. SLAF is very engaged with this work and members attended a site visit with Natural England to hear of progress and issues delivering the path. SLAF are interested in the tourism benefits of a new path and the opportunity for an East England Coast Path through East Anglia. However, SLAF are very concerned over whether estuaries are included in the Path and that the route is not truncated at key points. SLAF will continue to advocate an estuarine trail with Natural England. A key concern relates to the River Blyth and the Bailey Bridge which connects Southwold Harbour with Walberswick and forms a strategic link for the Sandlings Walk, the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Path and potentially The

England Coast Path. The bridge is due for an inspection at a cost of £25k and SLAF are very concerned at the financial impact of this inspection and are concerned over the long-term viability of this crossing.

c) Rights of Way Improvement Plan

SLAF support the work of officers in developing a new strategic plan for countryside access. Rights of Way Improvement Plans are a statutory requirement for highway authorities and Suffolk's plan is due to be launched in 2018/19. The plan will focus on how green access will be developed in Suffolk with attention to securing funding for access improvements, enabling communities to be more active in developing green access, and promoting countryside access and the use of the access network through such initiatives as the Suffolk Walking Festival.

d) Review of Open Access Restrictions

Open Access is land where the public have a right to roam. Nationally this includes areas of mountain, moorland, down and heath. In Suffolk this includes two areas of heathland: the Sandlings along the coast between Ipswich and Southwold; and the Brecks, north of Bury St Edmunds towards the Norfolk border. Where there are protected species, specifically ground nesting birds, these areas carry seasonal restrictions when the public are not allowed access. SLAF are consultees on deciding these restrictions which meet nationally agreed criteria based on nesting sites. SLAF fully support efforts by Natural England and other partners to protect the landscape for rare species but at the same time see educating the public on the relevance of such sites very important and encourage the authority to promote Suffolk's countryside effectively and where necessary challenge restrictions if they do not meet the criteria.

e) DEFRA's Report on the Future for Food, Farming and the Environment

DEFRA's report is a first step towards a new Agriculture Bill that will form the basis of the UK's post-Brexit agriculture and environment policy. SLAF welcomed the opportunity to comment on the report. SLAF believes the report should be bolder, especially in terms of joining up habitats and providing access for health, wellbeing and enjoyment benefits. There is concern over urban access to the countryside which is particularly important and should be supported. Changes to the public rights of way network where the highway authority agrees there is an overall public benefit to access, should be supported through payments, payments should also be made to remove barriers on public rights of way and to improve surfaces, and payments should be made available where land managers can add value to the access network, managing public rights of way and creating new public and open access.

f) LAF Regional Meeting

SLAF welcomed the return of a regional LAF meeting where the chair was able to meet chairs and vice chairs of other LAFs in the east of England. This meeting allowed the exchange of priorities between LAFs and helped identify common ground where LAFs could work together, such as on rail level crossings, the England Coast Path and DEFRA's Report on the Future of Food, Farming and the Environment.

g) Sizewell C

SLAF welcomed officers alerting EDF to member's wish for full involvement at stage 3 consultation and look forward to receiving further updates at their October 2018 meeting from EDF Energy.

h) 2018 Suffolk Walking Festival

SLAF were delighted to hear about this year's Suffolk Walking Festival and are impressed with the momentum this event has created. They were especially impressed that an economic impact assessment of the event (Cambridge Model) estimated an economic impact of £176k into Suffolk's economy, that 49% of participants were enthused to increase their levels of activity and that the event has become a pan-Suffolk partnership of authorities, health organisations and conservation bodies drawing in sponsorship and support across the county.

i) Consultations

1. Natural England Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act Restrictions on Open Access land
2. DEFRA The Future for Food, Farming and the Environment
3. RSPB Woodland Management

j) Conference/Training/Meetings/Site Visits:

SLAF members have attended the following conferences, training sessions, meetings or site visits this year:

1. 17th November 2017 – The England Coast Path public consultation Woodbridge Library
2. 30th November 2017 – The England Coast Path public consultation Hollesley Village Hall
3. 21st June 2018 – East of England Local Access Forum Chair and Vice Chair Meeting
4. 18th July 2018 – Norfolk Local Access Forum
5. 26th July 2018 – Walberswick and Southwold Harbour to hear from Natural England about the delivery of the England Coast Path and from officers on issues related to the Bailey Bridge on the River Blyth which connects Walberswick and Southwold Harbour.

k) Working Groups:

The forum has the following working groups:

<u>Topic</u>	Membership
Network Rail	Barry Hall, Roley Wilson, Diana Kearsley
Sizewell C	Barry Hall Anthony Wright, Roley Wilson
Forests and Woodlands	Gordon Merfield, Anthony Wright, Jane Hatton
Open Access	Barry Hall, Gordon Merfield,
ROWIP	Roley Wilson, Jane Hatton, Diana Kearsley, Monica Pipe

Coastal Erosion and Access	Roley Wilson, Barry Hall
Planning and Development	Jane Storey, Jane Hatton, Anthony Wright
Agri-Environment Schemes	David Barker, John Wayman

12. Looking Ahead

Priorities for SLAF over the coming year include:

- a. **Investment in Public Rights of Way** – to see that investment in the public rights of way network and countryside access meet the needs of an increasing and ageing population and ensure that all members of society benefit from being able to visit and enjoy Suffolk’s countryside.
- b. **Network Rail** – to continue working with officers and Network Rail to ensure that rights of way level crossings are not closed as a first option, but that careful consideration is given to alternative solutions that meet the needs of all members of society.
- c. **The England Coast Path** – to continue to liaise with officers and Natural England to contribute to the development, management and promotion of a new regional coastal path. To ensure as far as possible the trail follows estuaries with all the additional benefits that will bring, especially to local communities.
- d. **Sizewell C** – to use the stage 3 consultation to press for the best outcome for public access during construction, and a high quality, long-lasting legacy to the development.
- e. **SLAF Recruitment** – SLAF are keen to recruit up to 5 new members to bring total membership to 16 and expand on the current spread of knowledge, experience and expertise. SLAF are especially keen to see new members with a strong background in health and wellbeing, and accessibility.
- f. **Rights of Way Improvement Plan** – SLAF are keen to see the publication of the ROWIP and the emphasis on maintaining and developing infrastructure, developing communities and enhanced promotion of the rights of way and access network.
- g. **Development** – to raise awareness by local planning authorities to both protecting and enhancing public rights of way both on and off site.

Barry Hall

Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

David Barker

Vice Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

September 2018

Sources of further information

- a) Suffolk Local Access Forum web pages:
<http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum/>
- b) The Suffolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan:
<http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/home/rights-of-way-improvement-plan/>
- c) Local Access Forums:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-access-forums-participate-in-decisions-on-public-access>

Appendix A

Suffolk Local Access Forum – Members Details

SLAF Membership July 2018

Barry Hall (Chair) – Barry is a retired local government officer with experience of working on countryside and rights of way projects. Barry retains an interest in countryside access as a member of the RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and National Trust. *Barry has been a member of SLAF since October 2007 and Chair since January 2016.*

David Barker (Vice Chair) – With his wide experience within the NFU, CLA and as a former Countryside Agency commissioner, David seeks to work to balance all interests in countryside access. David is also Chair of Creating the Greenest County. *David has been a member of SLAF since July 2003 and Vice Chair since April 2010.*

Margaret Hancock A Blue Badge Tourist Guide particularly interested in promoting sustainable tourism. Keen to encourage visitors to explore Suffolk by public transport, walking and cycling to benefit the local economy and preserve the peace and tranquillity of the county. Experience of supporting children and young people with disabilities, enabling them to access leisure facilities. *Margaret has been a member of SLAF since April 2010.*

Jane Hatton – A horse rider since a child, Jane was born and brought up in Suffolk enjoying the countryside both as a keen horse rider and dog walker. Jane has a background in Sales and Marketing and works for Intelligent Health. *Jane has been a member of SLAF since October 2013.*

Cllr Diana Kearsley – With a keen interest in wildlife and preserving Suffolk, Diana has specific responsibilities for community issues and is also a member of the 'Development Control' committee for Mid Suffolk District Council. *Cllr Diana Kearsley has been a member of SLAF since October 2013.*

Gordon Merfield – With a background in agriculture, since the 1980's Gordon has been active in participating and coaching field sports events as well as being interested in the wider countryside and walking in foreign countries. *Gordon has been a member of SLAF since September 2004.*

Monica Pipe – Monica farms just north of Ipswich and has many well-used footpaths on her land including the promoted Fynn Valley Walk. *Monica has been a member of SLAF since July 2003.*

Councillor Jane Storey – SCC Councillor for Thedwastre North, Jane's interests include walking, dog-walking, off-road driving and, being a farmer's daughter, a strong view that along with rights come responsibilities. Jane believes that we should preserve our rights of way, including byways and bridleways, but not at the expense of common sense. These are an important part of presenting Suffolk as the Greenest County, useful for getting from A to B, but also for getting people who do not normally exercise out and about at little or no expense. *Cllr Jane Storey has been a member of SLAF since October 2009.*

John Wayman – A former district council member farming in the Stour Valley, John now contributes to the wider rural picture. *John has been a member of SLAF since July 2003.*

Roley Wilson – Roley is actively involved in the promotion of the health benefits of walking for all. He has a lifelong interest in nature and open-air pursuits. During a 33-year police career one of his many postings involved being the Wildlife Liaison Officer for Suffolk. He is a member of the Ramblers and since retirement has spent an increasing amount of time in volunteer activities for that organisation. A keen bird watcher and member of the RSPB and Suffolk Wildlife Trust he has a passion for ensuring that everyone has free and responsible access to the countryside. *Roley has been a member of SLAF since October 2013.*

Anthony Wright – A long-term cyclist and walker, Anthony has worked with several local authorities on the production of cycling and walking publications and works part time with the sustainable transport charity Sustrans. *Anthony has been a member of SLAF since July 2003.*

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	SLAF Annual Report 2017-2018
Meeting:	25th October 2018
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	The Pykkerell Inn, High Street, Ixworth IP31 2HH

Minute of Cabinet 11-09-2018

Cllr Evans introduced Barry Hall as Chair of SLAF and referred to his background, setting up SLAF when he worked for Suffolk County Council. She commented on a recent article in the EADT of a Sport England report that 30% of Suffolk residents walk less than 10 minutes a week. She supported the work of the forum, and the contribution of Public Rights of Way to tourism and health. Cllr Evans welcomed the role of the forum in holding the council to account and thanked them for their support on Public Rights of Way, Network Rail and Sizewell.

Barry Hall presented the SLAF Annual Report.

There were no questions.

Cllr McGregor raised an issue with Network Rail stating how unfortunate it was that a government organisation hadn't more ability to engage with a local authority. He said they seem to reinvent the wheel every time they consult. He acknowledged that safety is important but there needed to be more co-operation as them as a government body and us as the local body.

The report was accepted by Cabinet.