

Coastal Access – Wallasea Island to Burnham-on-Crouch



Representations on WIB1

April 2021

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1. Introduction

This document details representations we have received on the stated coastal access report. These fall into two categories:

- Representations received from persons or bodies that must be sent in full to the Secretary of State (‘full’ representations, reproduced below); and
- Those which have not come from those persons or bodies whose representations we are required to send in full to the Secretary of State (‘other’ representations, summarised below).

It also sets out any comments that Natural England choose to make in response to these representations.

2. Background

Natural England’s compendium of reports setting out its proposals for improved access to the coast from Wallasea Island to Burnham-on-Crouch was submitted to the Secretary of State on 29 January 2020. This began an eight-week period during which representations and objections about each constituent report could be made.

In relation to the report for WIB 1 Wallasea Island to Ferry Road Hullbridge, Natural England received five representations, of which two were made by organisations or individuals whose representations must be sent in full to the Secretary of State in accordance with paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 1A to the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. These ‘full’ representations are reproduced in Section 3 of this document together with Natural England’s comments where relevant.

As required by the legislation this document also summarises and, where relevant, comments on the three representations submitted by other individuals or organisations, referred to here as 'other' representations. Of those three 'other' representations, none contain similar or identical points.

Before making a determination in respect of a coastal access report, the Secretary of State must consider all 'full' representations and our summary of 'other' representations, together with Natural England's comments on each.

No further representations were received after the period of eight weeks beginning with the date on which the report was first advertised on Natural England's website.

3. Record of 'full' representations and Natural England's comments on them

Representation number:

MCA / WIBstretch/ R /1/WIB0662

Organisation/ person making representation:

The Ramblers Association

Route section(s) specific to this representation:

Whole stretch

Other reports within stretch to which this representation also relates:

WIB 2, 3, 4, 5

Representation in full

We give our full support to Natural England's proposals for the England Coast Path between Wallasea Island and Burnham-on-Crouch.

Natural England's comments

Natural England thank the Ramblers Association for their supportive comments.

Representation number:

MCA / WIB1/ R /3/WIB0638

Organisation/ person making representation:

Essex County Council

Route section(s) specific to this representation:

Report WIB 1: Map WIB E1b, Sections WIB-1- S013 to WIB-1-S025

Other reports within stretch to which this representation also relates:

WIB 2, 3, 4, 5

Representation in full

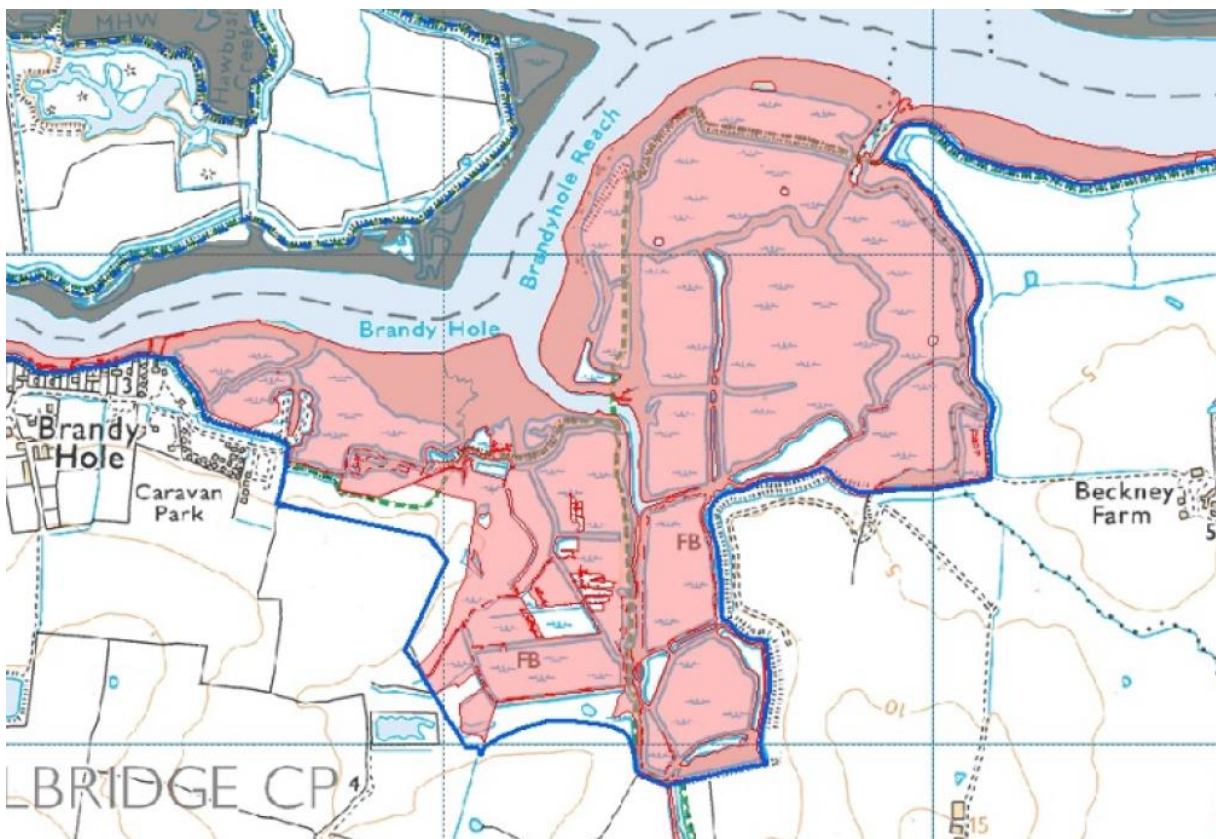
Essex County Council are wholly supportive of Natural England and the England Coast Path scheme, working closely, with dedicated officers, to ensure that the right route is created and the correct balance is struck between the rights of landowners and the public and our internationally important wildlife sites. The Scheme will bring great benefits to the Essex Coast through economy and tourism and will support our coastal communities, businesses and transport infrastructure. We remain supportive and welcome the scheme however the accuracy within this report is a concern and we wish to see the errors addressed to ensure that the public and the County Council are served with correct information.

The report contains errors and inaccurate information relating to the s25a restrictions and to some sections of the route identified as existing highway.

Report WIB 1: Map WIB E1b, Sections WIB-1- S013 to WIB-1-S025

There are numerous small and several large errors/commissions within the S25a directions mapping. It is important that the public are provided with clear and accurate health and safety information regarding coastal access. The omission of areas of saltmarsh and flat implies that it is suitable for public access which we don't believe is the case. The inclusion of areas of land that are not saltmarsh or flat is equally problematic, implying that areas are unsafe for public access when in reality they are safe and should be part of the coastal margin.

The map below shows an example of one area where there are numerous small areas not included within the S25a direction. We believe that most, if not all of these, are indistinguishable from the surrounding saltmarsh or flat habitat so should be included within the direction.



Natural England's comments

Natural England agree with the general content of this representation and will review and where necessary amend the maps that are made publically available once the access rights are confirmed post establishment (under the commencement order)

Much of the saltmarsh and flat that is determined to be unsafe for the public to access through their coastal access rights is reviewed by site visits from the shore looking across the expanse of saltmarsh and flat. We also consider information made available to us from a range of sources regarding public strandings and rescues within the intertidal area. The final mapped boundaries for the saltmarsh and flat access exclusions are then determined from the habitat inventories held by Natural England. As saltmarsh and flats are transient habitats the point in time mapped boundaries may not precisely align with the feature as it exists in real time. As such the Section 25A restriction on public access to saltmarsh and flat is more about the habitat type than a precise line on a map. Natural England will be working with Essex County Council to provide suitable signage and information at key locations to explain the restrictions to the public.

However Natural England agree that there are small areas identified in the map presented by Essex County Council where the saltmarsh and flat habitat inventory layer doesn't coincide with mapped boundaries and there are small pockets of qualifying land that didn't show up due to a difference in mapping scales.

In Map E1b, only some of the areas showing as white should in fact have the pink shading to indicate the S25A access restriction. The areas that should also have the access exclusion are those showing as surrounded by an exclusion and Natural England will amend this on our exclusions and restrictions map when approved by the Secretary of State.

We will review closely the boundaries of the three white parcels grouped together on the western side, as the public may currently be accessing these areas of dryer ground from the existing public right of way and the old seawall that extends out into the marshes.

4. Summary of 'other' representations making non-common points, and Natural England's comments on them

Representation ID:

MCA/WIBstretch/R/2/WIB0008

Organisation/ person making representation:

Disabled Ramblers

Name of site:

Report map reference:

Whole stretch

Route sections on or adjacent to the land:

Whole stretch

Other reports within stretch to which this representation also relates

WIB 2, 3, 4, 5

Summary of representation:

The Disabled Ramblers noted that Natural England should ensure that, unless the natural terrain itself prevents access, any existing or new infrastructure along the Coast Path does not present a barrier to their ability to progress along the Coast Path.

Natural England's comment:

Natural England welcome the Disabled Ramblers comments regarding infrastructure that may present as a barrier to many users of the England Coast Path and will work with Essex County Council as the access authority who have responsibility for establishing and maintaining the trail to ensure all users are considered and structures and surfacing meets all necessary legislation, including that designed to protect wildlife.

Representation ID:

MCA/WIB1/R/2/WIB0663

Organisation/ person making representation:

Ashingdon Parish Council.

Name of site:

Report map reference:

Whole stretch

Route sections on or adjacent to the land:

Whole stretch

Other reports within stretch to which this representation also relates

none

Summary of representation:

Ashingdon Parish Council is in full agreement with the route in WIB1

Natural England's comment:

Natural England thank Ashingdon Parish Council for their support

Representation ID:

MCA/WIB1/R/1/WIB0066

Organisation/ person making representation:

Crouch Coastal Community Team (for which Rochford District Council is the Accountable Body)

Name of site:

Report map reference:

Report WIB1 - Maps WIB 1a to WIB 1h

Route sections on or adjacent to the land:

Whole report WIB 1

Other reports within stretch to which this representation also relates

none

Summary of representation:

The Crouch Coastal Community Team agrees with the proposal

Natural England's comment:

Natural England thank The Crouch Coastal Community Team for their support.