

Natural England's Access and Conservation Assessment process

Introduction

Increased access rights to the countryside and coast create more opportunities for the public to enjoy the natural environment and to understand it better. Our access proposals (be they for NNR dedication or for Coastal Access provision) are developed and influenced by local opportunities for people to encounter landscape and wildlife features or to get a more varied experience of the countryside, where this is consistent with Natural England's statutory obligations. These include our Biodiversity duty and protection of features designated for their landscape, geological or geomorphological or biodiversity interest. These obligations and principles are outlined in chapters 4 & 5 of Natural England's Coastal Access 'Scheme'¹, and the section on protection of sensitive features is in Annex 2.

The key principle in our approach to developing access proposals will be to find the best outcome that secures these opportunities for engagement so far as practicable while ensuring appropriate protection of key sensitive features. This principle is in keeping with our statutory purpose to conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

We carefully consider the potential effects of improved coastal access on any key sensitive features, including wildlife, heritage, landscape and geodiversity features. This includes considering potential effects arising from any works which are necessary for the establishment or maintenance of improved access, as well as from people's use of new access rights.

In respect of sensitive natural features, we use an iterative process for developing our access proposals, as set out in this staged proforma. By working through these steps, we assess the potential effects of various options and further refine and assess them as necessary to help us decide on the best outcome.

The development of our proposals draws on a range of expertise in both Natural England and relevant organisations such as local wildlife trusts and other conservation bodies. We share our emerging analysis with these bodies before it is published as part of any external report, in order to help ensure we reach the right decisions. The aim is to develop proposals that have the necessary measures built into their design to avoid any substantive impacts on key conservation interests. These are then assessed as to their potential impact on key conservation interests, including European or other designated features, and habitats and species of principle importance in England.

The staged approach is illustrated in Figure 1, which also shows the different roles played within Natural England. The proforma follows these steps and aims to:

- show how conservation issues have been addressed in developing an access proposal;
- assess the impact of the access proposal on SSSIs and habitats and species that are potentially vulnerable to access pressure; and
- Provide a record of the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the access proposal, where required under Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2010.

Guidance notes are provided throughout the form to point to further information.

The completed proforma will be available, as necessary, when access proposals are published externally.

Roles within Natural England

In order to ensure objective decision making throughout this process, a separation of duties is employed between:

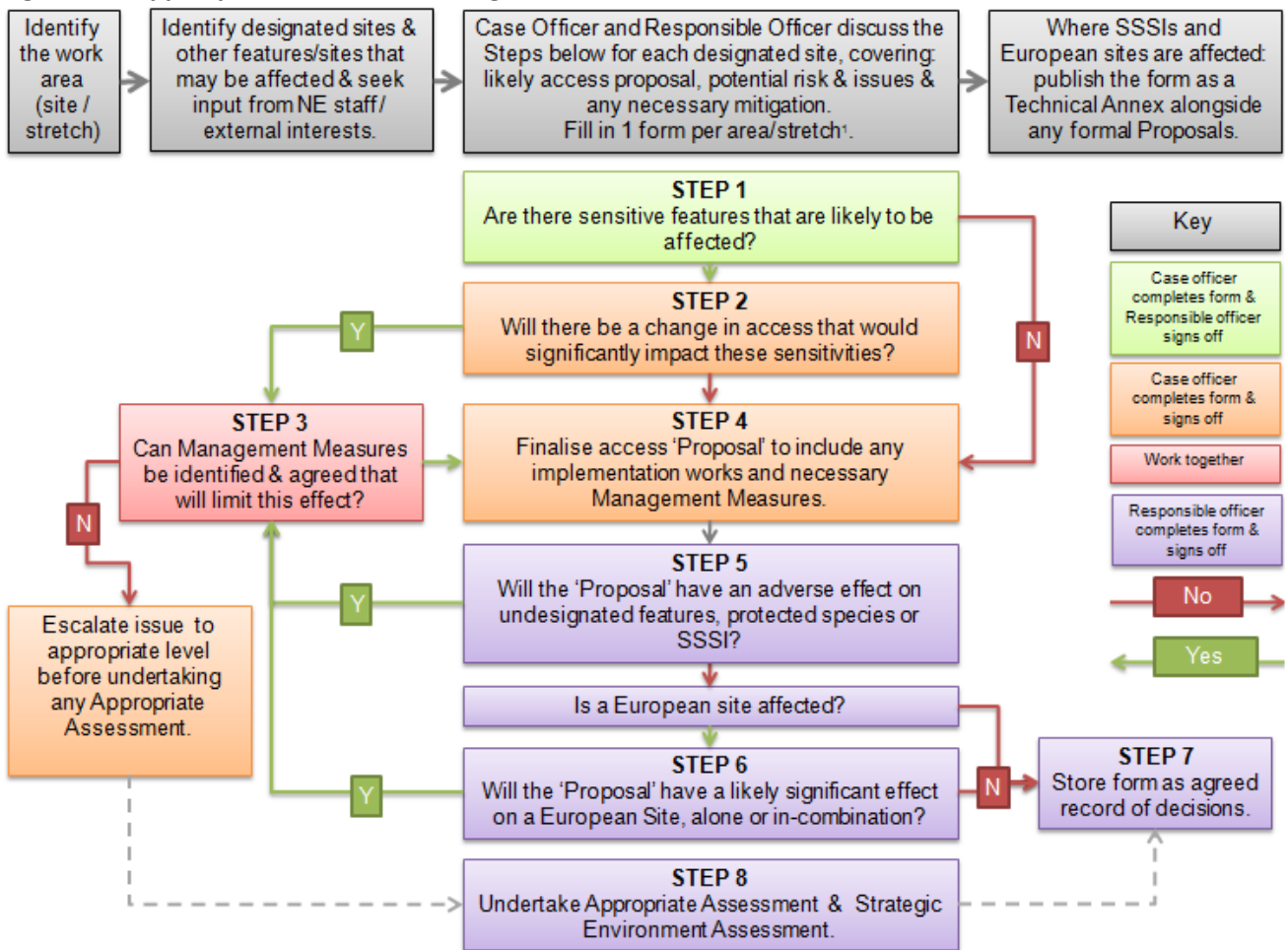
¹ Coastal Access, Natural England's Approved Scheme, 2013 (NE446). Available on the [Natural England website](#)

- **The Responsible Officer²** (a member of Natural England's local Land Management, Land Use, NNR or Coastal Access team, who has experience of assessing impacts on the site/s) and,
- **The Case Officer³** (a member of Natural England's local Access Team).

The process is a collaborative approach between these officers, where the **risks** of access and nature conservation being incompatible are considered early on and any issues raised in each step are discussed and resolved prior to completing the form. In completing the form:

- Case officers should complete the proforma text for Steps 1-4 and agree content with Responsible Officers, prior to sign-off.
- Responsible Officers should complete text for Steps 5-8 and agree with Case Officer, prior to sign-off.
- Steps 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 should be signed off by the Responsible Officer².
- Steps 2 & 4 should be signed off by the Case Officer³.
- Step 6 should only be completed for European sites.
- Step 8 should only be completed when an Appropriate Assessment on a European site is required.

Figure1: Stepped process for undertaking a Nature conservation Assessment



¹Use one proforma to cover:

- A whole Coastal Access stretch and its SSSI/s , where there are limited designated sites, or
- A subsection of a coastal access stretch, to include a single or group of sites eg an SSSI alongside the 2-3 European designations it supports, or
- A single NNR for dedication.

² a member of Natural England's local Land Management, Land Use, Coastal Access or NNR team, who has experience of assessing impacts on the site/s.

³ a member of Natural England's local Access Team.

Access and Conservation Assessment Form

Contents

Introduction

- STEP 1:** Information gathering about the site/s and identification of species & habitats potentially vulnerable to access pressure
- STEP 2:** Access assessment to identify predicted changes in access levels and patterns; and potential impacts on habitats and species
- STEP 3:** Identification of Management Measures necessary to counter predicted impacts
- STEP 4:** Description of final access proposal
- STEP 5:** Assessment of access proposal on SSSI & non-notified habitats and species
- STEP 6:** Assessment of access proposal on European sites - Screening for Likely Significant Effect (Habitat Regulation Assessment, using Part C of Regulation 61 form)
- STEP 7:** Information storage
- STEP 8:** Assessment of access proposal on European sites - Appropriate Assessment and conclusion on Site Integrity (Habitat Regulation Assessment, using Part D of Regulation 61 form).

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

NOTE TO STAFF: The Case Officer completes this section after discussion with the Responsible Officer. The Responsible Officer signs off this Step.

Review information on [Webmap](#) and insert a map here (see attached map) showing the extent of the area covered by this proforma and the component designated sites, where necessary.

Please ensure that when entering information about designated sites in the table below, it is clear which designations relate to which 'notified / qualifying' features. These are the species or habitats for which the designation was made. Information gathered here will contribute to later steps of the process.

For advice on *potentially vulnerable habitats and species*, please see the published Wildlife and Access Advisory Group Guidance reports [NECR012](#) & [NECR013](#). Annex 3 lists those birds that Natural England specialists considered particularly vulnerable to access pressure ('Category A' species).

Please create maps of where vulnerable habitats and species are located, if necessary.

Basic Site Information							
Designated site/s name: Caister Beach is not subject to any statutory designations but supports Breeding Little Terns, a species listed in Annex 1 of the Habs Regs and included within Natural England's Category A species list (annex 3)							
Designation type/s (please tick <i>one</i> only)	SPA		SAC		Ramsar		SSSI
Insert Site Conservation Objectives⁴ for each designation: N/A							
Insert Qualifying or notified features⁵ for each designation: N/A							
Highlight any site condition issues, relevant to access, for each designation: Site not subject to any statutory designation, area is cordoned off to access during breeding season.							
Please identify any of the qualifying or notified habitats or species that are within the likely affected area and are <i>potentially vulnerable to access pressure</i>⁵, and describe their vulnerability (to access pressure), occurrence (numbers / area), duration (period of sensitivity) and specific location: N/A							
Please identify any legally protected species⁶, where access proposals would pose a significant risk of disturbance or damage, and give details of vulnerability, occurrence, duration and location: N/A							
Please identify any un-notified habitats or species that are <i>potentially vulnerable to access pressure</i>⁵ and describe their occurrence, vulnerability and location: Little Tern breed on the shingle along the beach at Caister Beach, grid ref TG523135. They are a colonial breeder, usually associated with beaches, and known to be adversely affected by recreational access disturbance, nest trampling and predation. Breeding numbers unknown; site size approx. less than 1ha., Period of sensitivity during breeding season, mainly May to August.							

⁴ 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 with SSSI information available through intranet at: <http://tenis:8008/special/sssi/SSSIcountyselection.cfm>

⁵ See the list of 'Category A' species in Annex 3.

⁶ Under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, Protection of Badgers Act 1992) Natural England's Protected Species [here](#)

Completion of Step 1 – Please complete as appropriate

Responsible Officer Signed:



Name: Rick Southwood

On behalf of Natural England

Date: 18/08/2014

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 TO IDENTIFY PREDICTED CHANGES IN ACCESS LEVELS AND PATTERNS & POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON HABITATS AND SPECIES

NOTES TO STAFF: The Case Officer completes this section, in discussion with the Responsible officer and local access experts.

Where no habitats or species have been identified in Step 1 as being vulnerable to access pressure, sign off this section and move directly to Step 4.

For low risk access proposals (as identified through discussions between the case and responsible officers), fill in this table and append a map, if necessary. For further information on access assessment, see the Scheme⁷.

For higher risk access proposals, see Annex 4 for detailed instructions on how to complete a full mapping exercise to identify any changes likely to happen as a result of the access proposal and where risks are located. Summarise the conclusions below and append a map, if necessary, before signing off this Step.

Current (Map 1)	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		<i>Permissive path along the sea wall</i>
Are the routes / is access to the land actively promoted?		X	
These routes are / the land is used mainly by;	walkers	X	
	horseriders		
	cyclists		
Are there clear and defined access points to the site? If so give details		X	
Are you aware of or has the mapping exercise raised any particular management problems with existing routes?		X	
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	
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		<i>A small car park north of the site.</i>
Is there already de facto use of the site? If so give details of location and refer to mapped annotations.	X		<i>Beach access and adjoining sea wall.</i>
Predicted (Map 2)	Yes	No	Comments
Are new entrance points likely to develop on the site, and if so, where?		X	
Are any new routes or areas of access (on foot, horse or bike) other than those proposed, likely to develop and, if so, where?		X	
<p>Summarise any predicted changes to access levels and patterns and 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><i>Predicted changes to access levels are most likely to be along the sea wall where the coast path is proposed. The sea wall is already a popular walking route for locals and visitors, we anticipate therefore a slight increase to current access levels along the sea wall. The beach is already a popular destination for walkers and as such the area utilised by breeding terns is cordoned off and signs installed. Patterns of use are unlikely to change significantly either along the sea wall or the beach. Continuation of the current management measures including the cordoning off and installation of temporary signs during the breeding season by the RSPB under the Life+ is recommended. In the long term Natural England will work closely with RSPB and other</i></p>			

⁷ See Figure 16 page 46 of the Coastal Access, Natural England's Approved Scheme, 2013 (NE446). Available on the Natural England [website](#)

local partners to help identify and resolve issues at the site.

Completion of Step 2 –Please complete as appropriate

Case Officer Signed: *Diana Curtis*

Name: Diana Curtis

On behalf of Natural England

Date:18/08/2014

If predicted changes to access will pose a risk to vulnerable habitats and species, move to Step 3.

If predicted changes to access will not pose a risk to vulnerable habitats and species, move to Step 4.

STEP 3 – IDENTIFY MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO COUNTER PREDICTED IMPACTS


NOTE TO STAFF: The Case Officer completes this section after discussion with the Responsible Officer. The Responsible Officer signs off this Step.

If predicted changes to access will not pose a risk to vulnerable habitats and species, sign off this Step and move directly to Step 4.

Using the information gathered in Steps 1 and 2, complete the tables below identifying what specific management measures are necessary to avoid significant negative effects on vulnerable habitats and species. Please ensure it is clear which measures will counter impacts on what species or habitats.

When considering suitable measures, please apply the least restrictive access management measures and create a map where detailed location information is needed. Further information on this is available from the Scheme⁸ and from Open Access Team colleagues.

NB: Please liaise with Open Access Team colleagues before signing off this Step.

Species or habitat	Risk of predicted change significantly affecting conservation interests (H, M, L)	Required access management measures (least restrictive option)
<i>Little Tern</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Continuation of current management measures</i>
Completion of Step 3 – Please complete as appropriate		
Responsible Officer Signed:  On behalf of Natural England		Name: Rick Southwood Date: 18/8/2014
Move on to Step 4		

⁸ See Section 6.3 on page 46 of the Coastal Access, Natural England's Approved Scheme, 2013 (NE446). Available on the Natural England [website](#)

STEP 4: DESCRIPTION OF FINAL ACCESS PROPOSAL

NOTE TO STAFF: the Case Officer should complete the description of the final access proposal, upon which the Responsible Officer will base their decisions in Steps 5+.

NB: the final access proposal includes:

- the access proposals
- any measures identified within Step 3 *and*
- any necessary implementation works or structures that would affect designated sites or other species or habitats.

If the proposal includes a complicated suite of measures - insert a map showing significant infrastructure or restriction areas.

Summarise the final Access Proposal:

- alignment of the trail along the sea wall, identified by red line on attached map (Annex 6 – Caister Beach).
- continue with current management measures within the seaward spreading room which includes cordoning off the breeding area for little terns on the beach and the installation of temporary signs.
- Natural England will work closely with RSPB and other local partners in the future to help identify and resolve any future issues at the site.

Completion of Step 4 – Please complete

Case officer signed: *Diana Curtis*

Name: Diana Curtis

Date: 18/8/2014

Move to Step 5

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

NOTE TO STAFF: The Case Officer completes this section after discussion with the Responsible Officer. The Responsible Officer signs off this Step, according to Non Financial Scheme of Delegation⁹.

NB: consider the risk associated with the Proposal, and pass to a senior adviser or Team Leader, if required.

This section provides a record of Natural England's assessment of the access proposal (as summarised in Step 4) on Sites of Special Scientific Interest, protected species and non-notified habitats and species.

The access proposal will/will not (*delete as applicable*) be damaging to the interest features for which (*insert name of SSSI*) SSSI is notified. **NA**

Responsible Officer signed:

Name:

Date:

The access proposal will/will not (*delete as applicable*) be compatible with furthering the conservation or enhancement of the features for which (*insert name of SSSI*) SSSI is notified. **NA**

Responsible Officer signed:

Name:

Date:

The access proposal will not have adverse impacts on *Breeding Little Tern, category A* Protected species.

Responsible Officer signed:



Name: **Rick Southwood**

Date: **18/08/2014**

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

Responsible Officer signed:



Name: **Rick Southwood**

Date: **18/08/2014**

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.

⁹ The Non Financial Scheme of delegation indicates that for SSSI assents the **appropriate adviser** is the delegated level of authority (see section 3.3.1 of the NFSOD on the Intranet).

**STEP 6: ASSESSMENT OF ACCESS PROPOSAL ON EUROPEAN SITES - SCREENING FOR LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT
(HABITAT REGULATION ASSESSMENT, USING PART C OF THE REGULATION 61 FORM)**

NOTE TO STAFF: The Case Officer completes this section after discussion with the Responsible Officer. The Responsible Officer signs off this Step, according to Non Financial Scheme of Delegation¹⁰. NB: consider the risk associated with the Proposal, and pass to a senior adviser or Team Leader, if required.

This section should only be filled out for European sites.

If in-combination issues arise (section C.2.2), seek advice early on, from Land Use colleagues and Access Teams. For more information in filling out this section, see Annex 5. Only certain plans and projects need to be assessed 'in combination' - see Table A and B and discuss with relevant Land Use colleagues.

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)

[Responsible officer to insert supporting text]

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/ is not** (*delete as applicable*) 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.*

[Responsible officer to Insert supporting text]

¹⁰ The Non Financial Scheme of delegation indicates that for Advising on screening Likely Significant Effect (LSE) and necessity for management tests, the **appropriate adviser** is the delegated level of authority (see Part 7, Reg. 61 (1) of the NFSOD on the Intranet).

C2.2 In-combination with other plans and projects (*only where applicable*):

From the section above, any elements of the project deemed to have an effect(s) which is/are not significant on their own must now be considered for in-combination impacts. Effects not considered to be significant alone in section C2.1 have been considered with the details of other live plans and projects and their effects to make an assessment of likely significant effect 'in-combination'.

The results of this assessment are as follows:

Test conclusion: Natural England has considered the project under Regulation 61(1)(a) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and has decided that it **is/ is not** ~~*strikethrough as applicable*~~ likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, for the following reasons:

Insert text which clearly states the reasons why this conclusion has been reached.

- The project is likely to have a significant effect on the following features for which the SAC and/or SPA has been designated or classified; *[List features]*
- There remains uncertainty as to whether the project is likely to have a significant effect on the following features for which the SAC and/or SPA has been designated or classified; *[List features]*
- The project is unlikely to have a significant effect on the following features for which the SAC and/or SPA has been designated or classified; *[List features]*

[Strikethrough the above as applicable]

C3. Screening Decision

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

- A) As the whole project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European Site, no further assessment is required and permission/authorisation/assent may be given.

OR

- 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.

OR

- C) As the project is likely to have significant effects on some or all of the Qualifying Features, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, or such effects cannot be ruled out, further assessment is required

[Delete the above as applicable]

D. Permission Decision

If the Screening decision is C), move directly to the sign-off box, below.

If Screening decision is A) or B) complete the following Permission Decision section:

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;

[Strikethrough as appropriate]

- Permission may be given
- Permission may be given subject to the following conditions:

[Insert relevant text]

- Permission may not be given

The reasons for this decision are as follows:

[Insert relevant text clearly stating the reasons why we have come to this conclusion]

Responsible Officer signed:

Name:

Date:

If the screening decision is A) or B) please move to Step 7.

If the screening decision is C) – Case Officer to review Step 3 with Responsible Officer to find suitable management and mitigation measures, or review conclusions with a functional Senior Managers, before moving to Step 7 and 8.

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. **Written permission should not be issued by Natural England until there has been a separate and further consideration of the project's effects on those features of special interest for which the relevant SSSI(s) has been notified (see Step 5).**

STEP 7: INFORMATION STORAGE

NOTE TO STAFF: This section should be completed by the Case officer alongside the Responsible officer.

Please ensure all the necessary signatures and dates are provided on this form, and the following steps are taken.

- i. Case Officer creates a digital record of the form and forwards to Responsible Officer.
- ii. Responsible officer attaches digital record and paper copy to relevant SSSI(s) files.
- iii. Responsible officer creates a consultation reference within Casework Tracker

The assessment is complete.

If there are any outstanding issues, or an Appropriate Assessment is still considered necessary – the Case Officer should review conclusions with senior managers.



18/8/2014

STEP 8: ASSESSMENT OF ACCESS PROPOSAL ON EUROPEAN SITES - APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION ON SITE INTEGRITY (HABITAT REGULATION ASSESSMENT, USING PART D OF REGULATION 61 FORM)

NOTE TO STAFF: This section should not be completed until directed by senior management.

This section should be completed by the Case Officer in discussion with the Responsible Officer for those European Sites affected, where they have been screened as Likely to Have a Significant Effect, in Step 6.

D1. Appropriate Assessment

Having considered that the project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European site] and is likely to have a significant effect on some or all of the features of that site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), this section contains the appropriate assessment of the implications of the project in view of the conservation objectives for the European Site (as required by Regulation 61 of the Habitats Regulations).

The Qualifying Features, on which significant effects are likely or cannot be ruled out, and which are integral to this appropriate assessment are;

[Adviser to list those features being subject to this further assessment (Take from Screening assessment details)]

D1.1 European Site Conservation Objectives

[Insert or append the current Conservation Objectives for the European Site(s). Take from Step 1, information gathering, or find at www.naturalengland.org.uk]

D1.2 Contextual statement on the current status, influences, management and condition of the site and those Qualifying features affected by the project

[Insert relevant text]

D1.3 Assessment of likely effects without mitigation measures

[Insert relevant text]

D1.4 Assessment of likely effects taking account of mitigation measures and legally enforceable conditions/restrictions

[Insert relevant text]

D1.5 Assessment of residual effects

[Insert relevant text if applicable]

D2. Conclusions on site Integrity

Because the project is not wholly directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European site] and is likely to have a significant effect on that site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), Natural England carried out an Appropriate Assessment as required under Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 to ascertain whether or not there would be an adverse effect on the integrity of the [European Site(s)].

Natural England has concluded that: *[strikethrough as appropriate]*

With respect to the SAC;

- It can be ascertained that the project **will not** have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s); *consent can be given without conditions*
- It can be ascertained that the project **will not** have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) subject to restrictions and/or conditions *consent can be given with conditions*
- It can be ascertained that the project **will** have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) for the following reasons; *consent cannot be given*

It cannot be ascertained that the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) for the following reasons; *consent cannot be given*

With respect to the SPA;

- It can be ascertained that the project **will not** have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s); *consent can be given without conditions*
- It can be ascertained that the project **will not** have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) subject to restrictions and/or conditions *consent can be given with conditions*
- It can be ascertained that the project **will** have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s); *consent cannot be given*
 - It cannot be ascertained that the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s). *consent cannot be given*

With respect to the Ramsar site;

- It can be ascertained that the project **will not** have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s); *consent can be given without conditions*

- It can be ascertained that the project **will not** have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) subject to restrictions and/or conditions *consent can be given with conditions*
- It can be ascertained that the project **will** have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s); *consent cannot be given*
- It cannot be ascertained that the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s). *consent cannot be given*

E. 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;

[Strikethrough as appropriate]

- Permission may be given
- Permission may be given subject to the following conditions:

[Insert relevant text]

- Permission may not be given

The reasons for this decision are as follows:

[Insert relevant text clearly stating the reasons why we have come to this conclusion]

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. **Written permission should not be issued by Natural England until there has been a separate and further consideration of the project's effects on those features of special interest for which the relevant SSSI(s) has been notified (see Step 5).**

Responsible Officer signed:

Name:

Date:

Proceed to Step 7.

Annex 1: Glossary

Access case officer: a member of Natural England's local Access Team.

Responsible Officer: a member of Natural England's local Land Management Land Use or NNR team, who has experience of assessing impacts on the site/s.

Annex 2: Protection of sensitive features

Extract from the Coastal Access, Natural England's Approved Scheme, 2013 (NE446). Available on the Natural England [website](#).

Protection of sensitive features

4.9.1 Coastal access rights create more opportunities for the public to enjoy the natural and cultural environment of the coast and to understand it better. Our proposals for the trail and the extent of landward spreading room are influenced by local opportunities for people to encounter particular features or to get a more varied experience, where this is consistent with statutory obligations and with the other key principles in chapters 4 and 5 of the Scheme. This includes features designated for their landscape, geological or geomorphological, biodiversity or historic interest.

4.9.2 The key principle in our approach will be to find the best outcome that secures these opportunities for engagement so far as practicable while ensuring appropriate protection of key sensitive features. This principle is in keeping with our statutory purpose to conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations³⁵.

4.9.3 There are two key considerations here:

- on the one hand, the various statutory obligations in respect of sites and features on the coast; and

- on the other hand, our duty to deliver coastal access rights.

Each is set in the context of the more general statutory responsibilities under our founding legislation to pursue such imperatives in an integrated way.

4.9.4 We carefully consider the potential effects of improved coastal access on any key sensitive features along each stretch of coast, including wildlife, heritage, landscape and geodiversity features. This includes considering potential effects arising from any works which are necessary for the establishment or maintenance of improved coastal access, as well as from people's use of the coastal access rights.

4.9.5 In respect of heritage features, we take advice from local authority archaeological officers about the potential effects on these features, and consult English Heritage in relation to Scheduled Monuments.

4.9.6 In respect of sensitive natural features, we use an iterative process for developing our proposals for coastal access, assessing the potential effects of various options and further refining them and assessing them as necessary to help us decide on the best outcome. The way in which we do this in consultation with relevant local bodies is outlined in chapter 3. Appropriate separation of duties within Natural England is in place to ensure that impartial judgements can then be made in the light of the available evidence about any potential impacts of particular options on key sensitive features before reaching our final decision.

4.9.7 More specifically, we:

- fulfil our obligations under the Habitats Directive and Habitats Regulations in relation to European sites to which our proposals may relate;
- comply with our duty to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of all our functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the notified features of any sites of special scientific interest to which our proposals may relate;
- comply with our duty, in exercising our functions as a public authority, to have regard (so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions) to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in England; and
- take into account any potentially significant effects on particular habitats or species protected under other legislation, insofar as they occur on the coast.

4.9.8 In developing our proposals for coastal access, we make a judgement on whether any of the features of conservation interest that may be affected are sensitive to public access, and if so:

- what changes in public use are likely to occur as a result of improved coastal access (see section 6.2 and figure 16 for the methodology); and
- whether any such changes will have a substantial effect on the features in question.

4.9.9 Often coastal access rights can be put in place without any special measures to protect the coastal environment. However, where we identify that there may be potential for coastal access rights to cause negative effects on protected sites or species, we consider whether any action is required to avoid or mitigate such effects, and include these measures within our proposals. There is a range of options available, including:

- a trail route that avoids sensitive areas, or an alternative route used during sensitive periods;
- informal management techniques such as public information, or promotion of particular routes;
- local restrictions or exclusions on public use of spreading room; and
- monitoring the outcome on the ground.

In all cases where we decide that special intervention is necessary because of environmental considerations, our policy is to adopt the option which is least restrictive on public access that will meet at reasonable cost our environmental objectives and any specific statutory obligations that apply. Chapter 7 of the Scheme indicates the solutions we are likely to consider in relation to key concerns.

4.9.11 The development of our proposals to introduce coastal access rights draws on a range of expertise in both Natural England and relevant organisations such as local wildlife trusts and other conservation bodies as outlined in chapter 3. We share our emerging analysis with these bodies before it is published as part of the coastal access report, in order to help ensure we reach the right decisions. The aim is to develop proposals that have the necessary measures built into their design to avoid any substantive impacts on key conservation interests. These are then assessed as to their potential impact on key conservation interests, including European or other designated features, and habitats and species of principle importance in England.

4.9.12 In the case of European sites, we have a specific duty to assess the implications of proposals to introduce coastal access rights on the sites' conservation objectives, under Regulations 9 and 61 of the Habitats Regulations 2010. The proposals are designed locally, and may include any measures considered necessary to reduce impact on the European designated features. We then assess each stretch

proposal to determine whether it is likely to have a significant effect on the features to which their designation relates, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Where we consider that the coastal access proposal:

- is not likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, this concludes the necessary Habitat Regulations tests; or
- is likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, we must then carry out an appropriate assessment to establish whether the proposal will have an adverse effect on the site's integrity.

4.9.13 On stretches of coast where we conclude that an appropriate assessment is required in relation to a European site, we also subject our proposals to strategic environmental assessment (SEA), in accordance with government policy. It is at the local rather than the national level that any SEA relating to coastal access is applied.

4.9.14 Should we conclude from an appropriate assessment that coastal access rights may have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, we will modify our proposals to the extent necessary to ensure on reassessment that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

4.9.15 Where other protected sites or species may be affected, we use our flexible powers under the legislation to find solutions that best integrate our nature conservation and coastal objectives, complying with any specific legal duties where relevant. There may be circumstances where after careful assessment we conclude that some impact on nature conservation interests is unavoidable but acceptable, in order to strike the right balance between our aspirations in this respect and our responsibilities under the Coastal Access Duty.

4.9.16 Where appropriate, we consider carrying out monitoring to ensure that any actual impacts on nature conservation interests stay within acceptable limits and that we can take further steps to mitigate those impacts if we conclude from monitoring that this is necessary. We use or adapt existing monitoring activity wherever possible to achieve this. We also work closely with local and national partners to build on existing best practice in encouraging the participation of local people and users of the trail in helping to identify and solve issues.

4.9.17 We also ensure that any operations (such as those necessary to install access infrastructure) which are felt necessary to implement the proposals meet any relevant statutory requirements, including any applying to SSSIs or Scheduled Monuments. Our approach is in any event always to ensure that any establishment works are undertaken in the way that has least impact on other uses and features of the land in question.

Annex 3: Appendix I: “Category A” bird species from Natural England’s Commissioned Report NECR013, 2009: Access and Nature Conservation Reconciliation, Supplementary Guidance for England.

Category A species are those bird species considered to be potentially vulnerable to disturbance because of their status, abundance or behaviour. The list has been developed by Natural England staff. The selection process is summarised and the full list given below.

Selection process

1. All regularly occurring species listed on Schedule 1 of WAC were considered.
2. Additional species were added if considered vulnerable to changes in access due to conservation status, rarity, degree of aggregation, sensitivity to disturbance and degree of likely overlap between people and habitat.
3. Rare, localised and highly aggregated species are all considered vulnerable because relatively small, localised changes to access could potentially have a disproportionately greater effect on their populations. The more dispersed species on the list are of less concern as only widespread changes to access are likely to have an effect (which probably not likely away from the coast).
4. Known or likely sensitivity has been applied conservatively, generally being based on published evidence (note that sensitivity can range from behavioural observations, correlative studies or conclusive evidence of a population-level effect). It has also been applied to species which breed in colonies, which are generally very sensitive to disturbance. This is a quick assessment and would benefit from a review of disturbance studies for each species.
5. Some species have been listed because the degree of potential overlap between their main habitat(s) and areas where access levels are likely to change (or are already high) is significant. This criterion relates largely to beach-nesting waders and seabirds.

Key: **Bold** = on original category A list; *italics* = low concern; Sch 1 = WAC Schedule 1; BoCC = Birds of Conservation Concern (red and amber); BAP = BAP priority species; rare = <300 pairs in England; highly localised/aggregated = greater than 50% of population at 10 or fewer sites in England; known or likely sensitivity = at least some information to suggest high sensitivity to disturbance. Table refers to breeding birds unless otherwise specified.

	Sch 1	BoCC	BAP	Rare	Highly localised/ aggregated	Known or likely sensitivity	Constrained habitat	Comments
<i>Black-necked Grebe</i>	X	A		X	X			Wetland/open water habitats relatively inaccessible. No evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance.
<i>Bittern (breeding and non-breeding)</i>	X	R	P	X	X	X		Known to be sensitive to disturbance: access adjacent to reedbeds, especially on raised banks, might displace breeding and wintering birds.
<i>Garganey</i>	X	A		X				Wetland/open water habitats relatively inaccessible. Relatively dispersed, although only associated with undisturbed sites.
<i>Pintail</i>	X	A		X	X			Wetland/open water habitats relatively inaccessible. Sensitivity to disturbance unknown.
<i>Honey Buzzard</i>	X	A		X	X	X?		Restricted to woodlands. Probably sensitive to disturbance. Very few breeding locations in England.
<i>Red Kite (roosting)</i>	X	A			X			Recently reintroduced and expanding population in England. Birds aggregate at winter roosts. No evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance when nesting or roosting.
Marsh Harrier (reedbeds)	X	A					X	Around 60% nest in reedbeds, often very small in extent, and thus the species is vulnerable to disturbance from adjacent activities.
<i>Hen Harrier (breeding & roosting)</i>	X	R		X	X			Birds often use traditional, localised roosts and can aggregate (including other raptors e.g. Merlin) and require disturbance-free areas. Breeding birds very rare in England and restricted to few moorland locations.
Montagu’s Harrier	X	A		X	X			Generally sporadic or occasional breeder only, majority now nesting in arable crops.
<i>Goshawk</i>	X			X		X		Sensitive to disturbance but relatively dispersed species.
<i>Golden Eagle</i>	X	A		X	X	X		Very rare breeder in England and sensitive to disturbance.

	Sch 1	BoCC	BAP	Rare	Highly localised/ aggregated	Known or likely sensitivity	Constrained habitat	Comments
<i>Osprey</i>	X	A		X	X	X?		Currently only present at two (?) sites in England where access carefully controlled (?)
<i>Merlin (roosting)</i>	X	A			X			Birds often use traditional, localised roosts and can aggregate (including other raptors e.g. Hen Harrier) and require disturbance-free areas
<i>Hobby</i>	X							Probably sensitive to disturbance but relatively dispersed species
<i>Peregrine</i>	X	A				X		Sensitive to disturbance close to nest and vulnerable to climbing activities in particular
Black Grouse (leks)		R	P		X	X		Requires disturbance-free lekking areas
<i>Quail</i>	X	R		X	X			Widely dispersed species with only sporadic/occasional occurrence as a breeding bird. Not known if particularly sensitive to disturbance. Temporary restrictions on dogs may be necessary in 'quail years' when bird may occur in higher densities.
<i>Spotted Crake</i>	X	A		X	X			Wetland habitats relatively inaccessible. No evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance.
<i>Corncrake</i>	X	R	P	X	X			Currently only one recently established, potentially regular breeding location, where access restricted. Not known if sensitive to disturbance.
<i>Crane</i>		A		X	X	X		Very rare breeding bird with only 2-3 regular sites. Appears sensitive to disturbance.
<i>Oystercatcher</i>		A				X	X	Largely breeding in coastal areas with evidence of decline in some areas, probably due, in part at least, to disturbance/nest trampling.
<i>Avocet</i>	X	A			X			Nests colonially, largely on saline and brackish lagoons.
Stone-curlew (breeding & roosting)	X	R	P		X	X	X	Known to be highly sensitive to disturbance and usually breeds on relatively small areas of habitat or specially managed plots.
<i>Little Ringed Plover</i>	X					X?		Associated with disturbed ground in active (or managed) gravel pits. Probably highly sensitive to disturbance but perhaps unlikely to be affected by changes to access.
<i>Ringed Plover</i>		A				X	X	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/predation.
<i>Dotterel</i>	X	A		X	X		X	Restricted to very restricted montane habitats popular with walkers. Now very scarce in England and no recent confirmed breeding.
<i>Ruff</i>	X	A		X	X	X		Requires disturbance-free lekking areas.
Black-tailed Godwit	X	R	P	X	X			Semi-colonial and thus more vulnerable to disturbance than other more dispersed waders. Very few breeding locations in England.
Mediterranean Gull	X	A		X	X	X	X	Colonial breeder – usually with Black-headed Gulls. Less than 15 regular breeding locations in England.
Black-headed Gull		A			X	X	X	Colonial breeder – around 20 important colonies with majority on the coast.
Lesser Black-backed Gull		A			X	X	X	Colonial breeder – around 10 important colonies with majority on coast.
Herring Gull		A	P		X	X	X	Colonial breeder – only 4 ground-nesting colonies of any significance.
Great Black-backed Gull					X	X	X	Colonial breeder – all significant colonies on the Isles of Scilly
Sandwich Tern		A			X	X	X	Colonial breeder – about 10 colonies, all at coastal locations.
Roseate Tern	X	R	P	X	X	X	X	Colonial breeder – largely restricted to single site with no current access.
Common Tern					X	X	X	Colonial breeder – majority nesting in coastal areas
Arctic Tern		A			X	X	X	Colonial breeder – only 4 colonies with two on islands with no or restricted access.
Little Tern	X	A			X	X	X	Colonial breeder – usually associated with beaches and known to be adversely affected by recreational access disturbance, nest trampling and predation.
<i>Barn Owl</i>	X	A						No evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance. Widely dispersed species.
<i>Nightjar</i>		R	P			X		Associated with relatively restricted habitats and known to be adversely affected by recreational access. Relatively dispersed across suitable habitat.
<i>Kingfisher</i>	X	A						No evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance. Widely dispersed species.
<i>Woodlark</i>	X	R	P			X		Associated with relatively restricted habitats and could be affected by changes in distribution of access. Relatively dispersed across suitable habitat.
<i>Black Redstart</i>	X	A		X	X			Associated with disturbed ground in urban areas and industrial sites. Not aggregated and no evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance.
<i>Cetti's Warbler</i>	X							No evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance. Relatively widely dispersed species though associated with wetland habitats of limited extent.

	Sch 1	BoCC	BAP	Rare	Highly localised/ aggregated	Known or likely sensitivity	Constrained habitat	Comments
<i>Marsh Warbler</i>	X	R	P	X	X			A very rare breeding species, with majority of breeding birds restricted to a single, coastal site. No evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance.
<i>Dartford Warbler</i>	X	A				X		Associated with relatively restricted habitats and known to be adversely affected by disturbance, notably by dogs. Relatively dispersed across suitable habitat.
<i>Firecrest</i>	X	A		X	X			Scarce but relatively widely dispersed and perhaps not particularly sensitive to disturbance.
<i>Bearded Tit</i>	X	A			X			Scarce breeder restricted to reedbeds. No evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance.
<i>Golden Oriole</i>	X	A		X	X			Very small and declining breeding population restricted to poplar plantations in the fens.
<i>Chough</i>	X	A		X	X			Cliff-nesting species restricted to one coastal location. Probably sensitive to disturbance, including from climbers.
<i>Crossbill</i>	X							A sporadic breeding species at many locations. Relatively widely dispersed and not considered to be particularly sensitive to disturbance.
<i>Curlew</i>	X	R	P		X			Localised breeding species now the focus of a reintroduction project. No evidence of particular sensitivity to disturbance.

Annex 4 – Access Assessment methodology

Access Assessment

Access Assessment	
Case Officer	Responsible Officer
Organise Access Assessment meeting with key organisations, provide all necessary materials, ensure annotations are standardised. Pass information to Responsible Officer for consideration	Attend Access Assessment meeting, advise on access related issues and record knowledge on maps. Compare current levels of access with future levels of access as a result of the proposal.

1. An Access Assessment should be undertaken for all **medium or high risk** N2K sites. At this stage requests for information from external bodies and individuals with knowledge of the site or area should be made.
2. The Access Assessment is a map-based exercise comparing current with predicted patterns of access use. It should be summarised in the Access and Nature Conservation Proforma. The Summary in Step 2 should be completed in the necessary detail for all N2K sites without exception.
3. The aim of the Access Assessment is to answer the following question;
Are there likely to be any significant changes to access levels and patterns as a result of the new proposals that will affect the interest features of designated sites?
4. In order to do this and provide evidence for consideration of the issue, it is necessary to:
 - Identify current levels and patterns of visitor use and,
 - Predict any changes in levels and patterns of visitors use.
5. Collecting the appropriate information to develop this understanding is best achieved by contacting those who manage the site.
6. For large or complex sites it is advisable to arrange a face-to-face meeting(s) with appropriate individuals or, where necessary, stakeholder organisations. These could include local residents, user groups, local access forums, wildlife or Steering Groups, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, National Trust, National Parks, AONBs, British Horse Society, NNR site managers, land owners, game keepers etc who have an involvement with the management of the site or have good local knowledge of the access issues and / or the key issues / sensitive features that can be found on the site. The Responsible Officer should be present.
7. For smaller sites or sites where no features sensitive to access have been identified as a result of the Sensitive Feature Assessment, the full mapping process described below may not be necessary. Instead undertaking a quick assessment using the table in the Proforma may suffice. This judgement of risk should be made and agreed by both the Responsible Officer and the Case Officer.
8. The type of information to be gathered includes;
 - Routes (promoted, desire lines etc)
 - Entry/exit points;
 - Site attractors - features that walkers, horse riders, cyclists are attracted to, such as waterfalls, summits, viewpoints;









- Site deterrents - features that walkers, horse riders, cyclists are likely to avoid, such as blanket bogs, steep slopes, uneven or difficult terrain

This information should be gathered in a *before* scenario i.e. what is the current use (see Map 1 below), and an *after* scenario (Map 2) i.e. what is the predicted use if the access project were implemented and without management measures in place. NB: also take account of any development proposals on the horizon (eg new car parks or housing in the vicinity).

9. The following resources are suggested to undertake the Access Assessment:

- 2 large-scale (A0), paper site maps (labelled Current Access Use: Map 1 and Predicted Access Use: Map 2)
- Site map with access and sensitive features (can be provided by Responsible Officer or taken from WebMap/Unit maps)
- Annotation Instructions
- Suggested Current and Predicted Use Access Key (see below)

Annotation instructions: Current Use Key

CURRENT USE ACCESS KEY	
TYPE OF ACCESS	ENTRY POINTS
<p>Description: annotate the location and distribution of existing access across the site.</p> <p>Key: detail any PROW, de facto access, promoted routes, or other types of access on the site, where:</p> <p>  = promoted PROW  = unpromoted PROW  = promoted non-PROW  = unpromoted non-PROW  = De facto access land </p> <p>Notes: please include the following under the above headings - access agreements; permissive paths; de facto access (regular trespass routes, unofficial area access); details of any promoted routes (National Trails, Bridleways, regional trails, local walking guides etc.)</p>	<p>Description: annotate the location and relative importance of entry points, horseriding centre or cycle hire centres onto the site.</p> <p>Key: the importance (or capacity of each entry point to spread visitors across the site) must be expressed as a number on a scale of 1 to 5, where:</p> <p>  = Entry Point 1 = low capacity of entry point and 5 = high capacity of entry point </p> <p>Higher Rights</p> <p>  = Horseriding centre  = Cycle Hire </p>

Map 1 Current Access Use

Step 1) Mark Existing Entry Points

The location and relative importance of entry points onto the site is one of the most important factors governing the spatial distribution of visitor usage across a site, as is the location and relative capacity of each entry point.

Entry points will mainly be located on or within the boundary of an area. However in cases where the starting point is, for instance, a car park some distance from the boundary this should be the entry point. When this is the case, please ensure the routes used from the entry points are marked up on the map.

Task List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark on the location of each entry point to the site.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By each entry point write on the capacity of visitors or relative level of use associated with it in relation to the rest of the site.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being low level of use/importance and 5 being high level of use/importance
For higher rights:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark on the location of each horse riding centre or cycle hire centre

Step 2) Mark PROW, Desire Lines and *de-facto* Access

Task list:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on the location of promoted PROW across the site (National Trails, Regional Trails, Bridleways, routes included in local walking, cycling, horse riding guides and leaflets covering the site).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on the location of all unpromoted PROW, across the site.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw over any PROW that exist on the OS map that are used. If they are left blank it will be assumed that they aren't used.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on the location of all promoted non-PROW, (permissive paths and Access Agreements that are promoted).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on the location of all un-promoted non-PROW (regular desire lines and unofficial area access).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on the location of any de facto access land on the site.

Step 3) Mark Attractors and Deterrents

















Task list:
Site Attractors Mark and annotate particular features that attract visitors to the site such as viewpoints, car parks, cafes and facilities, beaches, bird hides, visitor centres, climbing crags, ridges, lakes etc. By each of these features label them A to C where:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A = Scenery/Landscape attractors • B = Nature/Wildlife Attractors • C = Historical/Cultural Attractors
Site Deterrents Mark particular features, which deter visitors such as busy roads, unattractive or uninviting areas, dangerous areas, steep slopes, bogs, difficult terrain or dense undergrowth etc. By each of these features label either D or E, where:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D = Scenery/Landscape Deterrents • E = Nature/Wildlife Deterrents

Step 4) Mark areas or points showing the effects of existing access related impacts

Task list:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark and annotate on the map those areas where the effects of access related pressure are known and at what time of year.
Examples include areas where trampling is affecting sensitive flora or where access-related activities are known to affect ground nesting or overwintering birds.

Map 2 Predicted Access Use

Annotation instructions: Predicted Use Key

PREDICTED USE ACCESS KEY			
TYPE OF ACCESS	ENTRY POINTS	SITE ATTRACTORS	SITE DETRACTORS
PLEASE NOTE: ANNOTATIONS SHOULD ONLY BE MADE FOR ENVISAGED CHANGES AS OF THE NEW RIGHTS OF ACCESS - THERE IS NO NEED TO DUPLICATE THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDED FOR THE PRE-CROW MAP			
<p>Description: annotate the location and distribution of possible NEW, additional, access routes on the site as of the new rights of access.</p> <p>Key: please include any NEW access routes you think may occur due to the new access rights</p> <p>  = promoted PROW  = unpromoted PROW  = promoted non-PROW  = unpromoted non-PROW </p> <p>Higher Rights</p> <p>  = New bridle route  = New cycle route </p>	<p>Description: annotate the location and relative importance of possible NEW entry points onto the site as of the new rights of access. Also include any entry points from the pre-CROW map that will have an increased capacity.</p> <p>Key: the importance (or capacity) of each entry point to spread visitors across the site) must be expressed as a number on a scale of 1 to 5, where:</p> <p>  = Entry Point </p> <p>1 = low capacity of entry point</p> <p>and</p> <p>5 = high capacity of entry point</p> <p>Higher Rights</p> <p>  = Horseriding centre  = Cycle Hire </p> <p>Map 3 Management Points</p> <p>  = Management Point </p>	<p>Description: annotate the location and relative importance of particular factors that attract visitors across the site.</p> <p>Key: using symbols and lettered values to annotate:</p> <p>  = Point Feature  = Linear Feature  = Polygon Feature </p> <p>A for attractors, such as: Scenery/Landscape - (lakes, tarn, ponds; rivers, springs, water falls; ridges; springs; summits; viewpoints; valleys; gorges; cliffs; caves; areas of geological interest). Manmade - (fences; hedges; walls; bridges; trig points; viewboards; shelters).</p> <p>B for attractors, such as: Nature/Wildlife - (woodland; vegetation; rare trees; floral blooms).</p> <p>C for attractors, such as: Historical/Cultural - (field systems; mine workings; mills; cairns; old settlements; churches; chapels; castles; houses; towers; lighthouses; unique historical features; industrial archaeology; crashed aircraft).</p>	<p>Description: annotate the location and relative importance of particular factors that detract visitors across the site.</p> <p>Key: using symbols and lettered values to annotate:</p> <p>  = Point Feature  = Linear Feature  = Polygon Feature </p> <p>D for detractors, such as: Scenery/Landscape - (scree, stoney ground; featureless terrain; wetland; bogs). Manmade - (farms; pens; radio masts; houses; gardens; allotments; military training areas; workig mines; quarries).</p> <p>E for detractors, such as: Nature/Wildlife - (dense woodland; scrub; gorse; bracken; nesting areas).</p>

Map 2 should show the results of new proposals on the ground **before** any mitigation or management measures have been put in place.

Step 5) Mark New Entry Points

Task list:

- Mark on the location of any predicted **new** entry points for walkers, horse riders, cyclists. Some access points to linear routes or areas of open access may be further away, for example where there are car parks.
- Mark on any existing entry points that will likely see an increase in use as a result of the access proposals. If the level of use is unlikely to change from the current use (Map 1) then it doesn't need to be marked up.
- Use a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being low capacity/importance and 5 being high capacity/importance to act as a comparison between Map 1 and Map 2

Step 6) Mark New Route(s) and spreading room created by default

Task list

- Mark the route of or area any new access as a result of the proposals. For Coastal Access proposals, for example mark and annotate the extent of spreading room seaward of the trail (down to Mean Low Water) and any default or discretionary spreading room landward

10. To draw conclusions from the Current Access Use map exercise, answer the questions on the Access and Nature Conservation Assessment Proforma. The Case Officer is required to sign off this Step.
 11. The Access Assessment is critical in informing the next Step of the process where the Case Officer will recommend what management measures are necessary to avoid impacts of new proposals illustrated on Map 2. The resultant differences in the levels and patterns of use (current vs predicted) should be cross referenced with the sensitive features of interest, already identified in previous Step, which will enable a decision to be made.
 12. Details of extra information and conclusions for which features are being affected and how should be recorded on the Proforma and signed off by the Responsible Officer.
 13. It is advisable, for large or complex sites, to summarise the results of the access assessment element of the Procedure for inclusion within supporting documentation. A summary could be included, for example, in a Coastal Access Report. This summary should be completed by the Case Officer and must be decided on a case-by-case basis.
-

Annex 5: Information to inform Step 6

Table A helps identify which plans and projects, already assessed by a Competent Authority, should be considered in combination with the Access proposals (Step 6 C2.2).

On the basis of the case law and guidance, a 'plan or project' at any of the following stages may be relevant:

- a. applications lodged but not yet determined;
- b. projects subject to periodic review e.g. annual licences, during the time that their renewal is under consideration;
- c. refusals subject to appeal procedures not yet determined;
- d. projects with consent but not yet started;
- e. projects started but not yet completed;
- f. known projects that do not need consent;
- g. proposals in adopted plans;
- h. proposals in finalised draft plans formally published or submitted for final consultation or adoption.

	Access project has:		
Other project has:	No effect on European site	Minor effect	LSE
No effect on European site	No	No	No
Minor effect	No	Yes	Possibly ¹¹
LSE	No	No	No

Table B: Example table used to review and assess relevant plans and projects that may combine with the access proposal (see Step 6 C2.2).

Plan or project, date & status	Relevance to access proposal – eg how could this worsen or lessen the effects of the access proposal?	Consider in combination? Y/N (see Table A)	Will the combined impact have a LSE on European Site(s)? Y/N	Provide justification
			-	

¹¹ It is not incumbent on both authorities to conduct separate in-combination assessments of the same two projects.

Annex 6: Caister Beach

R. Gouthroon
18/8/2014



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2014



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