# England Coast Path Stretch: Bawdsey to Aldeburgh



**Report BSA 5: Hazlewood Marshes car park to Aldeburgh** 

# Part 5.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Hazlewood Marshes car park (TM 4427 5819)
End Point:	Fort Green car park, Aldeburgh (TM 4647 5599)
Relevant Maps:	BSA 5a to BSA 5c

5.1.1 This is one of a series of linked but legally separate reports published by Natural England under section 51 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which make proposals to the Secretary of State for improved public access along and to this stretch of coast between Bawdsey to Aldeburgh.

5.1.2 This report covers length BSA 5 of the stretch, which is the coast between Hazlewood Marshes car park and Aldeburgh Fort Green car park. It makes free-standing statutory proposals for this part of the stretch, and seeks approval for them by the Secretary of State in their own right under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

5.1.3 The report explains how we propose to implement the England Coast Path ("the trail") on this part of the stretch, and details the likely consequences in terms of the wider 'Coastal Margin' that will be created if our proposals are approved by the Secretary of State. Our report also sets out:

- any proposals we think are necessary for restricting or excluding coastal access rights to address
  particular issues, in line with the powers in the legislation; and
- any proposed powers for the trail to be capable of being relocated on particular sections ("rollback"), if this proves necessary in the future because of coastal change.

5.1.4 There is also a single Overview document for the whole of this stretch of coast, explaining common principles and background. This and the other individual reports relating to the stretch should be read in conjunction with the Overview. The Overview explains, among other things, how we have considered any potential environmental impacts of improving public access to this part of the coast, and this report, and other separately published assessments we refer to, then provides more detail on these aspects where appropriate.

# Part 5.2: Proposals Narrative

# The trail:

5.2.1 Follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way.

5.2.2 Initially is inland of the coast but, where possible follows the coastline quite closely with good views of the sea.

5.2.3 Between sections BSA-5-S001 to BSA-5-S024 (maps BSA 5a and 5b) the route is inland because of excepted land and a significant inland diversion is necessary to take the trail around Hazlewood Marshes which is inaccessible because access on the sea bank is no longer available as a result of damage sustained during the 2013 tidal surge. (See Future Change, below and Part 7 of the Overview).

5.2.4 In part follows a route similar to the existing Suffolk Coast Path but departs from this in order to get closer to the sea and have sea views.

# Protection of the environment:

In this part of the report, we explain how we have taken account of environmental protection objectives in developing our proposals for improved coastal access.

5.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Alde-Ore Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Alde-Ore and Butley Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Alde-Ore and Butley Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Outer Thames Estuary (SPA)
- Orfordness-Shingle Street SAC
- Alde-Ore Estuary Ramsar
- Orfordness-Havergate National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- Suffolk Coast and Heaths area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Orfordness: the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment test buildings and associated structures (SM)

The extent of designated areas listed are shown in the Overview in Map C1: Key International Environmental Designations, Map C2: Key National Environmental Designations and Map D: Landscape Designations.

The following table brings together design features of our access proposals that will help to protect the environment along this length of the coast.

## 5.2.6 Measures to protect the environment

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
BSA 5c	BSA-5- S030 to BSA-5- S032	<ul> <li>On Orford Ness:</li> <li>There will be a section 24 direction to restrict dogs all year round;</li> <li>There will be a section 24 direction to restrict access to marked routes only all year round.</li> <li>This affects part of the coastal margin seaward of the trail – see map 5c</li> </ul>	This addresses concerns in relation to damage to vegetated shingle disturbance to breeding and wintering birds
BSA 5a BSA 5c	Between BSA-5- S017 and BSA-5-018 Between BSA-5- S029 and BSA-5- S030	<ul> <li>Branded information panels around the estuary explaining the sensitivity of the site:</li> <li>on the northern edge of Aldeburgh Marshes;</li> <li>where the public footpath ends and the trail continues to the bank south of Aldeburgh.</li> </ul>	To inform walkers and reduce disturbance to breeding and wintering birds.

5.2.7 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation. For more information about how we came to this conclusion; see the following assessments of the access proposals that we have published separately:

- A Habitats Regulations Assessment relating to any potential impact on the conservation objectives of European sites.
- Our Nature Conservation Assessment, in which we document our conclusions in relation to other potential impacts on nature conservation.

Part 6b of the Overview includes some contextual information about protecting the environment along this length of coast.

# Accessibility:

5.2.8 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route. However, the natural coastal terrain is often challenging for people with reduced mobility and this is the case on sections of our proposed route because:

- The trail would follow an uneven grass footpath in cattle-grazed pasture between sections BSA-5-S020 and BSA-5-S022 (map 5b);
- At BSA-5-S024 (map 5b) and BSA-5-S031 (map 5c) where it would be necessary to ascend/descend steps at the banks.

## See part 6a of the Overview - 'Recreational issues' - for more information.

## Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

## Estuary

5.2.9 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Alde and the River Alde, including Short Reach and Westrow Reach, extending upstream from the open coast. Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of these rivers as far as Snape Bridge (BSA-4-S055FW, map 4e), as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on maps BSA 5a to BSA 5c.

# See part 5 of the Overview for a detailed analysis of the options considered for the Alde-Ore estuary and our resulting proposals.

## Landward boundary of coastal margin

5.2.10 **Landward boundary of the coastal margin:** We have used our discretion on some sections of the route to map the landward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical boundary such as a fence line, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 5.3.1 below.

5.2.11 The Proposals Tables show where we are proposing to alter the default landward boundary of the coastal margin. These proposals are set out in columns 5b and 5c of table 5.3.1. Where these columns are left blank, we are making no such proposals, so the default landward boundary applies. See the note relating to Columns 5b & 5c [above Table 5.3.1] explaining what this means in practice.

See also part 3 of the Overview - 'Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps', for a more detailed explanation of the default extent of the coastal margin and how we may use our discretion to adjust the margin, either to add land or to provide clarity.

# Restrictions and exclusions:

5.2.12 **Restrictions and/or exclusions:** We have proposed to exclude and restrict access by direction under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) in certain places along this section of coast.

Access to the saltmarsh and flats in the coastal margin between Hazlewood Marshes and Aldeburgh, seaward of route sections BSA-5-S001 to BSA-5-S028, will be excluded all year round. This is proposed under section 25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) because we are satisfied that the land is unsuitable for public access. The exclusion does not affect the route and will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See map E5a for further detail.

Most of the saltmarsh on the Alde-Ore Estuary is subject to regular tidal inundation, and is generally uneven and wet underfoot, incised with creeks and channels, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers. The area of flat on the Alde-Ore Estuary is predominantly soft mud at low tide that is difficult to walk on, which becomes inundated when the tide rises.

## Exclusion of access for land management

Access to the coastal margin will be excluded on Orford Ness. This is proposed under Section 24 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) for the purpose of land management, to enable this visitor attraction to continue to be managed for public access. See maps E5a & E5b for further detail.

- Orford Ness is a complex site with various concerns that could be impacted from the introduction of coastal access rights, as follows:
  - Areas of saltmarsh and mud unsuitable for general public access;
  - Public safety concerns from unexploded ordnance;
  - Concerns with damage from recreational access to vegetated shingle;
  - Concerns with disturbance from recreational access to breeding and wintering birds.

The exclusion of coastal access rights on the Ness for the purpose of land management replicates existing visitor management. The restriction also has the effect of preventing access to areas of saltmarsh and mud unsuitable for general public access, protecting the public from any risks from unexploded ordnance, and protecting the notified features from damage or disturbance from the general public.

The existing visitor management (at time of publication) that allows seasonal access to permissive routes from the jetty and slipway on the Ness, and permissive access to boat users on three short permissive routes across the spit at the southern end, will be able to continue without any additional coastal access rights.

5.2.13 These directions will not prevent or affect:

- any existing local use of the land by right: such use is not covered by coastal access rights;
- any other use people already make of the land locally by formal agreement with the landowner, or by informal permission or traditional toleration; or
- use of any registered rights of common or any rights at common law or by Royal Charter etc.

5.2.14 Any such use is not prohibited or limited by these arrangements.

5.2.15 The directions we give are intended to avoid any new public rights being created over the area in question in view of the difficult terrain of mudflats and saltmarsh, and in view of the various concerns outlined above on Orford Ness.

# Coastal erosion:

5.2.16 **Coastal erosion:** Natural England is able to propose that the route of the trail would be able to change in the future, without further approval from the Secretary of State, in response to coastal change. This would happen in accordance with the criteria and procedures for 'roll-back' set out in part 7 of the Overview.

Natural England may only propose the use of this roll-back power:

- as a result of coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes or encroachment by the sea, or
- in order to link with other parts of the route that need to roll back in direct response to such changes.

5.2.17 Column 4 of table 5.3.1 indicates where roll-back has been proposed in relation to a route section. Where this is the case, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps BSA 5a to BSA 5c as the proposed route of the trail.

5.2.18 If at any time in the future any part of a route section upon which roll-back has been specified needs, in Natural England's view, to change in order for the overall route to remain viable, the new route for the part in question will be determined by Natural England without further reference to the Secretary of State. This will be done in accordance with the criteria and procedures described under the title 'Roll-back' in part 7 of the Overview and section 4.10 of the Coastal Access Scheme. If this happens, the new route will become the approved route for that section for the purposes of the Order which determines where coastal access rights apply.

On sections for which roll-back is <u>not</u> proposed in table 5.3.1, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps BSA 5a to BSA 5c as the proposed route of the trail.

# Other future change:

5.2.19 There are also places described in this report where we foresee the need for future changes to the proposed access provisions due to coastal process reasons. These are summarised at part 7 of the Overview.

5.2.20 At this point we do not foresee any other need for future changes to the access provisions that we have proposed within this report.

## See parts 7 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.

# Establishment of the trail:

5.2.21 Below we summarise how our proposed route for the trail would be physically established to make it ready for public use before any new rights come into force.

Establishment works will only start on this length of coast once these proposals have been approved by the Secretary of State. The works may therefore either precede or follow the start of establishment works on other lengths of coast within the stretch, and detailed in their separate reports.

5.2.22 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £31,980 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Suffolk County Council, in relation to the management of the existing Suffolk Coast Path;
- the conclusions of our deliberations in relation to potential impacts on the environment; and
- information gathered while visiting affected land and talking to the people who own and manage it about the options for the route.

5.2.23 The main elements to the overall cost comprise:

- A number of new signs would be needed on the trail, in particular on route sections where the proposed route differs from that of the existing Suffolk Coast Path; any signs and information boards with outdated information about the existing route of the Suffolk Coast Path may require replacement.
- Boards providing additional information about the sensitivity of features on or near the trail will be installed.

Table 1 shows our estimate of the capital cost for each of the main elements of physical establishment described above.

## Table 1: Estimate of capital costs

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5.2.24 Once the Secretary of State's decision on our report has been notified, and further to our conversations with land managers during the route planning stage, Suffolk County Council will liaise with affected land owners and occupiers about relevant aspects of the design, installation and maintenance of the new signs and infrastructure that are needed on their land. Prior to works being carried out on the ground, all necessary permissions, authorisations and consents will be obtained. All such works would conform to the published standards for National Trails and the other criteria described in our Coastal Access Scheme.

## Maintenance of the trail:

5.2.25 Because the trail on this length of coast will form part of the National Trail being created around the whole coast of England called the England Coast Path, we envisage that it will be maintained to the same high quality standards as other National Trails in England (see The New Deal; Management of National Trails in England from April 2013: details at Annex A of the Overview).

5.2.26 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be  $\pounds 2,7023$  (exclusive of any VAT payable). In developing this estimate we have taken account of the formula used to calculate Natural England's contribution to the maintenance of other National Trails.

# Part 5.3: Proposals Tables

See Part 3 of Overview for guidance on reading and understanding the tables below

# 5.3.1 Section Details – Maps BSA 5a to BSA 5c: Hazlewood Marshes car park to Aldeburgh Fort Green car park

Key notes on table:

- 1. Column 2 an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 5.3.2: Other options considered.
- Column 4 'No' means no roll-back is proposed for this route section. 'Yes normal' means rollback is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.
- 3. Column 4 'Yes see table 5.3.3' means roll-back is proposed, but refer to that table below about our likely approach to implementing it for this route section. This is because a more complex situation exists in this case and consideration must be given to how roll-back may happen in relation to excepted land, a protected site etc.
- 4. Column 5a Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. "No" means none present on this route section.
- 5. Columns 5b and 5c Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
BSA 5a	BSA-5- S001FW to BSA-5- S009FW	Public footway (verge)	No	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	
BSA 5a	BSA-5- S010 and BSA-5- S011	Other existing walked route	No	No	Hedgerow	Clarity and cohesion	
BSA 5a	BSA-5- S012	Other existing walked route	No	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	
BSA 5a	BSA-5- S013FW	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
BSA 5a	BSA-5- S014RD	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No			
BSA 5a	BSA-5- S015FW	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No			
BSA 5b	BSA-5- S016FP	Public footpath	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No			
BSA 5b	BSA-5- S017	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No	Edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
BSA 5b	BSA-5- S018FP	Public footpath	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No	Fence	Clarity and cohesion	
BSA 5b	BSA-5- S019FP to BSA-5- S021FP	Public footpath	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No			
BSA 5b	BSA-5- S022	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No			
BSA 5b	BSA-5- S023	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No			
BSA 5b	BSA-5- S024	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	Yes - bank			
BSA 5b	BSA-5- S025	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	Yes - bank			
BSA 5b	BSA-5- S026	Public footpath	Yes - See table 5.3.3	Yes - bank			
BSA 5c	BSA-5- S026 cont'd	Public footpath	Yes - See table 5.3.3	Yes - bank			
BSA 5c	BSA-5- S027 to BSA-5- S029	Public footpath	Yes - See table 5.3.3	Yes - bank			
BSA 5c	BSA-5- S030	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No			
BSA 5c	BSA-5- S031	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	Yes - bank			

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
BSA 5c	BSA-5- S032 to BSA-5- S035	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	Yes - bank			
BSA 5c	BSA-5- S035	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	
BSA 5c	BSA-5- S036 and BSA-5- S037	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	No			
BSA 5c	BSA-5- S038	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 5.3.3	Yes - bank			

# 5.3.2 Other options considered: Maps BSA 5a to BSA 5c Hazlewood Marshes car park to Aldeburgh Fort Green car park

Map(s	Route section number(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
Map 5	BSA-5- S001 to BSA-5- S025	We considered a route seaward of the golf course and nearby houses	We opted for the proposed route because: there is no access seaward of the houses because the land is intertidal
BSA 5a and 5b	BSA-5- S012 to BSA-5- S025	Saxmundham Road along a	<ul> <li>We opted for the proposed route because:</li> <li>the private road is not wide enough for walkers and traffic: there is insufficient room to easily enable walkers to step off the road to allow vehicles to pass</li> <li>we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme</li> </ul>

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
Map 5a	BSA-5- S012 to BSA-5- S025	We considered a route off the Saxmundham Road along a private road and then east across the margin of an arable field, before heading south on the adjacent land to the river wall.	We opted for the proposed route because: the land to the south of the arable field is excepted land and excluded from coastal access rights
Map 5a	BSA-5- S013 FW	We considered various route options leading off the river wall around Hall Farm	We opted for the proposed route because: land covered by the farm buildings and shops and their curtilage, are regarded as excepted land and therefore excluded from coastal access rights
Map 5a	BSA-5- S013 FW	We considered route options at the Works, the former brick pit near Brickfields	We opted for the proposed route because: the route would lead to excepted land covered by the farm buildings and shops and their curtilage
Map 5a	BSA-5- S013 FW	We considered route options at Brickfields	We opted for the proposed route because: it is on a public footpath away from the housing development, excepted land and potential privacy concerns.
Map 5a, 5b and 5c	BSA-5- S013 FW to BSA-5- S034	We considered the current Suffolk Coast Path to the north of Aldeburgh	<ul> <li>We opted for the proposed route because :</li> <li>it is closer to the estuary and provides views of the estuary</li> <li>it met the coast at the start/end point of the next stretch of England Coast Path (Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea starting at Fort Green car park, Aldeburgh)</li> <li>enabled walkers to experience the seaside town of Aldeburgh</li> </ul>

Note: Any public rights of way not forming part of the proposed trail would remain available for people to use under their pre-existing rights.

5.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps BSA 5a to BSA 5c: Hazlewood Marshes car park to Aldeburgh Fort Green car park

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
BSA 5a, 5b and 5c	BSA-5- S014 to BSA-5- S035	Buildings, curtilage, gardens, Aldeburgh Hall Pit SSSI and Aldeburgh Brick Pit SSSI	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (e.g. buildings, curtilage, gardens) or SSSI we will choose a route landward, following discussions with relevant experts, owners and occupiers. In reaching this judgement we will have full regard to the need to seek a fair balance between the interests of potentially affected owners and occupiers and those of the public.

In relation to all other sections where roll-back has been proposed, any later adjustment of the trail is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.

# Part 5.4: Maps

### 5.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
BSA 5a	Hazlewood Marshes car park to Victoria Road
BSA 5b	Victoria Road, Aldeburgh to Aldeburgh Marshes
BSA 5c	Aldeburgh Marshes to Fort Green car park, Aldeburgh
BSA E5a	Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report BSA 5
BSA E5b and E5c	Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report BSA 5



#### PROPOSALS

### **Trail Sections**



Maps that show sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed use the following trail categories. Information on the existing status and infrastructure is not shown.



Trail using existing South West Coast Path

Alternative or optional alternative route using existing South West Coast Path

Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:

- BW Public bridleway
- BY Public byway
- CP Cycletrack (pedestrian)
- CT Cycletrack (cycles only)
- FP Public footpath
- FW Public footway (Pavement)
- **RB** Restricted byway
- RD Public road

#### **Coastal Margin**

#### Explanatory note

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.

Coastal margin landward of the trail



Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land

### Other Information

Other access rights and routes

- Public bridleways
- ► + + Public byways
- ----- Public footpaths
- ··· Restricted byways
- South West Coast Path
- Sustrans national routes

### Existing access land

### Infrastructure types

For status of each, where shown on map, see colour codes below



#### Infrastructure status

Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

 Existing steps to be retained
 New steps required
 Existing steps to be removed Coastal Access - Bawdsey to Aldeburgh - Natural England's Proposals

Report BSA 5 - Hazlewood Marshes car park to Aldeburgh

NATURAL ENGLAND

## Map BSA 5a - Hazlewood Marshes car park to Victoria Road, Aldeburgh





Coastal Access - Bawdsey to Aldeburgh - Natural England's Proposals Report BSA 5 - Hazlewood Marshes car park to Aldeburgh

## Map BSA 5b - Victoria Road, Aldeburgh to Aldeburgh Marshes



### Coastal Access - Bawdsey to Aldeburgh - Natural England's Proposals Report BSA 5 - Hazlewood Marshes car park to Aldeburgh

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## Map BSA 5c - Aldeburgh Marshes to Fort Green car park, Aldeburgh



## Coastal Access - Bawdsey to Aldeburgh - Natural England's Proposals Map BSA E5a: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report BSA5

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Coastal Access - Bawdsey to Aldeburgh - Natural England's Proposals

### Map BSA E5b and E5c:



Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report BSA5

