

Project to Consider Variations to the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Boundary Natural England's 3rd Briefing Note for SC&H AONB Partnership April 2016

Introduction

Natural England has now resumed work on the SC&H AONB boundary variation project following delays caused by other unscheduled landscape designations work as explained in the previous (January 2016) briefing to the Partnership.

We expect the timetable to be as broadly set out to the Partnership in January although the informal consultation is now likely to be in June rather than May.

Progress since January 2016:

We have continued to develop detailed evidence-based proposals and write up the justification for the proposed boundary for the South side of the Stour Estuary and parts of the Shotley Peninsula. We have also continued to consider issues with regard to the desirability designation. These will be presented at the informal consultation stage in June.

Plan for the Informal Consultation Stage

Our intention is to consult on a single possible revised boundary. We expect to have draft digitised maps available for inspection and scrutiny at the meetings as set out below. We will use these maps to seek opinions from the following:

- the Technical Advisory Group made up of officers from the relevant Local Authorities (as explained in the January note),
- relevant Parish Councils and
- the members of the AONB Partnership.

It is important to emphasise that at this stage we are likely to exclude any areas where we are not 100% sure of our position or where we feel that there may be further relevant evidence that may become apparent following the informal consultation.

This informal consultation will not therefore be with the wider public and is primarily intended as a means of ensuring that we are aware of all the issues likely to be relevant as well as an initial indication of the level of support before we go to the formal consultation stage.

At each of the above meetings, we will set out the process NE is required to follow and describe the proposed extensions currently under consideration. It will be explained that:

- although we want to know people's opinions, what we really require is any further evidence to support these opinions, and
- the boundaries are by no means final at this stage and could well alter (either way) as a result of evidence supplied at the informal stage in June as well as at the later formal consultation stage

We want to use these meetings to listen to people's views and we will take note of comments received on the day as well as providing a feedback form to be sent on to us following the consultation meeting, seeking feedback and further evidence regarding natural beauty, the desirability of designation and boundaries.

The next step therefore is to make the arrangements for the informal consultation meetings. This we will be doing over the next few days.

Jonathan Dix. April 2016.