

LAF Involvement in Coastal Access Implementation

Natural England envisages LAFs being involved in the implementation process in the following stages (taken from Natural England's Approved Coastal Access Scheme).

LAFs have a number of statutory roles, outlining when they 'have to be involved'. Any discretionary involvement over and above this will be discussed and agreed with the relevant Access Authority.

Stage 1 Identifying issues and opportunities: LAFs have a statutory role here.

Having established the delivery team (normally involving representatives of the local Access Authority) on a chosen stretch of coast, the delivery team (we) will begin the alignment process by identifying the main issues and opportunities on the stretch of coast. As soon as work starts on each stretch of coast, we will initiate discussions with those organisations Natural England is required to consult before preparing each report. These include the Access Authority, the District Council, Local Access Forum, English Heritage, Defence Estates and the Environment Agency.

Stage 4 Consultation on draft proposals: LAFs have a statutory role here.

At this stage we will publish our draft proposals on the internet and invite all interested parties to comment on them including, in accordance with sections 51(4) and 55D(6), any local access forum through whose area the trail would pass.

Stage 5 Final report: LAFs have a statutory role here.

Schedule 1A of the 1949 Act sets out requirements with respect to the final report. Paragraph 2 requires Natural England to advertise publication of the final report and to notify every Access Authority (obviously they are likely to be part of the delivery team) and Local Access Forum for an area in which there is affected land.

Stage 6 Representations and objections:

Any person will be able to make a formal representation to Natural England regarding the final report. The time allowed for representations to be made will be determined by Regulations. Once the period allowed for representations is over, Natural England will send to the Secretary of State with its final report:

- copies in full of any representations made by the Access Authority, the Local Access Forum, English Heritage, the Environment Agency and any other bodies that may be specified in Regulations;
- a summary of any other representations that we have received; and
- Natural England's comments on the representations

Stage 7 Decision by the Secretary of State:

Having made a decision, the Secretary of State must take reasonable steps to tell owners and lawful occupiers of affected land, or publish a notice to bring the decision to their attention. He/she must also notify any Local Access Forum through whose area the trail would pass.