

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Meeting Date:	Thursday 23 January 2025, 2.00pm-4.00pm
Venue:	Endeavour House, Lime Floor 5, Room 2

			Paper Number
1.	14:00	Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	14.05	Minutes of previous meeting – DRAFT	LAF 24/29
3.	14.10	Declaration of interest	
4.	14.10	Network Rail Updates	LAF 25/01 – SK Appendix 1
5.	14.20	Proposals for level crossing closures in Suffolk	Presentation-NR
6.	14.50	Suffolk Energy Schemes	LAF 25/02 AW
7.	15.00	King Charles III England Coast Path	LAF 25/03 AW
8.	15.10	Major Developments Update - Felixstowe	LAF 25/04 CB
9.	15.20	Suffolk’s Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan	LAF 25/05 CB
10.	15.30	Suffolk’s local transport plan	Verbal AW
11.	15.35	A12 Major Roadworks Improvements	LAF 25/06 BH
12.	15.45	Staff update	Verbal AW
13.	15.50	Any Other Business	
14.	15.55	Public Question Time	
15.	16.00	Date of Next Meetings: Dates and venues tbc (April 2025, July 2025, October 2025)	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of Meeting
Paper:	LAF 24/29
Author/Contact:	Jennifer Green
Meeting Date:	Thursday 24 October 2024, 1.00pm-3.00pm
Venue:	Melton Parish Council Offices, Melton IP12 1QT

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping.

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair); Christopher Bower (CB) (Vice Chair); Suzanne Bartlett (SB); Margaret Hancock (MH); Rowley Wison (RW); Clare Phillips (CP); Susan Mobbs (SM); Monica Pipe (MP); Cllr Joanna Spicer (JS); Jim Wayman (JWa); Adrian Shepherd (AS); Anthony Wright (AWr); Ed Thompson (ET)

Minutes: Jennifer Green (JG)

SCC Officers Present: David Falk (DF); Steve Kerr (SK); Samantha Bye (SBye); Claire Dickson (CD); Annette Robinson (AR)

East Suffolk Council Officer: James Goldberg (JGbrg)

Apologies and Absences: Gordon Merfield

The meeting was preceded by a morning site visit at Wilford Bridge led by CD.

CD gave an update about the King Charles III coastal Path and the role of the operational rights of way team. The site visit involved explaining the complexities of The King Charles III coastal path and new public access.

BH thanked CD for leading the site visit in the morning.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 July 2024 LAF24/22 were reviewed and agreed. These will now be published and made available to the public via the SCC website.

3. Declaration of Interest – None

4. Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood

JGbrg gave a presentation and shared a map of The North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood. The map included residential of 1500 houses, education, community and employment provision.

JGbrg stated that planning is to provide a safe sustainable community and connections to wider countryside.

JGbrg advised East Suffolk Council are leading the Masterplan. There are Public Rights of Way (PRoW) through the site.

JGbrg stated there is a community engagement program steering the masterplan. Public consultation includes statutory consultees, citizen panel, Felixstowe community and focussed workshops involving community groups especially nature and sports groups.

JGbrg stated that the masterplan is a leisure-led approach with environmental resilience, raising the bar for Suffolk.

JGbrg highlighted the non-residential areas, including the Neighbourhood hub.

JGbrg emphasised working with the landscape. The northern edge of the site has 28 hectares of open space. Gulpher Road has a quiet lane.

JGbrg stated this is a draft framework plan, second round of approvals imminent. Feedback included more open space.

DF asked what is the density per hectare?

JGbrg advised 40-45 dwellings per hectare.

MP asked about blue coloured areas on the map.

JGbrg stated they are two primary schools. First intake would be September 2027.

DF asked about playing fields.

JGbrg stated will not be moving the playing fields as well established in current location.

CD asked about managing playing fields which are often used as a dog exercise area. Is there a way to market a dog exercise area? Could a RAMS manager advise what open space can be used?

JGbrg advised engagement with landowner for a dog walking facility.

JS asked would there be a guarantee of natural areas, would the development utilise PRoW?

JGbrg advised no agreements in place but there are strategic routes for walking and cycling including a new route through the Persimmons development, adding that the Persimmons site was established first and had to work around the landscape.

JGbrg stated phase 2 approved but liaising with Head of Persimmons.

DF asked about leisure centre.

JGbrg stated leisure centre is not a statutory duty but is subsidised to provide a sustainable model for future growth.

CD asked about the Gulpher Road cycling route to primary school.

SB stated travel habits change with the facility of separate cycle lane.

JGbrg advised no detailed discussions yet but plans would include the provision of a shared 3m pedestrian and cycle route.

BH asked when the next consultation date is? SLAF have a working group to discuss plans and respond.

JGbrg advised next consultation event is 7th November. Question time ticketed free event.

ACTION: JG to email presentation slides to SLAF members

ACTION: CB to coordinate meeting of working group.

JS asked to take SLAF draft response to the SLAF January meeting.

5. Sizewell C update (AR)

AR gave an update on Sizewell C and the large road schemes with new access including on-site and across Leiston walking and cycling improvements.

AR advised East Suffolk Council website has minutes and presentations from the SZC community and transport forums with updated photographs.

AR stated the access road from Lovers Lane to the temporary construction area (TCA) was manned during working hours at the crossing point on Bridleway 19. AR stated accommodation will be provided at the Pontins site at Pakefield And not at the Ancillary Construction Area on the edge of Leiston. This site has the new SZC offices and will be used in connection with construction activities including material deliveries

AR stated the highways team have three major road schemes in package of works. These are the:-

- AD6- Main development site and the alternative to Bridleway 19.
- Sizewell Link Road-from the A12 near Kelsale to the B1122 at Theberton
- Two Village Bypass – bypassing Stratford St Andrew and Farnham.

AD6 - This will provide a new bridleway linking from King Georges Avenue, through Wild Aldhurst to Abbey Road then via the new main site roundabout and alongside the East Bridge Road. A new rail line will also be built from the existing Leiston branch line into the TCA crossing over Abbey Road and the new bridleway.

Design pack layout would require technical approval and need to meet national standards with a test surface using Flexi-pave providing a multiuser network.

Coast Path & public footpath 21 – This has now been closed and an alternative route provided in accordance with the discharge of requirement 10, public rights of way implementation plan. The area landward of the temporary footpath is now fenced off with security fencing.

AR stated PRoW severed by Sizewell Link Road but investigating the use of underpasses to improve access

Two Village bypass – investigating providing additional access that would link existing and diverted public rights of way.

Benhall Fen Meadow work completed with the restoration and construction of a dry path.

ACTION: AR to email slides to JG to email to SLAF members.

6. Suffolk Energy Schemes

BH advised Bramford to Twinstead approved

CD advised she was involved with examinations for DCO temporary closures. There was a PRoW management plan and CD team was monitoring conditions on the ground.

BH advised if AW has emailed Sealink.

7. King Charles III England Coast Path (CD)

CD stated there were additional areas of new access. Not all of the ECP aligns with existing PRoW. Access will include dedicated routes; not as legally recorded PRoW and therefore will not appear on the Definitive Map.

CD stated ECP will show on O.S. mapping

CD stated it was a NE decision with National Highways to use the Orwell Bridge for the ECP between Shotley Gate and Felixstowe.

CD stated the Orwell Bridge has always been used as a regional trail. There was liaison with the public health team.

JS asked how much SCC can promote the ferry service.

CD stated SCC can promote ferry. DF added SCC had previously promoted the ferry service through leaflets.

8. SLAF Annual report to Cabinet (BH)

BH gave a verbal update on the annual report to cabinet including Cllr Lockington concerns about the Fonnereau Way.

SK advised security fencing had been torn down. The developer currently owns the bridge over the railway, but this would pass to SCC once the various issues preventing the bridge from being adopted have been resolved. These include the need for adequate access to maintain the bridge and drainage. There is a temporary diversion of the Fonnereau Way to avoid the bridge.

9. East of England Local Access Forum Meeting

BH gave a verbal update on East of England Regional Access Forum meeting advising that Thurrock, Luton, and Peterborough do not have a LAF.

10. Network Rail Updates

SK gave verbal update on Needham Market, works have started onsite. The funding agreement has not yet been signed by NR and this will be raised with NR at the next Gipsy Lane update meeting.

SK advised he is attending a meeting to discuss the kissing gate at the Gipsy Lane end.

SK advised officers are attending monthly meetings with the ALXR project team (All Level Crossings Reduction). Designs have been shared with SCC for:-

- S29 Hawk End Lane- FP12 Elmswell
- S16 Gislingham – BR10 Finningham
- S30 Lords 29 – FP9 Elmswell
- S04 Island – FP18 Bentley

SCC has responded to all consultations. Hawk End Lane is the most advanced, with works anticipated to start soon, whilst the design for S17 Paynes (FPs 22 and 26 Gislingham) is currently delayed as the diversion alignment is affected by an existing drainage ditch. Further discussion is required for the Island site, as there is a pinch point in the available width due to the county council's Bridge Vehicle Incursion (BVI) scheme.

SK advised Network Rail (NR) are now considering tranches of TWAO applications to address PROW level crossing safety. The first tranche will seek to deal with the highest priority cases (for instance, the Weatherby crossing in Newmarket and Stennetts). It is possible FP6 Brantham may also be included.

AWr identified a typo in the ALXR item - FP12 Brantham should read FP 12 Elmswell.

ACTION: SK to liaise with NR for Steve Day to attend January SLAF meeting

ACTION: SK to share design of improvement works A14 re Higham with the forum when this is made available.

11. SLAF membership terms

DF asked the members if they would like to renew their SLAF membership

SB Agreed to renew

SM Agreed to renew

CP Agreed to renew

AWr Agreed to renew

12. AOB

SM advised Suffolk has been selected by the Long-Distance Walking Association for a long-distance walking event of 100 miles with 18 checkpoints in May 2025.

DF stated that he and Ben Heather gave advice to organisers and Ben Hetah will be able to advise on route closures.

CD stated that this would coincide with first programme of grass cutting and would seek more information to ensure the protection and maintenance of PRow

CP stated events were discussed in July's meeting. Event organisers should contact SCC.

SB asked about the Walking Festival

DF advised staffing pressures will mean 2025 Suffolk Walking Festival would be cancelled.

CP advised that she is no longer chair for Brantham footpath subcommittee anymore.

ACTION: JG to email SLAF members regarding members website biographies.

DF highlighted CB involvement with SCC's Local Transport Plan (LTP) consultation.

DF advised that he attended SCC A12 Major Road Network (MRN) meeting with Ben Heather and the team leading on the consultation welcomed SLAF response.

ACTION: DF to email details to members of LTP and A12 MRN consultations.

ACTION: BH/CB to coordinate SLAF responses.

13. Date of Next Meeting

23 January 2025 – Endeavour House

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Network Rail Updates
Paper:	LAF 25/01
Author/Contact:	Steve Kerr / Andrew Woodin
Meeting:	23 January 2025, 2:00pm-4:00pm
Venue:	Endeavour House, Lime Floor 5, Room 2

Introduction

This paper updates the forum on the main level crossings being addressed by Network Rail (NR) and Suffolk County Council ('the Council' or 'SCC'), and progress on their Transport and Works Act proposals.

Needham Market Gipsy Lane and FP6 Needham Market



Further to the update provided at the Forum's October meeting, the Gipsy Lane diversionary works at the culvert have now been completed. In addition, the landowner's agricultural access track and the footpath leading south from the culvert to join Stowmarket Road have been surfaced. Deer proof and security fencing has also been erected along the diversionary route on both sides of the railway corridor.

The works to install a disability compliant kissing gate at Gipsy Lane itself have yet to be undertaken and the Stowmarket Road footway widening improvement works are scheduled to start on 20 January and expected to last 7 weeks. The railway operator has booked the road space to allow these works to take place and a traffic management system will be in operation, which will include provision for pedestrian movements.

NR have indicated they wish to have all the associated diversionary works certified by the highway authority in advance of the finalising of the works at Stowmarket Road, to allow for the closure of the Gipsy Lane crossing. NR have confirmed the diversionary route would be fully available all the way to Stowmarket Road, where pedestrians

would then use the traffic management system that will in place. Officers are currently in discussions with NR regarding this.

Officers also raised the lack of progress on the funding agreement and NR recently confirmed they are in the process of seeking legal and commercial sign-off for the agreement.

General/Countywide

NR's Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Strategy - Transport and Works Act Order

Since the Forum's last meeting, several more monthly meetings have taken place with NR's ALXR Project team.

At its most recent meeting earlier this month, NR provided an update on their design programme progress for the 5 level crossings – see below.

Design (Current Plan)

		Complete	In Backlog	Within 14d		Within 28d		Within 56d		
Location	Site ID	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Comments
		HA Review	HA Design Sign Off	LPA Review 1	LPA Review 1	LPA Review 2	LPA Review 2	Construction Start	Construction Complete	
Island	S04	9-Oct-24	20-Jan-25	31-Oct-24	27-Dec-24	15-Jan-25	11-Feb-25	4-Mar-25	28-Mar-25	Working with NR Land Agent and Landowner over 5m PROW diversion
Gislingham	S16	13-Nov-24	24-Jan-25	18-Nov-24	10-Jan-25	10-Jan-25	10-Jan-25	17-Feb-25	14-Mar-25	SCC comments with Taziker, design update required
Paynes	S17	8-Apr-25	26-May-25	30-May-25	24-Jul-25	22-Aug-25	18-Sep-25	3-Oct-25	18-Nov-25	Way forward agreed. Revised alignment design required.
Hawk End Lane	S29	9-May-24	24-Sep-24	15-Aug-24	6-Jan-25	6-Jan-25	6-Jan-25	10-Feb-25	28-Feb-25	Landowner issue and LPA approval delaying works. S106 unresolved.
Lords	S30	22-Aug-24	4-Nov-24	7-Oct-24	15-Nov-24	15-Nov-24	15-Nov-24	3-Feb-25	14-Feb-25	

Further information on the progress for each of these are listed below:-

S04 Island – FP18 Bentley

NR has now accommodated the county council's Highways' Bridge Vehicle Incursion (BVI) scheme design into its own.

Initially, NR were proposing a reduction in the 2m width to 1.5m for a length of 3m, due to the presence of an established oak tree. SCC challenged this and following a site meeting with the landowner, they are currently negotiating an alternative alignment that would avoid the need for the width restriction. This minor realignment of 5m will still fall within the limits of deviation for the order.

S16 Gislingham – BR10 Finningham

Officers have provided their comments on the design back to NR and these are currently being incorporated. A revised submission is awaited.

S17 Paynes - FPs 22 and 26 Gislingham

Following de-vegetation survey and works, NR identified that parts of the order line were, in fact, recorded within a drainage ditch and through established trees. Following a meeting with their project team in December 2024, officers agreed to minor re-alignments to parts of the order route, that would allow for the provision of the route on the field headland, as was intended by the railway operator when the order was drafted. The county council is awaiting submission of their revised design, at which point it will provide further comment.

S29 Hawk End Lane – FP12 Brantham

NR are currently in negotiations with the landowner for a section of the route through the horse paddock at Elmswell Hall, which will also require installation of a length of equine fencing. The landowner has also requested a 5m deviation of the order line (again, within the limits of deviation), to avoid removal of an established vegetation corridor. Officers await the design re-submission.

NR are also currently liaising with the LPA regarding the s106 contribution for the nearby development that earmarked a sum of money for the diversion of the footpath level crossing.

S30 Lords 29 – FP9 Elmswell

Following submission of SCC's comments to NR's design in September of last year, officers are still waiting receipt of the design re-submission.

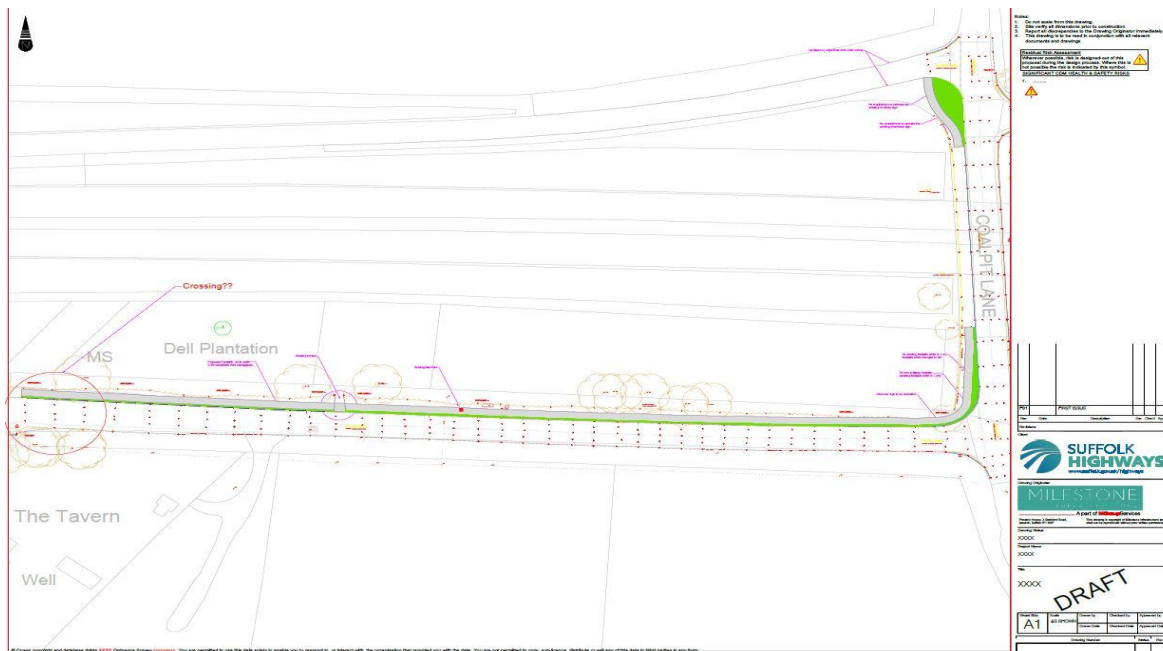
As part of the council's responses to individual design submissions, it has provided a general assessment of the commuted sums needed to maintain any new infrastructure, such as steps. These will need to be reviewed once all detailed designs have been agreed with the highway authority.

Footpath 6 Brantham (High Bridge)

Since the last update provided at the Forum's October meeting, there has been no further specific update from NR, following the county council's comments on the suitability of NR's proposals and SCC's preferred options (submitted in early July 2024).

As previously reported to the Forum, as part of the council's agreement to administer the Rail Crossing Diversion Order for part of FP1 Higham, NR have agreed to fund the highway verge improvement scheme for a length of the highway known as Lower Green, linking Coalpit Lane to the A14 slip road. The initial design has now been produced by Milestone (Suffolk Highways) – see below. A 2-metre-wide surfaced path will be provided on the northern highway verge, with a 0.5 metre grass strip separating this from the carriageway.

Officers are also currently undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening exercise.



Future TWAO application

As previously reported, officers were made aware that NR was considering the submission of a series of TWAO applications to the Secretary of State for Transport (SoSfT) and NR officers are presenting their current proposals to the Forum on 23 January.

Appendix 1 sets out their proposals for 15 PROW level crossings that are likely to be included in their first TWAO submission within the Control Period 7 window (see below). Some of these are crossings that were considered as part of the previous TWAO. Officers understand it is possible that cases such as Brantham and Bacton may also end up being included in NR's future TWAO application. As indicated at the Forum's last meeting, FP13 Rushmere St Andrew (Stennetts), which is currently closed under a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, is also included in this list.

1. Barking FP33
2. Bramfield FP1
3. Wenhaston FP8
4. Levington Heath FP1
5. Old Newton and Dagworth FP68
6. Rushmere St Andrew FP13
7. Playford FP9
8. Martlesham FP9

9. Pettistree FP8
10. Campsea Ashe FP20/22
11. Kelsale Cum Carlton FP26/27
12. Middleton FP22
13. Thurston FP5
14. Barham FP12
15. Wherstead FP34

The county council will be considering each level crossing proposal carefully, once further details have been received from the railway operator.

Suffolk Road Rail Partnership (SRRP)

The next meeting of the above group is scheduled for 17 January.
The remit, objectives and make-up of the SRRP, as set out by NR is:-

A Road Rail Partnership Group is a forum for road and rail authorities to come together to discuss joint issues. These should be established in each County Council area by senior Network Rail Manager.

The shared objectives of the group shall be to consider, from a Rail perspective:

- *crossings that concern Rail from a safety (misuse) perspective.*
- *crossings that are limiting train speed and / or capacity.*

And from a Highways perspective:

- *crossings that are impinging on Local Transport Plans and are a factor in road delay and congestion.*
- *crossings that if bridged / diverted may lead to development for closure.*

The RRP Group attendees should include Highways and Planning, Road Safety Partnerships (or combination of skills such as Road Safety Engineering and Enforcement where no such partnership exists), Highways Authorities (County Council or Unitary Authority), Planning Authorities, BTP, Local Operations Managers, Liabilities Managers, Level Crossing Managers, Level Crossing Engineering expertise, Route Enhancement expertise.

The focus of the RRP Group is to develop a long-term strategy and shall be:

- a) co-ordinated management of the risk using a template around closure, automation, improvement and leave alone, on a rail route by route basis.*
- b) understanding the safety and other impacts of level crossings, (such as delay and congestion), making sure that opportunities for minimising those impacts in a joined-up fashion are maximised.*
- c) influencing enforcement.*
- d) facilitating education of users as to the risks at the road / rail interface and how to act safely.*
- e) influencing planning likely to impact on the road rail interface.*
- f) helping facilitate the closure, diversion or upgrade of protection at level crossings.*

END
SK/SCC January 2025

Appendix 1



2025-01-23 LAF
2501 Appendix 1 TW/

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Suffolk Energy Schemes
Paper:	LAF 25/02
Author/Contact:	Annette Robinson / Sam Bye
Meeting Date:	Thursday 23 January 2025, 2.00pm-4.00pm
Venue:	Endeavour House, Lime Floor 5, Room 2

1. Sizewell C

SCC continues to handle applications for the Discharges of Requirement (DoR) as set out in the Development Consent Order. For PRow & Green Access these include DoR 10, the need for a Rights of Way implementation Plan for any new or diverted PRow. Currently, SCC is working with SZC on the DoR for those PRow affected by the green rail route – the new rail link from the Leiston branch line into the main development site.

Other current works that affect public rights of way and green access includes:

- In November, SZC submitted an application to discharge the requirement for the Public Rights of Way Implementation Plan for those PRow affected by the green rail route – the new rail link from the Leiston branch line into the main development site. SZC is now reviewing the PRow comments and intend to submit a revised document.
- Continuing technical input to the design of new PRow associated with the highway works schemes including the Sizewell Link Road, the two village bypass and the creation of the new inland bridleway as part of other highway works around the main development site. Priority is to complete the technical approval review for the Sizewell Link Road before moving on to reviewing the new inland bridleway.
- Fen Meadows - Preliminary preparation works (creation of site accesses) are being planned for the Halesworth and Pakenham site but no further plans have been discussed with the PRow team as yet.
- Leiston Walking & Cycling Fund – Funding was allocated in the Deed of Obligation (DoO) for delivering a series of works to improve the walking and cycling connectivity in Leiston (£728K) and this is being taken forward by the PRow officer embedded in the Highways NSIP team. The schemes will link to town centre public realm improvements being delivered by SZC and to the wider PRow network improvements which will be delivered via the PRow fund (DoO).

There is considerable construction activity on all of the main highway and the green rail route schemes evidenced by the setting up of construction compounds,

clearance of vegetation and widespread archaeological works creating much local interest.

2. **Sunnica**

As highlighted in previous SLAF paper 24/18 the examination for Sunnica concluded at the end of March 2023 and the new Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero granted the Sunnica Energy Farm application development consent on 12th July 2024.

There are no further updates.

3. **National Grid Bramford to Twinstead**

No further updates to report:

In September 2024 the application for development consent was approved – the SoS decision letter is 39 pages long and a link is below:

[EN020002-001919-Bramford to Twinstead - Final Decision Letter.pdf \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](https://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/decisions/EN020002-001919-Bramford%20to%20Twinstead%20-%20Final%20Decision%20Letter.pdf)

4. **Norwich to Tilbury (formally East Anglia Green)**

No further updates to report:

This scheme is in pre-application stage with the application expected to be submitted between June and August 2025. A link to the Planning Inspectorate website with further details is below:

[Norwich to Tilbury - Project information \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](https://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/norwich-to-tilbury)

5. **East Anglia One North and EA2 offshore windfarms with onshore infrastructure**

A total of nine offshore wind farm contracts have been awarded by the government after last year's auction failed to attract any bidders at all including East Anglia 2 - 963.07 MW and East Anglia Three (for 158.90 MW).

Numerous management plans continue to be submitted to SCC and ESC to discharge the planning requirements of the DCO namely the construction of the substation haul road from the B1069 at Knodishall to the substation site at Friston.

Archaeology survey work is now underway across the cable corridor; the impacts on the PRow network managed in accordance with the specific PRow management plan. There will be temporary closures of some PRow mainly on the Friston site, subject to SCC inspection and approval.

SCC is awaiting the final proposals for the proposed route of the diverted public footpath at the Friston site and the design of the accesses with respect to public rights of way onto the construction sites and haul roads.

6. East Anglia 3 offshore windfarm with onshore infrastructure

The EA3 converter station is currently under construction at Bramford and works along the cable ducting are being undertaken. There are numerous rights of way that will be crossed by the haul roads, but most will remain open with short term minor temporary diversions during the construction of the roads and then remain open using management measures.

7. SEALINK – National Grid offshore link from Suffolk to Kent-onshore cable corridor , new converter station and connection to Friston NG substation (if approved as part of EA1N &EA2 application)

No further updates to report:

This project is still in targeted consultation with National Grid and expecting a submission for development consent in early 2025. SCC officers are currently reviewing draft DCO documents

More details are at;

[Sea Link About the project | National Grid Group.](#)

8. LionLink (formerly EUROLINK) – interconnector between Suffolk and Belgium

No further updates to report:

As per the previous SLAF paper 24/18, a detailed response on public rights of way, access and amenity on the LionLink Scoping Report was submitted, focusing on the very concerning cumulative effects of this project in conjunction with the other east coast NSIPs.

SCC officers are now reviewing the survey points required along the route with regard to PROW which has not yet been agreed on both sides.

9. White Elm Solar

SCC PROW comments on the latest consultation are as per the SCC response:

[White Elm Solar Farm - Suffolk County Council](#)

[White Elm Solar Farm](#)

SCC Public Rights of Way

3.22 SCC's position is that the impacts on PROW are a topic in their own right and should not be solely considered as an element of other topic areas. Considering PROW over a number of topic areas will cause the assessment to become fragmentary and will not reflect the true impact on users of the PROW network. Moreover, an evaluation of cumulative impacts on PROW in Suffolk may be omitted if there is not a dedicated chapter on PROW. Therefore, a separate PROW Chapter

is required as per other topic areas. This section of the detailed technical comments includes recommended changes to the Applicant's approach to assessing impacts on PRow which could be incorporated into a dedicated chapter on the subject.

There is a much longer technical response as well, that can be provided if required.

SCC PRow & Green Access has had no further meetings, conversations or applications on the following schemes:

- Felixstowe North Garden Village
- Lowestoft Garden Village
- Saxmundham Garden Village

END
AR/SB/SCC Jan 2025

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	The King Charles III England Coast Path
Paper:	LAF 25/03
Author/Contact:	Claire Dickson
Meeting:	Thursday 23 January 2025, 2.00pm-4.00pm
Venue:	Endeavour House, Lime Floor 5, Room 2

1. Progress on Establishing The England Coast Path (ECP)

The latest information from Natural England (NE) on its progress for the ECP in Suffolk and Norfolk is shown on their website. The progress report update dates are shown in the links.

Stretch name	Progress
Harwich to Shotley Gate	Four out of six reports at Stage 4, two at Stage 5
Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry	OPEN for use from 16 th October
Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey	Stage 5: Approved. (Not yet available for public use – work to establish the route is currently taking place)
Bawdsey to Aldeburgh	Four out of five reports at Stage 4 and one at Stage 5
Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea	Four out of six reports are OPEN for use from 12 th December. Work to establish the route is currently taking place where Approved.

The remaining stages to establish Coastal Access in Suffolk are as follows:

Stage 4: Determine

Once the period to comment on the proposals has ended, the Secretary of State will decide whether to approve the proposals in Natural England's report. When making a decision, any representations or objections that have been submitted will be considered along with the recommendations from the Planning Inspectorate.

Stage 5: Open

The Secretary of State approves the route of the England Coast Path on this stretch, or a report within the stretch.

Preparations are then made on the ground and the necessary legal paperwork is completed. Once complete, the new public rights of access will come into force on the stretch.

Note: Whilst individual reports for sections within a stretch can be approved, in Suffolk stretches will not normally be launched until all of the Coastal Access Reports comprising the stretch have been approved.

Further information on the England Coast Path can be found [here](#).

2. The Stretches in More Detail

Natural England has provided this update on the national situation:

Over 50% of the whole route is now open. Nationally 130 miles have opened since the previous LAF meeting.

Status of proposals	Number of miles
Total mileage submitted to government	2680
- complete and open for public use	1381
- approved by government and work to establish the route taking place, or awaited	1025
- awaiting government decision	274
Yet to be submitted	16

The latest information from Natural England on its progress for the King Charles III England Coast Path in Suffolk is shown on their website. The progress report update dates are shown in the links at the start of the report and more detail from Natural England is shown in the table below.

The Five Suffolk Stretches

Harwich to Shotley Gate – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 14.1.25

No change since previous report

- Stage 4 and 5 (Determine and Open)
- The proposals were published in January 2020 and received 7 objections.
- Reports 4, 5 and 6 are in Suffolk.
- Coastal Access Reports 1 and 4 have been approved. Work to establish the route can now take place on these lengths.
- The Planning Inspector undertook a further visit in July 2022 and in July 2023 there was the opportunity to submit further representations about an objection in the Essex part of the stretch. We are waiting to hear the decision from the Secretary of State

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – Jonathan Clarke.

- Open for use.

Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 14.1.25

No change since previous report

- Stage 5 (Open) – but not yet available for use
- Natural England published proposals in December 2020
- Two reports were approved in May 2023 and the remaining sections were approved without change in May 2024.
- Work to establish the route is now taking place

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 14.1.25

No change since previous report

- Stage 4 and 5 (Determine and Open)
- The report was published in February 2021.
- Report 3 has been approved but work has not started.
- We are waiting to hear the decision from the Secretary of State.

Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 14.1.25

- Stage 4 and 5 (Determine and Open)
- Natural England published proposals in January 2020.
- 23 objections were received – all on Report 4. The Planning Inspector did site visits in April 2024.
- **Reports 1,2,3 and 6 opened to the public on 12 December 2024** and work to establish Report 5 is now taking place.
- We are waiting to hear the decision on Report 4 from the Secretary of State
- Proposals for minor variations at Corton and Dunwich have been proposed. They only received one representation (supportive), and so should be approved in time. They did not prevent the route opening.

3. Suffolk Progress

The project officer has continued to predominantly focus on the establishment works on the remaining approved stretches covering Aldeburgh to Hopton and Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey. With works completed on Shotley to Felixstowe Ferry in October 2024. All works are funded by Natural England by applying for grants from them. The breadth of the establishment works is broad, ranging from tree safety surveys, revetment and surfacing works, design and construction of structures such as boardwalks, bridges, and steps, new interpretation boards, bespoke heritage signs in conservation areas as well as the more familiar installation of new signposts and waymark posts.

The county council has developed new technical specifications and a GIS method for recording works including the production of bespoke maps and scheme details for the works packs needed for the quotation process, in line with the requirements of the Natural England grant scheme. Understanding and clarifying the many legal and technical aspects of the National Trail works and grant process with Natural England has been a key piece of work during this initial period.

Several works packages have been successfully tendered over the autumn months and completed in December 2025, namely:

- Installation of signs and waymarking from Aldeburgh to Hopton, covering the approved sections from Aldeburgh to Southwold and Pakefield to Corton.
- Surface improvement and structures (bridges) at Dunwich (Aldeburgh to Hopton stretch),
- Revetment works and installation of steps at Thorpeness (Aldeburgh to Hopton stretch),
- Boardwalks and surfacing works at Walberswick (Aldeburgh to Hopton stretch).

Following successful completion of tenders and grant applications, works commenced in early January 2024 on the Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry section, with all works completed by October 2024, including the culvert works within Orwell Park Estate.

Discussions continue between SCC Public Health, National Highways, Natural England and the Development & Improvement Manager on access by the King Charles III England Coast Path over the Orwell Bridge have continued. National Highways have agreed to replacement steps, but the County Council are seeking agreement to a resting point on the embankment and information signs. The initial steps have been replaced prior to resting point being installed as we await agreement and resolution from National Highways on this matter.

The team have also completed the interpretation signing works, including habitat mitigation signs, to tie in with the opening of this stretch. Natural England formal commenced the new access rights between Shotley Gate and Felixstowe Ferry on 16th October 2024.

Following verification of the infrastructure required on the Aldeburgh to Hopton stretch which was surveyed by Natural England (with SCC) in 2017/18, starting with the confirmed reports from Aldeburgh to Southwold and from Pakefield to Hopton. Works commenced in September 2024, following approval of grants, on the approved sections within this stretch. All works were completed in early December 2024 in line with the opening of these sections on 12th December 2024.

Works have been undertaken on the section of route by the Sizewell C site, this required the temporary rerouting of the trail as part of the Development Consent Order. These works have been overseen by the County Council's Senior Public Rights of Way Officer for Sizewell C Project.

The planning inspectorate visited the Southwold to Pakefield stretch in late March to consider objections. The Operations Manager attended the site visits as an advisory role. We now await a decision from the Secretary of State, we do not anticipate receiving this prior to the end of 2024. No decisions are provided during pre-election period resulting in further delay.

Following the approval of the Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey stretch on 7 May 2024, the team have verified the works required on site and raised several queries with Natural England. A joint site visit has been undertaken with Natural England and relevant landowners.

The team are now fully focused on the delivery of works on the Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey stretch. The route has been fully scoped and works identified over the autumn period. The works are currently out for tender with grant applications due to be submitted in late January 2025.

Following approval of grants, works will then commence in early March 2025. This will cover installation of boardwalks, bridges and signing. Due to habitat regulation requirements works must be completed for all structures by May 2025.

Remaining mitigation works, including the installation of 5 kilometres of dog proof fencing at Ramsholt, are required to be installed between late May and September. This is again to fulfil habitat regulation requirements.

An opening date for this stretch has not been agreed with Natural England currently. This will be dependent on completion of all mitigation works. The County Council do not currently envisage any delays with works in line with habitat regulation requirements.

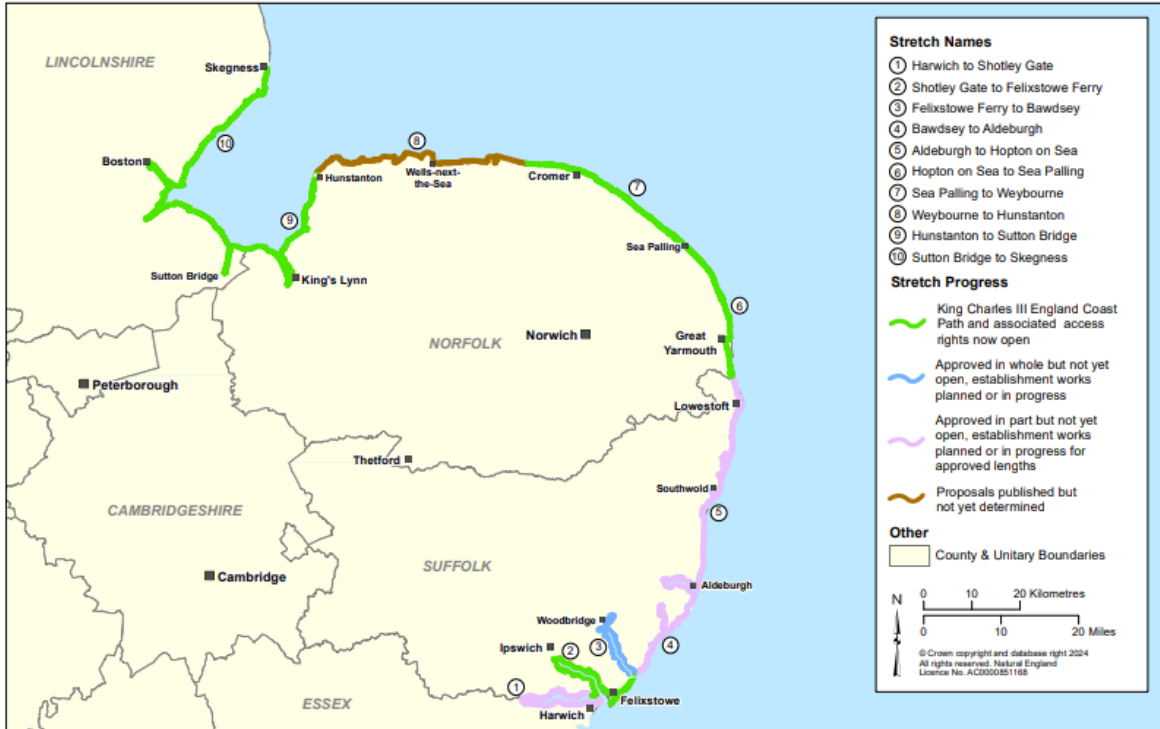
The team are working closely with the RAMS Manager (Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy) and Natural England to review all mitigation information signs. This is a positive area of work that will unify information signs on the trail and wider RAMS areas.

Natural England have advised that funding is available for a second project officer. As works are currently on target for delivery, we are not in a position to progress with a second officer. Implementation work is progressing well on the approved sections. This will remain under review and dependent on the timing of approval of the remaining stretches.

The Operations Team have established fortnightly meetings with Natural England representatives. We have carried out a three positive site visits with Natural England on both Aldeburgh to Hopton and Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey stretches, these were carried out in late April, early June and November. With proposals for a further site visit in late January 2025. This has enabled us to discuss delivery of works and to meet with third parties on interpretation and works requirements. We have agreed that this will continue with remaining stretches following approval.

4. Future Management of the England Coast Path in the East of England

Following the appointment of the new Green Access Officer recently, the county council will consider how best to promote the King Charles III England Coast Path in Suffolk, and whether synergies can still be achieved by combining forces with neighbouring authorities.



END
CLD/SCC January 2025

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood (NFGN)
Paper:	LAF 25/04
Author/Contact:	Christopher Bower
Meeting:	23 January 2025, 2:00-4:00pm
Venue:	Endeavour House, Lime Floor 5, Room 2

Correspondence to James Goldberg North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood (NFGN) - Comments from Suffolk Local Access Forum:

1. During your presentation you mentioned it was not yet clear if the green buffer of land labelled 'The Meadows' at the top of the site adjacent to Gulpher Road would be included in the development, as it has not yet been secured. This should be confirmed, as the green space is critical to the overall feel of the development and residents' access to nature.

2. Ensuring there is good connectivity to existing rights of way – particularly the bridleways to the North of the Site which are suitable for cycling and horse riding, the Candlet track offers an off-road connection to Trimley Saint Martin and the associated developments there, so could potentially be enhanced as an active travel corridor.

3. Preserving the quiet lane status of Gulpher Road is also critical to ensuring that residents are able to ride, walk and cycle along it, and avoid excess vehicle traffic, Gulpher Road also connects nicely to NCN 51 and then Cordys Lane giving a quiet route to Trimley Marshes.

4. There is a huge opportunity to make Active travel the preferred mode of transport, by ensuring that walking, wheeling and cycling links on and around the site are good, but more importantly links to the wider Felixstowe town are also good. We felt that there was a lack of detail in some of the statements about the pedestrian and cycling links that will be provided. Relocating of the new Leisure centre is also likely to drive more visitors to the site, so ensuring these visitors are able to get there by walking, wheeling and cycling is essential.

5. Making sure routes are welcoming to walkers by providing benches, shelter, shade etc.

6. Consider having 20mph limit to traffic around the development with traffic calming measured to keep vehicle speeds low within the development and avoid central white lines in the road or replace with dashed cycle lanes along the edges.

7. The scheme's active travel & connectivity proposal (Fig. 1) below suggests that there are proposed walking / cycling entrances/exits at Gulpher Road (1) Beatrice Ave (2) – but neither has any existing infrastructure to encourage cycling to/from the station

and town centre. A direct route to Felixstowe station e.g. via Beatrice Ave or Glenfield Ave should be created to properly integrate active travel to and from the development, making it faster to cycle than drive.

8. Connecting Cycle infrastructure to the station and town centre should be upgraded to encourage more people to make this short journey by walking, wheeling or cycling. 2 possible routes to the station from these entry/exit points to the site are shown in blue in Figure 2. There is also an existing NCN route 51 nearby (in green) that could be linked to. See Figure 3 for more detail on existing cycle routes.

9. Secure bike storage, particularly for e-bikes and cargo bikes needs to be provided in popular tourist areas e.g. at the promenade, and beach areas to encourage people to travel there with these modalities.

10. Can we ensure that these infrastructure improvements are put in at the start of the development so that more people can be encouraged to use active travel between the town centre, schools, and transport hubs right away.

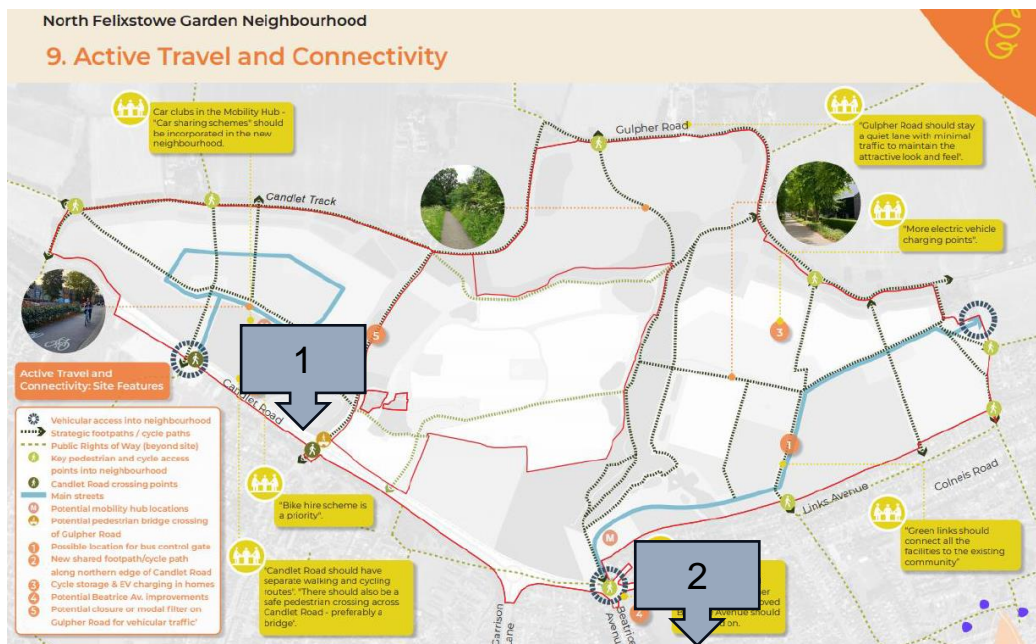


Figure 1. Active travel proposals showing key Entry/Exit points 1, 2.

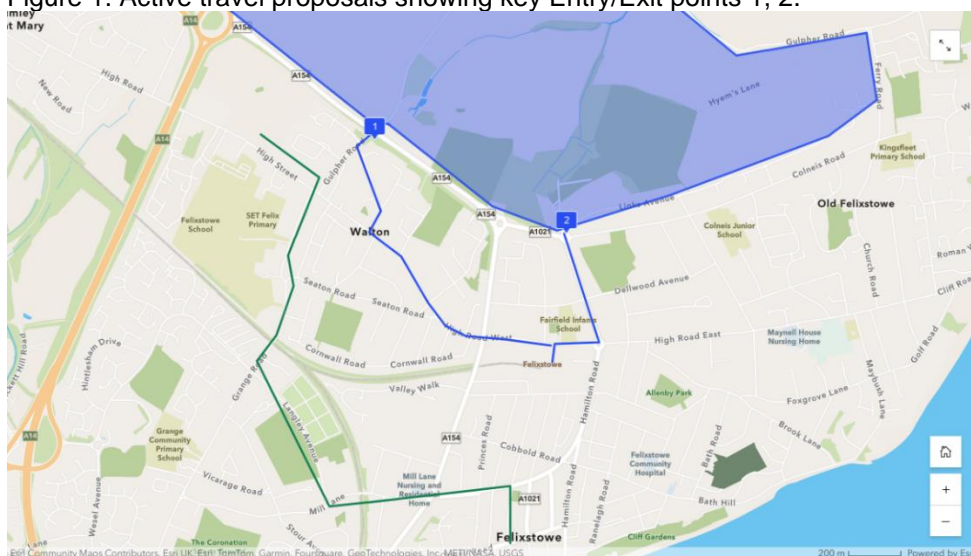


Figure 2. Possible routes to the Station from the entry exit points (blue) and existing NCN route (green) for interactive map see <https://arcg.is/11rDm91>

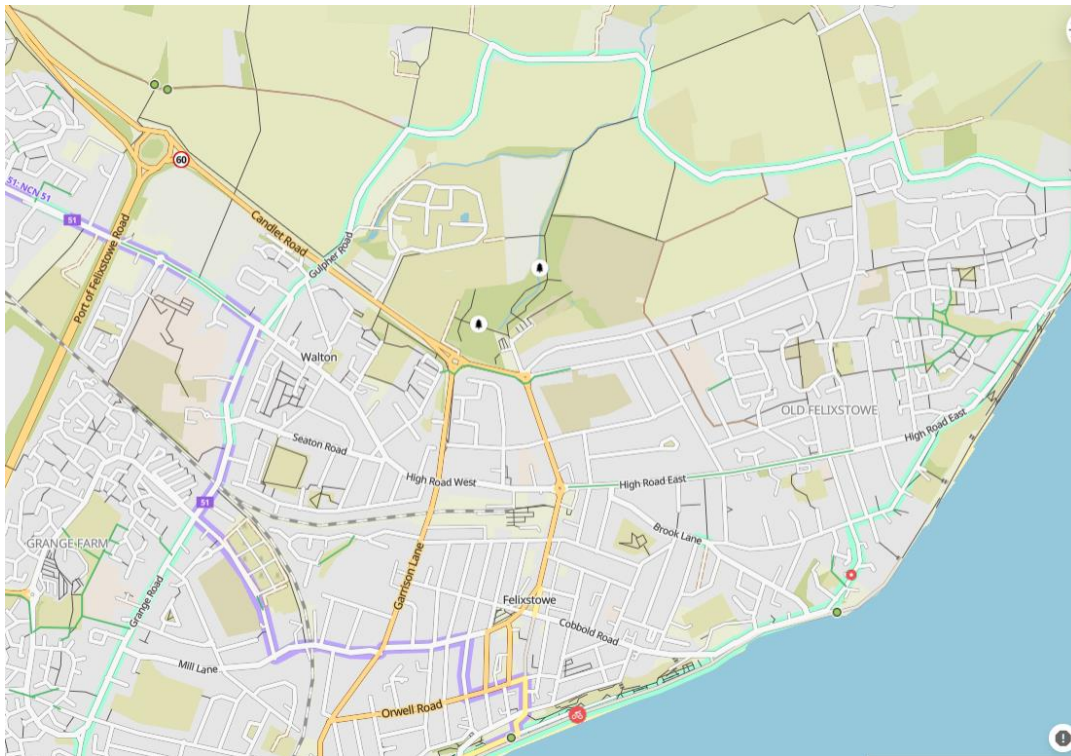


Figure 3. Existing Walking and Cycling Routes around Felixstowe.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Bower

Vice Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

END
CB/January 2025

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Suffolk's Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan
Paper:	LAF 25/05
Author/Contact:	Christopher Bower
Meeting:	23 January 2025, 2:00-4:00pm
Venue:	Endeavour House, Lime Floor 5, Room 2

SLAF Feedback on the SCC LCWIP and Local Transport Plans

Below are some points raised by SLAF members on the proposed schemes

CYCLING, WHEELING & WALKING STRATEGY – IPSWICH

IP20 – Nacton Rd to Fore Hamlet (?re allocate as a red priority route?)

A high quality, much improved route on both sides of Nacton Road with suitable crossings through to the A14 underpass and beyond is necessary for safer access from Ipswich to Bridge Wood and the walks at Nacton Shores and Levington Creek . This could help encourage Ipswich families to use more sustainable methods of transport to visit these popular sites. Such a facility could also have the potential to reduce current congestion levels at The Havens roundabout by increasing levels of cycling for large numbers of people employed on Ransomes Europark.

IP24 –Portman Rd to Foxhall Road

The section of route along the Waterfront between UoS and Stoke Bridge is a great asset, and is currently very well used by cyclists and pedestrians in both directions. It brings considerable economic benefit to the town from locals, as well as visiting cyclists following the national route from Hull to Harwich. Signing to highlight the need for consideration by all users could help reduce potential conflicts. Education of users and collaboration with waterfront property owners (including cafes) and regular enforcement of current 'Access Only' rule will be essential.

IP27 – River Gipping Path Yarmouth Road to Sproughton

Has been talked about for at least 25 years. I sincerely hope I live long enough to see it finished and use it!!

IP33 – Oyster Reach to Town Centre

There is a much more pleasant route from Stoke Bridge to Wherstead Rd/ Virginia St. roundabout along Dock St , New Cut West, Bath St and Discovery Avenue. This would need a small section of contraflow cycle route to be created to allow safe access to the Public Open Space at the flood barrier. An extension of this route towards Bourne Bridge is outlined through any future development. This would much improve access

to walks along the Strand at Wherstead etc. and benefit those following the KCIIECP wishing to detour into Ipswich.

Additional Thoughts

The current proposals do not identify the possibility of providing a pleasant route between Ipswich town centre and the countryside to the north, including the planned country park at Ipswich Garden Village. Completion and improvement of the existing 'Fonnereau Way' as a shared use facility would be a great advantage.

Margaret Hancock
29th October 2024

Southwold / Walberswick / Blythburgh / Halesworth

I am particularly interested in the proposal on the East Suffolk Council's Walking and Cycling Plan for a walkway/cycleway between Southwold/Walberswick/Blythburgh/Halesworth. A beautiful area, full of interest (Blyth Valley, estuary, heath and reedbeds) which would make a wonderful route for walkers and cyclists. There are existing footpaths which I have often walked, but it is not straightforward.

There are big problems with the footpath going towards Halesworth to the north of the River Blyth at Blythburgh, in fact it was closed this summer, the bank suffers from erosion and flooding. Much of the path beyond the path closure (which could be approached by taking a detour) was overgrown this year, the path on the south bank of the Blyth going to Wenhaston was also overgrown. How to provide a route along the Blyth marshes from Blythburgh to Halesworth is, I think, the key question for this proposal, although there are also issues with road crossings, the A12 being the main one, but also the B1387.

Susan Mobbs

END
CB/January 2025

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	A12 Major Roadworks Improvements
Paper:	LAF 25/06
Author/Contact:	Barry Hall
Meeting:	23 January 2025, 2:00-4:00pm
Venue:	Endeavour House, Lime Floor 5, Room 2

SLAF Correspondence to John Kilpatrick

Dear John

Re: Suffolk Local Access Forum's response to the A12 Major Roadworks Improvement Consultation

Thank you for giving SLAF the opportunity to comment on these proposals. We welcome the County Councils acknowledgement that there are barriers to crossing the A12 on foot or by bicycle and the need to encourage walking and cycling by providing better access opportunities within this corridor.

A12/A14 Seven Hills Junction

We have no issues with the proposals.

A12 between Seven Hills Junction and A12/Foxhall Rd Junction

Although in the Consultation Document there appears to be no improvements proposed, we would ask if anything could be done to alleviate the flooding that occurs on the southbound carriageway under the Bucklesham Rd overbridge.

We are also concerned that nothing has been proposed to provide a safer crossing of the A12 around where the Mill River flows under the dual carriageway, and where there several footpaths, Brightwell 18,26,27,29 and Bridleway25 in the vicinity of Kennels Road which could be diverted to a new footbridge or underpass.

A12/Foxhall Rd Junction to A12/Barrack Square Junction

SLAF notes that new Pegasus crossing has been installed at the entrance to the new Brightwell Lakes development connecting Brightwell BR12 and BR6 linking to Foxhall BR46, and then via Dobbs Lane linking to Foxhall BR 50/49 on the Kesgrave boundary which is already used as part of the Sandlings Walk. Are there any improvements to these bridleways being proposed?

We welcome the proposed replacement overbridge to provide better links between Martlesham Heath and the industrial/retail park.

A12/Anson Rd Junction

SLAF welcomes the improvement that the addition of traffic lights will make to traffic flows around this junction. In terms of walking/cycling, the proposed shared use path that is tied in with the proposed bus link and improvements to the underpass routes within the retail area is welcomed.

A12/1241 Junction

The improved share use links along the Main Rd towards Kesgrave and along Portal Avenue together with the new bus link are welcomed. Would it be possible to extend a route northward from the Park & Ride to link up with the rights of way around Bloomfield Farm, Little Bealings FP11 and Martlesham FP's 3, 4, 54,55 where perhaps some segregated crossing of the A12 could be investigated.

A12/B1438 Ipswich Rd Junction

SLAF has concerns regarding the proposals of the suggested at grade footway crossings at this busy junction. Could the proposed new shared use path alongside the new northbound A12 carriageway be extended south from the Seckford Hall Rd to this junction and the possibility explored of using the underpass on the A12 which is part of the Fynn Valley Walk, Gt Bealings FP 10,12 and 9, to obviate this with the relevant section being upgraded to bridleway connecting into Brock Lane?

A12/B1079 Grundisburgh Rd Junction

The improvements suggested here with the new shared use path and Toucan crossings are welcomed. Could there also be some surface improvement to the public right of way south of Dobbies, Woodbridge 15?

A12/Woods Lane Junction

We are concerned that although this junction has footway improvements, crossings of both the A12 and Woods Lane are not light controlled.

Perhaps the opportunity of the A12 improvements should also look at opportunities north of this junction as far as the Woodbridge Road/New Road crossing which together with improvements here and an upgrade of Melton FP2 to bridleway would link BR 21 to New Road.

SLAF hope that you find our comments constructive and look forward to the seeing and commenting on the planning application.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

END
BH/January 2025