

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Meeting Date:	27th July 2023, 2-4 pm
Venue:	National Trust, Ickworth House, Horringer, Bury St Edmunds

			Paper Number
1.	14:00	Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	14.05	Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 23/16
3.	14.10	Declaration of interest	
4.	14.15	National Trust – Approach to Sustainable Travel	Presentation Adrian Shepherd, General Manager Ickworth Estate
5.	14:35	Suffolk Energy Schemes	LAF 23/17 – AW
6.	14.50	Network Rail	LAF 23/18 – SK
7.	15.00	Ipswich Byway 38 / RB 38A	LAF 23/19 – SK
8.	15.10	The England Coast Path	LAF 23/20 – AW
9.	15.20	National Highways	Verbal – DF
10.	15.30	Regional LAF Meeting	Verbal - David Barker, Vice Chair
11.	15.40	Annual Report	Verbal – DF
12.	15.45	Membership – Vice Chair Election	Verbal – AW
13.	15.50	Public Question Time	
14.	15.55	Any Other Business	
15.	16.00	Date of Next Meeting: October 2023. date and venue tbc	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of Meeting
Paper:	LAF 23/16
Author/Contact:	Anna McGowan
Meeting Date:	25th April 2023, 2-4pm
Venue:	Mildenhall Cricket Club, Wamil Way, Mildenhall IP28 7JU

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair); Jane Hatton (JH); Anthony Wright (AWr); Monica Pipe (MP); Margaret Hancock (MH); John Wayman (JW); Susan Mobbs (SM); Clare Phillips (CP); Cllr Joanna Spicer (JS); Jim Wayman (JWa); Christopher Bower (CB); Adrian Shepherd (AS).

SCC Officers Present: Andrew Woodin (AW); Steve Kerr (SK), David Falk (DF); Mary George (MG); Clare Dickson (CD); Anna McGowan (AM) Minutes.

Apologies: David Barker (DB) (Vice Chair); Suzanne Bartlett (SB); Cllr James Mallinder (JM); Gordon Merfield (GM); Roland Wilson (RW).

This meeting was preceded by a training session in the morning, and site visits to Mildenhall Bridleway 1, and a newly installed bridge over the River Lark.

BH welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the recently appointed new members: Jim Wayman (JWa); Christopher Bower (CB); Adrian Shepherd (AS). There were round table introductions.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2023 LAF23/8, were reviewed, agreed, and accepted.

3. Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Network Rail – Public Rights of Way & Level Crossings

Needham Market Gypsy Lane

For the benefit of new members, SK gave a background to the Gypsy Lane project. SK advised works to construct an underpass was planned for summer 2023 and is expected to last 16 weeks. An engagement letter from Network Rail (NR) regarding £300K compensation lumpsum is expected to be received by May. A Section 278

agreement needs final sign off by SCC and NR. NR will be initiating their communications strategy in due course.

General/Countywide

All three counties (Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire) are severely delayed for NR works to close level crossings and provide alternative routes.

Footpath 1 Higham

SK advised there had been no objections to the Railway Crossing Diversion Order (RCDO), and the Order was subsequently confirmed on 12 April. The diversion will come into effect 70 days from the confirmation notice date, and the cost of the works are also being funded by NR.

SK advised that he had spoken to NR and they had advised that they had set aside a budget of c100K for the design and delivery of the Higham Road/A14 verge improvements but that these funds would only be available from 1st April 2024, as part of NR's Control Period (CP) 7 allocation. CP7 runs for 5 years (2024-2029). when officers will liaise with the new Suffolk Highways partnership to include these works in their pipeline.

AW said this was a good example of working well with NR.

AW advised that NR and Access professionals had held national webinars to further improve the relationship between Highway Authorities and the railway operator on order making priorities and good practice. AW also advised that NR had recently worked with external consultants to design a composite plastic, steps only footbridge called a "Flow Bridge" which can be designed and installed at a fraction of the cost of conventional bridges.

Footpath 6 Brantham

The RCDO application has been received and SCC is considering it. SK needs to go out on site with the area officer and liaise with SCC's consultant.

SK gave a verbal update on other NR schemes in new developments. He advised NR is objecting to a Town and Country Planning Act diversion affecting part of FP1 Nacton (Shepherd & Dog crossing) and that parts of FP18 Ipswich are temporarily closed as part of the Ipswich Garden Suburb development and the construction of the pedestrian/cycling bridge.

5. Byway 36/Restricted Byway 38A Ipswich

SK said the lighting columns have been connected and fully tested. There is continued delay in opening up the Public Open Space (POS) at Griffin Wharf. Both the Environment Agency and ABP are keen to open up the POS but IBC and the EA are currently negotiating the transfer of the land over to the Borough and negotiations include agreeing a commuted sum for its future maintenance.

JS expressed frustration at the lack of progress and suggested the matter should be escalated.

Action: SK to work with BH on a letter to IBC on lack of progress to open the POS, with Paul West to be briefed beforehand.

6. King Charles III England Coast Path (ECP)

AW said that the hold up in the confirmation of the ECP lies with the Planning Inspectorate with a national issue of not enough Planning Inspectors. NE is reluctant to push further with the Planning Inspectorate where stretches have been objected to and are still at determination stage. The issue is sitting with the Planning Inspectorate.

AW said the new ECP officer started in January.

AW said that SCC are working with Norfolk and Essex on an East of England Coast Path, a regional trail, and that the partnership is prepared and awaiting to be signed off. The trail will link Kings Lynn with Thurrock.

AW cited an example of the benefits that a regional trail can bring. The South-West Coast Path brings in an estimated £500m per year, with £75m benefits in health and well-being.

JS – questioned the rate of progress by the ECP.

AW – This is an ongoing process and there are no timescales. The sticking point is that the alignments proposed by NE have been objected to and the matter has gone to the Planning Inspectorate. Once it has been confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate NE will go out and cost up all the works. NE will pay for all the establishment works.

AS – asked for the Gantt Chart of the processes to be shared.

Action: AW to request a progress report on establishment works on the trail in Suffolk, and the estimated rate of progress.

7. Suffolk Energy Schemes

SZC

AW said consent has been given and EDF have started the official work for the Marsh Harrier habitats to be replaced in habitat around Lovers Lane.

The intermediate work is taking up a lot of officer time and continuing to be a challenge as it is not properly funded. Funds will be paid on the start of construction.

There will be two new officers and training programmes for them.

AW to meet with Highways lead.

JS – asked if the mitigation funding of £2.5m for PROW improvements can be used.

AW – said that funds can be pulled down with timesheets.
DF- said a cycle/multi-user route from Aldeburgh to Southwold is included in the package.
AW- said the Tourism Fund of £12m will go to ESC, and SCC will work with ESC.

Sunnica

AW said SCC made very strong representations and there is a draft Section 106 agreement for improvements to PRowS which will be shared with Cambridgeshire. SCC will receive £250k.
All PRowS will be made by agreement.

SCC is very disappointed as this mitigation is not as good as EDFs.

MP – can agreement between applicants and landowners which tie our hands be escalated.
BH – this will be discussed at Regional LAF.

Bramford Twinstead

AW said the transmission lines are upgraded to 400 kilowats. There is no news that the application has been submitted (by end of this month).

BH said there will be a period for objections.

JS – asked about the SLAF position regarding Bramford Twinstead and East Anglia Green.

BH – representations will be made by the sub-group.

JS – how many routes will be affected, and what will be the permanent impact on PRow?

AW – SCC will get quantum of impact.

JS – diversions will have to be provided for blocked routes.

Action: AW to seek on the number of PRow affected by this scheme and what is the permanent impact on the Prow network.

Eurolink

AW said this is bigger than the new proposal.

AW said there is a collection of applications around the county for solar farms around Needham Market. The new panels will be larger and higher. There are a lot of objections.

8. National Highways RS13

Copdock

DF said this project has gone through a public consultation.
Copdock is a more deliverable scheme because of the underpasses.

Mildenhall Fiveways Roundabout

This is yet to go through a public consultation.
There is a proposal for a flyover/bypass on the southeast side, or a bridleway bridge over the A11. In each design proposal SCC have insisted on a PRoW grade separated crossing.

These two large projects will be selected out of a total of 40 national projects by the end of late summer.

DF will be attending a meeting with NH on Thursday.

9. ELMS

This was deferred to the next meeting.

10. Natural England LAF Support and Contact Spreadsheet

BH said NE has pulled back from helping LAFs. The government website with all the local information has disappeared.

BH said there will be a new LAF sharepoint which will start to reconnect with LAFs, similar to HUDDLE but with easier access.

AW encouraged members to use the proposed LAF sharepoint.

AW made a point that the proposed sharepoint is not recommended as a communications tool.

Action: AW to pick up how comms might work with NE

11. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

12. Any Other Business

JW said that new tree plantings on highways need to have biodegradable guards.

MP said there will be an update on ELMS at the next meeting.

The Meeting ended at 4.10pm

Date of Next Meeting: 27th July 2023, 2-4pm, at Ickworth House.
This will include a morning site visit.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Suffolk Energy Schemes
Paper:	LAF 23/17
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Meeting:	27th July 2023, 2-4pm
Venue:	National Trust, Ickworth House

1. Sizewell C

Although the formal commencement of the SZC Development Consent Order is not expected until later in 2023, the considerable amount of pre-commencement activity continues.

Wetland creation - as new habitat for marsh harrier started in October 2022 using part of BR19 as access until May 2023. SZC carried out repair works and the bridleway was re-opened prior to the May half term.

Temporary access route – having been denied permission to use BR19 for other site works, SZC are constructing a temporary access road from Lovers Lane, across BR19 onto the land at the rear of the proposed main site. This haul road crosses BR19 at a controlled and manned crossing point.

Benhall Fen Meadow creation – initial work has commenced to create the access to this site from the A1094. A haul road will be constructed for HGVs to remove the topsoil from site and taken to the main site via the temporary access of Lovers Lane. The footpath that crosses the fen meadow site will be temporarily closed with an alternative route put in place very close by. Once works are completed, SZC is committed to providing a dry route for this footpath.

In addition, detailed design work on the highway and bridleway works close to the main site has started and discussions continue on the design of the alternative bridleway. The design work for the proposed bridleway bridge over the Leiston drain in Aldhurst farm are continuing. Design work on the two other road bypass schemes, park and ride sites and other associated highway works has started, many of which impact on the PRoW network.

2. Sunnica

The Examination for Sunnica concluded at the end of March. The County Council and other interested parties await the Examiners decision; this is expected later this year.

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

3. National Grid Bramford to Twinstead

The scheme has now entered the pre application stage, with the application submitted and the Planning Inspectorate accepting the application on 26th May 2023. This includes the draft DCO and supporting documents for the application.

The planning inspectorate now has three months to prepare for Examination. Although dates have yet to be given, we anticipate this will start in late August 2023.

At the last meeting a member asked for the number of PRow affected by this scheme and what is the permanent impact on the PRow network. The Development Consent Order directly effects 45 public rights of way in Suffolk through temporary restrictions, There are no proposals for permanent changes to the network. 16 PRow are shown where diversion routes will be available and 29 shown without any diversion option. The impact is greater with connecting routes also severed during this period, resulting in greatly limiting access in those parishes during that period.

Unfortunately, Public Rights of Way is not a separate topic as requested. This is covered within the chapters of Traffic and Transport, Landscape and Visual, and Socio-Economics and Tourism.

The county council is currently preparing its Local Impact Report for submission in August 2023.

An over view of the Bramford to Twinstead application can be found here - [Bramford to Twinstead | National Infrastructure Planning \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](https://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/bramford-to-twinstead/)

Further details can be found on the National Grid website here - [Bramford to Twinstead | National Grid ET](https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/energy-projects/bramford-to-twinstead)

4. Norwich to Tilbury (formally East Anglia Green)

The scheme has just entered public consultation prior to a formal application. The public consultation opened on 27th June 2023 for a period of eight weeks.

The scheme effects a vast number of routes in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. This remains at pre application stage and it is now anticipated the application being submitted in late 2024.

The county council awaits further discussions with the applicant's agents regarding the scheme and the cumulative and in combination effects of multiple energy projects in this area.

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

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

Work on the main site is not expected to start until 2024. Discussions are ongoing with SPR regarding the proposed route of the diverted public footpath at the Friston site and the design of the accesses with respect to public rights of way onto the construction sites and haul roads.

6. East Anglia 3 offshore windfarm with onshore infrastructure

Works to create access off the road into construction compound along the cable route have been agreed. Discussions are underway regarding the design of access points from the highway into the proposed cable corridor in order to create new haul road and to access the existing jointing bays.

7. SEALINK – 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 scheme involves the construction of an onshore cable corridor linking to a new converter station that will link to an expanded National Grid substation at Friston (approved under the EA1n & 2 DCO consent)

There has been further stakeholder engagement regarding highways and public rights of way – summary of comments raised by the PRoW service below:

- Clarity and standardisation of terminology for identifying and labelling PRoW
- Use of the PRoW digital data for identifying correct location and status of PRoW
- Clarification of impact on ROW of access points/haul roads
- Request for a PRoW Strategy or Management Plan as part of the DCO submission, that identifies where and how the project affects PRoW in the pre commencement stages, construction and operational phase, management measures, mitigation and improvement measures.

8. EUROLINK – interconnector between Suffolk and Belgium

The scheme involves the construction of an onshore cable corridor linking to a new converter station that will link to an expanded National Grid substation at Friston (approved under the EA1n & 2 DCO consent). A non statutory consultation was carried out in late 2022, to which ROW & Access responded (see April paper).

END
AW/SCC July 2023

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings
Paper:	LAF 23/18
Author/Contact:	Steve Kerr / Andrew Woodin
Meeting:	27th July 2023, 2-4pm
Venue:	National Trust, Ickworth House

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 April, the Heads of Terms are currently being finalised between the parties, with the 16 week works programme expected to start in late summer.

At the end of June NR shared their draft communications strategy with SCC and it is intended to issue a joint NR/SCC press release in due course. NR have requested the strategy is not shared with other parties at this stage.

On 13 June SCC responded to NR with revisions to the amended £300K Funding Agreement supplied by NR in early May. The county council is currently waiting for NR to provide its formal response but it has again been confirmed the £300K will be received as a lump sum, upon the parties signing the Funding Agreement letter.

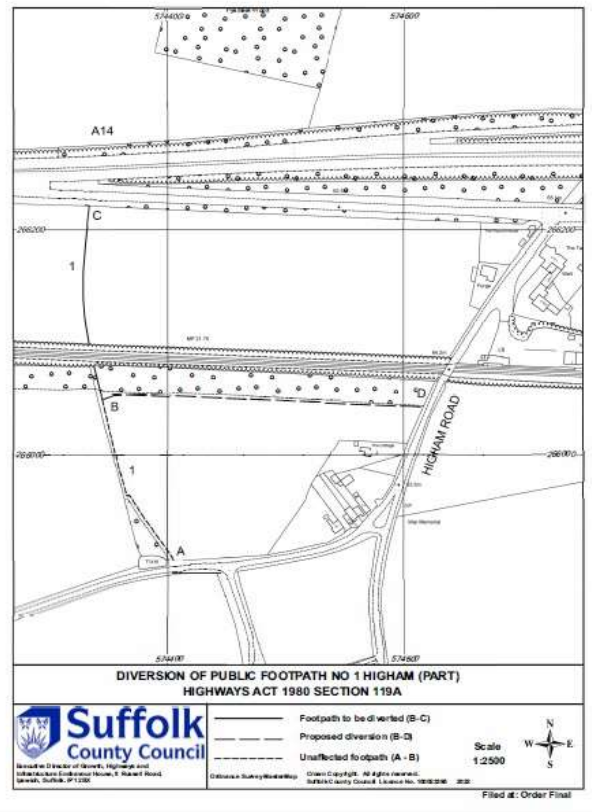
General/Countywide

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

Further to the update at the Forum's April meeting, unfortunately officers have to again report that there has been no progress or update provided on the part of NR. It is understood that the delays are associated with the contract awarded to the chosen contractor.

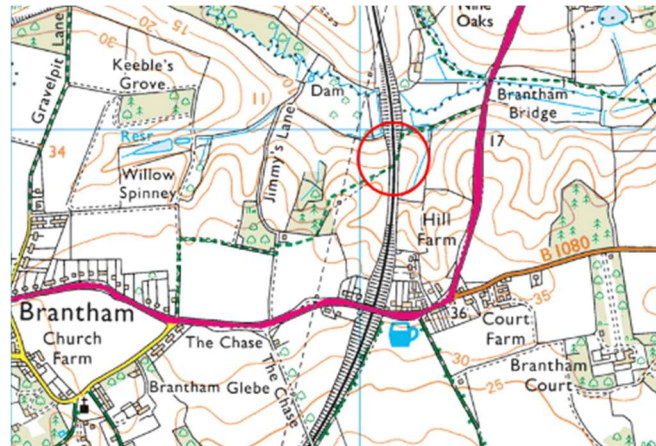
Footpath 1 Higham (High Bridge)

Further to the update provided to the Forum at its last meeting, the Order was confirmed on 3 May and the confirmation Notice advertised on 9 June. The diversion comes into effect on 12 July 2023, 70 days from the date of its confirmation.



All costs associated with the making of the Order are funded by NR. NR have confirmed the funding for the highway improvement works to Higham Road and the A14 verge will be available for 4 years from 1 March 2024 (Control Period 7) and officers will be in a position to commission these when the funding is available.

Footpath 6 Brantham (High Bridge)



Since the update provided to the Forum in April, officers have contacted NR to establish what progress has been made with respect to the consultations with affected landowners. On 10 July NR responded, advising they had not been in a position to approach the landowners yet but would be doing this shortly.

The plan below shows what is being proposed. The proposed diversion would see the majority of FP6 extinguished (points A-B-C), with diversionary routes proposed along Jimmy's Lane (A-D) and along a field margin, parallel to the A137 (C-E). The section E-F appears to run along existing highway verge and is in the control of the county council.



END
SK July 2023

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Ipswich Byway 38 / Restricted Byway 38A
Paper:	LAF 23/19
Author/Contact:	Steve Kerr
Meeting Date:	27th July 2023, 2-4 pm
Venue:	National Trust, Ickworth House

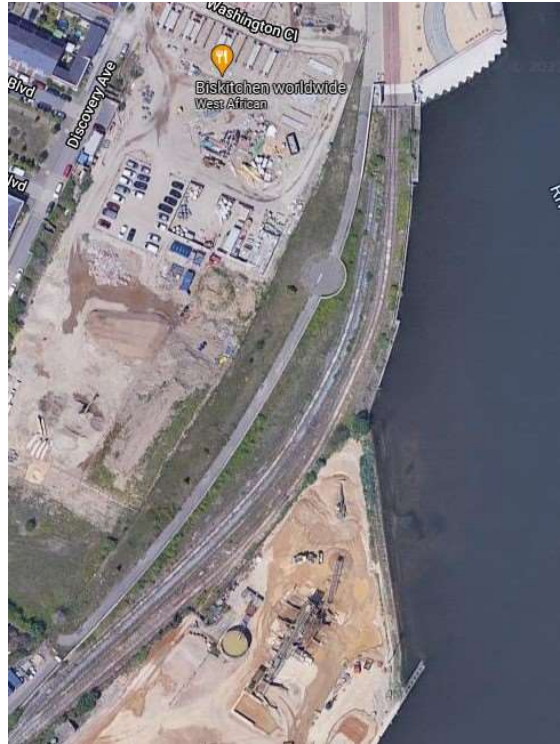
Further to the update provided to the Forum in April, the Public Open Space (POS) continues to be unavailable to the public.

At the Forum's last meeting, officers advised Ipswich Borough Council (IBC) had indicated they needed to enter into access licence agreements with all landowners in order to be able to maintain the POS. Members agreed to write a letter of complaint to the Helen Pluck, Chief Executive of IBC and request the POS be opened up as soon as possible. Officers advised that in advance of this, the Cabinet Member should be briefed.

On 15 June officers briefed Councillor Paul West, Cabinet Member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding.

The outcome of the meeting was that Councillor West advised against writing a letter of complaint at this stage but to liaise with Andrew Cook, Executive Director of Growth, Highways and Infrastructure and request he write to Helen to try and expedite the opening up of the POS to the public.

Andrew sent an email to IBC on 27 June and Helen replied on 6 July, advising she had asked her Director of Operations and Place to investigate and respond. Officers acknowledge that as an independent body, the Forum can still exercise their right to send the letter of complaint.



END
SK July 2023

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	The England Coast Path
Paper:	LAF 23/20
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Meeting Date:	27th July 2023, 2-4 pm
Venue:	National Trust, Ickworth House

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	Two reports at Stage 5; four reports at Stage 4
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.

The Five Suffolk Stretches

Harwich to Shotley Gate – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 12.7.23

No change since previous report

- Stage 4 and 5 (Determine and Open)
- The proposals were published on 22 January 2020 and received 7 objections.
- 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 Planning Inspector undertook a further visit in July 2022 and is currently considering the situation prior to advising the Secretary of State on the outstanding objections.

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 12.7.23

No change since previous report

- Stage 5 (Open) – but not yet available for use
- Work to establish the route is now taking place.

Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 12.7.23

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- Natural England published proposals on 9th December 2020
- 7 objections were received.

- A Planning Inspector visited the sites in November 2022 and is now considering the 7 objections.
- Two reports where no objections were received were approved in May 2023 by the Secretary of State Notice by the Secretary of State under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey, lengths FFB2 and FFB3 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 12.7.23

- 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.
- The Planning Inspector visited the stretch in July 2022, and we are waiting to hear the decision from the Secretary of State.

Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 12.7.23

- 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.
- Natural England has completed comments on the objections and representations received on Report 4 and has submitted them to Defra. The next stage will be a site visit from a planning inspector.

3. Suffolk Progress

The new project officer has focused on the establishment works on the Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry stretch. All works will be funded by Natural England by applying for grants from two NE held funds. The breadth of the establishment works is broad, ranging from tree safety surveys, design and construction of structures such as steps and culverts, new interpretation boards, bespoke heritage signs in conservation areas as well as the more familiar installation of new signposts and waymark posts. We have developed new technical specifications and a GIS method for recording works including the production of bespoke maps and scheme details for the works packs needed for the quotation process, in line with the requirements of the NE grant scheme. Understanding and clarifying the many legal and technical aspects of the National Trail works and grant process with NE has been a key piece of work during this initial period.

The first works package is for the signing and waymarking of the trail from Shotley Gate to the Orwell bridge and this work has been awarded to a local contractor subject to receiving approval for the grant application from Natural England. The project officer has also started to verify the infrastructure required on the Aldeburgh to Hopton stretch which was surveyed by NE (with SCC) in 2017/18, starting with the confirmed reports from Aldeburgh to Southwold.

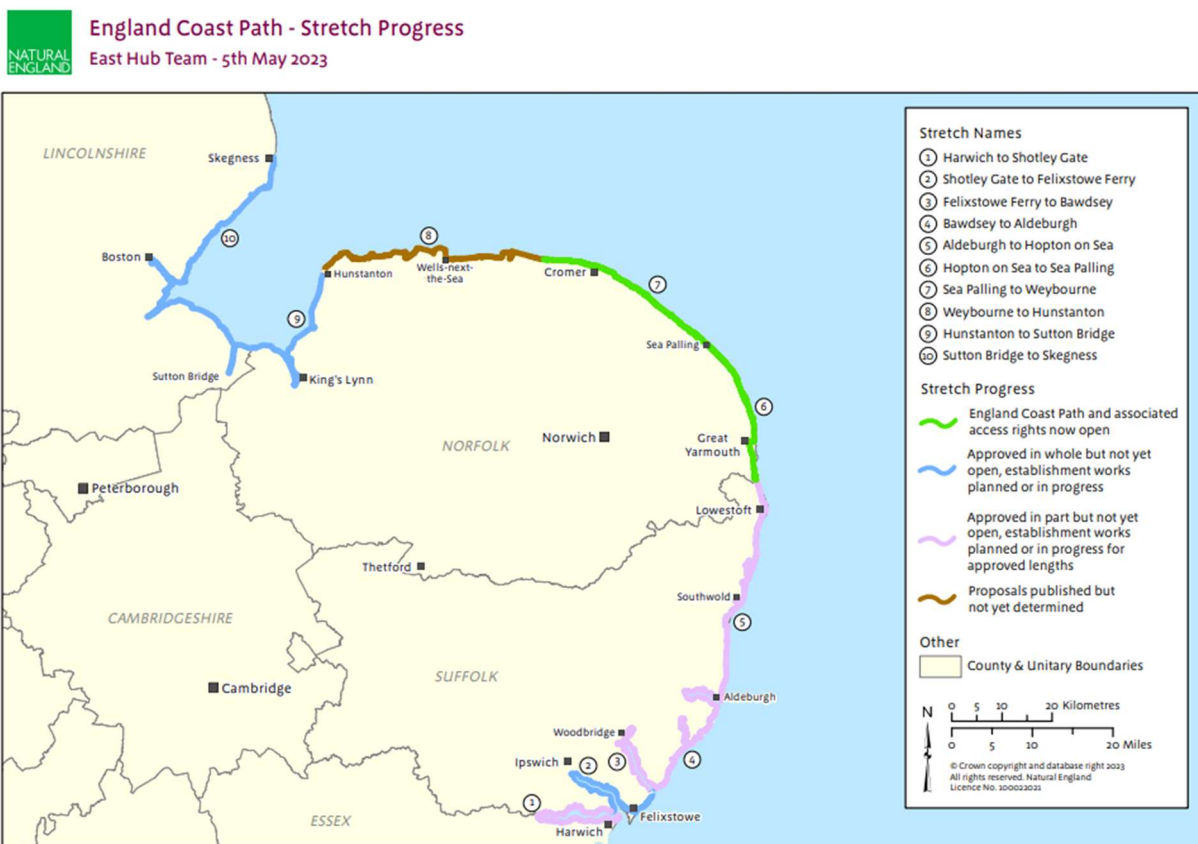
Discussions continue between SCC Public Health, National Highways, Natural England and the ROW & Access Manager on access by the King Charles III

England Coast Path over the Orwell Bridge. Public Health understand any restrictions on, or modifications to, access over the bridge will require the cooperation of Natural England, and will require funding. As it stands the intention is to improve signing and provide a rest stop on the new steps to be installed on the south west embankment, measures intended to provide reflection and intervention opportunities for those intending to take their lives.

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

Political support has been given by Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk county councils on establishing a regional trail. Officers will now move to start establishing the partnership.

5. England Coast Path – Progress Map for the East



END
AW/SCC July 2023