



Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal

Coastal Access Programme

This document records the conclusions of Natural England’s appraisal of any potential for environmental impacts from our proposals to establish the England Coast Path in the light of the requirements of the legislation affecting Natura 2000 sites, SSSIs, NNRs, protected species and Marine Conservation Zones.

East Head to Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex Stretch

27th September 2017

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This appraisal should be read alongside Natural England’s related Coastal Access Report in which the access proposal is fully described and explained

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-from-east-head-to-shoreham-comment-on-proposals>

1. Our approach

Natural England's approach to protection of sensitive features under the Coastal Access Programme is set out in section 4.9 Coastal Access: Natural England's Approved Scheme 2013¹. We call our internal processes to support this approach 'Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal' or ASFA.

Our final published proposal for a stretch of England Coast Path is preceded by detailed local consideration of options for route alignment, the extent of the coastal margin and any requirement for restrictions, exclusions or seasonal alternative routes. The proposals are thoroughly considered before being finalised and initial ideas may be modified or rejected during the iterative design process, drawing on the range of relevant expertise available within Natural England.

Evidence is also gathered as appropriate from a range of other sources which can include information and data held locally by external partners or from the experience of local land owners and occupiers. The approach includes looking at any current visitor management practices, either informal or formal. It also involves discussing our emerging conclusions as appropriate with key local interests such as land owners or occupiers, conservation organisations or the local access authority. In these ways, any nature conservation concerns are discussed early and constructive solutions identified as necessary.

The conclusions of our assessment are certified by both the member of staff responsible for developing the access proposal and the person responsible for considering any environmental impacts. This ensures appropriate separation of duties within Natural England.

2. Scope

In this part of the document we define the geographic extent for the appraisal and the features that are included. Note that this appraisal is concerned with ecological, geological and geomorphological features; any other possible sensitivities, including landscape and historic features, are discussed in our coastal access report.

2.1 Geographic extent

This stretch of England Coast Path is located in West Sussex between West Wittering and Shoreham by Sea and is 69km in length. The landscape is generally flat coastal plain with the South Downs National Park to the north. The coastline is predominantly shingle beach, with estuarine environments at Pagham Harbour and at Medmerry. There are minor sand dune systems at West Wittering and at Climping Beach, just west of Littlehampton Harbour. There are two main river systems along the stretch; firstly the River Arun and the port of Littlehampton. Secondly, the River Adur, with the port of Shoreham by Sea, located at the easternmost section of this stretch. The majority of the sensitive sites and open coastline is to the west of Littlehampton. In summary, there are several sensitive sites with overlapping designations, which affect several chapters within the report. The Coastal Access report is divided into 6 chapters, with each chapter providing more detail for each of the designated sensitive sites, as shown in table 2.2 below.

2.2 Designated sites

	1. East Head to Bracklesham	2. Bracklesham Bay to Pagham Harbour Estate	3. Aldwick Bay to Elmer	4. Poole Place to Littlehampton Harbour	5. Littlehampton to Ferring	6. Goring by Sea to Shoreham Harbour
Bracklesham Bay SSSI	X	X				
Selsey East Beach SSSI		X				
Pagham Harbour Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, MCZ		X				
Bognor Reef SSSI			X			
Felpham SSSI			X			
Climping Beach SSSI				X		
Adur Estuary SSSI						X
Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve (LNR)		X				
West Beach LNR				X		
Shoreham Beach LNR						X
Solent to Dorset Coast	X	X	X			

pSPA						
Medmerry. As a compensatory site, this site should be treated as a European Site		X				

2.3 Designated features

Features – of the designated sites listed in 2.2	Bracklesham Bay SSSI	Selsey East Beach SSSI	Pagham Harbour SPA	Pagham Harbour Ramsar	Pagham Harbour SSSI	Pagham Harbour MCZ	Pagham Harbour LNR	Bognor Reef SSSI	Felpham SSSI	Climping Beach SSSI	West Beach LNR	Adur Estuary SSSI	Shoreham Beach LNR	Solent & Dorset Coast pSPA
Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> (non-breeding)	X				X		X							
Brent goose (dark-bellied) <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> (non-breeding)	X		X	X	X		X							
Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> (non-breeding)	X			X	X		X							
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> (non-breeding)	X		X		X		X							
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> (non-breeding)					X		X							
Ringed Plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> (non-breeding)					X		X					X		
Sanderling, <i>Calidris alba</i> (non-breeding)										X	X			
Lowland damp grasslands (breeding birds)	X				X		X							
Sand-dunes and saltmarshes (breeding birds)					X		X							
Coastal vegetated shingle(SD1-3)					X						X		X	

Features – of the designated sites listed in 2.2	Bracklesham Bay SSSI	Selsey East Beach SSSI	Pagham Harbour SPA	Pagham Harbour Ramsar	Pagham Harbour SSSI	Pagham Harbour MCZ	Pagham Harbour LNR	Bognor Reef SSSI	Felpham SSSI	Climping Beach SSSI	West Beach LNR	Adur Estuary SSSI	Shoreham Beach LNR	Solent & Dorset Coast pSPA
Little Tern, <i>Sterna albifrons</i> (breeding)			X		X		X							X
Common tern, <i>Sterna hirundo</i> (Breeding)			X											X
Sandwich tern, <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>														X
SD7 Semi-fixed dune communities										X	X			
SD8 Fixed dune communities										X	X			
SD1 - Curled dock (<i>Rumex crispus</i>) - Yellow-horned poppy (<i>Glaucium flavum</i>) shingle community	X				X			X		X				
Sand dune; strandline, embryo and mobile dunes(SD1-6)										X	X			
Population of Schedule 8 plant - Childing Pink (<i>Petrorhagia nanteuilii</i>)					X			X						
Population of schedule 5 Starlet sea anemone (<i>Nematostella vectensis</i>)					X									
Population of schedule 5 Defolin's Lagoon Snail (<i>Caecum armoricum</i>)						X								
Population of schedule 5 Lagoon sand shrimp (<i>Gammarus insensibilis</i>)						X								
Seagrass beds						X								
Saline coastal lagoons					X									
SM14 - saltmarsh (<i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>)					X							X		
SM6 - Saltmarsh (<i>Spartina Anglica</i>)					X									

Features – of the designated sites listed in 2.2	Bracklesham Bay SSSI	Selsey East Beach SSSI	Pagham Harbour SPA	Pagham Harbour Ramsar	Pagham Harbour SSSI	Pagham Harbour MCZ	Pagham Harbour LNR	Bognor Reef SSSI	Felpham SSSI	Climping Beach SSSI	West Beach LNR	Adur Estuary SSSI	Shoreham Beach LNR	Solent & Dorset Coast pSPA
SM13c - <i>Puccinellia maritima</i> saltmarsh, <i>Limonium vulgare</i> - <i>Armeria maritima</i> sub-community					X							X		
Sheltered muddy shores (including estuarine muds)												X		
Lowland neutral grassland(MG5)	X													
Invertebrate assemblage					X									
Geologic: Mesozoic Palaeogene Quaternary Tertiary	X	X												
Pleistocene Vertebrata		X												
W10 - <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> woodland					X									
W12 - <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland					X									
EC - Tertiary Palaeobotany	x				X			X	X					
EC – Palaeoentomology								X						
EC – Aves								X						
IA - Coastal Geomorphology					X									

2.4 Medmerry

Medmerry is compensatory habitat, provided under the Habitats Regulations, for losses of SAC and SPA intertidal habitat in the Solent due to coastal squeeze. Compensatory habitat is given the same protection as European sites (SPAs and SACs) by paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It does not have any designated features yet, particularly no individual bird species, as the habitat has yet to develop. However, it has been designed to create saltmarsh and mudflat habitat to replace the losses in the Solent, and is being managed to support the assemblage of wintering and breeding birds.

3. Baseline conditions and environmental sensitivities

In this part of the document we identify any of the features mentioned above that are potentially sensitive to changes in access, and rule out from further consideration those that are not. Where applicable we have some features treated together as 'feature groups'.

3.1 Non-breeding waders

Composition of features group
<p>For the purposes of this appraisal, the following designated features have been grouped:</p> <p>Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i></p> <p>Ruff, <i>Philomachus pugnax</i></p> <p>Grey Plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i></p> <p>Ringed Plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i></p> <p>Sanderling, <i>Calidris alba</i></p>
Current conservation status and use of site by features
<p>Along this stretch of coast, these are the sensitive sites that are used by the birds in this feature group:</p> <p>Bracklesham Bay SSSI</p> <p>Medmerry</p> <p>Pagham Harbour SPA, Ramsar, SSSI</p> <p>Climping Beach SSSI</p> <p>The RSPB Management Plan for Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve 2013-2018 provides information over a 5 year period between 2008-12. This can be used for details and trends of population size and average numbers for particular bird species.</p> <p>Species: Black-tailed Godwit</p> <p>Habitat: Wintering/passage birds</p> <p>Popn. Size: (5yr average, 2008/09 -2012/13): 660</p> <p>Status comments: Red/ SPA/Ramsar</p> <p>Comments: The black-tailed godwit prefers wet grasslands and winters on coastal estuaries, marshes and inland shallow waters. It forms large flocks when feeding, probing the mud with its bill for invertebrate-prey. After recent increases, less than 100 used the reserve in winter 2011-12 due to severe weather</p> <p>Species: Ruff</p> <p>Habitat: Wintering/passage birds</p> <p>Popn. Size: 1</p> <p>Status: Red/SPA</p> <p>Comments: The ruff is a large sandpiper which feeds in shallow water around lakes and wetland areas near</p>

the coast. In the 1970s, this species used Pagham Harbour in large numbers, with a maximum of 540 in December 1978 and they were included in the SPA designation. Since then, numbers have significantly declined.

Species: Grey Plover

Habitat: Shingle spits & islands

Popn. Size: 873

Status: Amber

Comments: The grey plover is found on the coast, preferring sandy and muddy estuaries. It is a winter migrant, although a small number of birds stay during summer. It forages for invertebrates and crustaceans. Nationally important numbers in winter at Pagham Harbour.

Species: Ringed Plover

Habitat: Shingle spits & islands

Popn. Size: 11.8 pairs

Status: Amber/SSSI

Comments: The Ringed Plover forages for food on beaches, tidal flats and fields. They forage for insects, crustaceans and small marine worms. Relatively stable but productivity often low.

Species: Sanderling

Habitat: sandy beaches, sand flats and mud flats

Popn. Size: No details provided for Pagham Harbour

Status: No details provided

Comments: The Sanderling is a passage migrant and winter visitor, typically associated with sandy beaches, mudflats and coastal pools. They are characteristic of sandy beaches, running back and forth with the ebb and flow of the tide. They eat small marine worms, crustaceans and molluscs.

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), which monitors non-breeding waterbirds in the UK, provides detail on bird counts taken at low tide at Pagham Harbour. This shows that Grey Plover are the most common bird which are generally found generally scattered adjacent to the estuarine channels within Pagham Harbour. The other non-breeding wader species are not shown in the Wetland Bird Survey.

The table below shows the numbers of Pagham Harbour WeBs high tide data for non-breeding waders (Frost *et al*, 2016).

Species	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Black Tailed Godwit	833	806	137	562	1000	277	291
Ruff	1	3	1	1	1	0	0
Grey Plover	1329	1215	528	919	926	649	1058
Ringed Plover	187	80	93	213	196	52	75

Sanderling	12	4	2	3	3	1	0
Sensitivities to changes in access							
<p>Changes in visitor behaviour in sensitive areas can potentially cause increased disturbance to feeding and/or roosting wintering or passage water birds using the saltmarsh, mudflats and fields adjoining the coast. Disturbance events (where the presence of human activity elicits a behavioural response from birds) can increase the energetic requirements of these species by reduced feeding rates or by birds taking flight. These responses do not necessarily mean that the birds are adversely impacted in terms of increased likelihood of mortality or reduced fitness. However, the potential for adverse impacts cannot be ruled out at this stage of the appraisal.</p> <p>Conclusion: Due to sensitivities to changes in access this feature group ruled in for further consideration in this appraisal.</p>							

3.2 Non Breeding Waterfowl: Dark Bellied Goose

Current conservation status and use of site by features

Along this stretch of coast, these are the key sensitive sites that are used by the birds in this feature group:

Bracklesham Bay SSSI

Medmerry

Pagham Harbour SPA, Ramsar, SSSI

The RSPB Management Plan for Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve 2013-2018 provides details and trends on population size and average for particular bird species over a 5 year period between 2008-12.

Species: Dark-bellied Brent Goose, *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Habitat: Wintering/passage birds

Popn. Size (5yr average, 2008/09 -2012/13): 2553

Status: Amber/SPA/Ramsar

Comments: Stable

The BTO WeBS online reports for low tide counts at Pagham Harbour, shows that high concentrations of Dark Bellied Goose are found in the north east part of the SPA. This is in a line between Sidlesham and Pagham Village in 2014-15, which extends northwards onto Pagham Rife for 2013 -14.

The table below shows WeBs high tide data for Dark bellied Brent Geese (Frost *et al*, 2016)

Species	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Dark bellied goose	3015	2453	2500	2351	2164	2100	3701

Sensitivities to changes in access

Dark-bellied Brent geese are small migratory geese that spend the winter along the coasts of western Europe and breed in northern Siberia. They prefer natural and semi-natural habitats, ranging from intertidal mudflats to saltmarshes and in more recent decades they also frequent agricultural fields for foraging.

Dark-bellied Brent geese graze algae on the mudflats, especially *Enteromorpha* species and eelgrasses *Zostera* spp, at times when the habitat is exposed at low tide. They also use surrounding land for feeding and maintenance behaviours such as resting and preening. A range of inland habitats are used including arable crops, recreation grounds and permanent pasture.

Brent geese often come into contact with human activity and their responses can be variable. On occasions, they can apparently tolerate human presence and at other times they can appear to be more wary; stopping feeding, showing alertness and taking flight. Given this variability in behavioural responses to human activity, the starting point for this appraisal is that dark-bellied Brent geese may be sensitive to changes in access patterns during the time when they are present.

Therefore Dark-bellied Brent geese would be sensitive to changes in access that led to:

- More frequent interruptions to feeding both on the coast and on terrestrial / functionally-linked land. Sensitivity will depend on how close people are to feeding areas; how people (and their dogs) behave; sightlines and any features that act as a buffer between the path and feeding areas.

- More frequent displacement from places where birds congregate to roost at high tide. Brent geese usually prefer the outer seaward edge of saltmarshes to roost and so sensitivity is greater in these areas.
- Loss of feeding areas

Disturbance to dark-bellied Brent goose results in increased energy expenditure & reduced feeding rates.

Saltmarsh may act as a buffer between sea wall footpaths and exposed mud at low tides but in areas where saltmarsh is narrow or is not found, birds feeding on mud are more sensitive to terrestrial access as they are pushed ever closer to the sea wall by the rising tide.

Conclusion: Due to these sensitivities to changes in access Dark-bellied Brent geese are ruled in for further consideration.

3.3 Pintail

Current conservation status and use of the site

The pintail uses open wetlands and nests on the ground, often some distance from water. It feeds by dabbling for plant food and adds small invertebrates to its diet during the nesting season. It is highly gregarious when not breeding, forming large mixed flocks with other species of duck. It feeds by dabbling and upending in shallow water for plant food mainly in the evening or at night, and therefore spends much of the day resting. Its long neck enables it to take food items from the bottom of water bodies up to 30 cm (12 in) deep, which are beyond the reach of other dabbling ducks like the Mallard.

The winter diet is mainly plant material including seeds and rhizomes of aquatic plants, but the pintail sometimes feeds on roots, grain and other seeds in fields, though less frequently than other *Anas* ducks. During the nesting season, this bird eats mainly invertebrate animals, including aquatic insects, molluscs and crustaceans.

Along this stretch of coast, these are the key locations that are used by Pintail:

Bracklesham Bay SSSI

Medmerry

Pagham Harbour SPA, Ramsar, SSSI

The RSPB Management Plan for Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve 2013-2018 provides details and trends on population size and average for particular bird species over a 5 year period between 2008-12.

Species: Pintail, *Anas acuta*

Habitat: Wintering/ Passage birds

Popn. Size: 372

Status: Amber/SPA

Comments: Declining

With reference to the BTO WeBS online reports for low tide counts at Pagham Harbour, there are few Pintail recorded and these are scattered across the Harbour upon the mudflats and salt marsh habitats.

The table below shows WeBs high tide data for Pintail Dabbling Ducks (Frost *et al*, 2016).

Species	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Pintail	337	552	187	335	237	283	221

Sensitivities to changes in access

The dabbling duck species use a variety of habitats for feeding and roosting; including saltmarsh, open mudflats and freshwater wetlands.

Conclusion: Due to sensitivities to changes in access this feature group ruled in for further consideration in this appraisal.

3.4 Breeding birds – Little Tern and Common Tern

Little terns (*Sterna albifrons*) generally arrive at their nesting areas from late April to early May and numbers of adults and young peak around July/early August, with most leaving for their West African wintering grounds by mid-September. However, an extended breeding season can begin in early March onwards to May and there can be up to three broods so flightless young may still be present in August.

It is recognised that recreational disturbance is a factor in reducing breeding success. Populations are dynamic and will relocate to new sites. The favoured little tern nesting habitat is transient and subject to dynamic change storm events, whilst more stable sites may become lost to encroaching vegetation. Little tern are currently identified as a species of conservation priority. They are 'amber' listed in Birds of Conservation Concern (2015 update) protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and in the EC Birds Directive – listed in Annex 1 and as a migratory species - the highest level of legal protection in the UK.

Schedule 1 of the Act contains a list of birds for which all offences carry harsher penalties and for which the following extra protection applies. Under the legislation it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly disturb a Schedule 1 bird while it is building a nest or is in or near a nest containing eggs or young or intentionally or recklessly disturb dependent young while it is in use or being built during the breeding season.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) has been declining in recent years and are classified in the UK as an Amber List species under the Birds of Conservation Concern review. As part of a national review with the aim of giving protection to their whole life span, Common Tern foraging areas are proposed for protection through a number of Proposed Extensions to Special Protection Areas. Terns forage mainly off-shore and return to breeding colonies to feed adult partners or chicks, with common terns also using coastal or inland wetlands for foraging.

Current conservation status and use of site by features

Along this stretch of coast, these are the sensitive sites that are used by Little Tern, *Sterna albifrons*:

Pagham Harbour SPA, SSSI and LNR

Solent & Dorset Coast pSPA

Common Tern, *Sterna hirundo* is found at:

Pagham Harbour SPA

Solent & Dorset Coast pSPA

The RSPB Management Plan for Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve 2013-2018 provides details and trends on population size and average for particular bird species over a 5 year period between 2008-12.

Species: Little Tern, *Sterna albifrons*

Habitat: Shingle spits & islands

Popn. Size: 11 pairs

Status: Amber/SPA

Comments: Recently recolonised; although it is a small colony, productivity can be high (2011: 6prs produced 6-10 fledged young)

The table below shows WeBs high tide data for Little Tern (Frost *et al*, 2016).

Species	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Little Tern	17	4	29	24	24	17	47

The JNCC for Little Tern states that 'Breeding occurs at scattered colonies around much of the coast of Britain and Ireland, from the north of Scotland to the south coast of England. All British and Irish Little Terns nest on the coast, utilising sand and shingle beaches and spits, as well as tiny islets of sand or rock close inshore. The greater part of the population occurs in south and east England from Hampshire to Norfolk'. Under Little Terns classification criteria, the JNCC refers to 'The colony breeding at Pagham Harbour has a long history of occupation, occurs in natural habitat and forms part of the core range of Little Terns on the south coast of England. It has suffered recent declines owing to disturbance, high spring tides and possible predation.'

Sensitivities to changes in access

Breeding Little Tern colonies are potentially sensitive to the presence of walkers and dogs. This will depend on the amount of spatial separation between the colony and people, along with the type of access management measures present.

Direct effects are possible via accidental trampling of nests and eggs. Indirect effects can occur where adult birds are disturbed off eggs or away from chicks, leaving them more vulnerable to predation or chilling.

Little Terns forage throughout the harbour and the open coast, returning to breeding colonies to feed adult partners or chicks. Connectivity between breeding areas and foraging areas is also potentially sensitive in that the presence of walkers with dogs in certain locations may disrupt or change normal flight routes.

Little Terns are therefore very susceptible to disturbance because their nesting season largely coincides with the summer holiday period and their nesting habitat is very popular for seaside recreation. This is particularly true at Pagham Harbour, where the shingle spits are often heavily used by the public. Field studies have shown that levels of disturbance have a major impact on the species' breeding density at coastal sites (Liley & Sutherland 2007). The current high level of use by walkers and their dogs is probably a major reason for the erratic occurrence and low numbers of Little Tern attempting to nest.

All breeding birds of bare or sparsely vegetated sand, shingle or shell banks would be sensitive to changes in access that led to:

- new areas of this habitat becoming available to the public for the first time;
- an increase in access to this habitat during their nesting season

These would result in potential trampling of eggs; disturbance by dogs; nest desertion; and increased predation of eggs and young.

- Loss or degradation of the habitat;
- Connectivity between breeding areas and off-shore foraging areas is also potentially sensitive in that the presence of walkers and dogs in certain locations may disrupt or change normal flight routes.

There is an existing WSCC LNR bylaw to protect Little Terns habitat on the mobile Church Norton shingle spit at Pagham Harbour. The shingle beach has a wire fence excluding the area and RSPB temporary closed information signs.

Conclusion: Due to sensitivities to changes in access this feature group ruled in for further consideration in this appraisal.

3.5 Vegetated shingle

Vegetated Shingle

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

SD1-3 Coastal vegetated shingle

Population of Schedule 8 plant - *Petrorhagia nanteuilii*, Childing Pink

Current conservation status and use of site by features

Vegetated shingle is found at the following sites:

Bracklesham Bay SSSI

Pagham Harbour SSSI

Bognor Reef SSSI

Climping Beach SSSI

Shoreham Beach LNR

Sensitivities to changes in access

Potential issues relate to trampling. Some shingle areas are subject to protection due to their geomorphology or specialised plant communities, both of which are vulnerable to trampling.

Childing Pink is found at Church Norton Spit, with small populations also on Pagham Harbour Spit and Tern Island.

Conclusion: Due to sensitivities to changes in access this feature group ruled in for further consideration in this appraisal.

3.6 Saltmarsh

Saltmarsh
SM6 - <i>Spartina Anglica</i> Saltmarsh SM13c - <i>Puccinellia maritima</i> saltmarsh, <i>Limonium vulgare</i> - <i>Armeria maritima</i> sub-community SM14 - <i>Atriplex portulacoides</i> saltmarsh
Current conservation status and use of site by features
Salt marsh is found at the following sites: Pagham Harbour SPA, SSSI Medmerry Adur Estuary SSSI
Sensitivities to changes in access
<p>Saltmarsh vegetation is vulnerable to trampling. Increased usage by members of the public is likely to exacerbate erosional processes as the footfall may damage the plants that knit the sediment together, leading to increased erosion, or by physically eroding the sediment itself, such as collapsing edges under foot.</p> <p>The salt marsh is located within the automatic seaward coastal margin at Pagham Harbour and Medmerry. Adur Estuary is not within the coastal margin and is inaccessible from the trail.</p> <p>Conclusion: Due to ecological sensitivities to changes in access saltmarsh is ruled in for further consideration in this appraisal.</p>

3.7 Saline coastal lagoons

Saline Coastal Lagoons
Saline coastal lagoons
Current conservation status and use of site by features
Pagham Harbour SPA, SSSI
Sensitivities to changes in access
<p>At Pagham Harbour, Pagham Lagoon is landward of the trail, so it is not within the coastal margin. Pagham Spit Little Lagoon will be within the coastal margin, however the access path is currently managed by the RSPB and is fenced on either side with 'Special Protection Area No access' signs. The rapidly evolving and elongated eastern Pagham Spit has recently created a new lagoon seaward of Pagham Harbour estate, which is within the coastal margin. This shingle spit is rapidly evolving and the lagoon currently visible at low tide should be monitored.</p> <p>Conclusion: Due to ecological sensitivities to changes in access saline coastal lagoons is ruled in for further consideration in this appraisal.</p>

3.8 Sheltered muddy shores (including estuarine muds)

Sheltered muddy shores (including estuarine muds)
Sheltered muddy shores (including estuarine muds)
Current conservation status and use of site by features
Adur Estuary SSSI
Sensitivities to changes in access
Adur Estuary SSSI is not within the coastal margin and is inaccessible from the trail at Shoreham by Sea. Conclusion: This feature group is ruled out for further consideration in this appraisal, as it is not affected by coastal access.

3.9 Sand dunes

Sand dunes
SD7 Semi-fixed dune communities SD8 Fixed dune communities Sand dune; strandline, embryo and mobile dunes(SD1-6)
Current conservation status and use of site by features
Climping Beach SSSI West Beach LNR
Sensitivities to changes in access
<p>Sand dunes are naturally dynamic, making it difficult in some circumstances to maintain permanent routes through them for the medium to long term. Sand dunes are home for specialised plants and animals, some of which are confined to dunes. Potential concerns are most likely to arise in relation to trampling, nutrient enrichment, disturbance to birds or amphibians. At relatively low levels, recreational use can contribute to the dynamic processes of dunes, which may be desirable for conservation reasons. Above a threshold, trampling may destabilise existing dunes or prevent new dunes from forming, with associate loss of plant and animal life. Therefore a fine balance of controlled access to the sand dunes is ideal for management, with a controlled degree of disturbance required to keep the sand dunes mobile and to prevent them becoming smothered with marram grass.</p> <p>Concerns over trampling are best avoided through sensitive alignment of the trail and in conjunction with informal management techniques. Sand dunes will automatically be within the coastal margin by default, both seaward and landward of the trail.</p> <p>Conclusion: Due to ecological sensitivities to changes in access sand dunes are ruled in for further consideration in this appraisal.</p>

3.10 Coastal Geomorphology

Coastal Geomorphology
<p>Pleistocene Vertebrata EC - Tertiary Palaeobotany EC – Palaeoentomology IA - Coastal Geomorphology</p>
Current conservation status and use of site by features
<p>Bracklesham Bay SSSI Selsey East Beach SSSI Pagham Harbour SPA Bognor Reef SSSI Felpham SSSI</p>
Sensitivities to changes in access
<p>The geomorphological sites are seaward of the trail within the inter-tidal zone and will automatically qualify as spreading room. The potential concern is for public safety when out rock pooling, fossil hunting, or bait collection.</p> <p>Conclusion: This feature group is ruled out for further consideration in this appraisal, as they are located in inter-tidal areas where the public already has access at low tide.</p>

3.11 Woodland

Woodland
<p>W10 - <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> woodland W12 - <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland</p>
Current conservation status and use of site by features
<p>Pagham Harbour SSSI</p>
Sensitivities to changes in access
<p>At Pagham Harbour, oak woodland is adjacent to the edge of the beach at Church Norton, just seaward of the trail and is within the seaward coastal margin. Public safety may be a concern from falling trees or</p>

branches.

Conclusion: Due to potential ecological sensitivities to changes in access, oak woodland is ruled in for further consideration in this appraisal.

3.12 Marine Fauna

Marine Fauna
Population of <i>Caecum armoricum</i> , Defolin's Lagoon Snail - schedule 5 and MCZ Population of <i>Gammarus insensibilis</i> , Lagoon sand shrimp – schedule 5 and MCZ Population of Seagrass Beds – MCZ Population of <i>Nematostella vectensis</i> , Starlet sea anemone - schedule 5 and SSSI
Current conservation status and use of site by features
Pagham Harbour SPA, Ramsar, SSSI, MCZ
Sensitivities to changes in access
The Defolin's lagoon snail lives in shingle and has been found on Church Norton Spit, but the evidence base suggests that there is no interaction of concern through walking on the shingle. The Lagoon sand shrimp is found in Ferry Pool which is landward of the trail. Seagrass in the intertidal mudflats will be within the coastal margin, however soft mud is considered to be difficult to access, so is considered unlikely to be affected by coastal access. Starlet sea anemone has been found in Pagham Lagoon, which is landward of the trail. Conclusion: This feature group is ruled out for further consideration in this appraisal, as the interest features are considered to be not affected by coastal access.

4. Potential for interaction

In this part of the document we identify places where sensitive features are present *and* whether there could, or will not, be an interaction with proposed changes in access.

4.1 Bracklesham Bay SSSI

Outline of changes in access
<p>The trail uses an existing public footpath adjacent to the coast, then for ease of access, it uses roads through suburban areas parallel to the coast rather than a lengthy stretch of shingle beach at East Wittering and Bracklesham. The shingle beach is within the coastal margin. There is new coastal access along the undeveloped coastline between Bracklesham and Medmerry, along the crest of the shingle beach. Also there is new coastal access along the beach adjacent to West Sands Caravan Park. The shingle beach already has informal access and becomes particularly busy during summer months. There are already a combination of permissive and public footpaths around Medmerry, recently created by the Environment Agency and now managed by the RSPB.</p>
Potential for interaction (or lack of it)
<p>Between West Wittering and Bracklesham, the potential for interaction with sensitive features is considered low, as the trail is mostly adjacent to or within the urban area. At Medmerry following extensive consultation by the Environment Agency, the trail is following existing, recently created access, as detailed in section 4.2 below. Between Medmerry and Selsey, the trail follows the coastline along the beach crest and then a public footpath.</p> <p>Landward spreading room – no significant areas proposed.</p> <p>Seaward spreading room – there are no attractors within the coastal margin. At Medmerry, saltmarsh and mudflats are proposed for a Section 25A Restriction. Grazing fields are proposed for a section 26 wildlife Restriction. Arable fields are automatically excluded.</p> <p>Potential for interaction with relevant ecological sensitivities listed as in scope in section 3. See 5.1</p>

4.2 Medmerry

Outline of changes in access
<p>The Medmerry scheme is habitat creation in compensation for losses in the Solent as a result of the Shoreline Management Plan. The habitat creation is salt marsh and inter-tidal mudflats. The Environment Agency Habitat Regulations Assessment gives details of the habitats and species for which it provides compensation. Public access was established at the outset as part of the scheme. The coast path at Medmerry follows existing access, recently negotiated by the Environment Agency following extensive consultation to avoid sensitive wildlife areas. Much of the trail is upon the raised perimeter bank, with widespread views across the reserve and beyond. Other sections are on tracks through low lying farmland,</p>

away from the perimeter bank, to avoid wildlife disturbance in sensitive areas.
Potential for interaction (or lack of it)
<p>There is potential for interaction between users of the trail and sensitive features located to both the seaward and landward side of the trail, particularly for bird disturbance when walking along the raised perimeter bank, where walkers upon the skyline have the potential to disturb nesting or feeding birds. There is already a wide variety of both farmland and wetland bird species at Medmerry, and the wetland area is rapidly evolving. The farmland areas both within Medmerry and landward of the trail are enclosed with post and wire fencing with signs saying that access is not permitted, as the area is being managed by the RSPB to attract a variety of birds using a varied combination of habitats.</p> <p>To enjoy the widespread views, the trail will follow the perimeter bank on existing permissive and public footpaths. In a couple of places it is inland from the bank on access tracks through low lying farmland to avoid disturbance to sensitive wildlife features. The two sections of bank which do not have public access has access gates, post and wire fencing and signs which clearly say no access and why. The route inland from the bank is already clearly sign posted.</p> <p>As the seaward coastal margin will include Medmerry, including evolving marshland and mudflats, grazing and arable fields, there is the potential for visitors to climb over gates and fences and access these areas, with potential disturbance to wildlife. However there is existing management of the nature reserve already in place and access restrictions are proposed for the coastal margin as detailed in section 5.1.6, so once the trail is in place, access arrangements should remain as it is now.</p>

4.3 Selsey East Beach SSSI

Outline of changes in access
There is no change in access adjacent to the SSSI, as the trail is along the existing sea wall adjacent to Selsey, where there is already good access. An existing interpretative panel explains the geological interest features.
Potential for interaction (or lack of it)
There is low potential for interaction, as the interest features of the SSSI are geological and are upon the beach at low tide. Although the interest features are located within the coastal margin, access will remain unchanged as the beach already has access, so it is considered to be no change for the interest features here.

4.4

4.5 Pagham Harbour Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, MCZ, LNR

Outline of changes in access
<p>There is no change in access adjacent to Pagham Harbour, as the trail uses the existing well used permissive and public footpaths on the beach and raised bank (or bund) around the perimeter of the reserve. There is an optional alternative route, inland along a public footpath between East Beach and Church Norton, for when the trail following the existing public footpath on the beach at the south-western entrance to Pagham Harbour becomes flooded at extreme high tides. Pagham Harbour will however all be within the automatic seaward coastal margin.</p>
Potential for interaction (or lack of it)
<p>There is potential for interaction between users of the trail and sensitive features located to both the seaward and landward side of the trail route, particularly within the automatic seaward coastal margin. Though the trail follows existing public and permissive footpaths along perimeter banks and the beach, at Halsey's Farm, Sidlesham, the trail is inland from the coast. There is therefore automatic seaward coastal margin on grazing fields which are used for feeding by Brent Geese. There is an existing byelaw, with fencing and information signs, to prevent access to areas of shingle beach used by breeding Little Terns on the Church Norton shingle spit.</p>

4.6 Bognor Reef SSSI

Outline of changes in access
<p>There is no formal coastal access between Pagham Harbour Estate and Bognor Regis, either through the Aldwick private estates or along the beach. The trail proposal is to use an existing informal path upon the back of the vegetated shingle beach, which is part of the Bognor Reef SSSI. The preferred trail route is along the landward side of the shingle beach along a clear, existing informal path adjacent to properties. The shingle beach habitat is therefore on the seaward side and it is not split by the trail. All the beach will automatically become part of the seaward coastal margin, however it is already used by the public. Away from this existing informal path along the landward edge, the beach is unconsolidated shingle, so it is more difficult to walk on and there is no clear line for the trail through the vegetated shingle along this stretch of coast. The section of open coastline here is just over a mile in length.</p>
Potential for interaction (or lack of it)
<p>The beach already has good access, with sections of boardwalk and numerous informal paths, there is low potential for increased interaction between users of the trail and the vegetated shingle features of Bognor Reef SSSI.</p> <p>The waymarked National Trail should encourage users of the trail to keep to the trail route, rather than wandering around the shingle beach, trying to find a way through the clumps of vegetation on</p>

unconsolidated shingle. Alternatively, walkers will continue to choose to use the firm beach at low tide, as it provides easier walking.

4.6 Felpham SSSI

Outline of changes in access

The trail is located upon the seafront promenade at Felpham, where there already is good public access to the beach and inter-tidal area, which is within the coastal margin. Therefore there is no change in access adjacent to the SSSI.

Potential for interaction (or lack of it)

There is low potential for interaction, as the interest features of the SSSI are geological and are upon the beach within the inter-tidal area. Although the interest features are located within the seaward coastal margin, access will remain unchanged as the beach already has access, so it is considered to be no change for the interest features here.

4.7 Climping Beach SSSI, West Beach LNR

Outline of changes in access

At the western end of the SSSI there is an existing public footpath upon the landward edge of the beach, which will be used as part of the trail and where we expect a moderate increase in use. Where this path turns inland close to The Mill, adjacent to the golf course, the proposed route for the trail is to continue eastwards along the coast using an existing, informal path to the western harbour wall at Littlehampton. This path is located between two interest features of the SSSI, with sand dunes on the landward side and vegetated shingle beach on the seaward side. The path itself is consolidated shingle, so is easy to walk on.

Potential for interaction (or lack of it)

The trail route is through the SSSI, which will all automatically be within the coastal margin. It is considered that majority of walkers will choose to stay on the existing easy access path, as the unconsolidated shingle beach is more difficult to walk on. Therefore we consider the potential for interaction here to be medium, as being a promoted route, more walkers will be expected to use it. The sand dunes currently has a wire fence in poor condition adjacent to the path at each end, with a section unfenced between them. It is considered that some access is beneficial, to keep the sand dunes mobile and to prevent them becoming completely covered by marram grass if no access was allowed.

Any detrimental effects due to coastal access will be closely monitored by the existing regular habitat condition monitoring for Climping Beach SSSI.

4.8 Adur Estuary SSSI

Outline of changes in access
There is no change in access, as the trail is only adjacent to the SSSI where it crosses the existing swing bridge over the River Adur at Shoreham by Sea, which is already very well used by the public. The interest features are upon the mud flats of the river Adur and the SSSI is only on the landward side of the footbridge. There is no opportunity for walkers to access the mudflats, as the EA has recently constructed a new sea wall defence here.
Potential for interaction (or lack of it)
Very little potential for interaction, as area is not within the coastal margin. Therefore this site can be ruled out of further consideration.

4.9 Shoreham Beach Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

Outline of changes in access
The proposed trail uses existing informal paths upon the shingle beach and the recently installed easy access boardwalk. Where there is no boardwalk, the trail uses the shingle beach using existing well used, informal paths. In the west, this is between Beach Road and the start of the boardwalk opposite Ferry Road. In the east, this is between the current eastern end of the boardwalk opposite Old Fort Road to the car park adjacent to The Old Fort, an 1850's defence at the Harbour entrance. The chosen route on the beach passes between vegetated shingle areas, along a route already well used by walkers.
Potential for interaction (or lack of it)
It is considered that the potential for interaction is low, as the trail uses sections of the shingle beach which walkers are currently using and where there is no vegetated shingle. The existing boardwalk provides easy access, so walkers tend to stay on the boardwalk rather than the unconsolidated shingle beach. There are existing interpretation panels explaining the interest features of the Local Nature Reserve.

5. Assessment of any possible adverse impacts and mitigation measures

In this part of the document we look in more detail at sections of coast where there could be an interaction between the access proposal and sensitive features. We discuss possible risks to sensitive features and explain how these have shaped the design of our proposals and/or led to the inclusion of any specific mitigation measures. As part of our considerations about possible risks to sensitive features, we need to understand how patterns and levels of public access locally might be affected by our proposals. An overview of our approach to assessing patterns and levels of public access is described in our Coastal Access Scheme (see Figure 16 on page 46) and we use this approach where there might be a need for intervention to manage access to a site.

There are several factors that can influence the pattern and level of use of a site by the public. Proximity and convenience to a place where people live, or stay whilst on holiday, is often the dominant factor, although it is not influenced by our proposals. Where new or significantly improved opportunities for access are created as a result of our proposals, it is an important consideration. Other factors we consider are availability of parking and other facilities for visitors, and features of the location that might be attractive to visitors, such as a view point or sandy beach.

In carrying out our assessment of current and possible changes in use of the site, we make use of available local sources of evidence, including the findings from previous visitor surveys or counts where these exist, as well as information from local tourism businesses. We seek advice from site managers and local experts with knowledge of access in the area. We also take account of the views of the landowner and local groups or people that know the site e.g. local wildfowling groups and other user groups. As part of developing our proposals for England Coast Path we undertake a detailed site survey including assessing existing physical features that are relevant to the assessment, such as the presence of paths or barriers to access.

Where there is a potential interaction between a sensitive feature and our access proposals, we make a more in-depth assessment of patterns and levels of access and how they might be affected by our proposals. The main way that our proposals can influence visits to a particular location is through improving the quality and range of access opportunities available for the public. We identify entry points to a site and consider how use of our proposed route for the England Coast Path and access within the associated Coastal Margin might be affected. We consider use by local people and visitors from further afield. The local evidence gathered informs the assessment and where possible, quantitative information is used e.g. the capacity of nearby parking. We also make use of information from studies of visitor behaviour at comparable locations elsewhere, for example concerning the profile of users and duration of visits. Advice from experts in managing public access is used in the process to complete the assessment of how we expect the pattern and level of access to be affected by our proposals. Our conclusions are fully explained and incorporated into the assessment of possible risk to sensitive features.

5.1 Bracklesham Bay SSSI including Medmerry

5.1.1 Environmental sensitivity

At the western end of this stretch of the England Coast Path, Bracklesham Bay is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The SSSI is a long stretch of open coast which includes areas of rough unimproved grazing pastures

which are important for the bird populations they support. The coastal habitats include vegetated shingle, salt marsh and associated reed beds. The long stretches of intertidal exposures are of high geological interest.

The SSSI is contained for much of its length along the shingle beach, except for at Medmerry, where it includes the original inland estuarine environment, before the development of the site as a flood mitigation scheme by the Environment Agency.

Medmerry is recently created compensatory habitat, provided under the Habitats Regulations, for losses of SAC and SPA intertidal habitat in the Solent due to coastal squeeze. Compensatory habitat is given the same protection as European sites (SPAs and SACs) by paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The RSPB who manage the area is collecting data on bird numbers. Medmerry covers a much greater area inland than the existing SSSI.

5.1.2 Current access provisions and use of site for recreation



The map above shows the extent of Bracklesham Bay SSSI, shaded in pale pink, and existing PROW. Note that this map does not show any recent changes to the public footpath network around Medmerry. Also due to the breach there is now no coastal access along the beach adjacent to Medmerry.

At Bracklesham Bay there is currently good access to the coast on existing public footpaths, permissive paths, roads and there are several car parks adjacent to the coast. This is a holiday destination and as an overview from west to east, the shingle beach is extensively used adjacent to the coastal seaside towns of West Wittering, East Wittering and Bracklesham. There is a caravan park at the eastern end of Bracklesham which has access to the beach. Between Bracklesham and Medmerry, numbers of visitors are likely to reduce the further away visitors are from accommodation, car parking and facilities. The new access

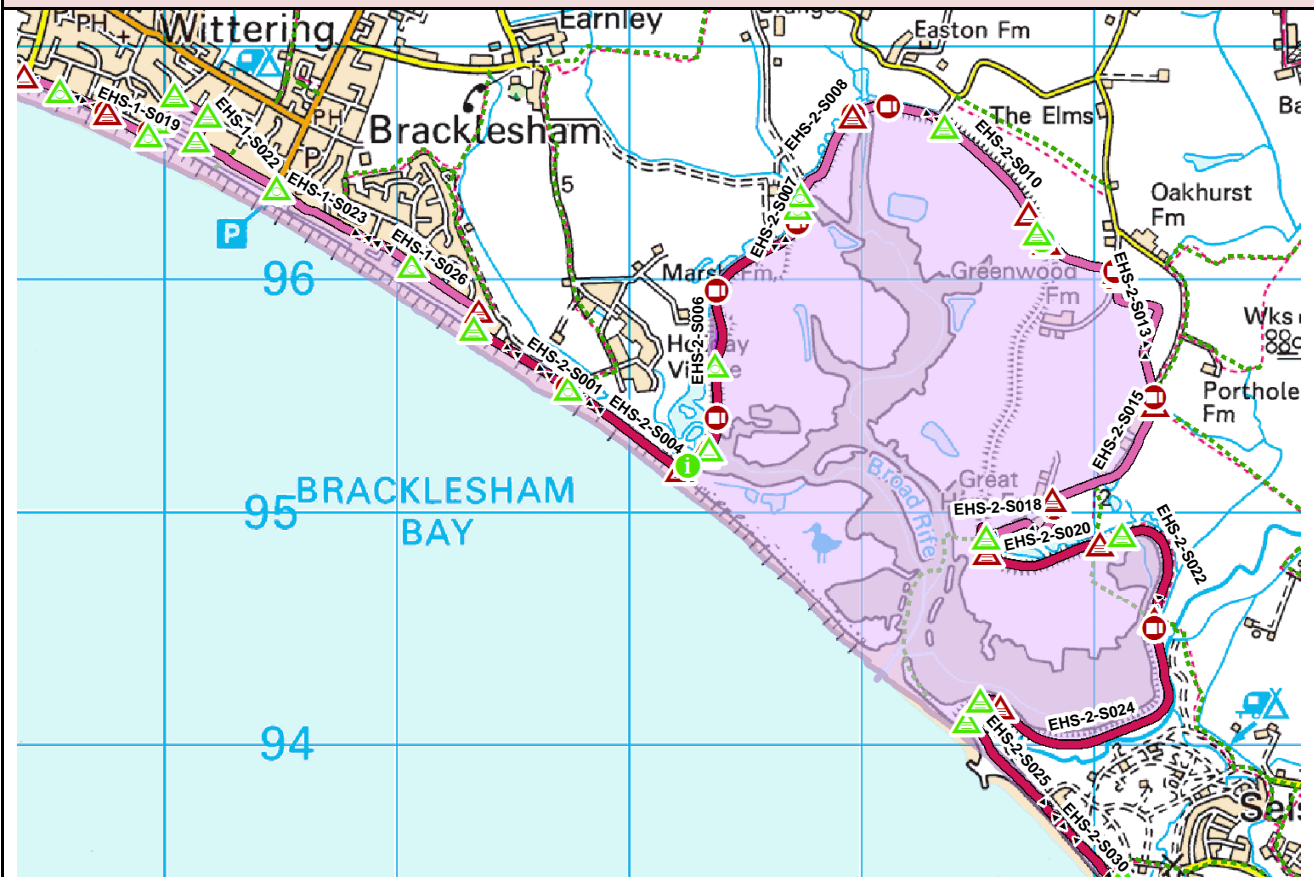
recently created around Medmerry is likely to become an increasingly attractive destination for visitors, as the RSPB managed nature reserve becomes more established for both walkers and bird watchers, with magnificent views from the raised perimeter banks. Two car parks have been recently provided as part of the scheme. Therefore following the development, what was once considered a remote area is now becoming increasingly popular with visitors. Just to the east of Medmerry, there is a large caravan park complex at West Sands Caravan Park adjacent to the beach, followed by a short section of open coastline towards Selsey.

This is a tourist, second home and retirement destination, so there are several car parks, cafes and caravan parks catering for holiday makers, particularly at West Wittering. The sandy beach is the main feature of interest for visitors, and at West Wittering there is an extensive grass car park with café, which can hold hundreds of cars. At East Wittering, there is a car park beside the beach and the popular 'Billys on the Beach' café, which can take approximately 75 cars. There are several alleyways leading to the beach from the roads adjacent to the coast, encouraging access.

New rights of way, permissive paths and viewing areas upon and adjacent to the perimeter bank have been recently established as part of the works by the Environment Agency. Two car parks have been recently provided and there is an information panel at the main Medmerry car park. Medmerry is likely to become increasingly attractive as it evolves as an estuarine environment, providing a similar habitat to nearby Pagham Harbour. A site map, bird watching and guided walks around Medmerry are available from the nearby Pagham Harbour RSPB Visitor Centre.

In summary, visitors come to this area primarily for the beach, so will tend to visit during the warmer months of the year and during school holidays, particularly during July and August. Weekends are busy with second home owners and visitors. At Medmerry, the RSPB promote the area with leaflets, guided walks and interpretation panels for the nature reserve. Two new car parks and four raised viewing areas have been provided, so that the area is becoming popular with bird watchers particularly at bird migration times in spring and autumn.

5.1.3 Access proposal



At the start of the stretch at West Wittering, the proposed line of the trail is along an existing PROW adjacent to the beach between West Wittering to East Wittering, it then uses roads parallel to the coast until joining the raised beach crest adjacent to property boundaries and a private caravan park at Bracklesham. The trail follows the crest of the shingle beach between Bracklesham and Medmerry, which is within the Bracklesham Bay SSSI.

At Medmerry there is no access along the beach due to the recent creation of the estuarine environment, so the trail follows the existing permissive path generally upon the raised perimeter bank or bund. There are a couple of existing wildlife refuge areas where the trail follows the promoted route inland. Natural England considered whether the trail could be located all the way around Medmerry upon the perimeter bank, so to enjoy the seaward views. Further to discussions with the RSPB and Environment Agency, this option whether to stay on the perimeter bank was discounted due to potential bird disturbance by walkers upon the skyline if they stayed on the bank. This is on the eastern side of Medmerry, where the existing path comes off the bank towards Greenwood Farm and is inland through farmland tracks and public footpaths around properties at Ham. It is also along a track parallel to and below the perimeter bank adjacent to West Sands Caravan Park.

To the east of Medmerry, the trail follows the wide shingle beach between the mean high tide line and seaward of West Sands Caravan Park, then joins a public footpath adjacent to the beach. Where the footpath has been eroded away and is upon the beach here, the trail is proposed to follow an existing informal path upon the low clifftop at Medmerry Cliff to the eastern end of the Bracklesham Bay SSSI and the start of the coastal defence at Selsey. This section of the trail will have roll back upon the clifftop into the adjacent grazing field. The existing footpath upon the beach can be used whenever the clifftop path is temporarily not available, if the field perimeter fence requires relocating following coastal erosion.

5.1.4 Predicted change in use of site for recreation

Bracklesham Bay is an already extremely popular coastline with tourists and at the western end towards Chichester Harbour there are three beach resort towns adjacent to the coast. The coast around Medmerry is likely to be most secluded, as it is further away from visitor facilities. However with the recent development of this area as a flood defence project by the Environment Agency and the creation of a new estuarine environment, which is managed by the RSPB as a wildlife nature reserve, visitors are already being encouraged to visit. Access routes have been provided adjacent to and upon much of the perimeter bank, including four viewing areas and two new car parks. The coastline to the east of Medmerry is also particularly popular at West Sands Caravan Park and Selsey.

The England Coast Path as a promoted route will encourage access around Medmerry and the undeveloped coastline between Bracklesham and Selsey, by joining up public footpaths and permissive paths. Following the promoted trail, visitors may decide to walk sections of the coast which they may not otherwise do, particularly where there are currently gaps in the PRoW network along this stretch of coast. Therefore as a promoted trail, the coast path will clarify where everyone can walk along the coast here, which is likely to lead to more visitors.

In summary, the trail will provide a clear coastal footpath link along Bracklesham Bay, particularly for the undeveloped coastline between the seaside towns of Bracklesham and Selsey and will encourage use of the new route around Medmerry.

5.1.5 Possible adverse impacts to sensitive features

At Medmerry, there has been extensive consultation by the Environment Agency for the suitable location for access routes and the likely impacts to wildlife have been minimised by choosing a route away from particularly sensitive areas off the perimeter bank. With the England Coast Path trail, there is automatic coastal margin seaward of the trail, however the inter-tidal mudflats are deemed unsuitable for public access and will be covered by a Section 25A exclusion, restricting access. There is also a Section 26 exclusion for wildlife which includes various grazing fields within the coastal margin, including the perimeter bank which is not being used for the trail, due to wildlife disturbance. Arable fields within the coastal margin will automatically become excepted land.

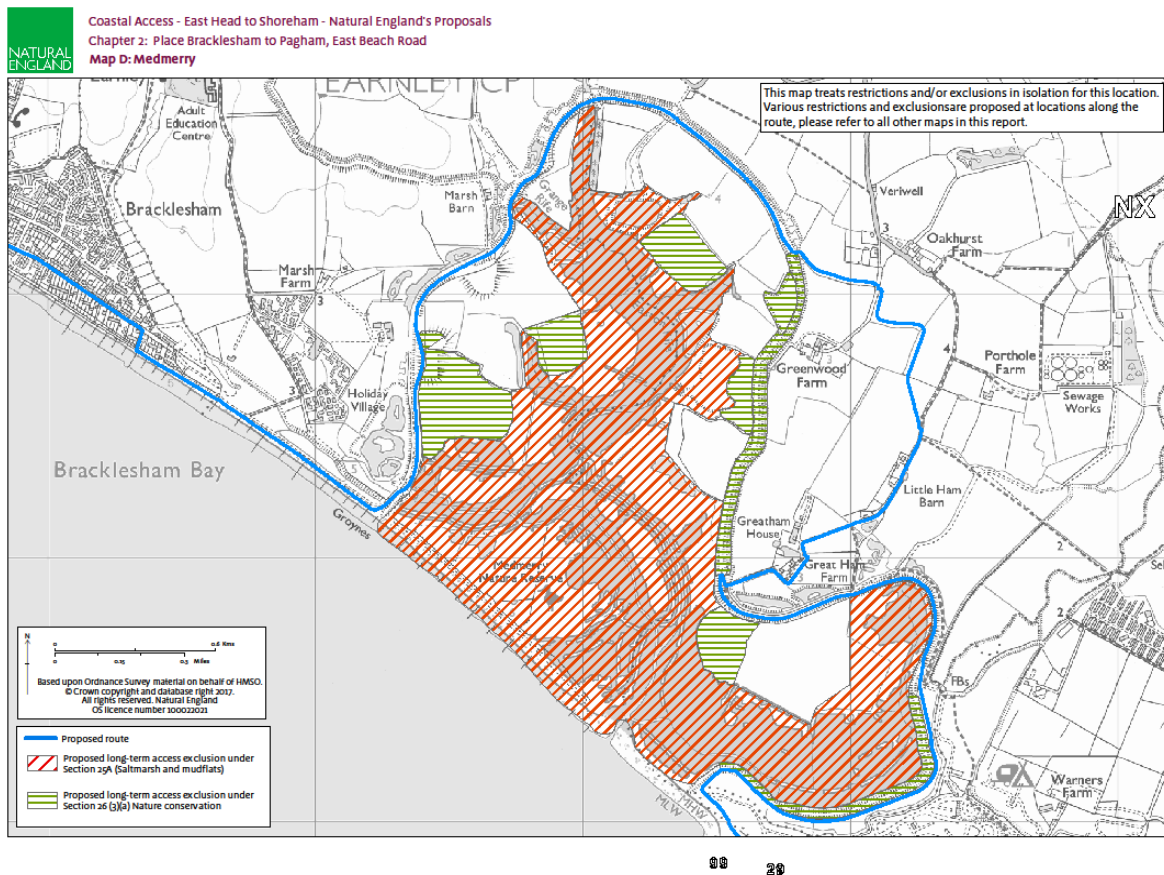
It is worth noting that while Section 25A exclusions are applied where the Coastal Margin is not suitable for access, rather than on nature conservation grounds, these exclusions are important in reducing the potential for adverse impacts on non-breeding waterbirds and other sensitive features in this section of the route. If in the future there is a proposal to remove or relax the Section 25A exclusions, then an appraisal of the effects of those changes on sensitive features would be essential.

This means that there is no coastal margin which is accessible at Medmerry and the trail is upon the existing public and permissive routes. Therefore no possible adverse impacts to the sensitive features are envisaged.

5.1.6 Any mitigation measures included in the access proposal to address possible impacts

The trail will be using the existing public footpaths and permissive routes around Medmerry. For the automatic coastal margin, the inter-tidal mudflats and developing saltmarsh are deemed unsuitable for public access and will be covered by a section 25A exclusion. For specific wildlife sensitive grazing fields, there is a section 26 wildlife exclusion, which includes sections of the perimeter bank which are not used by the trail. There are also areas of arable fields which are automatically excluded from the coastal margin.

In summary, at Medmerry there is no change to the existing access situation, as the trail follows existing access and all the coastal margin has either access exclusions or is automatically restricted land. Signs will be used to explain the access exclusions. Where the trail is off the bank, the existing route is well sign-posted and there is post and wire fencing with signs explaining why access is not permitted upon the bank



for wildlife reasons.

The above map shows an overview of the proposed access restrictions for Medmerry. The red hatched area is the section 25A exclusion for the inter-tidal mudflats, as they are deemed unsuitable for public access. The green hatched areas are the specific grassland areas for the section 26 wildlife restriction at Medmerry. The brown shaded areas are the arable fields which are automatically excluded for coastal access.

5.1.7 Conclusion

The England Coast Path proposals will complement and reinforce existing access management. This is because the trail is following existing access along this section of coast, either along a public footpath, permissive paths or existing informal access. At Medmerry, there are coastal access restrictions and automatic exclusions in place to prevent access to the coastal margin, as it is unsuitable for public access or to prevent wildlife disturbance. This means that access provision at Medmerry should stay as it is now, as recently provided by the Environment Agency in 2012.

5.2 Pagham Harbour Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, MCZ, LNR

5.2.1 Environmental sensitivity

Pagham Harbour has been designated due to its importance as a breeding site for Little Terns and also provides a habitat for overwintering Ruff. In addition there are Pintails and Dark-bellied Brent Geese that are important in terms of over wintering migratory species, plus to a lesser extent Black-tailed Godwits. This means that the site is important year round rather than on a seasonal basis.

The European wildlife designation recognises the international importance of the Harbour for its extensive saltmarsh and intertidal mudflats offering vital feeding grounds for a range of water birds, particularly over winter, along with its dynamic shingle areas offering perfect breeding sites for terns.

5.2.2 Current access provisions and use of site for recreation



The above map of Pagham Harbour shows the existing public footpaths and the shaded area shows the designations (Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, MCZ).

There is currently very good access on the existing PRoW and other existing walked routes. These are either located upon the foreshore in places, or are otherwise located upon the raised perimeter bank around the estuarine environment. The area is managed as an RSPB Nature Reserve.

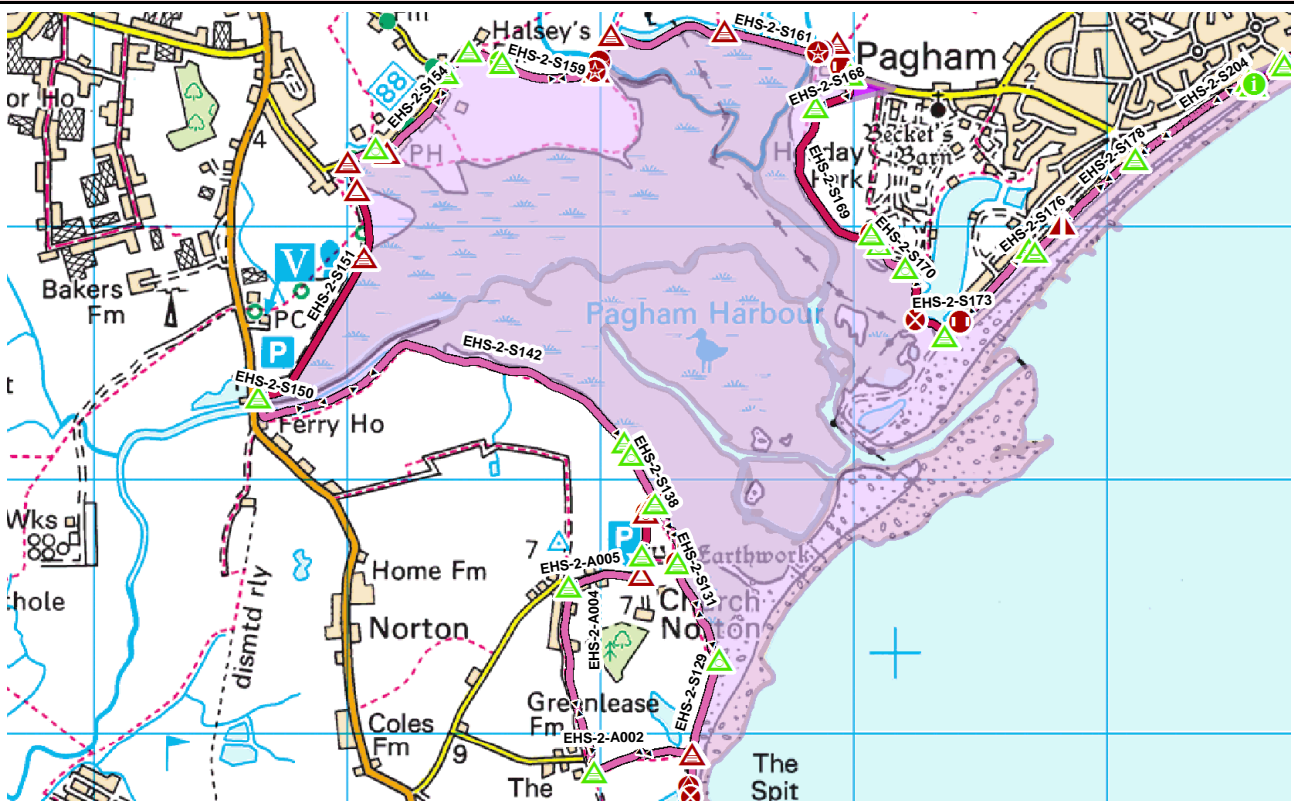
The RSPB Visitor Centre and Bourne Leisure holiday village complex at Church Farm, Pagham village are both visitor attractions. Therefore Pagham Harbour is already very popular with day visitors and bird watchers. Existing facilities include the RSPB visitor Centre at Pagham Harbour, with RSPB leaflets for the area showing access routes and guided walks, also various information panels interpreting the area (i.e. at Sidlesham Quay). Also the holiday village at Church Farm, Pagham village, promotes access to the area. Pagham Beach Holdings is a private estate with parking, café, tourist shops, sailing clubs and private roads, which provides good access to the popular beach and the eastern side of Pagham Harbour.

The RSPB website, posters and leaflets promote events by RSPB for walking and bird watching. Church Farm promotes accommodation and events for this area at the village complex for people on holiday. Car parks are at Church Norton, RSPB Visitor Centre, Pagham Village car parks and roadside parking at Sidlesham Quay. Walking, walking with dog, bird watching, and cycling are the main recreational pursuits. The beach is used for informal recreation, including sun bathing, paddling and swimming.

The Pagham Harbour Visitor Survey by Footprint Ecology in 2012 (Cruickshanks, k & Liley, D), states that 'Visitors undertook a relatively limited range of activities with dog walking, wildlife watching and walking as the three most popular. The highest proportion of visitors were dog walking (35%) as their main activity and a further 33% were walking and 22% were wildlife watching which together, account for 90% of the main activity responses. Wildlife watching was more popular in the winter surveys with 30% stating this as their main activity compared to 14% in the summer. Furthermore, dog walking was the main activity of 40% of interviewed visitors in the winter compared to 30% in the summer.'

The area is therefore very popular for walking and bird watching, particularly in summer months with tourism in the area. It is also busy with specialised interest groups for spring and autumn bird migration.

5.2.3 Access proposal



The above map shows the proposed route for the England Coast Path around Pagham Harbour including the automatic seaward coastal margin, which is shown with purple shading. The trail is upon existing public footpaths or permissive paths upon the beach or the perimeter bank around the inter-tidal area. An alternative trail route has been provided at Church Norton along an existing public footpath, for use when the trail route upon the beach is inaccessible at particular high tides. There is no coastal margin for the alternative route.

It is proposed that the route of the England Coast Path National Trail will follow existing PRoW and permissive paths around the Harbour, from East Beach at Selsey in the south west, to Harbour Road within the Pagham Beach Holdings private estate in the north east. This meets the criteria for the coast path, providing extensive seaward views and reduces the seaward coastal margin for this sensitive area. A Section 25A exclusion zone has been prepared for Pagham Harbour to prevent access onto the intertidal mudflats and salt marsh areas as they are deemed unsuitable for public access. This covers the majority of the coastal margin area at Pagham Harbour, except for the shingle banks.

An area where the existing public footpath adjacent to the estuary is regarded as not being suitable for the National Trail is at Sidlesham Quay eastwards along Mudland Road (track). This public footpath is upon the beach and is within the high tide zone. It is consequently particularly boggy in places all year round and is

flooded at high tides. An existing public footpath at Halsey's Farm which is inland and parallel to the coast here has been chosen as the preferred route, however grazing fields used by feeding dark bellied Brent Goose will then be within the automatic seaward coastal margin. The RSPB, managers of the nature reserve, have already independently proposed informal mitigation for Halsey's Farm. They intend to construct a livestock fence and clear an existing ditch beside the public footpath, in order to separate visitors and their dogs from livestock and potential feeding areas for Brent Geese, which will make the coastal margin area between the trail route and the shore inaccessible to the public and their dogs. These works will be independently carried out by the RSPB during the practical establishment of the trail and are due to be completed before the trail is officially opened.

An optional alternative route is proposed between East Beach to Church Norton, for use when there are exceptionally high tides and the public footpath upon the beach is flooded. This will use an existing Public Right of Way, via Greenlease Farm, Pigeonhouse Farm and Church Norton Churchyard. There is no coastal margin with this alternative route.

Infrastructure works will include waymarking the trail, resurfacing the path in places with a suitable natural hardwearing surface material such as hogging, cutting back of scrub vegetation to widen the path where necessary and the replacement of an existing boardwalk on the beach at Church Norton, to raise the coast path above high tides. This will help prevent migration from the path by walkers. In more detail, the existing path upon the bank is narrow and has worn in places, so that it becomes puddled and boggy particularly in winter months and it becomes difficult to access the trail. It is intended that sections of the path will be resurfaced and vegetation cut back to widen the path between Church Norton and Ferry House (sections EHS-2-S137 to EHS-2-S150). Secondly, sections of the path between Halsey's Farm and the North Wall are to be resurfaced (sections EHS- 2 – S159 to EHS-2-S161). The resurfacing works will be provided by the Access Authority, West Sussex County Council.

The estuarine environment is highly sensitive for birds and will automatically become coastal margin, however coastal access will be restricted under Section 25A, as it is deemed unsuitable for public access on the inter-tidal mudflats and salt marsh areas. As the existing route is close to the estuary, the accessible coastal margin is limited to areas of beach foreshore and the mobile shingle spits on each side of the entrance to Pagham Harbour. These are Church Norton Spit on the south-west side and Pagham Spit to the north-east side. There is an existing WSCC Local Nature Reserve byelaw which has seasonal restrictions for public access onto an area of the Church Norton shingle spit to ensure that breeding areas for Little Terns are not disturbed. This is described in the RSPB Pagham Harbour Management Plan as: 'The LNR byelaws forbid access to Tern Island (and New Island in proposed revised byelaws) at all times of the year and to the inner half of Church Norton Spit during the nesting season, April - August inclusive'. Local byelaws do take precedence over coastal access rights.

It is noted that the Church Norton shingle Spit is a particularly dynamic section of coast and is accreting from the west, towards the beach at Pagham Beach Holdings. In recent years there has been a pulse of sediment that has led to an extension of the spit north-eastwards which is also causing changes to the location and size of the harbour mouth and has led to risk of coastal erosion at Pagham Beach Holdings. Ongoing changes to the shingle spit have recently created a new natural breach into the spit adjacent to the original Pagham Harbour entrance and thereby the natural closure of the channel at low tide, which has

created a new lagoon within the wide shingle spit. These ongoing changes may affect the wetland areas behind the spits, which could affect the breeding, roosting and feeding habitats of many of the bird species currently using the intertidal areas. It is not clear if, to what extent, or how quickly this would happen and is the subject of ongoing discussion with the Environment Agency and others in terms of flood risk and coastal erosion issues. The coastal access arrangement we propose may be adjusted where necessary in the light of future changes.

5.2.4 Predicted change in use of site for recreation

The Pagham Harbour Visitor Survey by Footprint Ecology in 2012 (Cruickshanks, k & Liley, D), states that 'The main activities undertaken at Pagham Harbour are dog walking (35%), walking (33%) and wildlife watching (22%). In the winter, wildlife watching is twice as popular compared to the summer. In the summer, the main activity was walking. Over 80% of all interviewed groups stated that they were visiting from home. The site clearly has a local catchment with 34% of summer visitors and 27% of winter visitors arriving by foot or bicycle. The site does attract visitors from a wide area in the winter with a median travel distance for birdwatchers' of 49.8km.

When asked why they chose this site over any other, the most popular response in the winter was for a particular wildlife interest (27%) this was closely followed by 'closeness to home' (25%).'

The England Coast Path will become a promoted route as a National Trail, however the paths here are already extremely popular with walkers. Therefore no particular change is envisaged, other than general promotion of the coast path as a National Trail which passes through this area, which may lead to an increase in numbers of visitors. The improvements we propose will make the route easier to use and so make a positive contribution to managing visitors to this site.

RSPB and Church Farm may wish to include in their promotion that the area now includes the coast path trail. The existing public footpaths and permissive routes are just footpaths, so no new activities are envisaged. Due to the unsuitable nature of the estuary for public access and the open access restriction for inter-tidal areas, visitors should prefer to stay on the existing paths and will not be interested in entering the coastal margin.

For the shingle banks, there is existing management including a WSCC byelaw which prevents access to a section of the Church Norton spit, to prevent disturbance to ground nesting Little Terns during the breeding season. The RSPB has information signs and perimeter fencing in place to prevent access. On the Pagham Harbour spit, the perimeter path around the entrance to the Harbour is already carefully managed by the RSPB, with perimeter fencing and SPA signs, preventing access from the path onto the interest features. This means that the Little Lagoon at Pagham Harbour spit is already excluded from public access. As a promoted trail which uses the shingle beach between East Beach and Church Norton, there is the potential for increased access to the coast here which may impact the interest features.

5.2.5 Possible adverse impacts to sensitive features

England Coast Path usage is expected busiest during summer months during better weather whilst the large majority of non-breeding water bird species are most abundant in months less attractive to walkers, in particular dark bellied brent goose during the core winter period of November to March. In addition, the England Coast Path proposals do not take people closer to neither coastal or terrestrial feeding areas nor closer to potential roosts than the already existing PROW. It does not change existing sightlines; does not remove any buffers between route and feeding areas nor propose access to significant areas of new land landward or seaward of the Trail, due to proposed informal management and section 25A access restriction.

Potential conflicts include:

- Bird disturbance with more visitors as this is a promoted route. The coastal margin may have the potential to cause disturbance of breeding and feeding birds, however there is a Section 25A Restriction for the inter-tidal area which is unsuitable for public access. This restriction covers most of Pagham Harbour as shown on Map A below.
- Disturbance to ground nesting birds. Increased numbers of visitors to the shingle spits, which potentially can disturb sensitive features including ground nesting birds. There are existing byelaws restricting access onto sensitive areas of the Church Norton shingle spit for Little Terns during the breeding season. Local byelaws do take precedence over coastal access rights. Visitors can still walk along the spit seawards of the restricted area. For Little Lagoon at Pagham Harbour spit, which is within the coastal margin, there is existing management with SPA signs and fencing adjacent to the path to ensure that there is no disturbance to this interest feature.
- The inland route at Halsey's Farm, Sidlesham has the potential to create disturbance of overwintering dark bellied brent Goose feeding on grazing fields within the coastal margin. The RSPB has already independently decided to provide informal management for the public footpath, by installing fencing and improving ditches to separate trail users from livestock and brent goose. This is to be completed before the trail is officially opened, so trail users will not be able to access the coastal margin and disturb the interest feature here.
- Trampling of vegetated shingle, particularly for the section of the trail which will follow the existing, easy access compacted shingle path upon the shingle beach between East Beach and Church Norton. Visitors will be able to access the shingle beach from the trail, as they can do now and any increase in visitor numbers can potentially affect the interest features. It is considered that the majority of trail users are likely to be walking through the area and tend to stay on the trail between Selsey and Church Norton. This is because the unconsolidated vegetated shingle is difficult to walk on and this beach is relatively remote, without any visitor facilities nearby.
- The Pagham Harbour shingle spits are a particularly dynamic section of coast and the Church Norton spit is currently accreting from the west, towards the coastline at Pagham Beach Holdings. The coastal access arrangement we propose may be adjusted where necessary in the light of future changes.

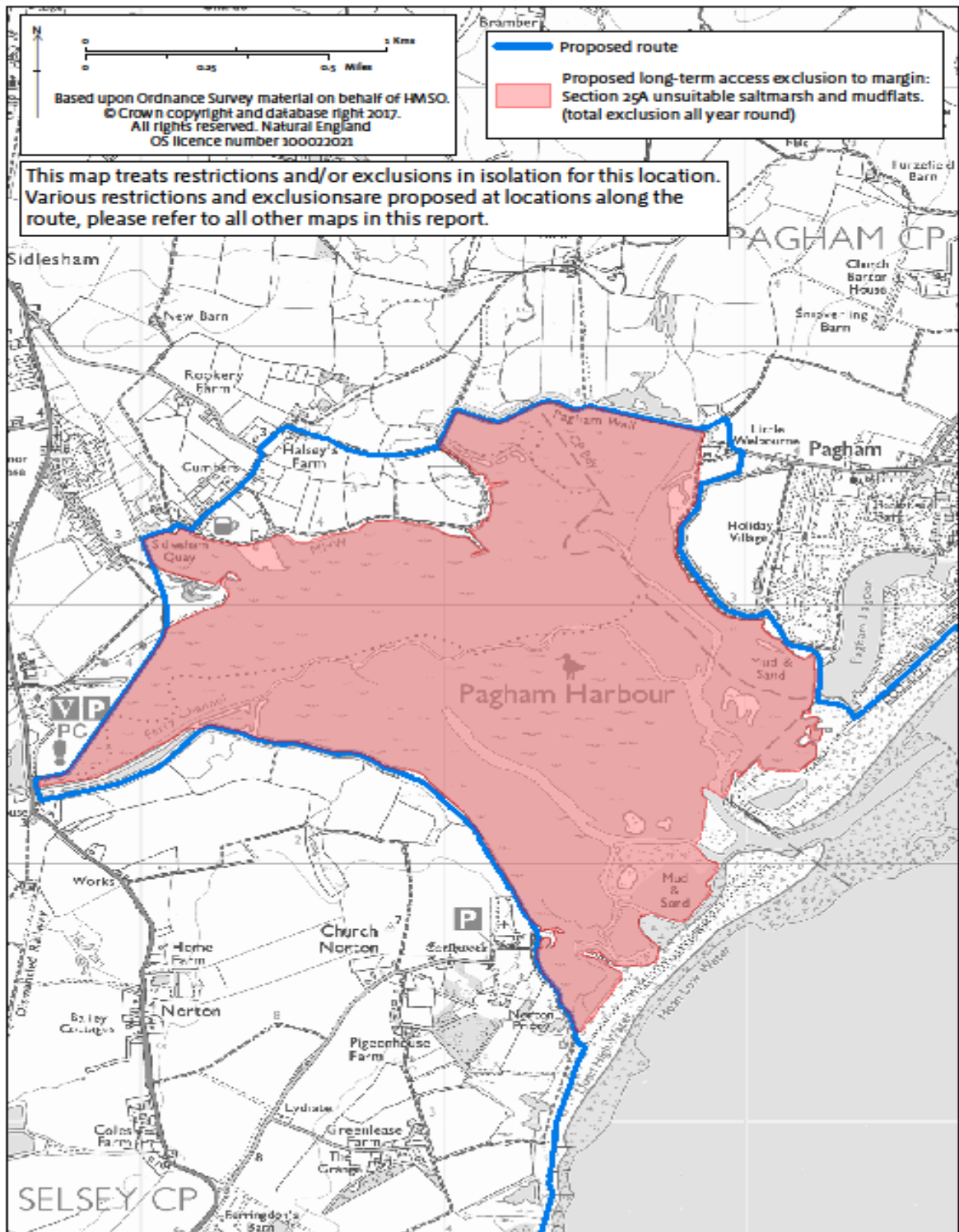
5.2.6 Any mitigation measures included in the access proposal to address possible impacts

This includes a Section 25A Restriction for the inter-tidal area which is deemed unsuitable for public access.

See map below.



Coastal Access - East Head to Shoreham - Natural England's Proposals
Chapter 2: Bracklesham to Pagham Harbour
Map A: Proposed direction under s25A: Saltmarsh and mudflat



5.2.7 Conclusion

The ECP proposals will complement and reinforce existing access management. This is because the trail is following existing access and there are coastal access restrictions and automatic exclusions in place to prevent access to much of the coastal margin. There is a section 25A coastal access exclusion in place to prevent access to the coastal margin where it is deemed unsuitable for public access. It is worth noting that while Section 25A exclusions are applied where the Coastal Margin is not suitable for access, rather than on nature conservation grounds, these exclusions are important in reducing the potential for adverse impacts on non-breeding waterbirds and other sensitive features in this section of the route. If in the future there is a proposal to remove or relax the Section 25A exclusions, then an appraisal of the effects of those changes on sensitive features would be essential.

At Church Norton shingle spit there is an existing byelaw, with signs and fencing in place, to prevent disturbance to the breeding Little Terns on the shingle spit. Local byelaws do take precedence over coastal access rights. The shingle beach will continue to have habitat monitoring of the interest features, particularly where the trail is upon the beach between East Beach and Church Norton. Natural England will liaise with RSPB to agree the appropriate mitigation measures required to make visitors aware of the ground nesting birds and vegetated shingle habitat. Potential mitigation measures include interpretation signs, trail guide posts and seasonal fencing. At Pagham Harbour spit there is already existing management in place, with fencing and SPA nesting bird signs each side of the perimeter path, which prevents access from the path to sensitive areas including the Pagham Harbour Little Lagoon.

Informal management has already been independently proposed by the RSPB for a public footpath at Halsey's Farm, now to be used for the trail, in order to prevent access on farmland. They propose to install livestock fencing and ditching works, which will be completed before the trail is opened. Keeping visitors on the trail here will ensure that dark bellied brent goose feeding on the grazing fields are not disturbed within the coastal margin.

We have fully considered ecological sensitivities in this area alongside the current and predicted access levels. It is expected that the existing and proposed management coupled with the s25A CROW direction on public access, delivers all necessary mitigation. Once the trail has been opened, continued monitoring of the sensitive features will take place and if required appropriate additional mitigation will be included.

5.3 Bognor Reef SSSI

5.3.1 Environmental sensitivity

Bognor Reef SSSI has been designated due to coastal vegetated shingle (SD1-3) features, which include Sea Kale, Curly Dock and Yellow Horned Poppy. There is also a population of Schedule 8 plant, Childing Pink. There are areas of grass and 'garden escape' plants including Valerian, particularly towards properties of the Aldwick Estate.

There are Tertiary Palaeobotany and Palaeoentomology geological features within the inter-tidal zone.

Bognor Reef SSSI already has habitat condition monitoring by Natural England, to assess any changes

through time for the interest features.

5.3.2 Current access provisions and use of site for recreation

The shingle beach at Aldwick is relatively remote from visitor services, so it is used considerably less than the popular beach at Pagham Harbour Estate or the seafront at Bognor Regis. The easiest way to walk between Pagham Harbour and Bognor Regis is to follow the firm sand and shingle at low tides. The shingle beach above the high tide is unconsolidated shingle, which is difficult to walk on for any distance. Upon the vegetated shingle beach above the mean high tide line there are numerous paths meandering between the clumps of vegetated shingle. There is a continuous informal path along the landward edge of the beach adjacent to properties. Most walkers using this beach between Pagham Harbour and Bognor Regis either use the informal path adjacent to the properties or along the sandy beach at low tide, as both provide easier walking than the unconsolidated vegetated shingle. There are a couple of boardwalks leading from the seaward ends of private estate roads towards the crest of the shingle beach, with benches upon the viewing area.



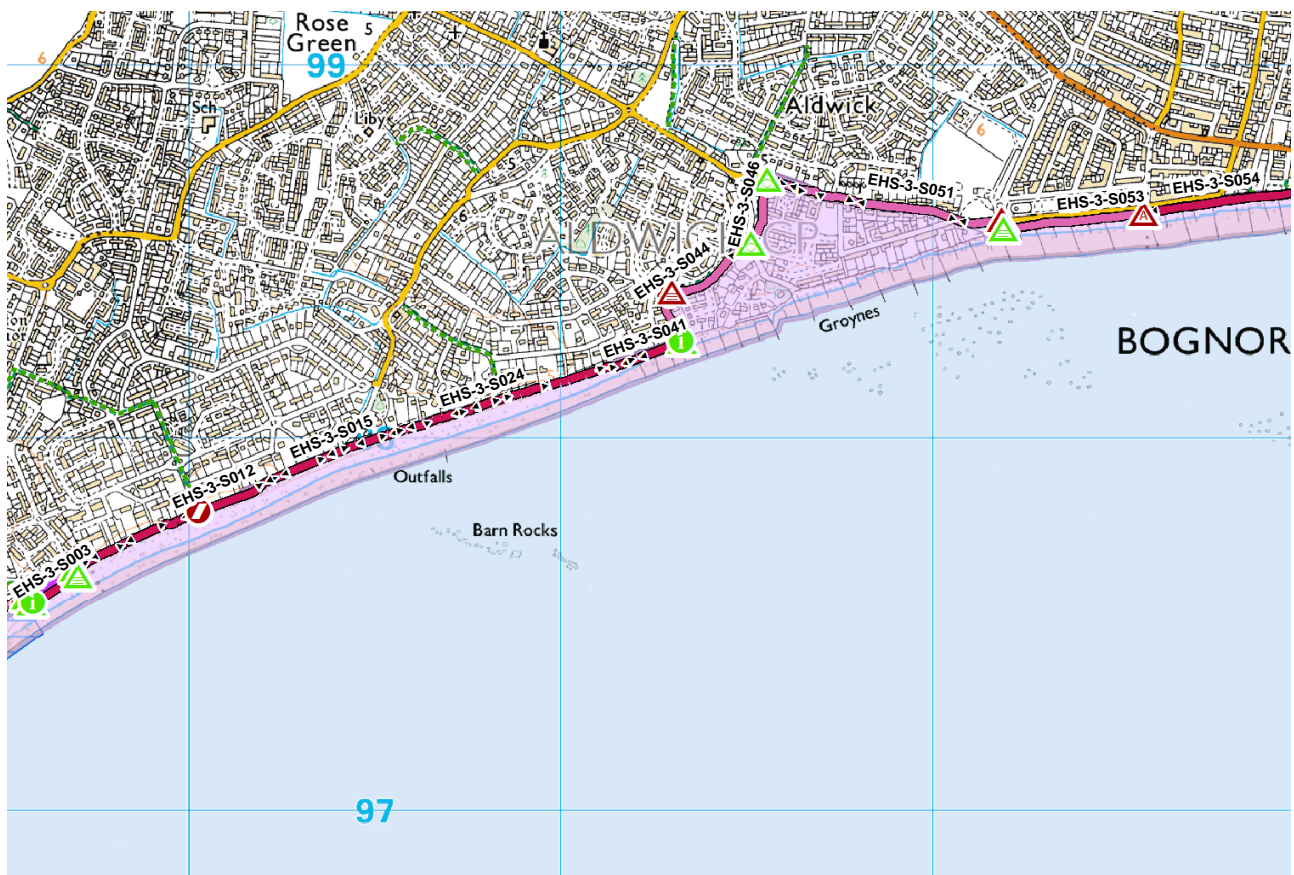
The above map shows the extent of the Bognor Reef SSSI, shaded in pale pink along the beach between Pagham Beach Holdings private estate (end of East Front Road) in the west and Bognor Regis pier in the east. Any existing public footpaths are generally through the Aldwick private estates in a north-south direction, as shown on the map, with no direct route available parallel to the coast along roads within the private estates. There are a number of informal paths and boardwalks upon the vegetated shingle beach.

In summary, visitors currently either walk along the beach at low tide, which provides easy access on firm sand and shingle, or make their way along the vegetated shingle, following an existing informal, well walked path adjacent to property boundaries which provides easier access than walking on the unconsolidated shingle along this lengthy stretch of coast.

5.3.3 Access proposal

From the west at Pagham Beach Holdings, the proposed route for the trail is to initially use the existing section of paved boardwalk parallel to the coast along the vegetated shingle beach, which is part of the Bognor Reef SSSI. When this finishes, the route will then join and follow the existing well walked path along the landward edge of the beach for approximately 1.7km adjacent to the Aldwick private estates, to the alleyway adjacent to Aldwick Hundred. Here the route will head inland to avoid at high tide an impassable concrete sea defence. The alleyway leads to the pavement along Craigwell Lane to Fish Lane, where the trail crosses the road to follow the pavement on the north side of the road, then returns to the coast at the western end of Bognor Regis promenade. The infrastructure will be limited to waymarking signs and an information panel at each end of the shingle beach section, explaining about the SSSI and vulnerable vegetated shingle habitat, and to stay on the trail or to use the firm beach at low tides.

Away from the preferred route there is no other existing clear path all along this lengthy stretch of shingle bank, which is unconsolidated shingle and therefore is difficult to walk on and has vulnerable vegetation. The interpretation will include that the easiest place to walk is along the beach at low tide, which is within the coastal margin, as this provides a firm surface and thereby easy walking. The map below shows the proposed line of the trail and the automatic seaward coastal margin as a purple tint.



5.3.4 Predicted change in use of site for recreation

Landward of this coastline are a number of private estates at Aldwick, where car parking by non-residents is discouraged on the private estate roads. The nearest public car parks are at Pagham Harbour Estate and at Bognor Regis. Therefore this coastline is quiet and is mostly used by local residents from the private

estates.

Generally, the trail will secure access along this stretch of coastline. Promotion of the National Trail is likely to attract more visitors, however the area is relatively remote as there are no visitor facilities nearby, with access either from Pagham Harbour or Bognor Regis. Therefore any increased access is likely to be walkers using the trail rather than more holiday makers, as it is considered to be too far to walk in for the average tourist and there are no facilities to attract them here. There are beaches with facilities close to car parks at Pagham Harbour Estate and at Bognor Regis, which already attract a considerable number of visitors in the summer months.

5.3.5 Possible adverse impacts to sensitive features

The trail is proposed to follow an existing informal path along the landward edge of the shingle beach at Aldwick. This section of beach is considered to be remote, as there are no visitor facilities nearby. There is possibility of increased trampling of vegetated shingle areas, however the vegetation is generally a high sward height and visitors have tended to avoid these areas, so any disturbance is likely to be for the shingle itself. This is already occurring, as there are numerous existing informal paths meandering across the shingle beach between the clumps of vegetation.

The waymarked National Trail route and information panels will encourage users of the trail to keep to the trail route, rather than walking across the shingle beach, trying to find a way through the clumps of vegetation on unconsolidated shingle. Alternatively, walkers will choose to use the firm beach at low tide, as it provides easier walking. The interpretation panels will make visitors aware that there is easy walking within the coastal margin at low tide along this stretch of coast.

5.3.6 Any mitigation measures included in the access proposal to address possible impacts

The trail has been aligned along the landward edge of the shingle beach, as this provides the clearest continuous route and provides the easiest walking surface of numerous informal paths upon the beach. It leaves the interest features intact, rather than intersecting them with the trail located further way from properties. Waymarking signs and information panels are proposed for each end of the vegetated shingle beach. The panels will explain about the vulnerable nature of the shingle beach and its interest features, so that walkers are clear that they are to stay on the path and to avoid areas with vegetation, or alternatively to use the firm beach which provides easy walking at low tides.

The SSSI will continue to have ongoing condition monitoring of the interest features, to gauge whether there is any detrimental effects by visitors using the coast path.

5.3.7 Conclusion

There is no existing public footpath along the stretch of coast between Pagham Harbour and Bognor Regis and there is no clear route adjacent to the coast through a series of private estates at Aldwick. The trail

route has been aligned along the landward edge of the shingle beach, along an existing informal path which provides a clear, continuous route along the beach. The beach above the mean high tide line is vegetated shingle and is part of the Bognor Reef SSSI. There are existing numerous, minor informal paths upon the shingle beach, however these are on unconsolidated shingle and there they provide no clear route along this lengthy stretch of coastline. Any detrimental effects due to coastal access will be closely monitored by the existing regular habitat condition monitoring for Bognor Reef SSSI.

Mitigation includes clear waymarking and information panels, to explain about the protected, rare and vulnerable vegetation on the shingle beach and to ensure that users keep to the trail or to use the beach at low tides for easier walking. No formal exclusions are proposed for Bognor Reef SSSI.

We have fully considered ecological sensitivities in this area alongside the current and predicted access levels. It is expected that the predicted absence of a significant increase in use together with clear waymarking, use of information panels and ongoing habitat condition monitoring, delivers all necessary mitigation.

5.4 Climping Beach SSSI

5.4.1 Environmental sensitivity

Climping Beach SSSI has been designated due to its importance for coastal vegetated shingle (SD1-3), fixed dune grassland and sand dune; strandline, embryo and mobile dunes (SD1-6) and non-breeding birds - Sanderling (*Calidris alba*). Within the SSSI is West Beach Local Nature Reserve.

5.4.2 Current access provisions and use of site for recreation



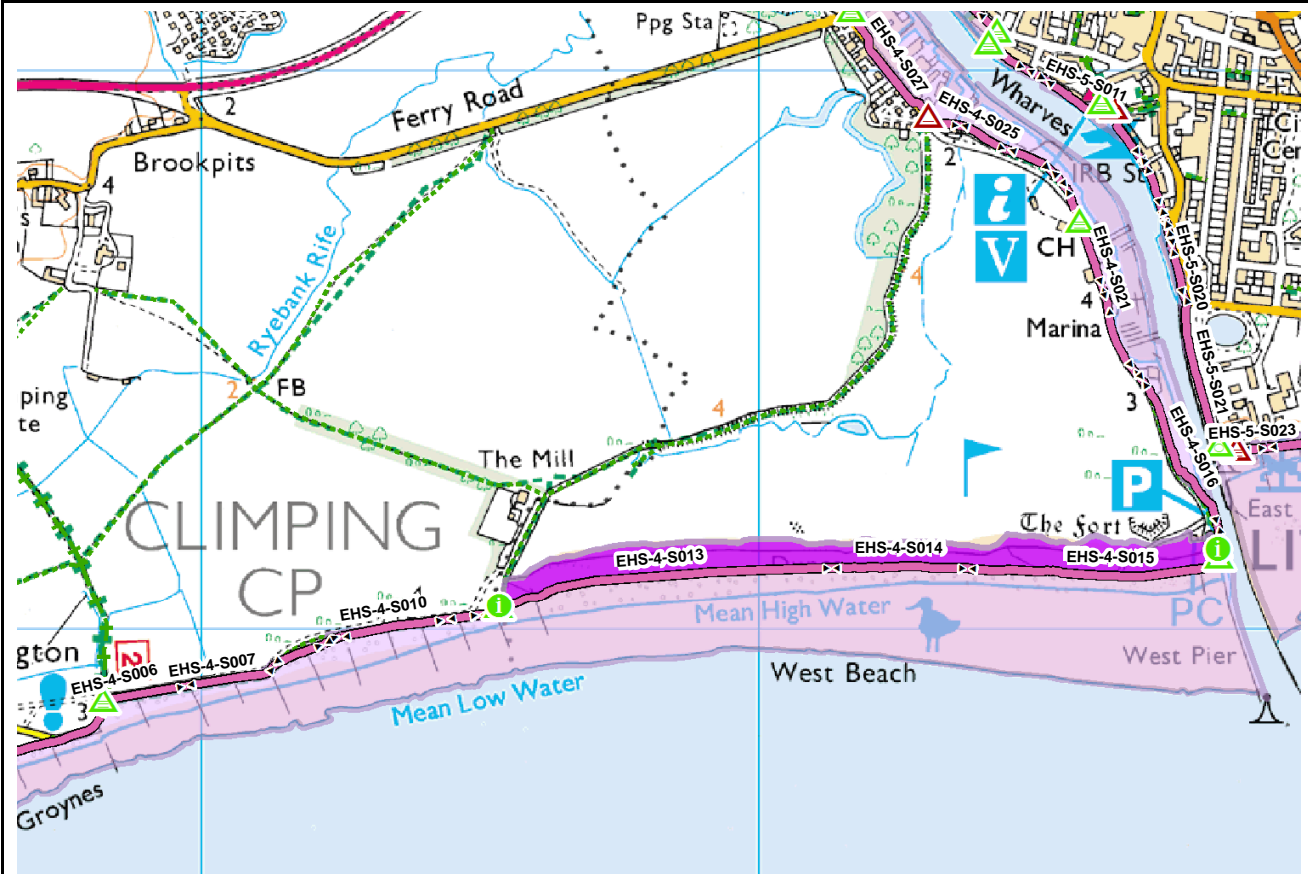
The map above shows Climping Beach Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is shaded pink and West Beach Local Nature Reserve (LNR) outlined by a red line. The site is located west of the River Arun at Littlehampton, West Sussex. Climping Beach SSSI is an accreting section of coast, with longshore drift shingle deposits accumulating adjacent to the West Pier harbour wall.

This is an undeveloped section of coast, which is rare in West Sussex, so the rural location provides tranquillity and privacy for visitors. To the west, there is a large grass car park with café and toilets at the road end at Atherington, however this is closed out of season during winter months. There is permanent, limited verge parking at the road end here. To the east, there is a small car park with café at the end of the Littlehampton Harbour wall. Adjacent to the car parks, the beach tends to become busy during summer months with visitors using the beach and existing public footpath. Outside the summer holiday season, this area is likely to be one of the quietest sections of coast along this stretch.

There is generally good access along this stretch of coast, with a public footpath upon the shingle beach to the west from Atherington and then inland at The Mill, adjacent to the golf course. However there is no PRoW eastwards along the coast to Littlehampton Harbour, just a well-established informal path within the Climping Beach SSSI between the sand dunes landwards and the shingle beach seawards, which follows the line of an old wire fence located at each end of the sand dunes to the Harbour sea wall. The path generally provides easy access, which is easier to walk on than the adjacent interest features.

Adjacent to the informal path along the landward side there is a section of wire fence at each end of the sand dunes, likely to be installed to deter access to the fragile sand dune system. There is some existing wildlife interpretation by Arun District Council which explains the conservation value of the SSSI and why it is important not to trample the fragile habitats. The panel is located where the public footpath heads inland towards The Mill at the western end of Climping Beach, however it is faded and requires updating.

5.4.3 Access proposal



The above map shows the proposed route of the trail through the SSSI, from the west on an existing public footpath upon the beach, then on an existing informal path between the vegetated shingle and sand dunes. The coastal margin is automatically between mean low water and the landward edge of the sand dunes, shaded in purple. The trail will be waymarked at each end of the SSSI and guide posts are proposed along the trail past the interest features, to encourage visitors to stay on the path. An information panel is also proposed for each end of the SSSI, explaining about the vulnerable nature of the interest features and to stay on the path or alternatively to use the beach at low tides as it provides easy walking.

5.4.4 Predicted change in use of site for recreation

Generally, the trail will secure access along this stretch of coastline. Promotion of the National Trail is likely to attract more visitors, however the area is relatively remote as there are no visitor facilities nearby, with access either from West Pier at Littlehampton, which has limited parking, or Atherington car park. Therefore any increased access is likely to be walkers using the trail rather than more holiday makers, as it is considered to be too far to walk in for the average tourist and there are no facilities to attract them here.

5.4.5 Possible adverse impacts to sensitive features

The proposed route follows an existing informal path which above mean high tide line is the easiest surface and most direct route to follow in this area. The shingle beach by its nature is not easy to walk on and there are no obvious desire lines at any particular point, whereas the sand dunes are more attractive to walk on and explore, including gaining some height to look at views around the area. Some limited trampling is

necessary for the sand dunes to stay as a mosaic of habitats with open areas of sand dune and not to become smothered by dense marram grass. Any detrimental effects due to coastal access will be closely monitored by the existing regular habitat condition monitoring for Climping Beach SSSI.

5.4.6 Any mitigation measures included in the access proposal to address possible impacts

New information panels are proposed for each end of the trail at Climping Beach, explaining about the sensitive nature of the interest features and to stay on the path. Guide posts are proposed along the trail route, so that walkers clearly know where to walk. The SSSI will continue to have ongoing condition monitoring of the interest features, to gauge whether there is any detrimental effects by visitors using the coast path.

5.4.7 Conclusion

This SSSI is particularly sensitive for the fragile sand dunes habitat, where over-trampling will degrade the sand dune system. Natural England will continue to carry out regular habitat condition monitoring of the interest features of the Climping Beach SSSI, to ensure that there is no deterioration. Mitigation will be with onsite information panels, clear waymarking and guide posts, so that walkers will stay on the trail or use the firm beach at low tide. No formal exclusions are proposed for Climping Beach SSSI.

We have fully considered ecological sensitivities in this area alongside the current and predicted access levels. It is expected that the predicted absence of a significant increase in use together with the information panels, waymarking, guide posts and ongoing condition monitoring delivers all necessary mitigation.

5.5 Shoreham Beach LNR

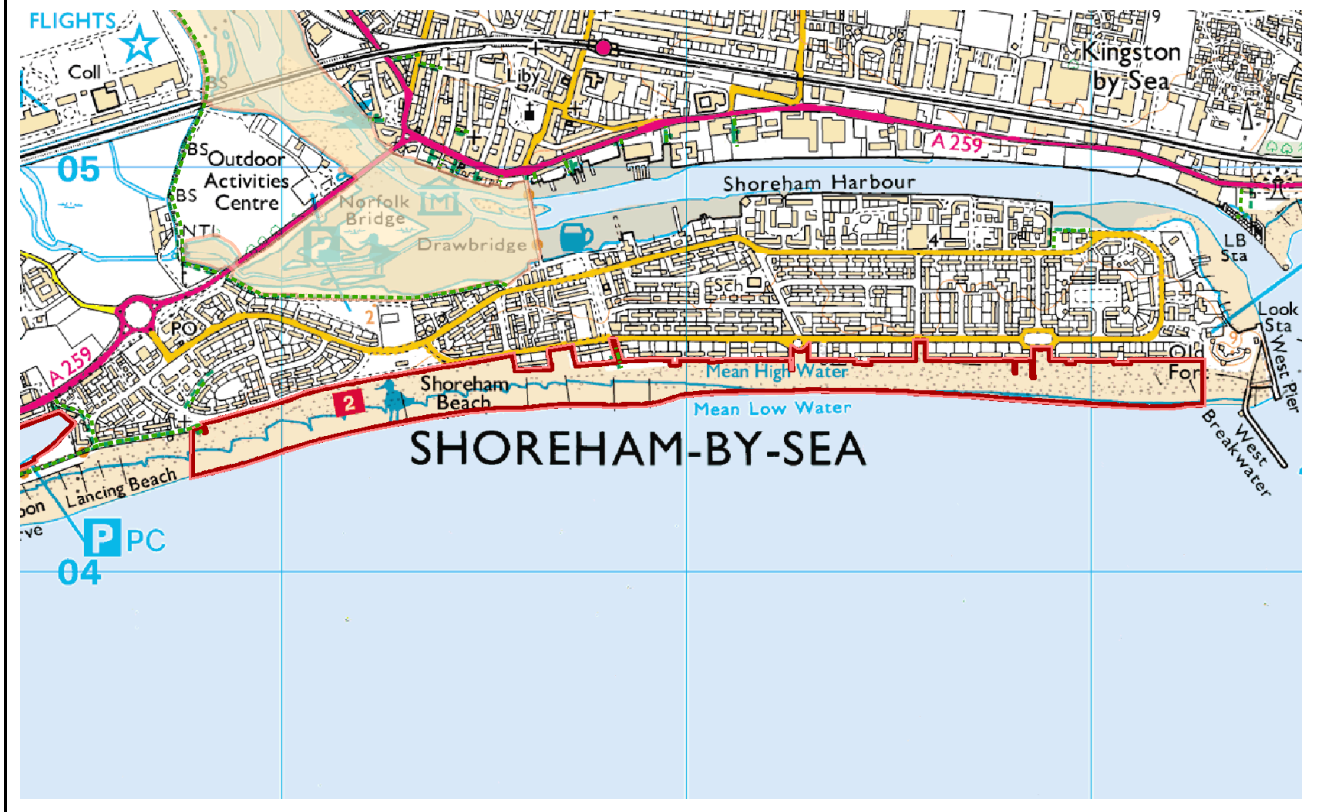
5.5.1 Environmental sensitivity

Shoreham Beach Local Nature Reserve (LNR) has been designated due to its importance for coastal vegetated shingle (SD1-3).

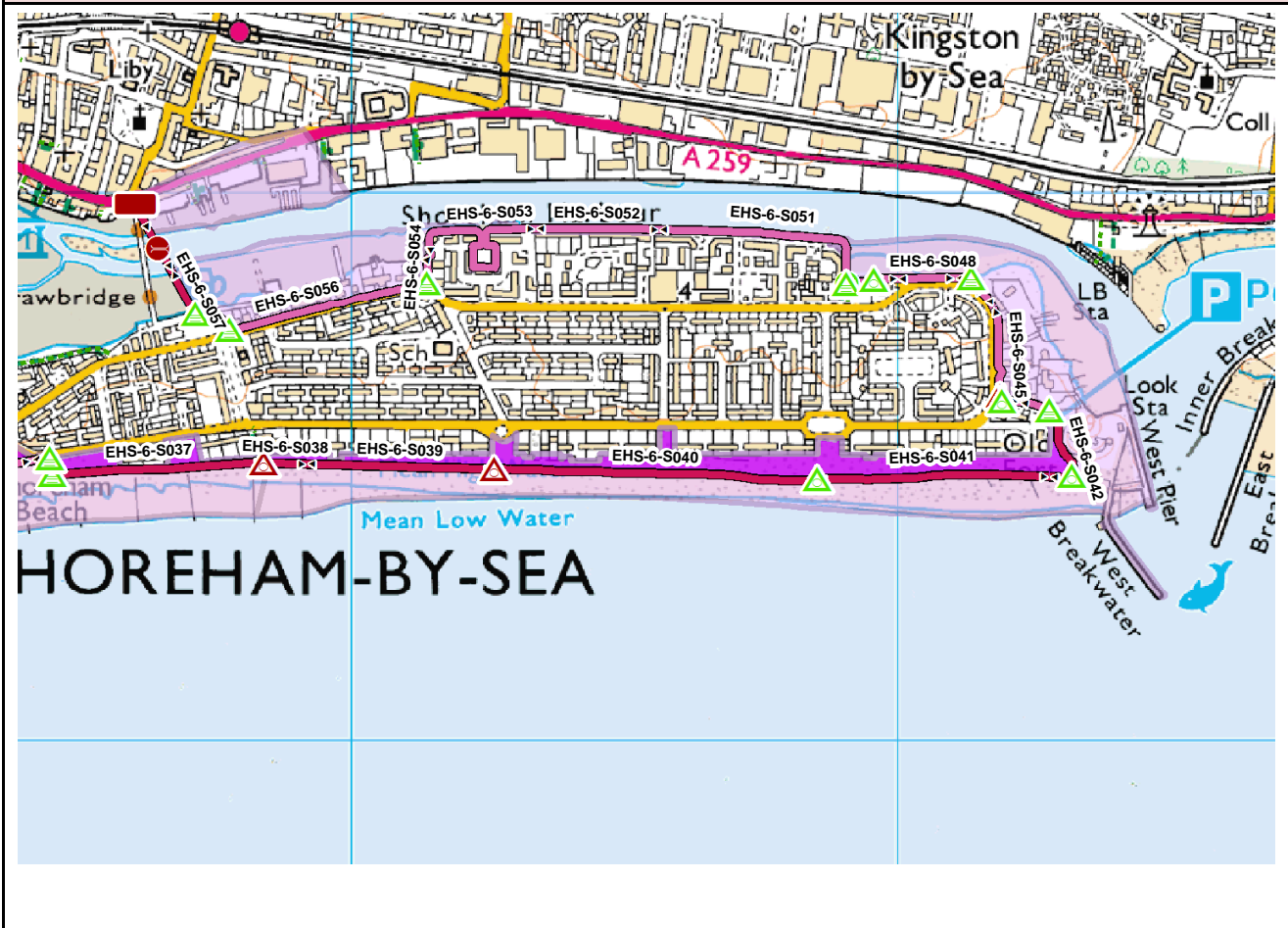
5.5.2 Current access provisions and use of site for recreation

There are no existing public footpaths on Shoreham Beach, however Adur District Council has recently provided a boardwalk along a section of the shingle beach, which provides easy access for walking. There are four access points to the boardwalk from Old Fort Road and the area is already particularly well used by walkers. There are a couple of sections of shingle beach at either end which do not have a boardwalk, however there is an existing well used informal path upon the shingle beach at each end of the boardwalk. This is a wide shingle beach, as the shingle is accreting adjacent to the West Breakwater harbour wall. The beach is already extremely well used by the public.

The current access is shown on the map below, however it does not show the line of the boardwalk. The red line shows the boundary of the Local Nature Reserve (LNR).



5.5.3 Access proposal



The above map shows the proposed line of the trail and the coastal margin, which is automatically both seaward and landward of the path to the landward edge of the shingle beach. Sections EHS-6-S038 to EHS-6-S040 use the line of the existing boardwalk, sections EHS-6-S037 and EHS-6-S041 are upon the shingle beach.

5.5.4 Predicted change in use of site for recreation

As a promoted National Trail, the trail will secure access along this stretch of coastline. The trail will attract more visitors to the area, however the area is already busy on a sunny day at all times of the year, due to the close proximity of properties and features of interest in this area. Therefore it is not predicted that there will be any significant changes in use of the beach for recreation.

5.5.5 Possible adverse impacts to sensitive features

Due to the easy access provided by the boardwalk, walkers are already keeping to the structure, rather than walking on the unconsolidated shingle beach. The trail uses the already well used informal path upon the shingle beach, taking the direct line on the shingle beach where visitors currently walk which connects to each end of the boardwalk. As the path is already well used by walkers, the shingle beach here has no vegetated shingle. Therefore, as the beach is already well used and as most visitors are keeping to the boardwalk and existing well walked areas on the beach, it is not considered that there are any potential

adverse impacts to the sensitive features.

5.5.6 Any mitigation measures included in the access proposal to address possible impacts

Use of the existing boardwalk provides easy access upon the shingle beach and it avoids the areas with vegetated shingle. For areas with no boardwalk, the trail follows a clear line on the shingle beach which connects with each end of the boardwalk. Therefore it is already well used by walkers and is well away from vegetation. The trail will be well waymarked to clearly show which way to walk. There are already existing interpretative panels explaining the vulnerable ecology of the vegetated shingle beach.

5.5.7 Conclusion

Use of the existing boardwalk through the LNR on the vegetated shingle beach provides easier access than walking on unconsolidated shingle. Walkers therefore already tend to use the boardwalk, thereby allowing the vegetated shingle to flourish. Where the trail is upon the shingle, the chosen route is on an existing well used informal path away from clumps of vegetation.

6 Establishing and maintaining the England Coast Path

In this part of the document we describe how the access proposal would be implemented and arrangements for ongoing management and maintenance once coastal access rights are in place.

Note that before the access proposal can be taken forward, the coastal access report must first be considered by the Secretary of State in light of any representations, any objections from affected owners or occupiers and the Appointed Person's recommendations as to how any objections should be determined.

6.1 Establishment

6.1.1 Works on the ground

Once approval for a coastal access report is received from the Secretary of State, any necessary works can be carried out on the ground to make the trail fit for use and prepare for opening. For this stretch of coastline, works on the ground will be carried out by West Sussex County Council.

An estimate of the total cost of works needed to establish the trail is given in our coastal access report for the stretch. The cost of establishment works will be met by Natural England.

West Sussex County Council is responsible for ensuring they take appropriate steps to protect sensitive features whilst works on the ground are carried out, in line with any recommendations or conditions agreed in advance.

We have held preliminary discussions with West Sussex County Council about the works required and believe that it is feasible for them to be carried out without adverse effect on the designated sites considered in this appraisal.

West Sussex County Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be undertaken in line with these conditions. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

6.1.2 Implementation of mitigation measures

The mitigation measures described in Part 5 of this document will be implemented as follows:

Measure	Implementation
A section 25A Restriction at Medmerry for the inter-tidal area which is deemed unsuitable for public access.	Following liaison with the Environment Agency and RSPB, installation of signs to make trail users aware of the access restriction at Medmerry. Fixtures and posts for signage at appropriate locations will be set in place with minimum disturbance using hand tools.

<p>A section 25A Restriction at Pagham Harbour for the inter-tidal area which is deemed unsuitable for public access.</p>	<p>Following liaison with the Environment Agency and RSPB, installation of signs to make trail users aware of the access restriction at Pagham Harbour. Fixtures and posts for signage at appropriate locations will be set in place with minimum disturbance using hand tools.</p>
<p>A section 26 Restriction at Medmerry within the coastal margin for the specific grassland areas managed by the RSPB so that birds are not disturbed.</p>	<p>Following liaison with the Environment Agency and RSPB, installation of signs to make trail users aware of the access restriction at Medmerry. Fixtures and posts for signage at appropriate locations will be set in place with minimum disturbance using hand tools.</p>
<p>Information signs, trail guide posts and temporary, seasonal fencing at Church Norton and Pagham Harbour shingle spits.</p>	<p>Following liaison with the RSPB, installation of information signs to make trail users aware of ground nesting birds and vegetated shingle habitat. Install guide posts adjacent to trail between East Beach and Church Norton, between sections EHS-2-S128 to EHS-2-S129 to guide users of the England Coast Path away from these potentially sensitive areas and complement existing mitigation. Install seasonal fencing with signs to prevent access to areas with ground nesting birds when required. Fixtures and posts for signage at appropriate locations will be set in place with minimum disturbance using hand tools.</p>
<p>Information panel to be installed at each end of the trail at Aldwick (Bognor Reef SSSI), at section EHS-3-S003 and at EHS-3-S041. This is to highlight the wildlife value of the vegetated shingle, to keep to the path and use the beach at low tides for easy access.</p>	<p>To be designed by Natural England and installed by the access authority, WSCC. Fixtures and posts for signage will be set in place with minimum disturbance using hand tools.</p>
<p>Information panel to be installed at each end of the trail at Climping Beach SSSI, at section EHS-4-S012 and EHS-4-S015. This is to highlight the wildlife value of the vegetated shingle and sand dunes, to keep to the path.</p>	<p>To be designed by Natural England and installed by the access authority, WSCC. Fixtures and posts for signage will be set in place with minimum disturbance using hand tools.</p>
<p>Guide posts at Climping beach SSSI to be installed on the landward side of the trail, to act as a soft barrier to deter access onto the sand dunes, between sections EHS-4-S013 and EHS-4-S015</p>	<p>To be installed by the access authority, WSCC. Posts will be set in place with minimum disturbance using hand tools.</p>

6.1.3 Local restrictions or exclusions

Where specific restrictions or exclusions have been included in the proposal and are approved by the Secretary of State, Natural England will give the necessary directions before public rights come into force to make the rights subject to those restrictions or exclusions.

6.2 Maintenance

Where there is a need for ongoing maintenance of any special measures proposed, this will become part of longer term arrangements for upkeep of the trail. An overall estimate of the ongoing cost of maintaining stretches of the England Coast Path is given in the relevant part of our report for the stretch.

6.3 Monitoring

Monitoring of the protected site will continue through established programmes including our common standards monitoring protocols. The access authority will be responsible for ongoing monitoring of trail condition. Natural England will be tracking general trends, including in the number of people using the path, as part of our evaluation of the coastal access programme nationally.

Prior to opening the new trail checks will be made that establishment works, including any special mitigation measures required at this stage, have been implemented. Once the England Coast Path is open, there will be regular ongoing monitoring of the condition of the trail and its associated infrastructure. Any reports of anti-social behaviour by trail users will usually be dealt with by a trail manager in the first instance.

6.4 Future changes

The access proposals in this document are designed to ensure appropriate protection of sensitive features, taking account of any mitigation measures that are included. The coast is a dynamic environment and in designing the access proposals we have taken account of any changes predicted by the Environment Agency as a result of coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes. Should it be necessary in the future to identify a new alignment for the trail in line with 'roll back' proposals in the stretch report, due care will be taken at that stage to minimise any potential impacts of this change on sensitive features. The same will be true if any unforeseen other changes arise in the future that may require us to propose a variation of the access arrangements described in these proposals, following due procedures.

7 Conclusions

7.1 Overall conclusion – Natura 2000/ Ramsar site

7.1.1 Likelihood of significant effects alone on sensitive features

This section presents conclusions on the effects of the East Head to Shoreham by Sea stretch of the England Coast Path proposals on the interest features of the following Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites:

Pagham Harbour Ramsar

Pagham Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA)

Medmerry

Solent to Dorset Coast potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)

From the information presented above in parts 3 to 5 of this appraisal document, Natural England concludes that, when considered alone, the proposal for this stretch of the England Coast Path is not likely to cause a significant adverse effect on any SPA, SAC or Ramsar site interest features. This conclusion takes account of the modifications made to our proposal to avoid or reduce the risk of effects as described in Part 5. However, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) also require an assessment of the effects of other ‘live’ plans or projects.

For each SPA, SAC or Ramsar site interest feature the table below gives our conclusion as to whether or not the proposal for this stretch of the England Coast Path could possibly cause an adverse effect. Where effects cannot be ruled out they are considered further as part of the in-combination assessment (7.1.2).

In this section of the document, we present our conclusions about the likelihood of significant effects alone on sensitive features. We consider each of the qualifying features, or feature groups that include qualifying features, in turn. A complete list of the qualifying features of the European sites involved and explanation of how we have grouped them for purposes of this assessment see Table 2.4 and Part 3 of this document.

Our conclusions draw on the evidence and analysis presented earlier in the document, and take account of any modifications to our proposal described in Part 5. There is a degree of judgement involved in reaching this conclusion, and for some features it is not possible to entirely rule out that our proposals for the Coast Path could cause an effect. The nature of any leftover risks is described in the conclusion column of the Table below and these risks are further considered as part of the in-combination assessment in Section 7.1.2.

Feature - or feature group	Conclusion
Non Breeding Waterfowl: Dark Bellied Brent Goose, <i>Bernicla bernicla</i> ; Ruff, <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	The main area likely to be affected is at Pagham Harbour where the trail is located inland for Halsey’s Farm, Sidlesham and the fields within the seaward coastal margin are recorded as having overwintering Brent Geese. The RSPB will be independently carrying out enhancement works for the public footpath, with livestock fencing and ditching which will keep visitors on the trail.

	<p>As visitors will not be able to access the coastal margin, the Brent Geese should not be affected by any increase in visitor numbers. Ruff uses the estuarine environment which is within the section 25A exclusion area, as it is unsuitable for access by the public. As they are located away from the trail, they should not be affected by any increase in visitor numbers.</p>
<p>Dabbling Ducks: Pintail, <i>Anas acuta</i></p>	<p>At Pagham Harbour, the trail will follow existing access, so there are no changes in access arrangements which are likely to affect these ducks. With regard to the coastal margin seaward of the trail, the inter-tidal mudflats in this location are deemed unsuitable for public access and will be covered by a Section 25A exclusion, restricting access. As these ducks are located within the exclusion area, they should not be affected by any increase in visitor numbers.</p>
<p>Aggregations of breeding birds: Little Tern, <i>Sterna albifrons</i> Common Tern, <i>Sterna hirundo</i></p>	<p>The shingle spits at Pagham Harbour will be within the coastal margin, however these areas already have good access. Existing management arrangements for public access will remain as they do now. This includes an existing WSCC LNR byelaw for Church Norton spit, with perimeter fencing and signage to prevent disturbance to nesting Little Terns. Natural England will continue to carry out habitat monitoring of the interest features, which will highlight any increased disturbance caused by the promoted National Trail. Natural England will liaise with RSPB to agree and provide appropriate mitigation measures required to make visitors aware of the breeding birds. Proposed mitigation measures include improved signage, trail guide posts and temporary, seasonal fencing to prevent disturbance to ground nesting birds. Should the situation change, then we can consider whether an access restriction is required.</p>
<p>Saltmarsh: SM6 - <i>Spartina Anglica</i> Saltmarsh SM14 - <i>Atriplex portulacoides</i> saltmarsh</p>	<p>No possible adverse effects from the access proposal (taking into account any proposed mitigation measures) have been identified. With regard to the coastal margin seaward of the trail, the inter-tidal mudflats in this location are deemed unsuitable for public access and will be covered by a Section 25A exclusion, restricting access.</p>
<p>Saline Coastal Lagoons</p>	<p>Pagham Spit Little Lagoon is within the coastal margin, however the existing management by the RSPB is considered sufficient to control access. There is a path around the spit, which includes Little Lagoon, which is fenced on both sides and there are SPA bird ground nesting signs at regular intervals. Should the situation change, then we can consider whether an access restriction is required.</p>
<p>Woodland: W10 - <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> woodland.</p>	<p>No possible adverse effects from the access proposal (taking into account any proposed mitigation measures) have been identified. The trail is adjacent to oak woodland at Church Norton, however as</p>

W12 - <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland	there is already access to the trees within the coastal margin, they should not be affected by any increase in visitor numbers.
Invertebrate assemblage	No possible adverse effects from the access proposal (taking into account any proposed mitigation measures) have been identified.
Tertiary Palaeobotany Palaeoentomology	No possible adverse effects from the access proposal (taking into account any proposed mitigation measures) have been identified.
Coastal geomorphology	No possible adverse effects from the access proposal (taking into account any proposed mitigation measures) have been identified.

7.1.2 Likelihood of significant effects in combination on sensitive features

In this section of the document, we present our conclusions about the likelihood that the risk of non-significant effects identified in the previous section might combine with similar risks highlighted for other live plans or projects.

Table A - Other qualifying plans or projects

Competent Authority	Plan or project	Description
Chichester District Council	Chichester Local Plan 2014-2029	The plan allocates housing developments which will increase recreational pressure on Pagham Harbour SPA.
Arun District Council	Arun Local Plan 2011-2031	The plan allocates housing developments which will increase recreational pressure on Pagham Harbour SPA

Chichester District Council and Arun District Council's Local Plans increase housing in the area, and the HRA of those plans identified the need to mitigate recreational disturbance. This is because new development will lead to an increase in visitor numbers and hence an increase in land based recreational activities, so planning permission can only be granted where appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are put in place in perpetuity, that will ensure that the development – in combination will all other developments in the Plan area - does not adversely affect the integrity of Pagham Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA). There is a zone of influence within which contribution are required from new developments. Based on visitor survey evidence these are set at 3.5km from the SPA boundary for Pagham Harbour. Developments pay a fixed contribution per net new dwelling which is used to fund a package of wardening, education, green infrastructure improvements and monitoring. Wardening will be delivered by the RSPB as site managers, with education and monitoring activities bought in from the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP), a Solent-wide project which also covers the Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA.

As a promoted trail, the coastal path will also increase the number of visitors. Therefore, the increase in housing and the coastal path, in combination, will both place additional pressure on Pagham Harbour SPA. (Medmerry was screened out of the HRA for the local plans, because it has been designed with access in mind which avoided sensitive areas).

Table B - Possible in combination effects

Non-significant effect – access proposal	Non-significant effect – other plan or project	In combination conclusion
<p>Possible small increases in disturbance to Pagham Harbour SPA/Ramsar birds. Applies to overwintering (Brent Geese) and breeding (Little Tern) birds.</p>	<p>Possible small increase in disturbance to Pagham harbour SPA/Ramsar birds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chichester Local Plan 2014-2029 • Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 	<p>We do not consider there will be significant effect in combination for the following reasons:</p> <p>Mitigation for each project complements each other - Pagham Harbour SAMM project provides 1.5FTE warden, signage and interpretation, dog project and monitoring with developers paying a fixed contribution per net new dwelling which is used to fund the above.</p> <p>The section 25A exclusion for mudflats and salt marsh as it is unsuitable for public access, will also prevent disturbance to the non-breeding water fowl within the coastal margin.</p> <p>On existing PROWs to be used by the trail at Halsey’s Farm, the RSPB has independently proposed fencing and ditching to control access, which removes potential disturbance to Dark Bellied Brent Goose within the coastal margin.</p> <p>For breeding birds, there is the existing WSCC byelaw for Little Tern at Church Norton spit, with on-site signage and guide fencing. To complement this further interpretation, trail guide posts and seasonal fencing are proposed for the trail where it is on the beach here to prevent any disturbance to ground nesting birds</p>

We do not consider it likely that there will be a significant effect in combination for the following reasons:

- 1) England Coast Path – East Head to Shoreham by Sea stretch

As a promoted National Trail the England Coast Path can be expected to result in an increase in usage of existing coastal public rights of way which could lead to an associated increase in disturbance. However, from the information presented earlier parts of this appraisal document, this possible residual disturbance effects on this stretch, taking mitigation into account, are assessed as well below 'significant effect' level.

In several respects the England Coast path is likely to make it easier for the existing and projected baseline population to access the coast sensitively – by providing a carefully aligned, well maintained and well waymarked walking route around the coast with interpretation panels at key locations raising awareness on sensitive wildlife and possible disturbance effects.

In addition, the coastal access arrangements that we have proposed can, where necessary, be adjusted in the light of future unforeseen circumstances.

7.1.3 Overall screening decision

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has reached this conclusion about the new access proposal: (Mark one box only with an X as appropriate).

Pagham Harbour SPA/ Ramsar

No likely significant effect - as the new access proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on Pagham Harbour Ramsar; Pagham Harbour SPA, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, (taking into account any proposed mitigation measures) no further Habitats Regulations assessment is required;

OR

Likely significant effect - as the new access proposal is likely to have a significant effect on Pagham Harbour Ramsar; Pagham Harbour SPA, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects (despite any proposed mitigation measures), appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has reached this conclusion about the new access proposal: (Mark one box only with an X as appropriate).

Medmerry

No likely significant effect - as the new access proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on Medmerry, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, (taking into account any proposed mitigation measures) no further Habitats Regulations assessment is required;

OR

Likely significant effect - as the new access proposal is likely to have a significant effect on Medmerry, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects (despite any proposed mitigation measures), appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has reached this conclusion about the new access proposal:
(Mark one box only with an X as appropriate).

Solent to Dorset Coast pSPA

No likely significant effect - as the new access proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on Solent to Dorset Coast pSPA, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, (taking into account any proposed mitigation measures) no further Habitats Regulations assessment is required;

OR

Likely significant effect - as the new access proposal is likely to have a significant effect on Solent to Dorset Coast pSPA, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects (despite any proposed mitigation measures), appropriate assessment is required to consider whether the new access proposal may proceed.

7.2 Overall conclusion - SSSI

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has concluded that the new access proposal:
(Mark one box only with an X below)

Bracklesham Bay SSSI

complies with Natural England'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 should not be given for the new access proposal in the form finally specified in this template, for the following reasons:

Reasons (where second box is ticked):

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has concluded that the new access proposal:
(Mark one box only with an X below)

Selsey East Beach SSSI

complies with Natural England'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

¹ The reference in 7.2 above to Natural England's functions includes its balanced general purposes for access, nature conservation and landscape 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 periodically agrees with Defra.

² The reference in 7.2 above to Natural England's functions includes its balanced general purposes for access, nature conservation and landscape 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 periodically agrees with Defra.

OR

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

Reasons (where second box is ticked):

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has reached this conclusion about the new access proposal: (Mark one box only with an X as appropriate).

Pagham Harbour SSSI

complies with Natural England’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 should not be given for the new access proposal in the form finally specified in this template, for the following reasons:

Reasons (where second box is ticked):

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has reached this conclusion about the new access proposal: (Mark one box only with an X as appropriate).

Bognor Reef SSSI

complies with Natural England’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 should not be given for the new access proposal in the form finally specified in this template, for the following reasons:

Reasons (where second box is ticked):

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has reached this conclusion about the new access proposal: (Mark one box only with an X as appropriate).

³ The reference in 7.2 above to Natural England’s functions includes its balanced general purposes for access, nature conservation and landscape 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 periodically agrees with Defra.

⁴ The reference in 7.2 above to Natural England’s functions includes its balanced general purposes for access, nature conservation and landscape 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 periodically agrees with Defra.

Felpham SSSI

complies with Natural England’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 should not be given for the new access proposal in the form finally specified in this template, for the following reasons:

Reasons (where second box is ticked):

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has reached this conclusion about the new access proposal: (Mark one box only with an X as appropriate).

Climping Beach SSSI

complies with Natural England’s duty to further the conservation and enhancement of the notified features of the SSSI, consistent with the proper exercise of its functions⁶ - 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 should not be given for the new access proposal in the form finally specified in this template, for the following reasons:

Reasons (where second box is ticked):

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has reached this conclusion about the new access proposal: (Mark one box only with an X as appropriate).

Adur Estuary SSSI

complies with Natural England’s duty to further the conservation and enhancement of the notified features of the SSSI, consistent with the proper exercise of its functions⁷ - and accordingly the new access proposal may proceed as finally specified in this template

⁵ The reference in 7.2 above to Natural England’s functions includes its balanced general purposes for access, nature conservation and landscape 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 periodically agrees with Defra.

⁶ The reference in 7.2 above to Natural England’s functions includes its balanced general purposes for access, nature conservation and landscape 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 periodically agrees with Defra.

OR

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

Reasons (where second box is ticked):

7.3 Overall conclusion: Marine Conservation Zone

In respect of any duties that may arise under section 125 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, Natural England has concluded for Pagham Harbour MCZ that:

(Mark one box only with an X below)

The access proposal (including any special measures specified in this appraisal) is the one that, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions under section 296 of the same Act, is least likely to hinder the achievement of the conservation objectives for the Marine Conservation Zone - and accordingly may proceed.

OR

The above test is not met, and accordingly the access proposal should not be taken forward in this form, for the following reasons:

Reasons (where second box is ticked):

7.4 Other features about which concerns have been expressed

In the light of this appraisal, Natural England has concluded that:

(Mark one box only with an X below)

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

⁷ The reference in 7.2 above to Natural England's functions includes its balanced general purposes for access, nature conservation and landscape 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 periodically agrees with Defra.

proposal should not proceed in the form finally specified in this template, for the following reasons:

Reasons (where second box is ticked):

8 Certification

8.1 Certification – access proposal

I agree with the conclusions of this appraisal and am satisfied that the final access proposal, incorporating any special measures, is the least restrictive option necessary to ensure appropriate protection of sensitive features.

Signed:



Name:

Kate Bull

Date:

16.9.17

8.2 Certification – environmental impacts

I agree with the conclusions of this appraisal and am satisfied that potential environmental impacts of the access proposal on Pagham Harbour Ramsar; Pagham Harbour SPA; Medmerry; Pagham Harbour MCZ; Solent to Dorset Coast pSPA, have been fully addressed.

Name:

Kate Bull

Signed:



Date:

26.9.17

9 References

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