

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisals: Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe

Programme	<i>Coastal Access</i>
Proposal title	<i>Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe</i>
Aim and location	<p><i>This appraisal presents Natural England's assessment of the proposals to establish the England Coast Path, between Kimmeridge Bay and Highcliffe, as necessary under the relevant legislation including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assessment of impacts on SSSIs and the requirement to fulfil Natural England's duties under S28G of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of our functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the SSSI;</i> • <i>Assessment of impacts on European designated sites (SPA, SAC) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations");</i> • <i>Assessment of impacts on Ramsar sites</i> • <i>Assessment of impacts on Marine Conservation Zones under Section 125 and 126 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA) (2009).</i> • <i>Species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.</i> <p><i>These appraisal should be read in conjunction with Natural England's Coastal Access Report – Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe, which sets out for approval by the Secretary of State our proposals for the England Coast Path and associated Coastal Margin on this stretch of coast.</i></p>
Report Status	<i>Final</i>
Date	<i>15 March 2017</i>
TRIM reference	
Access Case Officer	<i>David Trump</i>
Site Responsible Officer	<i>Matt Low, Andrew Nicholson, Adam Bates, Helen Powell and Simon Curson</i>

Contents

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Kimmeridge Bay to Studland

▪ Section 1 – Overview of access proposal	4
▪ Section 2 – Predicted change in public use of the area	6
▪ Section 3 – Potential Impact on Features from new Access proposal	7
▪ Section 4 –Final Conclusions	10
○ Section 4a - European Site	10
○ Section 4b – SSSI	12
○ Section 4c – Other features about which concerns have been expressed	12
▪ Annex A: Maps of designated sites	14
○ South Dorset Coast Site of Special SSSI	14
○ Purbeck Ridge (East) and Studland Cliffs SSSI	15
○ Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and St Alban’s Head to Durlston Cliff SAC	16
○ Studland to Portland Marine SAC	17

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Studland Bay

▪ Section 1 – Overview of access proposal	18
▪ Section 2 – Predicted change in public use of the area	19
▪ Section 3 – Potential Impact on Features from new Access proposal	21
▪ Section 4 –Final Conclusions	24
○ Section 4a - European Sites	24
○ Section 4b – SSSI	28
○ Section 4c – Other features about which concerns have been expressed	29
▪ Annex B: Maps of designated sites	30
○ Studland Bay (incorporating several site designations)	30
○ Solent and Dorset Coast potential SPA	31

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Poole Bay Cliffs SSSI

▪ Section 1 – Overview of access proposal	32
▪ Section 2 – Predicted change in public use of the area	33
▪ Section 3 – Potential Impact on Features from new Access proposal	34
▪ Section 4 –Final Conclusions	36
○ Section 4a - European Site	36
○ Section 4b – SSSI	38
○ Section 4c – Other features about which concerns have been expressed	38
▪ Annex C: Map of designated site	39

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Christchurch Harbour

▪ Section 1 – Overview of proposal	40
▪ Section 2 – Predicted change in public use of the area	41
▪ Section 3 – Potential Impact on Features from new Access proposal	43
▪ Section 4 –Final Conclusions	49
○ Section 4a - European Sites	49
○ Section 4b – SSSI	50
○ Section 4c – Other features about which concerns have been expressed	51

- Annex D: Map of designated sites 52

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Highcliffe to Milford Cliffs SSSI

- Section 1 – Overview of proposal 53
- Section 2 – Predicted change in public use of the area 54
- Section 3 – Potential Impact on Features from new Access proposal 54
- Section 4 –Final Conclusions 55
 - Section 4a - European Site 55
 - Section 4b – SSSI 57
 - Section 4c – Other features about which concerns have been expressed 57
- Annex E: Map of designated site 58

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Kimmeridge Bay to Studland

Including consideration of South Dorset Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), St Alban's Head to Durlston Head Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC, Purbeck Ridge (East) SSSI, Studland Cliffs SSSI, Studland to Portland Marine SAC.

Section 1: SITE MAPS (see annex A) AND OVERVIEW OF NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL/ CONSIDERATION

Map

Note on maps for reference

Report maps (published separately)

This appraisal is published alongside Natural England's report to the Secretary of State, which includes more detailed maps illustrating each chapter of the report.

Chapters 1 to 4 relate to the protected sites under consideration in this part of the Appraisal. The detailed maps that accompany these chapters are those to which the text in the appraisal refers. They are numbered according to the chapter of the report they relate to. For example, map 1b is the second map in the series relating to chapter 1 of the formal proposals.

Protected site maps

Annex A to this appraisal includes large scale maps of the designated areas for reference purposes:

- South Dorset Coast Site of Special SSSI
- Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC
- St Alban's Head to Durlston Head SAC
- Purbeck Ridge (East) SSSI
- Studland Cliffs SSSI
- Studland to Portland Marine SAC

These maps also show the proposed route but are not referred to in the appraisal.

Proposed new access provisions

Proposed route of the England Coast Path

The England Coast Path will follow the existing South West Coast Path through these protected sites, except in the following places:

- Route sections LCH-2-S027 to S044 in Durlston Country Park, where it will follow another existing walked route closer to the coast (see map 2e in chapter 2 of the proposals)
- Route sections LCH-3-S001 to S008 in Swanage, where it will follow a more seaward route around Peveril Point, whilst the existing route of the South West Coast Path would be the official alternative route at time when the normal route is covered by the tide.

All land seaward of the route will become coastal margin by default under the legislation

and will be subject to access rights unless it falls into a category of excepted land. In some places additional land on the landward side of the route will be subject to access rights under the proposals – see next section.

In general it is proposed that the path should be able to ‘roll back’ where necessary in the future as a result of coastal erosion. There are few places where no rollback is proposed because the path is not likely to be affected by erosion in the foreseeable future.

Proposed landward boundary of the coastal margin

Generally, the landward boundary of the coastal margin will be a physical feature adjacent to the proposed route, unless no suitable feature exists, in which case access rights will extend 2m landward of the centre of the route line, as indicated in the relevant chapters of the report.

In the following places where we propose a boundary further inland, either to improve clarity as to the extent of access rights or to secure access to areas already used for recreation:

- Houns-tout cliff – see map 1d
- St Aldhelms Head – see map 1f
- Between Dancing ledge and Durlston National Nature Reserve – see map 2c
- Anvil Point – see map 2d
- Durlston Heights/Peveril Point – see map 2e

Establishment works

Some establishment works will be required on the designated sites – principally replacement of step stiles where necessary, and the provision of small numbers of stone steps where additional ones are needed or existing wooden steps need replacing. Some resurfacing works are proposed for the track below Durlston Castle to improve access for those with reduced mobility. The project team also intend to facilitate discussions between Dorset County Council and the responsible officer about route section LCH-2-S026, where there may be scope to improve the path surface to the benefit of the surrounding vegetation. Improvements to the steps to the beach at Shep’s Hollow (New Swanage) is also planned.

Additional/improved directional signs (primarily wooden finger posts and simple way marker posts) will be required incorporating the National Trail Acorn.

Once the Secretary of State has approved a route for this stretch of coast, the local access authority will approach the site responsible officer to agree the details of the works programme and formal assent.

At the same stage, we will discuss provision of interpretation/information boards along this stretch of coast with other interested parties. These do not form part of our formal proposals but may be included in the establishment works programme.

No local access restrictions are proposed. The general restrictions listed in the Overview to the report will apply to the new access rights, but not to public rights of way.

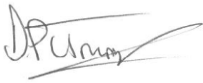
Section 2: PREDICTED CHANGE IN PUBLIC USE OF AREA**How do visitors already use the site?**

- The South West Coast Path already attracts a number of walkers, both long distance walkers and those utilising existing 'circular' walks or shorter walks from car parks.
- It is widely promoted by local authorities, tourism providers, the South West Coast Path Association, guidebooks and travel websites. It enjoys an international profile and attracts significant numbers of international visitors.
- Key viewpoints include the Clavel Tower at Kimmeridge, St Aldhelm's Head and Durlston Head.
- Other significant 'honeypots' include Kimmeridge Bay Marine Nature Reserve (large car park), Durlston Country Park on the outskirts of Swanage and Dancing Ledge (National Trust) near Worth Matravers (popular with climbers, coastering groups and school geography/geology groups).
- The www.dorsetforyou.gov website estimated that 250,000 people visited Durlston Country Park in 2012.
- The Purbeck Way links in with the SWCP forming a much longer 'circular' walk between Hill Bottom/Chapman's Pool and Ballard Down (via Corfe). The trail is promoted by the local authorities www.dorsetforyou.gov and the Long Distance Walkers Association www.ldwa.org.uk
- According to Dorset County Council rangers, current users generally stick to the existing trail.
- The area is popular with climbers and the British Mountaineering Council operates a voluntary code to avoid climbing in sensitive areas on this section of coast during the bird breeding season.

How is the new access proposal likely to affect use of this site by the public?

- Since the South West Coast Path is already an international tourist destination, its designation as part of the England Coast path is expected to make little difference to overall visit numbers along this stretch of the coast.
- In places where we propose a different route to the existing South West Coast Path, we do not expect it to attract significant numbers of new visitors because the changes are small scale and in keeping with already established use.
- The nature of the seaward coastal margin along much of the coast - steep cliffs - means that walkers and other users are likely to remain on the established trail.
- Elsewhere the extent of new access rights within the coastal margin is in keeping with already established use and is not expected to attract significant numbers of new visitors.
- There are no proposals from the project team to promote the site as a visitor

destination. Others may choose to do so – the project team’s view is that the proposals here will not be a significant factor in those decisions.

Access case officer		
Signed: 	Name: David Trump	Date: 20.02.17

Section 3: POTENTIAL IMPACT ON FEATURES FROM NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL

Designated site name(s): South Dorset Coast SSSI (part), Studland Cliffs SSSI, Purbeck Ridge (East), Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC, St Alban’s Head to Durlston Head SAC										
		SPA	p/SPA		SAC	p/SAC		Ramsar	p/Ramsar	SSSI
Designation types present (show boundaries on map)					X					X

Potential concern about new access proposal (summary)

The existing levels of public access along this stretch of coast are already very high, this being the route of the SW Coast Path National Trail. It is not likely that significant new visitor pressure will be driven by the creation of this section of the ECP.

Two Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) adjoin the route of the path. St Aldhelm's Head SNCI (SY97/027) is an arable plant margin and is situated in an arable field itself fenced off from the proposed route. South Gwyle SNCI (SY97/014) is a small area of ancient semi-natural woodland running from inland to the cliff edge. The proposed route would run through the SNCI, but follows the existing South West Coast Path so we would not expect any change: it is unlikely that anyone would access the woodland element of the site as it leads nowhere. The coastal part of the SNCI is open grassland very similar to the adjacent coastal SSSI habitats.

Concerns about existing public use and action already taken to address this (summary)

The best reference to existing issues with coastal access is the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) for the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC, incorporating the St Aldhelm’s Head to Durlston Head SAC. This was put together as part of the IPENS project. National Trust have begun the process of creating a recreational access plan as part of the Wild Purbeck NIA and in light of the SIP findings/recommendations.

There are existing concerns around specific access/recreation points (such as Dancing Ledge) associated with coastering. The coastal access proposal is not envisaged to alter these either way.

The main issue is that of coastal squeeze where the re-routing of the coast path in the event of landslips (a phenomenon of increasing frequency over the last few years) impinges upon already constrained and finite areas of particular biodiversity importance.

Key sensitive features relevant to site (detail)		
Feature	Any potential sensitivity to visitors	Any likely impact
CG1 <i>Festuca ovina</i> – <i>Carlina</i>	These grasslands are sensitive to trampling and active erosion when	Impacts are likely in the event of cliff falls which force an almost immediate

<p><i>vulgaris</i> grassland Sheep's Fescue – Carline Thistle calcareous grassland</p>	<p>they are used by the public as either main path, short cut/desire lines or as re-routed paths when sections of existing path are lost or closed due to cliff falls/instability. Also sensitive to eutrophication from excessive dog urine/faeces – though this usually concentrated in 'honey pot' sites/locations.</p>	<p>re-routing of the path, either by design or by creation of new 'desire line' – often along the route of an existing but much smaller path. The designation of new coast path will speed up the formal approval of any path changes made for this reason.</p>
<p>CG2 <i>Festuca ovina</i> - <i>Avenula pratensis</i> grassland Sheep's Fescue – Meadow Oat-grass calcareous grassland</p>	<p>See above</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>CG4 <i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i> grassland Tor grass calcareous grassland</p>	<p>See above</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>N2K H6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco - Brometalia</i>)* Annex I habitat under EU Habitats Directive</p>	<p>Found on the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC, St Alban's Head to Durlston SAC. Same sensitivity as SSSI grassland features.</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>N2K H6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco - Brometalia</i>) (Important Orchid Sites)* Annex I habitat under EU Habitats Directive</p>	<p>Found on the St Alban's Head to Durlston SAC. Same sensitivity as SSSI grassland features.</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>Population of Schedule 8 vascular plant <i>Ophrys sphegodes</i>* Early Spider</p>	<p>See above</p>	<p>See above</p>

Orchid		
N2K S1654 Population of Schedule 8 vascular plant <i>Gentianella anglica</i> Early Gentian*	Found on the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC, St Alban's Head to Durlston SAC. Same sensitivity as SSSI grassland features.	See above
Vascular Plants Assemblage Site supports populations of 19 vascular plant species of high conservation importance.	See above	See above
Invertebrate Assemblage: F11 unshaded early successional mosaic; F111 sand and chalk; and F112 open short sward - calcareous grassland	Across sites. Not likely to be impacted and, in fact, may open niches that some of these species may be able to exploit.	
Population of nationally scarce butterfly: <i>Thymelicus acteon</i>	Trampling of grassland used by species throughout life cycle.	Habitat is widespread and almost ubiquitous to the eastern end of the SSSI. No likelihood that current or slight increase in visitor numbers using path will have any discernible effect
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> – <i>Acer campestre</i> – <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland	Small woodland site at junction of SDC and Studland Cliffs SSSIs. Ground flora sensitive to excessive trampling/cycle use (known issue)	Higher engagement with NT staff over managing the use of site by cyclists of the site as a short cut off of the main coast path appears to have kept issue at bay recently.
Invertebrate assemblage Broad Assemblage Type: A21 Wood Decay	See above	See above
N2K S1304 Greater Horseshoe Bat <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> *	St Alban's Head to Durlston Head SAC. Fires/barbecues and general disturbance of the cliffside caves these bats use for hibernation.	Locales used by the bats are off the main path and as such unlikely to be affected.
N2K H1230 Vegetated Sea Cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts* MC1 <i>Crithmum maritimum</i> – <i>Spergularia rupicola</i> crevice	Found on the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC, St Alban's Head to Durlston SAC. These communities all exist principally beyond the break of the cliff slope and are therefore unlikely to be impacted by users of the coast path. Some areas where there may be some impact on these habitats are associated with access to the shore,	Existing impacts on these habitats in places where access to the coast is being (over) used by users such as coasteering groups are not likely to be increased with the establishment of the ECP.

community MC4 <i>Brassica oleracea</i> maritime cliff-edge community MC5 <i>Armeria maritima</i> – <i>Cerastium diffusum</i> maritime therophyte community MC8 <i>Festuca rubra</i> - <i>Armeria maritima</i> maritime grassland MC11 <i>Festuca rubra</i> – <i>Daucus carota</i> ssp. <i>gummifer</i> maritime grassland M22 <i>Juncus subnodulosus</i> – <i>Cirsium palustre</i> fen-meadow	rather than use of the coast path.	
N2K H1210 Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines*	Found on the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC. Not likely to be affected – off of the coastal path	
Coastal Cliffs and Foreshore (EC)	Not likely to be affected – robust features	
Active Process Geomorphological (IA)	Not likely to be affected – robust features	

Note: If the table suggests unacceptable residual impacts on the features in question, the norm is to repeat the earlier process of consideration, and complete when ready a further version of the template. But if at this point the access case officer and responsible officer cannot agree whether the access proposal adequately addresses the potential sensitivities, the case should be referred to the Access and Nature Conservation Review Panel.

Section 4: FINAL CONCLUSIONS

4A: FINAL CONCLUSION - EUROPEAN SITE

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – alone

In relation to the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, taken alone, Natural England has concluded on the best available evidence and information that:

- A. It can be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have any effect on any of the features listed in section 3 above for which the European site has been

designated or classified, for the following reasons:

B. While it cannot be excluded that the new access proposal taken alone will have an effect on any of the features listed in section 3 above for which the European sites have been designated or classified, **it is not considered that the effect is likely to be significant**, for the following reasons:

All N2K features are unlikely to be more greatly affected by the ECP than by current levels of footfall on the well-established SW Coast Path National trail. Existing issues are not likely to be exacerbated by the new footpath and its provisions.

C. **It cannot be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have a significant effect** on the following feature(s) for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – in combination

Other relevant plan or project	Is each other plan or project clear and specific enough for a judgement to be made at this stage about the probability or risk of its having any <i>similar</i> effect on the features in question?	Where the answer in Column 2 is Yes, what effect is it considered the other plan or project is likely to have in its own right on the features in question? Enter <u>one</u> of the following values, with brief reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No effect • A non-significant effect • A significant effect Where the answer in Column 2 is No, enter “Not applicable” in this column.
Dorset AONB management plan	Yes	No effect
Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site management plan	Yes	No effect
Shoreline Management Plan	Yes	No effect
Durlston Country Park management plan	Yes	No effect
Durlston National Nature reserve management plan	Yes	No effect
Purbeck Local Plan	Yes	No effect

Conclusions of screening in combination

Having considered the best available evidence and information on any other qualifying plans or projects that might operate in combination with the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, Natural England has concluded that **it can be excluded** that the new access proposal, in combination with any such qualifying plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any of the features for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Other plans, such as the Dorset AONB management plan, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site management plan, Shoreline Management Plan, Durlston Country Park management plan, Durlston

National Nature Reserve management plan, Purbeck Local Plan are all of too generic a nature to raise specific, quantifiable concerns that may be looked at, *in combination*, with these coastal access proposals.

Overall Screening Decision for European site/features

Accordingly, taking into account the preceding screening both alone and, where appropriate, in combination, Natural England has concluded:

No likely significant effect – the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified, subject to any separate considerations in relation to SSSI features etc (see below) ;
OR

Likely significant effect - appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.

PART 4B: FINAL CONCLUSION – SSSI

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2:

complies with NE’s duty to further the conservation and enhancement of the notified features of the SSSI, consistent with the proper exercise of its functions¹ - and accordingly the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified in this template ;
OR

would not comply with the duty referred to in (a) – and accordingly permission/ authorisation/ assent for the new proposal should not be given, for the following reasons: .

PART 4C: FINAL CONCLUSION - Other features about which concerns have been expressed

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that:

the appropriate balance has been struck by the new access proposal between NE’s conservation and access objectives, duties and purposes - and accordingly the new access proposal should proceed as finally specified in this template ;
OR

the appropriate balance referred to above has not been struck – and accordingly the new access proposal should not proceed in the form specified in this template , for the following reasons:..

¹ The reference in (a) above to Natural England’s functions includes its balanced general purposes under the NERC Act 2006, any specific statutory duties it may have to deliver specific improvements to public access, and the access-related policies and priorities it has agreed with Defra.

SIGNATURE COVERING THE WHOLE OF PART 4:

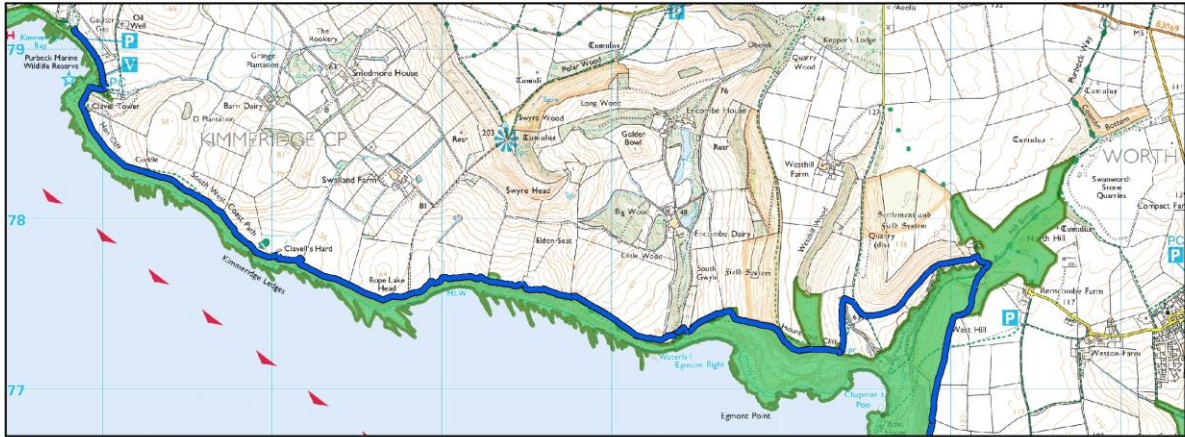
Responsible officer		
Name: Matt Low	Signed: <i>Matt Low</i>	Date: 28 Feb 2017

ANNEX A



Coastal Access - Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe

Extent of South Dorset Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)



England Coast Path
 Proposed route of the trail

Extent of South Dorset Coast SSSI
 (extent of site west of Kimmeridge not shown),

N ↑

© Crown copyright and database right 2017. All rights reserved. Natural England Licence No. 100022021


0 250 500 1,000 1,500
Metres




Coastal Access - Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe

Extent of Purbeck Ridge (East) and Studland Cliffs Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)



England Coast Path

 Proposed route of the trail

 **Extent of SSSI**

N


© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
 All rights reserved.
 Natural England Licence No. 100022021

0 250 500 1,000 1,500
 Metres

**Top: Purbeck Ridge (East) SSSI
 Bottom: Studland Cliffs SSSI**



Coastal Access - Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe
 Extent of St Alban's Head to Durlston Head and
 Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs Special Areas of Conservation(SAC)



England Coast Path
 Proposed route of the trail

SAC boundary
 (extent of site west of Kimmeridge not shown),

N

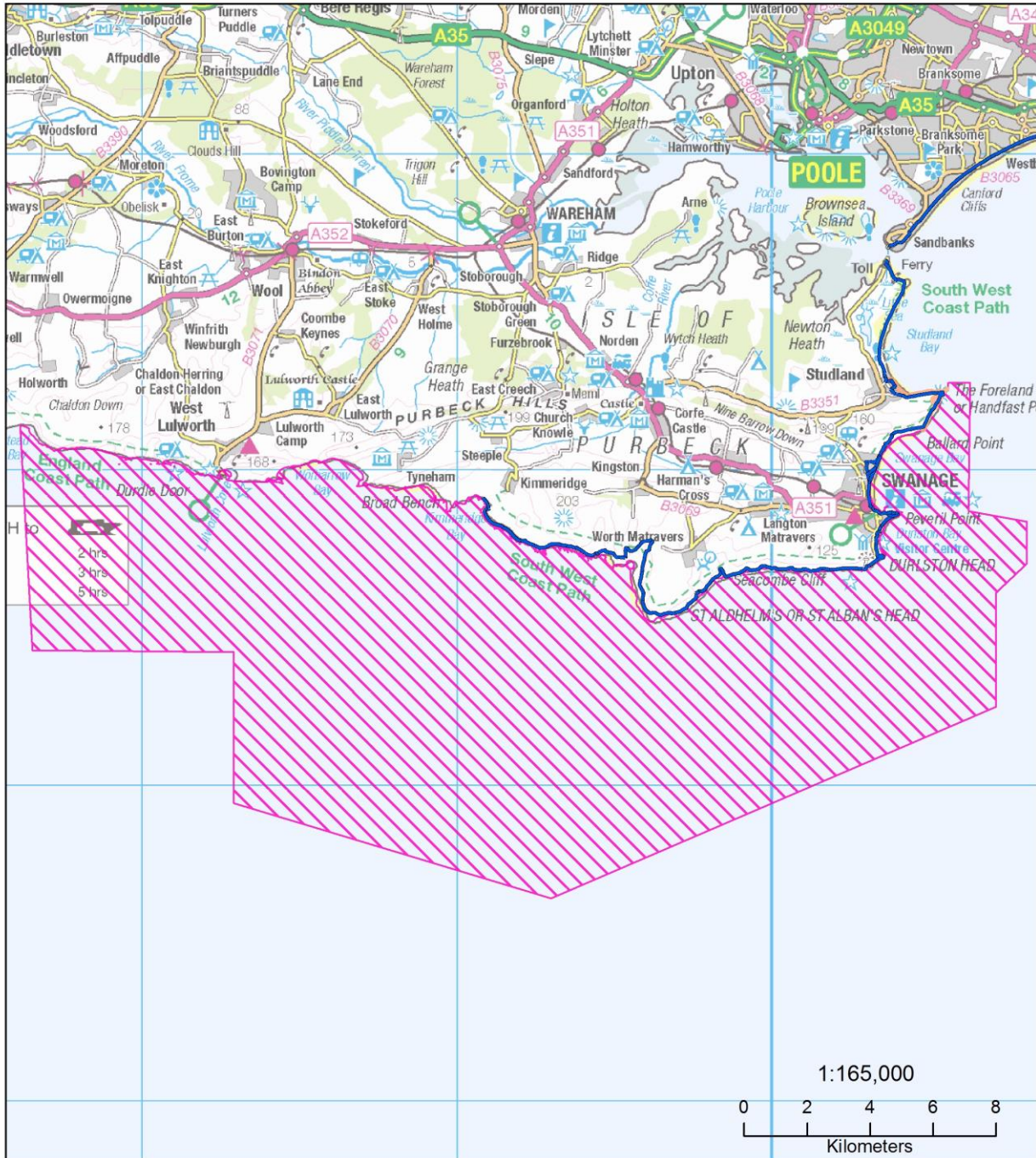
© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
 All rights reserved.
 Natural England Licence No. 100022021

Top:
 St Albans Head to Durlston Head SAC

Bottom:
 Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC



Coastal Access - Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe
Extent of Studland to Portland Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC)



England Coast Path
 Proposed route of the trail

Extent of SAC

N

© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
 All rights reserved.
 Natural England Licence No. 100022021

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Studland Bay

Including consideration of Studland and Godlingston Heaths SSSI, Dorset Heathlands Ramsar, Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC & Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA), South Dorset and the Solent proposed SPA.

Section 1: SITE MAPS (see Annex B) AND OVERVIEW OF NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL/ CONSIDERATION

Maps

Note on maps for reference

Report maps (published separately)

This appraisal is published alongside Natural England's report to the Secretary of State, which includes more detailed maps illustrating each chapter of the report.

Chapters 1 to 4 relate to the protected sites under consideration in this part of the Appraisal. The detailed maps that accompany these chapters are those to which the text in the appraisal refers. They are numbered according to the chapter of the report they relate to. For example, map 1b is the second map in the series relating to chapter 1 of the formal proposals.

Protected site maps

Annex B to this appraisal includes 2 large scale maps of the designated sites for reference purposes:

- Studland Bay - incorporating Studland and Godlingston Heaths SSSI, Dorset Heathlands Ramsar, Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC and Dorset Heathlands SPA; and
- Solent and Dorset Coast potential SPA

These maps also show the proposed route but the maps are not referred to in the appraisal that follows.

Hengistbury Head is part of the Dorset Heaths SAC and Dorset heathlands SPA, but is considered in a separate Appraisal for Christchurch Harbour.

Proposed new access provisions

Proposed route of the England Coast Path

The England Coast Path will follow the existing South West Coast Path through these protected sites, except in the following places:

- Route sections LCH-4-S019 to LCH-4-S024 at Middle Beach in Studland, where it will follow another existing walked route that is less at risk from erosion (see map 4c in chapter 4 of the proposals)
- Route sections LCH-4-S027 to LCH-4-S028 in Shell Bay, where it will divert slightly inland to cross a stream

All land seaward of the route will become coastal margin by default under the legislation and will be subject to access rights unless it falls into a category of excepted land. In some

places additional land on the landward side of the route will be subject to access rights under the proposals – see next section.

In general it is proposed that the path should be able to ‘roll back’ where necessary in the future as a result of coastal accretion or erosion.

See chapter 4 for further detail about the route proposals for these sites.

Proposed landward boundary of the coastal margin

Generally, the landward boundary of the coastal margin will be a physical feature adjacent to the proposed route, unless no suitable feature exists, in which case access rights will extend 2m landward of the centre of the route line, as indicated in the relevant chapter of the report.

However, on Studland Heath we propose as boundaries physical features that are further inland in order to improve clarity as to the extent of access rights:

- Knoll Beach to Shell Bay, where we propose an existing track called the Heather Trail as the boundary – see maps 4c to 4e.
- Shell Bay, where we propose an existing vehicle track as the boundary – see map 4e

The coastal margin created under these proposals is already access land. No local access restrictions are proposed. The general restrictions listed in the Overview to the report will apply to the new access rights, but not to public rights of way.

Establishment works

No establishment work will be required on the designated sites apart from provision of some additional signage (wooden finger posts and simple way markers with the National Trail Acorn Symbol) at key locations.

Once the Secretary of State has approved a route for this stretch of coast, the local access authority will approach the site responsible officer to agree the details of the works programme and formal assent.

Section 2: PREDICTED CHANGE IN PUBLIC USE OF AREA

How do visitors already use the site?

The Studland peninsular is a hugely popular year round beach/wildlife/walking destination close to the major conurbation of Poole and Bournemouth, but separated from it by the Sandbanks ferry.

The www.dorsetforyou.gov website states that more than 1 million people visited the Studland ‘beach and nature reserve’ in 2007. Studland comprises both heathland and coast, the two most popular destinations for local walks according to research into access patterns in South-East Dorset by Footprint Ecology*.

A report on visitor use for Dorset AONB shows Studland is the busiest countryside site in the Wild Purbeck Natural Improvement Area*. There are no indications from the surveys at

Studland that visitors that coming to the area specifically to walk the SWCP form anything other than a very small proportion of the total. Most visitors not in cars using the Studland ferry were cyclists; walkers comprised only a small proportion of the sample and none of these said that the SWCP was the reason for their visit. The Household Survey showed that Studland is a major destination for people living in SE Dorset.

It is owned/managed by the National Trust.

There are four key access points – Middle Beach, Knoll Beach and Shell Bay with large car parks, and foot access from parking along the Ferry Road to the beach between Shell Bay and Knoll Beach using a track across Studland Heath.


It is the start/end of the South West Coast Path (at South Haven Point). The coast path is widely promoted by local authorities, tourism providers, the South West Coast Path Association, guidebooks and travel websites. It enjoys an international profile and attracts significant numbers of international visitors.

*See the bibliography in the Overview to the coastal access report for references.

How is the new access proposal likely to affect use of this site by the public?

- Since the South West Coast Path is already an international tourist destination, its designation as part of the England Coast path is expected to make little difference to overall visit numbers along this stretch of the coast.
- There are no proposals from the project team to promote the site as a visitor destination. Others may choose to do so – the project team’s view is that the proposals here will not be a significant factor in those decisions.
- In places where we propose a different route to the existing South West Coast Path, we do not expect it to attract significant numbers of new visitors because the changes are small scale and in keeping with already established use. The potential effect that requires assessment in such cases is the re-routing of existing visitor numbers along a different path alignment rather than an increase in visits.
- The proposed extent of the coastal margin is in keeping with already established use and is not expected to attract significant numbers of new visitors, given its existing popularity with local people.

*See the bibliography in the Overview to the coastal access report for references.

Access case officer		
Signed: 	Name: David Trump	Date: Dec 2016

Section 3: POTENTIAL IMPACT ON FEATURES FROM NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL

Designated site name(s): Studland and Godlingston Heaths SSSI; Dorset Heathlands SPA; Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC; Dorset Heathlands Ramsar; Solent and Dorset Coast potential SPA.

	SPA	p/SPA	SAC	p/SAC	Ramsar	p/Ramsar	SSSI
Designation types present (show boundaries on map)	X	X	X		X		X

Potential concern about new access proposal (summary)

The effects of elements of public access on conservation interests on lowland heathlands are well recognised (Underhill-Day 2005) so any new access proposal needs to be considered in the light of these potential impacts. Effects on the ground nesting birds (nightjar, Dartford Warbler, woodlark) that are the features of the SPA designation, have been highlighted as a particular concern.*

**See the bibliography in the Overview to the coastal access report for references.*

Concerns about existing public use and action already taken to address this (summary)

Public access at Studland is dominated by the huge popularity of the beach but many beach users also spill into the neighbouring dunes. Whilst the considerable public pressure within the dunes is a potential concern, there is little evidence of significant specific adverse effects. Accretion of dunes is continuing and is seemingly not affected by the public use. The beach is also used by dog walkers and effects on SPA birds within the dune heath is a potential concern. Compared with the scale of these two uses, the number of visitors there specifically for the SWCP is tiny. The National Trust carry out a range of different visitor management measures including restrictions on the use of the beach by dogs, establishment and maintenance of nature trails and litter collection.

The following are general considerations regarding public access and the coast path at Studland. They are relevant to all the sensitive features there and underpin the conclusions about the predicted effects on the designated sites.

1. The high profile of the existing SWCP means that no increase in visitor numbers is predicted (see section 2 above).
2. Existence of the landward coastal margin would not affect the behaviour of visitors since the land is already open access land, is owned by the National Trust and is widely recognised as being open to the public (the situation for many years, well preceding the open access classification).
3. In practice almost walkers use the part of the beach immediately adjacent to the sea, because the sand is much firmer and easier to walk on – the sand at the back of the beach is rarely inundated and very soft. Thus walkers avoid the most sensitive areas.
4. The large number of visitors to the beach and adjacent areas results in a network of small paths through the dunes to which any additional visitors would be likely to follow, so reducing any impact.
5. The two small proposed minor deviations from the existing SWCP (nr Middle Beach and at the eastern end of Shell Bay) use very well used existing paths where no adverse impacts would be anticipated.
6. There is no evidence that walkers using the existing SWCP have ever contributed to starting fires and information about the causes of heathland fires indicates that visitors of this type do not cause fires.

Key sensitive features relevant to site (detail)

Feature	Any potential sensitivity to visitors	Any likely impact
SAC: European dry heaths; Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes	These features occur only in the landward coastal margin. They would be vulnerable to excessive trampling but some disturbance is beneficial for example in maintaining niches for smaller dune plants.	No impact – see particularly points 1 , 2 and 5 above
SAC: Embryonic shifting dunes, Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ,	SAC dune features vulnerable to trampling. The feature occurs at the back of the beach particularly where dunes are accreting (which is still occurring along large stretches of the shoreline despite the large number of visitors).	No significant impact - see particularly points 1 and 3 above
SAC: Humid dune slacks	This feature occurs only in the landward coastal margin but ground condition make access difficult and increased access unlikely.	No impact – see particularly points 1 and 2 above
SAC and Ramsar: Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> , temperate Atlantic Wet Heaths with <i>Eric ciliaris</i> and <i>Erica tetralix</i> , Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i>	Present but assessment concludes not on or in vicinity of path route or coastal margin	
SAC: Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains.	Present but assessment concludes not on or in vicinity of path route or coastal margin	
SAC: Old acidophilous oak woods.	Present but assessment concludes not on or in vicinity of path route or coastal margin	
SAC: Alkaline Fens	Present but assessment concludes not on or in vicinity of path route or coastal margin	
SAC: <i>Molinia</i> meadows on chalk and clay.	Present but assessment concludes not on or in vicinity of path route or coastal margin	
SPA: Population of Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i> . (breeding)	This feature occurs only in the landward coastal margin. Dartfords are sensitive to disturbance from people and dogs and temporary loss of habitat from fires.	No significant impact because of points 1, 2 and 5 above
SPA: Population of nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europeaus</i> . (breeding)	This feature occurs only in the landward coastal margin. Nightjar are sensitive to disturbance from people and dogs and temporary loss of habitat from fires	No significant impact because of points 1, 2 and 5 above
SPA: Population of	Present but assessment concludes	

woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i> .(breeding)	not on or in vicinity of path route or coastal margin	
SPA: Population of hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> .(non-breeding)	Present but assessment concludes not on or in vicinity of path route or coastal margin	
SPA: Population of merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> . (non-breeding)	Present but assessment concludes not on or in vicinity of path route or coastal margin	
pSPA Population of common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> (breeding)	Forages in Studland Bay but foraging behaviour unaffected by presence of people on the shore	No impact because of point 1 and lack of sensitivity of foraging terns to people on the shoreline
pSPA Population of Sandwich tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> (breeding)	Frequently forages in Studland Bay including close to the shoreline but foraging behaviour unaffected by presence of people on the shore	No impact because of point 1 and lack of sensitivity of foraging terns to people on the shoreline
pSPA Population of little tern <i>Sternula albifrons</i> (breeding)	Rarely uses Studland Bay – breeding colony is too distant	No impact because of point 1, lack of sensitivity of foraging terns to people on the shoreline and absence of any use of the area by little terns
Ramsar; ecological diversity of mires and transition zones	This feature includes humid dune slacks with the landward coastal margin and is covered by the SAC assessment. Other Ramsar features are present but assessment concludes not on or in vicinity of path route or coastal margin	
SSSI dune and heath habitat features	Present but all covered by SAC assessments of the same habitat types	
SSSI: Rare reptiles – Smooth snake <i>Coronella austriaca</i> .	In the landward coastal margin. Not known to be sensitive to increased public access but sensitive to fire. risk	No significant impact because of points 1, 2 and 5 above
SSSI: Rare reptiles – Sand lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i> .	In the landward coastal margin, a particularly large and important population. Sensitive to fire and trampling/disturbance of eggs	No significant impact because of points 1, 2 and 5 above
SSSI: vascular plant assemblage.	In the landward coastal margin but not particularly sensitive to trampling; a moderate amount of disturbance can be important in maintaining these plants. Also occasional rare plants on embryonic dunes where bullet 3 is relevant.	No significant impact because of points 1, 2 and 3 above
SSSI: Coastal Geomorphology, Prograding sand dunes.	Dune accretion continues to occur along large stretches of the shoreline despite the large number of visitors.	No significant impact because of points 1 and 3 above

Section 4: FINAL CONCLUSIONS

4Ai: FINAL CONCLUSION - Dorset Heathlands SPA

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – alone

In relation to the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, taken alone, Natural England has concluded on the best available evidence and information that:

A. **It can be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have any effect** on any of the features listed in section 3 above for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

B. While it cannot be excluded that the new access proposal taken alone will have an effect, **it is not considered that the effect is likely to be significant**, for the following reasons:
No increase in visitor numbers to the landward coastal margin is predicted.

C. **It cannot be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have a significant effect** on the following feature(s) for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – in combination

Other relevant plan or project	Is each other plan or project clear and specific enough for a judgement to be made at this stage about the probability or risk of its having any <i>similar</i> effect on the features in question?	Where the answer in Column 2 is Yes, what effect is it considered the other plan or project is likely to have in its own right on the features in question? Enter <u>one</u> of the following values, with brief reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No effect • A non-significant effect • A significant effect Where the answer in Column 2 is No, enter “Not applicable” in this column.
Housing allocations in local plans in Dorset within 5km of the Dorset heathlands SPA/SAC.	yes	A non significant effect.

Conclusions of screening in combination

Having considered the best available evidence and information on any other qualifying plans or projects that might operate in combination with the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, Natural England has concluded that **it can be excluded** that the new access proposal, in

combination with any such qualifying plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any of the features for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Without mitigation housing allocations in local plans in Dorset within 5km of the Dorset Heathlands SPA would lead to increased public access onto heathland, including at Studland, leading to a variety of adverse effects. However, mitigation measures required by these plans reduce the increase to a non significant level. Nevertheless, there is still the potential for this effect to combine with other non significant effects of the same type such as the ECP proposal. However, in the case of the ECP the judgement made that the effect is not significant rather than not present at all is a precautionary one because it is extremely hard to be certain that there is absolutely no effect at all. Moreover, the Habitat Regulations do not require that this distinction is made. In practice, it is considered that any adverse effects from the ECP proposal would be so trivial and inconsequential that there is no prospect that they could combine with other non-significant effects, such as from new housing, so that the combined effect was over the significant effect threshold.

Overall Screening Decision for European (SPA) site/features

Accordingly, taking into account the preceding screening both alone and, where appropriate, in combination, Natural England has concluded:

No likely significant effect – the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified, subject to any separate considerations in relation to other international sites and SSSIs etc;

OR

Likely significant effect - appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.

4Aii: FINAL CONCLUSION – Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – alone

In relation to the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, taken alone, Natural England has concluded on the best available evidence and information that:

A. **It can be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have any effect** on any of the features listed in section 3 above for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

B. While it cannot be excluded that the new access proposal taken alone will have an effect, **it is not considered that the effect is likely to be significant**, for the following reasons:
The route of the ECP avoids sensitive features; no increase in visitor numbers is predicted.

C. **It cannot be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have a significant effect** on the following feature(s) for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – in combination

Other relevant plan or project	Is each other plan or project clear and specific enough for a judgement to be made at this stage about the probability or risk of its having any <i>similar</i> effect on the features in question?	Where the answer in Column 2 is Yes, what effect is it considered the other plan or project is likely to have in its own right on the features in question? Enter <u>one</u> of the following values, with brief reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No effect • A non-significant effect • A significant effect Where the answer in Column 2 is No, enter “Not applicable” in this column.
Housing allocations in local plans in Dorset within 5km of the Dorset heathlands SPA/SAC.	yes	A non-significant effect.

Conclusions of screening in combination

Having considered the best available evidence and information on any other qualifying plans or projects that might operate in combination with the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, Natural England has concluded that **it can be excluded** that the new access proposal, in combination with any such qualifying plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any of the features for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Without mitigation housing allocations in local plans in Dorset within 5km of the Dorset Heaths SACs would lead to increased public access onto heathland, including at Studland, leading to a variety of adverse effects. However, mitigation measures required by these plans reduce the increase to a non significant level. Nevertheless, there is still the potential for this effect to combine with other non significant effects of the same type such as the ECP proposal. However, in the case of the ECP the judgement made that the effect is not significant rather than not present at all is a precautionary one because it is extremely hard to be certain that there is absolutely no effect at all. Moreover, the Habitat Regulations do not require that this distinction is made. In practice, it is considered that any adverse effects from the ECP proposal would be so trivial and inconsequential that there is no prospect that they could combine with other non-significant effects, such as from new housing, so that the combined effect was over the significant effect threshold, particularly as any effect on dune features from these housing allocations is also likely to be trivial.

Overall Screening Decision for European (SAC) site/features

Accordingly, taking into account the preceding screening both alone and, where appropriate, in combination, Natural England has concluded:

No likely significant effect – the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified, subject to any separate considerations in relation to other international sites and SSSIs etc

OR

Likely significant effect - appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.

4Aiii: FINAL CONCLUSION - Dorset Heathlands Ramsar

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – alone

In relation to the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, taken alone, Natural England has concluded on the best available evidence and information that:

- A. **It can be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have any effect** on any of the features listed in section 3 above for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:
 Ramsar features are not near the ECP itself and have only marginal representation in the landward coastal margin (as new wetland dune slacks develop). The feature is not particularly sensitive to pressure from public access and no increase in visitor numbers in the coastal margin is predicted.
- B. While it cannot be excluded that the new access proposal taken alone will have an effect, **it is not considered that the effect is likely to be significant**, for the following reasons:
- C. **It cannot be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have a significant effect** on the following feature(s) for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – in combination

Not applicable.

Overall Screening Decision for Ramsar site/features

Accordingly, taking into account the preceding screening both alone and, where appropriate, in combination, Natural England has concluded:

- No likely significant effect – the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified, subject to any separate considerations in relation to other international site features and SSSI features etc;**
 OR
- Likely significant effect - appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.**

4Aiv: FINAL CONCLUSION – Solent and Dorset Coast potential SPA

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – alone

In relation to the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, taken alone, Natural England has concluded on the best available evidence and information that:

- A. **It can be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have any effect** on any of the features listed in section 3 above for which the potential European site may be designated or classified, for the following reasons:
 Features are not sensitive to walkers on the shoreline and no increase in visitor numbers as a result of the proposal is predicted.
- B. While it cannot be excluded that the new access proposal taken alone will have an effect, **it is not considered that the effect is likely to be significant**, for the following reasons:
- C. **It cannot be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have a significant effect** on the following feature(s) for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – in combination

Not applicable.

Overall Screening Decision for potential SPA site/features

Accordingly, taking into account the preceding screening both alone and, where appropriate, in combination, Natural England has concluded:

- No likely significant effect – the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified, subject to any separate considerations in relation to other international site features and SSSI features etc;**
OR
- Likely significant effect - appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.**

PART 4B: FINAL CONCLUSION – SSSI

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2:

- complies with NE’s duty to further the conservation and enhancement of the notified features of the SSSI, consistent with the proper exercise of its functions² - and accordingly the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified in this template ;
OR
- would not comply with the duty referred to in (a) – and accordingly permission/ authorisation/ assent for the new proposal should not be given, for the following reasons: .

² The reference in (a) above to Natural England’s functions includes its balanced general purposes under the NERC Act 2006, any specific statutory duties it may have to deliver specific improvements to public access, and the access-related policies and priorities it has agreed with Defra.

PART 4C: FINAL CONCLUSION - Other features about which concerns have been expressed

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that:

the appropriate balance has been struck by the new access proposal between NE's conservation and access objectives, duties and purposes - and accordingly the new access proposal should proceed as finally specified in this template;

OR

the appropriate balance referred to above has not been struck – and accordingly the new access proposal should not proceed in the form specified in this template, for the following reasons: .

Responsible officer

Name:

Dr Andrew Nicholson

Signed:



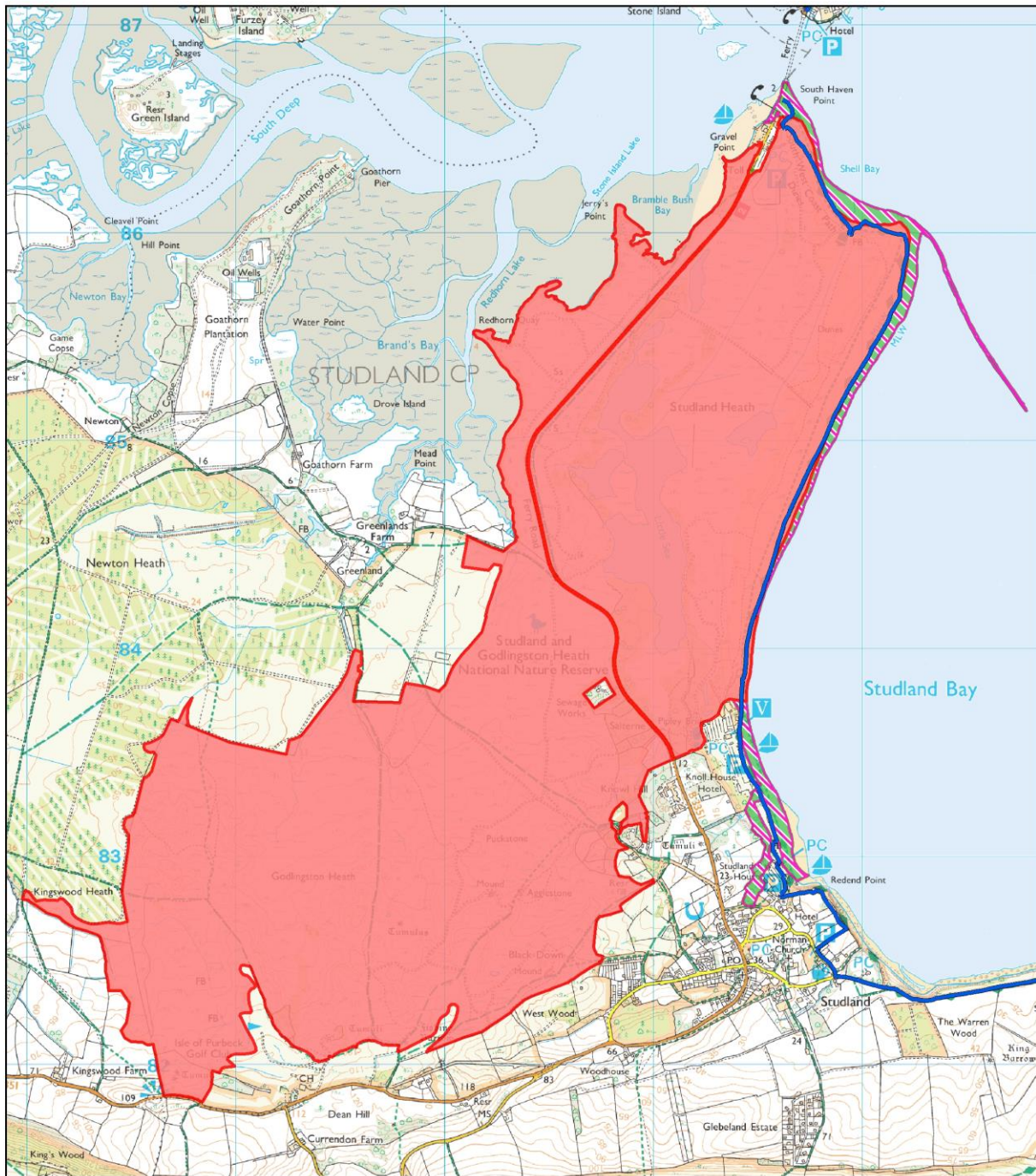
Date:

15/3/2017

ANNEX B



Coastal Access - Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe
 Extent of SSSI / SAC / SPA / Ramsar at Studland Bay



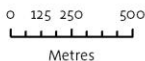
England Coast Path



Proposed route of the trail



© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
 All rights reserved.
 Natural England Licence No. 100022021



- Dorset Heathlands Ramsar
 Dorset Heathlands SPA
 Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham)
 & Studland Dunes SAC
 Studland & Godlingston Heaths SSSI
- Studland & Godlingston Heaths SSSI
 Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham)
 & Studland Dunes SAC
 (additional area not covered by above)



Coastal Access - Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe

Extent of Solent and Dorset Coast Potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)



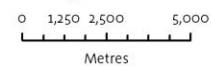
England Coast Path



Proposed route of the trail



© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
All rights reserved.
Natural England Licence No. 100022021



Solent and Dorset Coast
Potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Poole Bay Cliffs SSSI

Section 1: SITE MAPS (see Annex C) AND OVERVIEW OF NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL/ CONSIDERATION

Map

Note on maps for reference

Report maps (published separately)

This appraisal is published alongside Natural England's report to the Secretary of State, which includes more detailed maps illustrating each chapter of the report.

Chapter 5 relates to the protected sites under consideration in this part of the Appraisal. The detailed maps that accompany this chapter are those to which the text in the appraisal refers. They are numbered according to the chapter of the report they relate to. For example, map 5b is the second map in the series relating to chapter 5 of the formal proposals.

Protected site map

Annex C to this appraisal includes large scale maps of the designated area for reference purposes. The protected site maps also show the proposed route but are not referred to in the appraisal.

Proposed new access provisions

Proposed route

The England Coast path will follow the promenades through Poole and Bournemouth. The trail is seaward of the SSSI along the whole area, apart from one section - between Manor Bay and Southbourne zigzags - where the trail leaves the prom and follows a path along the overcliff (see map 5f of the proposals).

All land seaward of the route will become coastal margin by default under the legislation and will be subject to access rights unless it falls into a category of excepted land. In some places additional land on the landward side of the route will be subject to access rights under the proposals – see next section.

In two places it is proposed that the path should be able to 'roll back' where necessary in the future as a result of coastal processes:

- Sandbanks, where the proposed route is on the beach – see maps 5a and 5b and table 5.2.1 of chapter 5 of the proposals
- Manor Bay to Southbourne zigzags, where the proposed route is on the overcliff – see map 5f and table 5.2.1 of chapter 5 of the proposals

See chapter 5 for further detail about the route proposals adjacent to this site.

Proposed landward boundary of the coastal margin

Generally, the landward boundary of the coastal margin will be a physical feature adjacent to the proposed route, unless no suitable feature exists, in which case access rights will extend 2m landward of the centre of the route line, as indicated in the chapter 5 of the report.

As a result, there would be no new access rights on the site except at Boscombe overcliff, where part of the site lies seaward of the proposed route and is therefore coastal margin by default under the legislation.

No local access restrictions are proposed. The general restrictions listed in the Overview to the report will apply to the new access rights, but not to public rights of way.

Establishment works

No establishment work will be required on the designated sites. Replacement signs will be required, using the National Trail Acorn symbol in prominent places. One of these will be located at the top end of the Manor Bay zigzag path. In keeping with current site management no new infrastructure will be located outside the footprint of existing access routes.

Section 2: PREDICTED CHANGE IN PUBLIC USE OF AREA

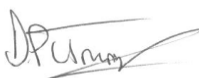
How do visitors already use the site?

- The Poole/Bournemouth area is a hugely popular year round seaside location
- The promenades are used by walkers, cyclists and beach users year round.
- There are engineered paths up and down them which people use to move from the promenade and beach to the cliff top.

The cliff slopes that form the designated site are rarely used for recreational purposes and are fenced from existing paths in many places.

How is the new access proposal likely to affect use of this site by the public?

- It is unlikely that there will be a significant increase in frequency of use of the existing promenades, cycle trails as a result of the establishment of the trail.
- There would be no new access rights to the cliff slopes except at Boscombe overcliff (map 5f).
- There is no reason to suppose members of the public would be interested in exercising their access rights to the cliff slope at this location, since they do not do so now. The existing fences will remain in place, providing a physical barrier which is likely to act as an effective deterrent.

Access case officer		
Signed: 	Name: David Trump	Date: 20.02.17

Section 3: POTENTIAL IMPACT ON FEATURES FROM NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL

Designated site name(s): Poole Bay Cliffs										
		SPA	p/SPA		SAC	p/SAC		Ramsar	p/Ramsar	SSSI
Designation types present (show boundaries on map)										
										X

Potential concern about new access proposal (summary)

There is existing public access along the non-designated undercliff promenade, overcliffe path network and road footpaths. Sections of the overcliffe paths run through County Wildlife Sites (CWS) but given the already intensive public usage of these sites it is unlikely that there will be any additional impact on the CWS.

Concerns about existing public use and action already taken to address this (summary)

Local authorities have installed sea defences in order to protect built development on the cliff top and provide safer access along the sea front. This has resulted in the cliffs becoming disconnected from erosion by the sea resulting in the cliff faces becoming vegetated with invasive, non-native species (INNS) and woodland which has reduced the availability of the geological interest features for research and study. This has also reduced the distribution of heathland habitat. Management to maintain the notified features is delivered through Higher Level Stewardship agreements with Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole.

Key sensitive features relevant to site (detail)		
Feature	Any potential sensitivity to visitors	Any likely impact
Coastal cliffs and foreshore (EC)	This feature is found along the entire length of the SSSI. This feature is sensitive to being further disconnected from natural erosion processes. The site is also sensitive to un-managed geological specimen collection (at present we do not think this is an issue).	The interest features are managed through two HLS agreements which include extensive capital works programs and grazing. At present there is little public use of the cliff face (with the exception of the grazing units access is not restricted from the undercliffe). As long as the access route is located on one of the existing routes, as proposed, then there should be no impact on the sensitivity of this feature.
Habitat mosaic including soft maritime cliff and slope, heathland, scrub, exposed sands with dune-like vegetation and seepages.	This feature is found along the entire length of the SSSI. This feature is sensitive to being further disconnected from natural erosion processes which results in INNS and woodland vegetating the cliff face. This feature is also sensitive to un-managed geological specimen collection (at present we do not think this is an issue).	The interest features are managed through two HLS agreements which include extensive capital works programs and grazing. At present there is little public use of the cliff face (with the exception of the grazing units access is not restricted from the undercliffe). As long as the access route is located on one of the existing routes, as proposed, then there should be no impact on the sensitivity of this feature.

<p>Sand lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i></p>	<p>This notified feature is only found where suitable habitats are located. The amount of suitable habitat should increase as a result of the HLS management. Sand Lizards are sensitive to disturbance to their egg laying and hibernation sites.</p>	<p>The interest features are managed through two HLS agreements which include extensive capital works programs and grazing. At present there is little public use of the cliff face (with the exception of the grazing units access is not restricted from the undercliffe). As long as the access route is located on one of the existing routes, as proposed, then there should be no impact on the sensitivity of this feature</p>
<p>Sandbanks Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI SZ08/016) – dune habitats; Sand Lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i></p>	<p>This area is a popular beach close to car parks, childrens play area, beach huts and the Sandbanks Pavillion. Dunes can be vulnerable to trampling if levels of public use are sufficient to cause it. Dune habitat is accreting in this area in spite of the existing high levels of public use, in particular on the adjoining beach, influenced by the groynes and on occasion helped by active intervention such as fencing of areas for restoration.</p>	<p>The proposed route will introduce a new linear waymarked path, but the expected number of walkers on the route is to be a very small percentage of overall users of the area. The proposed route passes on the beach in front of the low dunes, avoiding the habitat and species of importance. The large number of visitors to the beach and adjacent properties results in a network of small paths through the dunes to which any occasional walkers who might detour from the linear route would be likely to follow, so reducing any potential impact.</p>
<p>Flaghead Chine SNCI – lowland heathland cliff faces; Sand Lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i></p>	<p>The lowland heath on cliff faces is sensitive to being further disconnected from natural erosion processes which results in invasive non-native species and woodland vegetating the cliff face. This feature is also sensitive to un-managed geological specimen collection (at present we do not think this is an issue). Sand Lizards are only found where suitable habitats are located. The amount of suitable habitat should increase as a result of the HLS management. Sand Lizards are sensitive to disturbance to their egg laying and hibernation sites.</p>	<p>The interest features are managed through an HLS agreement which includes an extensive capital works programs. At present there is little public use of the cliff face. As long as the access route is located on one of the existing routes, as proposed, then there should be no impact on the sensitivity of these features.</p>
<p>Branksome Chine SNCI (SZ08/018) - narrow, steep-sided pine and deciduous wooded valleys; lowland heathland cliff</p>	<p>The lowland heath on cliff faces is sensitive to being further disconnected from natural erosion processes which results in invasive non-native species and woodland vegetating the cliff face. This feature is also sensitive to un-managed</p>	<p>The interest features are managed through an HLS agreement which includes an extensive capital works programs. At present there is little public use of the cliff face. As long as the access route is located on one of the existing routes, as proposed, then</p>

<p>faces; Sand Lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i></p>	<p>geological specimen collection (at present we do not think this is an issue). Sand Lizards are only found where suitable habitats are located. The amount of suitable habitat should increase as a result of the HLS management. Sand Lizards are sensitive to disturbance to their egg laying and hibernation sites.</p>	<p>there should be no impact on the sensitivity of these features.</p>
<p>Boscombe and Southbourne Overcliff SSSI - lowland heathland cliff faces; Sand Lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i>; acid grassland with areas of gorse scrub; Dartford Warbler</p>	<p>The lowland heath on cliff faces is sensitive to being further disconnected from natural erosion processes which results in invasive non-native species and woodland vegetating the cliff face. This feature is also sensitive to un-managed geological specimen collection (at present we do not think this is an issue). Sand Lizards are only found where suitable habitats are located. The amount of suitable habitat should increase as a result of the HLS management. Sand Lizards are sensitive to disturbance to their egg laying and hibernation sites. The cliff top is characterised by acid grassland and gorse scrub growing on light, sandy, free-draining soils. This habitat is sensitive to nutrient enrichment, erosion, damage and disturbance. Dartford Warbler are subject to disturbance and habitat damage.</p>	<p>The interest features are managed through an HLS agreement which include extensive capital works programs and grazing. At present there is little public use of the cliff face (with the exception of the grazing units access is not restricted from the undercliffe). The cliff top is crisscrossed by formal, constructed paths which are well used by the public for recreational activities. As long as the access route is located on one of the existing routes, as proposed, then there should be no impact on the sensitivity of these features.</p>

Note: If the table suggests unacceptable residual impacts on the features in question, the norm is to repeat the earlier process of consideration, and complete when ready a further version of the template. But if at this point the access case officer and responsible officer cannot agree whether the access proposal adequately addresses the potential sensitivities, the case should be referred to the Access and Nature Conservation Review Panel.

Section 4: FINAL CONCLUSIONS

4A: FINAL CONCLUSION - EUROPEAN SITE

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – alone

In relation to the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, taken alone, Natural England has concluded on the best available evidence and information that:

- A. **It can be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have any effect** on any of the features listed in section 3 above for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

- B. While it cannot be excluded that the new access proposal taken alone will have an effect, **it is not considered that the effect is likely to be significant**, for the following reasons:

- C. **It cannot be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have a significant effect** on the following feature(s) for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – in combination

Other relevant plan or project	Is each other plan or project clear and specific enough for a judgement to be made at this stage about the probability or risk of its having any <i>similar</i> effect on the features in question?	Where the answer in Column 2 is Yes, what effect is it considered the other plan or project is likely to have in its own right on the features in question? Enter <u>one</u> of the following values, with brief reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No effect • A non-significant effect • A significant effect Where the answer in Column 2 is No, enter “Not applicable” in this column.

Conclusions of screening in combination

Having considered the best available evidence and information on any other qualifying plans or projects that might operate in combination with the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, Natural England has concluded that **it can/cannot be excluded** *[delete as appropriate]* that the new access proposal, in combination with any such qualifying plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any of the features for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Overall Screening Decision for European site/features

Accordingly, taking into account the preceding screening both alone and, where appropriate, in combination, Natural England has concluded:

- No likely significant effect** – the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified, subject to any separate considerations in relation to SSSI features etc (see below);
- OR
- _____

Likely significant effect - appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.

PART 4B: FINAL CONCLUSION – SSSI

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2:

complies with NE’s duty to further the conservation and enhancement of the notified features of the SSSI, consistent with the proper exercise of its functions³ - and accordingly the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified in this template ;

OR

would not comply with the duty referred to in (a) – and accordingly permission/ authorisation/ assent for the new proposal should not be given, for the following reasons: .

PART 4C: FINAL CONCLUSION - Other features about which concerns have been expressed

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that:

the appropriate balance has been struck by the new access proposal between NE’s conservation and access objectives, duties and purposes - and accordingly the new access proposal should proceed as finally specified in this template ;

OR

the appropriate balance referred to above has not been struck – and accordingly the new access proposal should not proceed in the form specified in this template , for the following reasons: .

SIGNATURE COVERING THE WHOLE OF PART 4:

Responsible officer		
Name: Adam Bates	Signed: 	Date: 8/3/2017

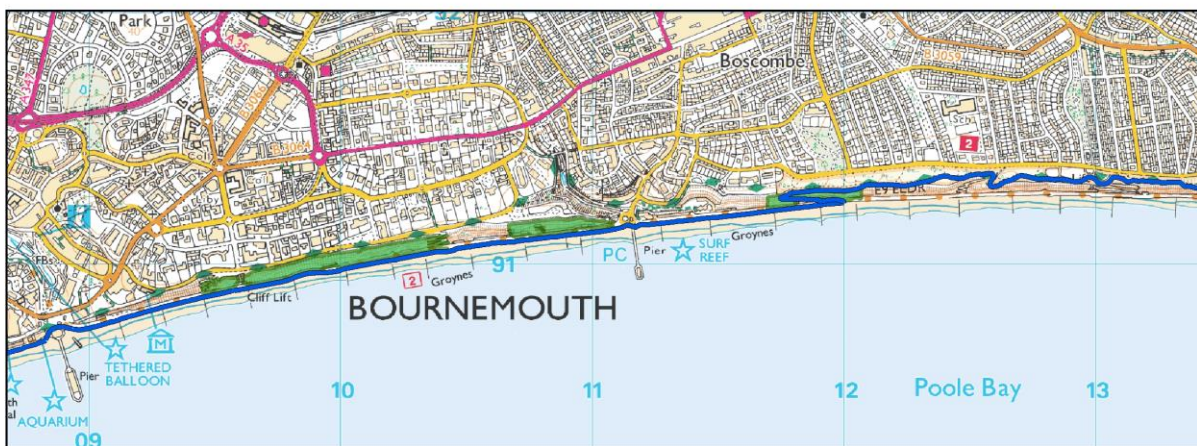
³ The reference in (a) above to Natural England’s functions includes its balanced general purposes under the NERC Act 2006, any specific statutory duties it may have to deliver specific improvements to public access, and the access-related policies and priorities it has agreed with Defra.

ANNEX C



Coastal Access - Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe

Extent of Poole Bay Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)



England Coast Path

Proposed route of the trail

Extent of Poole Bay Cliffs SSSI

N

0 250 500 1,000

Metres

© Crown copyright and database right 2017. All rights reserved. Natural England Licence No. 100022021

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Christchurch Harbour

Includes consideration of: Christchurch Harbour SSSI, River Avon System SSSI, Avon Valley (Bickton to Christchurch) SSSI, Dorset Heaths SAC (Hengistbury Head), Dorset Heathlands SPA (Hengistbury Head) River Avon SAC, Avon Valley SPA & Avon Valley Ramsar

Section 1: SITE MAP (see Annex D) AND OVERVIEW OF NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL/ CONSIDERATION

Map

Note on maps for reference

Report maps (published separately)

This appraisal is published alongside Natural England's report to the Secretary of State, which includes more detailed maps illustrating each chapter of the report.

Chapter 6 relates to the protected sites under consideration in this part of the Appraisal. The detailed maps that accompany this chapter are those to which the text in the appraisal refers. They are numbered according to the chapter of the report they relate to. For example, map 6b is the second map in the series relating to chapter 6 of the formal proposals.

Protected site maps

Annex D to this Appraisal includes a large scale map of the designated areas for reference purposes. The protected site map also shows the proposed route but is not referred to in the appraisal.

Proposed new access provisions

Proposed route

The England Coast Path follows the existing well-used trails across Hengistbury Head, the beach around Mundeford Spit, the land train route from the spit to the main Hengistbury Head visitor centre then follows the Stour Valley Way as far as Tuckton Bridge. The trail then crosses the River Avon via the two existing road bridges (Bridge Street, Christchurch) before skirting Stanpit Marsh nature Reserve and towards Mundeford Quay.

Between Southbourne and the neck of Mundeford Spit, it is proposed that the path should be able to 'roll back' where necessary in the future as a result of coastal processes – see table 6.2.1 of chapter 6 for further detail.

Coastal margin

All land seaward of the route will become coastal margin by default under the legislation and will be subject to access rights unless it falls into a category of excepted land. The general restrictions listed in the Overview to the report will apply to the new access rights, but not to public rights of way.

We propose to exclude access to areas of saltmarsh and flat that would otherwise become accessible in this way, because we are satisfied that it is unsuitable for a general right of access. Map G of the Overview shows areas that would be excluded in this way. There are public footpaths across the area which will not be subject to the direction.

Generally, the landward boundary of the coastal margin will be a physical feature adjacent to the proposed route, unless no suitable feature exists, in which case access rights will extend 2m landward of the centre of the route line, as indicated in the chapter 6 of the report.

Mudford Spit will qualify as coastal margin by default whether seaward or landward of the proposed route, because it is composed of coastal land types that qualify by default under the legislation. Here, we propose a boundary at the neck of the spit to give more clarity as to the extent of access rights – see map 6b and table 6.2.1 for details. Note that parts of the spit will be excepted from access rights because they are covered by buildings.

Establishment work

No physical establishment work will be required on the designated sites, with the exception of directional signs, using the National Trail Acorn symbol, where necessary to direct people along the proposed route.

Once the Secretary of State has approved a route for this stretch of coast, the local access authority will approach the site responsible officer to agree the details of the works programme and formal assent.

Section 2: PREDICTED CHANGE IN PUBLIC USE OF AREA

How do visitors already use the site?

The periphery of Christchurch Harbour comprises a number of distinct areas – Hengistbury Head, Mudford Spit, the rivers Avon and Stour and the associated saltmarsh and mudflats and the more urbanised areas of Christchurch, Wick and Stanpit. They are not linked into a cohesive route and we can find no evidence of people treating the harbour as a circular walk, but it is reasonable to suppose that people occasionally attempt it. Instead, recreational activity is concentrated in particular places and along particular recognisable routes.

An existing promoted long-distance walking route called the Stour Valley Way runs from the source of the River Stour at Stourhead to Hengistbury Head (97km).

www.stourvalleyway.co.uk

Hengistbury Head appears to be the most popular and distinctive destination for informal open-air recreation. The number of people visiting Hengistbury Head is estimated to be in the region of 1 million per year www.hengistbury-head.co.uk.

There are two large car parks at the western end of Hengistbury Head. There is a 'land train' connecting the main car park at Hengistbury head and the beach huts on Mudford Spit.

There is a network of recognisable paths on Hengistbury Head, probably used in conjunction with the Stour Valley Way and Mudeford Spit. Much of Hengistbury Head is designated access land.

There is a seasonal ferry across the entrance to Christchurch Harbour (Mudeford Quay to Mudeford Spit).

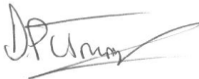
There is a smaller car park at Stanpit Recreation Ground and a further large carpark at Mudeford Quay.

How is the new access proposal likely to affect use of this site by the public?

We expect a well-sign-posted route around Christchurch Harbour to be popular locally, especially on weekend days when the ferry runs between Mudeford Spit and Mudeford Quay. The new route will also attract long-distance walkers following the England Coast Path.

In general, we do not expect the proposals to result in any significant increase in public use of areas off the designated path, because the principle new attraction is the waymarked route itself.

However, we expect an increase in footfall around key access points such as the car parks at Hengistbury Head, Mudeford Quay and Stanpit recreation ground, by people making their way from their cars to the proposed route, and at focal points or viewpoints around the harbour edge.

Access case officer		
Signed: 	Name: David Trump	Date: 20 Feb 2017

Section 3: POTENTIAL IMPACT ON FEATURES FROM NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL

Designated site name(s): Christchurch Harbour SSSI, River Avon System SSSI, Avon Valley (Bickton to Christchurch) SSSI, Dorset Heaths SAC (Hengistbury Head), Dorset Heathlands SPA (Hengistbury Head), River Avon SAC, Avon Valley SPA & Avon Valley Ramsar

	SPA	p/SPA	SAC	p/SAC	Ramsar	p/Ramsar	SSSI
Designation types present (show boundaries on map)	X		X		X		X

Notified Features that will not interact with the new access proposal

The following notified features will not interact with the new access proposal because they are not present along the proposed route and, to the extent that they occur in the coastal margin, will not be subject to any increase in recreational activity as a result of the proposals.

Christchurch Harbour SSSI

- Swamp and reed-bed Communities
 - S19 - *Eleocharis palustris* swamp
 - S20 - *Scirpus lacustris* ssp. *tabernaemontani* swamp
 - S21 - *Scirpus maritimus* swamp
 - S22 - *Glyceria fluitans* water-margin vegetation
 - S4 - *Phragmites australis* swamp and reed-beds
 - S5 - *Glyceria maxima* swamp
 - Population of Schedule 8 plant - *Eleocharis parvula*, Dwarf Spike-rush
- SSSI: Exposed Cliffs – Palaeogene

River Avon System SSSI

- Flowing waters
- Neutral grassland communities
- Swamp Communities
- Woodland
- Populations of RDB molluscs

River Avon SAC

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation.
- Annex II species: Desmoulin’s whorl snail, Sea lamprey, Brook lamprey, Atlantic salmon, Bullhead

Avon Valley (Bickton to Christchurch) SSSI

- Flowing waters.
- Heathland Communities: dry, wet, mire and fen.
- Neutral grassland communities.
- Swamp and reed-bed communities.
- Vascular plant assemblage.
- Aggregations of non-breeding birds: Bewick’s swan, Black-tailed godwit, Coot, Gadwall, Mute swan, White-fronted goose, Wigeon.
- Assemblages of breeding birds of lowland open waters and their margins.
- Rare bird species: wet meadow waders Lapwing, Redshank, Snipe.
- Invertebrate Assemblage.

Avon Valley SPA

- A051 *Anas strepera* Gadwall
- A037 *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* Bewick's swan

Avon Valley Ramsar

- Diversity of chalk river habitats, including fens and mires, lowland wet grassland, unimproved floodplain grassland, series of gravel pits, woodland.
- Assemblage of breeding wetland birds
- Breeding waders of lowland wet grassland
- Diverse assemblage of plants and animal
- Brown galingale, *Cyperus fuscus*, Small fleabane, *Pulicaria vulgaris*, Scarce chaser, *Libellula fulva*, Large-mouthed valve snail *Valvata macrostoma*, Desmoulins whorl snail, *Vertigo moulinsiana*, and the pea mussel *Pisidium tenuilineatum*

Stanpit Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)

(Ship in Distress fen, Ashtree fen, Monkswell fen)

- Designated for its reedbed, meadow and carr habitats.

Potential concern about new access proposal (summary)

The existing levels of public access along this stretch of coast are already very high with this section of coast being within the Bournemouth/Christchurch conurbation. Access provision here is already well established with waymarked access paths, car parking provision and visitor facilities.

The route of the ECP utilises the existing access infrastructure and whilst it is possible that the creation of this section of the ECP has potential to increase visitor access to the designated sites, the existing access provision is such that it is unlikely to result in a significant effect on the features of interest of the designated sites. The table below sets out the key sensitive features which could interact with the new access proposal and our reasoning behind this conclusion.

Concerns about existing public use and action already taken to address this (summary)**Christchurch Harbour SSSI**

Unit 1: Warren Hill (Hengistbury Head). Severe erosion of routes across the headland which was further accelerated by weather related erosion. In 2008/9 the main routes across the headland were upgraded to surfaced paths to address the erosion and restoration of this sensitive habitat.

Unit 2: The western dunes - also known as Whitepits. Erosion of the dunes caused by trampling on this much-frequented site, however the construction of a boardwalk has significantly reduced erosion and damage to the vegetation here. The boardwalk is now preferentially used over ad hoc routes through the dunes.

Unit 4: Barn Field and Double Dykes. Severe erosion of a network of desire lines across the Double Dykes and Barn Field with impacts from footfall; worn and eroded turf, compacted soils and bare ground further exacerbated by weathering. A series of access and conservation measures were initiated in 2001 which included a grazing enclosure at Barn Fields, the closure of the archeologically important Double Dykes and the provision of a surfaced, signed pathway to the headland. Monitoring of the recovery of the swards has shown that the measures have been successful in restoring the acid grassland communities (Hawes, P.T.J. Monitoring of Grazing -

research & monitoring reports for Barn Field, Long Field, Whitepits, Salt Hurns & Wick Hams 2005 - 2010. Bournemouth BC.) These measures have also been successful in providing optimal conditions for breeding Skylark and Meadow Pipit (Bird Census: Smith 1999 – 2003)

Unit 11: Stanpit Marsh. Frequent disturbance of over-wintering birds (both feeding and roosting) by free running dogs. This has now been resolved by the introduction of a byelaw to restrict the use of the site to dogs on leads only. Other complementary measures – the opening up of alternative recreation space for dogs to run freely – were brought in at the same time as the byelaw.

Key sensitive features relevant to Appraisal		
Feature	Any potential sensitivity to visitors	Any likely impact
<p>SAC: European dry heaths</p> <p>SSSI: Lowland dry heath</p> <p>H2 - <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> - <i>Ulex minor</i> heath</p>	<p>Present at Warren Hill/Hengistbury Head within Christchurch Harbour unit 1.</p> <p>Heathland habitat is sensitive to trampling and erosion when used as either a main path or short cut/desire line. Also sensitive to eutrophication from dog faeces.</p>	<p>The main path across the headland is surfaced which is preferentially used by existing visitors. Monitoring of the (previously trampled) sward recovery adjacent to the footpaths has shown that the surfaced paths have been successful in controlling the excesses of footfall.</p> <p>There remains a proportion of visitors walking off the surfaced path; access monitoring of the first surfaced footpaths installed from Double Dykes to the headland indicated that 90% of visitors keep to the surfaced path. Whilst there remains some use of smaller sandy tracks through the heath, this has not been shown to be having a significant impact and is considered to be at a level which maintains the sandy tracks within the heathland.</p> <p>Existing measures are in place to reduce the impact of dogs. These range from a wardening presence, the appropriate siting of dog waste bins and byelaws requiring dog owners to collect and dispose of dog faeces appropriately.</p> <p>The new coast path follows the existing surfaced path across the headland which is an already well used and recognised local path. The Dorset Household Survey Liley, D et al. (2008) found that Hengistbury Head is the most popular heathland destination for people living in SE Dorset. We do not expect the new access proposal to result in any significant increase in public use of areas off the designated path (see section 2 above).</p>

		<p>Existence of the coastal margin would not affect the behaviour of visitors since the land is already open access land, it is owned and managed by the Borough Council and is widely recognised as being open to the public (the situation for many years, well preceding open access classification).</p> <p>Access in this location is well managed and the new access proposal will not affect the existing management that is in place. Signposting and waymarking of the ECP should make it more likely that users follow the surfaced route through the heathland. Given the existing access infrastructure it is unlikely that the coast path on this part of the route would give rise to significant effects on the designated heathland habitat.</p>
<p>SPA: Population of Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>. (breeding)</p> <p>SPA: Nightjar, <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> (breeding)</p>	<p>Dartford warbler: Present in unit 1</p> <p>Nightjar: There are no recent records for Nightjar. 1 churring male recorded in nightjar surveys in 1991 and 2004.</p> <p>No other SPA listed features (Woodlark) present</p>	<p>The new coast path follows the existing surfaced path across the headland which is an already well used and recognised local path.</p> <p>The Dorset Household Survey (Liley, D et al. 2008) found that Hengistbury Head is the most popular heathland destination for people living in SE Dorset. We do not expect the new access proposal to result in any significant increase in public use of areas off the designated path (see section 2 above).</p> <p>Existence of the coastal margin would not affect the behaviour of visitors since the land is already open access land, it is owned and managed by the Borough Council and is widely recognised as being open to the public (the situation for many years, well preceding open access classification).</p> <p>Access in this location is well managed and the new access proposal will not affect the existing management that is in place. Signposting and waymarking of the ECP should make it more likely that users follow the surfaced route through the heathland. Given the existing access infrastructure it is</p>

		unlikely that the coast path on this part of the route would give rise to significant effects on the designated SPA feature breeding Dartford warbler.
SSSI: Lowland dry acid Grassland communities U1b, c, d, f : <i>Festuca Ovina - Agrostis Capillaris - Rumex Acetosella</i> Grassland and U4: <i>Festuca ovina - Agrostis capillaris - Galium saxatile</i> grassland	Christchurch Harbour unit 4, known as Barn Field and parts of 1. Acid grassland habitat is sensitive to trampling and erosion when used as either a main path, short cut/desire line.	The implementation of a series of access and conservation measures which included the reintroduction of seasonal grazing in 2001 has successfully restored the acid grassland communities within Barn Field. The provision of signed and surfaced paths together with measures to restore the acid grassland including a gated grazing enclosure have repaired the previous severe erosion to the acid grassland. (Hawes, P.T.J 2005-2010) The new coast path follows the existing surfaced path at Barn Field. Access here is well managed and given the existing access infrastructure, it is unlikely that the coast path on this part of the route would give rise to significant effects on the designated acid grassland habitat.
SSSI: Dune Communities including: SD6 - <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> mobile dune community SD7 - <i>Ammophila arenaria - Festuca rubra</i> semi-fixed dune community SD10 - <i>Carex arenaria</i> dune community	Christchurch Harbour unit 2, known as Whitepits Dune habitat is sensitive to trampling and erosion when used as either a main path, short cut/desire line.	The route of the Coast Path takes the well-defined footpath at the back of the dunes at Whitepits. The construction of a boardwalk in 2009 linking Solent Beach Car Park with the land to the east (towards the headland) has significantly addressed the previous issues of erosion of the dunes from footfall. Public use of the coast path in this part of the site would be unlikely to give rise to significant effects on the designated dune communities providing the boardwalk continues to be maintained and fit for purpose.
SSSI: Saltmarsh Communities including: SM13a - <i>Puccinellia maritima</i> saltmarsh, <i>Puccinellia maritima</i> dominant	Christchurch Harbour units 3,11 These communities are present within the vicinity of the route but off the coast path itself. The location and nature of the habitat makes access unlikely.	Unlikely to be affected by users of the coast path. Stanpit Marsh (Unit 11) The Coast path route lies to the north of Stanpit Marsh, away from the Marsh itself. Access to Stanpit Marsh will continue via an existing footpath that lies to the south of the route. However

<p>sub-community SM15 - <i>Juncus maritimus</i> - <i>Triglochin maritima</i> saltmarsh SM16a - <i>Festuca rubra</i> saltmarsh <i>Puccinellia maritima</i> sub-community SM18 - <i>Juncus maritimus</i> saltmarsh SM2 - <i>Ruppia maritima</i> salt-marsh community SM8 - Annual <i>Salicornia</i> Saltmarsh</p>		<p>It is proposed to exclude wider access rights that would otherwise occur to areas of saltmarsh and mudflat in the coastal margin (see description of proposals in section 1 of the Appraisal). Signposting and waymarking of the ECP should make it more likely that users follow the ECP and not divert to Stanpit Marsh.</p>
<p>SSSI: Assemblages of breeding birds - Mixed: Lowland fen, Lowland heath, Scrub SSSI: Variety of breeding bird species (70)</p>	<p>Christchurch Harbour units. 1,4,5,6 - 12</p>	<p>Taking into account the existing access and visitor management measures in place (e.g. surfaced routes, grazing enclosures, byelaws relating to the control of dogs) and the proposed route of the coast path away from sensitive areas (mudflat, saltmarsh, reedbed, freshwater marsh) it is unlikely that the coast path would give rise to significant effects on the designated breeding bird interest.</p>
<p>SSSI: Variety of wintering bird species (90)</p>	<p>Christchurch Harbour units 3,7,8,11,12</p>	<p>It is proposed to exclude access to areas of saltmarsh and mudflat (see description of proposals in section 1 of the Appraisal). Taking into account the exclusion, together with existing access and visitor management measures in place (e.g. surfaced routes, grazing enclosures, byelaws relating to the control of dogs) and the proposed route of the coast path away from sensitive areas (e.g. mudflat, saltmarsh, reedbed, freshwater marsh) it is unlikely that the coast path would give rise to significant effects on the designated over-wintering bird interest.</p>
<p>SSSI: Invertebrate Assemblage</p>	<p>Across all units.</p>	<p>Not likely to be affected. The coast path follows existing surfaced paths around the site. Access is well managed and given the existing access infrastructure it is unlikely that the coast path would give rise to significant effects on the designated invertebrate assemblage</p>
<p>Mudford Spit</p>		<p>The new coast path follows the beach on the seaward side and the surfaced</p>

<p>SNCI: Sand dune, gravel/shingle foreshore and Red Data Book species <i>Polygonium maritimum</i>, sea knotgrass</p>		<p>land train route on the harbour side, avoiding sensitive habitat within the SNCI. Christchurch Borough Council maintains an area of fenced dune to prevent erosion from footfall to the dunes at the northern end of the spit. It is therefore unlikely that the coast path would give rise to an effect on the SNCI interest.</p>
---	--	---

Note: If the table suggests unacceptable residual impacts on the features in question, the norm is to repeat the earlier process of consideration, and complete when ready a further version of the template. But if at this point the access case officer and responsible officer cannot agree whether the access proposal adequately addresses the potential sensitivities, the case should be referred to the Access and Nature Conservation Review Panel.

Section 4: FINAL CONCLUSIONS

4A: FINAL CONCLUSION - EUROPEAN SITES

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – alone

In relation to the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, taken alone, Natural England has concluded on the best available evidence and information that:

X

A. It can be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have any effect on any of the features considered in section 3 above for which the European sites listed below have been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

- Dorset Heaths SAC: The new coast path follows the existing surfaced path across the SAC/SPA designated headland at Hengistbury Head. Access in this location is well managed and given the existing access infrastructure, together with existing patterns of use (i.e. visitors keeping to surfaced path) it is unlikely that the coast path on this part of the route would give rise to significant effects on the designated heathland habitat.
- Dorset Heathlands SPA: Dartford warbler unlikely to be affected by users of the coast path. No other listed features are present at this part of the SPA.
- River Avon SAC: No conceivable impact; the designated interest features are not likely to be affected. The route of the coast path crosses the designated sites of the River Avon at the bridges in the town centre.
- Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar: Interest features not present within the vicinity of the route.

B. While it cannot be excluded that the new access proposal taken alone will have an effect, it is not considered that the effect is likely to be significant, for the following reasons:

C. It cannot be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have a significant effect on the following feature(s) for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – in combination

Other relevant plan or project	Is each other plan or project clear and specific enough for a judgement to be made at this stage about the probability or risk of its having any <i>similar</i> effect on the features in question?	Where the answer in Column 2 is Yes, what effect is it considered the other plan or project is likely to have in its own right on the features in question? Enter <u>one</u> of the following values, with brief reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No effect • A non-significant effect • A significant effect Where the answer in Column 2 is No, enter “Not applicable” in this column.

Conclusions of screening in combination

Having considered the best available evidence and information on any other qualifying plans or projects that might operate in combination with the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, Natural England has concluded that **it can/cannot be excluded** *[delete as appropriate]* that the new access proposal, in combination with any such qualifying plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any of the features for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Overall Screening Decision for European site/features

Accordingly, taking into account the preceding screening both alone and, where appropriate, in combination, Natural England has concluded:

No likely significant effect – the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified, subject to any separate considerations in relation to SSSI features etc (see below);

OR

Likely significant effect - appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.

[Continued]

PART 4B: FINAL CONCLUSION – SSSI

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2:

complies with NE’s duty to further the conservation and enhancement of the notified features of the SSSI, consistent with the proper exercise of its functions⁴ - and accordingly the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified in this template ;

OR

would not comply with the duty referred to in (a) – and accordingly permission/ authorisation/ assent for the new proposal should not be given, for the following reasons: .

The route of the ECP utilises the existing surfaced access routes across Christchurch Harbour SSSI. It is possible that the creation of this section of the ECP has potential to increase visitor access to the designated sites, however the existing well managed access provision is such that it is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the features of interest.

PART 4C: FINAL CONCLUSION - Other features about which concerns have been expressed

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that:

the appropriate balance has been struck by the new access proposal between NE’s conservation and access objectives, duties and purposes - and accordingly the new access proposal should proceed as finally specified in this template ;

OR

the appropriate balance referred to above has not been struck – and accordingly the new access proposal should not proceed in the form specified in this template , for the following reasons: .

Mudeford Spit SNCI: The new access proposal avoids sensitive habitat within the SNCI and utilises two existing well used routes across the Spit; the beach and the existing surfaced land train route.

SIGNATURE COVERING THE WHOLE OF PART 4:

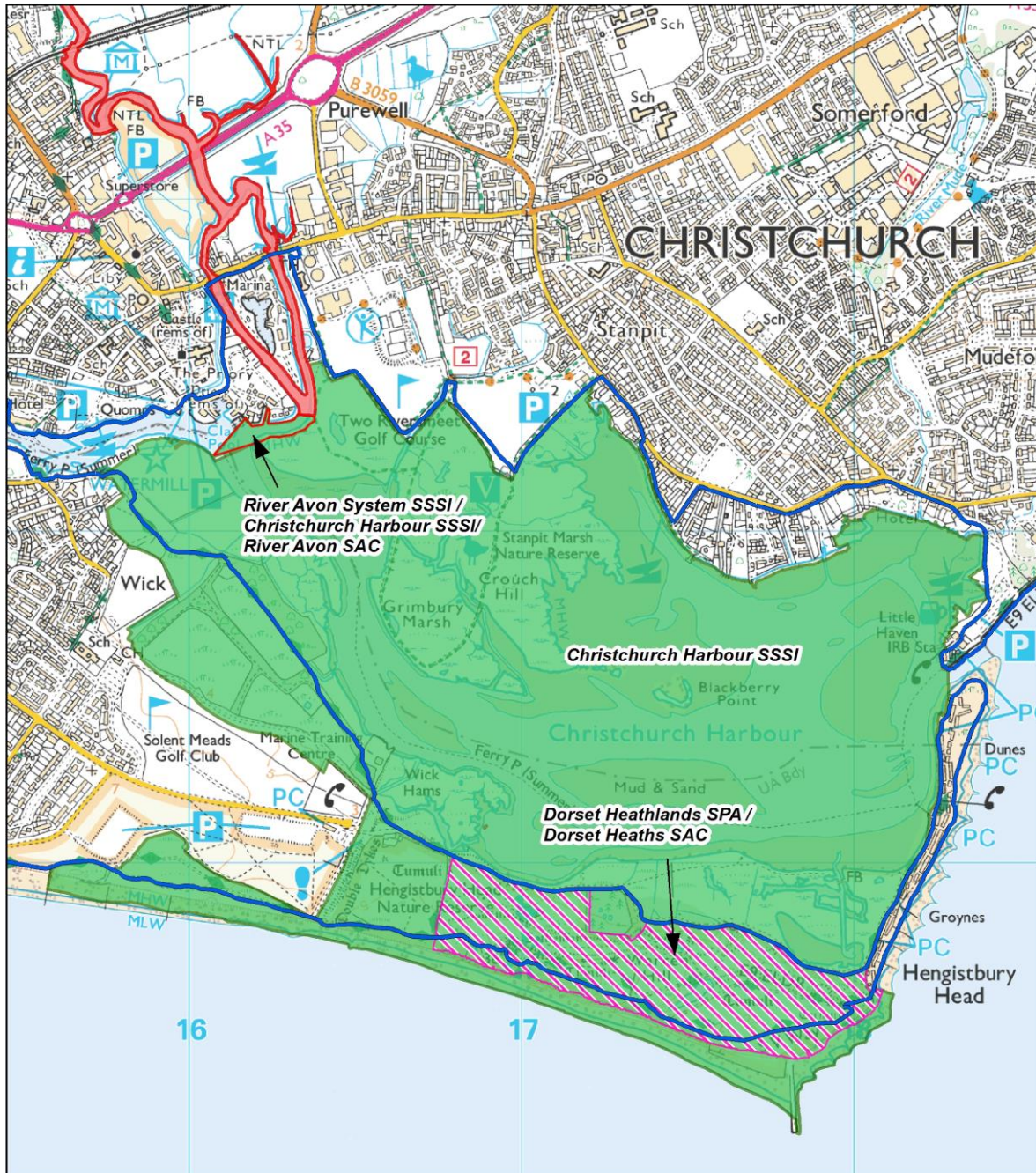
Responsible officer		
Name: Helen Powell	Signed: 	Date: 1 March 2017

⁴ The reference in (a) above to Natural England’s functions includes its balanced general purposes under the NERC Act 2006, any specific statutory duties it may have to deliver specific improvements to public access, and the access-related policies and priorities it has agreed with Defra.

ANNEX D



Coastal Access - Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe
 Extent of SSSI / SAC / SPA / Ramsar at Christchurch Harbour



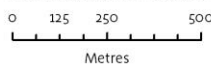
England Coast Path



Proposed route of the trail

N

© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
 All rights reserved.
 Natural England Licence No. 100022021



Christchurch Harbour SSSI /
 River Avon System SSSI /
 River Avon SAC
 Overlapping area



Christchurch Harbour /
 River Avon System SSSI



Avon Valley (Bickton to Christchurch) SSSI /
 River Avon System SSSI
 River Avon SAC /
 Avon Valley SPA /
 Avon Valley Ramsar



Dorset Heaths SAC /
 Dorset Heathlands SPA

Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal: Highcliffe to Milford Cliffs SSSI

Section 1: SITE MAP (see Annex E) AND OVERVIEW OF NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL/ CONSIDERATION

Map

Note on maps for reference

Report maps (published separately)

This appraisal is published alongside Natural England's report to the Secretary of State, which includes more detailed maps illustrating each chapter of the report.

Chapter 7 relates to the protected sites under consideration in this part of the Appraisal. The detailed maps that accompany this chapter are those to which the text in the appraisal refers. They are numbered according to the chapter of the report they relate to. For example, map 7b is the second map in the series relating to chapter 7 of the formal proposals.

Protected site map

Annex E to this appraisal includes a large scale map of the designated area for reference purposes. The protected site map also shows the proposed route but is not referred to in the appraisal.

Proposed new access provisions

Proposed route

The England Coast Path will follow the wave wall below Steamer Point Nature Reserve and then the beach below Highcliffe Castle and low level track eastwards to the seaward end of Chewton Bunny (see maps 7b and 7c). This is the eastern end of the Lulworth Cove to Highcliffe stretch of the England Coast Path.

It is proposed that route sections LCH-7-S010 to S013 should be able to 'roll back' where necessary in the future to adapt to coastal processes such as erosion or accretion of the beach, dune or cliff.

Coastal margin

All land seaward of the trail to mean high water will become coastal margin and subject to access rights on foot. Seasonal dog bylaws will continue to apply.

The landward boundary of the coastal margin will coincide with a physical feature adjacent to the route itself – see table 7.2.1 for details of the boundary for each route section.

No local access restrictions are proposed. The general restrictions listed in the Overview to the report will apply to the new access rights, but not to public rights of way.

Establishment works

Some directional signs will be required along the route, using the National Trail Acorn symbol in prominent/key places, but no other establishment work will be required on the designated sites. Once the Secretary of State has approved a route for this stretch of coast, the local access authority will approach the site responsible officer to agree the details of these and formal assent.

Section 2: PREDICTED CHANGE IN PUBLIC USE OF AREA

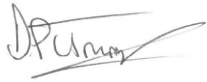
How do visitors already use the site?

The area is popular with those visiting Highcliffe Castle (accessing the beach via steps and a zigzag path) and those using the car parks at Wharncliffe Road/Chewton Bunny and Highcliffe Castle.

How is the new access proposal likely to affect use of this site by the public?

We expect a modest increase in footfall along the route itself, as a result of day visitors and long-distance walkers attracted by the designated coast path. We have no reliable means to quantify this change, but it is unlikely to be significant relative to the existing use of the area.

We do not expect any noticeable increase in public use of the land either side of the route as a result of the proposals because it is already accessible. Walkers may step on to the beach to rest, but there is no obvious attraction for them in the areas of sensitivity at the base of the cliffs.

Access case officer		
Signed: 	Name: David Trump	Date: 20 Feb 2017

Section 3: POTENTIAL IMPACT ON FEATURES FROM NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL

	SPA	p/SPA	SAC	p/SAC	Ramsar	p/Ramsar	SSSI
Designation types present (show boundaries on map)							X

Potential concern about new access proposal (summary)

There may be a negative effect of trampling, disturbance and nutrient input to pools and other habitats for invertebrates of the soft undercliff and slumped areas.

Concerns about existing public use and action already taken to address this (summary)

Local authorities have installed sea defences in order to protect built development on the cliff top and provide safer access along the sea front. This has resulted in less erosion and the cliff faces have become vegetated and are not available for research and study.

Key sensitive features relevant to site (detail)

Feature	Any potential sensitivity to visitors	Any likely impact
	This features runs along the entire	The England Coast Path is proposed

<p>Geological features of cliff strata.</p>	<p>SSSI, but it is really only relevant to the cliff face itself. This feature is maintained in favourable condition by having the cliff face clear for education/research purposes. In most geological SSSIs of this nature the cliff face is kept open by natural erosion. This has not been the case for much of this SSSI due to structures at the base of the cliffs that have been positioned there in order to prevent erosion of the cliffs.</p>	<p>along existing walked lines of the shingle beach and on existing hard structures and no further coastal defences or structures are proposed.</p> <p>Since the 'roll-back' option is written into the legislation and any proposal under that option will be fully consulted on and assessed and that there is limited landward spreading room as described in Section 1, it is felt that there is no likely negative impact upon the geological notified feature.</p>
<p>Invertebrates of soft cliffs</p>	<p>The invertebrates live in the runnels, pools and open vegetation of the slumped areas of the cliffs. The invertebrates will occur in all areas of slumped cliffs with open vegetation within the SSSI. The invertebrates are unlikely to be adversely affected by increased human access on the Coastal Path, unless there is increased access to the slumped areas. In this case, trampling could adversely affect the invertebrates. This particularly applies to the pools and water bodies which are undisturbed at the moment, but with human and dog access may become more disturbed physically and may have nutrient input from dog faeces.</p>	<p>The England Coast Path is proposed along existing walk lines of the shingle beach and on existing hard structures. Since only a modest increase in human traffic along this section is expected once the ECP is opened (because it is already well used by people) and since it is expected that the vast majority of people will wish to walk along the existing walk lines and hard structures it is felt that there will be no likely negative impact upon the invertebrates of soft cliff notified feature.</p>

Note: If the table suggests unacceptable residual impacts on the features in question, the norm is to repeat the earlier process of consideration, and complete when ready a further version of the template. But if at this point the access case officer and responsible officer cannot agree whether the access proposal adequately addresses the potential sensitivities, the case should be referred to the Access and Nature Conservation Review Panel.

Section 4: FINAL CONCLUSIONS

4A: FINAL CONCLUSION - EUROPEAN SITE

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – alone

In relation to the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, taken alone, Natural England has concluded on the best available evidence and information that:

- A. It can be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have any effect on any of the features listed in section 3 above for which the European site has been

designated or classified, for the following reasons:

B. While it cannot be excluded that the new access proposal taken alone will have an effect, **it is not considered that the effect is likely to be significant**, for the following reasons:

C. **It cannot be excluded that the new access proposal, taken alone, will have a significant effect** on the following feature(s) for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – in combination

Other relevant plan or project	Is each other plan or project clear and specific enough for a judgement to be made at this stage about the probability or risk of its having any <i>similar</i> effect on the features in question?	Where the answer in Column 2 is Yes, what effect is it considered the other plan or project is likely to have in its own right on the features in question? Enter <u>one</u> of the following values, with brief reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No effect • A non-significant effect • A significant effect Where the answer in Column 2 is No, enter “Not applicable” in this column.

Conclusions of screening in combination

Having considered the best available evidence and information on any other qualifying plans or projects that might operate in combination with the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2, Natural England has concluded that **it can/cannot be excluded** *[delete as appropriate]* that the new access proposal, in combination with any such qualifying plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any of the features for which the European site has been designated or classified, for the following reasons:

Overall Screening Decision for European site/features

Accordingly, taking into account the preceding screening both alone and, where appropriate, in combination, Natural England has concluded:

No likely significant effect – the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified, subject to any separate considerations in relation to SSSI features etc (see below);

OR

Likely significant effect - appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.

PART 4B: FINAL CONCLUSION – SSSI

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that the new access proposal detailed in sections 1 and 2:

complies with NE’s duty to further the conservation and enhancement of the notified features of the SSSI, consistent with the proper exercise of its functions⁵ - and accordingly the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified in this template ;

OR

would not comply with the duty referred to in (a) – and accordingly permission/ authorisation/ assent for the new proposal should not be given, for the following reasons: .

PART 4C: FINAL CONCLUSION - Other features about which concerns have been expressed

Conclusion


In the light of the analysis in section 3, Natural England has concluded that:

the appropriate balance has been struck by the new access proposal between NE’s conservation and access objectives, duties and purposes - and accordingly the new access proposal should proceed as finally specified in this template ;

OR

the appropriate balance referred to above has not been struck – and accordingly the new access proposal should not proceed in the form specified in this template , for the following reasons: .

SIGNATURE COVERING THE WHOLE OF PART 4:

Responsible officer		
Name: Simon Curson	Signed: 	Date: 24 th Feb 2017

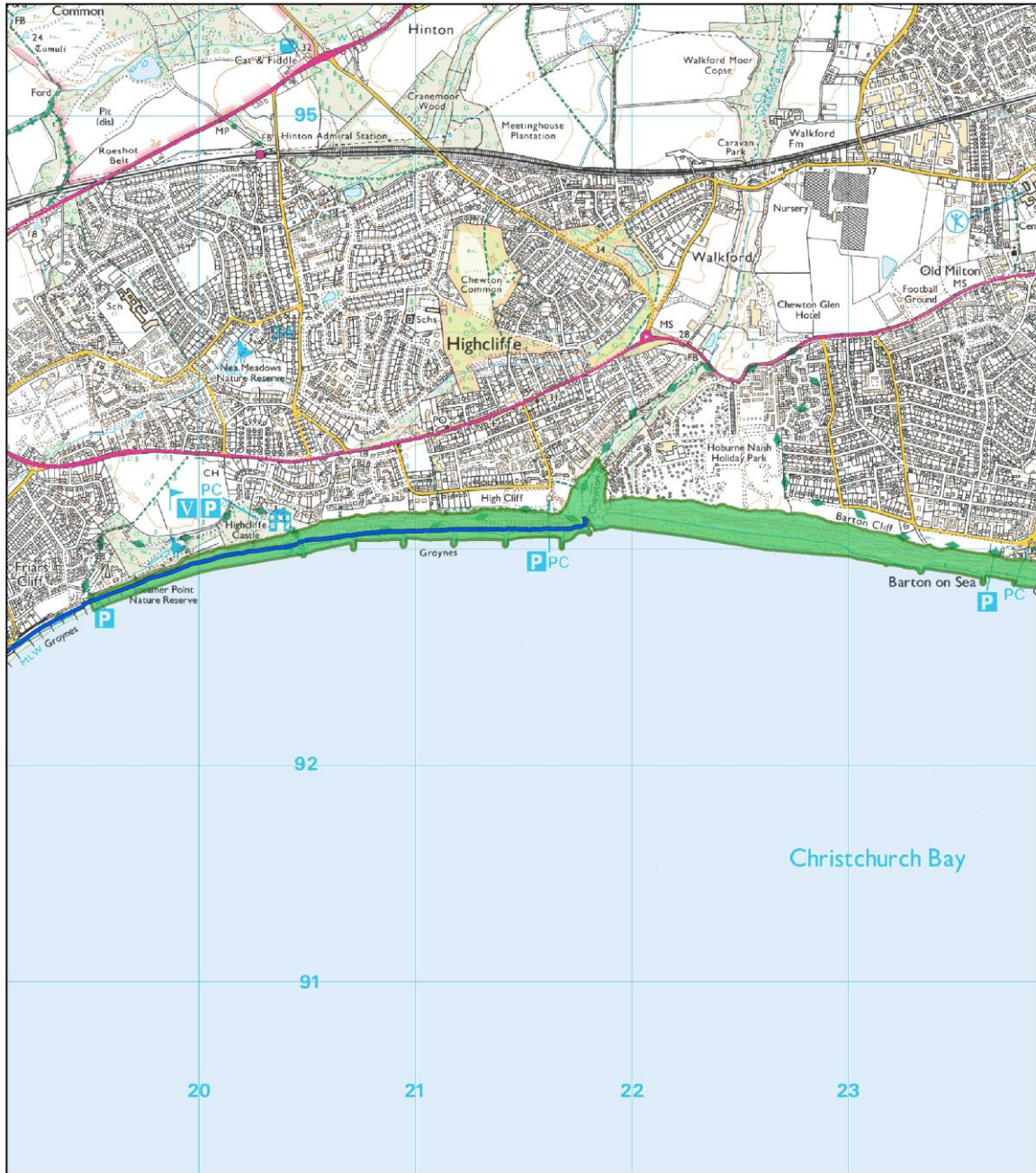
⁵ The reference in (a) above to Natural England’s functions includes its balanced general purposes under the NERC Act 2006, any specific statutory duties it may have to deliver specific improvements to public access, and the access-related policies and priorities it has agreed with Defra.

ANNEX E



Coastal Access - Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe

Extent of Highcliffe to Milford Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)



England Coast Path
 Proposed route of the trail

Highcliffe to Milford Cliffs SSSI (full extent of site east of Highcliffe not shown)

N

0 250 500 1,000

Metres

© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
 All rights reserved.
 Natural England Licence No. 100022021