



Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal

Coastal Access Programme

Programme	Coastal Access – Weybourne to Hunstanton
Proposal title	The Wash at Hunstanton
Reason for consideration	Alignment of the coast path and associated areas of spreading room
Location of affected area	West of Flaxley to The Salad Bowl Café, Hunstanton
Report Status	Final
Date	October 2017
Access Case Officer	Diana Curtis
Site Responsible Officer	Helen Dixon

Our Approach

Natural England's approach to ensuring the protection of sensitive nature conservation 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' (ASFA) and this document is a record of our conclusions. The appraisal includes our Habitats Regulations Assessment wherever relevant to the site in question.

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 appraisal 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.

Where our proposals for the England Coast Path and associated Coastal Margin are relevant to a Natura 2000 site, this appraisal fulfils our duty under the Habitats Regulations 2010 to assess their potential implications in order to ensure no likely significant effect on the site. The formal conclusions relating to this are recorded in Part 7 of the document.

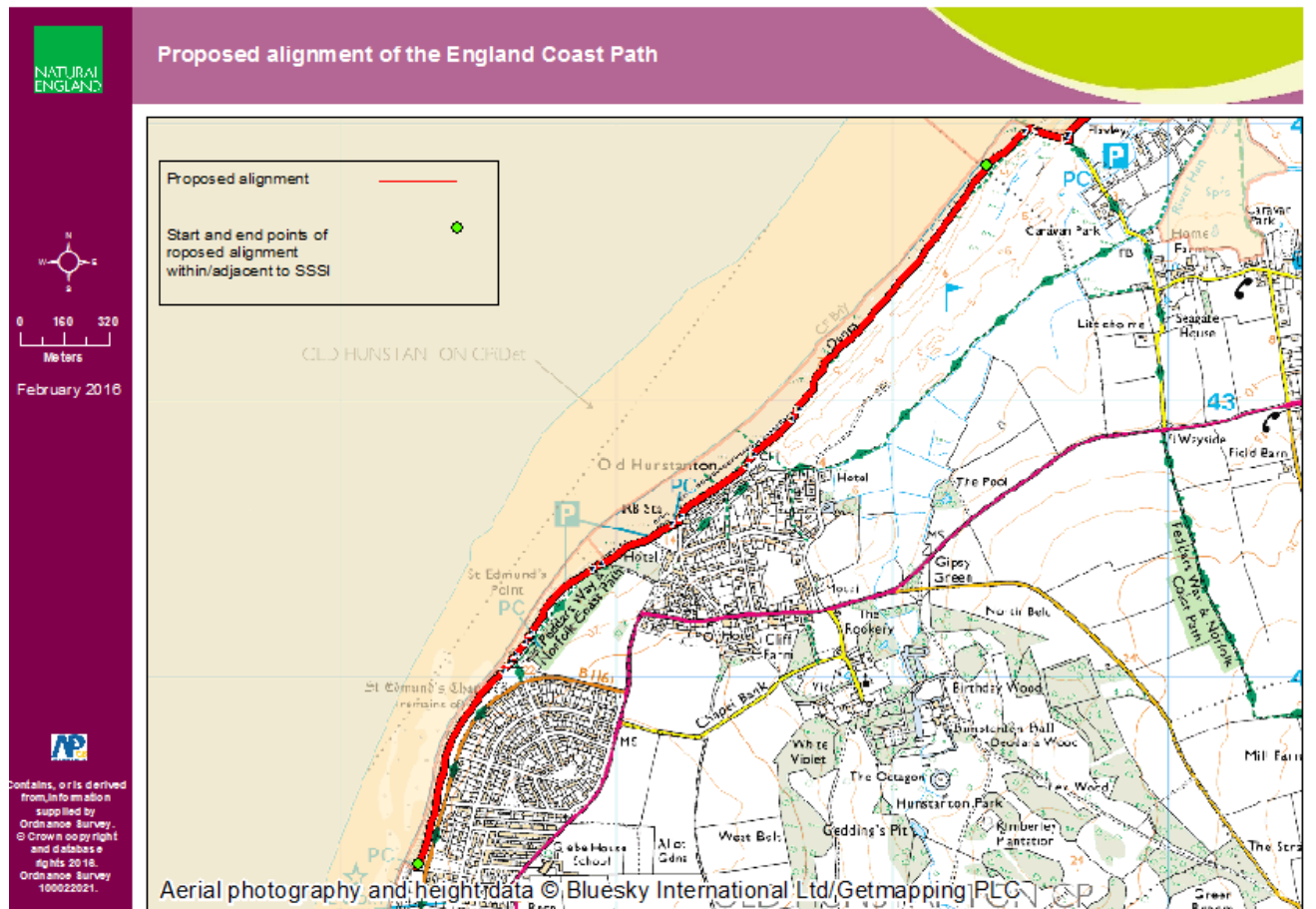
This appraisal should be read alongside Natural England's related Coastal Access Report in which the access proposal is fully described and explained. The report can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-veybourne-to-hunstanton

Section 1: SITE MAP(S) AND OVERVIEW OF NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL/ CONSIDERATION

Map

Proposed alignment along the section identified by the line on the map below.



Proposed new access provisions

Proposed alignment along the cliff top being the walked route of the Norfolk Coast Path National Trail with default spreading room seaward of the proposed trail to low mean water mark.

Some replacement way marking may be required along the existing route.

Section 2: PREDICTED CHANGE IN PUBLIC USE OF AREA

How do visitors already use the site?

Hunstanton is a popular holiday destination and has many tourist attractions and visitor facilities including long sandy beaches. The existing National Trail along the cliff tops provides for a popular walking route.

The beach is regularly used by tourists being particularly busy during the summer months.

No records of climbing within the cliff faces.

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

We do not anticipate any significant change to access patterns and levels of use as a result of the introduction of coastal access along this stretch of coast including activities associated to climbing.

Access case officer

Signed:



Name:

Sally Fishwick

Date: 19/10/17

Section 3: POTENTIAL IMPACT ON FEATURES FROM NEW ACCESS PROPOSAL

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

Potential concern about new access proposal (summary)

No concerns as route shown is through town of Hunstanton with no potential to impact features of interest.

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

No concerns in this area – there are concerns regarding use between Heacham and Kings Lynn.

Key sensitive features relevant to site (detail)

Feature	Any potential sensitivity to visitors	Any likely impact
<p>H1110. Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; Subtidal sandbanks</p> <p>H1140. Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Intertidal mudflats and sandflats</p> <p>H1150. Coastal lagoons*</p> <p>H1160. Large shallow inlets and bays</p> <p>H1170. Reefs</p> <p>H1310. Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand</p> <p>H1330. Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</p> <p>H1420. Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (<i>Sarcocornetea fruticosi</i>); Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub</p> <p>S1355. <i>Lutra lutra</i>; Otter</p> <p>S1365. <i>Phoca vitulina</i>; Common seal*</p> <p>A037 <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A040 <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A046a <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A048 <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A050 <i>Anas penelope</i>; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A051 <i>Anas strepera</i>; Gadwall (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A054 <i>Anas acuta</i>; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A065 <i>Melanitta nigra</i>; Black (common) scoter (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A067 <i>Bucephala clangula</i>; Common goldeneye (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A130 <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A141 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A143 <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Red knot (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A144 <i>Calidris alba</i>; Sanderling (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A149 <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A156 <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A157 <i>Limosa lapponica</i>; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A160 <i>Numenius arquata</i>; Eurasian curlew (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A162 <i>Tringa totanus</i>; Common redshank (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A169 <i>Arenaria interpres</i>; Ruddy turnstone (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A193 <i>Sterna hirundo</i>; Common tern (Breeding)</p> <p>A195 <i>Sterna albifrons</i>; Little tern (Breeding) Waterbird assemblage</p>	<p>The features are not sensitive in this location due to the distance between the route and the features.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Section 4: FINAL CONCLUSIONS

4A: FINAL CONCLUSION - EUROPEAN SITE

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – alone

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

X

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

- Location of route not close to features.

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

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

Screening for Likely Significant Effect under Habitats Regulations – in combination

Not applicable in this case

Other relevant plan or project	Is each other plan or project clear and specific enough for a judgement to be made at this stage about the probability or risk of its having any <i>similar</i> effect on the features in question?	Where the answer in Column 2 is Yes, what effect is it considered the other plan or project is likely to have in its own right on the features in question? Enter <u>one</u> of the following values, with brief reasons: • No effect • A non-significant effect • A significant effect Where the answer in Column 2 is No, enter "Not applicable" in this column.
N/A	N/A	N/A

Conclusions of screening in combination – *Not applicable in this case*

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

Summarise reasons for conclusion – *Not applicable in this case*

Overall Screening Decision for European site/features

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

☒

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

OR

☐

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

[Continued]

PART 4B: FINAL CONCLUSION – SSSI

Conclusion

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

X

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

OR

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

- **Location of route not close to features.**

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

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

Conclusion

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

X

A. 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



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

No concerns as route shown is through town of Hunstanton with no potential to impact features of interest.

SIGNATURE COVERING THE WHOLE OF PART 4:

Responsible officer

Name: Andy Millar

Signed:

Date: 18.10.17

Part 5: Certification:

Certification – access proposal

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

Signed:



Name:

Sally Fishwick

Date:

19/10/17

Certification – environmental impacts

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

Signed:



Name:

Andy Miller

Date:

18.10.17