

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	Thursday 23 October 2025 2.00pm- 4.00pm
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Melton Parish Council, 17 Riduna Park, Melton, IP12 1QT

			Paper Number
1.	14:00	Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	14.05	Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 25/20
3.	14.15	Declaration of interest	
4.	14.20	NSIPS Approved	LAF 25/21 AW
5.	14.30	NSIPS in consultation	LAF 25/22 SB
6.	14.40	Solar Farms	LAF 25/23 SB
7.	15.00	Network Rail	LAF 25/24 SK
8.	15.15	King Charles III England Coast Path	LAF 25/25 CD
9.	15.30	SLAF Annual Report 2024 to 2025	Verbal AW
10.	15.40	Local Government review and devolution	Verbal AW
11.	15.50	Any Other Business	
12.	15.55	Public Question Time	
13.	16.00	Date of next meetings	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of Meeting
Paper:	LAF 25/20
Author/Contact:	Jennifer Green
Meeting Date:	Thursday 24 July 2025
Venue:	Endeavour House, LIME B2GFR8 - Benjamin Britten

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping.

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair); Christopher Bower (CB) (Vice Chair); Suzanne Bartlett (SB); Margaret Hancock (MH); Rowley Wison (RW); Clare Phillips (CP); Susan Mobbs (SM); Monica Pipe (MP); Ed Thompson (ET); Joanna Spicer (JS)

SCC Officers Present: Andrew Woodin (AW); Steve Kerr (SK); Claire Dickson (CD); Sam Bye (SB); David Falk (DF) Benjiman Grapes (BG)

Minutes: Jennifer Green (JG)

Presentation: Benjiman Grapes SCC Green Access Delivery Manager

Apologies and Absences: Jim Wayman (JWa); Adrian Shepherd (AS)

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 April 2025 LAF25/11 were reviewed and agreed. These will now be published and made available to the public via the SCC website.

MH advised typo amendment.

JS requested apologies added to draft.

JG advised that amendment details were received and noted.

ACTION: JG to confirm, amend and add to website.

These will be published and made available to the public via the SCC website.

3. Declaration of Interest – None.

4. Regional local access forum meeting verbal report BH

BH gave an update regarding the regional access forum on 16th July 2025.

BH stated that a presentation from Cambridgeshire NFU about ELMS was given and PowerPoint presentation sent.

BH stated that there is capital funding available Open Access for schemes. Funding is limited and for an agreement of 5 years.

MP asked would this apply to permissive paths. BH confirmed yes.

BH mentioned the all-party parliamentary group call for evidence regarding outdoor recreation and access to nature inquiry to changes in policy and legislation. Report should be published beginning of September. Short timeframe for consultation responses.

AW advised for land managers to look at permissive paths regarding capital funding, these permissive routes can link to existing public rights of way as well and that can be useful. Permissive paths are not on the definitive map.

ACTION: JG to circulate RLAF minutes.

5. NSIPS Approved

SZC: AW advised the forum of Sizewell C discharge of requirement 10 (plan that implements all the changes to the rights of way network) and construction of the marine bulk import facility (MBIF). The right of way will go under the MBIF structure as illustrated in paper LAF 25/12. Other:

- BR19 still open, alternative route not built yet.
- Government final SZC investment is £38billion.

East Anglia Windfarm: impacts several rights of way, with the bridleway and Sandlings Walk impacted due to the location of the haul road.

6. NSIPS IN Consultation

SB advised:

- Bramford to Twinstead is the major volume of work currently with discharge of conditions. Management plans and landscape plans are coming in and the team are looking to see if PRowWs being looked after and protected.
- A meeting took place to discuss the final drafting of the management plan. National Grid engagement with Suffolk and Essex is positive.

- Suffolk and Essex not in distribution list for SLAF regarding consultations. This is being chased to add SLAF to the distribution list.
- On 30th May cabinet members objected to the current Sealink proposals.
- SCC are engaged with ongoing discussions with the statements of common ground. We are putting case forward but cannot discuss in detail due to confidentiality.

MP asked is there any improvement for PRoWs to be treated separately in plans and SB responded. PRoW's to be treated separately but are included in transport meetings with Steve Merry's team. SCC are pushing for PRoW's to be a separate subject in plans.

BH advised that SLAF response to Sea Link was submitted, deadline extended.

BH stated that large solar farms, non NSIPS are coming in. Could not find any information about a proposal at Friston. SB advised that this application has not been submitted yet. A lot of solar farms are coming in.

BH asked can we have a SLAF paper on large scale solar farms.

ACTION: SB to provide SLAF paper on large scale solar farms

JS asked about mitigation regarding solar farms. How can we keep up with communications? DF advised SCC website page for NSIPS is very good.

CB stated that documents including PRoWs maps are buried deep in applicant's websites and AW advised parish councils are interested in planning so should be aware of NSIPS in their area.

For Norwich to Tilbury there were ongoing discussions on the statement of common ground and construction management plans to safeguard PRoW. SCC were pushing for PRoW to have their own section in documents and regular engagement, similar to Bramford to Twinstead regarding engagement and meetings included in SCC Transport strategy team.

SB stated Lion Link had seismic testing on the beach. At present no engagement meetings to report.

SB advised no further updates regarding Ecopower, there is a statutory consultation in Autumn 2025.

SB advised a site visit took place at White Elm. The application was subsequently withdrawn but it may come back in a different format.

MP asked about coordinating closures and works. SB advised we must communicate impact and co-ordination of works. Applicants to look at the commutative impact of everything else that's happening in that immediate area.

7. SZC PRow Fund – presentation by Benjamin Grapes – Green Access Delivery manager

BG gave a brief introduction about his role and the PRow fund project. Annette Robinson is leading on the Leiston Walking and Cycling Fund. BG overseeing the wider PRow legacy fund projects.

BG advised the project is governed by the right of way working group. These occur every 3 months but as the project progresses the meetings will be every 6 months.

There are 3 areas of work within the project itself which is

- Promoting routes, connecting businesses to the network.
- Mitigating the impact of the works by improving the rights of way network.
- Aldeburgh to Southwold amenity route for walking and cycling.

CB asked is the amenity route a multiuser route. BG confirmed yes and the surface to be discussed. There are 27 projects within the PRow fund with satellite sites including Pakenham and he has rescoped the routes inspection and all the work to go forward. The county council will next liaise with all key stakeholders and communities.

BG will map the whole project so mapping will be made available to key stakeholders.

DF explained he worked with Annette Robinson to look at infrastructure/furniture along the amenity route. Through a SZC tourism fund, discussion will be held on how to collaborate, including Minsmere and National Trust sites.

BH asked what the timescale for delivery - 10 years, and we are 1 year into the project already.

JS asked how good news stories will be communicated.

ACTION: SCC will raise this with RoWWG in September. Important to link this with wider SZC comms plan and coordinate with SCC comms team.

RW – SCC should sign routes better with waymarking along the way especially around Sizewell. This was noted.

CD advised Discovering Suffolk has mapping with QR codes.

ACTION: JG to circulate presentation slides

8. SLAF Annual Report 2024 to 2025

AW asked if members have read the draft annual report. [Post meeting note: the report is likely to go to Cabinet in November, or October if a meeting is held that month and there is room on the agenda.]

AW noted SLAF's annual report it is based on everything they've done over the last year. Any changes must be to the point and concise. BH will present this report to cabinet.

AW has pulled out the main issues for the body of the report including energy schemes, the A12, Network Rail and the King Charles III England Coast Path.

JS –Cabinet should be mindful of NSIPs impact on PRow and Green Access

ACTION: Circulate draft SLAF annual report

9. Local Government Review and devolution verbal report AW

AW advised that devolution would coincide with May 2026 elections; timescales are not obvious for local LGR.

The county council will submit its business case in September and two government consultations to come. Possibly more information in the new year. Devolution consultation finished mid-June and awaiting approval. There will be further consultations and AW advised SLAF members to look out for them when they arise.

Note: LGR and devolution are two separate processes.

10. King Charles III England Coast Path

CD gave an update and advised Deben stretch Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey, works will be completed soon. The proposed opening date is 24th September, with a possible SLAF site visit in October. Physical works are restrained due to ecological windows and noise impact of works in the environment.

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh was approved early May and the team is busy rescoping works, due to environmental changes on the ground from 6 years ago. Ecological windows are a restraint, but more information will be available at the next SLAF meeting

The majority of the Aldeburgh to Hopton route is open except Southwold to Pakefield. SCC are still waiting for secretary of state to approve and sign off. No final date available.

Positive news regarding the Orwell Bridge alternative route this does not change ECP Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry but Green Access team working on an alternative Orwell Bridge inland route that will be available at the end of this year. There will be signage and interpretation boards.

MH asked as the route will incorporate the Ipswich Waterfront can the open space Heras fencing be replaced with something more attractive.

SK advised that we do not have authority to move fence, the temporary Heras fencing is within the highway. Currently work is at phase 1 to open up the open space by stopping up part of the width and to coincide with the creation of a new Bridleway to link to Bath Street that will add a dedicated level crossing across the railway with picket fence and gate. Phase 2 would be looking at a permanent solution and fencing.

ACTION: JG to circulate Orwell Bridge alternative route.

11. Network Rail

SK gave an update regarding Gipsy Lane including

- Small no cycling signs have been installed at the junction with Stowmarket Road footway and at Gipsy Lane.
- Officers are still liaising with the District Council to look to place a dog waste bin at the Stowmarket Road end.
- A dog waste bin is already present at Gipsy Lane.
- Scoping is currently taking place regarding PROW improvements, as part of the funding agreement settlement.
- The commuted sum amount is still to be provided in respect of the flood debris clearance at the culvert.
- Officer costs are being reimbursed by NR.

SK gave an update regarding 5 crossings involved in the TWAO. This included

- Gislingham – Crossing temporarily closed for NR maintenance. Works depend on activity at the badger sett.
- Lords Level crossing infrastructure was removed in August.
- Paynes awaiting resubmission of design.
- Hawk End Lane quality of work revised and rectified. Officers to inspect end of July. NR are responsible for maintaining the route for 12 months.

AWr asked what the status of Butts Road is

ACTION: SK to confirm what the status is of Butts Road

12. Definitive Map consolidation project

SK explained the digital process of definitive maps and consolidation has been a long running project.

SK explained the legislative background and statutory duty of the surveying authority to keep the definitive map and statement under continuous review and accounting for legal events.

BH thanked the team for all their hard work.

SK advised that Thingoe is the remaining LEMO to be completed, the timeframe would be mid-August for the preparation of the DM&S. The working copies of the definitive map will be uploaded to SCC's website.

13. A12 Improvements

DF gave an update about plans to improve A12 from the junction with A14 up to Melton junction. SLAF provided feedback. David Falk and Ben Heather had a site visit to look at proposals to improve walking and cycling access beside the A12. There will be another opportunity to look at the proposals and respond to the planning applications later this year.

The forum asked for greater crossings on the A12 at Seven Hills junction but advised there is no funding for this

Improvements for Barrack Square junction for access to Brightwell Lakes. To the west the Green Access team have a section 106 for improvements further North.

Section near Park and Ride access is available on the ground within the highway verge. There are well walked existing footpaths on the ground which are cut. SCC looked at cycling access from the underpass at Martlesham. The gradients are very steep alongside the A12 northwards. South of the A12 is not suitable for cycling access, cross field paths do not lend itself to this, so officers are pressing for improved footpath access as you can follow the footpath network into the Fynn Valley. In addition, there are concrete steps on the A12 B1438 junction near well walked, well signed routes. The steps are very steep and do not lend themselves for cycling. SCC will be pressing for footpath access including handrails on steps.

14. Open Access Consultation

DF advised Natural England placed restrictions a couple of years ago at Euston Estate due to deer rutting season. Public access at this time interrupts land management. Euston Estate approached Natural England for a seasonal closure.

DF stated SCC are happy with re-consultation of this closure. The site is land locked and does not contain a right of way. There is permissive access. The closure is for two months of the calendar year.

15. Any Other Business

16. Public Question Time

17. Date of next meetings

23 October 2025. Venue TBC.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	NSIPS Approved (Sizewell C, SPR East Anglia, Bramford to Twinstead)
Paper:	LAF 25/21
Author/Contact:	Annette Robinson
Meeting:	Thursday 23 October 2025 2.00pm- 4.00pm
Venue:	Melton Parish Council, 17 Riduna Park, Melton, IP12 1QT

Sizewell C

Construction works on the many highway schemes are underway – northern and southern park and ride sites, new rail branch line, roundabouts on the A12 at Darsham, Yoxford, Kelsale, Friday Street (Aldeburgh junction) and Stratford St Andrew, plus the Two Village Bypass, the Sizewell Link Road and around the main development site in Leiston.

There are ongoing discussions with SZC managers and the various principal contractors to develop plans for the management of the numerous public rights of way which will be affected by these widespread works, to ensure that there is a useable access network for communities. The starting point are the provisions that were put in place by the development consent order and the environmental impact assessments, which generally concluded that PRow would be kept open during construction works and hence no additional mitigation was provided.

There are several temporary closures in place or planned, for example to lay power cables in the bridleway at Kenton Hills (BR19). There is ongoing monitoring of any affected route.

1. Works on the coast

There are a number of works proposed on the coastal frontage that will affect the public footpath/King Charles III England Coast Path. These are:-

- Construction of the temporary marine outfall – more details have been received. This is a pipe from the C site taking cleaned surface water (rainfall) to a headwall emptying onto a gabion mattress on the beach. It will pass underneath the footpath then continue as a surface mounted pipe. Timing of works is to be confirmed but there will be a small localised diversion of the coastal path.

- Investigation and removal of old metallic material buried in the beach to ensure safe installation of the piles for the overhead marine bulk import facility. Scheduled for mid-October; the footpath will remain open but there could be some delays. Details are yet to be confirmed.
- The construction of the marine bulk import facility (MBIF). Currently (23.9.25) we are still awaiting confirmation of how SZC intend to manage access whilst constructing the MBIF and/or what mitigation they intend to provide. The SZC Rights of Way & Access Strategy stated that the path 'would be kept open during the construction except in rare circumstances where it is unsafe to do so. In such instances, use of the temporary inland diversion of the coast path will be necessary'. However, this temporary inland diversion has not yet been constructed.

2. Discharge of Requirements

SCC have discharged requirement 10, Public Right of Way Implementation Plan for the Two Village Bypass and are currently consulting on the Implementation Plan for the Sizewell Link Road.

3. **Project Updates** - East Suffolk SZC Governance Group webpage has the minutes and presentations from the various community forums. The link below is to the most recent SZC presentation which was given to the Northern Transport Forum

[6-August-Presentation.pdf](#)

4. Leiston Walking and Cycling fund

This is a Deed of Obligation fund for the improvement of the walking and cycling facilities in Leiston and is being delivered by the Highways NSIP team working in partnership with the town council supported by the SCC Definitive Map team. The schemes include improving the surface of existing public footpaths, creation of new public bridleways and improvements to existing footways. Works are due to start on improving a link from residential areas to the primary and high school using both SZC funds and s106 funds received in 2018 from a new housing development.

East Anglia Two Offshore Windfarm

- The main site access road which starts on the B1069 south of Knodishall and heads west to Friston has been built. The public bridleway (and Sandlings Walk) from Knodishall to Friston is now closed over a short section and a new route has been constructed.

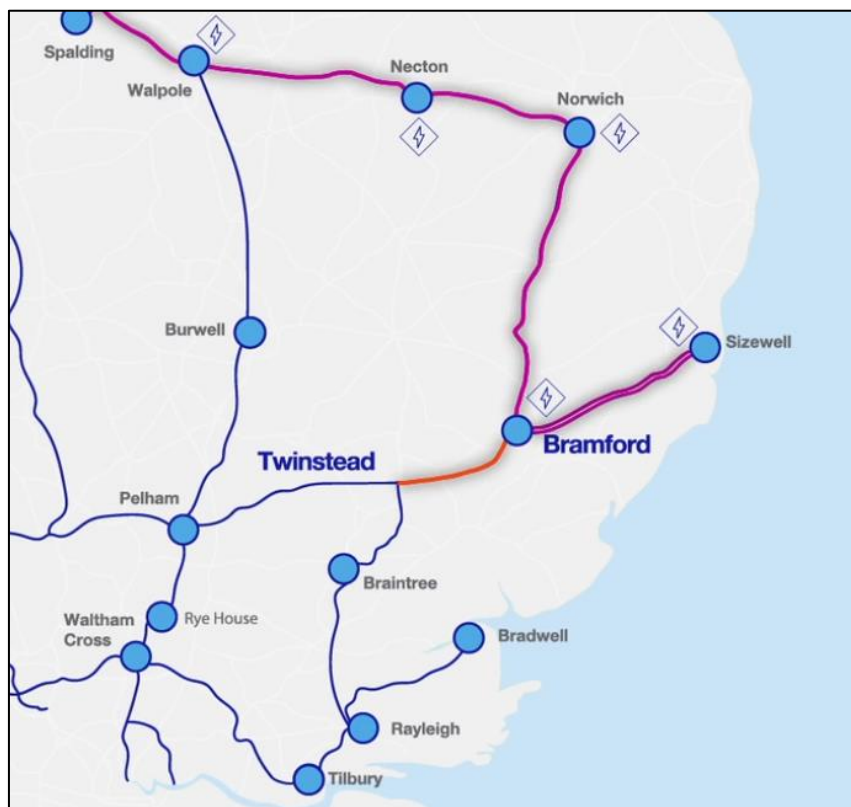
- Work has commenced on the construction of the alternative public footpath at the Friston substation site.
- Preliminary work is due to start on the cable corridor; detailed archaeology surveys followed by fencing and vegetation clearing. Discussions have been held with Scottish Power and the principal contractor to agree the management and communication for the numerous temporary closures that will be needed across the cable corridor. This will be captured in a PRow Management Plan (DCO requirement) that will be submitted to SCC for approval.

National Grid Bramford to Twinstead

National Grid's scheme will reinforce the electricity transmission network between Bramford substation in Suffolk and Twinstead Tee in Essex. The scheme involves constructing up to 18km of overhead line, around 11km of underground cable (through the Dedham Vale National Landscape) and removal of up to 27km of existing lines.

Details of the scheme can be found here:

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/the-great-grid-upgrade/bramford-to-twinstead>



Key updates to date:

- Details of the Bramford to Twinstead application can be found here:

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020002>

- The examination for Bramford to Twinstead concluded on 15th March 2024.
- In September 2024 the application for development consent was approved – the SoS decision letter is 39 pages long and a link is below:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020002/EN020002-001919-Bramford%20to%20Twinstead%20-%20Final%20Decision%20Letter.pdf>

Latest update:

SCC PRow team are currently assessing and responding to various management plans linked to the delivery of this scheme, including the PRow Management Plan, and commenting in detail on proposed PRow diversions to ensure they are convenient and appropriate for PRow users, and using the latest guidance by BHS regarding equestrian users near construction sites.

The list of public rights of way (PRow) projects contained in document '[The Sizewell C Projects 9.113 PRow Fund and Leiston Walking and Cycling Projects](#)' have been re-assessed. The re-assessment is based on:

1. latest costings – PRow works have experienced significant inflation on materials since the list was originally scoped,
2. improvements to the PRow network – since the list was originally developed on-going maintenance programmes have delivered some improvements,
3. alternative delivery options – a result of works by SZC on the PRow network means some of the listed projects are now covered when re-instated by SZC post works.

The revised list of projects will be presented to the SZC PRow Working Group in due course. Once agreed with the working group, the county council will commence engagement with stakeholders where required, to finalise the details of each project. Delivery of first projects is due to commence in spring 2026.

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	NSIPS in consultation
Paper:	LAF 25/22
Author/Contact:	Samantha Bye
Meeting:	Thursday 23 October 2025 2.00pm – 4.00pm
Venue:	Melton Parish Council, 17 Riduna Park, Melton, IP12 1QT

Details of all NSIPs affecting Suffolk can be found on Suffolk County Council's website here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects-including-nsips/nsips-in-suffolk>

In response to the number of NSIPs in Suffolk SCC produced a Supplementary Guidance Document which can be seen here: [green-access-prow-guidance.pdf](#)

1. **Sea Link**

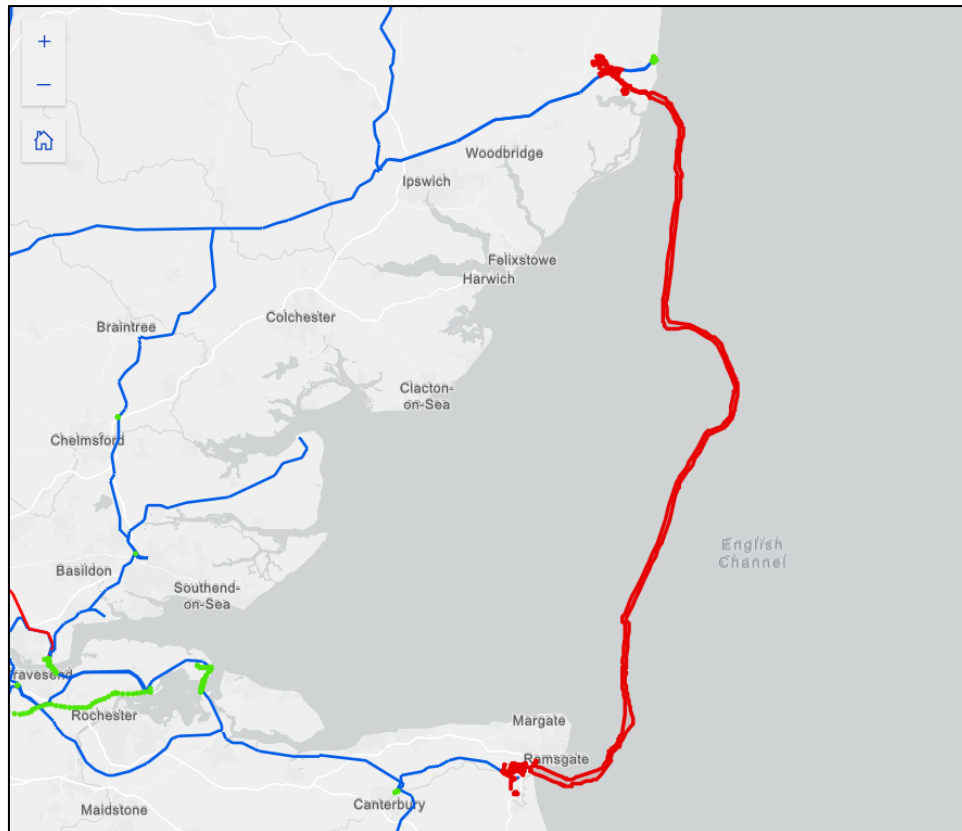
Sealink is a 130km long offshore cable with new onshore infrastructure allowing power to flow in either direction between Suffolk and Kent, depending on where renewable energy is being generated at that time and where in the country power is needed. The scheme's onshore infrastructure includes a converter station east of Saxmundham, substations and new underground and overhead electricity lines, as well as upgrading existing overhead electricity lines.

Details of the scheme can be found here:

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/the-great-grid-upgrade/sea-link>

An interactive map of the scheme can be seen here:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/dc9df778577248738777772709f8a970>



Planning Inspectorate details of the project are here: [Sea Link - Project information](#)

Key updates to date:

- Sea Link held a series of topic workshops following statutory consultation to address concerns raised by SCC over the impact on the access network and amenity value for users.
- Sea Link undertook further, targeted, consultation introducing changes including an alteration to the cable route north of Aldeburgh, confirmation of the proposed access route to the converter station, changes to access and associated bridge over the River Fromus, and outlining how coordination with other NSIP projects had evolved.
- An on-going issue for SCC PRoW is to have green access treated as a separate theme within consultation. At present it is placed within 4 separate topic themes.
- On 23 April 2025 the Planning Inspectorate accepted the application for development consent for Sea Link.
- At this Pre-examination stage anyone with an interest has until 23 June 2025 to register to have their say:
[Register to have your say about a national infrastructure project - National Infrastructure Planning](#).

Latest update:

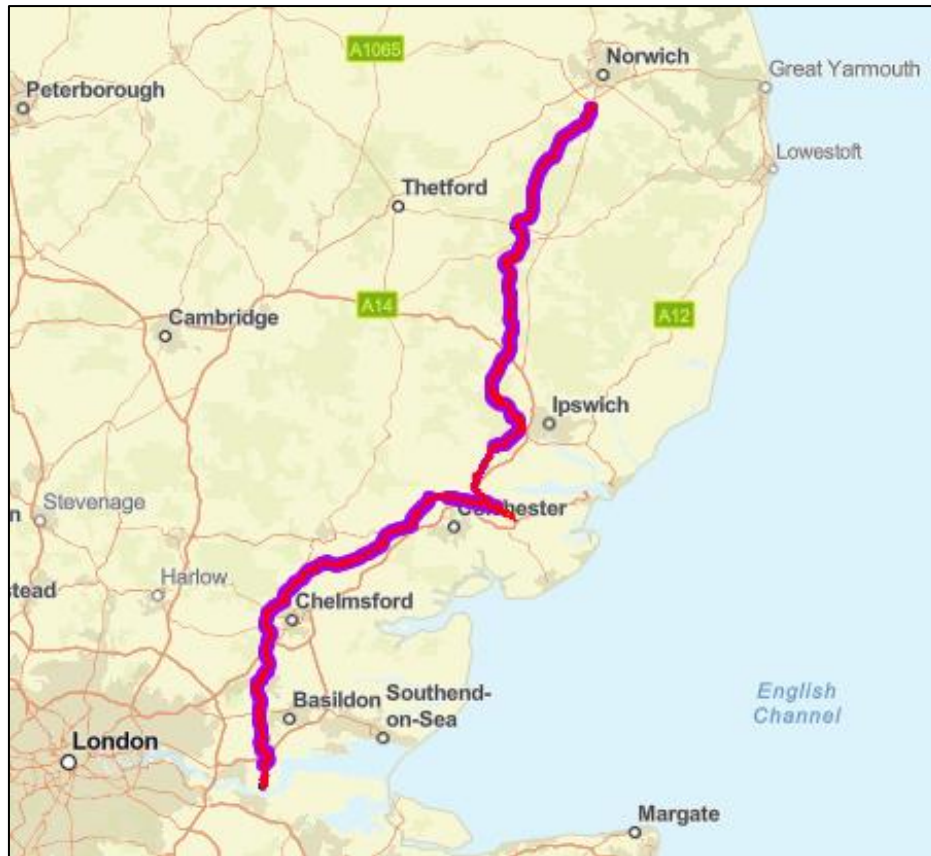
- At SCC Cabinet meeting on 13 May 2025, members were to be recommended to object to the current proposals for Sea Link.
- PRow team are engaged in on-going discussions regarding a Statement of Common Ground which is a written document that outlines areas of agreement and disagreement between parties about the development.
- Pre-examination - Interested parties were encouraged to submit Relevant Representations regarding the proposed development between 24 April and 23 June 2025, however, the Planning Inspectorate opened a further period running from 18 July until 18 August 2025 for parties who had not been notified to submit relevant representations by the previous deadline.

2. Norwich to Tilbury (formally East Anglia Green)

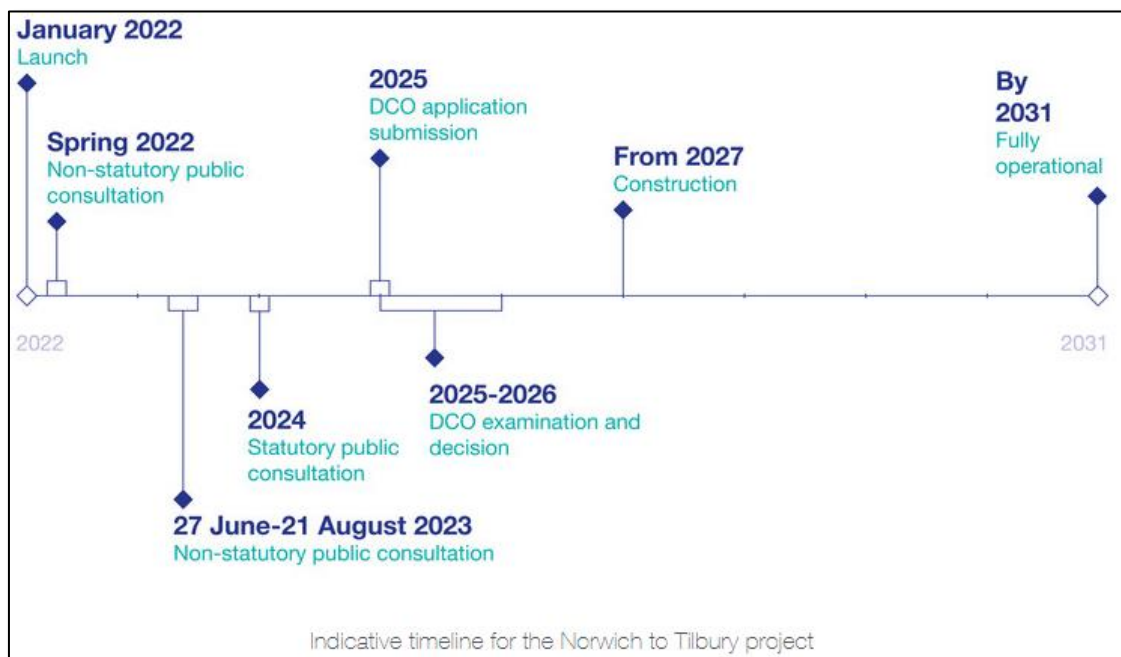
Norwich to Tilbury will reinforce the high voltage power network in East Anglia between existing substations at Norwich Main in Norfolk, Bramford in Suffolk, and Tilbury in Essex, as well as connect new offshore wind generation. The scheme will build approximately 160km of overhead lines and pylons, over 20km of underground cabling through the Dedham Vale National Landscape, and a new substation on the Tendring Peninsula.

Details of the scheme can be found here: <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/norwich-to-tilbury>

An interactive map of the scheme can be found here:
<https://norwichtotilburymap.nationalgrid.com/>



The timetable published by National Grid is shown below.



Key updates to date:

- Statutory consultation took place in summer 2024.
- SLAF's responded to that consultation in July 2024
- National Grid provided an opportunity for feedback on the consultation with targeted consultations in Norfolk and Suffolk between January and March 2025. Details below:
- <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/norwich-to-tilbury/document-library#4257225834-1659806241-3>
- This scheme is in pre-application stage with the application expected to be submitted by August 2025. A link to the Planning Inspectorate website with further details is here: [Norwich to Tilbury - Project information](#)

Latest update:

- A submission is expected mid-late August 2025
- The PROW team are very engaged in developing the Statement of Common Ground for PROW, and for Traffic and Transport.
- The application for Development Consent was submitted on 29 August 2025.

3. LionLink (formerly EUROLINK)

LionLink is a partnership between National Grid and Dutch partner TenneT to build a subsea cable between Great Britain and the Netherlands connecting a Dutch offshore windfarm to the GB and Dutch electricity grids.

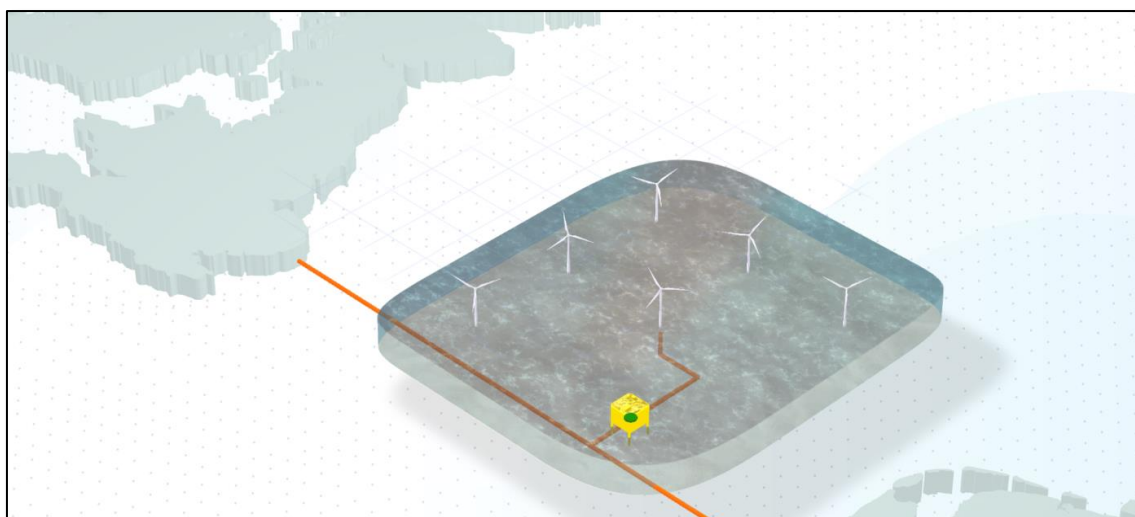
In Suffolk the scheme involves landfall of the subsea cable near Walberswick and the construction of an onshore cable corridor to a new onshore converter station east of Saxmundham. Onshore cabling will then link to an expanded National Grid substation at Friston (approved under the EA1North & 2 DCO consent). In Holland a new converter station is being constructed offshore.

Details of the scheme including an animation on proposals can be found here:

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/national-grid-ventures/lionlink/about>

The Planning Inspectorate website for information is here:

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020033>



Key updates to date:

- Detailed responses have been submitted by SCC's rights of way and access team expressing concern over the cumulative effects on the PRow network of this project with other east coast NSIPs.
- The county council has pressed for a co-ordinated approach with other NSIPs for the cable corridor and design of the proposed converter station site.
- As with Sea Link, the PRow topic is split across different themes making responding less easy.
- The team have responded to Transport Assessments to protect the PRow network (such as PRow conditions, user surveys, construction methods, use of banksmen, permanent infrastructure, and PRow diversions).

Latest update:

- Walberswick has been selected as the landfall site.
- Statutory consultation is due in Autumn/Winter 2025.
- The current timeline is for the Development Consent Order to be submitted in 2026.
- Seismic testing took place in June 2025 on Walberswick beach.

4. EcoPower

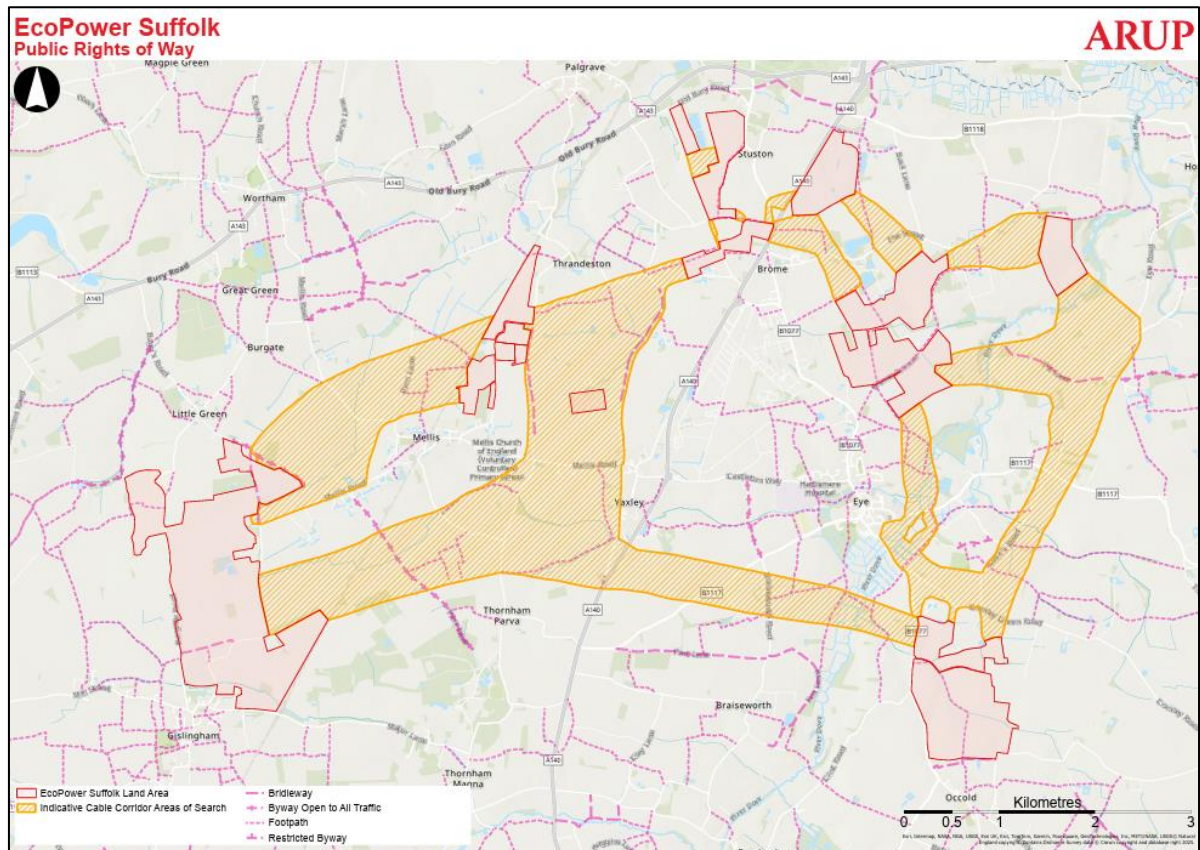
EcoPower Suffolk is a solar farm and a co-located Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure with grid connection via underground cable to the Yaxley substation.

The project area extends close to various villages in the Mid Suffolk District including Yaxley, Brome, Gislingham, Mellis, Eye and Occold. Collectively, the proposed energy farm will cover a land area of around 600ha.

EcoPower are aiming to submit their DCO application to PINS in 2026.

Details of the scheme can be found here:

<https://ecopowersuffolk.com/>



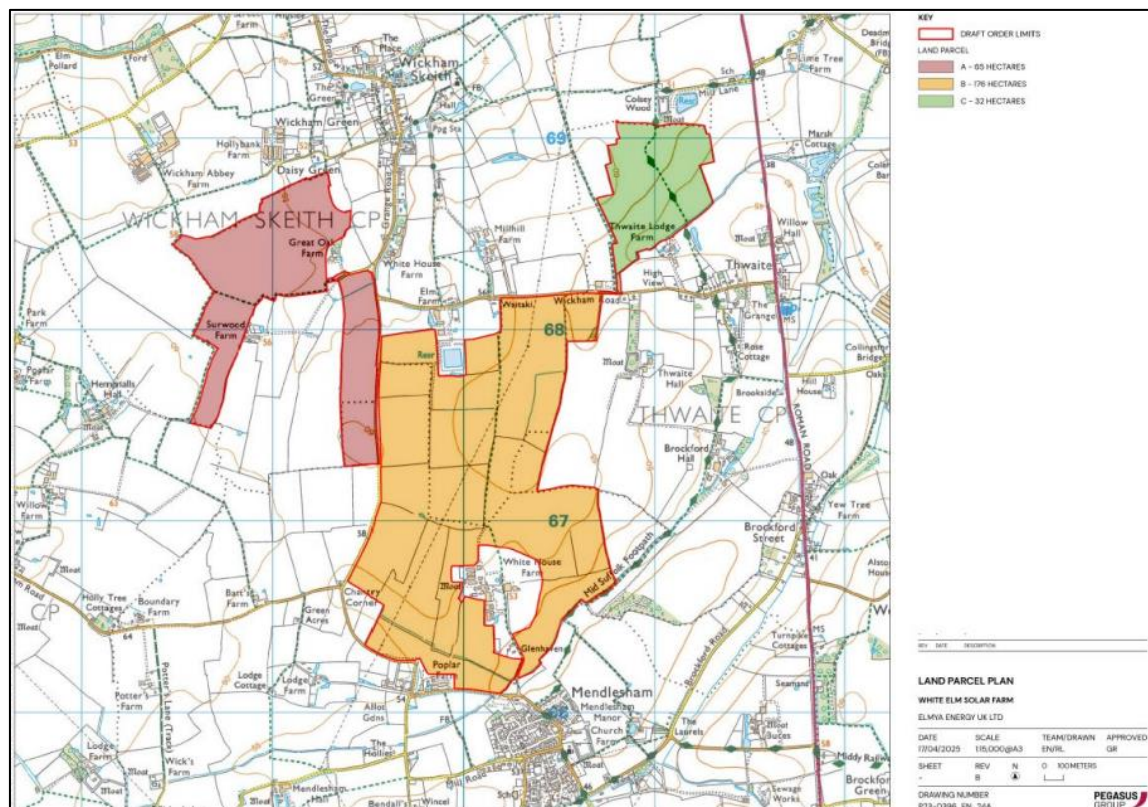
White Elm is a proposed solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS) on land north of Mendlesham.

Details of the scheme including an animation on proposals can be found here:

<https://www.whiteelmsolarfarm.com/>

The Planning Inspectorate website for information is here:

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110003>



Latest update:

- From 19 May to 30 June 2025, White Elm ran a non-statutory consultation for local communities, wider stakeholders and consultees to feed into detailed designs to be shared at statutory consultation in winter 2025.
- On Saturday 24th May 2025 the following was posted on the project website by the promoter:
"The project team has taken a decision to pause development of the project indefinitely. Please note that the ongoing non-statutory consultation has been cancelled with immediate effect. This includes the two public consultation events on Saturday 31st May and Wednesday 4th June 2025. We ask that any work being undertaken to respond to the proposals shared in our non-statutory consultation be cancelled."

Planning Inspectorate Project Stage	Non-statutory Consultation	Pre-Application	Acceptance	Pre-Examination	Examination	Recommendation	Decision
1. Sea Link							
2. Norwich to Tilbury							
3. LionLink							
4. EcoPower							
5. White Elm							

KEY:							
Stage Completed							
Stage In Progress							

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Solar Farms
Paper:	LAF 25/23
Author/Contact:	Jasmine Piper-Williams & Samantha Bye.
Meeting:	Thursday 23 October 2025 2.00pm – 4.00pm
Venue:	Melton Parish Council, 17 Riduna Park, Melton, IP12 1QT

This paper sets out the current situations for solar farm applications that PRow have been consulted on in the last 5 years in Suffolk.

The map below indicates all the applications graded by size to help understand locations and assess any potential cluster sites.

The table lists all of the applications listed by size. The text sets out all the sites down to 40MW.

Information on all the sites can be emailed to members by request.

The three energy NSiPs listed in red here are covered by the NSiP paper.

The Rights of Way Solar Farm Position Statement is included in this paper. (Appendix)

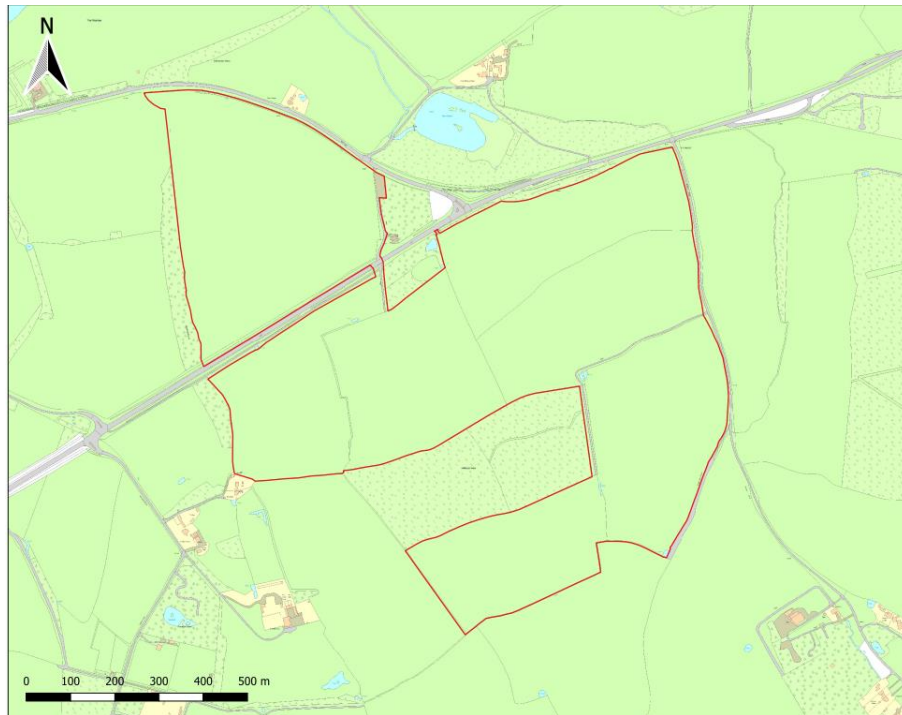
Map 1. Current Solar Farm applications from 30MW to NSiP.

NSiP	
40-99 MW	
30-39 MW	
<30 MW	

Land To The South Of Church Farm, Somersham IP8 4PN And Land To The East Of The Channel, Burstall	Somersham and Burstall	DC/20/05895	Permitted through appeal	40-49 MW
Land at Chediston Hall	Chediston	DC/25/2021/FUL	Awaiting Decision	30-39 MW
Land at Grove Farm and Land East of the Railway Line	Bentley	DC/23/05656	Application Refused	30-39 MW
Land at Access Road from Brandon to Fenhouse Farm	Brandon	DC/25/0885/FUL	Awaiting Decision	<30 MW
Land North of Lion Grove	Palgrave	DC/23/05426	Application Permitted	<30 MW
Land South of Easton Lane, Glevering Park	Wickham Market	DC/25/2997/FUL	Awaiting Decision	<30 MW
Land at Park Farm, Loudham Hall	Loudham	DC/21/5550/FUL	Awaiting Decision	<30 MW
Land North of Wales End Road	Cavendish	DC/25/1027/FUL	Awaiting Decision	<30 MW
Access Road In and Around Eriswell	Eriswell	DC/25/0189/FUL	Awaiting Decision	<30 MW
Land West of Boxted	Boxted	DC/23/05127	Awaiting Decision	<30 MW
Manor Farm, Grove Road	Knodishall	DC/24/4431/FUL	Awaiting Decision	<30 MW
Land West of Blacksmiths Lane	Earl Stonham	DC/23/04644	Application Permitted	<30 MW
Land Adjacent to Mendlesham Manor	Mendlesham	DC/23/00979	Application Permitted	<30 MW
Land to the South of Sugghenham Farm	Rickinghall	DC/21/06825	Permitted through appeal	<30 MW

Current Solar Farms 40-99MW

DC/25/03257- Consulted July 2025- BMSDC- Land At Stone Cottages Bury Road Botesdale IP22 1QH- Planning Application - Construction of ground mounted solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure which will have the ability to export 49.9MW (AC) electricity. Construction of new vehicular access. (EIA Development)

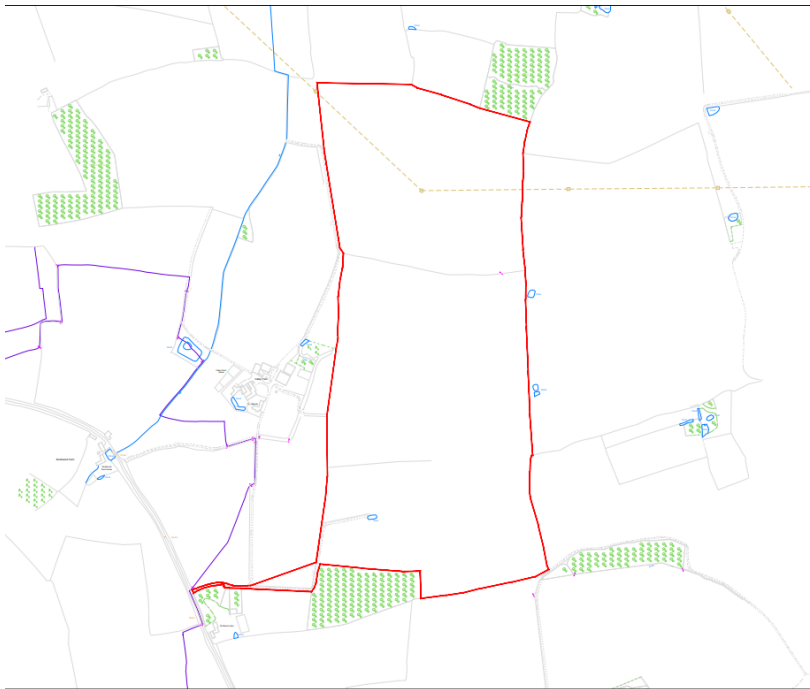


“Installation and operation of a solar farm together with all associated infrastructure, works and equipment, including landscape and ecological enhancement and access for a temporary period of 40 years.”

Application status: Awaiting decision (as of 02/09/25)

The PROW and Green Access team added informative notes to their response.

DC/25/02730- Consulted July 2025 and August 2025- BMSDC- Valley Farm Hessest Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0AH-Full Planning Application - Installation and operation of a Solar Farm together with all associated works, equipment and infrastructure

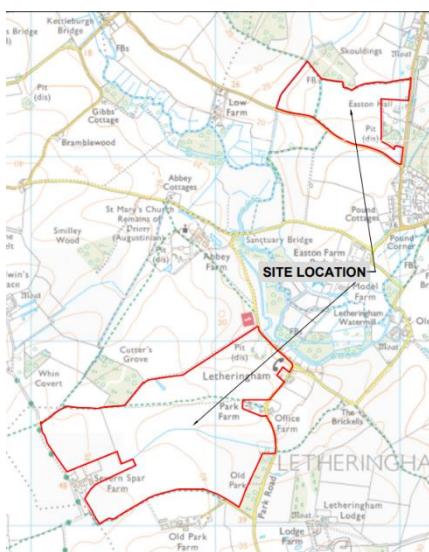


The area of the solar farm is approximately 38 Ha. Full planning application for a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Farm with potential capacity up to 42 Mega Watt (MW) known as 'Valley Solar Farm', located on land southwest of Drinkstone Green, Hessest, Suffolk. This development will provide a renewable source to create electricity, capable to supply 9,660 homes, which will be supplied to domestic and commercial consumers via the national grid distribution network.

Application status: Awaiting decision (as of 10/09/25)

In July 2025, the PROW and Green Access team issued a holding objection on this application due to the proposed closure of the PROW for 9 months. In August 2025, the team were prepared to accept the proposal with some amendments to the plans, as well as fencing being set back the correct distance from the PROW.

DC/25/2733/FUL- Consulted August 2025- ESC- Parcels To Northwest Of Easton And South West Of Letheringham Suffolk- Full planning application for the construction and operation of a Solar Farm (49.9MW) and Battery Energy Storage Scheme (50MW) with all associated works, equipment, enclosures, access and biodiversity net gains



Application status: Awaiting decision (as of 05/09/25)

The PROW and Green Access team issued a holding objection on this application due to lack of information on the impacts on the PROW.

DC/25/2109/FUL- Consulted July 2025- ESC- Redisham Hall Farm School Road Ringsfield Beccles Suffolk NR34 8NY- Construction of solar photovoltaic farm of up to 42MW and associated ancillary infrastructure including; underground cable route, new access tracks, transformers, control room, DNO building, customer building, perimeter fencing with CCTV cameras and access gates, landscaping and associated site works

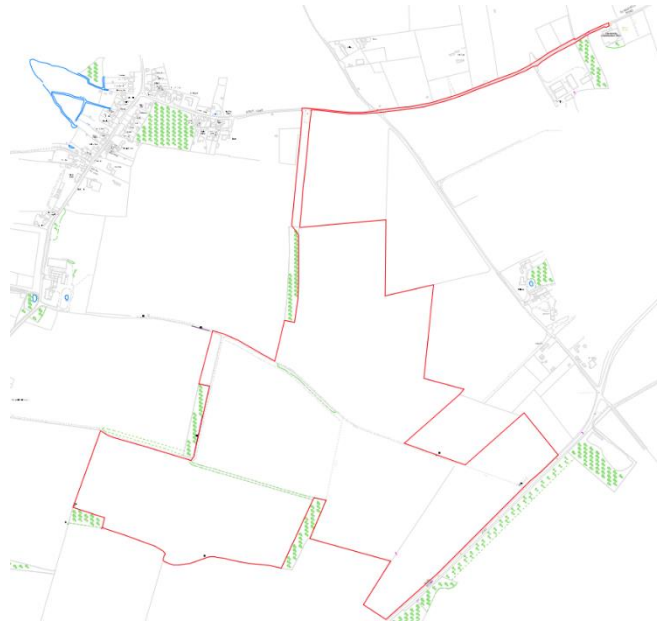


Application for the development of a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm up to 42 Mega Watt site known as 'Hall Solar Farm', located on Land at Hall Solar Farm, School Road, Ringsfield, Beccles within East Suffolk Council. This development will provide a renewable source of electricity, capable to supply approximately 11,500 homes, which will be supplied to domestic and commercial consumers via the UK Power Networks distribution network.

Application status: Awaiting decision (as of 08/09/25)

The PROW and Green Access team conditioned that prior to commencement of works a photographic condition survey of the highway must be submitted and agreed.

DC/25/0980/FUL- Consulted July 2025- WSC- Land South Of Knox Lane Bardwell Suffolk- Planning application - installation and operation of a 42MW ground mounted Solar Farm with substation, CCTV, boundary fence, equipment, landscaping and necessary grid connection infrastructure

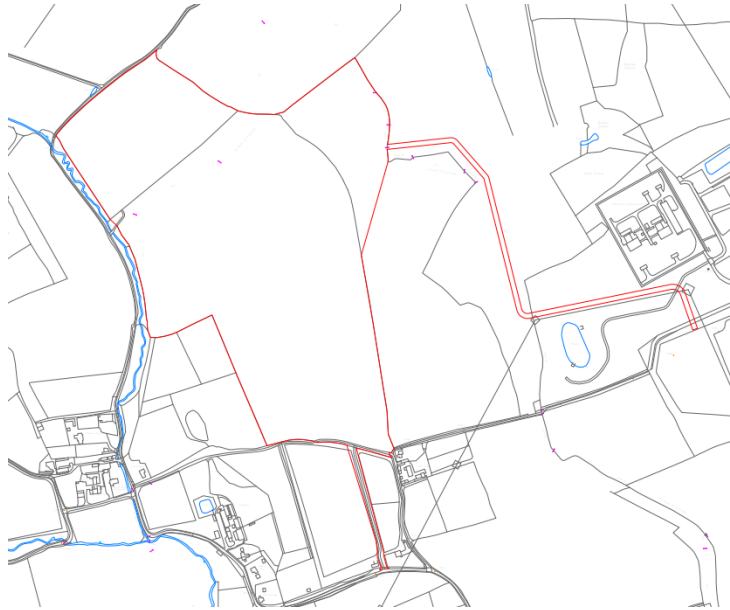


Application for the development of a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm up to 42 Mega Watt site known as 'Bardwell Solar Farm', located on Bardwell Fields, Land north of the A143, Bardwell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 1BD. This development will provide a renewable source of electricity, capable to supply approximately 9,660 homes, which will be supplied to domestic and commercial consumers via the UK Power Networks distribution network.

Application status: Awaiting decision (as of 08/09/25)

The PROW and Green Access team had no objection to this application due to no PROWs being in the vicinity of the proposed site.

DC/23/02118- Consulted May 2023- BMSDC- Land To The South Of Church Farm, Somersham IP8 4PN And Land To The East Of The Channel, Burstall Suffolk IP8 4JL- Planning Application - Installation of renewable led energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with substation, inverter/transformer stations, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements including Nature Areas ('Free Go' application following refusal of MSDC Ref: DC/20/05895)(accompanied by EIA Statement)



The Proposed Development would supply up to 49.9MW of clean renewable electricity to the National Grid, providing the equivalent annual electrical needs of approximately 13,000 family homes. The anticipated CO2 displacement is around 21,500 tonnes per annum, which represents an emission saving equivalent of a reduction in c. 7,000 cars on the road every year.

Application Status: Application Permitted on 14th September 2023

The PROW and Rights of Way Team issued a standard response with informative notes.

DC/21/04711- Consulted September 2021 and March 2023- BMSDC- Land North Of Tye Lane Bramford Suffolk- Planning Application - Change of use from agricultural land to solar farm and construction of a solar farm (up to 49.9MW AC maximum combined capacity) with associated grid connection cable route, infrastructure and planting (accompanied by EIA Statement).



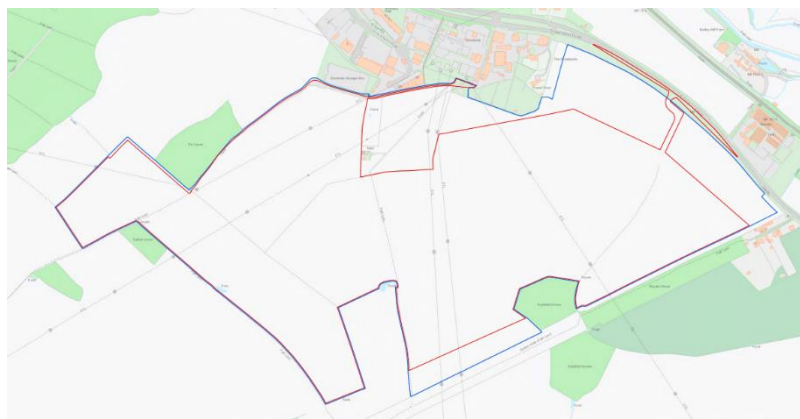
The total solar array would have a rated capacity of up to 49.9MW at the point of connection. The proposed operational lifetime of the project is 35 years, following which the solar farm and grid connection would be decommissioned, unless a fresh planning permission was granted for its retention.

In terms of household electricity usage this would be sufficient to offset the equivalent annual energy needs of 14 500 (to 3 S.F.) average Mid-Suffolk homes (based on average domestic consumption per household of 4 663kWh (DBEIS, 2020).

Application Status: Application Permitted on 18th December 2023

In September 2021, the PROW and Green Access team commented that any structures or fencing should be screened by planting to reduce the visual impact on PROW users. It is unclear what mitigation will be put in place to reduce visual impacts, which would be negatively impacted by the proposed development. The glint and glare assessment did not include users of the PROW. The team had concerns of the amenity value of the PROW, combined with similar developments in the area. In March 2023, we provided no further comments.

DC/22/01530- Consulted April and September 2022- BMSDC- Land At Woodlands Farm Stowmarket Road Badley Suffolk- Full Planning Application - Installation of a solar array, associated infrastructure and construction of new vehicular access



A planning application is made for the installation of a solar farm comprising an array of ground mounted solar PV panels with associated infrastructure including inverters, a substation compound as well as fencing, security cameras and cabling. The export capacity of the Development will be approximately 49.9 MW.

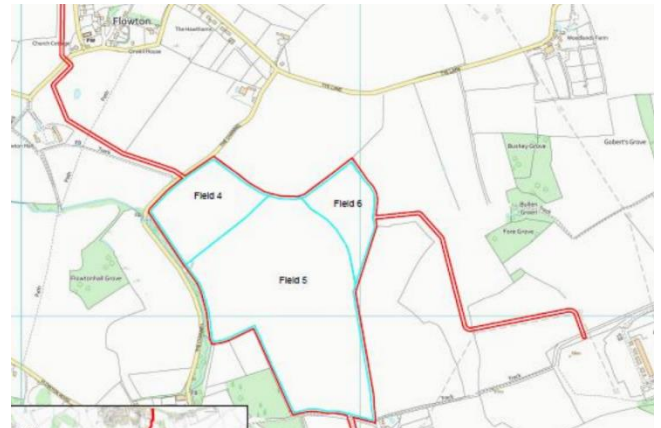
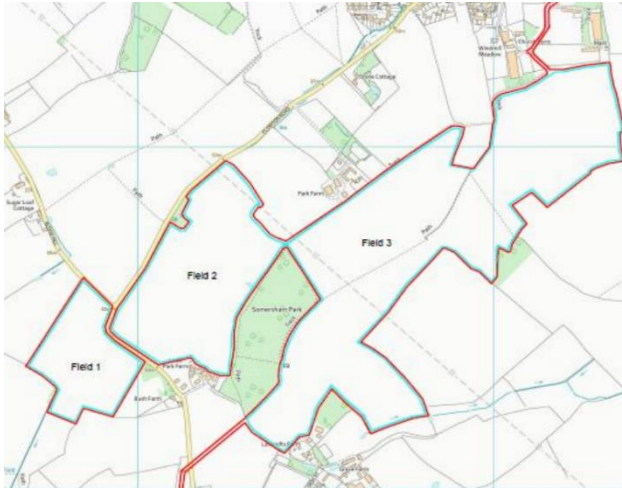
The construction phase of the Development is expected have a duration of approximately 6 months and planning permission is sought for an operational period of 40 years. The Site would be fully decommissioned and restored at the end of the temporary planning permission period.

Application Status: Application Refused.

An appeal AP/24/00058 was allowed with conditions.

In April 2022, the PROW and Green Access team accepted the development, with comments that they welcomed the inclusion of a list of all affected PROWs and the proposed submission of a Construction Management Plan. In September 2022, the team's position was unchanged but additional comments were made requesting that any hedgerow planted along the PROW green corridors is placed closer to fencing to maximise the available width of the PROW.

DC/20/05895- Consulted February 2021, September 2021 and September 2022- BMSDC- Land To The South Of Church Farm, Somersham, And Land To The East Of The Channel, Burstall, In Suffolk- Full Planning Application - Installation of renewable energy generating station, comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with substation, inverter/transformer stations, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements including Nature Areas.



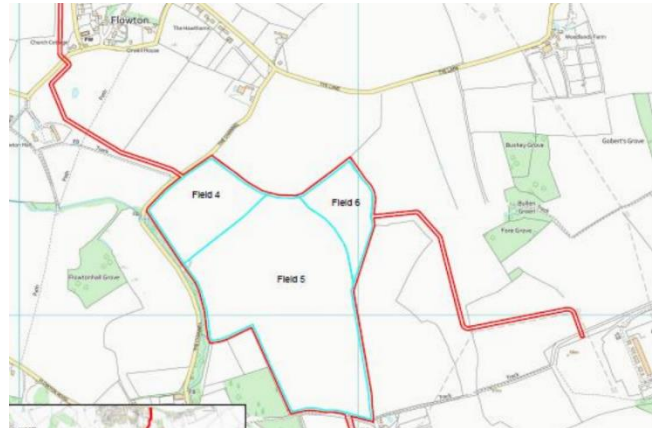
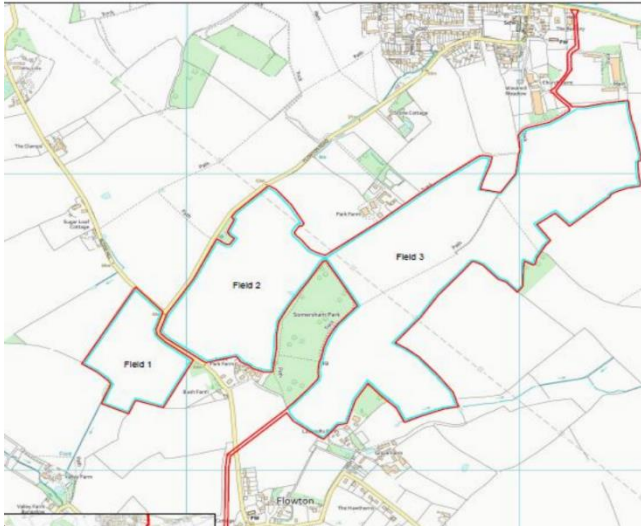
The Proposed Development would supply up to 49.9MW of clean renewable electricity to the National Grid, providing the equivalent annual electrical needs of approximately 13,000 family homes. The anticipated CO2 displacement is around 21,500 tonnes per annum, which represents an emission saving equivalent of a reduction in c. 7,000 cars on the road every year.

Application Status: Application Refused on 17th February 2023

The appeal AP/23/00037 was allowed with conditions.

In February 2021, the PROW and Green Access Team objected to this application due to no discussions with the PROW team taking place, inadequate screening from planting, and no PROW users being mentioned in the glint and glare assessment. In September 2021, the PROW team commented that points raised in a meeting with the applicant had been addressed. The team raised concerns about the impact of the development on users experience of the countryside and the lack of consideration for PROW users in the glint and glare assessment. In September 2022, the team welcomed the provision of a permissive footpath and bridleway. They accepted safety management proposals and the plotting of the alignment of the footpath. However, they objected to the inclusion of bridleway gates and the omission of some footpaths on the submitted documents.

DC/21/00060- Consulted February 2021 and September 2022 (X2)- BMSDC- Land To The East Of The Channel, Burstall Hill- Full Planning Application - Installation of renewable led energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with substation, inverter/transformer stations, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements including Nature Areas



The Proposed Development would supply up to 49.9MW of clean renewable electricity to the National Grid, providing the equivalent annual electrical needs of approximately 13,000 family homes. The anticipated CO2 displacement is around 21,500 tonnes per annum, which represents an emission saving equivalent of a reduction in c. 7,000 cars on the road every year.

Application status: Application Permitted on 17th February 2023

In February 2021, the PROW and Green Access team objected to this application due to no discussions with the PROW team taking place, inadequate screening from planting, and no PROW users being mentioned in the glint and glare assessment. In September 2021 the PROW and Green Access team welcomed the addition of a permissive bridleway and footpath through the site and green corridor, however objected to the installation of bridleway gates and plans not showing all PROWs. The team added further comments following a site visit which requested that the glint and glare assessment cover all PROW users, further details on the permissive bridleway and screening vegetation.

Appendix

Suffolk County Council

Public Rights of Way and Solar Farms - Position Statement

Public rights of way (PROW) are an important part of Suffolk's landscape and are legally protected. The National Planning Policy Framework specifically refers to PROW at paragraph 100, stating that "Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance PROW and access..."

PROW are divided into the following classifications:

- Public Footpath – only for use on foot or with a mobility vehicle
- Public Bridleway – as per a public footpath, and on horseback or by bicycle
- Restricted Byway – as per a bridleway and by a 'non-motorised vehicle' e.g. a horse and carriage
- Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) – as per a restricted byway and can be used by all vehicles

All recorded PROW are shown and described on the Definitive Map and Statement, together forming the legal record of all currently recorded PROW. They are available to view as PDFs divided into parishes at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/view-definitive-maps-of-public-rights-of-way/>. There may be other PROW that exist which have not been registered on the Definitive Map. These paths are either historical paths that were not claimed under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or since, or paths that have been created by years of public use.

In 2019 Suffolk County Council declared a climate emergency and stated the ambition to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. In 2020 the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan was published, which documents priority actions all public sector partners can take in order to achieve our goal. We understand the need for greener ways to generate power and are happy to work with organisations to enable this process whilst protecting and enhancing our natural environment. Our position in relation to PROW and solar farms in Suffolk is as follows:

1. Early contact and discussion with the Green Access Team is essential to allow for best practice to be followed in developing new sites.
2. Applications for planning permission should include full information about PROW in and around the site, including a plan showing the local PROW network and how it interacts with the proposals. They should also include full information about the cumulative effects of other similar applications and sites in the area.
3. We require that a full PROW search (including for claims and anomalies) is carried out and the digital data is obtained and plotted on site plans. This includes details recorded on the Definitive Statement and any legally recorded widths. For information about this, and to enquire about fees contact DefinitiveMaps@suffolk.gov.uk
4. PROW must remain unobstructed at all times, i.e. no barriers or gates may be erected, and management measures should be put in place to enable PROW to remain open during construction. If closures are temporarily required then the appropriate permissions must be applied for from the Rights of Way & Access Team. More information can be found at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/rights-and-responsibilities/>
5. All PROW must be protected on their legally recorded alignment both within and around the site, and must be accommodated within wide green corridors. Any new planting proposed as screening should

1
Jan 2022

be of mixed native species and a minimum of 10m from the edge of the PROW. This is to ensure routes remain well-lit and ventilated and do not create a corridor effect. The length of time it will take for new planting to mature and the impact on the user experience during that time must be considered. Planting should not be allowed to grow any taller than 1.8m. Future cutting and maintenance of hedges, trees and the corridor strip also needs to be taken into account from both a financial and access perspective. We may seek a financial contribution for the maintenance of green corridors unless an alternative agreement is in place. The siting of access tracks outside the fencing could be considered, as per the example shown in Image 1 below:



1 - L-R tree belt - public footpath - grassed solar farm access track - hedge planting - low-level wire fencing - solar arrays

6. In limited circumstances it may be possible for a PROW to be diverted if a development cannot otherwise take place. However any diverted route must be no less comfortable and convenient for users and mitigation for any impact such as loss of views etc will be required. Diversion options must be discussed with the Green Access Team and the appropriate legal process followed. We will seek to avoid 'dog-leg' alignments and retain desire lines.
7. For fencing, the use of open mesh is preferable. Close boarding or metal palisade type fencing are too intrusive in the landscape and create unpleasant and intimidating alleys, even if used on a relatively wide path. Metal palisade fencing with spikes on top should particularly be avoided anywhere used by horse riders, as it poses a particular hazard. Any fencing should be screened with planting on the PROW side of the fence with reference to the requirements in paragraph 5 above. Fencing must not be above 2m in height.
8. The effect of glint and glare on users of PROW must be properly considered. This is particularly relevant in the case of PROW that may be used by horse riders. The British Horse Society has produced guidance in relation to solar farms (available to download at <https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/free-leaflets-and-advice>) and recommends that arrays should be avoided where glare is likely to effect users of an equestrian route.
9. Where site access tracks will intersect with PROW, particularly during construction, the safety of people using the PROW must be ensured. Management measures must be put in place to control construction traffic, e.g. employing banksmen, temporary closures with a convenient alternative route provided etc. All measures must be agreed with the Rights of Way & Access Team. All efforts must be made to avoid damaging the surface of the PROW, and any damage caused must be rectified at the earliest opportunity so that the surface is commensurate with the use of the PROW (e.g. for a footpath it must

be suitable for pedestrians to use it safely, for a bridleway it must be appropriate and safe for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists etc.)

10. All structures (including container-style structures) should be sited as far from PROW as possible and should be screened. The noise from inverters may be disturbing to users of bridleways and byways, therefore higher standards of sound insulation on the housing of inverters may be required. Inverters should also be sited as far from bridleways and byways as possible.
11. Drainage provision must be taken into account to prevent potentially serious effects on PROW through and immediately adjacent to the site, and for some distance away depending on drainage patterns, outflow, and the terrain.
12. Potential loss of amenity value to users of the PROW network generally must be considered, with views of open countryside replaced with hedged paths, restricted views over the landscape, and the visual impact of solar farms both close up and from a distance. Mitigation measures such as wider enhancements to the local network (including the creation of new PROW) may be required, particularly in larger scale solar farm proposals. In some instances new PROW can be created and this option should be explored.

For further information and advice about public rights of way please contact:

Rights of Way & Access Team, Growth, Highways and Infrastructure, Suffolk County Council, Phoenix House, 3 Goddard Road, Ipswich IP1 5NP. PROWplanning@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Network Rail Updates
Paper:	LAF 25/24
Author/Contact:	Steve Kerr / Andrew Woodin
Meeting:	Thursday 23 October 2025, 2:00pm-4:00pm
Venue:	Melton Parish Council, 17 Riduna Park, Melton, IP12 1QT

Introduction

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

Needham Market Gipsy Lane and FP6 Needham Market



Further to the update provided at the Forum's July meeting, the county council has now erected further 'no cycling' signs, but the dog waste bin is still outstanding.

Officers are also pleased to report that the commuted sum payment and reimbursement of the county council's officer costs have now been received.

The railway operator also submitted the Road Safety Audit 3 (dated 14 July), to the county council on 22 July, in its capacity as the overseeing organisation. The report included several recommendations in respect of the improved footway/cycle path alongside Stowmarket Road. These include cutting back overhanging vegetation, addressing some localised ponding, and investigating the re-positioning of the cycling bollard at the junction with the diversionary route. These are currently being considered by NR and its contractor.

As part of the s278 agreement, the railway operator is also required to submit further documentation, including a Health & Safety file that confirms compliance with the Construction Design Manual Regulations.

General/Countywide

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

Three of the five crossings that involve diversions have now been through the detailed design process, constructed on the ground and certified by the county council. Officers continue to liaise with NR on the remaining two crossings, which are at different stages of progress.

Updates are provided below, together with photos of the routes on the ground, following certification.

Gislingham – works completed and certified by SCC on 7 August 2025. 12-month NR maintenance period now in force. Commuted sum agreed.



Lords – as previously advised, the works were certified by SCC on 4 July 2025. 12-month NR maintenance period now in force. Commuted sum agreed.



Island – the diversionary route is in the final stages of construction, with NR's contractors aiming to finish w/e 10/10/25. NR will then prepare the certification pack for SCC to consider and look to sign off the works. A commuted sum has yet to be agreed.

Paynes - Taziker are still working on an updated design and works are anticipated to start onsite by the end of December.

Hawk End Lane – the diversionary route was certified by SCC on 5 September 2025. 12-month NR maintenance period now in force. Commuted sum agreed.



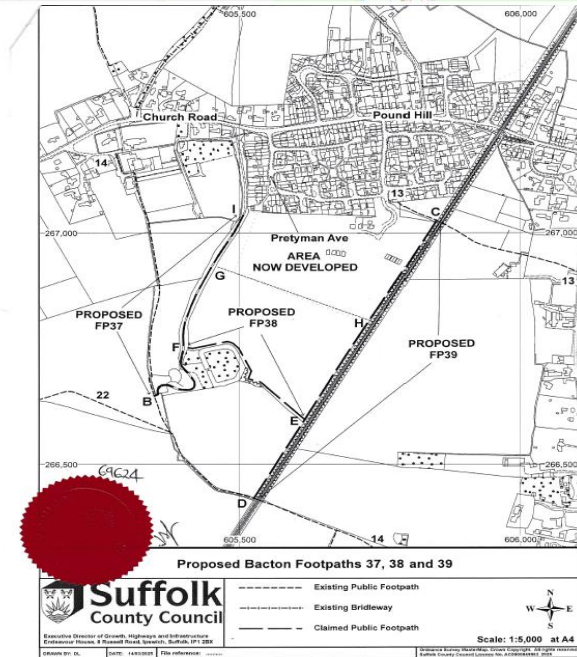
Footpath 6 Brantham (High Bridge)

Since the last update provided at the Forum's July meeting, the county council was advised by NR at the last Suffolk Road Rail Partnership Group meeting that it is still considering a proposal to improve the A137 verge, as part of a future Rail Crossing Extinguishment Order.



Footpath 13 Bacton

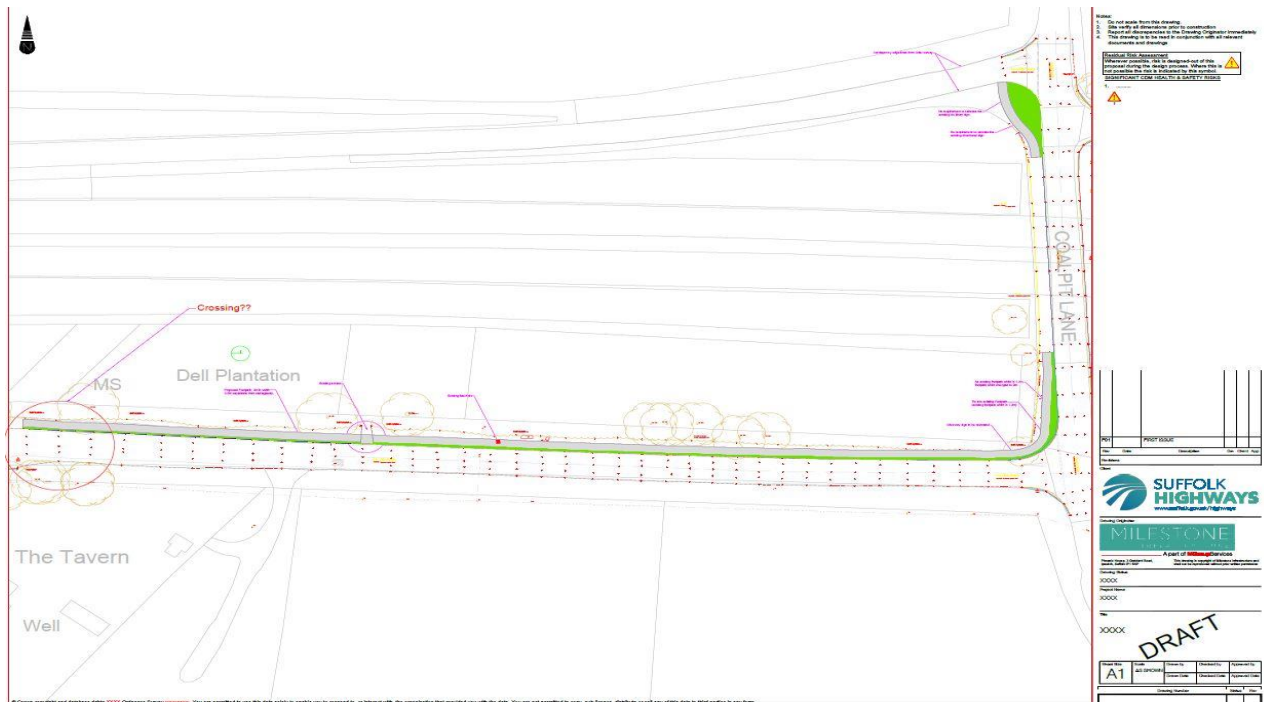
Further to the update at the Forum's last meeting, there has been no further dialogue with NR regarding the Rail Crossing Extinguishment Order application. However, north of the railway corridor, FP13 now connects to Public Footpath 39 Bacton parallel to the railway. This forms part of a network public footpaths, added to the Definitive Map and Statement by way of a Definitive Map Modification Order, confirmed on 14 July 2025.



Officers are liaising with Mid Suffolk District Council and the developer to ensure FP39 remains unobstructed, where it connects to FP13 at the level crossing.

Higham – Highway Improvement Scheme

The county council has now received confirmation from Suffolk Highways as to the total estimated construction cost, which amounts to £110K. Together with the design and survey costs to date, this totals £130K. SCC has informed NR of the cost and is awaiting confirmation from the railway operator that it has the funds to allow the project to proceed.



Future TWAO application

Since the Forum's last update, the county council has not received any further detail or update on the other future TWAO proposals. Officers have chased NR for an update.

Suffolk Road Rail Partnership /group (SRRPG)

A meeting was held on 15 September at Endeavour House to discuss the evidence factors required to adopt a collaborative approach to progress NR's future TWAO proposals. At the meeting it was agreed there should be joint site visits with NR's Level Crossing Managers, PROW officers and a Highway Safety Engineer, to assess the viability of individual level crossing proposals and undertake evidence gathering. At the meeting the county council's Strategic Transport Officer also shared an interactive mapping platform that showed all the road and PROW level crossings in Suffolk. The background database allows various types of information to be displayed including land subject to ongoing development, cycling routes, highway safety information, and NR's usage survey and risk assessment information.

A further meeting of the Group was held on 10 October. The meeting covered the following topics:-

- level crossing approaches that needed urgent attention, for instance where highway verge vegetation or third-party vegetation is overhanging the highway and restricting visibility or where road line/warning markings need addressing.
- an update on SCC's interactive level crossing/highway interface map which in the future will include bus route/stop information, road traffic volume data, and a RAG system for the individual level crossing risk. It is intended to also map

future development land and NSIP geographical areas. The mapping database will continue to be updated with further information as agreed between the highway authority and the railway operator.

- discussion on progress regarding potential enforcement action or traffic management measures at the Westerfield Road level crossing and future track improvements at the Melton level crossing (which will require track possession and road/PROW level crossing Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders).
- an update on the impacts of the Sizewell C development on the road/rail interface.
- discussion around the county council's Local Plan, that is currently being finalised.
- discussion regarding a future joint operation between NR and the British Transport Police at road level crossings in the Stowmarket area to identify vehicle and pedestrian misuse and take any necessary enforcement action. The operation will take place during peak traffic times. SCC highway enforcement officers and Suffolk Constabulary will also be invited to attend.
- request for SCC to consider future potential Highways Act rail crossing diversion/extinguishment orders, for cases which NR may not wish to include in any future TWAO application eg if they are likely to be particularly contentious.
- NR are still considering the scope of the TWAO application and investigating the necessary funding required.

END
SK/SCC October 2025

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	The King Charles III England Coast Path
Paper:	LAF 25/25
Author/Contact:	Claire Dickson
Meeting:	Thursday 23 October 2025 2.00pm – 4.00pm
Venue:	Melton Parish Council, 17 Riduna Park, Melton, IP12 1QT

1. Progress on Establishing The King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIECP)

The latest information from Natural England (NE) on its progress for the KCIIECP 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	Stage 5: Approved. (Not yet available for public use – work to establish the route is currently taking place)
Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry	OPEN for use from 16 th October 2024
Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey	OPEN for use from 24 th September 2025
Bawdsey to Aldeburgh	Stage 5: Approved. (Not yet available for public use – work to establish the route is currently taking place)
Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea	Four out of six reports are OPEN for use from 12 th December 2024. Two out of six reports at Stage 5: Approved. (Not yet available for public use – work to establish the route is currently taking place)

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

Stage 4: Determine

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 KCIIIECP can be found [here](#).

2. The Stretches in More Detail

Natural England has provided this update on the national situation:

Just over 69% of the whole route is now open. Nationally 83 miles have opened since the previous LAF meeting.

Status of proposals	Number of miles
Total mileage submitted to government	2689
- complete and open for public use	1855
- approved by government and work to establish the route taking place, or awaited	727
- awaiting government decision	107

The latest information from Natural England on its progress for the King Charles III England Coast Path in Suffolk is shown on their website. The progress report update dates are shown in the links at the start of the report and more detail from Natural England is shown in the table below.

The Five Suffolk Stretches

Harwich to Shotley Gate – Giles Merritt. Last updated 08.10.25

No change since previous report

- Report 1 and 4. Secretary of State announced their approval of this stretch on 31 August 2021
- Report 2, 3, 5 and 6. Secretary of State announced their approval of this stretch on 18 September 2025.
- Stage 5 (Open) – but not yet available for use
- Work to establish the route is now taking place, for opening in late Summer 2026.

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – Giles Merritt. Last updated 08.10.25

- Open for use.

Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey – Giles Merritt. Last updated 08.10.25

- Open for use.

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh – Giles Merritt. Last updated 08.10.25

- Secretary of State announced their approval of this stretch on 2 May 2025.
- Stage 5 (Open) – but not yet available for use
- Work to establish the route is now taking place, for opening in early 2026.

Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea – Giles Merritt. Last updated 08.10.25

- Stage 5 (Open)
- Reports 1, 2, 3 and 6 opened to the public on 12 December 2024.
- Report 4 - Secretary of State announced their approval of this stretch on 18 September 2025. Work to establish the route is now taking place, for opening in late Summer 2026.
- Report 5 - work to establish the route is now taking place, for opening in early 2026

3. Suffolk Progress

Following the Secretary of State announcement regarding the approval of Bawdsey to Aldeburgh stretch in early May 2025. The project officer has predominantly focused on the establishment works for this approved stretch over the last few months. With works completed on Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry, Aldeburgh to Hopton (stretches 1, 2, 3 and 6) and Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey, with all of these stretches now open to the public. All works are funded by Natural England by applying for grants from them. The breadth of the establishment works is broad, ranging from ecology and tree safety surveys, revetment and surfacing works, design and construction of structures such as boardwalks, bridges, and steps, installation of mitigation fencing, new interpretation boards, bespoke heritage signs in conservation areas as well as the more familiar installation of new signposts and waymark posts.

The county council has 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 Natural England grant scheme. Understanding and clarifying the many legal and technical aspects of the National Trail works and grant process with Natural England has been a key piece of work during this initial period.

Discussions continue between SCC Public Health, National Highways, Natural England and the Development & Improvement Manager on access by the King Charles III England Coast Path over the Orwell Bridge. National Highways agreed to replacement steps, and these have been installed, but the County Council continue to seek agreement to a resting point on the embankment and information signs. In late February 2025, National Highways confirmed that they would not want a resting point placed adjacent to the steps.

The Green Access Team has scoped the alternative route through Ipswich Waterfront that will be promoted, including gateway signage at either side of the Orwell Bridge. This project has included working with a local school, with other contributions, including financial, coming from Ipswich Borough Council, Greenways, All About Ipswich, National Highways, National Landscapes, Suffolk Food Hall and St Joseph's College, Ipswich. The route is expected to open in the autumn 2025. National Highways and the county council's public health team are pleased with this progress, which both gives an alternative to walking the bridge and promotes Ipswich.

The team have completed the delivery of works, including mitigation fencing and a significant bird screen, in line with Habitat Regulation timing requirements, on Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey Stretch. All significant structural works and signage was completed by late August. This then enabled this stretch to be officially opened on 24th September 2025.

Focus is now on the Bawdsey to Aldeburgh stretch, which was approved 2 May 2025. Scoping works have been completed with full Habitat Regulation Assessment carried out and mitigation works identified. Close liaison is currently ongoing with Environment Agency over permits and exemptions for planned works. Several joint site visits have been undertaken with Natural England and relevant landowners over the last five months to resolve matters and confirmation of all detailed works has now been secured. Work tenders have been completed with physical works to commence late Autumn 2025.

Natural England received approval from the Secretary of State on the opposed stretch from Southwold to Pakefield on 18th September 2025. This was following the planning inspectorate site visit in March 2024. In addition, approval was granted for Harwich to Shotley Gate (Manningtree to Shotley Gate for Suffolk) on 18th September 2025.

The team have already been in liaison with Natural England over work requirements and meetings arranged with relevant landowners over the next month for both stretches. Scoping of works will commence in late October 2025, and full ecological assessment will be carried out on both stretches to ascertain a timetable of works for habitat regulation assessment.

The team continue to work closely with the RAMS Manager (Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy) and Natural England to review all mitigation information signs. This is a positive area of work that will unify information signs on the trail and wider RAMS areas. Mitigation signage has been installed in line with RAMS Manager agreement on the three open stretches. This will continue for the remaining approved stretches with detailed designs already agreed.

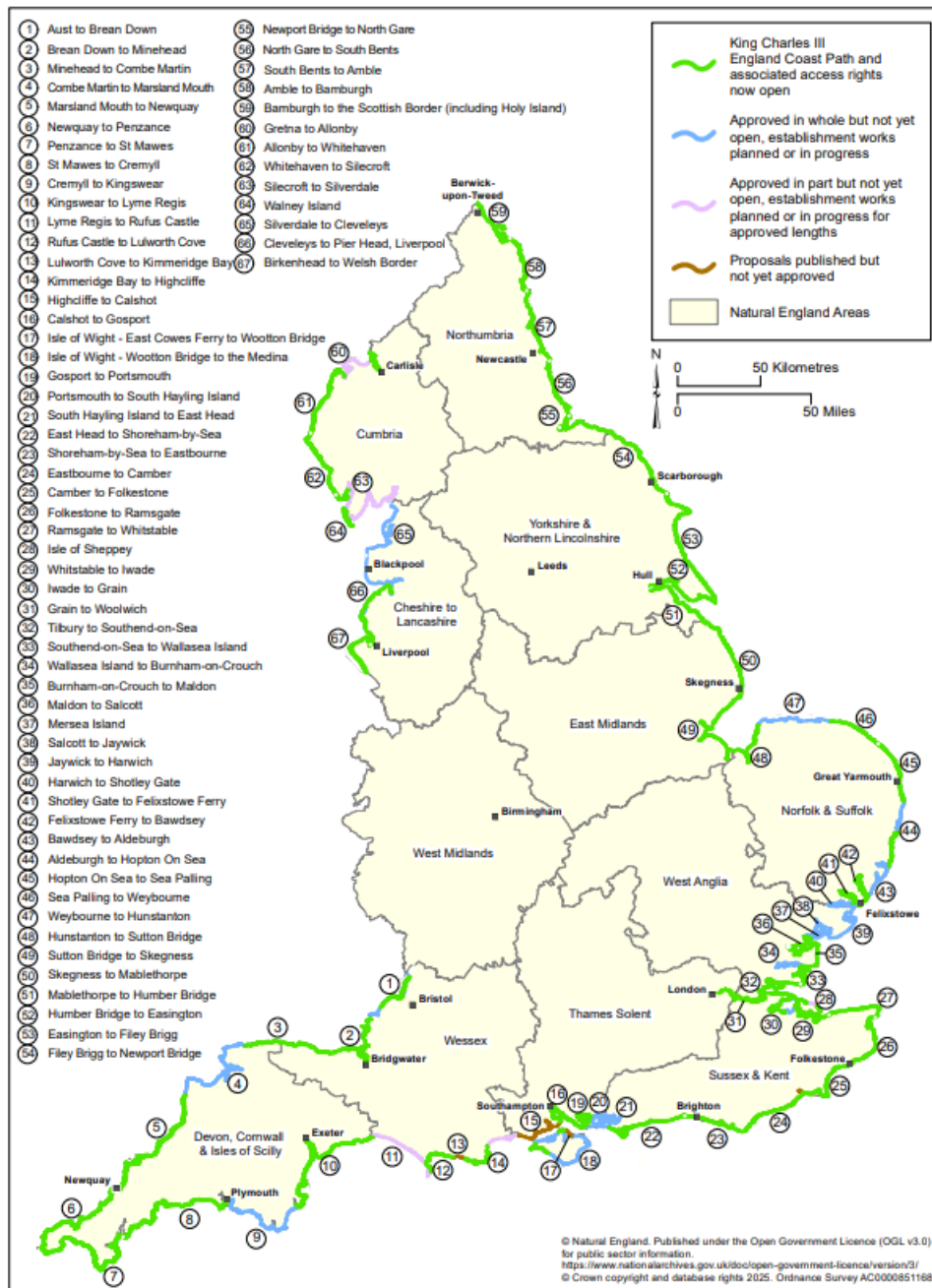
Natural England have advised that funding is available for a second project officer. As works are currently on target for delivery, we have not progressed with a second officer. This is currently under review following the recent approval of the remaining stretches.

The Operations Team have established fortnightly meetings with Natural England representatives. We have carried out a fifteen positive site visits with Natural England on Bawsey to Aldeburgh, Felixstowe to Bawdsey, Aldeburgh to Hopton and Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey stretches over the last year. This has enabled us to discuss delivery of works and to meet with third parties on interpretation and works requirements. We have agreed that this will continue with remaining stretches.

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

The county council will review the most effective way to promote the King Charles III England Coast Path in Suffolk once more stretches have been open to the public. If a mayoral Norfolk/Suffolk authority is introduced, the concept of a Norfolk and Suffolk regional National Trail is expected to be a priority for the county council to take forward, to maximise a regional trail's potential contribution to the visitor economy and lever in external income.

5. England Coast Path – [Progress Maps](#)



The stretch between Shotley Gate and Felixstowe Ferry opened on 16th October 2024.

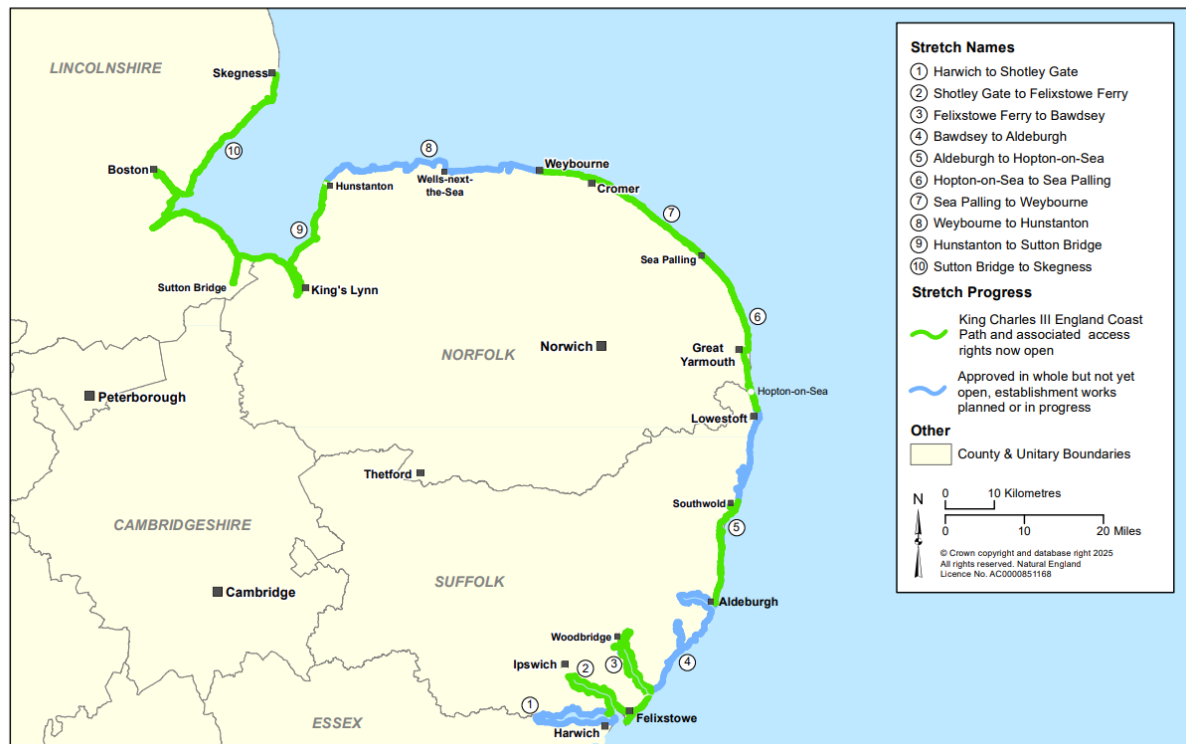
The stretch between Aldeburgh to Hopton (part) opened on 12th December 2024.

The stretch between Felixstowe Ferry and Bawdsey opened on 24th September 2025



King Charles III England Coast Path - Stretch Progress

East Hub Team - 24th September 2025



END
CLD/SCC OCTOBER 2025