

## Access and Nature Conservation Assessment Proforma

This proforma complements the Access and Nature Conservation Guidance Note which sets out Natural England's agreed process for undertaking an Access and Nature Conservation Assessment for access related plans or projects. It is to be used for the consideration of likely significant effect on Natura 2000 sites or impacts on sensitive habitats and species based on anticipated changes to access levels and patterns arising from the implementation of access proposals

**THIS ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN COMPLETED BY ADRIAN GARDINER (RO – WINTERTON-HORSEY DUNES SSSI), RICK SOUTHWOOD (SENIOR RESERVES' MANAGER – WINTERTON DUNES NNR) AND SUE REES (SENIOR COASTAL SPECIALIST).**

### Stage 1 - INFORMATION GATHERING

Please complete in as much detail as possible. Information gathered here will contribute to later stages of the process.

Basic Site Information (All fields mandatory)									
Please tick one:									
SPA	✓	SAC		Ramsar		SSSI	✓	Sensitive Feature	✓
Site/Sensitive Feature Name:		Great Yarmouth North Denes SSSI							
Site Area (ha):		100.75		County:		Norfolk			
Grid Reference:		TG530113		Date of designation:		January 24 <sup>th</sup> 1992			
NE Case Officer:		Diana Curtis		NE Responsible Officer consulted:		Adrian Gardiner			

### Reasons for designation – Interest Features

**Note:** the last condition assessments were carried out on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2009 and are therefore now 4 years out of date; the same judgements of condition would not necessarily be made now.

Interest Feature/Sensitive Feature	Condition of feature (% area of units containing the feature) based on assessment 2009	Reasons for <u>unfavourable</u> status		
<b>Supralittoral sediment</b>	SD1 <i>Rumex crispus</i> - <i>Glaucium flavum</i> shingle community	Vegetated Shingle	Favourable 100%	Current level of anthropogenic erosion is an issue in places.
	SD4 <i>Elymus farctus</i> ssp. <i>Boreali-atlanticus</i> foredune community	Shifting dunes	Favourable 100%	Current level of anthropogenic erosion is an issue in places.
	SD5 <i>Leymus arenarius</i> mobile dune community	Shifting dunes	Favourable 100%	Current level of anthropogenic erosion is an issue in places.
	SD6 <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> mobile dune community	Shifting dunes	Favourable 100%	Current level of anthropogenic erosion is an issue in places.
	SD7 <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - <i>Festuca rubra</i> semi-fixed dune community	Fixed dune grassland	Favourable 100%	This feature is extremely rare nationally and highly sensitive to erosion; it is currently considered at the limit of acceptable levels of anthropogenic erosion.
	SD11 <i>Carex arenaria</i> - <i>Cornicularia aculeata</i> dune community	Fixed dune grassland	Favourable 100%	This feature is extremely rare nationally and highly sensitive to erosion; this community is particularly susceptible, due to the lichen component of the SD11; it is currently considered at the limit of acceptable levels of anthropogenic erosion.
	SD12 <i>Carex arenaria</i> - <i>Festuca ovina</i> - <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> dune grassland	Fixed dune grassland	Favourable 100%	This feature is extremely rare nationally and highly sensitive to erosion; it is currently considered at the limit of acceptable levels of anthropogenic erosion.
	Aggregations of breeding birds - <i>Sterna albifrons</i>	Little Tern	Favourable 100%	The SPA population as a whole would be considered favourable; however, Great Yarmouth N Denes currently holds very low numbers, due to the current unfavourability of the nesting area and the favourability of Winterton & Scroby Sands.

Great Yarmouth North Denes SSSI was selected as it complements, rather than duplicates, Winterton-Horsey Dunes SSSI. Yarmouth is a much younger system and one that is much more actively accreting (at the time of designation). The early successional stages are therefore better represented than at Winterton. Also, the older areas of Yarmouth are mainly occupied by acidic dune grassland, whilst at Winterton such areas are largely occupied by *Calluna* heath (Radley, 1991 – proposal for SSSI designation).

### Other plans or projects to be considered (for in-combination)

Greater Norwich Development Partnership's Joint Core Strategy.

Existing levels of recreational use of the site need to be taken into consideration when considering the implications for condition of the notified features of interest (see section 2 for the assessment of current levels of erosion in relation to the features of interest on the site).

**Completion of Stage 1 – Please complete as appropriate**

Responsible Officer Signed:  Name: Adrian J. Gardiner  
 On behalf of Natural England Date: November 4<sup>th</sup> 2013

**Stage 2 – Sensitive Feature Assessment**

**Category A/ EPS features assessment**

**Do any of the Interest Features/Sensitive features appear on the Category A species list (see Guidance Note)? (Please tick grey box)**

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Little tern, ringed plover	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--	----	--------------------------

**If yes, could the proposals pose a significant risk to this feature? If no consider European Protected Species (EPS) (below)**

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

**If yes, provide more detail in the table below. If no consider EPS (below)**

**Are any European Protected Species (EPS) present on site (where not features of the designation)?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	-------------------------------------

**If yes, could the proposed proposals pose a significant risk to damaging or disturbing EPS or their habitat? If no – proceed to Stage 3 Access Assessment**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

**If yes, please enter details of the EPS species and their sensitivity to access related activities on the site in question in the tables below. See part 5.0 of the Guidance Note for more information.**

**If no, give reasons: eg bat roost is set away from the coastal margin, therefore no likely impact from Coastal Access.**

**Category A species/European Protected Species present on site**

Category A/EPS species	Sensitivity to access
<b>Category A/EPS species 1 Little tern</b> Further information: Part of the Great Yarmouth/ Winterton SPA population. The colony size at Great Yarmouth N Denes has historically been around 200 pairs and was at one time the largest colony in the UK. However, the Denes' colony has been small in recent years as other sites have been preferred. In 2012, 5 pairs attempted to nest and failed; in 2013, 0 pairs attempted to breed. The colony at Great Yarmouth is located around the eastern most point of the site and is related to the condition of this area at any given time, as well as the suitability of other nesting sites in the area. The overall health of the SPA population is favourable, as the numbers and productivity at Winterton and Scroby Sands have been good. The colony at Great Yarmouth could easily return to its former levels if conditions allow.	Colonial breeder – usually associated with beaches and known to be adversely affected by recreational access disturbance, nest trampling and predation.
<b>Category A/EPS species 1 Ringed plover</b> Further information: The number of breeding pairs over recent years has been up to about 10 pairs; 6 pairs attempted to breed in 2012; breeding pairs at Great Yarmouth are found along the coastline where suitable habitat is found, although success is very low outside of any little tern protection; this species would be more widely distributed along the coastline if access pressure was less.	Restricted to beaches and known to be adversely affected by recreational disturbance. At least one important population has suffered a large decline due, in part at least, to disturbance, nest trampling and predation.

**UK BAP red-listed species**

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

The denes are important for this Red-listed species due to recent declines in the population size. At least 30 pairs have been known to breed throughout the dunes historically (mid-1990s). No recent estimates are available.

## Natura 2000 and SSSI features assessment

The table below includes features not covered by the Category A/ EPS tables above, and is taken from the Habitats' Regulations' Assessment carried out on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 (Southwood & Gardiner, 2012).

Potential effect	Interest feature likely to be affected	The mechanism/ pathway of effect
<b>1. Beach features (included in relation to proposed 'spreading room')</b>		
Trampling	SD1 & SD4 – shingle and foredune communities (SSSI feature)	Vegetation damage – reduced extent of feature. The foredune communities can occur anywhere along this stretch as conditions allow. The effect is considered negligible; the embryonic dunes are transitory and resilient. The shingle communities are more vulnerable if little tern protection is not in place, but are generally resilient to some anthropogenic effects.
Trampling/ disturbance	Little tern (SPA feature)	Direct disturbance leading to reduced breeding success; trampling of nests. Measures already in place due to fencing and wardening provision by the RSPB; this will need to continue to avoid potential effects when the colony is <i>in situ</i> .
Nutrient enrichment/ disease transmission	All features	Nutrient enrichment from dog faeces/ transmission of disease. Considered to be a low effect due to tidal washing.
<b>2. 'Mobile' dunes features (included in relation to proposed 'spreading room')</b>		
Trampling	SD5, SD6 vegetation communities (SSSI feature)	Vegetation damage – reduced extent of feature, changes in vegetation structure and/or community composition. Substrate damage can lead to a removal of the upper layers of the soil profile, and a shift to unvegetated sand. Any increase from the current level of usage is likely to be damaging to this feature, though it is more resilient than the other dune features, due its inherent need for mobilisation.
Nutrient enrichment	SD5, SD6 vegetation communities (SSSI feature)	Nutrient enrichment leads to localised changes in species composition to a more nutrient tolerant sward.
<b>3. Fixed dune features (including adjacent 'spreading room')</b>		
Trampling	SD7, SD11 & SD12 vegetation communities (SSSI feature)	Vegetation damage – reduced extent of feature, changes in vegetation structure and/or community composition. Substrate damage can lead to a removal of the upper layers of the soil profile, and a shift to unvegetated sand. If damaged, the community is set back to the start of the successional process. Dependent on the current level of damage to the features from existing use.
Nutrient enrichment	SD7, SD11 & SD12 vegetation communities (SSSI feature)	Nutrient enrichment leads to localised changes in species composition to a more nutrient tolerant sward.

## Assessment of current levels of anthropogenic erosion

The following assesses the current levels of anthropogenic erosion at Great Yarmouth North Denes SSSI in relation to the broad dune features. This is related to the different attributes associated with erosion that apply to the different features. These can then be used to assess the potential impacts of the coastal access proposals on site feature condition.

The judgements on these attributes at the last condition assessment in 2009 were considered as being met. At that time it was judged that the anthropogenic mobilisation of the mobile dunes was at a beneficial level for the dynamics of the whole site. Since that time the reconnection of the mobile dunes in part with the beach, and increases in public use of the site have occurred. The site is not due for condition assessment until at least 2014, at which point there may be a different judgement on the meeting of bare ground attributes across the site, or within parts of the site. Until a full condition assessment is made, and the condition is deemed unfavourable, remedies cannot be put in place to address any issues identified. The judgements outlined below, therefore present an interim judgement based on the best available information, required in order to inform the assessment of coastal access proposals.

The following data and advice provides the evidence base for the judgements related to the current levels of use on the site, and potential increases in the usage of the site:

- Aerial photography (Next Perspectives, 2010) shows recent levels of bare sand across the site (Figure 1).
- Current and proposed alignment maps (NE Coastal Access team, September 2013), shows areas of eroded dune across the site.
- Management zones (Norfolk Coast Partnership – Visitor Management Strategy, 1995) do not cover Great Yarmouth North Denes as it falls outside the AONB. However, if the same categories were adopted at Great Yarmouth, it would be defined as a 'red zone'. The implications of this designation are that, "these are defined as the most fragile wildlife habitats *in the AONB*, and yet are under considerable visitor pressure. The strategy denotes a strict management technique of not promoting to visitors, and the reduction of parking."
- "For the dune heath, I would be looking for no increase in fragmentation and the ratio of bare sand to vegetated dune heath, perhaps also patch size of vegetation." (Sue Rees – Senior Environmental Specialist – Coastal Habitats, October 2013) This statement also relates to the lichen-rich dune grassland communities.
- The following are some observations of relevance from 'the access guidelines' (Natural England, 2009) (some of these are drawn from other research referenced in the report):
  - a) The significance of open access needs to be judged in terms of the extent to which they compromise the favourable condition of the key features on the site (section 2.8.1);
  - b) Management measures are deemed to be the preferred option for addressing concerns; where they are irreconcilable, conservation should prevail (section 2.8.1);
  - c) Where statutory controls are required, these would normally involve restrictions to linear routes and/or controls on dogs (section 2.8.3);
  - d) Measures applied should be the least stringent to protect the nature conservation interest of the site (section 2.8.4);
  - e) Further survey is likely to be required to determine the implications for features (section 2.8.5);
  - f) The potential effects on features are outlined in section 3;
  - g) Path width increases with use, and erosion continues once it has started even if usage reduces (section 3.3.19); the effects are accentuated on slopes, which is relevant to Great Yarmouth (section 3.3.20);
  - h) Sand dune features are sensitive to very low levels of usage, with damage occurring to features of interest (Table 3.2);
  - i) Good path surfacing leads to a high percentage of users using the desired route, particularly where the adjacent ground is difficult; off path usage is greater where the adjacent ground is easier to traverse and there are existing alternative routes (sections 3.4.3 – 3.4.7); open access can lead to a proliferation of the path network (section 3.4.8);
  - j) Assessing impacts needs to be site specific and related to the current condition of the site features as assessed through the favourable condition tables for the site (section 3.7);
  - k) Dune features are highly sensitive to moderate/ high levels of trampling; mobile dunes are the least resilient, though some mobilisation of sand is an inherent part of this feature (section 11.3); lichen-rich dune grassland (equates to SD11 at Great Yarmouth) is highly sensitive (probably more so than dune heath) (section 11.3.11);
  - l) The density of paths on some dune systems is very high; a study in 1977 (Boorman & Fuller, 1977) at Winterton Dunes estimated paths to occupy 13.6% of the whole site (defined as 104ha, though it is unclear which section of the site this refers to without access to the original paper) (section 11.3.8); the level of usage is likely to be higher at Great Yarmouth, particularly in the northern, narrow section;

m) Lichen-rich dunes are cited as one of the potential exceptions where it may be necessary to implement statutory restrictions (section 11.6.9).

**FEATURE: STRANDLINE, EMBRYO AND MOBILE DUNE FEATURES**

**Relevant FCT attribute:** *vehicle damage or trampling at vulnerable locations should be absent or rare*

**Assessment of current use in relation to attribute:**

- the strandline and embryonic dunes are transitory and resilient; at Yarmouth they are likely to be vulnerable across their entire frontage, due to the access patterns across the site down to the beach area;
- The mobile dune features are the least resilient to damage, although some mobilisation of sand is an inherent part of the functioning of the whole dune succession. At the northern end of the site at Yarmouth, this feature is narrow and constrained by the sea wall at its inland edge. As it fronts the holiday park and has heavy usage, erosion levels are high. On the wider part of the site, erosion is more diffuse, and largely related to the paths that access the beach and cross the mobile dune line.
- Aerial photography and the coastal access maps showing areas of erosion have been used to determine the current levels of erosion in the mobile dune feature. Across the whole site, current usage is at, or close to failing, the attribute for this feature. In heavily used parts of the site, current usage is failing the attribute for this feature.

**FEATURE: FIXED DUNE GRASSLAND**

**Relevant FCT attributes:** *general – bare substrate present, but <10%; no specific attributes identified for SD11 (containing the lichen-rich dune grassland communities), but it is more sensitive than the dune heath where heavy disturbance should be <1%; final FCT will be amended to recognise SD11 as different from the other fixed grassland communities with a heavy disturbance level of <1% or less*

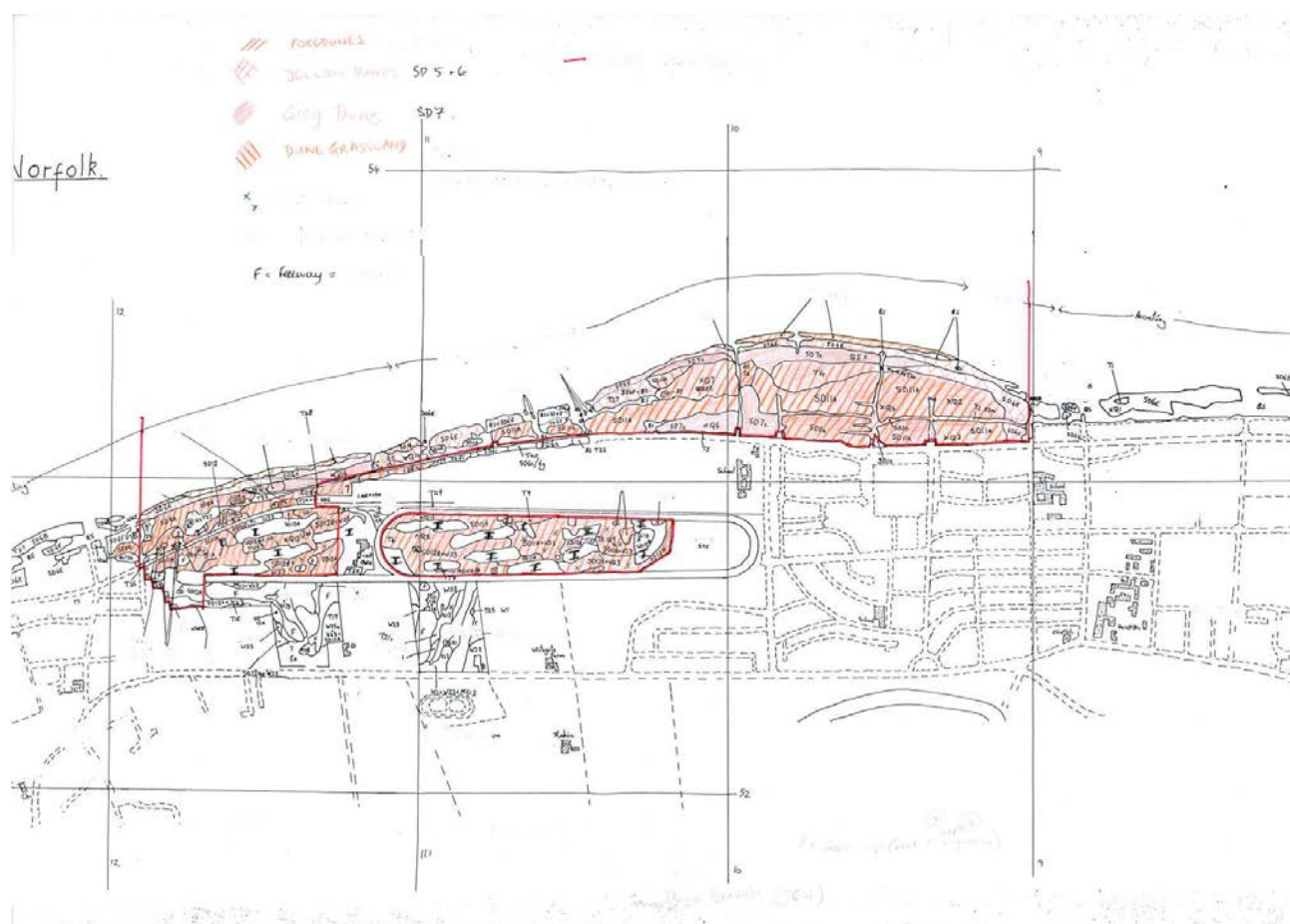
**Assessment of current use in relation to attribute:**

- The distribution of the fixed dune grassland communities is shown in Figure 2; SD11 (the lichen-rich communities) are extensive at Great Yarmouth within the fixed dune grassland.
- The distribution of NVC communities on the site has not been assessed since 1989. It is proposed to resurvey the site in 2014. One of the objectives will be to assess any changes in the distribution and condition of the more sensitive communities, in particular.
- The SD11 lichen-rich communities are the most sensitive features present on the site. The impact of anthropogenic pressure can be clearly seen towards the western edge of the NNR at nearby Winterton where the community is extensive and in good condition in an area where public access is excluded, but much reduced in the area outside the exclusion.
- Damage to the fixed dune grassland communities can be identified by a switch to bare sand, mobile dune communities, or a shift from the SD11 lichen-rich communities to more grass/forb dominated dune grassland swards. A switch to bare sand sets the succession back to the beginning, and it can take a significant length of time (without ongoing disturbance) for the community to recover back to fixed dune grassland.
- Aerial photography and the coastal access maps showing areas of erosion have been used to determine the current levels of erosion in the fixed dune grassland feature. Across the whole site, current usage is at, or close to failing, the attribute for this feature. In heavily used parts of the site, current usage is failing the attribute for this feature, particularly for the SD11 community. Boorman & Fuller (1977) showed a 13.6% level of erosion across 104ha of nearby Winterton Dunes – this exceeds the 10% disturbance level for the SD6, SD7, and SD12 communities, let alone the 1% disturbance levels for the SD11 communities. The level of erosion over much of Great Yarmouth North Denes exceeds the levels of erosion at Winterton.





Figure 2 – NVC map of site (Doarks & Radley, 1990)



Conclusions

The following are the conclusions of the stage 2 assessment:

- The category A/ EPS species are adequately protected on the site, due to measures already in place.
- The whole site contains sensitive coastal dune features.
- A range of research and analysis has indicated that the site has been close to recreational carrying capacity and consequent impacts on site features for some time.
- This assessment concludes that strandline and embryo dune communities are vulnerable at Yarmouth and the current data is insufficient to judge whether they are meeting their bare ground attributes and therefore not impacted by current levels of recreational usage.
- The mobile dune feature is at, or close to, failing its bare ground attributes on this site. Due to the mobilisation of sand being an inherent component of this community, with consequent benefits for the whole dune succession, some anthropogenic mobilisation is beneficial. If the mobilisation is at too high a level this can be detrimental. Mobile dunes are also able to recover more quickly than the other more fixed features on the site.
- The fixed dune grassland is at, or close to, failing its bare ground attributes on this site. The SD11 (lichen-rich dune grassland) is the most sensitive feature on the site, and is highly impacted by increases in disturbance.
- Any further anthropogenic damage to the mobile dune and fixed dune grassland features on the site must be avoided. There should be no further increase in access across the site, particularly where this will impact on the most sensitive features present.

## References

Boorman, L.A. and Fuller, R.M., 1977. Studies on the impacts of paths on the dune vegetation at Winterton, Norfolk, England. *Biol. Conserv.*, **12**, 203-16.

Doarks, C., & Radley, G.P., 1990, *National sand dune vegetation survey, Site Report No. 75 Great Yarmouth, Norfolk 1989*, Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough.

Natural England, 2009, *Countryside and Right of Way Act, 2000 Part 1: Access to the Countryside*, Natural England, Sheffield.

Norfolk Coast Partnership, 1995, *Visitor Management Strategy*, Norfolk Coast Partnership, Fakenham.

Norfolk Wildlife Services, 2012, *Study to assess the capacity of International Sites to accommodate visitor pressure*, Norfolk Wildlife Services, Norwich.

## Completion of Stage 2 – Please complete as appropriate

Responsible Officer Signed:



Name: Adrian J. Gardiner

On behalf of Natural England

Date: November 4<sup>th</sup> 2013

## Stage 3 – Access Assessment

Please see the Guidance Note for detailed instructions on how to complete the mapping element of the Access Assessment. Refer to and summarise any mapped annotations, extra information and conclusions below.

NB. Where no access sensitive features have been identified as a result of Stage 2, the mapping process may not be necessary. Please refer to part 4.3 of the Guidance Note for more information.

Current	Yes	No	Comments
Are the PRoW and/or permissive paths and any open access land within and adjacent to the site boundaries well used?	X		A network of well-walked, un-waymarked, informal linear routes exist north-south and east-west across the site. The E-W tracks show evidence of where local people pass through the dunes to the beach from neighbouring residential areas. People are probably also using the E-W tracks as part of circular walks incorporating one or more of the N-S tracks.
Are the routes / is access to the land actively promoted?	X		ND is popular for residents of Gt Yarmouth and seasonal holiday makers as it affords easy access to sandy beach across a dune system. The northern section is adjacent to Seashore Holiday Village. The site is currently promoted by Tourist Info for visitors and local residents as a place for dog walking ( <a href="http://www.great-yarmouth.co.uk/places-to-go/Great-Yarmouth-Great-Yarmouth-North-Beach/details/?dms=13&amp;feature=1&amp;venue=0110033&amp;easi=true">http://www.great-yarmouth.co.uk/places-to-go/Great-Yarmouth-Great-Yarmouth-North-Beach/details/?dms=13&amp;feature=1&amp;venue=0110033&amp;easi=true</a> )
These routes are / the land is used mainly by;	walkers	X	Including dog walkers
	horseriders		X
	cyclists	X	Some cyclists use the northern section along the sea wall.
	running	X	
Organised activities	X		Beach clearing
Wildlife watching	X		Levels at site are unknown but likely to be seasonal
Are there clear and defined access points to the site? If so give details	X		The dunes can be accessed directly from North Drive, the sea wall and from the beach (both north and south). The main access points are evident from worn areas assumed to be by walkers and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 along the southern section</li> <li>• 4 along the northern section</li> <li>• 1 from Caister Beach car park in the north.</li> <li>• 1 leading from the Boating Lake adjacent to North Drive in the south.</li> </ul>




Are you aware of or has the mapping exercise raised any particular management problems with existing routes?	X		<p>Northern section of access map provided by RO identifies damaged dune grassland requiring erosion control measures.</p> <p>The caravan park have installed an interpretation panel providing information about the SSSI and requesting people respect the wildlife and vegetation.</p> <p>However, there appears to be limited access management on the site with no information for dog walkers, limited signage or fencing etc to influence recreational behaviour across the site.</p> <p>The RSPB put electric fencing around Little Tern nesting areas in those years that Terns try and nest here with wardens providing advice to visitors. (www.great-yarmouth 20/09/13). RSPB advise this has proved effective when implemented.</p>
Does any other organisation promote this site for horse riding or cycling?		X	
Are there features on the site that will attract visitors e.g. viewpoint, waterfall, ruins, etc.? If so give details.	X		Sandy beach, open space close to urban site, convenient for dog walkers.
Are there features on the site that will detract visitors e.g. rough terrain, bogs etc.? If so give details		X	
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?	X		Services readily available to site due to close proximity of town. Car parking available along North Drive adjacent to site. The large Caister Beach car park to the north of the site is open all year round.
Is there already de facto use of the site? If so give details of location and refer to mapped annotations.	X		Across the whole of the site
Access data on current levels of use			<p>Survey undertaken by Norfolk Wildlife Services (NWS) on 31st January, 2009 (reported in the East of England HRA Plan Review, March 2010) recorded:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 16 walkers along the northern shore away from Great Yarmouth.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13 walkers along the northern shore towards Great Yarmouth.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 28 walkers along the southern shore away from Great Yarmouth.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 20 walkers along the southern shore towards Great Yarmouth.</p> <p>No other raw data appears available relating to this site although it is viewed that levels of visitors to the site is likely to be seasonal due to the seasonal holiday attractions in the area. (Norfolk Wildlife Services, 2012)</p>

#### Proposed Coastal Access trail alignment

Identified by purple line on attached map, aligned along a pavement and a currently walked route. Under the legislation, the beach and dunes would by default become part of the coastal margin and subject to access rights, including the landward dunes along the northern section.

Predicted	Yes/No /Comments
Are new entrance points likely to develop on the site, and if so, where?	No
Are any new routes or areas of access (on foot, horse or bike) other than those proposed, likely to develop and, if so, where?	No
Are there likely to be any significant changes to access levels and patterns as a result of the new proposals that will affect	<p>Our National Trails team have provided the following evidence to assist in assessing access levels post introduction of coastal access.</p> <p>The figures have been calculated using information from The Norfolk Coast Path/ Peddars Way team who have a wealth of information about people using these trails based on automated counters and various face to face surveys and other questionnaires and on-line surveys of visitors.</p> <p>Using information from recent years, our National Trails team estimate that the Norfolk</p>

<p><i>the interest features/sensitive features specified in Stage 2? If so, record those features likely to be affected in the table in Stage 4 below</i></p>	<p>Coast Path has approx 2,000 through hikers a year – ie long distance users.</p> <p>Numbers vary hugely throughout the year but considering the monthly profile of visits to the Norfolk Coast Path and making some assumptions about weekend/ weekdays it is estimated there might be 40 through hikers over a busy weekend in the summer and maybe 5 a day during the week. Over the winter months the numbers will be much lower – a handful at weekends and occasionally during the week.</p> <p>The Norfolk Coast Path has been established and promoted for many years and they do not expect numbers of through hikers to be as high for newly opened trail.</p> <p>For information the number of long distance walkers with a dog is much less than for other visitors (7% of long distance walkers compared with 18% of short distance walkers).</p> <p>The Norfolk Coast Path Trail Manager (11/3/2013) expects a modest increase in visitors to the site as a result of “long-distance” walkers wishing to walk the new stretch of National Trail. He does not expect any significant number of other visitors to be attracted to the site by the new trail or access rights over the dunes and beach.</p> <p>The Norfolk County Council Rights of Way Officer expects no significant increase in visitors to the site, even if promoted, due to its proximity to the already popular and easily accessible Great Yarmouth with accommodation and visitor attractions. (30/3/2013)</p> <p>Taking these expert local views into account, the England Coast Path delivery team predicts that more people will walk along the proposed route of the trail than do at present. We expect that most of this increase will arise from long-distance walkers newly attracted to the site by its designation as a National Trail.</p> <p>We expect a small minority of long-distance walkers to leave the proposed route in order to visit the beach, rest, or to use local facilities. Some management measures may therefore be desirable along selected routes where the conservation objective is to control the extent of erosion and/or to protect nesting birds. Such measures would also manage existing use more effectively.</p> <p>Any increase or redistribution of visitors will result in more dogs and/or a concentration of dogs. Where the conservation objective is to limit eutrophication or disturbance to birds, information and messages encouraging sympathetic behaviour by people who bring dogs may be desirable. We would expect this to limit these effects and to result in an overall reduction from their current levels over time.</p> <p>The predicted changes on site from the increased use by long distance walkers are based on the following assumptions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the car park at the northern end could act as a potential start/finish point for long distance walkers.</li> <li>• Long distance walkers are likely to keep mainly to marked trail, unless a particular attraction draws them away such as the beach.</li> </ul> <p>The most likely areas of increased use by long distance walkers are therefore the linked paths from the car park to the trail in the north, the proposed location of trail alignment along the existing walked path north of the caravan site, and currently walked paths leading from the trail to the beach.</p> <p>Long distance walkers’ dogs may contribute a minor amount of dog mess, but insignificant compared to existing local dog walking activities.</p>
---	--

Completion of Stage 3 –Please complete as appropriate	
<p>Case Officer Signed: </p> <p>On behalf of Natural England</p>	<p>Name: Diana Curtis</p> <p>Date: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014</p>

#### Stage 4 – Identify Management Measures

Using the information gathered in Stages 1 to 3, complete the tables below identifying specific management measures to avoid negative effects on interest features/sensitive features listed in Reason for Designation in Stage 1. Refer to the Guidance note for more information and examples.

NB. Amend new proposals to integrate any available measures as necessary to avoid the likelihood of any impacts of new proposals. Record them in the table below. Apply the least restrictive option (see Guidance Note for more information)

Interest Feature/Sensitive Feature and current access management issues.	Required access management measures (least restrictive option)
<p>The following management measures are proposed based on the understanding that the site is at, or exceeding, carrying capacity and any additional usage may have adverse effects on qualifying features (Norfolk Wildlife Services, 2012).</p>	
<p><i>The management measures listed generally apply to all features present on the site, unless otherwise stated.</i></p>	<p><b>Research</b></p> <p><b>Action for Coastal Access</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Possible monitoring of changes in erosion associated with the coastal access path and its immediate environs.</li> </ol>



	<p><b>Action for Responsible Officer</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repeat NVC vegetation surveys of the notified vegetation communities are essential to understand the habitat quality, feature condition and identify locations requiring restoration and re-connection of fragmented areas.</li> <li>2. The monitoring of erosion across the whole site associated with judgement of condition of the notified features, Ecological change of the notified features linked to anthropogenic effects, and data on the visitor usage of the site will be used to identify change resulting from coastal access implementation.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Action Coastal Access</b></p> <p><b>Waymarking</b> The proposed route of the trail and 2 selected cross routes should be waymarked to channel both existing and new visitors to the site along them. This will provide clear routes where people want them – to and from the coastal path to the beach. It will focus any unwanted effects of existing and new visitor use along these routes where it can be effectively managed using the other techniques outlined in this table. Waymarking will need to be sympathetic to the landscape and done in a way to minimise the visual intrusion, and optimise their longevity.</p>
	<p><b>Action Coastal Access</b></p> <p><b>Links</b> Using existing aerial photography, two desire lines from the trail to the shore line will be identified to channel visitors to the beach, to facilitate the managed use of the site by local people and day visitors, and to provide access to the beach and back. A stable, inert surface or boardwalk will be considered for these routes, as advised by the SSSI RO and NE's dune specialist. This will reduce trampling across the wider site which is sensitive to erosion.</p> <p>Context: The other desire lines from the coastal access route to the beach will be identified and managed in a way to ensure a reduction in the number of paths used and consequent habitat fragmentation.</p>
	<p><b>Action Coastal Access</b></p> <p><b>Interpretation</b> Interpretation panels to be placed at entry points to the site which would provide information to raise visitor awareness of the conservation value and objectives for the site and encourage sympathetic behaviour and enhance those already installed by the caravan park. This will limit any increase in unwanted behaviour and over time will result in a positive change in existing visitor behaviour. Discussions could be held with the tourist board and holiday park to further promote such information and messages. Consideration should be given to the use of social media to promote key messages to the site users.</p>
	<p><b>Context</b></p> <p><b>Little Tern Wardening</b> The RSPB currently organises seasonal wardening and fencing in years when little terns nest on the beach/foredunes, this management measure should continue. If RSPB no longer offer wardening then the need for restrictions or other measures would be reviewed and actioned if necessary.</p>
	<p><b>Action Coastal Access</b></p> <p><b>Restoration</b> Habitat restoration will be implemented with agreement of landowner as advised by SSSI RO/ NE dune specialist by fencing off areas to allow recovery and the provision of suitable signage to explain this activity to visitors.</p> <p><b>Context</b> The fixed dune grassland is sensitive and at the limit of acceptable levels of anthropogenic erosion, a rolling programme of habitat restoration should be implemented across the site in agreement with the landowner as advised by the SSSI RO/ NE dune specialist, by fencing off areas to allow recovery and the provision of suitable signage to explain this activity to visitors.</p>
	<p><b>Action Coastal Access</b></p> <p><b>Promotion</b> The site will not be promoted under the coastal access programme, or subsequently through National Trails' management. The Coastal Access Team believe the management measures proposed will reduce and avoid effects by influencing visitor behaviour and reducing physical impacts through physical intervention and ongoing habitat restoration.</p>

**Completion of Stage 4 – Please complete as appropriate**

**Responsible Officer Signed:**



**Name:** Adrian J. Gardiner

**On behalf of Natural England**

**Date:** July 7<sup>th</sup> 2014  
Revised September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014

**Ref**

Norfolk Wildlife Services, 2012) <http://www.gndp.org.uk/content/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/01/ENV-15-Study-to-assess-the-capacity-of-Sites-to-accommodate-visitor-pressure1.pdf>  
([www.greatyarmouth](http://www.greatyarmouth.co.uk) 20/09/13) <http://www.great-yarmouth.co.uk/Great-Yarmouth-Great-Yarmouth-North-Beach/details/?dms=13&venue=0110033>

**Stage 5 – Screening Decision**

**Conclusion of Stage 5 and thus the Access and Nature Conservation Assessment**

*Taking account of all available management measures listed in the table above, are the features of the N2K site/SSSI/Sensitive feature likely to be affected by the proposals?*

The appropriate implementation of the management measures identified above should ensure that there is no adverse effect on the European features (little tern) resulting from the designation of the Coastal Access Path through Great Yarmouth North Denes SSSI.

The appropriate implementation of the management measures identified above should ensure that the coastal access proposals are compatible with furthering the conservation and enhancement of the special interest of the SSSI.

**Completion of Stage 5 – Please complete as appropriate**

**Responsible Officer Signed:**



**Name:** Adrian J. Gardiner

**On behalf of Natural England**

**Date:** July 7<sup>th</sup> 2014

**Stage 6**

**CONCLUSION:** No likely significant effect on the European feature (little tern).

The appropriate implementation of the management measures identified above should ensure that the coastal access proposals are compatible with furthering the conservation and enhancement of the special interest of the SSSI.

**No Likely Significant Effect**

**Signed:**



**Name:** Dougal McNeil

**On behalf of Natural England**

**Date:** September 12<sup>th</sup> 2014

