

Coastal Access in East Sussex and Kent: Camber to Folkestone

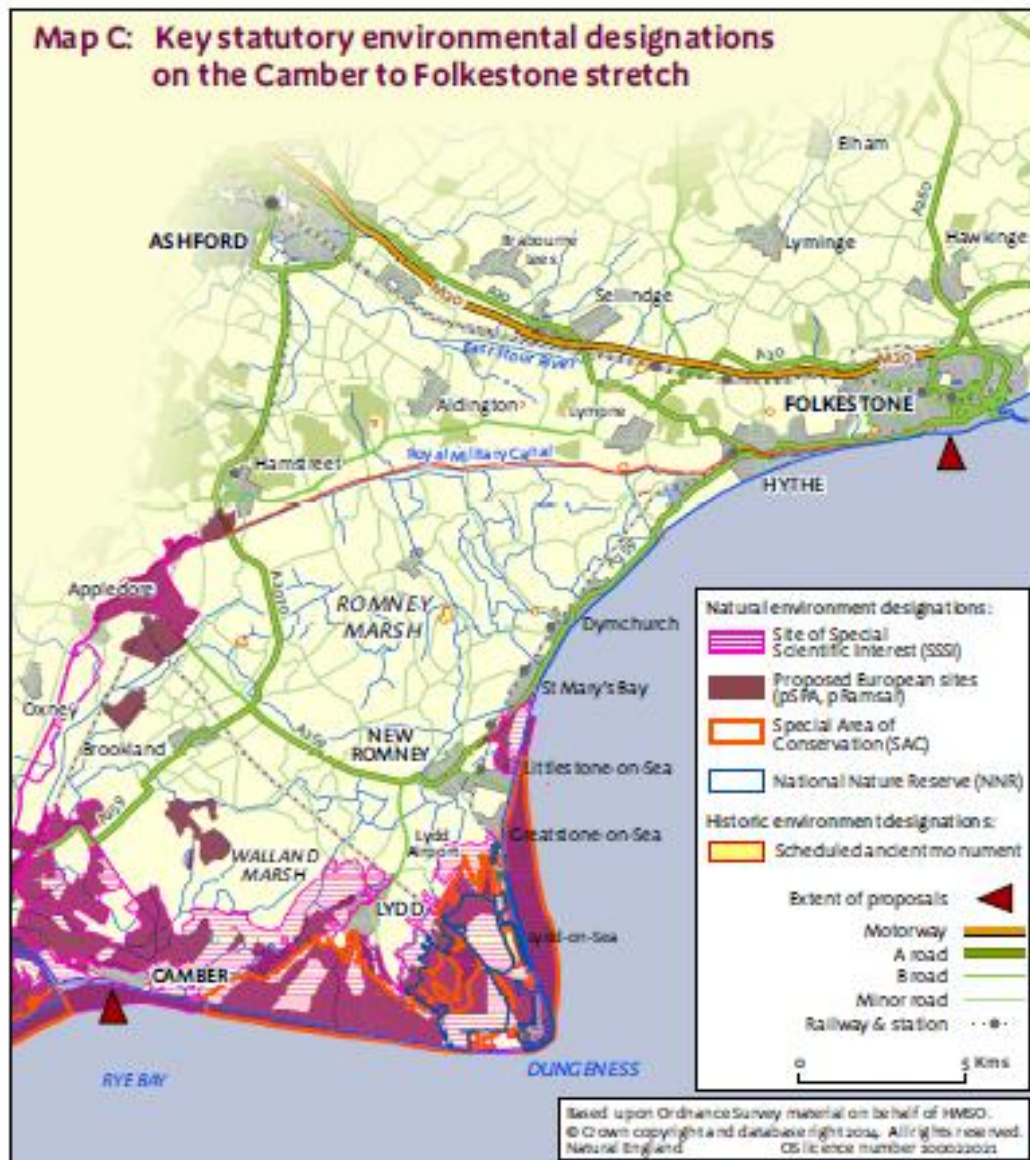
Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal

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Programme	Coastal Access
Proposal title	Camber to Folkestone
Aim and location	Access and sensitive features appraisal for Camber to Folkestone including Dungeness NNR and designated sites
Report Status	Final
Date	August 2014
TRIM reference	
Access Case Officer	Tom Lord
Site Responsible Officer	Jo Dear

STEP 1 – INFORMATION GATHERING ABOUT THE SITE/S AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE HABITATS AND SPECIES



Basic Site Information

Designated site/s name:

- Dungeness SAC
- Dungeness to Pett Level SPA including the pSPA extension (to be renamed Dungeness Romney Marsh and Rye Bay pSPA)
- Dungeness Romney Marsh and Rye Bay pRamsar
- Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI
- Dungeness NNR

Designation type/s (please tick <i>one</i> only)	SPA	✓	SAC	✓	Ramsar	✓	SSSI	✓
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Site Conservation Objectives for each designation:

Dungeness SAC¹

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species (see below), and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Dungeness to Pett Level SPA renamed as Dungeness Romney Marsh and Rye Bay pSPA

Conservation objectives for the pSPA will be developed once notification is confirmed by Defra

Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay pRamsar

Conservation objectives for the pRamsar will be developed once notification is confirmed by Defra

Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI

The Conservation Objectives for this site are, subject to natural change, to maintain the following habitats and geological features in favourable condition (*), with particular reference to any dependent component special interest features (habitats, vegetation types, species, species assemblages etc.) for which the land is designated.

Habitat Types represented (Biodiversity Action Plan categories)

- Littoral sediment - Saltmarsh
- Supralittoral sediment – Sand dune and vegetated shingle
- Inshore sub-littoral sediment – Saline lagoons
- Fen Marsh and Swamp – Basin Fen
- Standing open water and canals – Ditches and Canals
- Lowland Grazing Marsh

Geological features (Geological Site Types)

- Active Process Geomorphological Sites (IA)

¹ The current Conservation Objectives and notified species or habitats for the European Site(s) are available at www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designations/sac/conservationobjectives.aspx

Static (Fossil) Geomorphological Sites (IS)

(*) or restored to favourable condition if features are judged to be unfavourable.

Qualifying or notified features³ for each designation:

Dungeness SAC

H1210. Annual vegetation of drift lines

H1220. Perennial vegetation of stony banks; Coastal shingle vegetation outside the reach of waves

S1166. Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*;

Dungeness to Pett Level SPA (SPA) renamed as Dungeness Romney Marsh and Rye Bay pSPA

Marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus*, Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*, Common tern *Sterna hirundo*, Little tern *Sterna albifrons*, Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*, Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, Aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*, Shoveler *Anas clypeata*,

The site regularly supports more than 1% of the biogeographical population of one regularly occurring migratory species, Shoveler *Anas clypeata*.

The site regularly supports more than 20,000 waterbirds during the non-breeding season.

Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay pRamsar

The site contains representative, rare, or unique examples of natural or near-natural wetland types such as vegetated annual drift lines, perennial vegetated stony banks, natural shingle wetlands, saline lagoons, freshwater pits and basin fens.

The site supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities associated with wetland habitats. These communities include rich and diverse assemblages of bryophytes, vascular plants and invertebrates that are rare, threatened or specially protected.

In the non-breeding season, the site regularly supports 34,957 individual waterbirds (5 year peak mean 2002/3 – 2006/7).

The site qualifies under Criterion 6 because it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in the populations of the following species or subspecies of waterbird in any season:

Mute swan *Cygnus olor* 348 individuals – wintering = 1.1% Britain pop

Shoveler *Anas clypeata* 485 individuals – wintering = 1.2% NW & C Europe (non-breeding)

Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI

Assemblage of >20,000 Non-Breeding Waterbirds

Aggregations Of Breeding Birds - Little Grebe, *Tachybaptus Ruficollis* Avocet, *Recurvirostra avosetta* Bearded Tit, *Panurus biarmicus* Black-headed Gull, *Larus ridibundus* Cetti's Warbler, *Cettia cetti* Common Tern, *Sterna hirundo* Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo* Gadwall, *Anas strepera* Garganey, *Anas querquedula* Little Tern, *Sterna albifrons* Mediterranean Gull, *Larus melanocephalus* Pochard, *Aythya ferina* Sandwich Tern, *Sterna sandvicensis* Shoveler, *Anas clypeata* Tufted Duck, *Aythya fuligula* Water Rail, *Rallus aquaticus*

Aggregations Of Non-Breeding Birds - Aquatic Warbler, *Acrocephalus paludicola*, Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*, Bewick's Swan, *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* Bittern, *Botaurus stellaris* Coot, *Fulica atra* Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo* Gadwall, *Anas strepera* Golden Plover, *Pluvialis apricaria* Great crested Grebe, *Podiceps cristatus* Hen Harrier, *Circus cyaneus* Little

Grebe, *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Mute Swan, *Cygnus olor* Pochard, *Aythya ferina* Ruff, *Philomachus pugnax* Sanderling, *Calidris alba* Shoveler, *Anas clypeata* Teal, *Anas crecca* Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus* White-fronted Goose, *Anser albifrons albifrons* Wigeon, *Anas penelope*

Assemblages of breeding birds – Lowland damp grasslands and Lowland open waters and their margins, and scrub

Assemblages of breeding birds – Shingle beaches and saltmarshes

Great Crested Newt, *Triturus cristatus*

Invertebrate Assemblage

Lowland ditch systems

Water Vole, *Arvicola terrestris*

Percolated saline lagoons

Population of Schedule 5 leech - *Hirudo medicinalis*, Medicinal Leech

Population of Schedule 5 moth - *Thalera fimbrialis*, Sussex Emerald

Populations of RDB Beetle - *Melanotus punctolineatus*, a Click Beetle *Dibolia cynoglossi*, a Flea Beetle *Omophron limbatum*, a Ground Beetle

Populations of RDB Spider - *Euophrys browni*, a Jumping Spider *Pellenes tripunctatus*, a Jumping Spider *Apostenus fuscus*, a Spider

Population of RDB moss - *Bryum warneum*, Warne's Thread-moss

Populations of RDB moth - *Hydraecia osseola hucherardi*, Marsh Mallow Moth *Hadena albimacula*, White-spot

Populations of pRDB Moth - *Lasiocampa trifolii flava*, Pale Grass Eggar *Coleophora galbulipennella*, a Micro Moth *Ethmia terminella*, a Micro Moth

Population of pRDB True Bug - *Aphrodes duffieldi*, a Leafhopper

Assemblages of invertebrates occurring on 'dry' coastal habitats

Assemblages of wetland invertebrates

Populations of Schedule 8 plant - *Ophrys sphegodes*, Early Spider-orchid *Gnaphalium luteoalbum*, Jersey Cudweed *Lactuca saligna*, Least Lettuce *Himantoglossum hircinum*, Lizard Orchid

Standing waters

Vascular Plant Assemblage

S27 - *Carex rostrata* - *Potentilla palustris* swamp

S4 - *Phragmites australis* swamp and reed-beds

SD1 - *Rumex crispus* - *Glaucium flavum* shingle community

SD11 - *Carex arenaria* - *Cornicularia aculeata* dune community

SD12 - *Carex arenaria* - *Festuca ovina* - *Agrostis capillaris* dune grassland

SD2 - *Honkenya peploides* - *Cakile maritima* strandline community

SD4 - *Elymus farctus* ssp. *Boreali-atlanticus* foredune community

SD5 - *Leymus arenarius* mobile dune community

SD6 - *Ammophila arenaria* mobile dune community

SD7 - *Ammophila arenaria* - *Festuca rubra* semi-fixed dune community

SD8 - *Festuca rubra* - *Galium verum* fixed dune grassland

SD9 - *Ammophila arenaria* - *arrhenatherum elatius* dune grassland

SM10 - Transitional low marsh vegetation with *Puccinellia maritima*, annual *Salicornia* species and *Suaeda maritima*.

SM11 - *Aster tripolium* var. *discoides* -saltmarsh

SM12 - Rayed *Aster tripolium* on saltmarsh

SM13a - *Puccinellia maritima* saltmarsh, *Puccinellia maritima* dominant sub-community

SM16b - *Festuca rubra* saltmarsh *Juncus gerardii* sub-community

SM16d - Festuca rubra saltmarsh tall Festuca rubra sub-community
SM17 - Artemisia maritima saltmarsh
SM24 - Elytrigia atherica saltmarsh
SM28 - Elytrigia repens saltmarsh
SM4 - Spartina maritima
SM5 - Spartina alterniflora
SM6 - Spartina Anglica Saltmarsh
SM7 - Sarcocornia perennis
SM8 - Annual Salicornia Saltmarsh
SM9 - Suaeda Maritima Saltmarsh

Identify any site condition issues, relevant to access, for each designation:

- Dungeness SAC – trampling pressure, vehicle pressure
- Dungeness to Pett Level SPA including the pSPA extension (to be renamed Dungeness Romney Marsh and Rye Bay pSPA) - walkers on the low tide areas, disturbance to breeding birds for example, Wheatear,
- Dungeness Romney Marsh and Rye Bay pRamsar - walking on low tide areas, intertidal areas trampling pressure (Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines and early stage of Perennial Vegetation of Stoney Banks), vehicle pressure
- Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI all the above, including impacts on surface geomorphology, shingle ridge and trough system
- Dungeness NNR all the above

Identify any of the qualifying or notified habitats or species that are within the likely affected area and are potentially vulnerable to access pressure², and describe their vulnerability (to access pressure), occurrence (numbers / area), duration (period of sensitivity) and specific location:

Annual vegetation of drift lines (SAC)

Vegetated shingle communities vulnerable to trampling pressure, year round.

This is found from the proposed ECP route seaward across the Dungeness Point down to the foreshore. This includes early stages of both the Annex 1 Habitat PVSb (see below) from the ECP route seaward and the Annex 1 Habitat AVDL found on the foreshore.

Perennial vegetation of stony banks; Coastal shingle vegetation outside the reach of waves (SAC)

Vegetated shingle communities vulnerable to trampling pressure, year round.

This is found from the proposed ECP route seaward across the Dungeness Point down to the foreshore.

Surface geomorphology (SSSI) – trampling pressure that over time ‘flattens out’ the rise and fall of naturally formed ridges – pathways that cut across the natural orientation of shingle ridges. This is an underpinning feature of the SAC

Identify any legally protected species³, where access proposals would pose a significant risk of disturbance or damage, and give details of vulnerability, occurrence, duration and location:

Population of Schedule 5 moth - *Thalera fimbrialis*, Sussex Emerald

Populations of Schedule 8 plant - *Ophrys sphegodes*, Early Spider-orchid *Gnaphalium luteoalbum*,

² Identified with reference to: [Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 Part I: Access to the Countryside \(NECR012\)](#) and [Access and Nature Conservation Reconciliation: Supplementary Guidance for England \(NECR013\)](#).

³ Certain species are legally protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended & the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. For a list of European Protected Species, see [here](#).

Jersey Cudweed *Lactuca saligna*, Least Lettuce

Great Crested Newt

Population of Schedule 5 leech - *Hirudo medicinalis*, Medicinal Leech

Please identify any un-notified habitats or species that are potentially vulnerable to access pressure⁵ and describe their occurrence, vulnerability and location:

Invertebrate assemblage of shingle habitats – see SSSI notified features above

Assemblage of nationally rare and nationally scarce vascular plant species such as Stinking Hawkesbeard *Crepis foetida*

Completion of Step 1 – Please complete as appropriate

Responsible Officer Signed:
On behalf of Natural England



Name: Jo Dear


Date: 17th September 2014

If vulnerable habitats or species have been identified - move on to Step 2.

If no vulnerable habitats or species have been identified - move on to Step 4.

STEP 2 – ACCESS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY
IDENTIFIES PREDICTED CHANGES IN ACCESS LEVELS AND PATTERNS AND POTENTIAL
IMPACTS ON HABITATS AND SPECIES

Current Access Use across Dungeness & Greatstone area		Yes	No	Comments
Are the PRow and/or permissive paths and any open access land within and adjacent to the site boundaries well used?		✓		<i>Dungeness Rd is well used. Other surfaced routes between Dung. Rd and foreshore well used</i>
Are the routes / is access to the land actively promoted?			✓	
These routes are / the land is used mainly by;	walkers	✓		
	horseriders		✓	<i>Horse riding not popular on Dungeness, although riders sometimes use the intertidal areas at low tide which are sand and mud</i>
	cyclists	✓		
Are there clear and defined access points to the site? If so give details		✓		<i>Dungeness Estate Trust entrance off Battery Rd and the RHD Railway Station at Dungeness Point are main access points, along with Lade Boardwalk. Car Parks are used along Coast Drive to the north. A boardwalk leads from Lade Car Park to the coast</i>
Are you aware of or has the mapping exercise raised any particular management problems with existing routes?		✓		<i>Access along Dungeness Road requires closer management, car parking along the same road is an issue currently. Potential for damage from existing level of access on the foreshore and also further back inland from coast on the established shingle ridges. Both areas support vegetated shingle</i>
Does any other organisation promote this site for horse riding or cycling?		✓		<i>Cycle Shepway would like to promote a route for cycling. Horse riding not popular although intertidal areas sometimes used at low tide. This is predominantly on sand and mud intertidal areas.</i>
Are there features on the site that will attract visitors e.g. viewpoint, waterfall, ruins, etc.? If so give details.		✓		<i>Many attractions including lighthouses, rail station, pubs, cafes, power station, beaches, holiday & residential homes. Dungeness landscape itself a real draw.</i>
Are there features on the site that will detract visitors e.g. rough terrain, bogs etc.? If so give details			✓	<i>Shingle difficult surface to walk over however the draw of 'seeing the sea' itself is a strong influence on the visitor to walk over the shingle to the foreshore</i>

Are there car parks, lay-bys, bus stops, or any other visitor facilities (eg cycle hire centre, horse riding centre) providing or facilitating access to the site?	✓		<i>Rail station, free car parking, accessibility to beach along boardwalk. Bus stop at northern extent of estate on Coast Drive and car parks along Coast Drive</i>
Is there already de facto use of the site? If so give details of location and refer to mapped annotations.	✓		<i>De facto access exists in a number of areas on Dungeness</i>
Predicted Access Use	Yes	No	Comments
Are new entrance points likely to develop on the site, and if so, where?		✓	<i>Patterns of use are well established across Dungeness, including along the proposed route.</i>
Are any new routes or areas of access (on foot, horse or bike) other than those proposed, likely to develop and, if so, where?	✓		<i>There <u>may</u> be some additional use of shingle along existing routes, although a level of uncertainty as to where routes may develop if unmanaged, whether seaward or landward of the trail.</i>
<p>Summarise any predicted changes to access levels and patterns <u>and</u> where there is a significant risk that they would adversely affect the <i>potentially vulnerable habitats and species</i> highlighted in Step 1:</p> <p>From Access Assessment Conclusions⁴</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dungeness area is well used, with a trend for increasing numbers as the area is covered more and more in the press and on TV. It is expected that general promotion of the new England Coast Path will lead to an increase in access to the coast in the area. 2. Virtually all visitors will continue to come by car and railway, stay for a short visit (food, brew, look at sites and sea) and leave. The main focus will stay as Derek Jarman's garden, the facilities nr Britannia Pub, the boardwalk, lighthouse and the power station. 3. The use of the road, road verge, the footpaths beside and in front of the power station and the footpath between the Pilot pub and Penny Cottage may see minor increases from long distance walkers and day trippers, associated with the ECP. 4. There are a number of other rights of way across the shingle but these are not well marked, or regularly used and are unlikely to see any marked change due to ECP. 5. There is existing de-facto access across the open shingle both landward and seaward of Dungeness Road, in established patterns that have developed over years. These patterns are likely to remain unchanged. 6. With statutory spreading room, the existing levels of access across the shingle may change along existing routes and potentially along new routes due to the introduction of the ECP. 			
Completion of Step 2 –Please complete as appropriate			
<p>Case Officer Signed: </p> <p>On behalf of Natural England Name: Tom Lord Date: 15/09/2014</p>			
<p>If predicted changes to access will pose a risk to vulnerable habitats and species, move to Step 3. If predicted changes to access will <u>not</u> pose a risk to vulnerable habitats and species, move to Step 4.</p>			

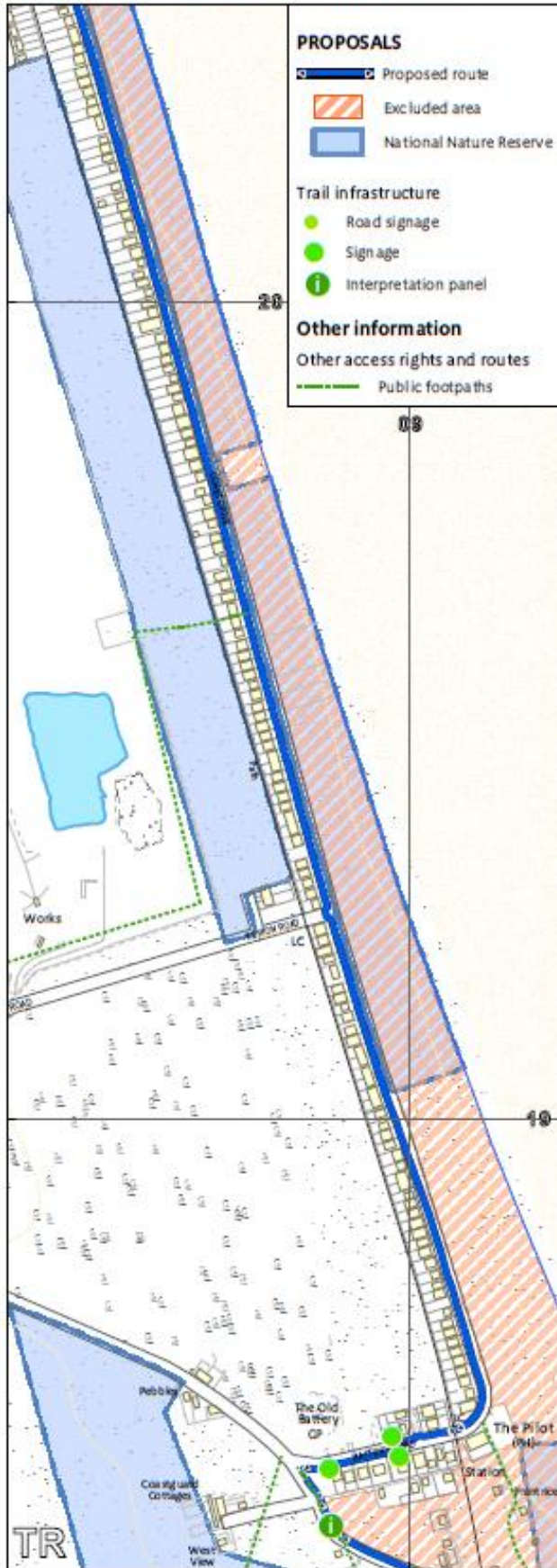
⁴ These conclusions were taken from meetings held on 120513 and 110214, with Dungeness Estate, Romney Marsh Countryside Project, RSPB, Kent County Council, Shepway District Council and Natural England,

STEP 3 – IDENTIFY MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO COUNTER PREDICTED IMPACTS

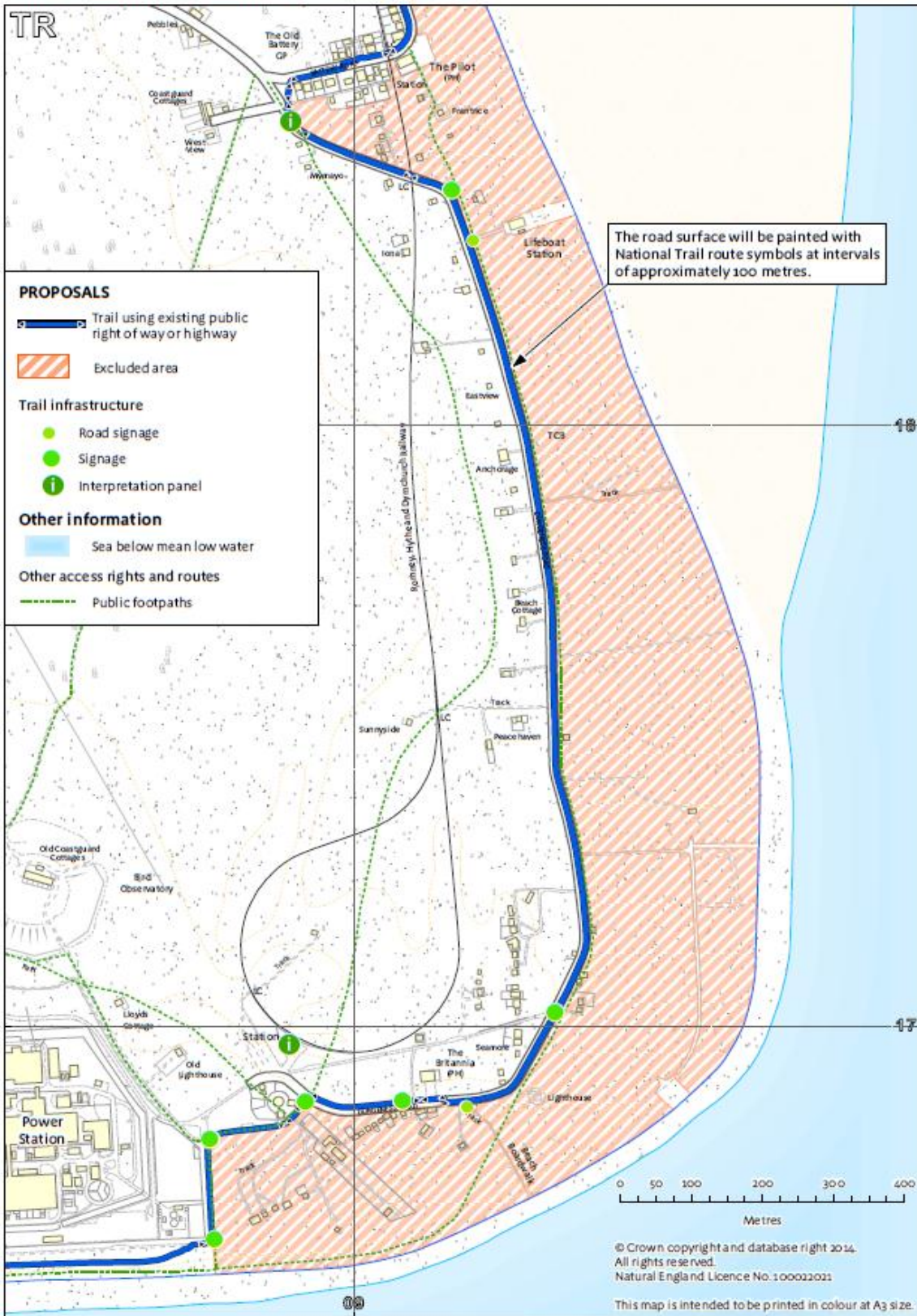
Species or habitat	Risk of predicted change significantly affecting conservation interests	Required access management measures (identifying the least restrictive option)
<p>Vegetated shingle. This is found from the proposed ECP route seaward across the Dungeness Point down to the foreshore. This includes early stages of the Annex 1 Habitat PVSB from the ECP route seaward and the Annex 1 Habitat AVDL found on the foreshore.</p>	<p>High – Access may be causing damage currently. Expected increase in visitors across shingle may see an increase in extent/frequency of damage.</p>	<p>Low level directional signs and waymarks The locations suggested are appropriate and will be placed in areas already subject to pressure at key locations to assist the walker to follow the ECP route. These will require ongoing maintenance, provided by Kent County Council. Locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at the bend of Dungeness Road near Penny Cottage • a key location to redirect walkers away from the PROW that crosses the shingle towards The Pilot and therefore walkers will be directed to follow the CP route along the road. • At lay-bys and car parks inland of the trail. • at the boardwalks ,to reinforce where access across the shingle is encouraged using the boardwalks • painted along the tarmac of Dungeness Road, which will be effective in marking the route of the England Coast Path (ECP), even if cars park along the verge. The road markings are an excellent solution as these cause no impact. They are easily maintained and repainted and would be a quick visual reminder to walkers to reassure them that they are ‘on the right path’. • Roundels on Dengemarsh Gulley (Pen Bars area) to direct people along the ECP, not across shingle towards power station which lies landward of the trail. • Waymarks to the north of the NNR at Greatstone dunes, directing people along the ECP (beside the road) avoiding the beach area
<p>Vegetated shingle.</p>	<p>High – Access may be causing damage currently. Expected increase in visitors across shingle may see an increase in extent/frequency of damage</p>	<p>Interpretation panels The suggested locations are all key locations and would certainly be a priority for additional interpretation. Existing interpretation is located at the Railway station and the boardwalk. Good opportunities if the Toll Booth progresses. We will include improvements to interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near the light railway station; • Near the boardwalk • At / near the future tollbooth site (entrance to Dungeness Estate) • Greatstone north NNR
<p>Vegetated shingle</p>	<p>High – Access may be causing damage currently. Expected increase in visitors across shingle may see an increase in extent/frequency of damage</p>	<p>Toll Booth additions NB. The Toll Booth is yet to be built and the detail of how the whole system of the Toll Booth is managed is yet to be agreed.</p> <p>When built/agreed, this should include (NE CA funded): Provision of a leaflet with map to hand out to visitors Permanent information boards covering 24hr access</p> <p>Other measures currently part-funded by NE (NNR) / elsewhere:</p> <p>Face to face – guidance to individual visitors/groups from on-site staff, training for site staff (via Owen of Romney Marsh Countryside</p>

		<p>Partnership RMCP) – important that continued funding and presence on site is maintained for the success of management measures outline here.</p> <p>The Toll Booth should be appropriately managed to engage with both cars and walkers and should work in conjunction with site based staff on site – dependant on funding opportunities to be explored with partners.</p>
Vegetated shingle	High – Access may be causing damage currently. Expected increase in visitors across shingle may see an increase in extent/frequency of damage	<p>Statutory Restrictions and Exclusions</p> <p>A direction for a local, year round exclusion zone will be managed by staff on site. The exclusion will cover the NNR and areas of private land seaward of the trail, largely east of Dungeness Road and Coast Drive, from south of Greatstone dunes to the eastern edge of the power station.</p> <p>The exclusion would not cover the promoted routes or access tracks to the beach (see map below).</p> <p>Face to face information, passing out of leaflets, ‘meet the warden’ would help to provide information to walkers in a welcoming, helpful, non-authoritarian manner.</p>
Vegetated shingle	High – Access may be causing damage currently. Expected increase in visitors across shingle may see an increase in extent/frequency of damage	<p>Monitoring programme</p> <p>Natural England will develop a methodology to evaluate the mitigation package. This will inform decisions at the 2 year review where adjustments to the direction, trail or management measures may be required.</p> <p>Monitoring will include evidence from before and after introduction of the ECP to inform assessment of impacts for example using recent Visitor Surveys, feedback from on-site warden and aerial photos (extent of shingle vegetation) to form a baseline.</p> <p>After an initial review, ongoing monitoring information from Natural England and other sources will inform future reviews of the mitigation package. Information can be gathered through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial photos to determine the extent of vegetation and spread of visitors. • Visitor numbers data • Vegetation monitoring at fixed points (informed by aerial photography and vegetation surveys at key locations). • Information and feedback passed on by site manager. <p>NB. If monitoring suggests that Coastal Access rights are unexpectedly resulting in more use of the shingle for example landward of the trail, compared with the position before commencement of the rights, further management measures could be explored in discussion with Natural England and the affected land owners/managers.</p>

Coast Road Infrastructure Requirements



Dungeness Infrastructure Requirements



Completion of Step 3 – Please complete as appropriate



Responsible Officer Signed:

On behalf of Natural England

Name: Jo Dear

Date: 17th September 2014

Move on to Step 4

STEP 4: DESCRIPTION OF FINAL ACCESS PROPOSAL

Summarise the final Access Proposal:

The route maps can be found on Natural England's website:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/access/coastalaccess/Camber/default.aspx>

All management measures relating to the route, infrastructure and signage requirements and restrictions applying to the coastal margin are as described in detail in the table in Step 3 above.

Completion of Step 4 – Please complete

Case officer signed:



Name: Tom Lord

Date: 15/09/2014

Move to Step 5

STEP 5: ASSESSMENT OF ACCESS PROPOSAL ON SSSI AND NON-NOTIFIED HABITATS AND SPECIES

The access proposal will not be damaging to the interest features for which Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI is notified.

Responsible Officer signed:



Name: Jo Dear

Date: 17th September 2014

The access proposal will be compatible with furthering the conservation or enhancement of the features for which Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI is notified.

Responsible Officer signed:



Name: Jo Dear

Date: 17th September 2014

The access proposal will not have adverse impacts on Protected species.

Responsible Officer signed:



Name: Jo Dear

Date: 17th September 2014

The access proposal will not have adverse impacts on un-notified species or habitats.

Responsible Officer signed:



Name: Jo Dear

Date: 17th September 2014

If the proposal affects a European site, move on to Step 6. If not, move on to Step 7 (information storage).

If there are any outstanding issues over the impacts on SSSIs, protected species or other features – the Case Officer and Responsible Officer should review Step 3 to find suitable management and mitigation measures, before moving to Step 7.

STEP 6: ASSESSMENT OF ACCESS PROPOSAL ON EUROPEAN SITES - SCREENING FOR LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT (HABITAT REGULATION ASSESSMENT)

Screening of the project

There are two screening stage tests required under Regulation 61 (transposing Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive):

C1. Test: Necessary to (conservation) management (of the European site's features)

Not necessary for the management of the SAC or SPA as sites are managed in partnership under a joint NNR management plan.

Test conclusion: Natural England has considered the whole project under Regulation 61 (1)(b) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and has decided that it **is not** directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European site], for the reasons outlined above.

C2. Test: Likelihood of significant effects (LSE)

C2.1 Alone: *This section details how those constituent elements of the project, which are not considered necessary for or directly connected with the management of the European Site(s), may have a likely significant effect(s) alone, after each of the project elements are tested against each of the relevant European site features and an assessment of their vulnerability to potential effects using best available evidence and information is made. Measures that would avoid or reduce the likelihood of significant effects arising and which are already integral to the project as submitted have been taken into account at this stage.*

Dungeness vegetated shingle is a unique and highly sensitive feature, damage to which can be irreversible. Active promotion of the boardwalk and a number of other surfaced tracks as the way for the public to reach the beach would benefit both the public and the conservation aims, so long as good interpretation is used. Access will be well signposted onto and off the beach at both ends of the NNR, on Dungeness and at the north end of Coast Drive, opposite Romney Bay Holiday Village.

After consideration and with such active promotion in place, it seems likely that public use of the intervening vegetated shingle areas will decrease, despite the advent of coastal access rights. Nevertheless, there is a possibility that this analysis might prove incorrect, or that the advent of the access rights might make the remaining users of the shingle areas less amenable to requests from the warden to leave these areas. This leads us to recommend that as a precaution, the Coastal Access Report should propose that an exclusion to default access rights to the shingle parcels lying seaward of the road (the trail) between promoted access routes to the beach be adopted for an initial period of 2 years, on an experimental basis – with an expectation that after that time the level of restriction will be reduced if, as expected, the use of active management through positive signage leads to a reduction in potential issues from public use of the vegetated shingle (see maps above for more details).

A longer term exclusion (past the initial 2 year period) may not be necessary, as the overall plan including active access management may in fact reduce rather than increase public use of the

shingle areas without the need for any longer term exclusion being put in place.

The monitoring and feedback from site will:

a) support the continued use of exclusion as an essential tool for the management of the site,

or;

b) demonstrate that the exclusion, coupled with the other management measures outlined in this document, has managed the pressure effectively, thereby triggering discussions about the continued use of and level and extent of the exclusions

The measures contained in this document would provide confidence in the continuing ability to warden the vegetated shingle and would allow and positively encourage beach access (main area of interest) via established tracks and hard surfaces that are already used and not vulnerable to trampling.

It was also agreed that the warden should continue to file regular logs in order to support an evidence based review at that stage of the access arrangements in this area.

C3. Screening Decision

On the basis of the project details submitted (see Step 4), Natural England has concluded that:

- B) As the project is unlikely to have significant effects (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on any of the Qualifying Features, no further assessment is required and permission/authorisation/assent may be given.

D. Permission Decision

As the relevant competent authority, Natural England has carried out a Habitats Regulations assessment of the access project as required by Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and has decided that, with regard to the European Site and its qualifying features;

- Permission may be given

The reasons for this decision are as follows:

The assessment has demonstrated that the vegetated shingle is vulnerable to trampling pressure. The damage that arises from trampling can result in a change in the vegetation cover that would need to be avoided. The mitigation measures operating in the whole together will help to reduce the damage and control this. A key mitigation measure is monitoring. This will help to inform future management decisions following the review that is set to take place two years after implementation.

Responsible Officer signed:

Jo Dear

Name: Jo Dear

Date: 17th September 2014

NOTE

Where it has been concluded that permission may be given, the Habitats Regulations assessment of the implications of this project on the European Site has been completed.

