

# Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

## Management Plan 2018 -23 Summary



# The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers an area of around 155 square miles (403 square kilometres) stretching from Kessingland near Lowestoft in the north, to the River Stour in the south. To the east the boundary is formed by the North Sea and the western boundary encompasses the length of the Suffolk estuaries.

The character of the AONB is a product of the underlying geology and its associated natural habitats. It is shaped by the effects of the sea and the interaction with people on the landscape. It is a gently rolling landscape, with the estuaries a common and dominant feature. Where the land does rise, commanding views across the landscape are rewarding.

Farmland dominates much of the AONB, interspersed with picturesque villages and the occasional small seaside town. There are forestry plantations, low lying fresh water marshes and extensive tracts of heathland. The coastal fringe is dominated by estuaries, grazing marshes and lowland heath.

Where the AONB joins the sea, shingle beaches often stretch for many miles. Orford Ness, the great shingle spit between Southwold and Shingle Street, is the largest of its kind in Europe. In some places, soft cliffs rise behind the beach, demonstrating the changing and dynamic nature of the coast in this part of England.

A dominant feature of the coast is the five river estuaries. The Blyth, Alde and Ore, Deben, Orwell and Stour estuaries are the locations of some of England's finest wildlife habitats, with intertidal areas of mudflats and saltmarsh.

There is considerable cultural interest, with many parts of the AONB famed for its association with artists and musicians.

The human influence over millennia provides a rich heritage. From internationally important archaeological sites, such as Sutton Hoo, to military structures such as the Napoleonic Martello towers and World War structures built to defend the nation from possible invasion. In the twentieth century developments at Orford Ness and Bawdsey played a significant part in the defence of the nation.



## The Management Plan

This Plan is drawn up by a Partnership of organisations that have an interest in the area. The Plan should guide decision making in the nationally designated landscape. It fulfils the statutory requirement placed on local authorities under section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to produce and review a plan every five years.

The Plan sets out a vision for the area and objectives on how that vision may be delivered.

The full Management Plan can be downloaded from [www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/about-us](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/about-us)  
Tel: 01394 445225 Email: [SCHAONB@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:SCHAONB@suffolk.gov.uk)

## The AONB Partnership

The AONB Partnership is currently made up of 23 organisations drawn from environmental, agricultural, business, community sectors and local authorities.

The AONB Partnership works together to secure the purposes of the AONB designation, to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

The AONB staff team, funded by Defra and local authorities and hosted by Suffolk County Council, provides the secretariat for the Partnership.

# Management Plan Objectives

## 1. Landscape

The Management Plan has the objective to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB and statutory bodies, public, private and third sector organisations pay regard to the purposes of the AONB.



## 2. Coast and Estuaries

The Plan has the objective that decision making relating to the coast and its estuaries pays due regard to the purposes of the AONB and that the associated habitats are conserved and enhanced.



## 3. Land Use and Wildlife

The Plan has the objective to ensure development decisions have regard to the purpose of the AONB designation. The Plan seeks to ensure that farming is profitable and sustainable and contributes to the purposes of the AONB.

In addition, it seeks to ensure positive management of AONB landscapes and wildlife habitat, remove or mitigate features that detract from the natural beauty of the area.



## 4. Enjoying the Area

The Plan has the objective to support tourism where it is inclusive, sustainable and supports the purpose of the designation. It further seeks to inform residents and visitors of the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB that in turn supports responsible access.

## 5. Working together

The Plan seeks to encourage organisations to work together to deliver the vision of the Plan and the objectives of the AONB designation, to conserve and enhance natural beauty.



# A Vision for the Area

The Management Plan sets out the AONB Partnership vision for the area which is summarised as:

*An area of special wildlife, landscape, seascape and heritage qualities that are conserved and enhanced, addressing the needs of people living, working and visiting the AONB.*

