



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Lord Gardiner of Kimble
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural
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Tony Juniper
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Your ref: OO CH 0719 01

7 July 2020

Dear Tony

I am replying to your letter of 22 July 2019 to the Secretary of State requesting confirmation of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation Variation) Order 2019, in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) section 83(3). I am replying as the Minister responsible for designated landscapes.

I have considered the substantial documentation setting out the background and supporting evidence leading to the creation of the Designation Variation Order and the proposed boundary variations which will add approximately 38 square kilometres to the current Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This additional area in the Counties of Essex and Suffolk includes:

- the majority of the Stour Estuary, estuary valley slopes at Brantham and from east of Mistley to Parkeston Quay (in Tendring and Babergh Districts)
- the tributary valley land extending inland from the existing SC&H AONB boundary westwards along Freston Brook (in Babergh District)
- the Samford Valley from the SC&H AONB boundary at Stutton Bridge, running north, then largely west towards the A12, (in Babergh District).

I am content that all the statutory requirements for designation of AONBs (CRoW sections 82 and 83) have been satisfactorily fulfilled. In particular I have considered Natural England's evaluation of the representations received during the formal Notice period in 2019 (Core Document 7b) and also during the informal 2016 and the formal 2018 statutory consultations as noted in the 'Consultation Analysis Report' published in February 2019 on Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suffolk-coast-and-heaths-area-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-boundary-variation>. These reports provide a clear rationale for Natural England's decisions for accepting or rejecting each of the alternative boundary suggestions submitted by stakeholders or members of the public; including grounds for retaining the AONB's existing name, notwithstanding the addition of the new areas in Essex County.

This letter should be taken to constitute the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' decision to confirm The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation Variation) Order 2019, without modification.

This letter is being copied to the relevant Local Authorities, Members of Parliament and those who made representations during the Notice period. It will also be published on Gov.uk.

Yours ever,
John