

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	29th July 2021, 2-4 pm
Author/Contact:	Anna McGowan
Venue:	online via TEAMS

			Paper Number
1.	14:00	Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.		Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 21/12 – BH
3.		Declarations of interest	
4.	14.10	Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Council Planning, Vincent Pearce, Principal Planning Officer.	Presentation
5.	14.40	Energy Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in Suffolk	LAF 21/13 – AW
6.	15.00	The England Coast Path	LAF 21/14 – AW
7.	15.10	Network Rail - Public Rights of Way and Level Crossings	LAF 21/15 – SK
8.	15.20	Trunk Roads - Copdock	Verbal – DF
9.	15.30	Regional Local Access Forum	LAF 21/16 – BH
10.	15.40	Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2020/21	LAF 21/17 – DF
11.	15.45	SLAF Membership	LAF 21/18 – DF
12.	15.50	Public Question Time	
13.	15.55	Any Other Business	
14.	16.00	Date of Next Meeting 28 th October 2-4pm Venue to be confirmed	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Paper:	LAF2112
Title:	Minutes of Meeting
Meeting Date:	29 April 2021
Author/Contact:	Anna McGowan
Venue:	online via TEAMS

1. **Welcome, apologies and housekeeping**

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), David Barker (DB) (Vice Chair), Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Jane Hatton (JH), Roland Wilson (RW), Anthony Wright (AWR), Margaret Hancock (MH), Derek Blake (DBL), Susan Mobbs (SM), Suzanne Bartlett (SB), Clare Phillips (CP), Cllr James Mallinder (JM)

SCC Officers Present: Anna McGowan (Minutes), Andrew Woodin (AW), David Falk (DF), Ben Heather (BH)

Apologies: Gordon Merfield (GM), Monica Pipe (MP), John Wayman (JW)

Members of the Public: Ken Hawkins, Gordon Crosby

2. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2021 were reviewed and agreed.

3. **Declaration of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **The England Coast Path**

AW presented paper 21/07 and advised on developments for the England Coast Path (ECP). Reports on all 5 stretches of coastal access have been published, and the website progress overview map last updated on 3 February 2021.

AW gave updates on the staffing levels at Natural England (NE), and noted the reduction in their staff numbers.

AW outlined the 5 stages of establishing coastal access, with the latest updates to all 5 stretches:

Harwich to Shotley Gate received 7 objections to 5 of the 6 reports, at Stage 4 of the coastal access. An appointed person will visit this stretch in June and advise the Secretary of State. A PRow member of staff will accompany the Inspector on their visit.

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – the report has been approved by the Secretary of State - therefore establishment work can commence as 3 out of 5 reports are approved.

Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey received 7 objections. The absence of objection on 2 of the 6 reports, means NE expects these 2 reports to progress positively to the Secretary of State's approval.

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh the report was the last to be published and closed for public comment on 31st March 2021. NE are looking at any objections and representations received to pass on to the Planning Inspectorate and Defra for review and consideration.

Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea received 23 objections. 5 of the 6 reports have been received so establishment works can be undertaken.

DB asked about the nature of the objections.

AW said objections were from landowners, citing nature conservation as key objection, especially in the Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea stretch. On the stretch on the north bank of the Stour, the proposed route through a historic park was objected leading to an incursion inland around the park and back to the estuary. In theory this brings the park into play as 'spreading room'.

BH asked how long it would take for the Inspector to resolve the objections.

AW could not advise how long this would take but said that work could start on sections where there were no objections.

JM asked about the timescale for opening up the route.

AW responded that this was not known at the present time.

Officers have recently met with NE to discuss applying for grant to establish the required works and also for staff resource to manage the process. Natural England had hoped the county council would apply for RDPE European funding, but as this had a tight turnaround and would lead to piecemeal establishment, the county council has decided to apply for funding for the remainder of the complete financial year outside of RDPE funding, repeating the process next year.

AW has also met with respective counterparts in Essex and Norfolk to discuss the 'regional trail' and will be working with them when more progress has been made on establishment.

5. Strategic Road Network – PRow Severance

AW presented the paper LAF 21/08, with updates on the ongoing dialogue between ROW & Access Team and Highways England (HE) regarding improvements to access across the A12 and A14 in Suffolk, where the roads sever the access network and separate communities.

AW has met with HE twice – 27th January and 5th February regarding the A14 at Sproughton and Trimley. AW stated that HE has a duty to look at walking and cycling when making their changes, and they are looking to work with the county council to make improvements at these locations. There is no guarantee that their proposed changes will happen. HE expressed a wish to work with the County Council on improving access to both locations. JM said that the Scheme to enhance capacity at eight junctions along the A12 needs to stretch all the way to Lowestoft for improved crossings for walkers and cyclists.

DF updated members on Highways England schemes he is involved with at Copdock and Melton

Action: BH agreed to represent SLAF at future Copdock stakeholder meetings.

Action: AW to invite HE to a future meeting to discuss their approach to walking and cycling.

6. Natural England – Regional Local Access Forums

BH has written to NE - LAF21/09 on the issue of their gradual withdrawing of support for the Regional Local Access Forum and said that their email response to his letter had just been received. This will be shared at the next meeting.

7. Energy Schemes

AW presented the paper LAF21/10.

Sunnica

There is not much liaison with Cambridgeshire, and the Development Consent Order is still awaited.

Sizewell C

Annette Robinson is continuing to do an excellent job representing ROW & Access at the Examination. David Falk has asked for improvements to PRow north and south of Sizewell C, and has scoped the proposed cycle trail from Southwold to Aldeburgh - as part of a Section 106 agreement to ensure a legacy. There will be a request for funds to include naming and branding the route, signage and for a new SCC Officer which is costed up at approximately £2.5m.

Scottish Power EA1N and EA2 and Friston substation

AW said that there continuing concerns for the EAs for the inadequacy of the methodology, which is a cause for objection, and the Examination has been extended until the 6th of July.

Action: AW to ask Claire Dickson if she is in touch with Cambridgeshire County Council on the proposal.

8. Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings

SK provided updates on LAF21/11.

Gipsy Lane

SCC and Network Rail (NR) have secured external legal advice that the intention of the Order must be given significant weight and that the Order schedule description supports what the Order sets out to achieve. NR are reviewing their culvert design to avoid using third party land. The county council continues to press Network Rail on expediting the scheme without further delay, as the new PRow cannot remain closed to the public indefinitely. A work programme with timetable has been requested.

SK read out the letter addressed to Barry Hall, just received from Ellie Burrows, which will be circulated separately.

General/Countywide TWAO

Network Rail want this crossing closed for safety reasons.

SK said that Network Rail's assessments for a Permanent Extinguishment Order have been requested and will need to be scrutinised.

CP said that local residents are unhappy about the extension to the closure of the crossing till 30 March 2022. CP also said that the PC footpath committee has found the crossing dangerous without warning lights, and some residents have expressed annoyance at the sounding of horns at the crossing. The A137 is not suitable to walk along to connect with onward PRow.

Members expressed concern about any potential compensation or alternative route to allow the crossing to be closed. RW expressed concern at what mitigation might look like and made the point the PRow is an asset for everyone, as well as a local one.

Overall SLAF had significant reservations about the permanent closure of this crossing. AW made the point they are an independent advisory body, and it was a positive signal for them to challenge these proposals.

AW could not advise what the mitigation would be.

Action: BH to consider how SLAF will respond to proposals to close the Brantham FP6 crossing.

9. Discovering Suffolk

DF gave a verbal update on the 2 year Discovering Suffolk project, which has received £367K from the 2020 Fund – with thanks to Cllr Andrew Reid, to further raise awareness of Suffolk's countryside, building on Covid-19 associated behavioural changes, and promoting local activity across Suffolk.

The new Green Access Officer, Ben Heather, recently been appointed to deliver this project which involves designing a bespoke mobile phone app allowing users to follow the Discover Suffolk series of leaflets, which will work offline and integrate with OS mapping.

QR codes will also be made and attached to fingerposts on footpaths with links to the Discover Suffolk website, countryside code as well as unique content related to the area. This project will also replace/refresh the signposts on highways to which QR codes will be fixed, and work in collaboration with partners ie. the AONB Teams.

DF added that this project does not replace previous work, ie the Discover Suffolk walks leaflets, which will continue to be produced.

Further research will also be undertaken with the University of East Anglia on how to capture new audiences.

10. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

11. Any Other Business

JS noted that Elmswell PC had done a hybrid meeting with mixed success.

Action: AM to enquire with Elmswell PC as to how this was achieved.

12. Date of Next Meeting

29th July 2021, venue to be arranged.

END
AM/SCC April 2021

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Paper:	LAF2113
Title:	Energy Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in Suffolk
Meeting:	29th July 2021
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	online via TEAMS

1. Sunnica
2. Sizewell C
3. Scottish Power EA1N & EA2 and Friston substation

1. Sunnica

There is nothing to report on Sunnica since the last meeting. For reference Sunnica's proposal as the statutory consultation can be found here <https://sunnica.co.uk/public-consultation/>

2. Sizewell C

At the time of writing the county council is in in the middle of a series of public examination hearings, with days set aside for a panel of inspectors to hear evidence from SZC Co and its consultants, and interested parties including the county council, East Suffolk Council and the local community and pressure groups. Hearings look at topics including traffic and transport, coastal geomorphology and biodiversity and ecology. Amenity and recreation does not have a specific hearing, and ROW & Access is being covered mainly under traffic and transport, where the PRow managers have worked closely with their colleagues in transport strategy.

Unlike public inquiries, which normally take place at the end of a consultation process, and give a decision on a proposal, the National Infrastructure Planning examination system is part of the decision making process, and more informal in the way the panel takes evidence and hears concerns and challenges to evidence already heard.

As well as hearing evidence, the panel also receive written representations from SZC Co and interested parties. All the documentation and exam timetable can be found on the National Infrastructure Planning website.

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/the-sizewell-c-project/>

The main PRow concerns remain:

- The disruption of the public footpath and ECP along the beach,
- The relationship between the coast path PRow and the sea defence,
- The lack of an off road route between the northern end of BR19 and Eastbridge.

Alongside the hearings, the county council is compiling its list of service improvements SZC will require under sS.106 agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This includes ROW & Access improvements to protect existing PRow infrastructure and improve local cycling facilities.

3. Scottish Power EA1N & EA2 and Friston substation

Scottish Power submitted their Development Consent Order in November 2019. It involves a cable route from the coast that will affect 26 PRow during construction and three substations that will require the permanent stopping up of a section of PRow to the north of the village of Friston.

The public examination should have concluded in early April but was extended beyond the normal 6 months until the 6th July. In all there were 9 months of Hearings, 13 Deadlines, 17 Issue Specific Hearings, multiple Open Floor hearings, a Local Impact Report and a Statement of Common Ground covering all the county council's concerns, including the impact of the proposal on PRow.

The final decision is due in 6 months and after that the discharge of the requirements process will begin.

END
AW/SCC July 2021

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Paper:	LAF2114
Title:	The England Coast Path
Meeting Date:	29th July 2021
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	online via TEAMS

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

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

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – 15th January 2020
Harwich to Shotley Gate – 22nd January 2020
Aldeburgh to Hopton on Sea – 29th January 2020
Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey – 9th December 2020
Bawdsey to Aldeburgh – 3rd February 2021

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 3 February 2021.

Stretch name	Progress
Harwich to Shotley Gate	Stage 4: Determine
Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry	Stage 4 and 5: Partially approved (not yet available for public use - work to establish the route is currently taking place on approved lengths)
Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey	Stage 4: Determine
Bawdsey to Aldeburgh	Stage 4: Determine
Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea	Stage 4: Determine
Hopton-on-Sea to Sea Palling	Open to the public

The remaining stages to establish Coastal Access in Suffolk are as follows:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast> .

2. The Stretches in More Detail

Natural England has provided the following updates around the Suffolk coast stretches.

The right of access to the approved stretch of coast does not come into effect at this stage. Natural England will work with the county council to establish any infrastructure works before an Order is made by the Secretary of State under the 2009 Act to bring the rights into effect.

Natural England, Suffolk County Council, Defra and the Planning Inspectorate continue to work together to ensure much of the England Coast Path is open as soon as possible.

Suffolk Stretches

Harwich to Shotley Gate – Sally Fishwick. Last updated 08.07.21

- 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.
- Natural England have submitted their comments on the objections and representations received.

- The Appointed Person visited the stretch in June and will advise the Secretary of State on the Objections.

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – Darren Braine. Last updated 13.04.21

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- Natural England published proposals on 15th January 2020 and the 8 week period for public comment ended on 11 March 2020.
- 3 of the 5 reports were approved by the secretary of state and are available for Suffolk County Council to apply for the establishment grants.
- The 2 reports with objections (SGF1 and SGF3) have been visited by the Planning Inspectorate and we await their report to Defra.

Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey – Araminta Adama & Sally Fishwick. Last updated 08.07.21

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- Natural England published proposals on 9th December 2020 and the 8 week period for public comment ended on 3 February 2021.
- 7 objections were received. As stretches are published as a compendium of reports, the absence of objection on 2 of the 6 reports means Natural England expects these 2 reports to progress positively to Secretary of State approval which would then allow Suffolk CC to undertake establishment works.
- Natural England are currently writing their comments on the objections and representations received.

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh –Jonathan Clarke & Darren Braine. Last updated 13.04.21

- The report was published on 3rd of February 2021 and closed for public comment at midnight on 31st March 2021.
- Natural England will now undertake administrative processes around the objections and representations received and pass them on to the Planning Inspectorate and Defra (respectively) for their review and consideration.

Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea – Sally Fishwick. Last updated 08.07.21

- 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.
- Natural England is currently writing their comments on the objections and representations received.

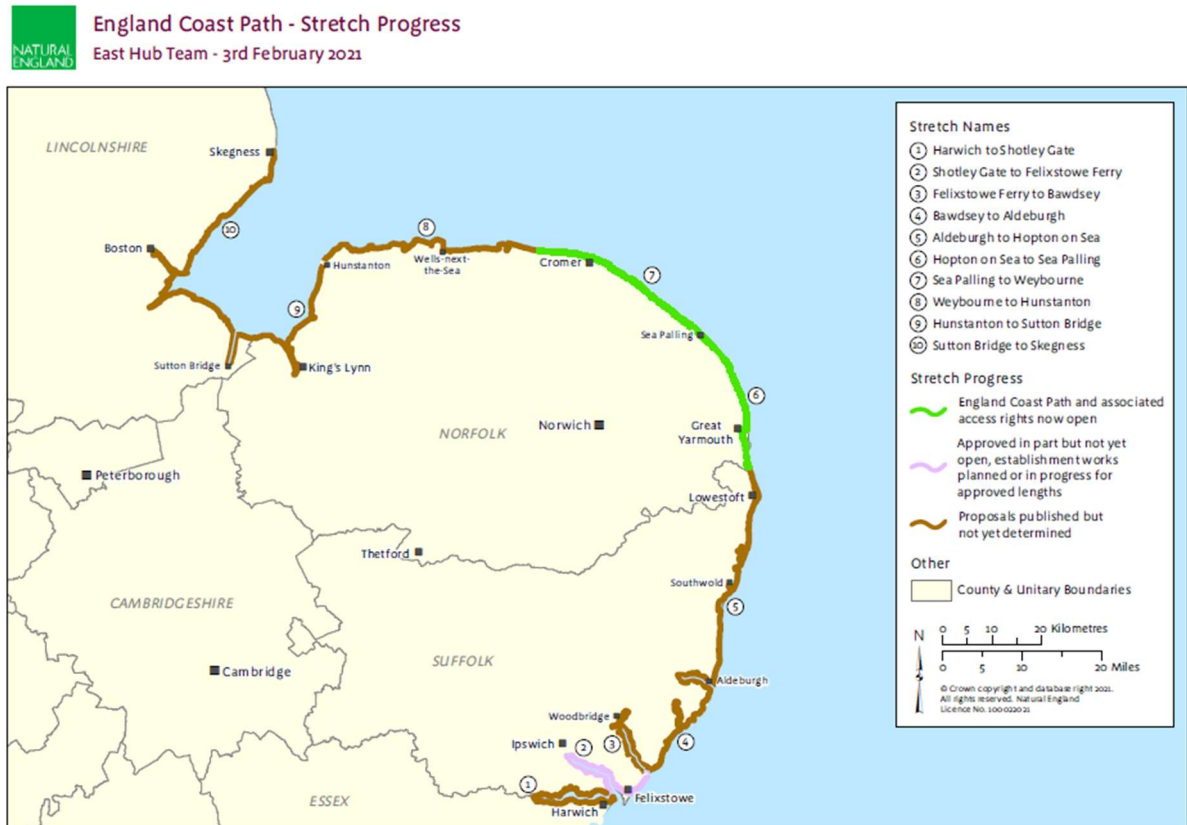
Since the last meeting, there have been visits to Suffolk by an inspector appointed from the Planning Inspectorate. They took place to enable landowners who had objected to the route to

point out features of interest to the inspector. The area Rights of Way Officer was present and was able to clarify the existing alignments of the PRow.

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

Resumption of discussions with Essex and Norfolk County Councils on establishing a trails partnership await further progress on establishing the coast path in the east of England.

4. England Coast Path – Progress Map for the East



END
AW/SCC July 2021

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Paper:	LAF2115
Title:	Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings
Meeting:	29th July 2021
Author/Contact:	Steve Kerr / Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Online via TEAMS

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



Since the Forum last met at the end of April, there has been some progress in this protracted case. Network Rail have produced a works programme and are in the process of negotiating a compensation package with the affected landowner, that is to include access arrangements for the works delivery phases. NR are also currently seeking to secure permission from the landowner for a further ecological survey. At the time of writing, however, SCC has not seen what the landowner is requesting in terms of financial compensation, which is being dealt with by their land agent, Savills.

In order to ensure progress is maintained, the railway operator has recently set up a Programme Board. The Board is now capturing specific work streams through an Action Tracker, with the aim of delivering all the necessary consents/works related to the diversion and closing the crossing by the middle of November 2021. The Council has asked that the timeline for the works programme includes appropriate hold points that will allow the highway authority to inspect the works as they progress. The wider Works Programme also includes a

communications strategy to ensure local residents and the wider community are kept informed throughout the development phase and advised when the crossing will be permanently stopped up.

General/Countywide

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

Since the Forum's last meeting the West Area Rights of Way team has undertaken site visits to the 5 crossings included in the Order, which are dependent on an alternative route being provided, in order to check that there are no further works required to make those routes suitable for public use. The county council is still waiting for confirmation from NR that they have appointed a contractor to deliver the necessary works, and that they have secured the necessary consents from all affected landowners to access their land for surveying purposes.

By way of a reminder, a total of 9 PROW crossings were included in the Order by the Secretary of State for Transport (SoSfT). Two of these were extinguished on the date the SoSfT made the Order (Gooderhams and Leggetts), and a further crossing is of a private status (Abbotts). Cow Pasture Lane (Byway 11 Mellis) has been downgraded from a byway to a bridleway but only signage works, and an equestrian mounting/dismounting block are required here, although it is also understood Miniature Warning Lights are being installed by Greater Anglia Railways, to address the continuing public safety risk.

The Forum has previously been advised that two of the PROW included in the TWAO were already the subject of temporary traffic regulation closures (TTROs) on safety grounds (FP 1 Higham and FP 6 Brantham).

Footpath 1 Higham (High Bridge)

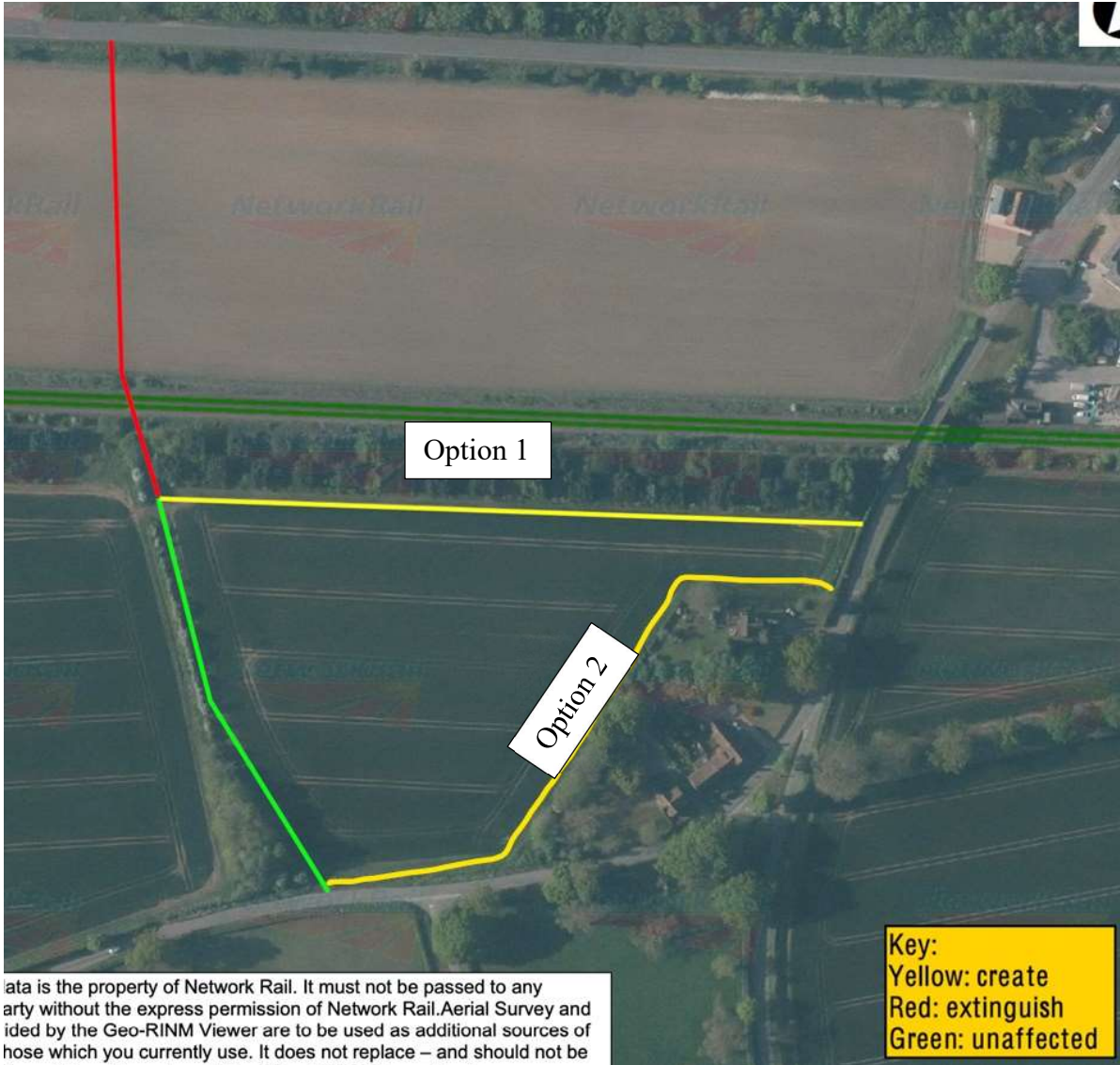
In the case of Higham, the temporary closure was required by NR to repair a set of embankment steps. The closure was meant to expire on 30 April 2021 but NR subsequently confirmed the steps had not been repaired, arguing the crossing did not meet the necessary safety standards for its re-opening. They then requested a further closure extension and approached SCC to discuss a permanent diversion of FP1 Higham (see image below).

In response, the county council considered there was merit in diverting FP1 Higham but requested that NR fund the hardening of the road verge between Higham Road and Coalpit Lane, as originally proposed in the TWAO application. Subject to NR agreeing to this improvement, SCC offered to take negotiations forward with the landowner, war memorial cottage owners, SLAF and users on its preferred route around the back of the cottages (Option 2). This route is shorter than what NR had originally proposed and discussed with the landowner (alongside the southern boundary of the railway corridor – Option 1), and what SCC would expect users to prefer. However, Option 2 has yet to be discussed and agreed with the landowner.

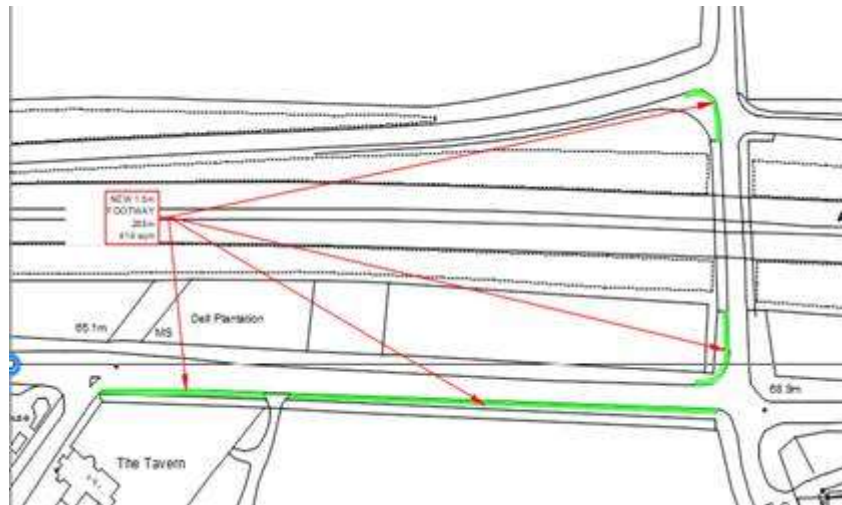
The images below illustrate the diversion alignment options and highway verge improvement works.

Following a catch-up meeting earlier this month, NR have agreed the principle of funding the hardening of the verge, contingent on a confirmed order allowing the level crossing to close.

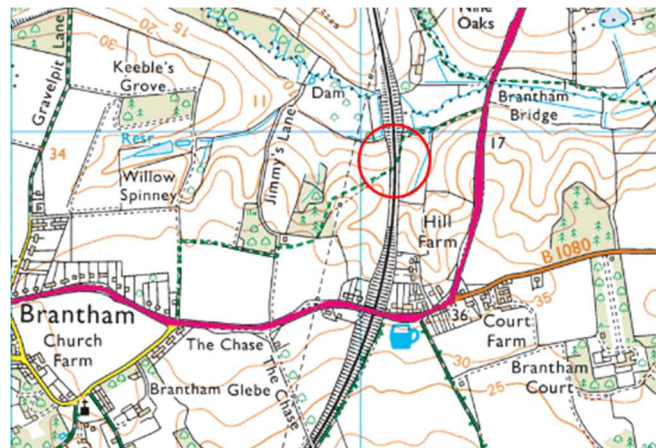
Proposed diversion options



Highway verge improvements



Footpath 6 Brantham (High Bridge)



At Brantham, where the safety grounds cited are insufficient sight lines, the county council recently met with Network Rail again to discuss the options to address the level crossing safety risk. SCC had previously requested NR provide a business case setting out all the options to mitigate the ongoing public safety risk and this was received on 9 June. This pdf document is attached at Appendix A.

With the agreement of NR, on 14 June SCC officers contacted Brantham Parish Council offering to facilitate a meeting with NR to explain the various options and constraints. The parish council have agreed to meet and it is expected that discussion will take place over the next few weeks. NR have also been advised that the Forum will also need to be consulted on their proposed options and any mitigation package and officers will be liaising with NR to ensure that happens.

Due to a lack of order making capacity, SCC has approached the Rights of Way Consultant it has engaged on a separate order making case, to enquire whether she has the capacity to take on the Higham case and potentially the Brantham case too, if, as a result of early engagement with stakeholders, a diversion is considered the most appropriate solution. She has recently confirmed she would be able to progress these cases but would not be in a position to start work on these until the end of August. As part of the order making consultation process, all landowners and stakeholders (including SLAF) would again be contacted for their views.

In both cases, NR have confirmed they would reimburse all of SCC's costs and, like in the case of Gipsy Lane, SCC would be looking to enter into Indemnity Agreements with the railway operator.

Stiles on Network Rail Land

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has published the responses to its recent consultation on guidance on Principles of Level Crossing Safety <https://www.orr.gov.uk/search-consultations/consultation-new-orr-guidance-principles-level-crossing-safety>.

The guidance, [Principles for managing level crossing safety June 2021](https://www.orr.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/principles-for-managing-level-crossing-safety-june-2021.pdf) (<https://www.orr.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/principles-for-managing-level-crossing-safety-june-2021.pdf>), has now been published with an [introduction and videos](https://www.orr.gov.uk/guidance-compliance/rail/health-safety/level-crossings) (<https://www.orr.gov.uk/guidance-compliance/rail/health-safety/level-crossings>) (including one specific to 'footpaths', which is worth watching).

It is noteworthy where the ORR has published the full responses to the consultation, "stiles" are mentioned 40 times in one form or another (often to the effect they are not suitable furniture), but in the summary of responses stiles are mentioned only once, noting "One issue that was raised by multiple consultees was that there was no specific statement in the guidance on the use of stiles and gates at footpath and bridleway crossings, particularly in relation to BS5709", but in the published guidance stiles are not mentioned at all. SCC responded to the consultation and raised the problem of Network Rail's continuing installation of stiles.

END
SK/AW/SCC July 2021

Appendix A

Brantham High Bridge FPS

M Lewis Jan 21

Options

- Reopen the level crossing without technology
- Reopen the level crossing with technology
- Extinguish the public footpath
- Divert the public footpath
- Construct a footbridge at/near the existing level crossing

Option 1: Reopen the level crossing

- Sighting is significantly insufficient
- Will require a speed reduction from 100MPH to 45MPH
- Detrimental effect on Bentley AHB
 - Increased barrier down times
 - Increased time between train striking in and reaching the crossing—conflict with Level Crossing Order
- Adverse impact on journey times, capacity, energy efficiency
- Risk of collision at level crossing remains

Sighting Calculator	
Approach Distance (m)	100
Train Length (m)	100
Train Speed (km/h)	100
Reaction Time (s)	3
Stopping Distance (m)	100
Time to Stop (s)	3
Time to Clear (s)	3
Time to Stop (s)	3
Time to Clear (s)	3
Time to Stop (s)	3
Time to Clear (s)	3

Option 2: Reopen the level crossing with technology

- Integrated Miniature Stop Light required
 - Controlling signaller would need to caution trains if system went into dark mode until reset had been completed or fault found.
- Cost £1.2 Million
- Risk of collision at level crossing remains
- Second trains regularly pass at the level crossing significantly increasing the risk

Option 3: Extinguish the public footpath

- Loss of public amenity
- Alternative route (public road) lacks footway in some places
- Existing route not believed to be widely used
- Provision of footways at NR expense
- Risk of collision at level crossing eliminated

Option 4: Divert the public footpath

- Using existing highways/new footpaths on private land
- Detailed design to assure stability of works close to railway cutting
- Landowners' consent required
- £100k estimate
- Diversion adds less than 250m
- Better connectivity with onward routes to the south and east
- Footways present
- Risk of collision at level crossing eliminated

Option 4b: Divert the public footpath on a different alignment

- Close and divert using existing highways/new footpaths on private land
- Landowners' consent
- Avoid cutting slope
- Better connectivity with onward routes to the south and east
- Footways present

Option 5: Construct a footbridge

- Cost estimate £3.5m (ramps); £2m (steps only)
- Piled foundations (ground conditions)
- Land purchase
- No new hazards introduced
- Risk of collision at level crossing eliminated
- Maintains existing route
- Remainder of network unimproved
- Aesthetic concerns?

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Paper:	LAF2116
Title:	Regional Local Access Forum
Meeting:	29th July 2021
Author/Contact:	Barry Hall
Venue:	Online via TEAMS

Minutes of the Zoom meeting held on 8 July 2021

Present

Mary Sanders (Chair)	Cambridgeshire LAF
Clive Beckett, Louis Upton	Central Beds & Luton Joint LAF
Ray Booty, Katherine Evans	Essex LAF
Liddy Lawrence	Hertfordshire LAF
Ken Hawkins	Norfolk LAF
Barry Hall	Suffolk LAF

Apologies for absence were received from

Martin Sullivan	Norfolk LAF
David Barker	Suffolk LAF
Sue Dobson	Thurrock LAF

1 Welcome and introductions

Mary welcomed all attending and thanked Phil Clark and Natalia Jasinska of Cambridgeshire County Council for setting up a MS Teams meeting for us.

2 Minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2021

The minutes had been circulated previously and were approved as correct.

3 Matters arising from the minutes

- 6 2026 cut off: It was noted that The Ramblers were continuing to develop their work on the *Don't Lose Your Way* project. An online map had been produced, but was as yet open only to members and related volunteers - <https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/>.

4 LAF issues

- 4.1 Hertfordshire LAF - report [appended](#). Liddy added that meetings had been online, with good attendance. She emphasised the problems with the state of their PRoW, mainly widening because of muddiness, and also issues with car parking and litter. The County had allocated £1m extra to be spent by March 2022 to address the problems, employing new staff. Health walks had been very badly affected.

- 4.2 Norfolk LAF - report [appended](#). Ken added to the report that Norfolk was experiencing very similar problems on its PRoW. Through its PRoW subgroup, it was planned to hold informal discussions with relevant County Council staff to explore ways to tackle the issues behind the divergence of views (between Council policy and user views) on the effectiveness of response to reports of problems. He also added that the County was recruiting additional staff to the Rights of Way and DMMO teams.
- 4.3 Essex LAF - report [appended](#). Katherine reported similar path issues, and added that staff were also dealing with a Ramblers' campaign to report issues. She drew particular attention to the map showing temporary path closures. She also noted that England Coast Path work seemed to have come to a halt: it was clarified that the target to have the Path completed this year had been replaced by a Natural England target to complete all initial reports this year. Essex were experiencing a lot of applications for large solar farms.
- 4.4 Central Beds and Luton Joint LAF - report [appended](#). Clive confirmed that they too had the same path problems that others were reporting, but had extra posts on their DMMO team. The PRoW team was being restructured and was not currently fully effective. He said the LAF may move back to in person meetings.
- 4.5 Suffolk LAF - report [appended](#). Barry noted that Suffolk County Council and SLAF continued to spend a lot of time on Sizewell, wind farms and a large solar farm. He also noted issues with stiles placed by Network Rail. Katherine said that Essex had had this problem, but Network Rail had insisted that their stiles met relevant standard. SLAF had written to Natural England to express concern at the reduction of support to LAFs - the letter and the email response from Andrew Macintosh had been circulated. It was agreed that Mary would contact Mr Macintosh to emphasise those concerns on behalf of all present, and invite him to attend a future meeting of this forum. It was also noted that the reply contained an offer to investigate renewed provision of a venue for our meetings (and we also had the Highways England offer).
- 4.6 Cambridgeshire LAF - report [appended](#). Mary noted that the new Mayor was not keen on Park & Ride, and was promoting public transport instead. Arguments continued between cyclists and horse riders on surfaces, and they were exploring appropriate surfaces. She had been trying, with Phil Clark's help, to make contact with Peterborough LAF, which had had no meetings since their Chair died.
- 4.7 Thurrock LAF - Sue Dobson had reported that no meetings had taken place since the last one prior to lockdown in February 2020. She had been keeping abreast of large projects (mainly the Lower Thames Crossing which has in itself stalled because of further investigative work) but had nothing further to report.
- 4.8 Borough of Bedford LAF - nothing to report (email received after the meeting).

5 **England Coast Path**

Giles Merritt had sent the following update. COVID has caused some delay in progress. Site visits by the Planning Inspectorate following publication of stretch reports were suspended for some time due to the pandemic. Site visits are underway again with visits for PINs on the Stour Estuary (Harwich to Shotley Gate stretch) last week and we expect to do the ones for Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge in August. We are however short staffed and progress on Weybourne to Hunstanton is slow - its Habitats Regulations Assessment won't be started till this autumn. For an up to date picture on the progress of each stretch, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-in-the-east-of-england> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-in-essex>.

6 **Environmental Land Management Scheme**

Giles Merritt had reported as follows. Details on the ELMs scheme are yet to emerge. I understand that educational access is likely to be included. I don't know yet about more general access (permissive paths).

The comment was made that reference to public access seemed very limited, and there was concern that it was getting sidelined.

7 Highways and NMU routes

- 7.1 An update from Highways England had been requested, but no reply received.
- 7.2 Katherine noted that in the A12 Essex consultation, many suggested routes were only for walkers and cyclists, not horse riders. Mary reported that, after a mistake meant that a bridge was not designed to allow horse riders to use it, mounting blocks had been had been erected to enable horses to be led across.
- 7.3 An email from Tees Valley LAF was discussed, noting that Highways England was planning to demolish or infill large numbers of railway bridges, including some which could potentially affect the future establishment of walking and cycling routes. More information is given in the attached extracts from *Heritage Railway*, issues 280 (May-June) and 282 (July-August).

8 Next meeting

Phil Clark had indicated that the Council's Teams software could be used for future Regional LAFs meetings. On this assumption, it was agreed to fix the next meeting for 1000 on 13 January 2022 [now confirmed], with the possibility of a face to face meeting in July.

Borough of Bedford LAF report

Nothing to report

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Central Beds and Luton Joint LAF report

- 1 East West Rail - Consultation on highway closures/re-routings. At April meeting we considered the impact of all proposals both on designated rights of way and permissive paths. Those comments have been fed back as part of CBC's response.
- 2 ROW Resourcing - LAF has for some time expressed concern regarding the backlog in processing Modification Applications and the likely impact of the 2026 deadline and problems with strategic management of ROW area team as a result of no active Team Leader. Some success with CBC as additional resource provided for Definitive Map function and working with Assistant Director, Highways for improved management of ROW Team on ground. Problems with Luton Borough as officer covering ROW issues has left and they are reorganising.
- 3 Work of the Forums - the work of the forum includes all access including open space and water access. Virtually all matters reported at regional meetings cover just ROW issues. Are wider access issues considered?
- 4 Green Wheels - The Green Wheel initiative is a long term vision to connect people with the environment and encourage healthy lifestyles for all by linking publicly accessible routes and green spaces around the constituent communities to create an 'outer rim' forming a complete circuit around towns. This is complemented by a series of 'spokes' (linear paths and corridors) leading from the town centre to this 'outer rim' (and beyond into the wider surrounding countryside). 5 Green Wheels have been established with varying degrees of access.

5 Membership - 3 new members including Masuma Ali from the Site Loss Council - still lacking farmer representation although Oliver Rubinstein from the NFU sometimes attends

6 COVID 19 - we had a presentation from Oliver Rubinstein, NFU on the impact of Covid from a farmers perspective - main issues:

- Increased access resulting in more rural crime (theft, arson, hare coursing, dog attacks on livestock)
- a minority of people walking through crops, BBQs being held in fields with damage to crops and nature reserves, couples engaging in romantic pursuits, verge parking (which causes issues with getting large machinery down roads and access to fields) and gates being left open leading to egress of livestock.
- one of the positives of Covid is that so many more people have become interested in the countryside, walking and farming creating a lot more opportunity for the NFU to promote the Countryside and engage with a wider audience.
- dog control an issue and NFU designed various signs to assist walkers. Promoting the Country Code. 15,000 - 20,000 sheep are killed each year down to dog attacks.
- flooding has been a problem on footpaths as this was one of the wettest winters on record.

7 M1-A6 Road Link - Ongoing issues and meeting with the Side Roads Order Team to progress through to publication of the orders.

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Cambridgeshire LAF report

We are still holding our meetings virtually and find that Councillor attendance is greatly improved when no travel is involved.

We are starting to make approaches to Peterborough LAF, which has still not been meeting. We invite them to all our meetings, but there has not been any attendance as yet. Our facilitator in the CC is making an approach to his equivalent in Peterborough to see if they can make a joint bid for money. Both areas are concerned with the dualling of the A47 (Cambs with the Guyhirn end and P'boro with the protection of Nene Country Park and the Clare country north and west of Peterborough.

We are sadly missing our Vice Chair, who helped so much with consultations, but we have appointed a new Vice Chair in his absence.

We have a newly appointed Labour Mayor for the Cambridge and Peterborough Joint Authority, Nic Johnson, who has already scrapped the idea of a Metro, stopped the building of any more large P&Rs, and has scrapped the idea of express busways – all in favour of improving the existing bus services.

We have been concerned with Highways' responsibility to return the old stretches of A14 to the CC and the access to NMU routes along it. We were particularly concerned with bridleways being hard-topped to make them more suitable as cycleways.

We share some developments with other counties in the region – Solar farms with Suffolk, the A428 and Wintringham with Bedfordshire, and the A47 with Norfolk.

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Essex LAF report

1 ACCESS FOR ALL - Photo Trails

Our 10 August ELAF meeting will be an external on-site tutorial meeting on how to do a "photo trail" led by Rowena, an ELAF member who is also a wheelchair user. Rowena and colleagues have developed photo trails in association with the Colchester Orbital route, etc. The aim is to provide all users with a photographic description of a route so that all users can assess for themselves how accessible a route is.

2 TEMPORARY CLOSURE ORDERS - new map based display

Shirley Anglin, who manages the secretariat support for ELAF and who is also the Essex Highways PROW & Localism Officer, has developed a map based display of temporary closure Orders.

<https://www.essexhighways.org/temporary-closures-or-diversions>

The map does take a while to load and you need to zoom in to see the closures in relation to the PROW network. Older still ongoing closures e.g. Network Rail 2 year "temporary" closures, still have to be added to the system but ELAF congratulate Shirley on working away at this issue and arriving at a useful, user friendly solution. The task now is to encourage PROW users to consult the map and for Essex Highways to provide the long term manpower resource to update the map as new temporary closure Orders are made.

3 ENGLAND COAST PATH - Essex Sections

Only one stretch of the Coast Path in Essex, the Maldon - Salcott stretch, is "open" but establishment works still need to be completed on the Tollesbury - Salcott section. The other Essex stretches have been sub-divided into smaller chapters so that un-contested chapters, generally those extensively based on existing PROWS, can be progressed. This is not a very effective use of Essex Highways PROW time and resources, including volunteer resources. It is unknown where funding will come from for establishment works after this month (June 2021) when the existing European funding ends. **Any information on future funding will be welcome.**

4 CONSULTATIONS, AGRICULTURE & LAND USE - including solar farms

- a) Agriculture Bill, ELMS & Public Access: I am not quite sure where we are with the Agriculture Bill (passed into law in November 2020) and the Environmental Land Management (ELMS) scheme. The latest "quarterly evidence report" on pilot schemes was published by DEFRA in October 2020. I am concerned that the public access element of the agriculture bill will be marginalised / lost. **Information & updates welcome.**
- b) ECC Minerals Local Plan refresh: ELAF responded to the consultation in April.
- c) Solar Farms: There seems to be an uptick in Solar Farm planning applications. **Is this just Essex or also elsewhere?** The large 400 Ha Longfield Solar Farm proposal is a "*Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project ("NSIP") under the Planning Act 2008*" with a statutory consultation period from 1 June - 13 July.

5 INFRASTRUCTURE: roads & railway crossings

Essex are still awaiting the result of the inquiry into the Network Rail Transport & Works Act Order for the closure of 56 mainly PROW at-grade crossings. We hope that the results will also be that many of the proposed closures are refused as has been the case for the Cambridgeshire and Suffolk inquiries.

The 8 week statutory consultation on the A12 widening & junction improvement scheme started on 22 June and ends on 16 August. The scheme is between Boreham (J19) and Marks Tey (J25). ELAF have been informed and will be responding regarding WCH provision. Highways England intend to apply for the DCO (development consent order) in Spring / Summer 2022. **Any advice / points to be made / opportunities to look for is welcome.**

ELAF have also been informed of another public consultation, from 14 July to Wednesday 8 September, on the proposed new Lower Thames Crossing & associated new roads. This scheme mostly affects Kent & Thurrock Unitary Authority. Only a small part of the northern new road section, where it connects with the M25, is in Essex County Council.

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Hertfordshire LAF report

- huge increase in visits to Herts countryside, particularly close to urban areas, resulting in parking issues, paths becoming muddy and spreading, litter and dog management problems
- PTRO review delayed for a further 6 months
- railway structures reviewed and no issues identified
- additional 'post-covid recovery' funding awarded by HCC to support repairs/improvements to ROW system
- good attendance at LAF meetings despite being on zoom (hopefully resuming meetings in person in September)

- admin support for LAF still presenting problems

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Norfolk LAF report

Current issues and actions are

- NLAF continues to operate a PRoW subgroup which involves representatives of CPRE, OSS, RA and U3A. We also continue to have a close liaison with Broads LAF which assists in dealing with overlapping issues.
- To support the follow up on the four priority issues raised by attendees at our Parish Paths Seminars, NLAF and NCC staff (and the Walking & Cycling Champion County Councillor) acted as the panel for a webinar organised by the Norfolk ALC, which attracted attendance around 100; Norfolk ALC plans to set up and maintain a network of what have been called Footpath Wardens, though we are establishing a new and more inclusive title.
- Continuing concern has been expressed about the backlog of reported problems, and about NCC's enforcement regime; an informal meeting is being set up to discuss these issues. We are also investigating the concerns of a member of the public submitting applications for DMMOs, who feels that NCC is not meeting its legal obligations in processing them.
- The draft paper, circulated in January, on the value (financial, tourist, health) of our rights of way network was adopted by NLAF, and we are now discussing with NCC how to take it forward within the Council.
- We continue to monitor proposed road developments.
- We still await further progress with the last 2 sections of the England Coast Path within the county: both are with the Secretary of State.
- Steps are being taken to try to make parish map boards available once again.

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Suffolk LAF report

Since the last Regional LAF there have been two SLAF meetings by Teams. Focus at both have been on ongoing issues.

- Sizewell C – the Public Inquiry is continuing, but with EDF issuing additional consultation documents with changes to their original proposals an end date is uncertain. SCC has put forward legacy proposals for a Section 106 agreement including a cycle route from Aldeburgh to Southwold.
- Scottish Power – the Public Inquiry is still ongoing regarding the Friston substation and associated infrastructure. Issues raised have included challenges to the Environmental Assessment and impact on PROWs.
- Sunnica Solar Energy Scheme – following the public consultation things have gone quiet although some discussion has taken place with SCC.
- Trunk Roads and PROW severance – Discussions have taken place between SCC Highways and Highways England about two sections of A14 in Suffolk and a group is looking at the A14/A12 interchange at Copdock regarding possible highway and pedestrian access improvements.
- England Coast Path in Suffolk – SLAF has welcomed the and supported the publication of all the sections of the Coast Path in Suffolk. Some reports in the sections have attracted objections which need to be resolved by NE or taken to an Inquiry. Those reports with no objections to the path can begin to be established and SCC will need to apply to NE for grant funding.
- Network Rail – Following the Secretary of State's ruling SCC is working with NR to close those given the go ahead to be closed. Issues still remain over some of those remaining open.

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MPs demand Highways England rethink over disposal of heritage structures

By Robin Jones

BACKBENCH MPs have thrown their weight behind heritage campaigners who are battling to stop Highways England (HE) from demolishing hundreds of disused railway structures.

Following the abolition of BRB (Residuary) Ltd in 2013, the Highways Agency was handed responsibility for managing the Department for Transport's (DfT) Historical Railways Estate (HRE), a collection of around 3800 structures, many of which were made redundant by the Beeching Axe.

However, in a strategic report from 2016, HE indicated its preference to "significantly reduce the level of liability and risk to the HE and DfT" through demolition and infilling. To fund this task, the HRE budget is being quadrupled to a typical annual figure of £41 million.

Pressure

Campaign organisation The HRE Group has been formed to oppose HE plans to eradicate structures which are either of historic value or could be given a new lease of life at some point.

The group claims that a third of the bridges earmarked for infilling are already proposed for reuse as part of reopened railways, heritage line extensions or footpaths and cycleways, or could be reused in the future.

Now the House of Commons Transport Select Committee has written to HE and Roads Minister Charlotte Vere urging it to reconsider.

Committee chairman Huw Merriman MP wrote: "We urge HE and the DfT not to view the estate

primarily as a risk to be minimised, but rather as assets to be preserved, repurposed for public benefit and enjoyed.

"Under its 2015 Protocol Agreement with the DfT, HE's role is to reduce the liabilities on the Secretary of State from individual structures within the estate. The estate is not only part of our national heritage, but includes many strategic assets with demonstrable public value.

"We would like to see the Protocol Agreement amended to reflect the cultural and strategic value of these historic structures.

"We are concerned to hear about HE's plans to infill or demolish parts of the estate. We have been informed that 130 bridges and tunnels will be demolished or infilled over the next five years.

"In addition, we understand that up to 15% of the estate (around 480 structures) is at risk of being demolished between now and 2029/30. Many of these historic structures already have an identified use and many more have clear potential to be used in future.

"Historic bridges, viaducts and tunnels, for example, help to facilitate walking and cycling routes throughout the country.

"Plans to demolish and infill these structures not only block existing, and potential, walking and cycling routes, but also prevent the structures being used to reopen historic railway lines.

"Around one third of these 130 structures, for many reasons, have no realistic prospect of offering any public value.

"In such cases, it is reasonable to

demolish or infill these structures, but, in principle, effort should be made to preserve the estate and encourage local communities to make use of these assets."

Action welcomed

HRE Group member Graeme Bickerdike welcomed the committee's action, claiming that in many locations, proposals for new active travel routes are now in doubt because HE is seeking infilling and demolition without engineering justification.

"It is unsustainable for the Government to allow vandalism of this kind if it expects us to take seriously its stated commitment to driving an active travel revolution," he said.

As highlighted in issue 277, HE has appointed outside contractor NPX to manage the HRE. NPX, a joint venture between Network Plus and Xeiad, was awarded a 10-year framework for the HRE Examination contract and began work in April.

Elsewhere, Herefordshire Council has just refused HE planning permission for the infilling of two disused railway bridges spanning the proposed route of a greenway, extending for 20 miles between Hereford and Hay-on-Wye.

It had been claimed that urgent action was needed 'to prevent an emergency arising' despite both bridges showing no signs of being overloaded.

However, council officers said that the infillings were incompatible with the local authority's adopted policies on heritage, ecology and sustainable transport.

Bridge infill 'could prevent Eden Valley Railway-Stainmore link'

By Robin Jones

A COUNCIL has questioned moves by Highways England to infill a road bridge over a disused trackbed that could one day be used to connect the Eden Valley Railway in Cumbria to the Stainmore Railway at Kirkby Stephen East.

Eden Valley District Council in Cumbria said Highways England had refused its request to stop the works on the bridge at Great Musgrave, near Warcop.

The council acknowledged that Highways England has permitted development rights to undertake work on the bridge without the need for planning permission to be granted beforehand.

However, the council's planning service has opened a dialogue with the company "to understand the full extent, nature and reasoning for the proposed works at Great Musgrave, to ascertain whether the works do fall within permitted development rights."

"This is an ongoing matter and discussions have not yet concluded," read a council statement. "Once sufficient information has been provided by Highways England, the planning service will be able to judge whether these works do constitute a permitted development, or if they require the prior granting of planning permission."

Following the abolition of BRB (Residuary) Ltd in 2013, the Highways Agency was handed responsibility for managing the Department for Transport's Historical Railways Estate

(HRE) collection of around 3800 bridges, tunnels and viaducts that are no longer part of the operational network.

HRE response

David Wheatley, Highways England's head of scheme delivery for the HRE, said: "As part of our stewardship of the HRE, we determined the Musgrave Lane bridge – which carries the B6259 over the old railway line – needed strengthening to safeguard the road's

absolutely vital role in connecting local communities like Warcop and Great Musgrave. We have complied with any planning requirements and have consulted widely – including with Eden Valley District Council, Sustrans and the Eden Valley Railway Company – on our plans to strengthen the bridge with an infilling scheme, which we aim to complete this financial year."

The HRE Group was recently formed to oppose Highways England plans to demolish or infill structures of historic value or which could be reused as key components of reopened railways, footpaths and cycleways.

The group claimed that according to Highways England's own inspection reports, the bridge is in 'fair' condition, shows no signs of being overloaded and has no significant defects. While

Highways England has said that the infilling is reversible, the group claims such a blockage would be too difficult and costly to remove. It also disputed Highways England's statement that it has consulted with the EVR, which, along with the Stainmore Railway, has the ultimate aspiration to create an 11-mile railway between their two existing bases.

Also on the Highways Agency's list for infilling is Mill Lane bridge on the former Colne Valley & Halstead

Railway trackbed between Castle Hedingham and Halstead, which could block a future extension of the heritage era Colne Valley Railway to the latter town.

HRE director Richard Marshall

said: "Our most recent assessment of the Mill Lane bridge showed that it was in poor condition and unsafe for vehicles over three tonnes. Work to strengthen the cast iron beam structure and bring it up to the eight tonnes limit, which is indicated on nearby road signs, would be very difficult and expensive to carry out.

"Work on the bridge will require planning permission. If our planning application is approved and subject to there being no local plans to reuse the bridge, we would look to infill the structure during financial year 2023/24. Infilling will preserve

the structure and can be reversed should plans be developed to put the structure back into use."

Paul Lemon, chairman of Colne Valley Railway Preservation Limited, said: "The sensible thing would be to put in a level crossing. But even if the Halstead extension doesn't happen, it's a perfect route for a footpath or cycleway. Our proposal is for a cyclepath alongside the track – it is wide enough."

The railway's initial focus for any extension would, however, be in the opposite direction, northwards to Great Yeldham, if the A1017 road could again be bridged.

Elsewhere, Mr Marshall said that Highways England has "no plans" to infill a 162-year-old bridge near Saltash designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel unless it is absolutely necessary.

The bridge has not been used by trains since 1907; a deviation line was built the following year to eliminate the wooden viaducts on a bypassed original section of the Cornwall Railway main line as engineered by Brunel. Since the line was moved, the bridge has been used solely as private access to a farm. Mr Marshall said that it was planned to assess the bridge's capacity to ensure it is safe to be used by heavy vehicles before deciding on any next steps.

Cornwall Railway Society John Ball secretary said the bridge might benefit from minor repairs, but demolishing or infilling it would "amount to cultural vandalism."

"The bridge might benefit from a few minor repairs, but demolishing or infilling the Brunel bridge would amount to cultural vandalism."

END
BH/SLAF July 2021

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Paper:	LAF2117
Title:	Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2020/21
Meeting:	29th July 2021
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	online via TEAMS

The Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report will be presented to Cabinet later this year. The report will cover the period August 2020-July 2021 and so it will be drafted following this meeting. There will not be another meeting before the report is presented to Cabinet, but the draft will be sent to all members for comments.

The key items in the report are as follows:

- Sizewell C Stage 4 Consultation
 - This summarises the activities of SLAF in responding to the latest consultation the forums comments related to the England Coast Path, issues relating to inland bridleway links and diversions, and the need for a legacy for countryside access for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- Sunnica Solar Farm
 - The report will highlight the forum's objection to the Sunnica Solar Farm consultation, communication with the MP, impact on the public rights of way network, and the need for the creation of new and improved access in the area if the development goes ahead.
- Friston Substation
 - The report highlights the forums concerns over the impact the substation will have on 26 public rights of way and its impact on quality of the user experience.
- Network Rail
 - The report will cover SLAF's concern over delays implementing the Transport and Works Act, delays over works required at Gypsy Lane, and the design and installation of new metal stiles on rights of way rail crossings.
- Trunk Roads
 - Highlighted in the report are engagement with Highways England over proposed developments at Copdock A12/A14, network severance along sections of the A14, and improved access at the Wherstead-Bourne Hill junction A14/A137.
- The Planning Process and Consultations
 - The report will highlight consultations received by SLAF and engagement with large scale developments including the Garden Village consultations at Mildenhall and Lowestoft.
- England Coast Path

- The report highlights that the proposed England Coast Path will extend along Suffolk's main estuaries to ensure continuity of trail along the coastline, but also mentions SLAFs concern over the long term maintenance of the trail.
- Open Access Restrictions
 - The report mentions SLAF's response to a Direction from Natural England regarding an Open Access site in Euston.
- Promoting Countryside Access
 - The report refers to the new Discovering Suffolk project and also the 2021 Virtual Suffolk Walking Festival.
- Regional Local Access Forum
 - The report highlights SLAF's concerns over the declining level of support provided to LAFs from Natural England.
- Norfolk Local Access Forum
 - The report covers a suggestion by the Norfolk LAF to alter SLAF's constitution to allow automatic non-voting membership between the Broads, Norfolk and Suffolk LAFs.
- SLAF Recruitment
 - This details the change of County Councillor on the forum.
- Working Groups
 - A current list is included.

Neither the October, January nor April meetings made reference to the Environmental Land Management Scheme, which was highlighted in the previous annual report.

The Cabinet paper needs to highlight 3 or 4 key issues and it is suggested those issues are:

1. Sizewell C
2. Sunnica Sola Farm
3. Network Rail
4. Investment in Public Rights of Way

SLAF are asked:

- Do the key items bulleted above accurately reflect the work of SLAF between August 2020 and July 2021?
- Are members in agreement with the key issues numbered above?
- What do members regard as the main topics looking forward?

END
DF/SCC July 2021

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Paper:	LAF2118
Title:	SLAF Membership
Meeting:	29th July 2021
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	online via TEAMS

A table of all members, date they joined the Suffolk Local Access Forum and their renewal date is below. The table is sorted by renewal date, earliest first.

SLAF Member	Joined	Renewal
David Barker (DB)	Jul-03	Jul-21
Monica Pipe (MP)	Jul-03	Jul-21
John Wayman (JW)	Jul-03	Jul-21
Anthony Wright (AWR)	Jul-03	Jul-21
Derek Blake (DBL)	Sep-18	Sep-21
Suzanne Bartlett (SB)	Sep-18	Sep-21
Susan Mobbs (SM)	Sep-18	Sep-21
Clare Phillips (CP)	Sep-18	Sep-21
Margaret Hancock (MH)	Apr-10	Apr-22
Gordon Merfield (GM)	Sep-04	Sep-22
Barry Hall (BH)	Oct-07	Sep-22
Jane Hatton (JH)	Oct-13	Oct-22
Roland Wilson (RW)	Oct-13	Oct-22
James Mallinder, Cllr (JM)	Sep-19	n/a
Paul West, Cllr (PW)	Jun-21	n/a

Councillor Mallinder and Councillor West are appointed to the forum to represent the districts and county respectively.

Gov.uk guidance states for local authorities:

You should make sure there's a reasonable balance of interests in the LAF to represent a range of views from the local community. Members should include:

- users of local rights of way or open access land (e.g. walkers, horse riders and cyclists)
- owners or occupiers of land which has a public right of access
- representatives of issues relevant to the area, such as tourism, nature and heritage conservation, coastal issues, health, public transport or community safety

The main interests represented by members of the Suffolk Local Access Forum are as follows:

Main interest	Member
Walking	BH, GM, RW, DBL, SM, SB
Cycling	MH, AWR, SM
Equestrian	JH, CP
Landowner	DB, MP, JW
Conservation	DB
Tourism	MH, JH, DBL
Sport	GM
Accessibility	CP

LAFs can have between 10 and 22 members. SLAF has 15 members which allows for effective communication and engaging meetings.

A consideration at this meeting is whether any member at the end, or approaching the end, of their current term wishes to step down, and whether recruitment should be considered to further broaden the range of interests represented by the current membership.

END
DF/SCC July 2021