

## **Project to Consider Variations to the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Boundary:**

### **Natural England's Briefing Note for SC&H AONB Partnership meeting June 2017**

#### **Introduction**

This note is to update the AONB Partnership about the project.

- The March 2017 briefing note that we provided for the combined SC&H & Dedham Vale AONB Joint Advisory Committee stated that we would be seeking approval of the proposed boundary for statutory formal consultation from the Natural England Board at its June meeting and that the Public and Statutory consultation would start as soon as possible after this date.
- In practice, it has been concluded that Natural England should avoid holding the statutory and public consultation over the summer holiday period. This will ensure that the statutory local authorities, other stakeholders and the public have the fullest opportunity to respond.
- As a consequence, the decision will be put to the Board at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September.
- This has also helped ensure that Natural England did not fall foul of the pre-general election rules for public sector organisations.
- It has also enabled a site visit to be planned to show a number of Board members the area during August prior to the September Board meeting. This will help to ensure that the Natural England Board is as fully informed as possible before considering the proposed revisions to the AONB boundary.
- Please be assured that this decision does not substantially alter the 'revised' timescale for completion of the project overall.
- Our intention is to provide a full briefing to the Technical Advisers Group (made up of officers from the relevant local authorities and the AONB) with all the relevant assessments and maps that the Natural England Board will have before them, as soon as possible after the September meeting and certainly before the start of the public consultation.
- The public consultation will run for a 12-week period. We are hoping that it will begin towards the end of September or start of October. This is of course subject to Board approval and any amendments made at the September meeting.
- We are now at the stage of finalising our assessments and papers for the Natural England Board meeting.

Jonathan Dix/ David Vose (Project Manager)

Natural England