

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	29th October 2020
Author/Contact:	Anna McGowan
Venue:	online via TEAMS

		Paper Number
1.	14:00 Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	14:05 Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 20/11 - BH
3.	14:10 Declaration of interest	
4.	14:15 Network Rail Public Rights of Way Level Crossings	LAF 20/12 - AW
5.	14:30 England Coast Path	LAF 20/13 - AW
6.	14:45 Sizewell C, and Friston Sub Station Letter to Planning Inspectorate	Verbal - AW LAF 20/14 - BH
7.	15:00 Sunnica Energy Farm	LAF 20/15 - AW
8.	15:10 A14 Severance	Verbal - AW
9.	15:20 OA seasonal closure Euston, The Brecks	Verbal - DF
10.	15:30 SLAF Annual Report 2019-2020 SLAF Annual Report 2019-2020: Presentation to Cabinet	LAF 20/16 - DF LAF 20/16A - DF
11.	15:40 Review of Working Groups	LAF 20/17 - AW
12.	15:50 Public Question Time	
13.	15:55 Any Other Business	
14.	16:00 Dates & Venues of Future Meetings	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of Meeting
Meeting Date:	21st July 2020, 2 - 3.15pm
Author/Contact:	Anna McGowan
Venue:	Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), Monica Pipe (MP), Roland Wilson (RW), Margaret Hancock (MH), Derek Blake (DBL), Suzanne Bartlett (SB), Clare Phillips (CP), Anthony Wright (AWR), Cllr James Mallinder (JM), Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Jane Hatton (JH).

SCC Officers Present: Anna McGowan (Minutes), David Falk (DF), Steve Kerr (SK), Annette Robinson (AR).

Apologies:

Andrew Woodin (AW), David Barker (DB) (Vice Chair), Gordon Merfield (GM), John Wayman (JW), Susan Mobbs (SM).

BH thanked everyone for attending and DF for organising the meeting via Zoom.

2. SCC ROW update

DF provided a general update on how the ROW and Access Team is functioning in the Covid-19 pandemic. There are new PROW Standards of Performance and Risk Assessments to reflect Government and corporate guidelines on working outdoors.

The majority of staff are working from home until further notice. Initially, only emergency site visits were allowed, however in the easing of lockdown other Rights of Way issues can now be undertaken by relevant members of staff.

At present staff can only visit office workplaces in accordance with strict procedures in place. Working from home is thus the 'new norm'.

Communication within teams was effective, and in many cases had increased with the use of Skype and Microsoft TEAMS to keep in touch. Some staff were able to attend a national conference via Zoom!

Planning applications are coming in and there is a new Discover Suffolk website.

A review on access to work buildings will be undertaken in September, although current conditions are predicted to be in force till the end of this calendar year.

Workloads are steadily returning to normal levels, and the use of the PROW network increased significantly following lockdown.

DF mentioned that SCC have access to statistics from STRAVA, an app which maps walking and cycling journeys by users of the app. This showed a significant increase in walking and cycling and matched increased use of the PROW network during lockdown. AR said there has been a positive use of the PROW network and all the Rights of Ways Area Teams workloads have thus gone up with a doubling of reporting compared to last year. Customer reporting is a mixture of missing signposts and protection. The majority of reports are genuine, with a few Covid-related ones in terms of blocking signs and closing of gates.

Various comments were made by members:-

- RW said that on the whole local farmers have been very good throughout this pandemic, by clearing paths – this needs to be acknowledged.
- There have been few complaints from landowners.
- Good to see so many people using the PROW network.
- SB said that one farmer opened up more trackways, mown paths and put in extra paths for the public to use.
- MP said that they had a lot more traffic, dog incidents, and a lot more rubbish on their land which has made a lot more work!
- JM said there were problems with litter at Sutton, problems with toilets and dogs. Despite ESC joining in the ‘Don’t be a Tosser’ campaign, and increasing provision in the number of bins, visitors appear not to comprehend the message as the problems are ongoing. A lack of communication with the public still exists.
- AWr said that the fact that cyclists have taken to using PROW footpaths as well as cycle paths, could be down to ignorance and not fully understanding Public Rights of Way.

3. Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings

Needham Market Gipsy Lane and FP6 Needham Market – SCC officers held an online progress catchup meeting with Network Rail (NR) representatives on 31st May. In advance of the meeting SCC had asked for a review on the design of the culvert, to make it as flood resilient as possible.

At the meeting NR representatives confirmed that they intended to start work onsite on 30 June, subject to:

- a further ecological survey being undertaken at the site
- securing all necessary consents for the works, including the site compound
- drafting up a communications strategy
- progressing the s278 legal agreement
- confirming whether a ramped structure was required where the diversion joined Gipsy Lane, north of the railway; and
- sharing their construction programme with SCC railway. NR subsequently advised they were not in a position to start onsite at the end of June, as they had originally indicated. SCC awaits updates regarding the above.

SK also advised that SCC and NR had entered into a costs agreement on 9 January 2019, which allocated £300K towards local PROW improvements, as mitigation for the sub-standard nature of the ‘tunnel’ - in particular its height, which is limited to 2.1 metres.

The agreement states that the improvement works need to be completed by January 2021, which SCC considers is wholly unrealistic. The Council emailed NR setting out its reasons for extending the delivery timeframe from January 2021 to 2024 (end of NR's Control Period 6) and has also requested that the Agreement is varied to allow the monies to be drawn down in phases, as and when local PROW improvements are scoped and delivered. No response has been received to date.

CP referred to an issue in Brantham and stated that pressure needs to be put on MPs as Brantham Footpath 6 and the A137 is a local issue, and the subject of an official complaint. SK said that pressure needs to be put on the Secretary of State rather than MPs, as the TWAO runs through 3 separate counties.

Felixstowe - Works were completed 10 months ago on Gun Lane Bridge. The new route has been signed off.

Footpath 12 Barham (Broomfields) – There are no further updates on this.

Bath Street, Ipswich – SK has chased this up five times. The hoarding is still up. Discussion between parties are still unresolved. SK will chase again and phone the Port Manager.

General/Countywide – There has been no further communication since the last SLAF meeting, advising when a decision will be likely. Although it is not officially confirmed, SCC officers understand that the Inspectorate's report for Suffolk has been issued and is with the Secretary of State for Transport (SoSfT) for consideration but also noted that NR's strategic case for all three countywide orders is the same.

4. Sizewell C/Friston Sub Station/England Coast Path

AR gave updates as follows:-

Sizewell C Sizewell C's proposed construction affects 27 Public Rights of Way. There will be a new link route from the A12 to Theberton.

AR is making the case for the inadequacy of mitigation measures and seeking compensation or Section 106 for access improvements.

There are proposals to move the ECP onto a grassy corridor on the seaward side of the site, which is not acceptable. AR would like to see it on a high bank sea defence.

This Consultation ends at the end of September.

JM said it was really important to highlight the restrictions. JM stated that he is involved in the debates and discussions. He will be involved in the responses and is seeking more for the Suffolk environment and residents.

SB asked if the path at Kenton Hills and Goose Hills is a Permissive Path. AR said it is and that it will come back as a Permissive Path following Sizewell C development.

BH said that the SZC Working Group needs to put together the SLAF response.

Action: SZC Working Group to arrange a meeting and put SLAF response together before end of September

Friston Sub Station – AR shared her screen with slides from Scottish Power showing what Friston Sub Station would look like. Planning has stalled due to Covid-19 with no timescale announced on progressing to the Inspector, but expected to resume in September/October this year.

Scottish Power to make a statement of common ground. SP have proposed a new footpath route but AR is proposing an alternative.

England Coast Path – Three reports are sitting with Natural England but progress is on hold due to NE restriction accessing offices to print documents, consultation letters and maps to send out. AR advise that Fiona Taylor at NE has moved on from this role.

5. Open Access Restrictions

DF shared his screen with the details of new OA created at Icknield Heath and seasonal restrictions for the site.

Action: DF advise NE of ‘no comment’ to seasonal restriction.

6. Severance of PROW by Trunk Roads

DF gave updates from AW’s paper.

Since the last SLAF meeting AW has attended two meetings with Highways England, in January and May. There is to be new funding this year for Highways England’s designated fund programmes, which include Cycling, Safety & Integration. Highways England officers are interested in working with SCC to reduce the number of at-grade PROW crossings in the county.

This would require SCC to undertake a piece of work to identify priority crossing sites; check the side roads orders for those sites; to see how those crossings were treated and ensure they are still legally at grade; and ground truth the crossings; and possible options to close the crossings (mainly to divert to existing over and under bridges). This work would be unfunded. However, if Highways England believed the options identified to close grade crossings merited being taken forward, they could use their designated funds budget to commission SCC to undertake the work.

Due to work pressures and vacancies, the preliminary scoping work is not a priority use of SCC’s resources. Therefore, Highways England have been asked for funding to employ a consultant for this preparatory work. A response is awaited.

7. Environmental Land Manager Scheme

DB had advised ahead of the meeting that he had no additional comments following previous letters to Lord Gardiner and Suffolk MPs. BH advised that NLAF had done a comprehensive response on ELMS and SLAF could echo some of their comments.

8. Regional LAF Meeting 15th July

BH advised that all regional LAFs were represented at the online event with subjects covered including ELMS, ECP, and SC&H AONB increased area. BH will distribute the minutes of the last meeting.

**Action: BH to distribute Minutes of last Regional LAF Meeting to AM.
AM to distribute them to SLAF**

9. SLAF Annual Report

DF to put the Annual Report together after this meeting and share with SLAF. This will be a similar report to last years. DF to find out when to present the Annual Report to the Cabinet Meeting, though this will not be done in person, and it may well be that Cabinet is focusing on more urgent matters.

Action: DF draft SLAF Annual Report and confirm how it will be presented to Cabinet.

10. Any other business

SK said that the Growth, Highways and Infrastructure Director, Mark Ash has trialled the promotion of walking and cycling through various road closures in Ipswich. This will be rolled out across the county – Bury St Edmunds will be next. This work is very much supported by the Director and by the Cabinet.

At the Ipswich Waterfront, where one of these closures has been trialled, there has been general support for the measures that have been introduced but one or two businesses had expressed concerns, particularly regarding their rights of access and the lack of parking.

Papers will be distributed following the meeting.

11. Date of next meeting

29th October 2020. Venue to be arranged.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings
Meeting: 29th October 2020
Author/Contact: Steve Kerr
Venue: Online

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 Needham Market



Further to the update provided at the Forum's meeting on 21 July 2020, there has been little material progress in this case.

A site meeting was held on 2 September attended by the landowners and their land agent, representatives from NR and their contractors (Taziker Industrial), the Eastern Internal Drainage Board and the county council. Discussions took place around the proposed bank protection measures, the widths and gradients of the ramped approaches to the culvert and whether these could be built within the confines of the highway, and the access arrangements for the plant required for the works delivery phase. Discussion also took place regarding the works required at the eastern end of the route, where the footpath diversion re-joins Gipsy Lane itself. At the culvert end the landowners are challenging whether the works can be delivered without trespassing on private land and consider there has been little engagement with them to date on further measures that would allow the project to proceed. In particular, the proposed bank protection measures intended to mitigate any scouring of the river bank and protect the landowners' private bridge are located outside of the footpath width and would need to be subject to a private agreement

between the landowners and the railway operator. Discussions between NR and the landowner are continuing but there has been no agreement to date on the access arrangements or works compound required for the works delivery phase and no start date has yet been secured for the works. NR have also yet to secure permission to undertake the required ecological survey.

It is now nearly a year since the Order was confirmed but it appears the project is no closer to starting on the ground. As a result, officers have escalated its concerns to senior management regarding the ongoing delays and an approach is being made to NR's Anglia Route Director. No further details are available at the time of writing this report.

On a more positive note, NR have agreed to vary the signed costs agreement in order to allow the highway authority further time to scope and deliver the £300Ks' worth of local PROW improvement works, by extending the time period for delivery from January 2021 to the end of NR's Control Period in March 2024. SCC officers are meeting at the end of the month to start that scoping exercise.

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



Following the expiration of the 12-month maintenance period in early September, the ongoing maintenance responsibility for the new routes has now passed from NR to SCC, in its capacity as the highway authority.

General/Countywide

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

Further to the Forum's last update, the Council has still not received any formal notification advising when a decision is likely to be forthcoming but it is understood the case may now be with the Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit (TIPIU) along with the Cambs and Essex orders. It is still likely to be several months before the Secretary of State for Transport announces his decision.

END – SK/SCC October 2020

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: The England Coast Path
Meeting Date: 29th October 2020
Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin
Venue: Online

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

Reports for three of the five stretches of coastal access in Suffolk have been published, on the dates stated.

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – 15th January
 Harwich to Shotley Gate – 22nd January 2020
 Aldeburgh to Hopton on Sea – 29th January 2020

The latest information from Natural England's (NE) on its progress for the ECP in Suffolk and Norfolk is shown on their website. The website progress overview map was last updated on 29th January 2020.

Stretch name	Progress
Harwich to Shotley Gate	Stage 4: Determine
Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry	Stage 4: Determine
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 4: Determine
Hopton-on-Sea to Sea Palling	Open to the public

The stages to establish Coastal Access are 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.

Further information on the England Coast Path can be found [here](#).

2. The Stretches in More Detail

Natural England has provided the following updates around the Suffolk coast stretches. Expected publication dates have been highlighted in yellow, and as reported at SLAF's January meeting this bunching may put county council officers under pressure when it comes to responding to the reports, and implementing the new routes once confirmed.

Work is progressing on the England Coast Path - a new National Trail around all of England's coast.

A European court judgement in April 2018 affected how Natural England should assess the impact of England Coast Path proposals on environmentally protected sites. Progress slowed as a result and having adjusted its approach to ensure compliance with this judgement.

The national impact of Coronavirus restrictions added a further complication. Offices were closed, staff resource and availability was reduced and site visits could not be undertaken during the peak summer months. This restriction also impacted the Planning Inspectorate who have had to delay their reviews of stretches and reports subject to Objections. However, Natural England continues to work hard to ensure as much of the England Coast Path as possible is open by 2020.

Suffolk Stretches

Harwich to Shotley Gate - Kim Thirlby & Sally Fishwick. Last updated 15.10.20

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- The Overview, and the compendium of six separate reports (covering individual lengths of coast within the stretch) were published on 22 January 2020. The 8 week period for comment closed on 18th March 2020
- Natural England received 7 objections, to 5 of the 6 individual reports. As stretches are published as a compendium of reports, the absence of objection on 1 of the 6 reports means Natural England anticipates that this will progress positively to Secretary of State approval which would then allow Suffolk CC to undertake establishment works.

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – Darren Braine. Last updated 15.10.2020

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- Natural England published proposals on 15th January 2020 and the 8 week period for public comment ended on 11 March.
- Two objections were received. As stretches are published as a compendium of reports, the absence of objection on 3 of the 5 reports means Natural England expects these 3 reports to progress positively to Secretary of State approval which would then allow Suffolk CC to undertake establishment works. Natural England anticipates that this approval will be given before the end of 2020.
- The 2 reports with objections now wait for the Planning Inspectorate to review and report.

Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey – Giles Merritt & Sally Fishwick. Last updated 15.10.20

- Stage 2 (Develop) and Stage 3 (Propose)

- All reports and overview are complete and undergoing QA (checking) process
- The HRA is complete with just the Nature Conservation Assessment to finalise. This work should be done by the end of October.
- The COVID 19 situation caused particular delays for this stretch, but **Natural England expects to be in a position to publish proposals this year.**

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh –Jonathan Clarke & Darren Braine. Last updated 15.10.20

- Stage 2 (Develop) and Stage 3 (Propose)
- Natural England has reviewed comments received on the initial planned alignment and are finalising proposals
- The HRA and NCA are in final draft stage.
- **Natural England expects to publish proposals on 20 January 2021.** (Staff resource availability and Christmas break coupled with the intensive process of publishing and mailing hundreds of owners has pushed this date into 2021.) They have kindly offered early sight of the route and options proposed:

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh England Coast Path initial proposals

Currently we are planning to publish the proposals on 20th January 2021.

Bawdsey to East Lane

This stretch starts at Bawdsey Quay car park.

The beach is unavailable because of tides and there is no access through the PGL at Bawdsey Manor because of their activities. The ECP initially uses the roadside and moves to the clifftop across the northern end of PGL's land. This is seaward of the fenced old military facilities and when the cliff erodes to the fences then a route inland of the missile site will be used. Between the missile site and East Lane the clifftop is also being proposed and it will rollback inland as the cliff erodes.

The parish council does not support this route and instead wants a route in the field-edge alongside the road. This has been offered by the landowner, and they say it will benefit villagers but it does not fulfil the key criterium of being close to the sea.





East Lane to Butley

Mainly on existing public footpaths. Detailed discussions at Shingle Street about the best route for residents' privacy and with winter flooding of a field.



Butley

We are proposing two routes around the Butley River. The route meets the ferry jetties and people may decide to use it during the limited times it is operating. The path around the estuary has a main route (shown in shades of red), but also an orange route that will be used for September to end of March because of the potential for disturbance to birds in the estuary. (The eastern orange section is at the landward base of the bank).



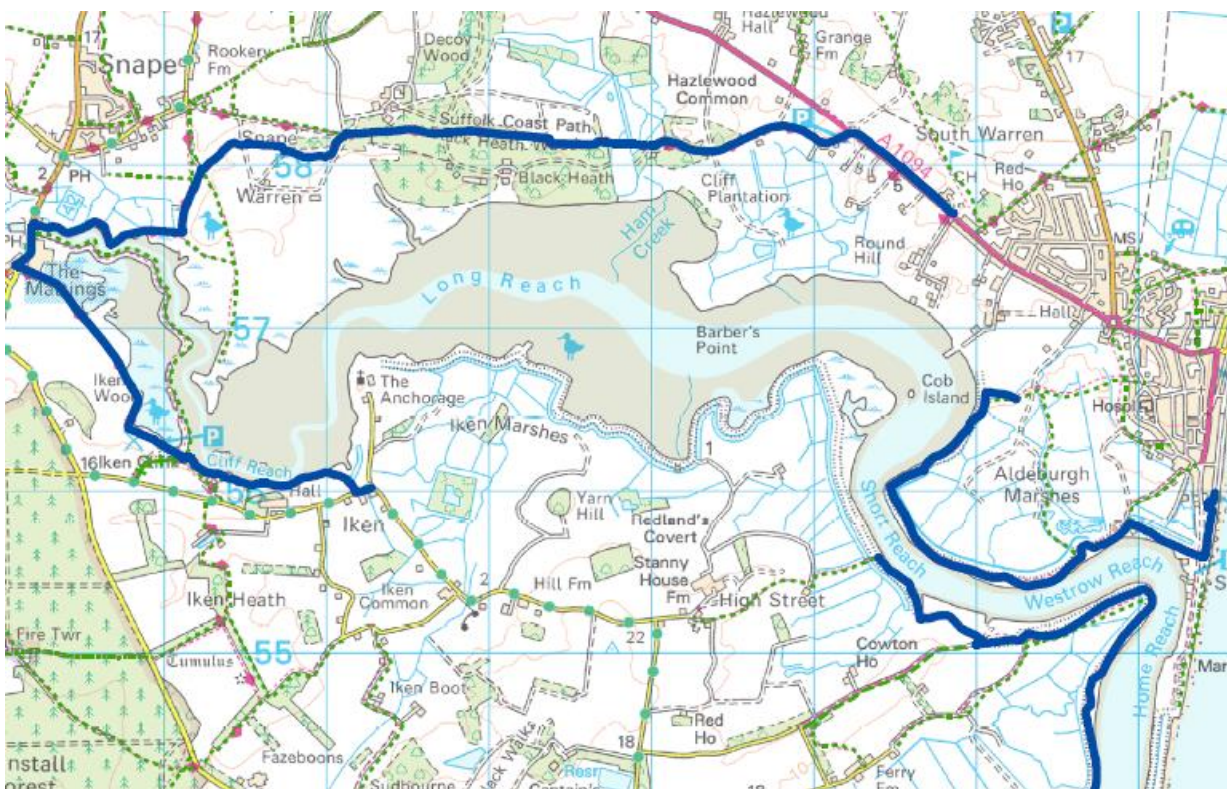
Orford

Uses the existing permissive route at Gedgrave Marshes and then public footpath.

Westrow Reach to Aldeburgh

The most complicated section to propose;

1. Iken – we are still talking to landowners about access on the southern bank. We are restricted to only 2 months on the bank because of our need to take potential disturbance to estuary birds into account. Additionally there are farming activities.
2. We are unable to propose a route alongside the river for most of the northern bank for various reasons including gardens, saltmarsh, unsuitable land and difficulty linking sections together.
3. The gap on the northern side is around the Brickfields development where we are considering the comments by owners about ECP using a path close to their properties.



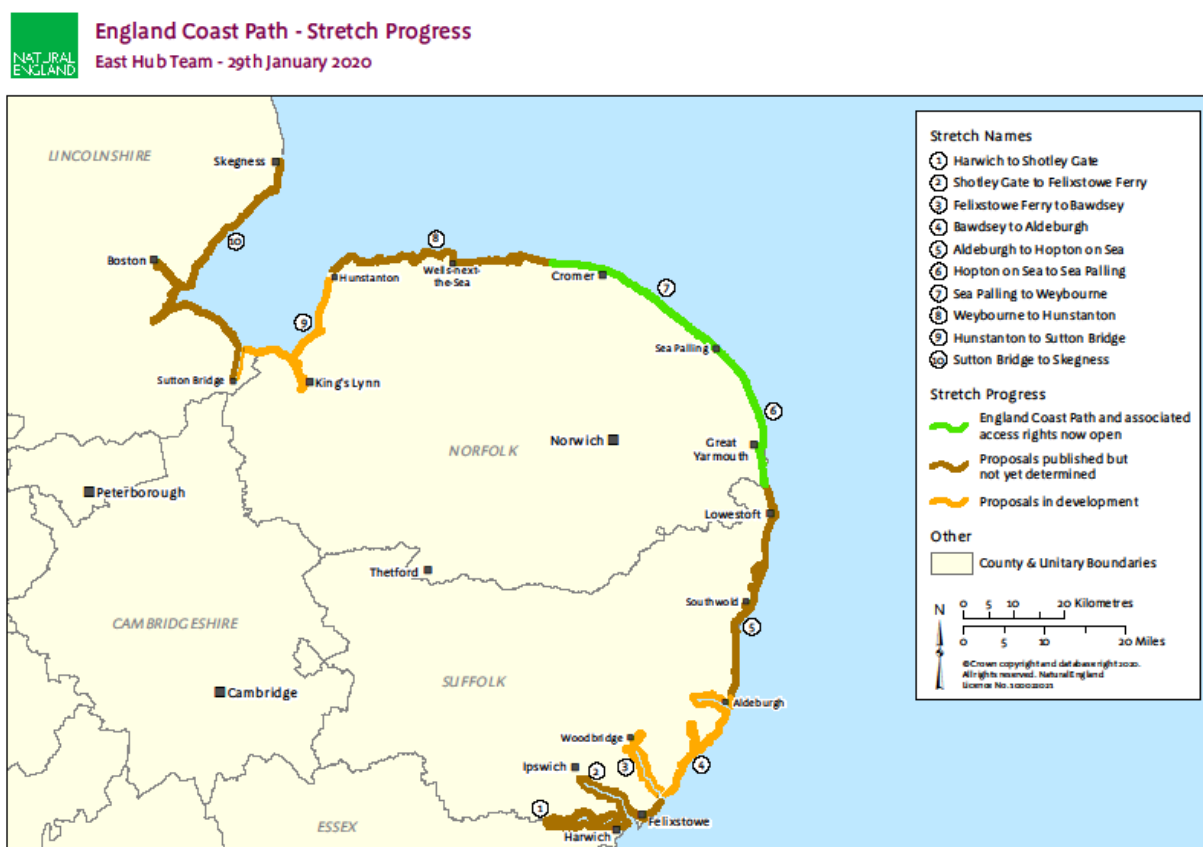
Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea – Sally Fishwick. Last updated 15.10.20

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- Natural England published proposals on 29th January 2020. The 8 week period for public comment, closed on 25th March 2020.
- 23 objections were received, to 1 of the 6 individual reports. As stretches are published as a compendium of reports, the absence of objections on 5 of the 6 reports means Natural England expects these will progress positively to Secretary of State approval, which would then allow Suffolk CC to undertake establishment works.

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

Discussions with Essex and Norfolk have been deferred due to the impact of Covid 19 on Natural England's and the councils' resources.

4. England Coast Path – Progress Map for the East



END
AW/SCC October 2020

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Sizewell C, Letter to Planning Inspectorate
Meeting:	29th October 2020
Author/Contact:	Barry Hall
Venue:	Online, 2-4pm

The Sizewell C Project: Planning Inspectorate
Reference: EN010012
The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

SLAF

C/O Suffolk Highways
Phoenix House
Goddard Road
Ipswich
IP1 5NP

Tel: 01473 260159

Email: slaf@suffolkhighways.org

Web: <http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum/>

Your Ref: EN010012

Our Ref: Registration ID 20026008

Date: 30 September 2020

Dear Sir

Representation to the Planning Inspectorate by the Suffolk Local Access Forum in response to the Development Consent Order by NNB Generation Company (SZC) for the proposed Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station. Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010012

Local Access Forums are statutory bodies established by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to comment and advise local authorities and other decision-making organisations on access issues for outdoor recreation and sustainable travel. They also respond to consultations and draft policy documents.

Since the start of consultation on a possible Sizewell C power station, the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) has had regular presentations from EDF at their meetings. We have welcomed these opportunities for dialogue and have subsequently made constructive comments to them at each phase of the consultation process. We are however concerned that although some of our comments have been taken into account, there are still outstanding issues we feel that still need to be addressed.

Summary

The main issues that we have been concerned about throughout the consultation process are:

1. The impact on the local and wider public rights of way network that the long construction phase will have, due to closures and diversions, and the consequential damage to the local tourism economy.
2. The impact of the suggested road schemes, and the increased traffic on the A12 on the rights of way network.
3. The need for a public access strategy during construction and a robust access legacy package to include all permissive routes and diversions to become definitive rights of way.

1. Impact on rights of way network

With regard to the local rights of way network SLAF has accepted the loss of Bridleway 19 during the construction period and welcomed the provision of an off-road route adjacent to the Eastbridge Road but would ask that this route is continued to Eastbridge itself. We would also ask for a safe pedestrian link from the B1122 through Aldhurst Farm to meet with Sandy Lane.

What is now the Suffolk Coast Path will shortly become part of the England Coast Path. Regrettably the route suggested by EDF is along soft sea defences which over time could disappear with coastal erosion. SLAF therefore requests that the definitive route of the path is moved onto the top of the new hard sea defences being constructed to protect the new power station.

2. Impact of proposed road schemes

Whilst SLAF has accepted the proposed new road schemes to help mitigate traffic impact on Farnham/Stratford St Andrew and Theberton, we welcome the dialogue that has occurred between EDF and the Highway Authority regarding the provision of safe crossing points for public rights of way on these new routes.

However, we have concerns that in the early years' construction traffic will access the site via Sizewell Gap which coupled with Sizewell A decommissioning traffic could lead to conflict with the use of local rights of way. Given the impact the additional traffic will have on the A12 from not only HGV movements but also construction workers and park and ride vehicles, we would ask that all points where public rights of way cross this road should be subject to a risk assessment audit.

3. Access strategy and legacy

This area of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty between Aldeburgh and Southwold attracts large number of visitors who enjoy the local access network and bring significant economic benefits to the area. SLAF is concerned that that temporary and permanent closure of key north to south and east to west routes during the construction period would severely affect the local economy. We would expect EDF to provide local authorities, businesses, and communities with up to date information to enable the local population and visitors to make best use of the access available for walkers, equestrians, and cyclists. For example, when the Coast Path is closed whilst there are seaborne deliveries.

Post construction, SLAF are requesting that there should be a significant legacy benefit to the public access to the wider area around the power station including the permissive routes around Kenton Hills becoming definitive, with a new link to the coast path and better off-road cycle routes between Aldeburgh and Southwold.

Appendices

Attached are copies of SLAF's response to the Second, Third and Fourth EDF consultations

Your sincerely



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SLAF Response Sizewell - Stage 2 Consultation

SLAF notes that the construction phase will particularly impact on the Suffolk Coast Path shortly to become part of the National Coast Path, the Sandlings Walk which uses a permissive route through Gorse Hill, Bridleway 19 which will be closed and other public rights of way within the Leiston/Sizewell area. Consequently, we would seek reassurances that:

- ⤴ Any changes to the current network should be kept to a minimum.
- ⤴ Closure of the Suffolk Coast Path for development of sea defences, landing jetty and beach landing facility should be kept to a minimum so as not to impact on the use of the area by locals and visitors.
- ⤴ Any construction phase development should where possible have minimum physical and visual impact on access.
- ⤴ After construction, all closed routes including permissive ones should be re-instated to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority and where possible new routes which have been created should be retained and dedicated for public use.
- ⤴ Land used for campus and construction purposes should when established as heathland be dedicated as Open Access land under the CROW 2000 Act.
- ⤴ Regarding the Campus Site, Option 2 is favoured as this will enable retaining Eastbridge Road for access with the addition of the new bridleway/cycle route
- ⤴ With regard to the green rail route, where path closures are suggested with a long detour, it is felt that with the frequency and low speed of the freight trains these are not necessary are suggested with a long detour, it is felt that with the frequency and low speed of the freight trains these are not necessary provided crossings have adequate sight-lines.
- ⤴ Any highway improvements to the A12 and B1122 should have full regard for the safety of walkers, horseriders and cyclists.
- ⤴ The crossing at Lovers Lane should be a controlled one.

Publicity and Promotion

- ⤴ It is essential that any changes to public rights of way through diversions and closures whether long term or temporary are widely publicised through information boards around the affected routes, walk leaflets widely available at TIC's, hotels, b&b's, stations and libraries, and on relevant websites.
- ⤴ The construction site is likely to attract significant visitor interest and suitable arrangements such as viewing platforms should be put in place to cater for and manage this.

Legacy

- ⤴ Any new routes put in place as a consequence of the construction phase which would be to the benefit of the wider rights of way network should be dedicated for use by the public and shown on the Definitive Map.
- ⤴ Routes closed during the construction phase should be re-instated to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority.
- ⤴ Permissive routes on the EDF estate should where possible be dedicated as public rights of way.
- ⤴ New areas of habitat creation resulting from the reinstatement of land used for the campus and construction works should be when established should be open to the public and dedicated for Open

Access under the CROW Act.

- ✧ The SLAF would expect EDF to engage in discussion with the Highway Authority how post-construction changes to the rights of way in the immediate area of Sizewell could better link in with proposals for the wider area included in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

SLAF further requests that EDF Energy makes information available to both the forum and Suffolk County Council officers on how the tourism and recreational legacy benefits from Sizewell will be scoped, developed and prioritised. The forum considers a timetable and process should be made available for working up legacy benefits.

SLAF Response Sizewell C -Stage 3 Consultation

Thank you for inviting the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) to comment on the latest round of consultations on EDF's plans for Sizewell C. As a statutory consultee and adviser to Suffolk County Council on issues affecting access to the countryside defined by the CROW Act 2000 we are concerned that little notice has been taken of our response to the Stage 2 Consultation and would stress that the points raised at that time are still valid.

See the Appendix restating our response to the Stage 2 Consultation.

The main issues that we have concern relating to the latest consultation are:

1. The impact on the local and wider rights of way network that the long construction phase will have.
 1. The impact of the suggested road schemes and increased traffic on the A12 on the rights of way network.
 2. The proposed closure and diversions of public rights of way crossings by Network Rail on the East Suffolk Line.
 3. The impact on tourism.
 4. The need to agree a legacy strategy with Suffolk County Council for access following the end of the construction phase.

Impact on Rights of Way

Assumptions seem to have been made regarding usage of the rights of way network by both EDF and Network Rail that are at odds with the experience of local communities and other bodies and we ask that further monitoring is carried out to provide a more accurate assessment.

We are concerned that the decision to dispense with a jetty and only provide a beach landing facility has implications to the use of what will be the England Coast Path and would request that this is reconsidered. The use of a jetty would have given walkers and cyclists access to the coast path most of the time, but the use solely of a beach landing facility could see the route closed several times each month during the main tourist season with a very long alternative route put in place. SLAF would expect that during closures a minibus should be made available to link Sizewell Beach with Eastbridge, Minsmere and Dunwich Heath. Closure of this key route could also encourage visitors to intrude into more environmentally sensitive areas.

During the construction of the proposed new sea defences we would expect the Coast Path to remain open. In the longer term we have concerns that the path being squeezed between the new dunes and the beach that if over time the beach erodes then the path could be lost when roll-back finally reaches the power station boundary.

Workers during the construction phase not on the campus but living close by should be encouraged to use cycling for their journey to the site. To encourage this proper dedicated safe cycle routes should be considered as this would also benefit the increasing number of leisure cyclist who use the area.

Any rights of way closures should be agreed with the Highways Authority well in advance of the submission of the DCO with dates, lengths of closure and alternative routes.

Impact of Road Schemes

SLAF notes that new bypasses are proposed for Farnham/Stratford St Andrew and Theberton. We are concerned that these will bisect public rights of way and would expect that as these schemes are firmed up in consultation with the Highway Authority, safety measures that reflect the status and use of the crossing points should be incorporated into their design. We are also aware that the increased traffic using the A12 during the construction phase on top of the existing traffic to Sizewell A for decommissioning and B for operation and maintenance means that Road Safety Audits should be carried out at sites on this major road where public rights of way cross the road and the necessary improvements made.

Rail Crossing Closures

SLAF is not convinced that the increased use of rail transport to bring construction materials into the site via the Green Rail route should be used by Network Rail as an excuse to close and divert twelve crossings on the East Suffolk line. We feel that a longer consultation period should be given, and more information provided so that the proposed diversions can be properly assessed on the ground by the Highway Authority and where public roads are used a Road Safety Audit should be produced. SLAF would prefer no closures but the use of audible warnings and miniature stoplights instead.

Impact on Tourism

Being in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the countryside from Aldeburgh to Southwold attracts large numbers of visitors both local and from further afield who use the local access network and bring significant economic benefits to the area. SLAF is concerned that the temporary and permanent closure of many of the key routes during the long construction period would impact badly on the local economy and that a strategy should be agreed that would show which routes were closed or diverted and when. We would look to EDF to provide a Community Liaison Officer who would provide a contact point with local authorities, businesses and communities to ensure adequate signage and information was widely available throughout the area and host a dedicated web site.

Legacy

SLAF would expect that following the construction period there should be positive green access gains for the immediate and wider area including the reinstatement of all closed public rights of way to a standard agreed by the Highway Authority with a commuted sum for future maintenance, the retention and dedication of all temporary diversions where they make a useful addition to the network. In addition, the provision of a north – south bridleway/cycle route between Aldeburgh and Southwold and a west – east Sandlings Walk link to the coast would be welcomed.

SLAF Response Sizewell C Stage 4 Pre-Application Consultation

Thank you for giving the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) the opportunity to comment on your latest plans for the construction of Sizewell C and for briefing its members at our July meeting. Whilst we feel that the responses that we made to the previous consultations are still valid and that these should be taken into account by EDF prior to the submission of the Development Consent Order we feel that there are further points that we would wish to make in relation to the latest consultation.

Transport of Construction Materials

In our response to the previous consultation we expressed concern about the closure of the large number of footpath crossings on the East Suffolk rail line in order to provide a rail-led strategy. From SLAF's perspective there was not enough detail given by Network Rail and from our involvement with previous crossing closures proposed by them in Suffolk we were sceptical about their ability to deliver in the tight timescale for Sizewell C. Although a rail-led strategy would have been preferable, given our previous concerns we therefore now support the Integrated Strategy with the upgrading of the Sizewell branch with the improvements to the footpath crossings and the use of the green route. As part of this new route we would support a gated level crossing on Bucklewood Road rather than a road closure with a footbridge.

Road Improvements

SLAF notes that with an Integrated Freight Strategy the proposed Theberton by-pass would be part of a new Sizewell Link Road between the A12 south of Yoxford and the B1122 and the red line has been extended to provide more flexibility and allow better non-motorised traffic safety. We welcome the ongoing discussions with Suffolk County Council's rights of way team regarding that where public rights of way cross the proposed road, safe crossing points are provided for pedestrian, equestrian and cyclists and that the use of Pretty Road footbridge is part of the proposals.

For this route and the proposed two villages by-pass we would expect that where there are public rights of way crossing these new routes the following principles should be applied:

1. Continuing liaison with SCC rights of way and highways teams
2. Road safety audits are carried out at all proposed crossing points
3. Adequate sight lines with dropped kerbs at crossing points
4. Level entry at all crossing points, not direct off steps. Where this is likely, a diversion should be made to a safe crossing point
5. Any stopped-up road should be retained with bridleway status
6. All changes need to be in place before construction begins
7. All surfacing, signage etc. should be agreed with the highway authority and routes should not be made available until signed off.

With regard to the Farnham bypass we welcome the proposed new bridleway bridge by Farnham Hall and the upgrading of the St Mary's church to Barn Farm as a bridleway.

Public Rights of Way and Bridleway19

As you are well aware, the role of SLAF is to advise the local highway authority and other organisations on access issues and that has been our focus during each stage of consultation. We welcome the amendments proposed to the proposed Bridleway19 diversion which will be used during the construction phase, particularly the reduction in road crossing points, the split surface shared route for equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists, also the new link to the proposed worker's caravan site. However, we would like to see the off-road bridleway route to be extended further north towards Eastbridge itself before it meets Eastbridge Road. The safe crossing points to be constructed as part of the Bridleway19 should be retained post construction.

However, we still have concerns regarding some other rights of way issues.

We are especially concerned about the soon to be England Coast Path. As SLAF understands it, during the construction of the new sea defences in front of Sizewell C the path may be diverted down the beach towards the sea. This raises safety issues, for instance if there is a high spring tide. We would also expect any such diversion to be accessible to all users with matting or something similar laid over the shingle to provide a level surface. Once the sea defences are in place, we would like to see the definitive legal route of the public right of way moved to the top of the defences which should be of sufficient width to accommodate this. This would future-proof the route against any long-term erosion issues.

With the possibility of closures of the Coast Path to enable beach landing of construction materials, these should be kept as short as possible and the frequency and duration notified well in advance to all interested parties. SLAF is still concerned that proposed long diversion route could cause problems to people who are walking to a tight schedule and the extra time taken for that this route could cause them accommodation problems at the end of the day. We therefore would see the provision of a shuttle minibus between Sizewell and Dunwich as an alternative of great benefit.

At Kenton Hills, whilst we welcome the new connection route to the permissive path network we would like to see post construction the link between Bridleway19 and the Coast Path become a definitive route as part of the legacy.

With regard to Valley Road which is very narrow. If this was downgraded to a bridleway it could provide a useful cycle route from the worker's caravan site to the construction site.

Habitat Compensation Land

SLAF notes that additional areas of land have been suggested for habitat creation as part of the mitigation measures. We ask what consideration has been given on the impact to nearby rights of way? For example, the construction of the lagoon off Sandy Lane could impact on the use of this narrow track by walkers if used to remove the spoil.

General points

SLAF would expect that a programme of regular meetings should be held during the construction phase with representatives of the local community and stakeholders so that any issues arising can be speedily resolved. We would also like to have regular updates at our meetings. As we already stated, SLAF would like to see a Community Liaison Officer funded by EDF in post before construction begins, as a link between them and the local community and businesses to address day to day problems that might arise.

Wording of the Section 106 agreement should be flexible as to how it can be used to deliver improvements. We would expect that it would be agreed between the relevant bodies prior to the submission of the DCO. SLAF is concerned about the amount of SCC rights of way staff time that has been expended on the project so far and will continue as it progresses and therefore feel that the agreement should allow for the funding of an extra staff member for at least two years as other work has suffered.

Legacy

SLAF has been highlighting in previous consultations the disruption that the construction phase of Sizewell C will cause to the public right of way network which will be wider than in just the immediate area. We would therefore expect EDF to provide a post-construction mitigation package which will enable a more accessible and joined up rights of way network that will bring positive benefits to the whole of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty including an off-road cycle route between Aldeburgh and Dunwich.

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: Sunnica Energy Farm
Meeting: 29th October 2020
Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin
Venue: Online

Introduction

Members have received previous updates on the proposals for a large solar farm spanning the Suffolk/Cambridgeshire border, between Mildenhall and Newmarket. Appendix A shows the proposed layout.

The statutory consultation for the proposal takes place between 22 September 2020 and 2 December 2020. Following the statutory consultation, Sunnica Limited will have regard to the comments received and continue to develop its design for the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm ahead of submitting a development consent order application to the Secretary of State.

Sunnica is holding a series of webinars on various subjects relating to the proposal and further details can be found [here](#).

Public Access

A joint response from all local authorities affected by the proposed solar farm is being prepared. The main points under consideration for public rights of way are as follows:

- There are concerns about the visual impact on PRow and views from the network. This includes the various different users of the network, with view points not being covered for equestrian use as previously discussed with Sunnica.
- The closure of all footpaths within the red line boundary for the duration of the construction phase seems excessive and needs to be reconsidered. There is concern that Worlington and Freckenham will effectively be cut off from recreational routes in the area during the construction phase. A phased approach should be adopted, and routes should only be closed for a minimum period, when works require it. Alternative routes should be provided. There are areas of the network that should remain open at all times due to routes being round the edge of the scheme area and not physically affected by works.
- The closure of routes may potentially negative impact other recreational areas in the wider area, including areas designated for their ecological value. These impacts will need to be assessed in a Habitat Regulation Assessment.

- There have not been sufficient improvements to green access to mitigate the impact on quiet enjoyment of the countryside by such a large scale solar farm on the local landscape. The suggestions from the Rights of Way Officer for desired additional routes were not taken further by Sunnica; some of the proposed additional permissive routes may interfere with ecological aims, for example in stone curlew areas.

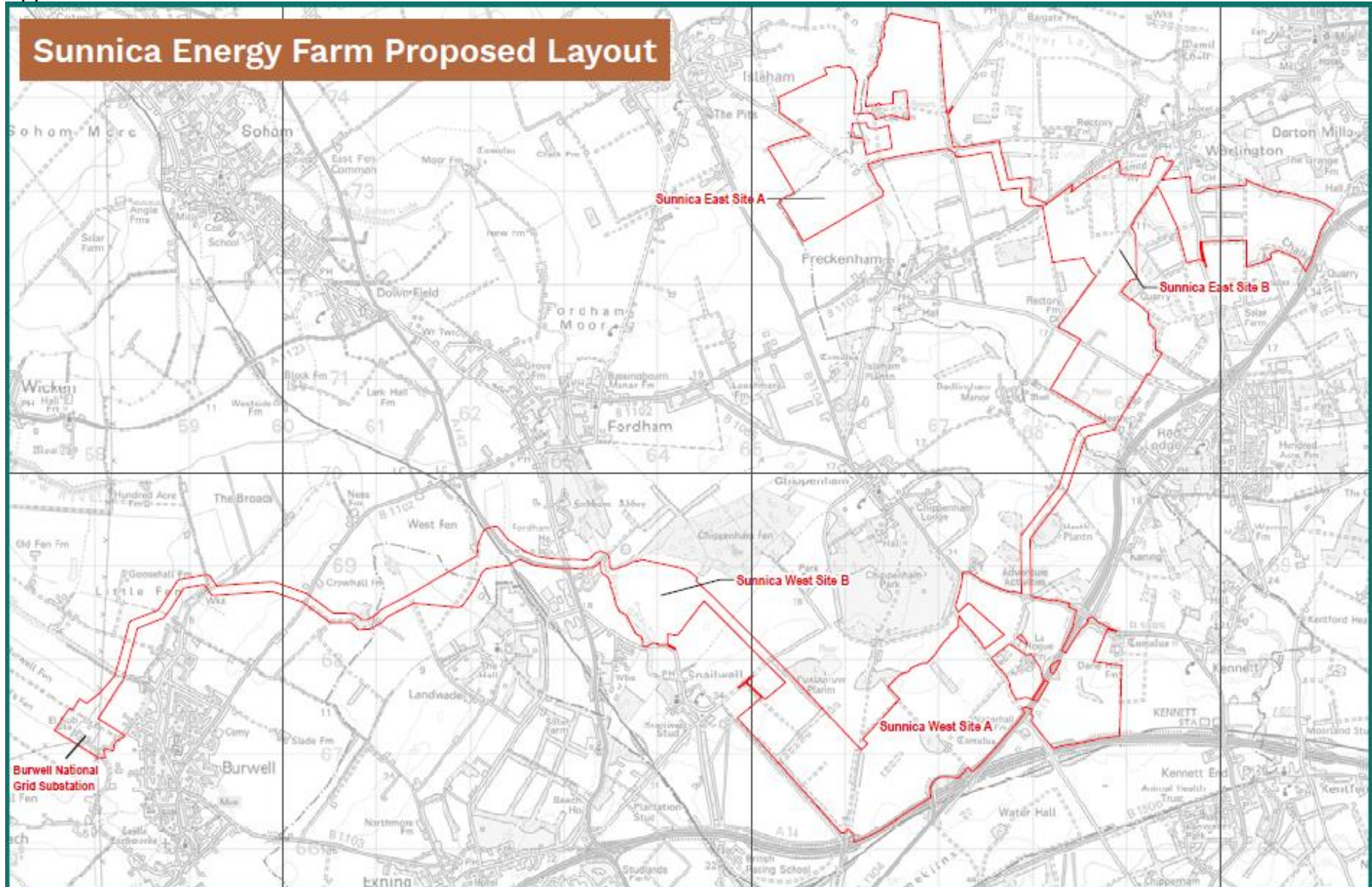
Sunnica's Preliminary Environmental Information Report can be found [here](#).

Conclusion

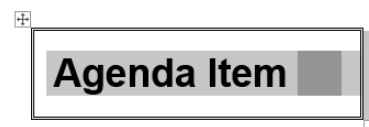
Members are asked how they wish to respond to the consultation.

END – AW/SCC October 2020

Appendix A



Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	SLAF Annual Report 2019/20
Meeting:	29th October 2020
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Online, 2-4pm



Cabinet

Report Title:	Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2019/20
Meeting Date:	13 October 2020
Lead Councillor(s):	Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs
Local Councillor(s):	All Councillors
Director:	Mark Ash, Executive Director of Growth, Highways and Infrastructure
Assistant Director or Head of Service:	Steve Palfrey, Assistant Director, Waste and Environment
Author:	David Falk, Green Access Manager, 07843 467 964, david.falk@suffolk.gov.uk

Brief summary of report

- Local Access Forums were established by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Each forum reports to a relevant appointing authority. The relevant appointing authority for the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) is Suffolk County Council. Local Access Forums are independent bodies made up of volunteer members and their role is to advise the Council on matters relating to rights of way and countryside access. They are also statutory consultees to a range of government departments and other organisations. Under the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007 (part 13), it is a requirement for forums to submit an Annual Report to their appointing authority. This will be the seventeenth Annual Report presented by the Suffolk Local Access Forum to Suffolk County Council and it provides a summary of the forum's activities between August 2019 and July 2020.

What is Cabinet being asked to decide?

2. The Cabinet is asked to accept the Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2019/20 and address the report's recommendations and state the actions that the Council is taking to address those recommendations.

Reason for recommendation

3. Under the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007, each forum is required to submit an annual report on rights of way and access matters to their appointing authority, and for that authority to publish their report. 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 2019/20 report are as follows:

a) Suffolk Green Access Strategy 2020-2030:

The forum welcomed the publication of Suffolk's second Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) titled 'Suffolk Green Access Strategy 2020-2030'. The forum fully supports the aims and objectives of the strategy and the relevance it has to enabling communities to access their local area via public rights of way. However, the forum has concerns that underfunding green access will have a detrimental effect on local communities. The forum stresses that the green access network offers a cost-effective means of developing healthy and sustainable communities and has a significant impact on the tourism economy. The forum would like to see funding levels for green access to reflect the increasing importance of walking and cycling in the national agenda.

Response: The Council thanks the forum for their role in developing the Suffolk Green Access Strategy and recognises the importance of green access, and specifically the public rights of way network, in enabling communities to access the countryside as well as travel in more sustainable modes. The Council also acknowledges the role green access plays in people's health and wellbeing and the impact it has on the tourism economy and support green access projects where practical.

b) The Agricultural Bill and Environmental Land Management Scheme:

The forum views this as the most important legislation for farming for many years and an opportunity to improve countryside access under the principle of 'public money for public goods'. The forum believes it is possible for the Environmental Land Management Scheme to deliver public enjoyment alongside food production and enhanced wildlife, and has lobbied local MPs and Lord Gardiner to include improved access in new agri-environment schemes, receiving replies from Lord Gardiner and James Cartledge MP in March and April 2020.

Response: The Council welcomes the forums approach to the Agricultural Bill and proposed Environmental Land Management Scheme and supports their proactive approach to central government and local MPs.

c) Sizewell C:

The forum is concerned over the disruption the development of Sizewell C will have on the green access network. The forum expects Sizewell C to effectively manage green access during the construction phase and to provide a legacy of an improved green access network post construction.

Response: The county council thanks the forum for its support at each stage of the consultation process and assures the forum that it is committed to protecting green access during the construction phase and ensuring a green access legacy is delivered post-construction.

d) England Coast Path:

The forum's coast path working group met in February 2020 to consider the published reports for three of the five sections of coast path in Suffolk and made their comments to Natural England. The forum is concerned at the lack of progress subsequently, Covid-19 notwithstanding, and the move of staff within Natural England that might further delay progress.

Response: The county council acknowledges the slowing of progress and will continue to work with Natural England to support them in delivering a new coast path that the county council can be proud of.

How will this impact on the Council's ambitions for carbon reduction?

5. The Suffolk Local Access Forum's recommendations focus on developing the green access network. This is at the core of encouraging more sustainable forms of travel which is integral to reducing carbon emissions and Suffolk achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

What are the resource and risk implications?

6. The Suffolk Local Access Forum recognises that these are unique times and that there will be severe budget pressures in all areas of the Council's work.
7. The forum believes that public rights of way and green access can deliver efficient, cost-effective solutions to securing healthy and sustainable communities and to supporting the county's tourism economy, where issues have been heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic.
8. The forum asks the Council to support green access initiatives as an innovative solution to encouraging more sustainable travel options and healthy, more active lifestyles. This will become more relevant in a post Covid-19 environment.
9. The Executive 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 green access network when 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.
10. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for the SLAF Annual Report 2019-2020, as advised by the Lead for Equalities and Inclusion.

What are the timescales associated with this decision?

11. Not applicable

Alternative options

12. 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?

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

Main body of report

The Work of SLAF

14. The forum meets every 3 months although in 2019-2020 this was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Meetings were held as follows:
 - 24th October 2019 – East Suffolk Council, Deben Room, Riduna Park, Melton IP12 1QT
 - 23rd January 2020 – Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC), Unit 11a, Hill View Business Park, Old Ipswich Road, Claydon IP6 0AJ
 - 30th April 2020 – meeting cancelled
 - 21st July 2020 – remote meeting via Zoom
15. Meetings were open to members of the public who can raise items or comment on issues being discussed or related to countryside access. Members of the public, including the Vice Chair of the Norfolk Local Access Forum, attended the meetings in October and January.
16. The Zoom meeting was not open to the public but was used as an opportunity to update members on progress in areas of interest to them.
17. One new member was appointed to the forum during the period of this report, attending their first meeting on 24th October 2019. That member was appointed to represent District and Borough Councils and replaced a councillor who stood down in 2019. A full list of members is given in Appendix A.

Administering SLAF

18. SLAF is made up of 15 volunteers each with a keen interest in countryside access. They act as an independent body with their own logo, letter heading, an independent email address and a dedicated page on the Suffolk County Council website; <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/suffolk-local-access-forum/>
19. Suffolk County Council's Rights of Way and Access team administers the forum. The cost of administering the Suffolk Local Access Forum during 2019-20 was under £500. This covered secretariat services, booking meeting rooms and providing refreshments, site visits, members' travel expenses and the recruitment of new members. The cost was kept very low by booking meeting rooms at partner organisations (e.g. East Suffolk Council) and as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in April's meeting being cancelled and July's meeting being held remotely.
20. The forum thanks the Rights of Way and Access team for their support which is vital to the forum delivering their work.

SLAF Activities in 2019/20

Rights of Way Improvement Plan: Suffolk Green Access Strategy 2020-2030

21. The forum was pleased to see Suffolk's second Rights of Way Improvement Plan published. The forum were key stakeholders in the development of the plan and were involved in the decision to title it 'Suffolk Green Access Strategy'.
22. At the January 2020 meeting, the forum discussed the importance of the title which members feel conveys the message of the strategy so succinctly.
23. The forum fully supports the aims and objectives of the strategy, its relevance in enabling communities to access their local area via public rights of way and emphasise the importance of maintaining and developing green access across Suffolk.

The Agricultural Bill and Environmental Land Management Scheme

24. The forum recognises this as the most important legislation for farming for many years and sees it as an opportunity to improve countryside access.
25. The forum wrote to Lord Gardiner and to all of Suffolk's MPs to ask them to use this opportunity to support improved access to the countryside. The forum highlighted that whilst in some of Suffolk's parishes the rights of way network is excellent, in others it is inadequate, with concern over a poor bridleway network in many parts of the county.
26. The forum supports compensating land managers under the principle of 'public money for public goods' and believes it is possible for the proposed Environmental Land Management Scheme to deliver public enjoyment alongside food production and enhanced wildlife.

Sizewell C Stage 4 Consultation

27. The forum responded to EDF Energy on the Stage 4 Consultation for Sizewell C and supports on-going discussions between EDF and Suffolk County Council's Rights of Way and Access team on the green access network.
28. A key area of concern is access north of Sizewell C to Eastbridge and the forum wants to see an off-road route created for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
29. The forum is also concerned with the impact construction of new sea defences will have on the England Coast Path. The coast path is a strategic route and construction will force the path seaward, potentially making it inaccessible during high tides. The forum insists that post-construction of sea defences, the coast path is future-proofed against long-term erosion issues by placing it at the top of the new sea defences.
30. The forum also has concerns over temporary closures of the coast path during beach landings of construction materials and insists that a shuttle minibus should be considered to avoid excessive diversions for walkers between Dunwich and Sizewell.
31. The forum is pressing for improvements to access around Sizewell with a new public right of way through Kenton Hills to connect to the coast path.
32. The forum would like to see a Community Liaison Officer funded by EDF in post before construction starts, to provide a link between EDF and the local community to address problems that arise.

33. The forum recognises the impact Sizewell C has on Suffolk County Council officer time and wants to see EDF fund an extra staff member within the rights of way and access team for at least two years to manage changes to the network as a result of the development.
34. The forum has also looked at proposals at Aldhurst Farm. The forum welcomes that its previous suggestions have been taken on board with the inclusion of public access to the southern part of the site and the provision of open access with the provision for dog walking and recreational use by the local community.
35. As a legacy of Sizewell C, the forum expects EDF to provide a more accessible and joined-up green access network, including an off-road cycle route between Aldeburgh and Dunwich.

Friston Sub Station

36. Scottish Power is proposing the construction of a National Grid substation in Friston to accommodate electricity produced by East Anglia 1 North and East Anglia 2 offshore windfarms.
37. The forum was contacted by 'Substation Action Save East Suffolk' for support in protecting the amenity of the countryside and public rights of way in and around Friston.
38. The forum expressed concern over the scale and impact of the project as well as concern over the lack of consultation from Scottish Power with the forum.

Sunnica Solar Farm

39. Sunnica Solar Farm, on the Suffolk-Cambridgeshire border, will be the largest solar farm in Europe. The forum is keen to learn more of the proposals and press the case for developing the existing public rights of way network in the area.
40. The forum will be inviting a representative of Sunnica to a future meeting.

Network Rail

41. On 24th September 2019, the SLAF Chair presented evidence at a Public Inquiry in support of a Rail Crossing Extinguishment and Diversion Order, under the Highways Act, to close a level-crossing public footpath (Needham Market Public Footpath 6 – Gypsy Lane) and divert the path to a nearby culvert. The forum was pleased to see the order confirmed by the Inspector on 6th December 2019.
42. The forum also supported Suffolk County Council on the closure of 5 public rights of way level crossings in Trimley following improvements to the Felixstowe Branch Line and the opening of a new bridleway bridge.
43. The forum is surprised there is still no decision on the countywide public rights of way level crossing closure Transport and Works Act Order, despite the inquiry concluding on 25th May 2018.

Trunk Roads

44. The A14 severs many public rights of way creating a safety issue for the public wanting to use those routes. The forum is concerned by this and see it as an issue shared with neighbouring Local Access Forums, including Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.

45. The forum is keen to see discussions between Highways England and Suffolk County Council's Rights of Way and Access team to address 'at-grade' crossings with suitable alternative 'grade-separated' crossings. The forum supports the council's request to Highways England to fund preparatory work to investigate severed crossings on the rights of way network.
46. The forum will make representations to Highways England to this effect and raise it at the next Regional Local Access Forum meeting to coordinate a response between forums in the east of England.

The Planning Process

47. In October 2019, the forum received a presentation from the Major Sites and Infrastructure Manager for East Suffolk Council on opportunities for improving countryside access through the planning process.
48. The forum is concerned that developers can overlook the importance of public rights of way and the role the network plays in creating healthy and active communities. It was, however, encouraged by the East Suffolk Council officer's enthusiasm to address green access positively in major developments
49. Looking forward, the forum will focus on the planning process and respond to major developments to secure improved access.

England Coast Path

50. Once completed, the England Coast Path will follow over 2,500 miles of the England coastline. The Suffolk Local Access Forum has been very involved in the development of the path in Suffolk with consultations from Natural England.
51. In Suffolk, the path is being determined in 5 stretches. Reports for 3 stretches have been submitted to the Secretary of State but work on the remaining 2 stretches (Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey; and Bawdsey to Aldeburgh) has been delayed.
52. The forum's England Coast Path working group convened in February 2020 to respond to these remaining stretches and is pleased that its efforts to extend the path along Suffolk's estuaries has resulted in these last 2 stretches proposing access along the River Orwell and the River Deben.
53. The forum is now keen to see the reports for these 2 stretches completed and to see all 5 reports confirmed allowing Suffolk's stretch of the England Coast Path to be launched in 2021.
54. The forum is also keen to see a partnership between Suffolk County Council and Norfolk and Essex councils to promote an east coast regional trail.

Open Access Restrictions

55. The forum is a statutory consultee to Natural England on issues relating to Open Access. Open Access are sites where the public have the right to roam. Nationally, Open Access includes 4 types of landscape; within Suffolk that landscape is heathland.
56. The forum considered a new direction from Natural England on seasonal closures for a site in The Brecks, which the forum had no objection to.

Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)

57. The forum welcomed a presentation on Suffolk Coast RAMS to understand how the strategy links to the planning process to mitigate the impact of developments on the natural environment.
58. The forum requested that public access, and specifically walking, was represented on the RAMS working group. The forum also advised that focusing resources on improving rights of way would positively manage access by deterring straying off paths and steering the public away from more sensitive sites.

Covid-19 pandemic and countryside access

59. The forum supports measures by Suffolk County Council's Rights of Way and Access team to communicate restrictions on public access to the countryside during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown measures. The forum recognises the good work by landowners to clear paths and provide new routes to enable local walks during this time. However, the forum is concerned over some elements of anti-social activity with reports of increased littering in some locations.

Suffolk Walking Festival

60. The forum fully supports the council's decision to cancel the 2020 Suffolk Walking Festival. The forum sees the event as key to promoting countryside access and the public rights of way network to residents and visitors to Suffolk.
61. The forum also sees the festival as a key event promoting Suffolk as an accessible tourism destination supporting the county's visitor attractions, tourism businesses and promoting its natural and historic sites.
62. The forum looks forward to seeing plans for the 2021 Suffolk Walking Festival in due course.

SLAF Recruitment

63. Local Access Forum membership can vary between 10 and 22 members. This can include 1 County Councillor and up to 2 District or Borough Councillors. SLAF has 15 members including 1 County Councillor and 1 District Councillor. The 15 members represent interests in walking, cycling, horse riding, land ownership, land management, conservation, accessibility, and outdoor sport.
64. In September 2019, Councillor James Mallinder (Deben Ward) was appointed by the Suffolk Chief Officers Leadership Team (SCOLT) to replace Councillor Diana Kearsley (Gislingham Ward), who stepped down in May 2019.

Presentations

65. 24th October 2019 – 'Public Rights of Way and the Planning Process', presented by Ben Woolnough, Major Sites and Infrastructure Manager, East Suffolk Council.
66. 23rd January 2020 – 'Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)', presented by Stephanie Walsh, Ecologist, Suffolk Coast RAMS, East Suffolk Council.

Consultations

67. EDF: Sizewell C Stage 4 Consultation
68. DEFRA: Environmental Land Management Scheme
69. Natural England: England Coast Path
70. Natural England: Open Access Restriction

Public Inquiry

71. Transport and Works Act Order – Needham Market Public Footpath 6 and Gipsy Lane.

Other Meetings

72. 16th January 2020 – Regional Local Access Forum Meeting, Cambridge, attended by Barry Hall, SLAF Chair, and David Barker, SLAF Vice Chair.
73. 15th July 2020 – Regional Local Access Forum Meeting, remote meeting, attended by Barry Hall, SLAF Chair.

Working Groups:

74. The forum has 7 working groups who meet in-between forum meetings to discuss key issues, address tight deadlines or attend other meetings. The working groups are as follows:

Topic	Membership
Network Rail	Barry Hall, Clare Philips, Roley Wilson, Margaret Hancock
Sizewell C	Suzanne Bartlett, Barry Hall, Roley Wilson, Anthony Wright
Open Access	Barry Hall, Gordon Merfield
Green Access Strategy ROWIP	Derek Blake, Jane Hatton, Monica Pipe, Roley Wilson
Coastal Erosion and Access	Barry Hall, Roley Wilson, Susan Mobbs
Planning and Development	Jane Hatton, Jane Storey, Anthony Wright
Agri-Environment Access Schemes	David Barker, John Wayman

Looking Ahead

75. Priorities for SLAF over the coming year include:
76. Investment in Green Access
 - To see investment to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Suffolk Green Access Strategy 2020-2030 are met and that the public rights of way network meets the needs of all users.

77. Sizewell C
 - To press for safe and convenient green access during construction and a meaningful green access legacy.
78. Environmental Land Management Scheme
 - To press for 'public money for public goods' in enhancing the green access network for the benefit of all users.
79. Planning
 - To further develop an understanding of the planning process and respond to significant developments to influence improved green access.
80. The England Coast Path
 - To see the new coast path delivered with access along Suffolk's estuaries.

Barry Hall

Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

David Barker

Vice Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

September 2020

Sources of further information

- a) Local Access Forums:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-access-forums-participate-in-decisions-on-public-access>
- b) The Suffolk Green Access Strategy: Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/green-access-strategy/>
- c) Suffolk Local Access Forum web pages and membership
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/suffolk-local-access-forum/>
- d) Suffolk Local Access Forum meeting 24 October 2019
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/SLAF-Minutes-etc/2019-10-24-SLAF-agenda-and-minutes.pdf>
- e) Suffolk Local Access Forum meeting 23 January 2020
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/SLAF-Minutes-etc/2020-01-23-SLAF-agenda-and-minutes.pdf>
- f) Suffolk Local Access Forum meeting 21 July 2020
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/SLAF-Minutes-etc/2020-07-21-SLAF-agenda-and-minutes.pdf>

Appendix A

Suffolk Local Access Forum – Members Details

SLAF Membership August 2019 – July 2020

The forum had 15 members during the period covered by this report.

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 MBE (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 was also Chair of Creating the Greenest County. *David has been a member of SLAF since July 2003 and Vice Chair since April 2010.*

Suzanne Bartlett – Having been brought up on a farm near Framlingham, Suzanne has spent most of her life living and working in Suffolk. Since retiring from her profession as a Librarian, she has dedicated more time to walking and cycling in the countryside, whilst continuing as a self-employed writer and researcher. She is particularly concerned with promoting the benefits of outdoor activities for both physical health and mental well-being. *Suzanne has been a member of SLAF since October 2018.*

Derek Blake MBE – Chairman of Clare Walkers and the Activity Planning Trustee at Clare Castle Country Park, Derek has a keen interest in all aspects of leisure walking, as well as issues related to access, health & well-being, and tourism. *Derek has been a member of SLAF since October 2018.*

Margaret Hancock – Margaret is a Blue Badge Tourist Guide with a particular interest in promoting sustainable tourism. She is 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. Margaret has 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 – Jane was born and has always lived in Suffolk enjoying the countryside as both a horse rider and dog walker. Jane has a background in Sales and Marketing and has previously been the Sudbury Town Centre Manager. She continues to work to improve access for the community into the countryside with an interest in promoting the benefits to health and tourism. She has introduced new walks for both the Suffolk Walking Festival and Walking for Health. *Jane has been a member of SLAF since October 2013.*

Councillor James Mallinder – James is an active parish councillor in Hollesley, volunteer for 'Meet up Mondays', and treasurer of a local Good Neighbour scheme. In 2019 he entered East Suffolk Council as ward member for Deben and with an enthusiasm for the environment, holds the Environment Portfolio. *James has been a member of SLAF since October 2019.*

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.*

Susan Mobbs - Sue is a walker and a cyclist mainly because of the opportunities they give for exploring landscape, history and nature at close hand. She is a volunteer with the

Suffolk Wildlife Trust, doing practical work on local reserves, and a member of the Long Distance Walkers Association. Sue's professional background is in social care and social and community development and she is keen to see improved access to the countryside and outdoor activities for people of all ages and abilities. *Susan has been a member of SLAF since October 2018.*

Clare Phillips – With a background in journalism, Clare has worked on the BBC's 'Farming Today' programme and presented countryside documentaries for BBC Radio Suffolk. Clare enjoys off-road running and walking in the Suffolk countryside, organises several Trail Races, and runs each year for her running club. She is a horse-rider and a Trustee of Ipswich Riding for the Disabled Group. Clare also chairs the footpaths sub-committee of Brantham Parish Council. *Clare has been a member of SLAF since October 2018.*

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 and publishers on the production of cycling and walking guides. For 15 years before retiring Anthony worked part-time for the national sustainable transport charity Sustrans as its Area Manager for Norfolk and Suffolk, while also working part-time as a Suffolk County Council Cycling Officer. He maintains an active interest in developing cycle routes and advises the Highways Agency and Norfolk & Suffolk Highways of their responsibilities for non-motorist users safety on the highway. *Anthony has been a member of SLAF since July 2003.*

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	SLAF Annual Report 2019-2020: Presentation to Cabinet
Meeting:	29th October 2020
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Microsoft TEAMS Meeting 2:00-4:00

The SLAF Annual Report 2019-2020 was presented to Cabinet by the Chair on Tuesday 13 October. The presentation lasted 2:40-3:45.

1. Cllr Matthew Hicks, Leader of the Council, welcomed Barry Hall, SLAF Chair to Cabinet.
2. Cllr Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, introduced the 17th SLAF Annual Report, explaining the role of the forum and outlining key issues before introducing Barry Hall, SLAF Chair.
3. Barry Hall thanked Cllr Reid and said this was his 4th attendance at Cabinet. Barry Hall presented the report, highlighting the importance of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 'Suffolk Green Access Strategy'. He recognised the increase in walking, cycling and equestrians use of rights of way which emphasises the importance of green access to the countryside and its benefits to physical and mental health.
4. Barry looked forward to seeing the ROWIP implemented and seeing funds put into repairing key bridges at Mildenhall, the Bailey Bridge at Walberswick and the Hempyard Bridge in Ixworth to enable better access.
5. Barry said SLAF has written to all MPs regarding the Agricultural Bill, and that SLAF had received a response from Lord Gardiner who recognised the benefits of green access as a public good.
6. SLAF has responded to 4 public consultations regarding Sizewell C, and representatives of EDF have attended SLAF Meetings. After the 4th consultation closed, SLAF wrote to the Planning Inspectorate with its response to EDFs proposals, reiterating previous responses that had ignored requests for the following:
 - An off-road cycle route to Eastbridge
 - That the England Coast Path is built along the new sea defence
 - Legacy of a long-distance cycle trail
7. Scottish Power have not consulted with SLAF over the Friston Sub-Station.
8. The forum was still waiting for a final outcome to Network Rail's proposals for level crossings.
9. There are 2 sections of the England Coast Path awaiting to be confirmed.

10. The forum was saddened to see The Suffolk Walking Festival cancelled this year for obvious reasons but recognise how well supported it is and look forward to seeing it return next year.
11. Barry echoed Cllr Reid's thanks to SLAF members for their dedication.
12. Barry thanked the Council for their support, for listening to points raised, thanked the Rights of Way Team for all their support, and asked Cabinet to accept the annual report.
13. There were no questions from Cllr Reid.
14. Cllr Matthew Hicks observed that this has been a busy time, and invited questions from the Cabinet
15. Cllr Hopfsenberger thanked SLAF for its work and said that a lot of parishes have opened up new walking routes during the pandemic. Cllr Hopfsenberger asked Cllr Reid about Trunk Road severance.
Cllr Reid said he is working very closely with Highways England regarding A14 severance with a survey recently completed, and that the Council is pressing Highways England to fund diversions of Public Rights of Way (PROW) to suitable crossings. He cited an example between Stowupland and Stowmarket where there is potential for a new crossing which would provide better links to school.
16. Cllr Gowrley thanked SLAF and asked Cllr Reid how the Council is responding to the Sizewell C Consultations during and post construction.
Cllr Reid advised that a large amount of resources have been committed to address the impact of Sizewell C on public rights of way and that the Council were committed to improving the network. They are working with EDF and East Suffolk Council to identify legacy projects including a long-distance promoted cycle trail from Southwold to Aldeburgh.
17. Cllr Evans remarked on the cancellation of the Suffolk Walking Festival this year and that it will return in 2021. She said the pandemic has given rise to antisocial behaviour across PROW and that farmers appreciated notices by the Green Access Team on social distancing. Cllr Evans asked what more could be done.
Cllr Reid said opportunities to reinforce messages will be explored further.
18. Cllr Rout thanked SLAF, echoing Cllrs Hall and Reid's words about how essential the work of SLAF has been during the pandemic, as people are 'reconnecting with the outdoors'. He asked what actions are being taken to deliver on the Suffolk Green Access Strategy.
Cllr Reid replied that there is a need to improve investment, for a more sustainable network with better connectivity especially where structures were either closed or about to close. He advised the council was investing more money into structures with over £1m allocated to urgent repairs, citing examples of the Bailey Bridge in Walberswick and the Mildenhall bridge as being high on the list.
Cllr Reid also said that a 5-year cycling plan had been completed for town and rural areas and hoped to secure government funding for this in the short and medium term.

19. Cllr Page congratulated Barry Hall for the SLAF report and praised it for its breadth. She expressed concerns in Woodbridge about how higher speed trains will affect PROW crossings on the East Suffolk Lines.
David Falk responded that no crossings were affected but advised that work had been done on the main line between Felixstowe and Newmarket, especially in Trimley St Martin and Needham Market.
20. Cllr Page welcomed looking at severance of PROW along the A14 but asked about A12 severances.
Cllr Reid responded that the A12 was also an area of concern.
21. Cllr Page also asked about public access being closed on the grounds of Covid-19 and whether the council recognised this as a form of antisocial behaviour.
Cllr Reid advised that landowners had been contacted to persuade them not to do this.
22. Cllr Karen Soons thanked Mr Hall for the SLAF report and its fine observations. She asked if there was any advice for Parishes wishing to take advantage of the Quiet Lane Scheme.
Cllr Reid responded that this initiative has been relaunched and advice is on the SCC website and there is a dedicated team of volunteers to field enquiries. Suffolk Highways work with PROW teams on these matters.
23. Cllr Brambley-Crawshaw gave thanks to Barry Hall for the report. She said that SCC responses to SLAFs recommendations were not robust enough and underfunding green access had a detrimental impact on communities.
Cllr Reid responded that the levels of investment that SCC had provided in such a short space of time was proof of their commitment to green access.
24. Cllr McGregor remarked that there needed to be improved rail service on the East Suffolk Line to speed up train times. He suggested lessons needed to be learned from Needham Market and proposed that SCC is more proactive with Network Rail.
Cllr Reid responded that SCC takes the initiative to see where suitable diversions can be made whilst minimising greater risks of road walking.
25. Cllr McGregor said SCC needs to be more proactive on trunk road severance, citing the example of the A11 underpass at the Elveden Monument as something that SCC can be proud of in its achievements.
Cllr Reid thanked Cllr McGregor for his observations. He provided reassurance by emphasising that he is engaging at a very high level with Highways England and Network Rail on the above issues and holding the organisations to account.
26. Cllr Otton thanked Barry Hall for the SLAF report. She asked about the possibility of persons with disabilities being selected.
Barry Hall said that a person with a disability would be welcomed to join the Forum and that every effort has been made to recruit members with disabilities.
David Falk added that there had been members on the Forum with obvious disabilities that current members may have less obvious disabilities which the Forum is not aware of, but that a current member works with Riding for the Disabled Association.

27. Cllr Otton asked about temporary closures of PROW when there is a development, and could alternative diversions be provided.
Cllr Reid responded that the PROW Team handled temporary closures.
28. Cllr Spicer agreed with Cllr Otton for the need for a disabled representative. She noted that East Suffolk Council's Planning Officer had attended a SLAF meeting and asked for West Suffolk Council's counterpart to be able to do the same. She said that the importance of PROW needs to be drawn to the attention of developers at an early stage, and for improvements of public access to green spaces and cycle routes. She said that SCC needs to work more proactively on planning applications.
Cllr Reid responded that SCC is working hard on design and projects, citing Marham Park and Thurston where better access was achieved.
29. Cllr Lockington asked Cllr Reid about how SCC deals with landowners who block their PROW with vehicles or send dogs out towards walkers.
Cllr Reid advised such issues need to be reported on the Highways Reporting Tool.
30. Cllr Storey praised SLAF for doing an incredible job, and that it is well supported by SCC. The Forum is one of few in the country which carries out such exemplary work. She said that the Forum's cost in 2019-2020 was £500, which is an insignificant amount relative to the tremendous amount of work by members. Cllr Storey cited the SLAF as one of the most successful LAFs in the country. She said that the work of SLAF is very important and that she is proud to be a member. Cllr Storey praised the Green Access Team and Rights of Way Officers for doing a tremendous job to support the forum and access. Cllr Storey noted the majority of landowners make every effort to keep their PROW open, whilst there are always a few who do not.
31. Cllr Adams thanked Barry Hall for the report and for the phenomenal work of the Forum. She advised that Cllr Bole is a good point of contact for seeking new members with disabilities. Cllr Adams said that cycle paths between towns needed to be improved and widened, so that people can cycle to work.
Cllr Reid responded the connectivity of cycle routes is being examined under the improvements of the network with a view to their longterm sustainability.
32. Cllr Reader added his thanks to Barry Hall for the report, and to Cllr Reid for the funding he had announced which will 'keep people moving'.
33. Cllr Reid asked Cabinet to accept the SLAF Annual Report 2019-2020.
34. This was accepted unanimously.
35. Cllr Hicks thanked Barry Hall and the forum for all they do for the residents of Suffolk and for the county council.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: SLAF Working Groups
Meeting: 29th October 2020
Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin
Venue: Online

Discussion

Members last agreed the full list of topics and membership of working groups at their meeting in October 2018:

Topic	Membership
Network Rail	Barry Hall, Roley Wilson, Diana Kearsley, Clare Philips
Sizewell C	Barry Hall, Anthony Wright, Roley Wilson, Suzanne Bartlett
Open Access	Barry Hall, Gordon Merfield,
ROWIP and Suffolk Walking Strategy	Roley Wilson, Jane Hatton, Diana Kearsley, Monica Pipe, Derek Blake
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

Since then, whilst not a working group, it was agreed Margaret Hancock would represent SLAF on the East Suffolk Coast Line Community Rail Partnership and Susan Mobbs was added to the coastal access group.

The working groups have shown their value in being able to give more time to specific topics and consultations in a more agile and timely way than the full quarterly meetings.

Most of the topic groups are still relevant, with large scale planning and energy proposals continuing to be a priority in their impact on green access, as do Network Rail projects. Likewise the Agriculture Bill currently going through the parliamentary stages and its impact on direct payments and new farming regulations.

Members are asked to consider whether they would like review the topics and membership of the groups.

END – AW/SCC October 2020