

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	27th October 2022, 2-4 pm
Author/Contact:	Anna McGowan
Venue:	Seminar Room B, The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LR

		Paper Number
1.	14:00 Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	14.05 Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 22/22 - BH
3.	14.10 Declaration of interest	
4.	14.15 Network Rail – Public Rights of Way & Level Crossings Byway 38/Restricted Byway 38A Ipswich	LAF 22/23 - SK LAF 22/24 - SK
5.	15.20 England Coast Path	LAF 22/25 – AW
6.	15.25 Energy Schemes	LAF 22/26 – AW
7.	15.30 SLAF Planning Response	LAF 22/27 - DF
8.	15.35 Cabinet /Annual Report	LAF 22/28 - DF
9.	15.40 Public Question Time	
10.	15.45 Any Other Business	Verbal - AW
11.	15.50 Dates of future Meetings	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of Meeting
Paper:	LAF 22/22
Meeting Date:	28th July 2022, 2-4pm
Author/Contact:	Anna McGowan
Venue:	The Lounge, Pinewood Community Hall, Laburnum Close, Pinewood, Ipswich IP8 3SL

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), David Barker (DB) (Vice Chair), Margaret Hancock (MH), Susan Mobbs (SM), Suzanne Bartlett (SB), Clare Phillips (CP); Gordon Merfield (GM); John Wayman (JW); Roland Wilson (RW)

SCC Officers Present: Anna McGowan (AM) (Minutes), Andrew Woodin (AW), Steve Kerr (SK), David Falk (DF); Tim de Keyser (TDK)

Speakers: Chris Ward (CW) and Rosalynn Claxton (RC) from Ipswich Borough Council

Apologies: Jane Hatton (JH); Anthony Wright (AWr); Monica Pipe (MP); Cllr James Mallinder (JM); Cllr Joanna Spicer (JP)

This meeting was preceded by a morning site visit to Belstead Meadows and Belstead Bridleway 47 underpass of the A14 to look at the National Highways proposals for the Copdock Interchange.

At this meeting BH welcomed CW and RC.

BH asked all members for their views on how future SLAF Meetings should be held, online or at a venue. The majority of members considered meetings should be held in person where possible. This was also the view of the chairman.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2022 LAF 22/13, were reviewed and agreed, with the following updates:-

9.1 SCC has received 126 formal applications on its backlog.

- 79 completed f/apps not started.
- 47 f/apps not completed - schedule 9 not received (confirmation that a notice has been served on the affected landowner(s)). SCC is under no duty to determine the application until notice served on L/Os.

- Currently working on 10 applications (various stages of progress), several of which are directions from the SoS.
- MH pointed to a mistake of in use of the word 'appeal' which should be 'repeal at bottom of page 5. Amended sentence to read as follows:
The extra resources were needed irrespective of the repeal as 2026 prompted claims to be put in.

3. Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. IBC Planning Presentation

CW gave a presentation on the IBC Local Plan, published in 2020 and confirmed in February 2022. CW said there were plans for an additional 400 homes on unallocated sites, under the Development Management Policies documents 6,8,9,10,11,12,13.

The Local Plan includes a policy to improve local access under CS16 Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation.

CW gave an overview of the Ipswich Green Trail which will provide an ecological corridor to support biodiversity in the Ipswich Area which gives access to green spaces using existing PRoW, cycling routes and quiet roads. The green corridor routes will radiate out of Ipswich into the East Suffolk and the Babergh District. This requires cross working with each respective District Council.

RC gave a presentation on the Ipswich Garden Suburb (IGS), how it is included in the Masterplan and part of the Ipswich Green Trail, and the work involved with Natural England. The premise is to internalise trips. There will be a network of cycling routes in this suburb which has one of the largest housing allocations in Suffolk, for 3.5k homes, and will include a 30-hectare country park for which IBC has been awarded £10m. The country park will include a visitor centre, large play area and woodland and will be owned IBC.

DB welcomed IBC's positive and proactive approach.

BH asked about the timescale of IGS. RC said the timescale is 10-20 years for this. The country park is proposed over the next 5-6 years but could be as early as next year.

BH asked about the railway bridge timeframe. RC said it would be April 2023.

GM asked if the cyclepaths would be linked to schools, citing the good example cycling to school in Kesgrave. RC said a series of cycling routes have been factored in.

MH queried the gradient of the cycle bridge at Westerfield train station.

RC said that the gradient of the Pedestrian and Cycle bridge ramps are 1:22.

MH noted 'rat running' concerns. RC said that rat runs are being addressed at the outline planning permission stage. RC will send out a link to bridge designs.

AW said he was surprised at the amount of severance involved in the proposals.

SK said there would be a temporary closure for six months starting at the beginning of January next year at the Fonnereau railway crossing, and that the timing of the adoption of the bridge was a bone of contention between NR and SCC.

DF asked how the Ipswich Green Trail is dealt with outside of the scope of IBC ie. at Wolsey Grange. RC there are formal discussions between IBC and Babergh District Council. DF said it would be good to get IBC view on a bridge over the river gipping linking Wolsey Grange to the Gipping Valley path and employment areas north of the river.

BH thanked CW and RC for their presentation.

Action: AM to circulate the presentation slides to ALL.

Action: AM circulate visualisations of the cycle and road bridges

5. Network Rail – Public Rights of Way and Level Crossings

SK present paper LAF22/14 and gave updates on the NR projects.

Needham Market Gipsy Lane and FP6 Needham Market

SK said there were no showstoppers on this. There is a slow process on getting the legal agreements signed.

Due to NR's public body status, SCC had agreed to waive the standard bond that forms part of a s278 agreement. There is to be a Memorandum of Understanding in place to recover any costs incurred by SCC.

TWAO General/Countywide

All land ownership consents are secured. Taziker have started the topographical and ecological surveys. The construction consents may take until November 2023.

Footpath 1 Higham (High Bridge)

SCC would like to proceed with the proposed diversion.

BH to provide a response to Rosalinde Emrys-Roberts, Routewise Consulting in support of the proposal.

Action: BH to respond to Rosalinde Emrys-Roberts.

Footpath 6 Brantham (High Bridge)

There are no further updates.

Byway Open to All Traffic 38/ Restricted Byway 38A Ipswich (New Cut West, Ipswich)

SK gave an update on LAF 22/15.

The lighting connection works were costed at approximately £11k which will be undertaken by SCC's contractor and which the Environment Agency will fund. The lighting columns were installed four years ago when the flood barrier was built. Discussions will be held with the Environment Agency regarding timescales for the works. These are likely to take up to six weeks.

The England Coast Path

AW gave an update on LAF 22/16. The Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry stretch is all approved and the new Coast Path Officer is scoping it.

AW sought the views of the members on creating a regional path, for which discussions between Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex have restarted.

BH noted that both Suffolk and Essex County councils covered the AONB and the River Stour on each respective side.

MH noted that religious settlements are a feature in East Anglia.

RW supported the regional path from a walker's perspective and noted that the benefit of volunteers' input. RW is coordinating the Ramblers group interest in the regional path with Norfolk and Essex Ramblers.

CP said it made sense to join up together.

Members were supportive and positive about this approach. It was generally agreed by members that a regional path made sense, especially economically.

6. Suffolk Energy Schemes

AW gave updates on the paper LAF 22/17.

Sizewell C

This has recently been consented. There may be a judicial review where objectors can make their further views heard.

BH said there is a need to look at the timetable for issues ie. Bridleway 19 and mitigation.

It was agreed that an overview on SZC would be useful so that the forum can decide which issues are important.

Sunnica

Meetings have been held over the last month, and the Statement of Common Ground is being drafted by SCC. The deadline for this is the end of August. There are two PRow affected. SCC is aiming to get legacy improvements to mitigate the impact on green access.

EA1 & 2

AW gave an update on LAF22/17.

General

Suffolk has 10% of all the NSIPs in the country. More projects will be coming through over the next 3-5 years for which there will be further opportunities.

BH noted the visual impact of the pylons.

DB noted the impact on the landscape, which will include agricultural implications on arable land. DB said that the NFU met Jo Churchill, MP, who undertook a site visit which highlighted the effects, and said in Parliament that the impact will be considerable.

The schemes are being pushed through outside of Parliament. DB commented on the corridor of land around the pylons that will be sterilized for two years, including PRow.

DB noted that Cllr Rout is on board.

TDK noted the enormous input of SCC teams considering these NSIPS, and that resourcing is under discussion.

AW suggested that SCC gives the forum an overview to clarify schemes, pipeline, and resources. TDK agreed on this.

Action: SCC to provide an overview of SZC and further energy schemes at the October Meeting.

JW left at 4.02pm

7. National Highways Copdock Interchange

This was covered by the morning site visit led by DF for LAF22/18.

BH said the site visit was very helpful.

The maps will be shared when National Highways send in more information.

8. Reply from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

There are no further updates on LAF22/19

9. Open Access Review of Directions

The forum supported the directions presented by Natural England for current restrictions on Open Access for dogs to be kept on leads during August at the OA sites being consulted on in East Suffolk, to be continue until the next review.

Action: DF to write to Natural England.

10. SLAF Annual Report

DF listed the topics to be drafted in to the report that will be brought to the Cabinet's meeting in October.

This report will also include the budget increase, Discovering Suffolk project, and the Suffolk Walking Festival.

SM commented Discovering Suffolk was a good project.

SM left the meeting at 4.15pm.

11. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

12. Any Other Business

The RLAF was discussed, and the common ground with Cambridgeshire was noted. SK noted that SCC can assist with details of ownership.

MH said that the ESL South chair, Aaron Taffera, has retired. The new Chair will be elected soon.

GM asked if SCC was responsible for common land and AW responded the council has a commons register contact on its website. [Post meeting update see [here](#)]

Action: AM to send GM link for Commons and Village Greens

13. Date & Venue of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 27th October. This may include a morning session and cover Sizewell C and Energy Schemes.

The venue is to be confirmed.

The meeting finished at 4.20pm

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings
Paper:	LAF 22/23
Meeting:	27th October 2022, 2-4pm
Author/Contact:	Steve Kerr / Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Seminar Room B, The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LR

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 in July, NR and the affected landowner have completed their negotiations and officers expect the legal agreements to be signed imminently.

The only outstanding element within the s278 agreement are the Road Safety Audits (RSA) that SCC has requested be undertaken. This was discussed at the Programme Board meeting held on 4 October and NR will be liaising with their contractor, Taziker, to ensure this is progressed as soon as possible. At the meeting NR also advised that the appropriate licence had now been secured from the Eastern Internal Drainage Board for the proposed works to the culvert and the installation of the gabion baskets. NR have still to advise when the works will start onsite.

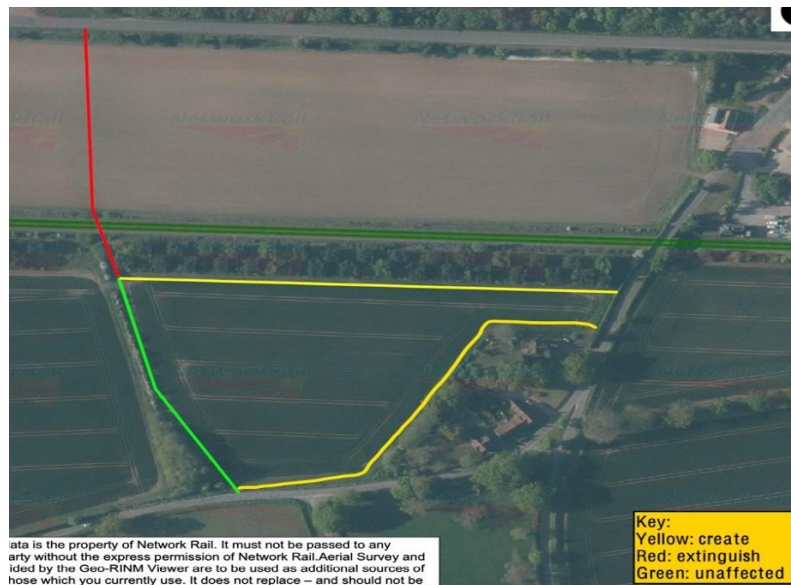
General/Countywide

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

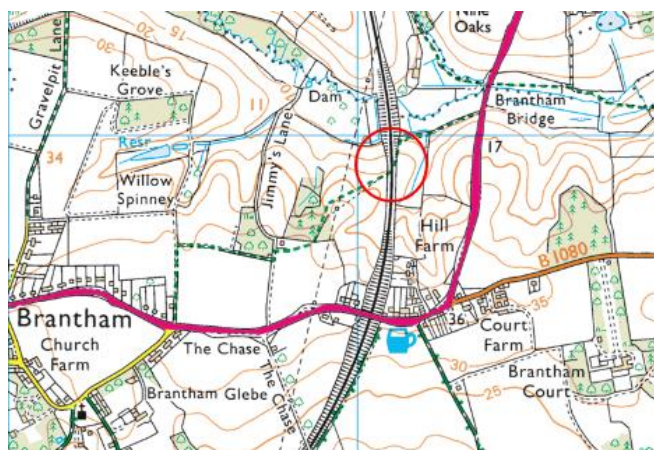
NR have recently confirmed that all the necessary surveys have been completed and the appointed contractor (Taziker) are currently working on the designs, with submission for the first sites due to be issued to NR by the end of October.

Footpath 1 Higham (High Bridge)

At its last meeting, the Forum was advised about the successful consultation exercise outcome in respect of Option 1. Officers met with SCC's consultant on 13 October to discuss the next stage of the order making process and work is ongoing to make and advertise the Rail Crossing Diversion Order. As previously advised, SCC will be liaising with NR to enter into a costs agreement for the associated works to improve pedestrian connectivity within the A14 slip road highway verge, between the junctions of Higham Road and Coalpit Lane, as well as sections of Coalpit Lane itself. Officers consider this legal document should be agreed at the point it is known whether any formal objections have been lodged in respect of the diversion order, not least because of the ongoing price increases in services and materials.



Footpath 6 Brantham (High Bridge)

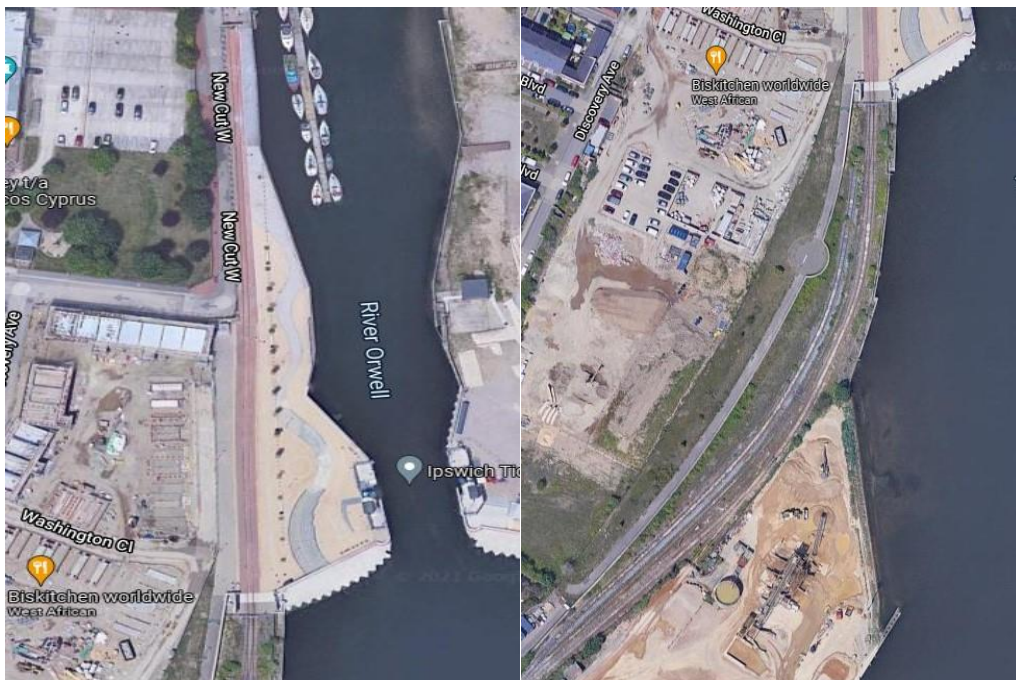


Since the Forum's July meeting, there has not been any further progress on the above case and SCC still awaits receipt of the completed Rail Crossing Extinguishment/Diversion Order application from the railway operator. Officers have also reminded NR that the current temporary closure expires on 30 March 2023 and that any extension request will need to be submitted well in advance.

END – SK October 2022

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Byway 38/Restricted Byway 38A Ipswich
Paper:	LAF 22/24
Meeting Date:	27th October 2022, 2-4 pm
Author/Contact:	Steve Kerr
Venue:	Seminar Room B, The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LR

Since the Forum's update in July, officers are pleased to report that there has been some encouraging progress towards opening up the Public Open Space (POS).



Councillor Paul West (Cabinet Member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding) visited the site on 1st August as part of a Rights of Way briefing, accompanied by SCC officers and a representative from the Environment Agency (EA).

Following the Lighting Team's visit to the site on 7 July, the works to make the lighting operational were costed up and a purchase order has now been processed. The works are to be funded by the EA.

Whilst the POS has yet to be made accessible to the public, stakeholder meetings were subsequently held on 12 September and 6 October. At the October meeting, representatives from Ipswich Borough Council (IBC), the EA, Associated British Ports

(ABP) and SCC's Rights Of way and Street Lighting teams attended. The following actions were discussed and agreed:

- It is expected the works will start by the end of this month, which will include digging a trench at Bath Street, for which a street works licence will be needed. The works will seek to make all the lighting columns, both in the POS and along the pedestrian/cycling facility operational, with those in the POS ready to be switched on when the POS hoarding is removed and the public can access the site.
- ABP will be removing the hoarding once they are advised that the lighting works are complete, although there will still be a need to have Heras fencing around the operational railway.
- The EA have also agreed to clean the POS and give it a facelift before the public can access it.
- Paul McKim (Interim Operations Manager Planning) at IBC needs to undertake some further investigations into what was agreed regarding the handover of the POS and cycle track from the EA and subsequent maintenance of the area. Whilst those discussions had taken place between the parties approximately 10 years ago, it was agreed at the meeting that IBC would not only be responsible for maintaining the POS but would also take ownership of the lighting columns (including along the cycle facility) and for all electricity usage. The EA will be discussing commuted sums for maintenance with the Borough Council.
- IBC application IP/09/00345/FUL intended the cycle track to connect to a medical centre within the adjacent Persimmon development, but this element of the scheme was subsequently dropped. Notwithstanding this, IBC will be investigating connectivity into the site, although at this stage it appears that the cycle track will not be adopted as public highway and, although used by the public, will effectively remain private and maintained by the Borough.

In the last few months, there have been several reports of members of the public accessing the site by breaking down the Heras fencing and/or hoarding and incidents of anti-social behaviour. More recently complaints have been received by the Borough's ASB team that a group of males are repeatedly gaining access to the POS and are consuming alcohol/drugs onsite, and have also set fires on two occasions, resulting in the fire brigade having to be called out. ABP, who are responsible for security of the site, have advised they are repairing the fencing on a near weekly basis following reports of damage, but that there are limits as to how secure they can make the site, given the temporary nature of the fencing. It is hoped that once the site is opened up to the public and with the lighting operational, these ASB incidents will reduce, although it is also possible that future consideration may need to be given to installing CCTV.

END – SK October 2022

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	England Coast Path
Paper:	LAF 22/25
Meeting Date:	27th October 2022, 2-4pm
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Seminar Room B, The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LR

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

The latest information from Natural England's (NE) on its progress for the ECP in Suffolk and Norfolk is shown on their website. The progress report update dates are shown in the links.

Stretch name	Progress
Harwich to Shotley Gate	Four out of six reports at Stage 4, two at Stage 5
Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry	Stage 5: Approved (not yet available for public use – work to establish the route is currently taking place)
Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey	Stage 4: Determine
Bawdsey to Aldeburgh	Four out of five reports at Stage 4 and one at Stage 5
Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea	One out of six reports at Stage 4, others at Stage 5
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, or a report within the 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.

Note: Whilst individual reports for sections within a stretch can be approved, in Suffolk stretches will not normally be launched until all of the Coastal Access Reports comprising the stretch have been approved.

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.

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. The right of access to the approved stretch of coast commences after all works have been completed and the route is formally opened on a specific date.

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.

The Five Suffolk Stretches

Harwich to Shotley Gate – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 3.10.22

- Stage 4 and 5 (Determine and Open)
- The Overview and reports were published on 22 January 2020.
- Natural England received 7 objections.
- Natural England have submitted their comments on the objections and representations received.
- Reports 4, 5 and 6 are in Suffolk.
- Coastal Access Reports 1 and 4 have been approved by the Secretary of State. Work to establish the route can now take place on these lengths.
- The Appointed Person visited the stretch in June 2021 and sought further advice from Natural England in relation to some of the objections received. He undertook a further visit in July 2022 and is currently considering the situation prior to advising the Secretary of State on the objections.

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 3.10.22

- Stage 5 (Open) – but not yet available for use
- All 5 reports are approved by the Secretary of State. Work to establish the route can now take place on this length.

Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 3.10.22

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- Natural England published proposals on 9th December 2020
- 7 objections were received.
- Natural England has been asked by the Planning Inspectorate to help with arranging site visits later in the year to consider the objections.

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 3.10.22

- Stage 4 and 5 (Determine and Open)
- The report was published on 3rd of February 2021.
- Report 3 has been approved by the Secretary of State. Work to establish the route can now take place on this length.
- The Appointed Person visited the stretch in July and is currently considering the situation prior to advising the Secretary of State on the objections.

Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 3.10.22

- Stage 4 and 5 (Determine and Open)
- Natural England published proposals on 29th January 2020.
- 23 objections were received – all on one of the 6 individual reports.
- Coastal Access Reports 1,2,3,5 and 6 were approved in June 2022 by the Secretary of State. Work to establish the route can now take place on these lengths.
- Natural England is currently writing Work to establish the route can now take place on this length.
- comments on the objections and representations received on Report 4.

Following the resignation of The ROW & Access coast path officer, the county council is recruiting a replacement.

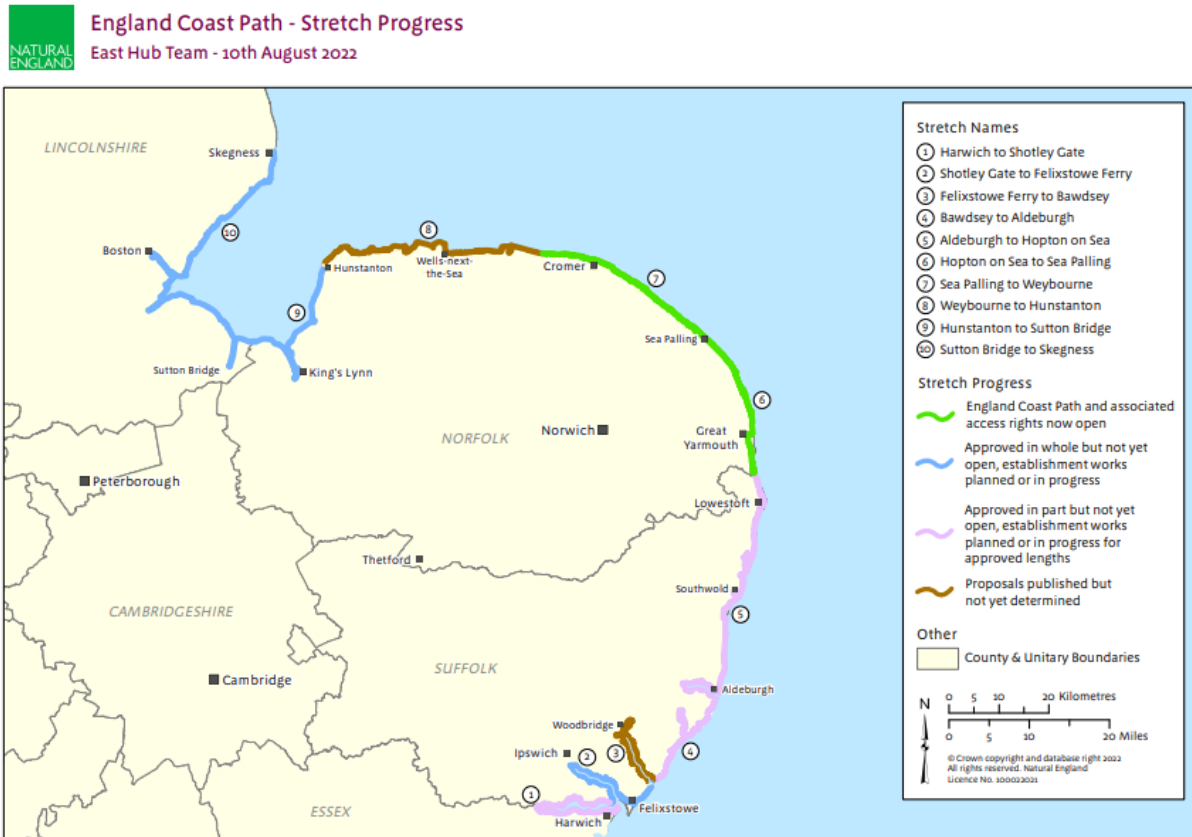
As further reports and stretches are approved, the pace of establishment will depend on capacity within the ROW & Access team.

The county council and Natural England have been in discussions about launching the first section of the coast path when the works are complete.

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

A meeting between Norfolk and Essex county councils took place in August and the lead officers agreed to proceed with the process to create a regional trail and trails partnership to promote and manage the England Coast Path in the east of England. The next step is to seek political support for the trail and partnership and this is in hand.

4. England Coast Path – Progress Map for the East



END
AW/SCC October 2022

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Energy Schemes
Paper:	LAF 22/26
Meeting Date:	27th October 2022, 2-4pm
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Seminar Room B, The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LR

Sunnica

The County Council continues to hold meetings with Sunnica representatives to discuss a Statement of Common Grounds (SoCG). At this point this is still not concluded, and further discussions are planned for early November but gives limited time. Sunnica had not met the deadline of 30th August as previously agreed, this has now been rescheduled for 11th November.

The Local Impact Report (LIR) has been submitted to the Planning Inspector on behalf of the local authorities. This includes the impact on the rights of way network in Suffolk, this is limited but does have a slight negative impact with temporary closures planned on routes within the Development Consent Order area. The County have expressed that this can be managed through limited impact and should look at options for Banksman and alternative routes where closures are unavoidable.

The Examination officially began on 28th September following original delays from July due to issues with the applicant. An initial accompanied site inspection was undertaken on 29th September and the Examiner required all Local Impact Reports and comments and summaries of Relevant Representations to be submitted by 19th October.

We now await further timetable of the examination including specific hearings and accompanied site inspections.

An over view of the Sunnica application can be found here - [Sunnica Energy Farm | National Infrastructure Planning \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](https://planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

National Grid Bramford to Twinstead

The scheme still remains at pre application stage with a statutory consultation carried out in Spring 2022. The scheme area has been amended slightly to look at an area on the western side of the Stour Valley near Alphamstone in Essex. A Statement of Community Consultation was carried out in September to consult on the environmental effects of National Grids amended proposals. This does not affect the network in Suffolk

Pre consultation meetings have continued between the County Council and National Grid consultants. As part of the discussions the County Council have requested that Public Rights of Way is a separate topic to Landscape and Highways. The Development Consent Order effects a vast number of public rights of way in Suffolk and Essex. No timescale has been set for the Developers Application.

Further details can be found on the National Grid website here - [Bramford to Twinstead | National Grid ET](#)

East Anglia Green

This scheme was launched earlier this year with the initial consultation being undertaken in late April through to June. The county council submitted comments regarding the network and amenity land. The scheme runs from Norwich to the substation at Bramford, then through the Dedham Vale to Tilbury in Essex. The statutory consultation is anticipated in late Spring next year.

The proposed route will affect a high volume of routes, including several promoted trails. Full details of the exact route are yet to be confirmed with the proposed option heading through Mid Suffolk to Bramford and then southeast through Babergh.

The County Council have made early suggestions that Rights of Way is dealt with as a separate topic to Highways and Landscape. The County are currently working on options for mitigation in the scheme area and focusing on the cumulative and in combination effects of multiple energy projects on green access in the Mid Suffolk and Babergh, particularly around the Bramford area.

Further details on the EA Green scheme can be found on the National Grid website here - [About East Anglia GREEN | National Grid ET](#)

1. Sizewell C

The Secretary of State has consented Sizewell C. Full details at [The Sizewell C Project | National Infrastructure Planning \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](#)

The County Council's key remaining points at the end of the examination (removal of Sizewell Link Road, removal of outage car park at Goose Hill, removal of pylons, changes to the design of SSSI crossing) were dismissed by both Examining Authority and Secretary of State.

A number of the technical changes to the DCO, put forward through the council solicitors, have been agreed – although unfortunately the Secretary of State went against our view , and indeed the Examining Authority's advice that SCC should be the discharging authority for surface water drainage, and gave ESC the discharging role.

Now we are entering a 6 week period where Judicial Reviews can be launched (which we expect will happen). EDF indicate that FID may be in first half of next year, commencement

from mid 2023 all being well. We will find out over the coming months what this means in terms of EDF's work programme over the coming months.

In the meantime, we have been working with EDF on plans to upgrade level crossings on the Leiston branch line, consulting on plans for the creation of a badger sett and more significantly, the creation of a large wetland habitat close to the Minsmere boundary. This habitat is necessary to mitigate the impact on marsh harriers and hence has to be ready before any existing marsh harrier habitat is disturbed. EDF have submitted a planning application to ESC following extensive discussions regarding transport and access to the site. We have agreed that bridleway 19 can be temporarily closed for a period of 6 months over the winter while it is used as the site access. An alternative route has been scoped on site and will be physically improved and maintained by EDF during the temporary closure. The Kenton Hills car park will remain open.

2. East Anglia One North and EA2 offshore windfarms with onshore infrastructure

The SoS approved these applications on the 31st March 2022, allowing for both offshore windfarms and cable corridors onshore, a National Grid substation and a substation for each windfarm to be built at Friston.

SPR are working towards discharging their requirements for highway improvements and the public rights of way changes. We have been discussing the public rights of way work with SPR, particularly the proposed permanent new footpath at the Friston site and liaising with the local community.

3. East Anglia 3 offshore windfarm with onshore infrastructure

This application was approved in 2017 and SPR have prepared and have approval from the district councils for works at some of the construction sites. Works are now starting.

4. SEAS – National Grid offshore link from Suffolk to Kent-onshore cable corridor , new converter station and connection to Friston NG substation (if approved as part of EA1N &EA2 application)

The National Grid intend to hold a public consultation in summer 2022 to outline their emerging proposals.

5. Nautilus Interconnector -an electrical connection between Belgium and Britain - National Grid Ventures

A non statutory consultation was held in October 2021 but there has been no further consultation since.

END
AW/SCC July 2022

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	SLAF Planning Response
Paper:	LAF 22/27
Meeting:	27th October 2022, 2-4pm
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Seminar Room B, The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LR

The forum responded to a consultation by Ipswich Borough Council for 'Land To South Of Railway Line Westerfield Road'. This site is part of Ipswich Garden Suburb, a total development of 3,500 homes making it the largest housing development in Suffolk.

Fri 12/08/2022 08:45

Dear Development Management

Ref: IP/22/00463/REM – SLAF FORMAL RESPONSE

Thank you for consulting with the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) on Reserved Matters for the site 'Land To South Of Railway Line Westerfield Road' within the Ipswich Garden Suburb development in north Ipswich.

The forum has the following comments:

- We understand that a consultation for Section 257 diversions will follow but request that no works are begun by the developer on this site until those Section 257 diversions are carried out. Failure to do so will affect the use of Section 257 to enact those diversions.
- We are concerned that an earlier plan from the developer showing diversions of the PROW network (attached) differs in key areas from the Permeability Plan 8978/53.
- It would be helpful to see a plan that depicts all of the public rights of way on their proposed future diverted alignments to provide clarity on their future intended use. That would also have helped us respond better to this consultation.
- With regard to the permeability of the site as depicted on the Permeability Plan 8978/53 we have the following comments:
 - We would comment on the clarity of the key for this plan – some colours are very similar in tone making it less easy to differentiate between routes.
 - Some of the terminology is used incorrectly – some paths labelled 'footpaths' should be labelled 'footways'.
 - The plan should clarify the widths of paths – there is no defined width for the red labelled 'combined footpath/cycle path'.
 - We would like to see consistency in widths of paths with all routes used for cycling to be 3m wide.

- Routes that are likely to become desire lines for cycling that have been categorised as footpaths should be upgraded to cycle paths.
- With regard to Ipswich Public Footpath 71 (FP71) we have the following comments:
 - We are concerned that due to the proposed high density housing, the diversion route south of the proposed District Centre 2 will not be retained within a green corridor to encourage its use within a traffic-free environment but will be diverted to be part of a footway/cycle path adjacent to the new carriageway.
 - The earlier plan (attached) depicted FP71 set back from the carriageway by a 2.5m verge and then upgraded to a 3m wide sealed surface shared facility. The Permeability Plan indicates that cycling will now be on the east side of the road but there is no indication of the width of that facility or if there is any separation by verge from the carriageway.
 - FP71 between the spine road and 'combined footpath/cycle path' to where it meets FP72 by the District Centre 2 (DC2) is likely to become a desire line for cyclists and should be upgraded to a 3m wide cycle path.
- With regard to Ipswich Public Footpath 72 (FP72) we have the following comments:
 - We see the section of FP72 that runs east-west between DC2 and the Fonnereau Way becoming a desire line for cyclists. Therefore, we would like to see this section of FP72 upgraded to cycle path, diverted onto the path depicted on the Permeability Plan and surfaced 3m wide.
 - In addition, the continuation of FP72 northwards past DC2 where it is then depicted as a 'combined footpath/cycle path' is also likely to become a desire line for cyclists and should be upgraded to cycle track.
 - The benefit of this will be to offer an alternative and more desirable route for cycling that avoids cycling beside a carriageway.
- With regard to Ipswich Public Footpath 18 (Fonnereau Way) (FP18) we have the following comments:
 - We would like assurance that the diversion of FP18 at the northern end of the development will link effectively to the ramp of the new cycling bridge over the railway line.
 - We note that the proposed diversion of the FP18 places it against the very western edge of the site. With no plans for the adjoining land, we would like assurances that FP18 will remain set within a green corridor and not penned in by adjoining rear garden fences or carriageways if in the future an application for residential development is submitted.

Finally, we encourage a meeting between officers at Ipswich Borough Council and SCC's Public Right of Way and Access team is arranged to discuss the detail of these plans.

Kind regards

Barry Hall
Chair Suffolk Local Access Forum

END – DF October 2022

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	SLAF Annual Report to Cabinet
Paper:	LAF 22/28
Meeting:	27th October 2022, 2-4pm
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Seminar Room B, The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LR

Barry Hall, Chair of the Suffolk Local Access Forum, presented the forum's 2021/2022 Annual Report to Cabinet on Tuesday 11th October.

The Annual Report is Appendix 1.

Councillor Paul West (Cabinet Member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding), introduced the topic paper:

- This was the 19th SLAF Annual Report presented to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet
- Councillor Paul West (PW) thanked the chair of the Suffolk Local Access Forum - Barry Hall (BH)
- BH thanked PW for the opportunity to present the report and outlined that over the last 12 months there had been 4 meetings and 2 by zoom and 2 in-person. BH stated that the forum prefer face to face meetings as this allows more interaction.
- BH thanked SCC, the Rights of Way and Green Access teams, and councillors and for their support to SLAF.
- BH said how grateful the forum was for the recognition from councillors of the importance of green access to the environment, tourism and health and wellbeing, and the financial support for bridge replacements, particularly Fen Bridge.

Barry Hall outlined the key issues that had been considered by the forum covered in the annual report:

- Sizewell C was likely to go ahead, and the forum want to see a legacy for access after construction for the PROW network between Aldeburgh and Southwold and around Leiston.
- BH advised Cabinet that the forum has a Solar Farms Position Statement in response to large solar farm schemes impacting on PROW and want to ensure PROW are protected.
- BH commented how the forum had objected to the Sunnica solar farm application which was now with the planning inspectorate.
- BH advised that there was a lot of opposition to East Anglian Green National Grid and that SLAF are looking to put forward suggestions to National Grid
- Network Rail – a Transport and Works Act Order was progressing slowly with problems with a PROW diversion at Brantham, and long standing issues at Gipsy Lane in Needham Market which had a solution but had still not come to fruition.

- National Highways – BH explained that SLAF had walked the route at the Copdock interchange and better access was required from Pinewood to Belstead utilising existing tunnels.
- Ipswich Borough Council had asked SLAF to provide feedback regarding the Ipswich Garden Suburb development. BH was appreciative that SLAF were now being recognised in the planning process.
- BH attended the launch of the Suffolk Walking Festival and emphasised his appreciation to all the volunteers who lead walks for the event.
- BH advised that the next SLAF meeting was at Ipswich waterfront to see an open public space developed with a flood defence scheme and see issues with a railway track preventing access.
- BH advised that the England Coast Path (ECP) was close to fruition with a Natural England funded project officer to ensure the route is opened. BH advised that the forum was supportive of a plan to promote the ECP through Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.
- BH thanked SCC and officers for their continued support to SLAF

Councillor West response:

- PW thanked BH and colleagues of the forum for all they do
- PW shared the forum's frustration of the slow progress with Network Rail.
- PW welcomed funding for green access improvements from Sizewell C and agreed with the need to protect public access and create a lasting PROW legacy.
- PW agreed to working with planners to ensure green energy schemes do not adversely impact on PROW but that within the current climate it was very important to have a balanced overall policy. The same was so with large scale developments.
- PW was pleased that Fen Bridge was being installed according to schedule and would be completed in the next week with a formal opening. PW advised that BH would be invited to the opening
- PW agreed to help push issues along regarding public access to Ipswich waterfront, appreciative of all the parties involved including ABP, Environment Agency, IBC and Suffolk County Council

Councillors' response:

- Councillor Hicks thanked Barry Hall
- Councillor Richard Smith (RS) appreciated comments on PROW at Sizewell C and wished BH good luck with EDF. RS acknowledged the forum's comments on the strategic roads network (Copdock and Fiveways) was very helpful and would use this in discussions with National Highways to reflect views.
- Councillor Richard Rout thanked BH but asked for clarification about Solar Farms and the forum's preference to see these placed on south facing roofs rather than in fields
- BH advised that the forum have a Position Statement for solar farms and their main concern was the impact vast banks of solar panels and battery storage would have on views.
- Councillor Andrew Reid thanked SLAF and BH for their work on Sizewell, Friston and a variety of prospective applications from surrounding areas.
- Councillor Joanna Spicer (JS) thanked BH. JS apologised for her absence at the previous meeting but emphasised the responsibility of SLAF in providing affective action countywide. JS also stated that she would play an active part in SLAF and thanked the Cabinet.

- Councillor Vigo di Gallidoro advised she used to sit on the Broads LAF and commented on the wide diversity of people in the forum. Councillor Vigo di Gallidoro was hopeful for the completion of the England Coast Path, especially at Kessingland where a new path is planned across a caravan park
- Councillor Andrew Stringer (AS) thanked BH and asked about the new strategy for post-EU farming support. BH advised the forum had written to every MP in Suffolk but had just a response from Therese Coffey MP. The SLAF Deputy Chair, David Barker, was very active in pursuing this issue on behalf of SLAF and the farming community and pressing for a suitable scheme. AS stated the importance of green access and the link with health.
- PW thanked colleagues.
- MH asked if Cabinet accepted the report. All Cabinet were in favour.

END – DF October 2022

Cabinet

Report Title:	Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2021/22
Meeting Date:	11 October 2022
Lead Councillor(s):	Councillor Paul West, Cabinet Member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding
Local Councillor(s):	All Councillors
Director:	Andrew Cook, 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 and their role is to advise on matters relating to public rights of way and countryside access.

Forums are statutory consultees to various organisations such as National Highways, Network Rail and Natural England. They also advise their relevant appointing authority which for the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) is Suffolk County Council (SCC).

Under the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007 (part 13), SLAF are required to submit an Annual Report to SCC. This is their nineteenth Annual Report, and it provides a summary of the forum's activities between August 2021 and July 2022.

What is Cabinet being asked to decide?

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Cabinet is being asked to accept the Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2021/22 and address the report's recommendations and state the actions that the Council is taking to address those recommendations. |
|---|

Reason for recommendation

- Under the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007, local access forums are required to submit an annual report on rights of way and access matters to their appointing authority and it is a requirement for that authority to publish the report. Guidance states that: "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?

The key issues raised by the Suffolk Local Access Forum 2021/22 report are as follows:

a) Sizewell C:

Over the year of this report the forum has remained concerned about proposals for Sizewell C and its impact on the green access network. The forum has pressed for green access to be effectively managed during construction and for a lasting legacy of improved green access following construction.

Response: The Council is thankful to the forum for its work and is committed to protecting green access during the construction of Sizewell C and delivering a strong green access legacy from this development.

b) Suffolk Green Energy Schemes:

The forum recognises that a significant amount of staff time is dedicated to managing responses to a high number of green energy schemes in Suffolk. The forum has concerns over the visual impact that above-ground infrastructure, including extensive solar farms and new pylons, will have on people's enjoyment of the green access network.

Response: The Council thanks the forum for recognising the significant effort by officers in responding to green energy proposals and will work with projects to mitigate their impact on green access and people's enjoyment of the countryside.

c) Severance of the Rights of Way network:

The forum has continually pressed Network Rail to address rights of way severance and notes the continuing lack of progress implementing a Transport and Works Act Order, although the forum does note that some progress has been made delivering works at Needham Market Gypsy Lane. The forum is also concerned over National Highway's proposals at the A14 Copdock Interchange and at A11 Fiveways, Mildenhall, and how either scheme will re-connect public rights of way previously severed by the trunk road network.

Response: The Council thanks the forum for their on-going efforts with Network Rail and National Highways and will continue to work with both organisations to secure positive outcomes for the green access network.

d) Large Scale Developments:

The forum is concerned over how large developments integrate with local green access, the impact they have on the wider network, and how they can be made to deliver meaningful improvements to the public rights of way network.

Response: The Council thanks the forum for their position and will work with planners and developers to secure improvements to the green access network in line with the aims and objectives of The Suffolk Green Access Strategy.

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

4. The Suffolk Local Access Forum's role, activities and recommendations are based on encouraging and enabling a greater use of the green access network and improving that network to benefit sustainable travel choices and healthier lifestyles. This is very relevant to reducing carbon emissions and to Suffolk

achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. Public rights of way are part of the county council's walking and cycling highway network.

What are the resource and risk implications?

5. The Suffolk Local Access Forum continues to recognise and support the Council in these times acknowledging that there are, and will be, budget pressures in all areas of the Council's work.
6. The forum thanks the Council for providing additional funding of £150,000 and resources to the Rights of Way and Access team to manage the significant increase in customer reports since the start of COVID-19, to deliver capital projects funded through developer contributions, and to provide legal services to progress changes to the public rights of way network.
7. The forum welcomes the council investing in three rights of way bridges: Fen Bridge in Dedham; River Lark bridge in Mildenhall; and the Bailey Bridge between Walberswick and Southwold.
8. The forum asks the Council to continue its positive support of green access by ensuring budgets allow for effective management and promotion of the public rights of way walking and cycling network and green access.
9. The Executive Director for Growth Highways and Infrastructure will consider and discuss with the Cabinet Member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding 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 the network provides.
10. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for the SLAF Annual Report 2021-2022, as advised by SCC 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 users of public rights of way, communities and landowners within Suffolk.

Main body of report

Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2021/22

14. This is their nineteenth Annual Report of the Suffolk Local Access Forum and provides a summary of the forum's activities between August 2021 and July 2022.
15. The forum meets quarterly but during the period of this report in-person meetings were not always possible due to COVID-19 restrictions. Meetings took place on:

- 28th October 2021 – meeting held online on Zoom (11 members attended, 1 apology, 2 guests speakers, 2 members of the public).
 - 27th January 2022 – meeting held online on Microsoft Teams (9 members attended, 4 apologies, 1 guest speaker, 3 members of the public).
 - 28th April 2022 – meeting held in person at Hintlesham Hall (9 members attended, 4 apologies).
 - 28th July 2022 – meeting held in person at Pinewood Community Hall with morning site visit (9 members attended, 5 apologies, 2 guest speakers).
16. Meetings are open to the public. Members of the public attended the October and January online meetings.
 17. A suggestion was made to continue online meetings on a regular basis alternating between online and in-person meetings. The majority of members, including the Chairman, considered meetings should be held in person where possible as it allowed for morning site visits on the day of a SLAF meeting, and enabled more effective communication and interaction between members and guest speakers which benefitted SLAF's activities and their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of often complex issues.
 18. A full list of members is given in Appendix A.

Administering SLAF

19. Members of SLAF are all volunteers with a wide range of experiences and knowledge of countryside access. They represent interests in walking, cycling, horse riding, disabilities, conservation, outdoor sport, land management and tourism. All are recruited following SCC's recruitment process.
20. In addition to the volunteer members, there are 2 councillor members, representing the County Council and District Councils, appointed by SCC Full Council and by the Suffolk Chief Officers Leadership Team, respectively.
21. The forum's independence is reflected in having their own logo, letter heading, email address and website page on the Suffolk County Council website at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/suffolk-local-access-forum/>.
22. SCC's Rights of Way and Access team administers the forum, providing secretariat services, booking meeting rooms, arranging refreshments, inviting speakers, organising site visits, re-imbursing travel expenses, and recruiting new members.
23. The cost of administering the forum in 2021-22 was £756.92.
24. The forum thanks the Rights of Way and Access team for their on-going support, advice and assistance which is vital to the forum performing their duties.

SLAF Activities in 2021/22

Sizewell C

25. Although the forum welcomed the opportunity for significant investment in the rights of way and green access network for walking, cycling and horse riding as a result of the proposed construction of Sizewell C, they remain concerned over

plans and the impact construction will have on the green access network in the area.

26. Of specific concern is the coastal footpath Leiston Cum Sizewell Public Footpath 21 and how it will be affected by a proposed sea defence.
27. In addition, although the forum welcomes proposals to dedicate the Sandlings Walk through Kenton Hills as a public right of way, it is concerned about onwards journeys northwards along the Sandlings Walk using Leiston Cum Sizewell Public Footpath 19 and the on-going lack of a solution to relocate this public right of way off the Eastbridge Road which is narrow and at times busy with road traffic.

Suffolk Energy Schemes

28. The forum received updates from SCC officers on a number of energy schemes across Suffolk:
 - a) Sunnica solar farm which straddles Suffolk and Cambridgeshire
 - b) East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two Offshore windfarms with onshore infrastructure
 - c) East Anglia 3 Offshore windfarm with onshore infrastructure
 - d) Bramford to Twinstead National Grid Reinforcement
 - e) East Anglia Green National Grid from Norwich through Suffolk to Tilbury Essex,
 - f) SEAS National Grid offshore link from Suffolk to Kent
 - g) Nautilus Interconnector between Britain and Belgium
29. The forum is very concerned by the proposal for constructing pylons which during construction will have a physical impact on the use of the public rights of way network and post construction leave a legacy of a visual impact.
30. The forum has concerns over large scale solar farms that can have a significant impact on the landscape and would prefer to see greater installation of solar panels on south facing roofs.
31. Due to the increased volume of planning applications for new solar farms in Suffolk the forum developed a Solar Farm Position Statement to use in response to new applications with suggested guidance in relation to public rights of way.

Network Rail

32. The forum welcomed a presentation from Steve Day, Liability Negotiations Manager Network Rail, and Daniel Fisk, Health and Safety Manager (Public and Passenger) Network Rail, with updates on proposals for rights of way crossings in Needham Market, Higham and Brantham.
33. The forum was pleased that Network Rail was progressing works on Needham Market Public Footpath 6 (Gipsy Lane), and supported works to divert Higham Public Footpath 1, but pressed Network Rail to look at various options for Brantham Public Footpath 6 to protect countryside access and avoid walking beside and along a main road.

34. The forum thanked SCC officers for regular updates on the progress of a Suffolk-wide Transport and Works Act Order.

Strategic Road Network

35. On Friday 12th November 2021, the SLAF Chair attended an exhibition by National Highways at Capel St Mary Village Hall on proposals to upgrade the A14 Junction 55 Copdock Interchange.
36. In addition, the forum is one of a number of stakeholders invited to National Highway's Community and Engagement Stakeholder Reference Group meetings.
37. The forum welcomed Tom Lawman, Programme Development Manager Operations, National Highways, to their January meeting. Tom Lawman presented on proposals for the A14 Junction 55 Copdock Interchange and also the A11 Fiveways junction, Barton Mills.
38. The forum was keen to understand the process of National Highway's Road Investment Strategy and their Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Assessment and Review process.
39. The forum raised concerns with National Highways over how proposals, if they progress, will impact on green access in the area with the rights of way network previously severed by the construction of the A12 and A14 which prevents easy movement for walking or riding between Belstead, Washbrook and Ipswich.
40. Following a site visit to Belstead on 28th July 2022, a specific concern for the forum was a bridleway underpass under the A14 which was in need of urgent upgrading and developing existing culverts under the A12 to enable access for walking, cycling and horse riding.
41. The forum has pressed National Highways to use their own Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Assessment and Review process to ensure any design for the Copdock Interchange enhances green access.
42. The forum is also keen to see National Highways consider future use of the green access network in determining designs to ensure those designs allow for increased journeys on foot and cycle.
43. The forum is also engaged with National Highways over proposals to upgrade the A11 Fiveways junction at Barton Mills and stresses the importance of providing a safe crossing bridge for people using the Lark Valley Path.

Planning and Development

44. The forum welcomed Chris Ward Planning Officer Policy, and Rosalynn Claxton, Special Projects Team Leader, Ipswich Borough Council, to their July meeting. They jointly presented on current and planned developments in, and immediately around, Ipswich and aspirations by Ipswich Borough Council to create a green orbital trail called the Ipswich Green Trail.
45. The forum was keen to understand how sustainable travel, especially cycling, will be incorporated into the design of the Ipswich Garden Suburb and questioned IBC on the detail, including gradients, for a cycling and pedestrian bridge over the railway at Westerfield.
46. The forum has questioned the continued delay at New Cut West in Ipswich to provide access to a new outdoor public space which is blocked by fencing. The

forum appreciates the efforts of officers but are keen to see the issues in this location, specifically the continued use of hoarding and the lack of installation of lighting, resolved.

Environmental Land Management Scheme

47. The forum is concerned that the government's proposed shift of farm support to *providing public money for public goods*, with an emphasis on issues such as soil health and biodiversity, will result in the loss of public access in the countryside created through previous Countryside Stewardship Schemes, especially for equestrians. Future post-EU Countryside Stewardship schemes are heavily focused on soil health but have not mentioned the provision of new and improved public access.
48. On 9th February 2022, the forum wrote to Rt Hon Dr Therese Coffey MP Suffolk Coastal and Secretary of State at the Department for Work & Pensions about the need for improved access to the countryside being part of any post-EU farm support package and emphasised that the Government has stated a policy of 'providing public money for public goods'.
49. The letter was subsequently copied to all Suffolk MPs and the regional Local Access Forums.
50. The forum stated in their letter that any new Countryside Stewardship scheme must provide improved access with the provision of permanent new routes by a single capital payment to the landowner where access meets the needs of users, are located where they are beneficial, and provides a fair return for the taxpayer.
51. The forum stressed that any new system of Government support should deliver public enjoyment alongside food production and enhanced wildlife with the benefits of health and well-being by enabling walking and riding in the countryside most certainly a public good.
52. On 8th June 2022 the forum received a response from Rt Hon George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, via Rt Hon Dr Therese Coffey MP.

England Coast Path

53. The forum welcomed the approval by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of proposals for the England Coast Path between Aldeburgh and Hopton-on-Sea.
54. The forum welcomed the addition of resources to deliver the England Coast Path along the Suffolk coast.
55. The forum sees a natural link between the sections of the England Coast Path in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, and supports the creation of a trail partnership between Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex to promote a regional path along all three counties for tourism benefits.

Open Access Restrictions

56. The forum is one of a number of consultees to Natural England on Open Access sites, commenting on proposals for Directions which create seasonal restrictions to public access or for dogs to be kept on short, fixed leads, for land management or conservation purposes.

57. The forum considered a Direction from Natural England on extending restrictions at a number of sites within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB for one additional month to keep dogs on short, fixed leads throughout August to protect ground nesting birds. These Directions were first introduced in 2007 and are reviewed every five years. The forum supported the review and continuation of restrictions for a further 5 years.

Promoting Countryside Access

58. The forum was delighted to see the Suffolk Walking Festival re-launched following 2 years of being cancelled and held virtually due to COVID-19. The forum congratulates officers on a successful event with an economic impact within Suffolk of £117,000 on a return on investment of 34:1 and for leaving an estimated 11 million footprints across the county.
59. The forum is impressed with the new Discover Suffolk outdoor app promoting over 150 walking and riding routes across Suffolk.
60. The forum looks forward to seeing the development of the first of a series of QR self-guided trails in Suffolk.

Regional Local Access Forum

61. The forum chair and vice chair attended a regional LAF meeting on 13th January 2022 and 7th July 2022. The regional meetings allow LAFs to learn of issues within each county, advise how they are addressing these issues, and identify areas of common ground by working together.

SLAF Membership

62. The forum had 15 members during the period covered by this report. Derek Blake MBE stepped down in August 2021 and Councillor Joanna Spicer joined the forum in June 2022.

Working Groups:

63. The forum has the following working groups:

Topic	Membership
PRoW Severance, including Network Rail and Highways England	Barry Hall, Clare Philips, Roley Wilson
Sizewell C	Suzanne Bartlett, Barry Hall, Roley Wilson, Anthony Wright
Open Access	Barry Hall, Gordon Merfield
Coastal Erosion and Access	Barry Hall, Susan Mobbs, Roley Wilson
Planning and Development	Jane Hatton, Roley Wilson, Anthony Wright
Agri-Environment Access Schemes	David Barker, John Wayman
East Suffolk Line Community Rail Group	Margaret Hancock

Looking Ahead

64. Priorities for SLAF over the coming year include:

- a) Investment in Green Access
 - i) To ensure that the increasing use of the green access network is effectively reflected in the Council's management of public rights of way and access.
- b) Sizewell C
 - i) To ensure that the development of Sizewell C acknowledges and addresses the forum's concerns for green access both during construction and after construction.
- c) Planning
 - i) To work with the planning process to seek a better green access network.
- d) Severance of Public Rights of Way
 - i) To ensure that Network Rail and National Highways deliver works that maintain a well-connected and easy to use green access network.
- e) Recruitment of new members
 - i) To recruit up to three new members to the forum to reflect a wide range of interests and experiences in accessing Suffolk's countryside.

Barry Hall

Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

David Barker

Vice Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

August 2022

Sources of further information

- a) Local Access Forums:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-access-forums-participate-in-decisions-on-public-access>
- b) 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/>
- c) Suffolk Local Access Forum meeting 28 October 2021
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/SLAF-Minutes-etc/2021-10-28-SLAF-agenda-and-papers.pdf>
- d) Suffolk Local Access Forum meeting 27 January 2022
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/SLAF-Minutes-etc/2022-01-27-SLAF-agenda-and-minutes.pdf>
- e) Suffolk Local Access Forum meeting 28 April 2022
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/SLAF-Minutes-etc/SLAF-Agenda-and-meeting-notes-28-April-2022.pdf>
- f) Suffolk Local Access Forum meeting 28 July 2022
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/SLAF-Minutes-etc/28-July-2022-SLAF-agenda-and-minutes.pdf>
- g) 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/>

Suffolk Local Access Forum – Members Details

SLAF Membership August 2021 – July 2022

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 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 became a member of SLAF in October 2018 and stepped down in August 2021.*

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 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 representing District and Borough Councils.*

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 with experience of working with a wide group of riders with disabilities. 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 Joanna Spicer – Joanna has lived in Suffolk for 50 years having come to live here in 1972 to work for the newly formed East Anglia Tourist Board as the Information Officer. She was first elected to Suffolk County Council in 1989 and represents the 16 rural villages of the Blackbourn Division, north-east of Bury St Edmunds. Joanna is not only a keen walker, but she also works with parish councils and landowners to press for additional rights of way and green space to be a larger part of new developments. *Joanna has been a member of SLAF since June 2022 representing Suffolk County Council.*

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.*

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