



The England Coast Path

Natural England is busy implementing the England Coast Path – a new long-distance trail that, once completed, will enable people to walk around the whole English coast.

As well as a long-distance walking route, there will often be a 'coastal margin', usually seaward of the trail, where people can explore more widely if they wish, relax and admire the view. This means that, often for the first time, there will usually be secure public rights to use popular coastal areas such as beaches, sand dunes and cliff tops.

Another major advantage of the work we are doing is that (unlike on existing coastal routes) if the England Coast Path is affected in the future by slumping, erosion or similar changes, the new arrangements will allow for it to 'roll back' in a sensible way – securing people's right to walk around the coast forever.

Where existing rights of way along the coast meet the need, we simply adopt them as part of the England Coast Path but we can create new sections of trail where necessary - for example where there are

currently gaps or the route is dangerous. Houses and gardens remain private, major ports and industry are respected, and appropriate protections are built in from the outset for sensitive species and habitats.

Once complete, the England Coast Path will bring significant benefits to the coastal economy, providing a vital lifeline for local businesses such as shops, hotels and pubs.

What's happening in Essex?

Work has recently started to extend the path along the Essex coast from Burnham-on-Crouch to Maldon. Natural England is working closely with officers from Essex County Council, who are providing expert local advice and helping to ensure local interests are taken fully into account as we develop the route.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast

Getting involved

Early in the development of our thinking, we will write to owners and occupiers of land likely to be affected, offering them the opportunity to discuss with us the options for route alignment on their land and the associated issues such as what wider land should be accessible, and where the path should be able to 'roll back'. This will include, should they want it, an opportunity to 'walk the course' with us when we visit the land. We will also offer to talk as necessary to any other people with legal interests in land that may be affected, for example those with shooting rights.

We also talk to key local or national organisations about any concerns or insights they may have, seek views about the best way to protect sensitive features and sites, and invite anyone with relevant data or information to share it with us. Members of the public with views about what needs to be done are also welcome to share these with us at an early stage and are invited to do so via gov.uk – see link below.

We expect these discussions to be completed by spring 2017.

We will then spend some time finalising our thinking before publishing our proposals for this stretch of coast. They will be submitted in a report to the Secretary of State, which we plan to do by summer 2017. The report will be published on our website and advertised locally. We will directly notify affected owners and occupiers and key local and national organisations, and copies of the report will be available locally in appropriate locations, such as libraries, for people to view.

Once our report is published, any person will be able to submit representations about what it proposes during an 8 week period. During the same period, owners and occupiers of affected land will be able to make formal objections, which will be considered

by an independent Appointed Person from the Planning Inspectorate. The Secretary of State will make a decision only after all representations and objections have been considered, and will take into account any advice from the Appointed Person, and any comments made by others on objection cases.

When will the new coast path be ready?

If the Secretary of State approves the route we propose along this stretch of coast, any new infrastructure that is needed - such as gates and signs - will be installed. Once these preparations are complete, this part of the England Coast Path will be opened and the new public rights will come into effect. We hope that the sections between Burnham-on-Crouch to Maldon will become part of the England Coast Path in this way by the autumn of 2018.

Find out more

Keep an eye on our website for the most up-to-date information about progress in Essex and on other parts of the English coast:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast

Contact us

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