

Dungeness Complex Sustainable Access and Recreation Management Strategy (SARMS)

Supporting Document 2 – Access and Recreation Assessment

Prepared for Shepway District Council and Rother District Council - Version 2.0 October 2017




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Introduction

About this Report

This document is one of a suite of documents which together form the Sustainable Access and Recreation Management Strategy (SARMS) for the Dungeness complex of protected sites. This report contains an assessment of the access infrastructure, accessible areas, promoted routes, car parks and accessible areas within the strategy area, along with an overview of access restrictions. These will then be drawn together with the other supporting documents set out below. This report should be read in conjunction with the other reports which form the complete SARMS.

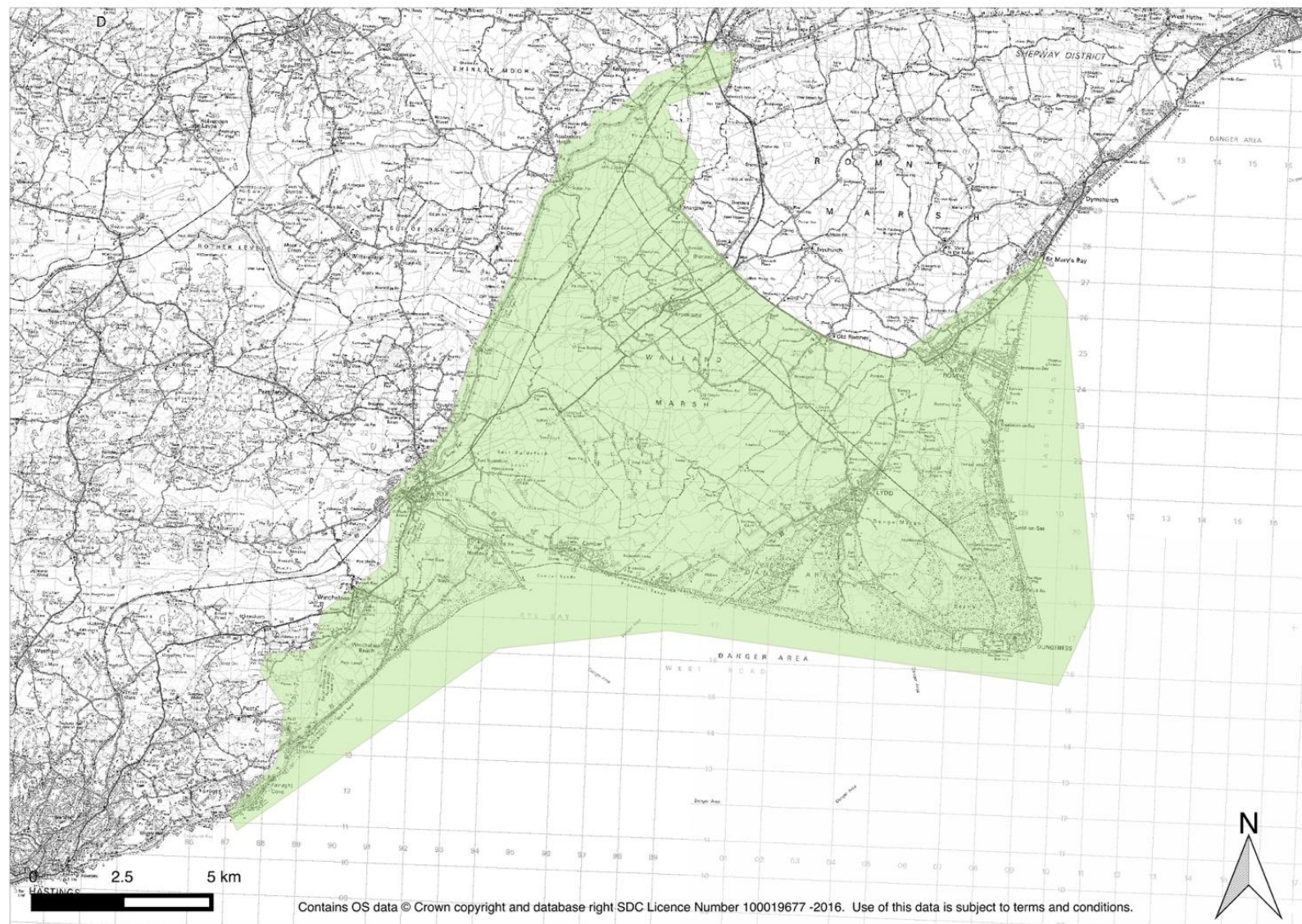
The documents which form the SARMS are:

- Main Report – this report brings together the findings, draws conclusions and sets out an action plan for the strategy area;
- Supporting Document 1 – Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Assessment;
- **Supporting Document 2 – Access Assessment (this report);**
- Supporting Document 3 – Visitors
- Supporting Document 4 – Tourism

Strategy Area

The strategy area is based upon the Dungeness complex of designated nature conservation sites as set out in the main report, see Plan 1.

Plan 1 - The Strategy Area



Access Provision

Public Rights of Way and Other Routes

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

All public rights of way are open to walkers. Some public rights of way are also open to horse riders, cyclists or motorists. The following uses are allowed:

- Footpaths - for walking, running, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs;
- Bridleways - for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs;
- Restricted byways - for any transport without a motor and mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs;
- Byways open to all traffic - for any kind of transport, including cars.

Public rights of way that run through the strategy area are byways, footpaths and bridleways – there are a small number of restricted byways that skirt the Lydd Ranges (MOD land).

These are shown in red in **Plan 3**.

Public rights of way are part of the highway network, a change to a path's route can only be carried out by local authorities or central government. Under the most common procedure a highway authority can make an order to close a path if it considers the path is no longer needed for public use. A formal process must be adhered to which includes the right for the public to make objections. These must be heard at a public inquiry taken by an inspector from the Planning Inspectorate, or by hearing (less formal than an inquiry), or they may be considered in writing if the objectors agree. Where there are byways it is possible to restrict vehicles through a Traffic Regulation Order, under current legislation, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTA 1984), authorities can make permanent TROs for one or more of the following purposes:

- for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of such danger arising
- for preventing damage to the road or to any building on or near the road
- for facilitating the passage on the road.... of any class of traffic (including pedestrians)
- for preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property
- for preserving the character of the road in a case where it is specially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot
- for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs
- for any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 (air quality) [4]
- for conserving or enhancing the natural beauty of the area [5]

- For roads in or adjacent to “special areas in the countryside”, the list of purposes is expanded to include:
- for affording better opportunities for the public to enjoy the amenities of the area, or recreation or the study of nature in the area

‘Special areas in the countryside’ include:

- National Parks
- Areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs)
- Country parks
- Nature reserves
- Long distance routes
- Land held by the National Trust inalienably
- Sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs)

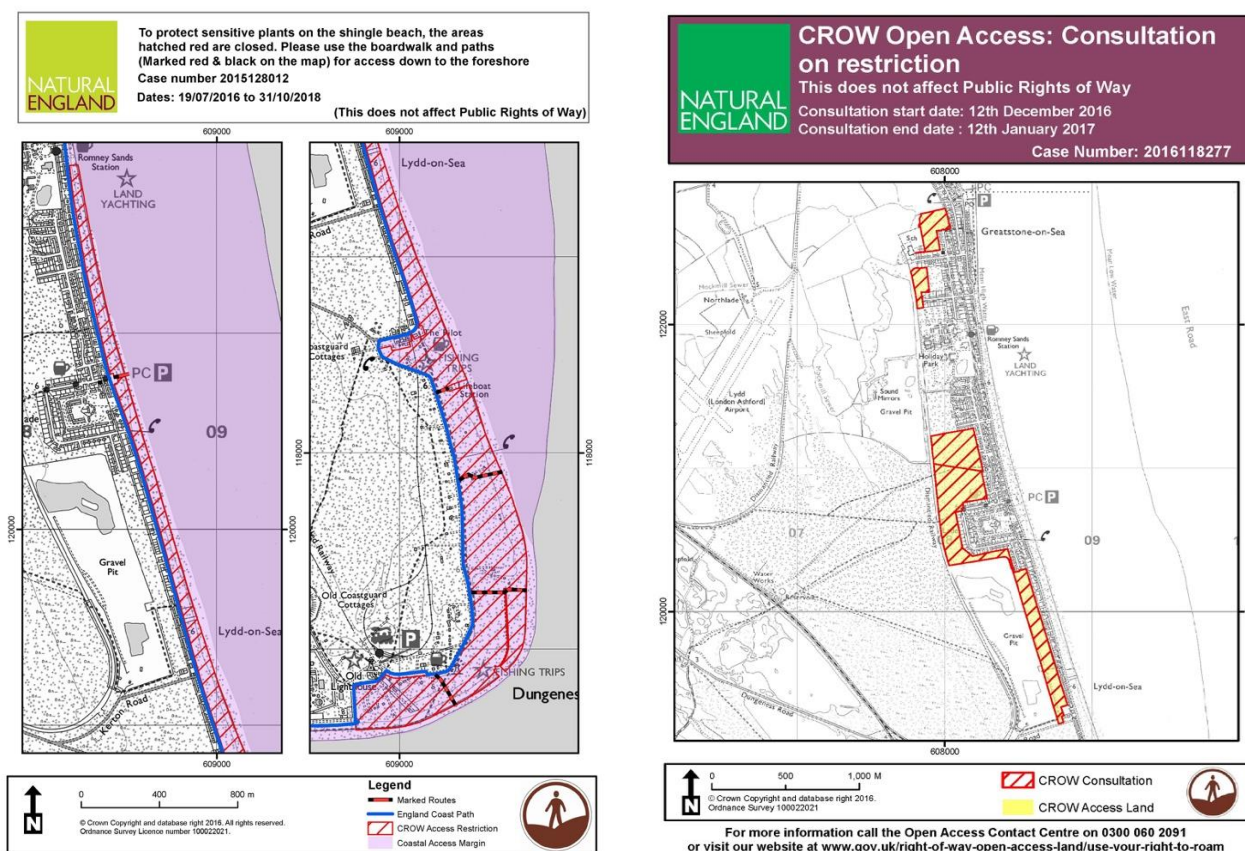
Paths can be diverted, but diversions may not take place if the new route will be substantially less convenient to the public than the existing one. Account must also be taken of the effect the diversion will have on public enjoyment of the path as a whole. The procedure is the same as for closure orders. There are also provisions for highway authorities to apply to magistrates courts for closure or diversion of paths, and for orders to be made in other circumstances such as the construction of new roads, railways and reservoirs, both on a permanent and temporary basis. Notice of temporary orders must be given on site; however, there is no specified procedure for objections.¹

¹ Rights Of Way: A Guide to Law and Practice - definitive guide to rights of way law in England and Wales published jointly by the Ramblers and the Open Spaces Society in 2007.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) - Open Access Land

It is possible to access some land across England without having to use paths - this land is known as 'open access land' or 'access land'. Access land includes mountains, moors, heaths and downs that are privately owned. It also includes common land registered with the local council and some land around the England Coast Path.

In the Dungeness NNR there is an area of 'open access' land designated under the CROW Act². However, due to the nature conservation sensitivity in this area, the right of open access to parts of this land is now restricted, except for existing linear rights of way. Visitors are asked to keep to marked routes and board walks in these areas. See **Plan 2** for access-restricted areas.



Plan 2 - Restricted open access land in the National Nature Reserve

The route of the Coastal Path in the strategy area is shown as a green/grey dashed line and can be seen in **Plan 3**. During its planning it was assessed for its recreational impact on species and the current route takes into account conservation sensitivities.

² Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) gives a public right of access to land mapped as 'open country' (mountain, moor, heath and down) or registered common land. These areas are known as 'open access land'

Licenced and Permissive Paths

Most access arrangements come in the form of licensed and permissive paths. The former are covered by a formal agreement between the landowner and local authority, while there is often no such documentation in place for the latter.

Within the strategy area the footpath crossing Rye Golf Course is a licenced (permissive) path – agreed at the discretion of Rye Golf Club. There is also a section of permitted footpath at Jury's Gap, but this section is to be confirmed by the MOD.

Other 'de facto' routes and desire lines are apparent across much of the Dungeness Point area, the foreshore at Lade Sands and Greatstone Dunes and across Camber Dunes. These areas are largely open and unfenced and there is very little information on where access might be restricted.

Promoted Routes, Strategies and Improvement Plans

Promoted Routes

There are many promoted routes in the strategy area. Most of these are clustered in the north, above Walland Marsh, in and around Brookland and skirt the most sensitive areas. Although around Appledore and Fairfield promoted routes run through and around the boundaries of some of the sensitive sites. Further access development in these areas may attract more visitors and therefore should be carefully considered and assessed with due regard to the conservation features of the designated sites.

Some of the promoted routes are published by the Romney Marsh Countryside Project (RMCP) and there are other organisations promoting routes online. Set up in 1996, the RMCP operates under the 'umbrella' of the White Cliffs Countryside Project, and aims to help conserve and enhance the special landscape and wildlife of Romney Marsh and Dungeness. Folders and packs of thematic walks can be purchased at various locations, including Amazon. These include 'The Magic of Romney Marsh' – a collection of nine self-guided trails and 'The Royal Military Canal' a pack of ten self-guided walks.

Royal Military Canal Path

Started in 1804, the Royal Military Canal Path (RMCP) runs for 28 miles along the entire length of the Royal Military Canal from Seabrook, Kent to Cliff End in East Sussex. The route is open to walkers, while a five mile stretch of the canal, from Seabrook to West Hythe dam, has been surfaced to allow better access for walkers, cyclists and disabled users, along with the provision of rest areas, information boards and a traffic-free link to the new route. Since these improvements, over 61,000³ visits have been recorded on the new route in a 13 month period.

3 Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan, Kent County Council, 2013 - 2017

A counter installed at West Hythe has shown that the number of visitors along that stretch of the RMCP in a five-year period up to 2016 was 192,791 (38,500 per annum average). The counters are all 'total volume' counters and do not differentiate between the direction of travel or type of user.⁴

Although a linear route, a number of public footpaths and promoted routes link to the Royal Military Canal Path, enabling the path to be included in circular routes. The route of the Royal Military canal forms part of the boundary of the strategy area and can be seen in Plan 3.

Ashford Borough Council, with Sustrans, are in the process of producing a feasibility study into extending the bridleway (and therefore the cycling route) to make a shared path from Aldergate Bridge to Rye. It is proposed that this is funded from the Marsh Millions Scheme (a socio-economic funding scheme as a result of funds from the closure of the Magnox nuclear power station). Again, further access development in these areas may attract more visitors and therefore should be carefully considered and assessed with due regard to the conservation features of the designated sites.

Greatstone Shingle Trail

The Greatstone Shingle Trail goes along the front of the sand dunes from the Romney Sands to the Jolly Fisherman car park and links to a small private car park owned by the Romney Sands Holiday Village (although this car park is now closed).

The Romney Marsh Meanders

The Romney Marsh Meanders is a pack of five self-guided cycle rides, published by the RMCP, some of which are in the strategy area.

Explore Kent

The Explore Kent website promotes sites within the strategy area, only one of these is a walking route – Dungeness RSPB Easy Access Walk. Other sites promoted include Dungeness NNR, Greatstone Beach, Littlestone Beach, Romney Warren Country Park and St Marys Bay. The website gives information about what is available at each site in terms of facilities and recreation opportunities.

NCN Routes 2 and 11

The National Cycle Network (NCN) is the national cycling route network of the United Kingdom, which was established to encourage cycling throughout Britain, as well as for the purposes of bicycle touring. It was created by the charity Sustrans.

⁴ Information courtesy of the Public Rights of Way and Access, Environment and Transport, Environment Planning, Kent County Council

Route 2 Dover to Hastings is a mixture of traffic-free and on-road routes. National Route 2 starts or finishes in Dover following a cliff top route to Folkestone and crossing Romney Marsh to Lydd and Rye. It joins Route 11 at Hawthorn Corner which in turn crosses the Royal Military Canal at Appledore.

NCN routes and promoted walking routes and cycle routes in the strategy area can be seen can in Plan 3.

Strategies and Policies

Shepway Cycling Strategy 2011

Kent Highway Services (KHS) works in partnership with the district councils to develop cycling strategies⁵. Shepway Cycling Strategy Report was published in 2011. This report states that routes will be developed in partnership with external partners and that suitable routes that are currently being promoted by outside organisations (e.g. Romney Marsh Countryside Partnership) will be considered for adoption.

Higher priority proposals are highlighted near Scanlons Bridge, Hythe, and the diversion of NCR2 along the Royal Military Canal, to Aldergate Bridge. Medium priority routes will link Hythe to Sandgate along the Royal Military Canal and a potential coastal route between Hythe, Dymchurch and St Mary's Bay is identified, incorporating improvements to be carried out in conjunction with the Nickolls Quarry development. A connection from the Marsh Academy, New Romney is also highlighted⁶.

A more recent proposal by Cycle Shepway, a charitable cycling campaigning group⁷, is for a 'Cinque Ports Cycleway' route, a 20-mile seafront cycleway from Folkestone Harbour to Dungeness⁸, with the potential to link up with the existing National Cycle Network at places including Lydd and the (cycle route sections of the Royal Military Canal path), with routes inland to Ashford and the Elham Valley. This route is not mentioned in the Shepway Cycling Strategy 2011.

East Sussex County Council Cycling Strategy

The County Council's strategy for cycling is set out in 'Active Travel – Walking and Cycling', in Chapter 4 of the Local Transport Plan.⁹ East Sussex County Council (ESCC) aim to make the conditions for cycling safer and more attractive by:

- Maximising cycling's role as a means of transport, to reduce dependency on cars;
- Bringing cycling to the heart of sustainable development in the county through an integrated approach to transport planning, land use planning, health improvement policies and education;
- Establishing a cycle-friendly culture through better infrastructure and routes;
- Developing partnerships with stakeholders and potential stakeholders at local, regional, national and international levels;
- Working with partners to ensure better cycling provision to maximise external funding.

⁵ www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/transport-and-highways-policies/cycling-strategies

⁶ Shepway Cycling Plan, Kent Highway Services. 2011

⁷ www.cycleshepway.org.uk

⁸ www.cycleshepway.org.uk/

⁹ [https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/localtransportplan/transportplans/cycling strategy](https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/localtransportplan/transportplans/cycling%20strategy)

New cycling route priorities applicable to the strategy area are:

- Routes from residential areas to key trip attractors;
- Rural-urban and rural-rural utility links and recreational routes;
- Encourage recreational cycling and cycle tourism through promotion, guided rides and making best use of existing recreational routes;
- Promote the health, environmental and financial benefits of walking and cycling.

The legal right for cyclists to use bridleways means that improvements to the bridleway network will assist cyclists as well as horse riders and walkers. Whilst the provision for cycling off the road is considered as part of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, on-road and next-to-road cycleways are dealt with as part of the Local Transport Plan and Cycling Strategy. However, on-road and next-to-road cycleways can provide an important link between off-road routes and from urban areas into the countryside.

ESCC are currently in the process of developing a county-wide walking and cycling strategy instead of the originally anticipated separate strategy documents for districts and boroughs. This is to reflect the emerging national DfT's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) which is encouraging local authorities to develop Cycling and Walking Investment Plans that reflect their local authority area as a whole.

The strategy will also reflect the ESCC Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2016 – 2021.¹⁰ A consultant has recently been procured by ESCC to manage this aspect of the work alongside engaging with local stakeholders. The Active Rother Partnership, co-ordinated by Rother District Council (RDC), will support this process. The initial stage will involve the review of existing and the identification of new cycling and walking infrastructure and measures which support access to key trip attractors, including employment, education, town centres, leisure and community facilities, along with future developments coming forward through Local Plans. The aim is to have an approved Cycling and Walking Strategy in place by March 2018.¹¹

Improvement Plans

Kent County Council Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan 2007 – 2017

The Countryside Access Improvement Plan (CAIP) is a 10-year Strategy for improving access to the countryside based on local and national research. The current plan covers the years 2007 – 2017 and is currently being revised to cover the period 2018 - 2028.

¹⁰Rother District Council MEETING 27 February 2017 PUBLIC QUESTION 2 - Response

¹¹Rother District Council MEETING 27 February 2017 PUBLIC QUESTION 2 - Response

The first aim of the CAIP is to determine whether the present public rights of way in Kent meet the current and future needs of the public. Priority 'A' status paths will be managed before priority 'B' status paths in cases where the same operational priority has been identified. Priority Status 'A' Paths are:

- North Downs Way National Trail;
- Paths used to access local amenities/ facilities (e.g., transport links, school, church, tourist attraction, access land);
- Paths forming part of the continuous access link around England's Coast;
- Multi-user routes with a clear public benefit;
- Paths used daily for leisure walking;
- Paths identified by local communities as having significant potential for improvement;
- Paths promoted by Explore Kent products and services.

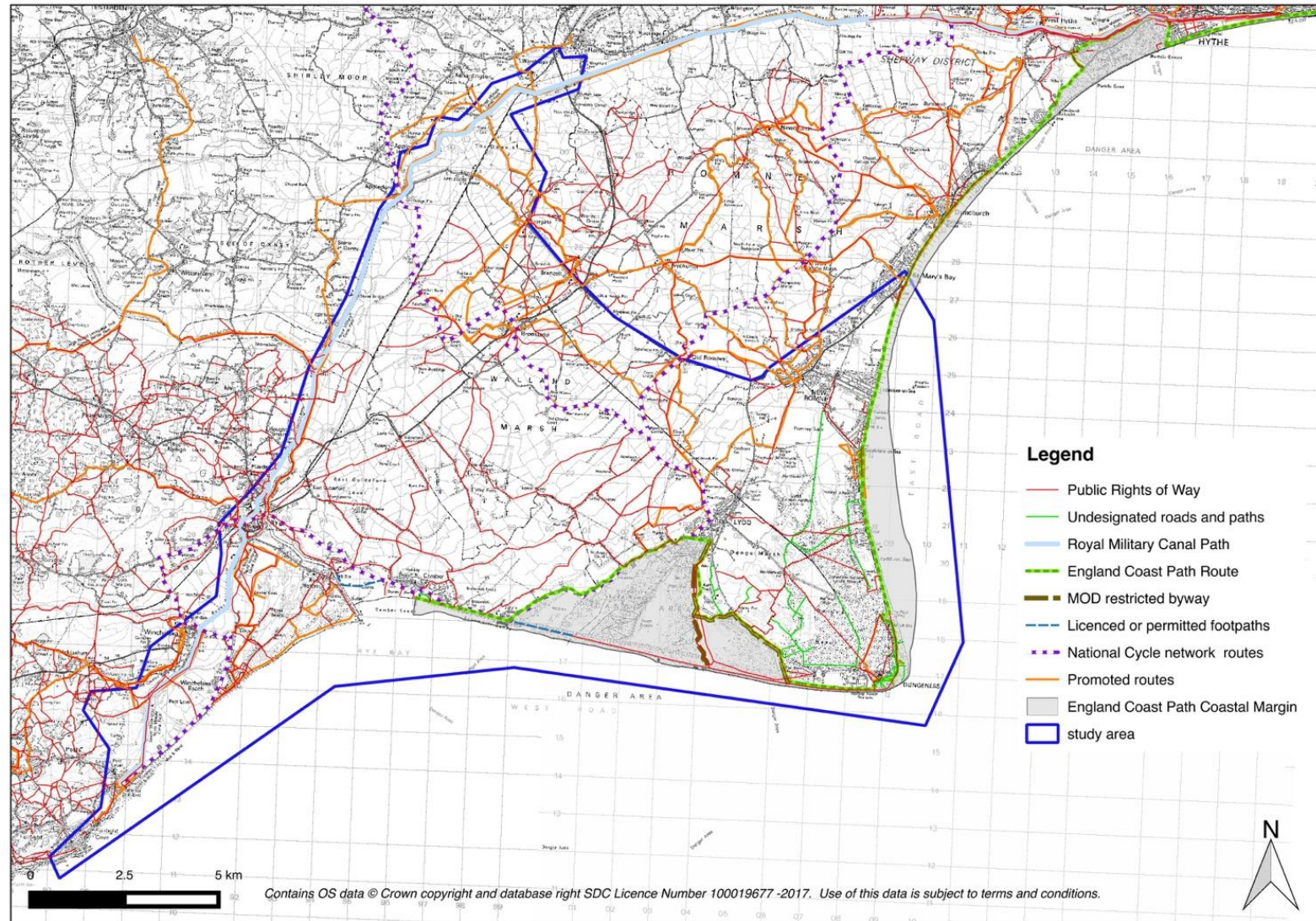
Although there are Priority A status paths within the strategy area there are currently no improvements planned.

East Sussex County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 -2017

The East Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan details the vision for the future of access to the countryside in East Sussex. It also sets the full context of the provision of rights of way and other forms of countryside access in the county. The Plan also details the consultation process, guided by the advice of rights of way users including the East Sussex Local Access Forum, South Downs Access Forum, Town and Parish Councils, Land owners and managers and various user groups.

There are high-level objectives set out in these reports for the overall improvement of the rights of way network in East Sussex but no specific improvements for the strategy area were detailed in these reports.

Plan 3 - Access Routes in the Strategy Area



Access to the Coast

England Coastal Path

The England Coast Path is a long-distance National Trail which will follow the coastline of England. It is being implemented by Natural England and is expected to be completed by 2020. When complete, it will cover 2,795 miles and will follow the whole coastline of England. In the South East a stretch from Ramsgate to Camber is now open. Work on the next stretch (Camber to Eastbourne) is estimated to start this year or in 2018. That is stages 2 and 3 (develop and propose) will start. After final discussions have been held with those who have a legal interest in the land, Natural England will begin refining and checking their proposals to improve access to this stretch of coast. The proposals will then be finalised and then published in a report to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The path includes any land, other than the trail itself, which forms part of the coastal margin and which has public rights of access along the way. This is known as 'spreading room'. All land within the 'coastal margin' (where it already exists) is associated with the England Coast Path and is by default access land. Coastal access rights apply within the coastal margin (including along the coast path itself) unless the land falls into a category of excepted land or is subject to local restrictions, exclusions or diversions. In the strategy area Lydd Ranges and the Natural England land in Plan 2 have restrictions to public access.

Rights of access on beaches

Under Common Law, a public right to navigation exists on all tidal waters (although not necessarily a right to land or launch a boat). This includes a right to pass and re-pass for any reasonable purpose including recreation, and the owner of the foreshore must not interfere with this right. There are no other public rights over the foreshore. Nevertheless, the public may pass across it if there is a lawfully established right of way over the foreshore. The foreshore and seabed do not fall within the current definition of access land, except in the case of coastal margin created by Natural England under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. See Section 'Strategy Sub-Areas' for more detail on individual sites.

Car Parking

The visitor surveys carried out for Phase 1 of the SARMS project showed that most people travel to the area by car; therefore siting and access to car parks may influence the behaviour of visitors to some of the more fragile zones in the strategy area. This might be significant in terms of visitor management. The location of car parks is shown in Plan 4.

There are few car parks inland. Assessment of inland car parking determined that visitor issues inland were not as great as those on the coast. Visitors to the coast are likely to be more 'captive' to their destination, probably because the activities there necessitate carrying equipment of some kind - picnics, windbreaks, kite/wind surfs etc., alongside the 'draw of the coast'. They are also more likely to be

insensitive to charges and increases in charges.¹² This is borne out by car park data for Greatstone (Jolly Fisherman) Camber (Central and Western) and Rye Harbour. Numbers of tickets purchased at the public car parks has been increasing since 2013.

Tickets bought at the Jolly Fisherman and Camber Central and Western are shown below, along with the percentage increase in numbers.

Table 1: Car parking numbers Jolly Fisherman and Camber car parks (2012 – 2016)

CAR PARK TICKETS BOUGHT - APRIL TO OCT	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	% INC 2013 -17
JOLLY FISHERMAN	7175	7597		7542	10562	39%
CAMBER (Central & Western)		67319	60329	74918	80340	17%

Between April and June numbers are constant, with a predictable increase in the July to September period.

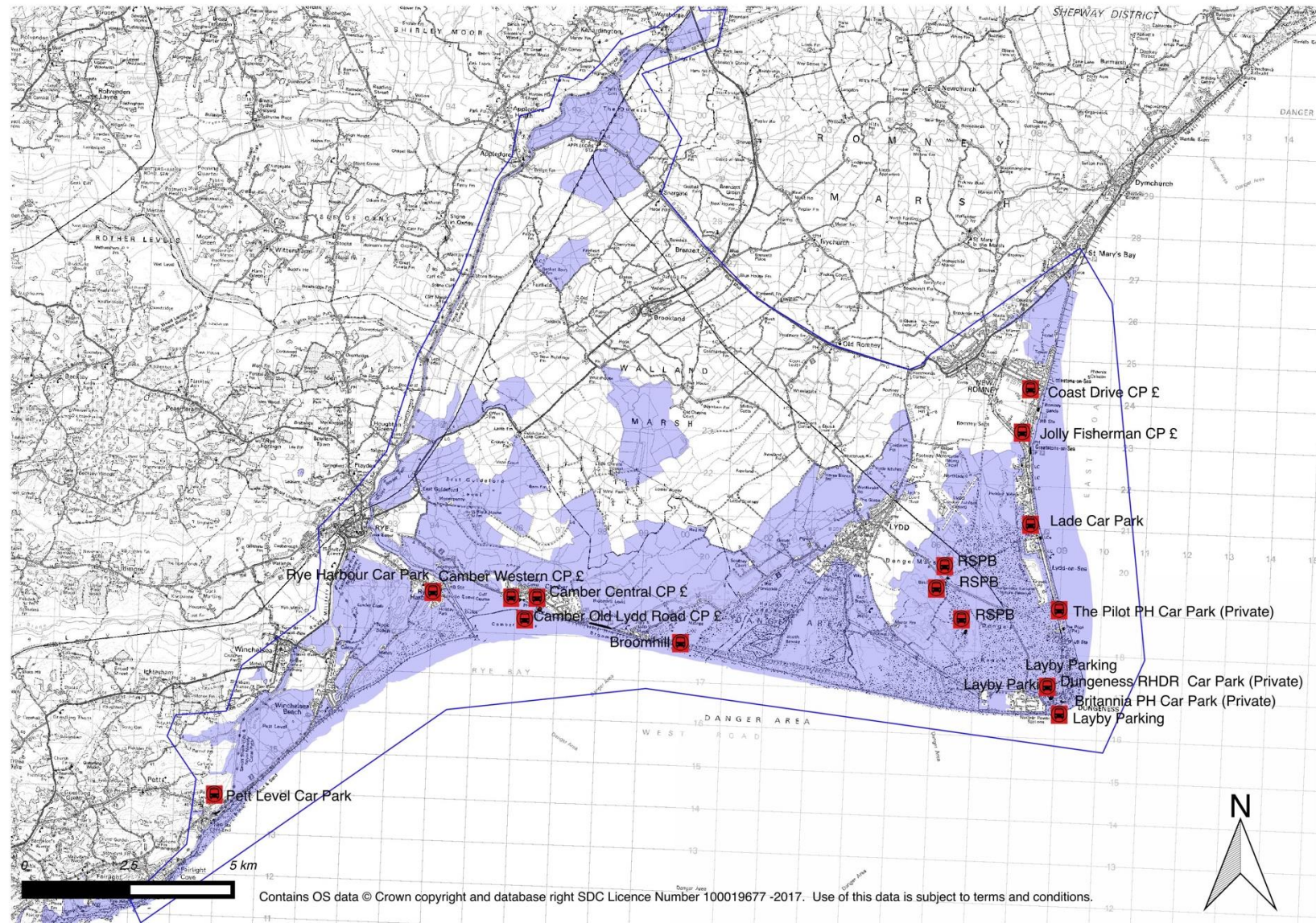
A detailed report on parking at Rye Harbour by Sussex Wildlife Trust¹³ shows that numbers remained stable between 2001 – 2010, with a gradual rise till 2013. Then the figure jumps sharply; between 2013 to 2015 there was an increase of 20.5%.

The following pages provide a summary of the coastal car parks and charges in the strategy area.

¹² The impact of car parking policies on greenhouse gas emissions. Eric Gantelet & Christophe Begon Sareco – 2008

¹³ Rye Harbour Car Park Data Summary 2001–15 prepared by Dr Barry Yates of Sussex Wildlife Trust from data supplied by ESCC derived from their equipment installed at the entrance to Rye Harbour Car Park.

Plan 4: Coastal Car Parks



Car Parking and Charges - Shepway

NAME	SPACES	LONG STAY	SEASON TICKET	DISABLED
Coast Drive	400	Yes	Yes	3 hours
Jolly Fisherman	130	Yes	Yes	3 hours
Lade	50	Free		

Parking charges for these car parks:

1 hour £1.20	2 hours £2.30	3 hours £3.40	4 hours £4.50
5 hours £5.70	6 hours £6.70	12 hours £7.90	

Season Tickets:

Quarter	£160.00
6 Months	£310.00
Year	£610.00

Car Parking and Charges – Rother

Charges

The Council operates several Pay and Display and free car parks across the district. The Council also offers a range of permits for use in its Pay and Display car parks.

Nominated parking permits for Rother District Council

Annual	£815.00
6 Months	£498.50

NAME	SPACES	PARKING FEE	DISABLED
Camber Central - Main	170	Pay & Display (W) Pay on entry (S)	5
Camber Central - Overflow	130		
Western (Summer only)	800	Pay on entry	4
Old Lydd Road	80	Pay and Display	0
Rye Harbour	180	Free	0
Broomhill Sands	-	Free	
Pett Level Road	-	Free	

Camber Central opening times –

Summer – 1st April to 30th September

Winter – 1st October to 31st March

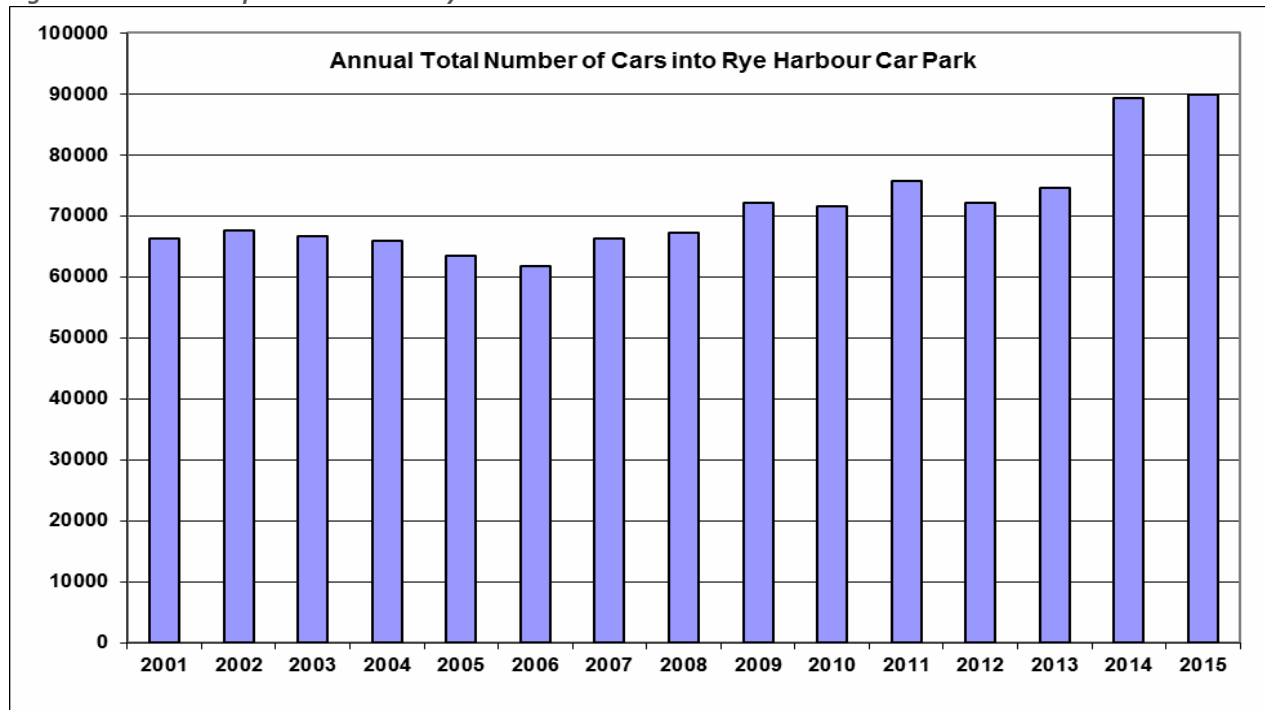
Camber Central, Western & Old Lydd Road:

FEES APPLY from 0830 /1800 –	WINTER	SUMMER
Up to 1 hour	£1.00	£1.50
1 to 3 hours	£3.00	£5.00
3 – 6 hours	£5.00	£10.00
6 hours +	£6.00	£12.00

Rye Harbour Car Park Data Summary 2001–15

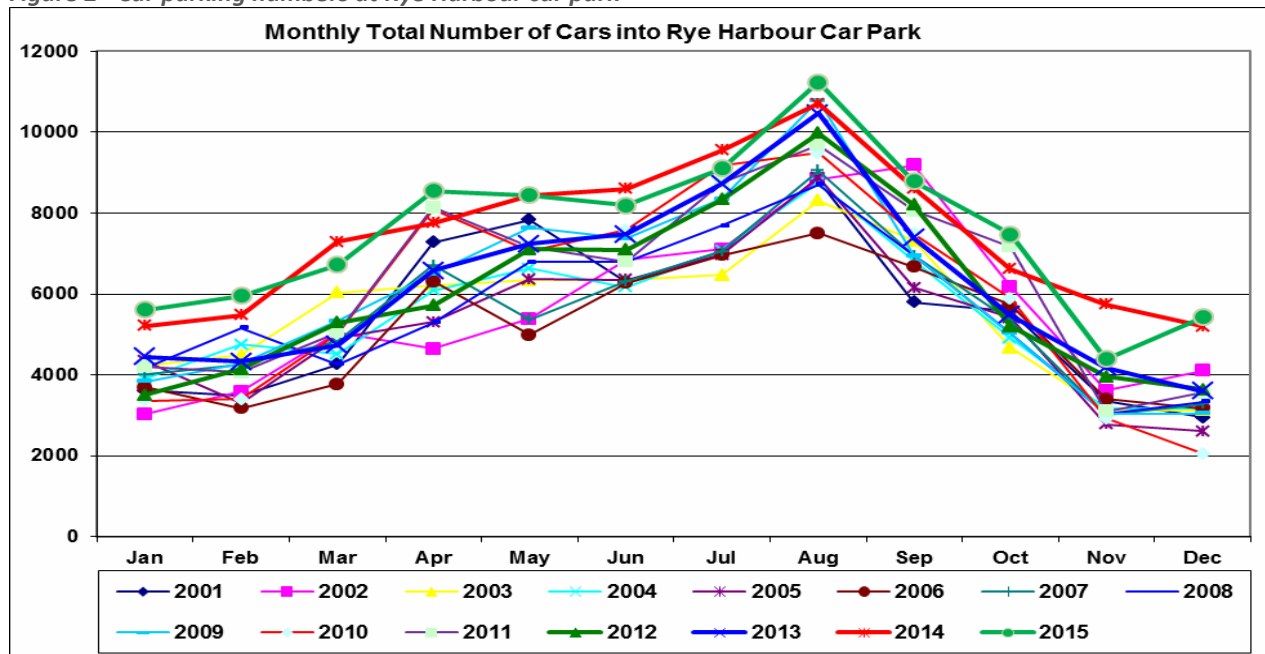
This car park has been taken over by the parish council; there is a charge, but it is voluntary. Previously the car park was free of charge. There have been some periods when the recording has failed and which have been filled with figures representative of the time of year and the days of the week.¹⁴

Figure 1 - Annual car park numbers at Rye Harbour



¹⁴ **Rye Harbour Car Park Data Summary 2001–15** prepared by Dr Barry Yates of Sussex Wildlife Trust from data supplied by ESCC derived from their equipment installed at the entrance to Rye Harbour Car Park.

Figure 2 - Car parking numbers at Rye Harbour car park



Private Car Parks

There are several private car parks for patrons or visitors, see Table 2.

Table 2: Private coastal car parks

NAME	FEE	TYPE
Pilot Pub	Free	Patrons Only
Britannia Pub	Free	Patrons Only
RHDR (land owned by EDF)*	Free	
RSPB X 3	Free	Free to visitors

*There are also a number of small 2/4 parking bays around the Dungeness Estate

Informal Car Parking

The areas which are mostly adversely affected by informal parking are mainly around Pett Level and Dungeness Point. At Pett Level this is mainly along Pett Level Road between Cliff End and Winchelsea. There are also residential roads where informal car parking takes place.

Along the coast road (The section of coast road from Lydd-On-Sea just north of Dungeness Estate) as far as the Romney Sands Holiday Park (between Lade and Greatstone) has double yellow lines on the land side of the road, and a single white line on the coast side (except areas opposite road entrances where there are short sections of double yellow lines). Cars regularly park on the coast side.

Just beyond the Holiday Park there are double yellow lines on both sides of the road and these continue for some distance. Kite-surfers are known to park on the white line side of the road between The Jolly Fisherman and the Lade car park and presumably walk straight across the shingle to get to the sea.



Figure 3 Informal parking at Pett Level

Informal parking is more of a problem at Dungeness Point. During the summer months motorhomes are a problem and there can be up to 6 parked in Dungeness Estate overnight. These tail off after the summer period. Some of these are tourists and some are anglers, according to the RMCP. Some of the residents park caravans on the shingle around their property but these are usually removed after BNP Paribas and Natural England intervene. Traffic cones are used around the estate to stop informal parking on the shingle with some success (functionally if not aesthetically).

Vehicle damage by 4X4's can also be a problem on the shingle. This also applies to unauthorised Fashion/Film Crews which seem to be an ongoing problem at Dungeness Estate. Damage to the shingle in and around the estate seems to be endemic throughout the year.

Natural England can fine those causing damage to an SSSI. Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 gives them responsibility for enforcing this section of the law and can they take appropriate enforcement action when the law is broken and when the habitat and features of SSSIs are damaged, disturbed or destroyed, if it can be proved that they were aware of an offence being committed¹⁵ (see next section – Restrictions and Enforcement).

¹⁵ Natural England SSSI Enforcement Policy Statement 2007.



Figure 4 – Informal parking and fashion shoots can cause problems at Dungeness Point. Photos courtesy of RMCP.

Restrictions and Enforcement

Byelaws

Byelaws are important to this strategy because they are a means by which the Local Authorities might deter and control deleterious behaviour in the strategy area. Although most of these aim to protect the public, some may also protect the environment if effectively enforced. However, the degree to which they are enforced is not known.

Rother Byelaws

Byelaws in Rother are generally well defined and easy to find on the RDC website. They set out individually what activities are prohibited on the coast. Signage on site setting out prohibited activities was present in some places, but they were not consistent or visually coordinated.



Figure 5 - Example of Signage at Camber Sands

Shepway Byelaws

Byelaws in Shepway were less easy to find and less specific about prohibited and controlled activities than Rother. In 2011 a resolution was passed by full Council to review a list of burdensome and archaic byelaws with a view to bringing forward proposals to repeal such byelaws, especially where the effect of such byelaws is to prohibit or undermine efforts by local residents and organisations to engage in or arrange activities that are of benefit to the welfare of the community. In February 2012 the Council published a list of those byelaws revoked in full or part.¹⁶ However, none of those revoked has any material effect on activities or behaviour in the strategy area.

More detail on the website about prohibited activities would be helpful. Signage is evident in some places on site but it is patchy, visually uncoordinated and sometimes hard to interpret. It is not easy to relate with details found on the website. For example, there is a byelaw for restricting seaside pleasure boats, but it is not clear if jet skiing is included in this, or kite surfing. Signage on site also mentions other prohibited activities which were not found on the website.



Figure 6 - Signage at Greatstone and Littlestone

A summary of relevant byelaws follows.

¹⁶<http://www.shepway.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s7971/rgpc20120221%20Review%20of%20the%20Councils%20Byelaws%20-%20Appendix%202.pdf>

Rother District Council Byelaws - Camber

Byelaws made under Section 82 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 by Rother District Council for the prevention of danger, obstruction, or annoyance to persons using the seashore. The byelaws apply to all areas of seashore that border the District of Rother within the civil parish of Camber lying to the east of the River Rother and to the West of the boundary with the Borough of Shepway.

Horse Riding and Sports

Horse riding for the Summer Season is restricted from 30 March 2017 to 1 October 2017 inclusive. During this period riding is permitted weekdays early mornings (off beach by 0830hrs) and evenings (after 1900hrs). Riding is permitted around LOW tide hours only, i.e. 2 hours before. Traps or carriages pulled by horse or pony are not permitted on the beach.

No sandlines or fishhooks are allowed. No aircraft, or taking off – such as with any kite, parachute, air foil, hang glider or parascending or motor gliding equipment or in any other manner without an aircraft except in the extreme sports area (see Plan 8). No person shall on any day between the Thursday before Easter in any year and the 30th day of September drive, ride, launch or land any vehicle powered by wind in any part of the seashore apart from the extreme sports area.

Games, parties and barbeques

No performances are allowed. No dangerous games are allowed. No trading is allowed. No fires or barbeques are allowed, except in designated areas or with the permission of the Council. No parties are allowed without permission.

Camping and structures, removal of signage

No erection of any booths, tents, sheds, stands, stalls, shows, exhibitions, swings, roundabouts, or any other structure, whether fixed or movable, except in a designated area for such structures (does not apply to the use of windbreaks and personal sunshades).

No person shall on the seashore, without the consent of the Council, erect a tent or use any vehicle, including a caravan or any other structure for the purpose of camping, except in any area which may be set apart and indicated by notice as a place where camping is permitted. No removal of signage without permission.

Rother District Council Byelaws - Fairlight, Pett and Icklesham

No person shall ride or drive any horse or other animal on any part of the seashore in such a manner as to cause danger or annoyance to any other person.

No person shall leave any fire or barbecue they have lit on the seashore without first extinguishing it in such a manner as to safeguard against damage or danger and lawfully disposing of any ashes or other waste.

No person shall, except in cases of emergency, launch, use or land any personal water craft or other non-displacement water craft on any part of the seashore except on such part as is designated by the Council for their launching, use or landing.

No person shall without reasonable excuse remove from the seashore or displace any barrier, post or seat or any part of any structure or ornament or any notice or flag displayed by or on behalf of the Council or any other competent authority.

No person shall except in the case of emergency remove from the seashore or displace any life-saving appliance provided by or on behalf of the Council or any other competent authority.

Any person offending against any of these byelaws shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

Shepway District Council - Byelaw in respect of seaside pleasure boats

No person, being the navigator of a pleasure boat, shall between 1 May and 30 September inclusive in any year cause or permit such vessel to exceed a speed of 8 nautical miles per hour through the water.

No person, being the navigator of a pleasure boat, shall cause or permit such vessel to be driven or sailed in a dangerous manner or without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other persons.

No person, being the navigator of a pleasure boat propelled by an internal combustion engine, shall use the pleasure boat, unless the engine is fitted with a silencer suitable and sufficient for reducing, as far as may be reasonable, the noise caused by the escape of the exhaust gases from the engine.

Shepway District Council - Byelaw with respect to the Placing of fish hooks on the seashore

No person shall between the first day of April and the thirtieth day of September, inclusive in any year, place or wilfully leave on the section of foreshore between The Grand Redoubt, Hythe and the Pilot Public House, Lydd-on-Sea any fish-hook, metal stake or similar article in such a position as to be likely to cause injury to any person using the seashore.

Shepway District Council - Byelaw with respect to the use of motor cycles and other vehicles

No person shall ride, drive or operate any motor bicycle or other mechanically propelled vehicle not intended or adapted for use on roads other than a vehicle constructed or adapted for the conveyance of an invalid on any open land within the District.

Provided that this byelaw shall not apply to any person taking part in a rally, trial, race or any other event held on any open land in pursuance of an agreement with the Council or landowner.

Open land means any land, whether enclosed or not, which is used as an amenity or for purposes of recreation or lies waste or unoccupied.

Dog Restrictions

Dogs are prohibited in various locations along the coastline from 1st May to the 30th September inclusive. These restrictions operate through Dog Control Orders – DCOs. If ignored, an on-the-spot fine of £80 (a 'Fixed Penalty Notice') can be charged, or up to £1,000 if the offence proceeds to court. Only owners of guide dogs are exempt. (N.B. These orders have been superseded by Public Space Protection Orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Further investigation will be needed by the local authorities regarding the evidence test required in applying the new orders, and/or the application of other legislation, in relation to the control of dogs). The areas where DCOs are currently in force are identified in the images below:



Figure 7 Dog restrictions at Pett Level Beach

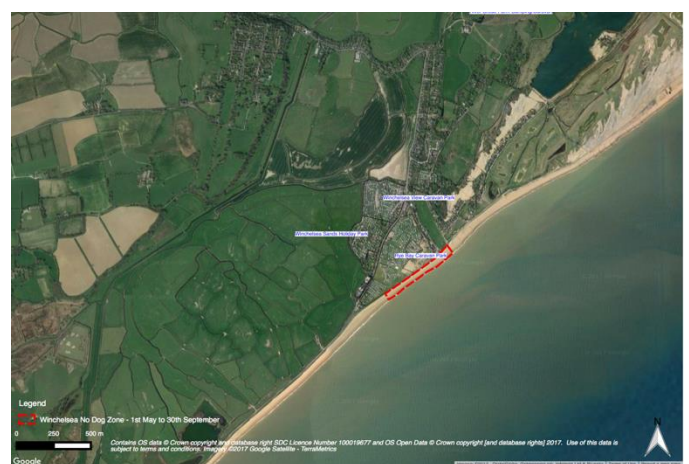


Figure 8 Dog restrictions at Winchelsea



Figure 9: Dog restrictions at Camber



Figure 10 Dog restrictions at Greatstone



Figure 11 Dog restrictions at Littlestone

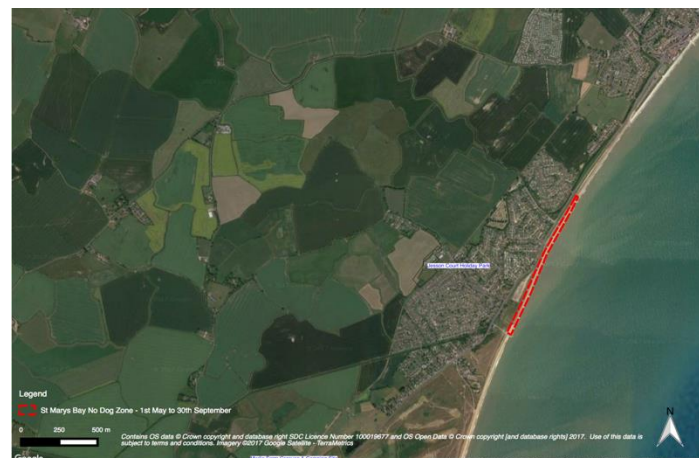


Figure 12- Dog restrictions at St Marys Bay

Natural England - SSSI enforcement role and policy

Natural England (NE) is the statutory body whose functions include conserving and enhancing England's natural environment. Natural England works in partnership with others by advising the Government, other agencies, local authorities, interest groups, businesses, communities and individuals on nature conservation; regulating activities affecting nature conservation sites; helping others to manage land for nature conservation through grants and projects and information. It has legal responsibilities for nationally important nature conservation sites known as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), the most important of which are managed as National Nature Reserves.

Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as replaced by Schedule 9 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and inserted by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 ('the Wildlife and Countryside Act') gives NE the power to make sure SSSIs are protected and managed effectively now and in the future. It is responsible for enforcing this section of the law and can take appropriate enforcement action when the law is broken and when the habitat and features of SSSIs are damaged, disturbed or destroyed. NE uses a range of enforcement methods; these methods range from information site notices and warning letters through to formal investigations and prosecutions.

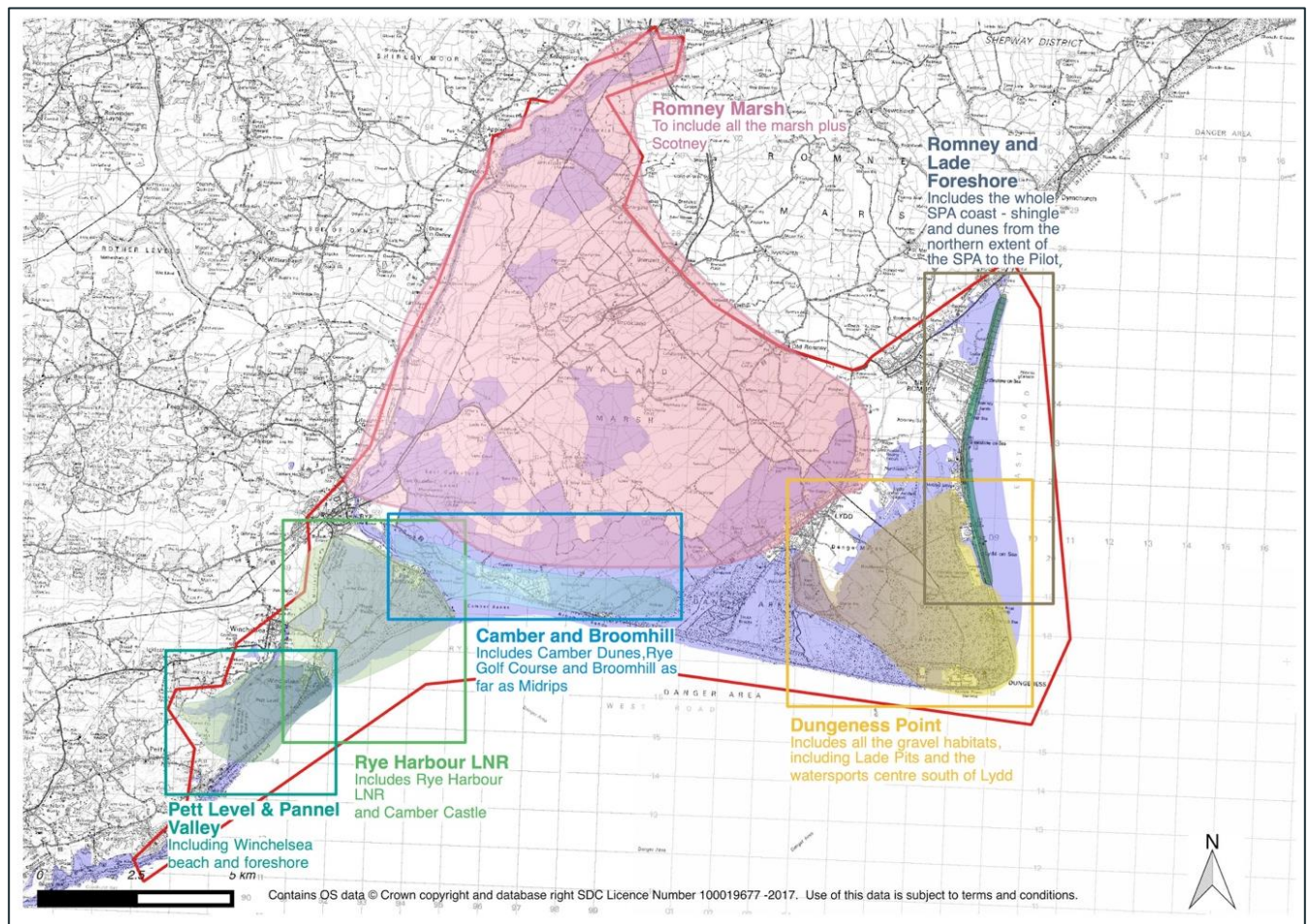
Strategy Sub-Areas – Access and Management

Introduction

Throughout this strategy, the wider strategy area is considered in six sub-areas, see Main Report and Plan 5 below:

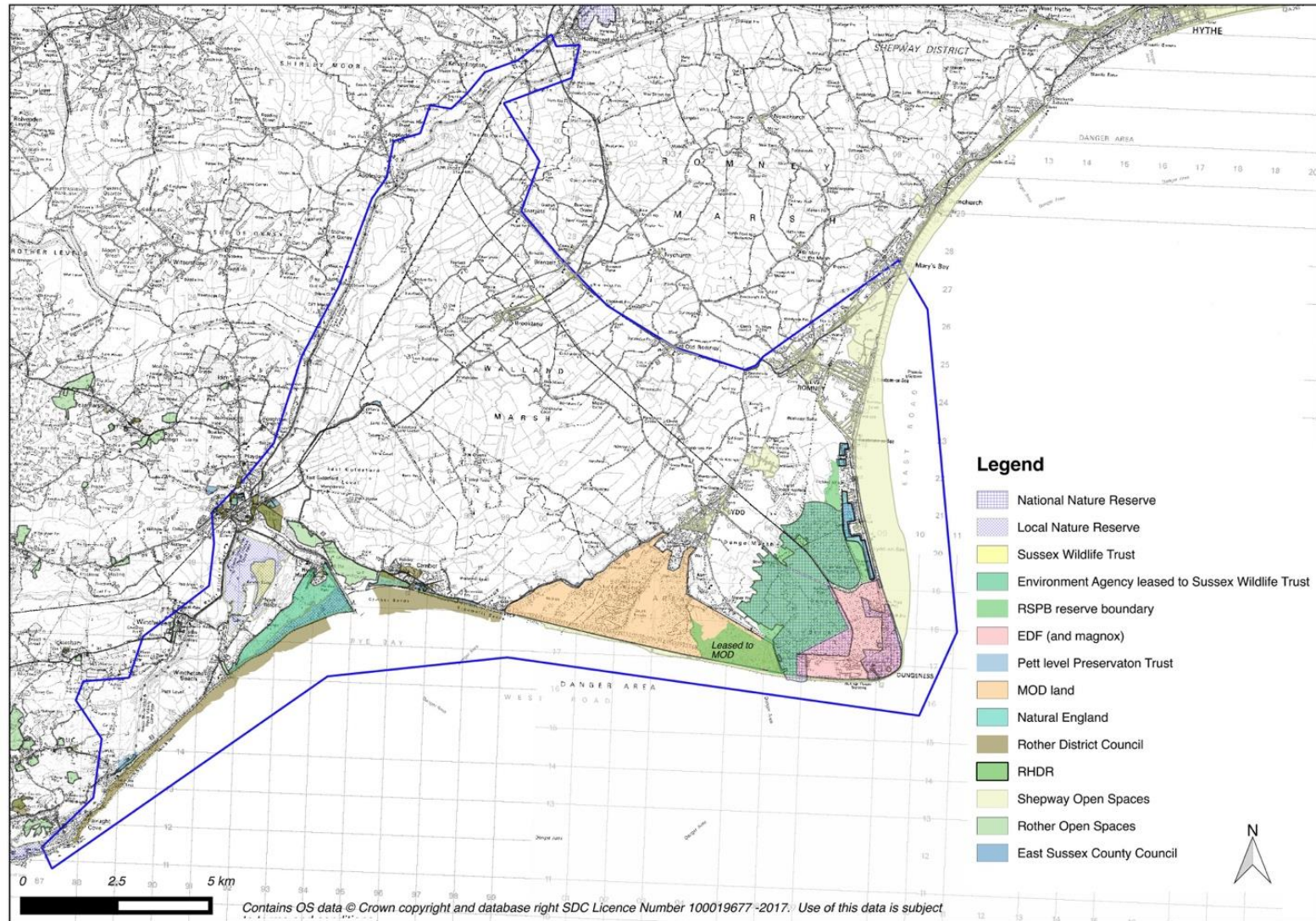
There are several landowners in each sub-area, see Plan 6.

Plan 7 shows the areas which are accessible. This includes those areas where access is permitted or legally allowed, including rights of way, accessible nature reserves including Rye Harbour LNR and publically owned land, along with areas where the public do access without explicit permission given (*de facto* public access).

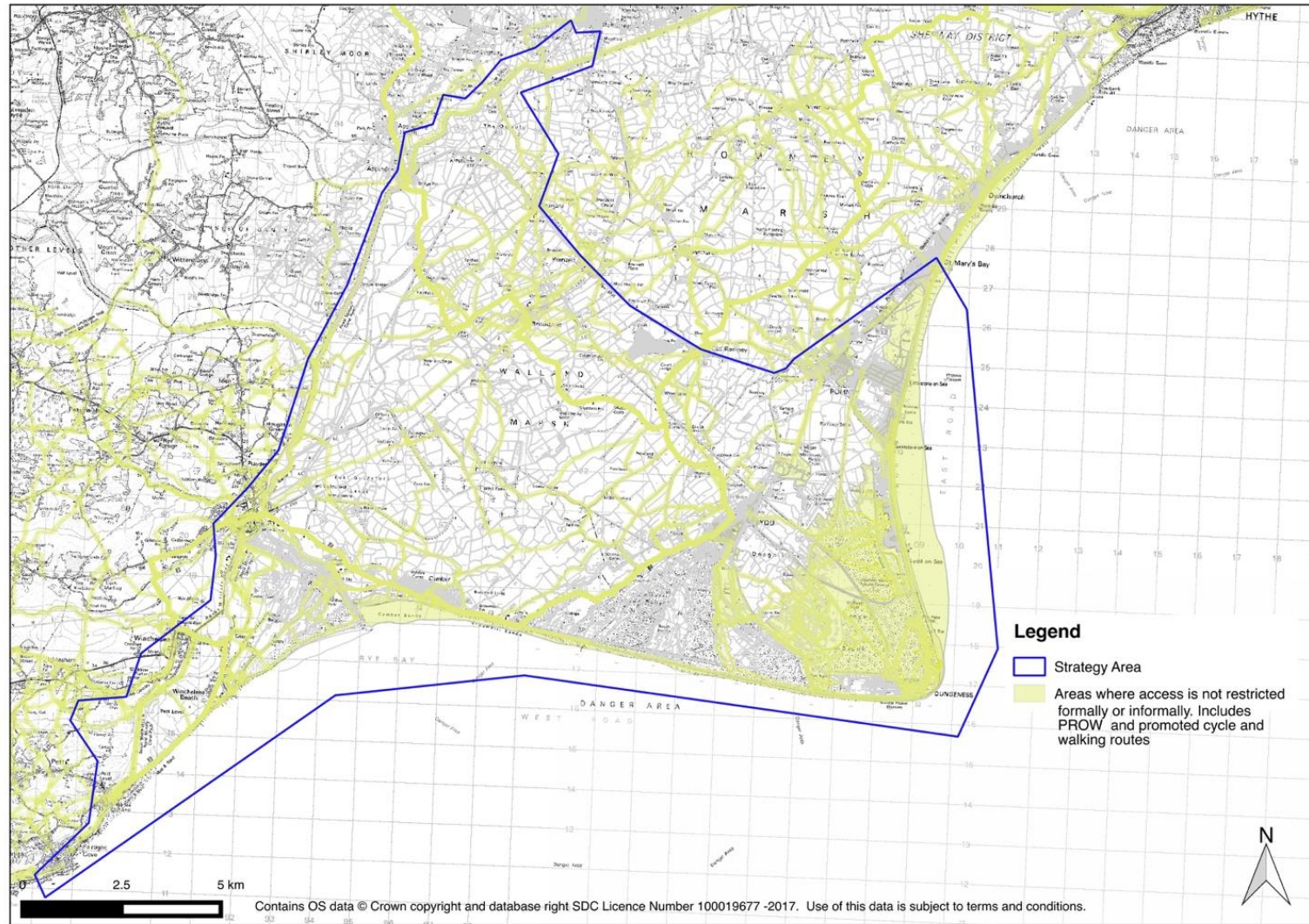


Plan 5 - Strategy Sub Areas

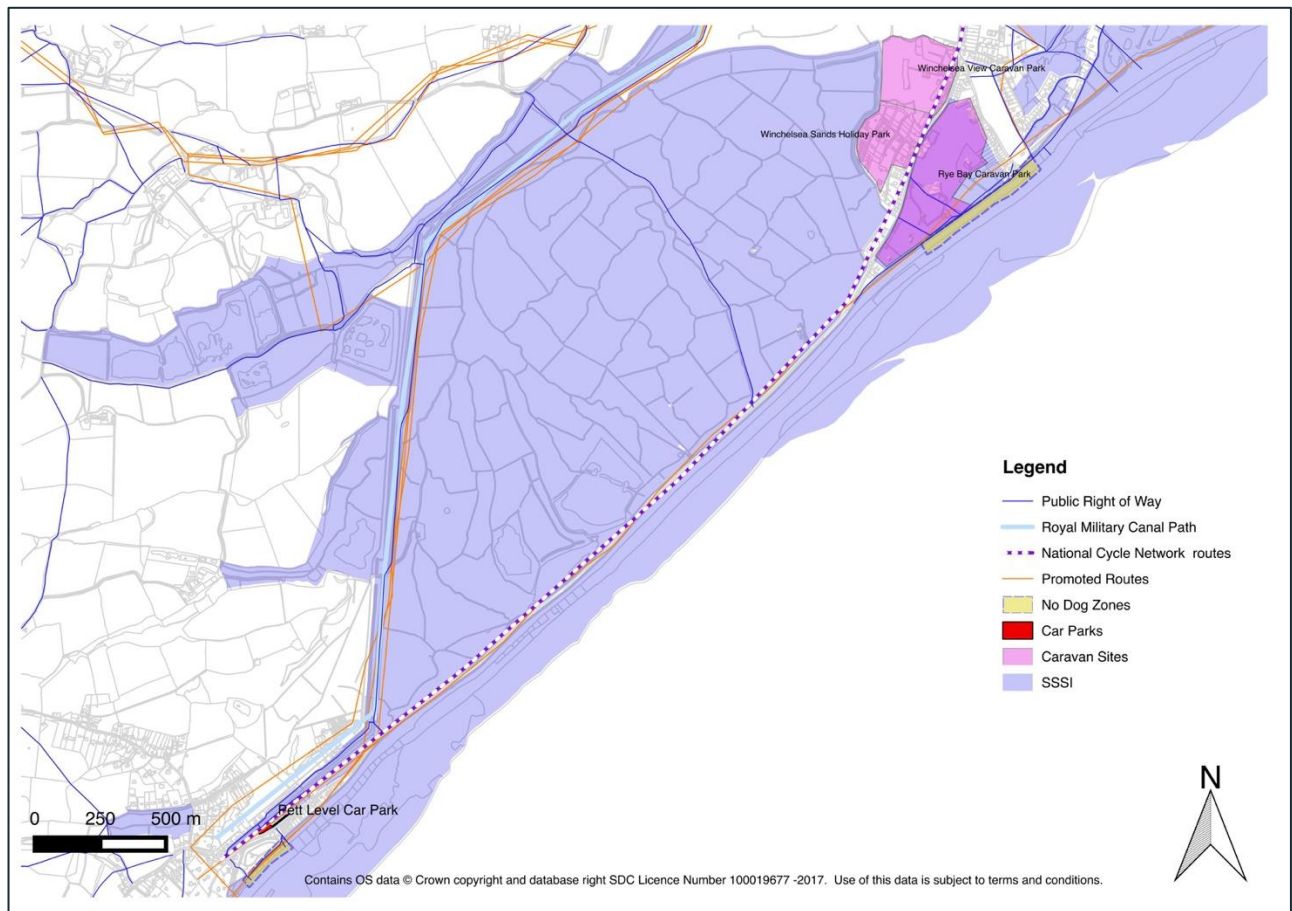
Plan 6 - Land Ownership in the Strategy Area



Plan 7: Accessible areas



Pett Level and Pannel Valley



Plan 8 - Pett Level and Pannel Valley Sub Area

Site ownership and management

Pett Level Preservation Trust

The Trust is a registered charity formed nearly 40 years ago when 18 acres of coastal grazing land came onto the market and looked set to be sold in lots for development. Subsequently further purchases of land were made bringing the total area to about 24 acres as an amenity for the general public and for wildlife conservation. The Trust is run by 14 local residents.

The land comprises the western end of Toot Rock, part of the Royal Military Canal and the area between that and the road as far as the start of the open marsh together with part of the land between the Royal Military Canal and the Marsham Sewer.

About 100 species of bird have been seen using the land and the canal running through it, with more than 30 species nesting and many more flying over, especially on migration. The canal is home to fish and

dragonflies. The geology of Toot Rock is a former island with good exposures sandstone, which are also important for invertebrates such as bees and hoverflies. The archaeological interest of the site centres on defensive installations from the Napoleonic and Second World Wars.¹⁷

The rest of this area is privately owned.

Site Management Plans and management arrangements

Pett Level Preservation Trust has a management plan for the area. The Trust's main efforts are directed towards managing the land to ensure access and biodiversity. Toot Rock is grazed by sheep and the Canal is the responsibility of the Environment Agency but the strip on the seaward side has progressed from grassland to scrub made up principally of blackthorn, hawthorn, elder and bramble, the former now forming dense thickets. To prevent it taking over the whole area, periodic clearance is necessary. This is a management requirement under the terms of the site's SSSI designation.

Byelaws, site rules, codes of conduct applicable to the site/area

There are byelaws which apply to this area (see previous chapter for detail) There are dog restricted areas on the beach at Pett Level and Winchelsea. There is also a zone for kite and windsurfing. There is a sign on the beach which displays the byelaws, but this doesn't describe the kite/windsurfing zone very clearly:



Figure 13 - Byelaws displayed at Pett Level

Horse riding is allowed on the beach if undertaken in a safe manner. Barbeques and fires are also allowed if these are properly extinguished and ashes and waste disposed of. Fines are applicable but it is not clear what these might be, either on the site sign or on the council website.

¹⁷ www.petttnet.co.uk/pett-level-preservation-trust website

Car parking arrangements

There is a free car park at Pett Level Road and informal parking takes place along the coast road which are causing erosion to the edge and damage in some places.



Figure 14 - Informal parking at Pett Level

Main access points and routes and promoted routes

The Royal Military Canal (RMC) borders northern part of this area and there are PROWs running along the coast and one across Pett Level from the RMC at New Gate. Apart from the land managed by Pett Level Preservation Trust there is limited access to Pett Level.



Figure 15 - Pett Level Views

There are several promoted routes in the area (Winchelsea Walk, RMC Route 10). National Cycle Network Route 2 runs along the coast and this also the main pedestrian access along the coast from Winchelsea to Pett Level.

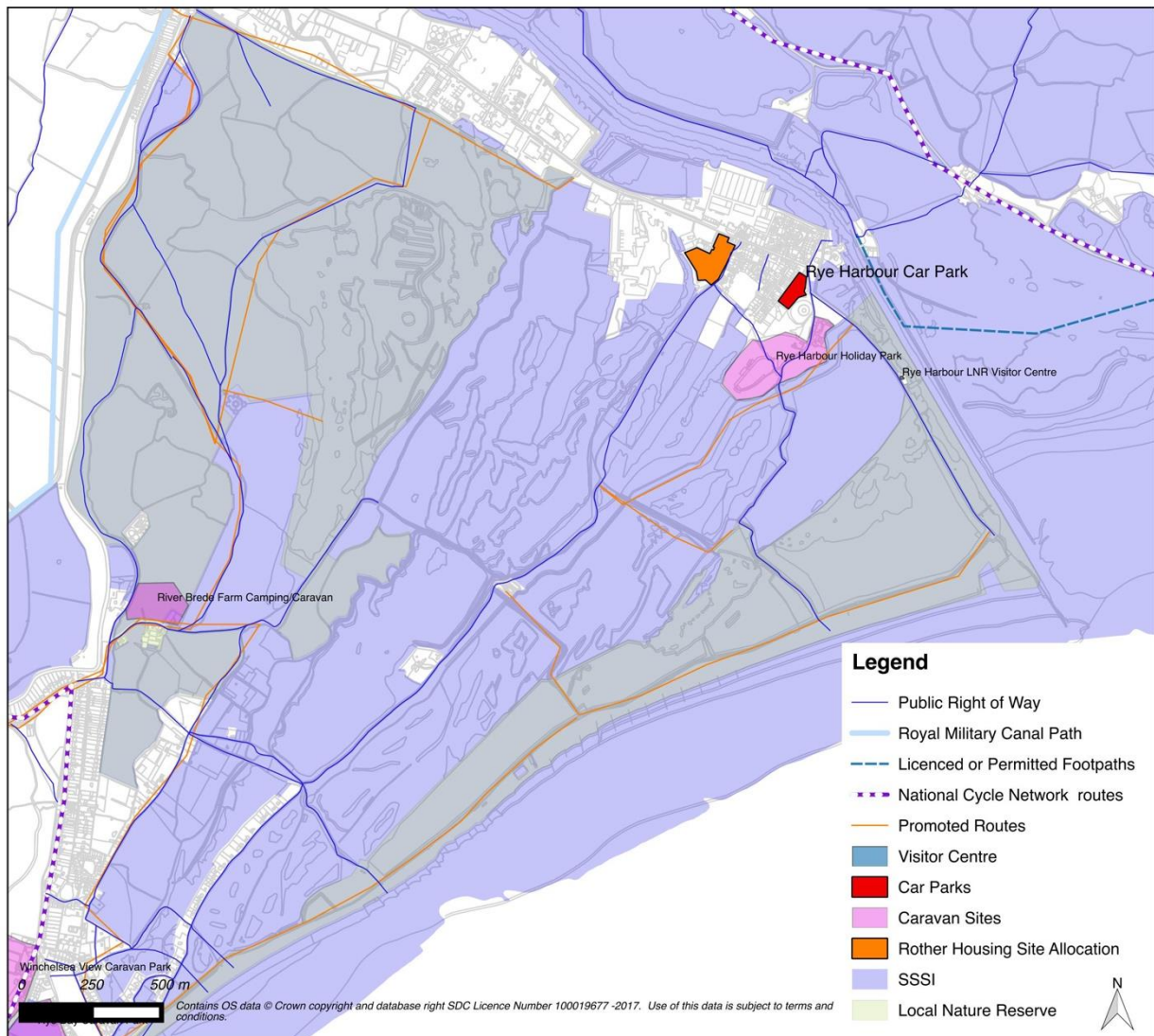
Issues and conflicts

The coast and beach appear to be the main attractors to this sub-area, although there are no visitor attractions or facilities and limited parking, so it remains one of the quieter section of coast in the strategy area. The lack of PROW across the Level, along with the presence of many ditches, limits access. The

Royal Military Canal (also the Saxon Shore Way at this point) forms the northern boundary of the Level. There are quite a number of promoted routes associated with the Royal Military Canal, increasing visitor numbers may impact on this area. Any future plans to upgrade this route to cycling and to increase visitors to this quiet part of the strategy area should be carefully assessed.

Informal car parking is causing damage along the coast road in some places and signage is largely uncoordinated.

Rye Harbour and the Local Nature Reserve



Plan 9 - Rye Harbour Sub Area

Site ownership and management

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

The Rye Harbour Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies on the coast to the south of the town of Rye and to the west of the River Rother. It was established in 1970 and is managed by Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Access by road can be gained from the village of Rye Harbour which lies at the end of Harbour Road, a minor road that joins the A259 just south of Rye. Access, via footpaths, to most parts of the LNR is very good from Rye, Rye Harbour and Winchelsea Beach, but most visitors access from the car park at Rye

Harbour where the Nature Reserve Information Kiosk is located, then walk to the River Mouth, past the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre. Access to the reserve is from Rye, Rye Harbour and Winchelsea Beach from four main access points:

- The Main car park at the end of Harbour Road;
- Winchelsea Beach;
- The track from Ternery Pools;
- Rye Harbour Caravan Park.

Public access is permitted in much of the site, with permissive and promoted routes in and around the reserve, as well as PRow. These are connected to other promoted routes leading to Rye and the Royal Military Canal. RMCP promoted route No 9 'Man the Castle' runs through the reserve, as does the Saxon Shore Way and the Winchelsea Walk. National Cycle Route (NCR) 2 passes close to the site. Cyclists may ride along Harbour Road and along a Sustrans-supported path through the reserve site to Winchelsea Beach under a permissive arrangement with the reserve. No horse riding is permitted. Access is not permitted within fenced areas. This good network of public and permissive footpaths enables much of the LNR to be visited from access points in Rye Town, Winchelsea Beach and Rye Harbour.¹⁸

The site receives an estimated 300,000 visitors per annum, and there are more walkers – with or without dogs - visiting the site than wildlife watchers.

A new visitor centre is planned which will provide information and education to visitors as well as other visitor facilities including refreshments. It is anticipated that this will encourage more visitors to the site. The Nature Reserve is a valuable educational resource (history, geography and biology), but is not used to its full potential due to a lack of visitor facilities. Few illegal activities occur on the Reserve, but they include hare coursing/lamping, dumping of rubbish, trespass by vehicles and pedestrians and low flying by aircraft, especially micro-lites and para-motors.¹⁹

Access to the site is carefully controlled. Electrified fencing is used to control predators into the bird breeding areas. This also helps to restrict public access and access by dogs. Birds have adapted to nest/roost inside fenced areas. Plastics and rubbish can be a problem on the site. Paths which are suitable for wheelchairs and passing places have the potential to be improved. Route 2 National Cycle Network runs on along the western boundary and there is a permissive cycle route through the site.

The LNR is seeking to enhance the wildlife interest and make it more accessible to the public.

The middle section of the site is not part of the LNR (although it is an SSSI and Ramsar) and is privately owned. (See Landownership - Plan 6)

¹⁸ Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Management Plan 2012 – 2021, DR BARRY YATES

¹⁹ Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Management Plan 2012 – 2021, DR BARRY YATES

Rye Harbour

The port of Rye is a fully operational commercial harbour with a fishing and leisure fleet. The harbour is owed by the Environment Agency (EA) although the river bed is rented from the Crown Estate. The EA lease some of this land to others – parts of the nature reserve is leased to Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Once inside the piers the channel narrows to 30 metres and runs straight for half a mile with Rye Harbour village on the west bank and the Harbour master's office on the east bank. Annual moorings are available on request and there are also a number of private operators offering long-term moorings along the rock channel. Moorings cost £1500 per annum.

Over the last ten years the demand for moorings has declined. There are about 70 boats now (250 in 2008). There are 26 commercial ships (120 in 2010) and 30 fishing boats permanently moored here. There is a berth capacity for 15 boats for visitors. Industrial use of the harbour is good. The Environment Agency doesn't advertise or promote the harbour.

The private road to the Harbour Master's Office is owned by the golf club and there are some issues - in summer in particular - with illegal parking by walkers and dog walkers.



Figure 16 - Views from Rye Harbour and the LNR

Site Management Plans and management arrangements

Rye Harbour LNR has a detailed management plan for the Local Nature reserve²⁰. This sets all the management issues from management structure of the LNR, staffing, landownership, operational management of the site, byelaws and funding. It is a very comprehensive document.

²⁰ Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Management Plan **2012 - 2021**. by Dr Barry Yates Manager of Rye Harbour LNR
<https://assets.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/Files/management-plan-2012-2021-1.pdf>

Byelaws, site rules, codes of conduct applicable to the site/area

There is a comprehensive list of byelaws produced by ESCC which apply to Rye Harbour LNR. These can be found in the management plan on pages 117 to 119. However, they do not apply to those areas outside of the LNR (the privately owned central section)

Rye Harbour – There are byelaws relating to vessels entering, using or leaving the Harbour of Rye, these are produced by the Environment Agency²¹ as part of the Access to the Countryside Policy.²²

Car parking arrangements

The Main car park at the end of Harbour Road has 180 spaces. This car park has been taken over by the parish council; there is a charge, but it is voluntary. Previously the car park was free of charge. There is also car parking around the nearby café area. There



Figure 17 - Cafe near Rye harbour LNR

Main access points and routes and promoted routes

There are several entry points to the LNR but the main one is in the village of Rye Harbour, close to the car park next to the Martello Tower. Other access points are Winchelsea Beach; the track from Ternery Pools and Rye Harbour Caravan Park.

There are PROW running through and round the site as well as permissive routes. There are many promoted routes in and around the LNR (Camber Castle Walk 1, Saxon Shore Way, Winchelsea Walk and a long and a short trail)

²¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/289787/LIT_8627_36f6a0.pdf

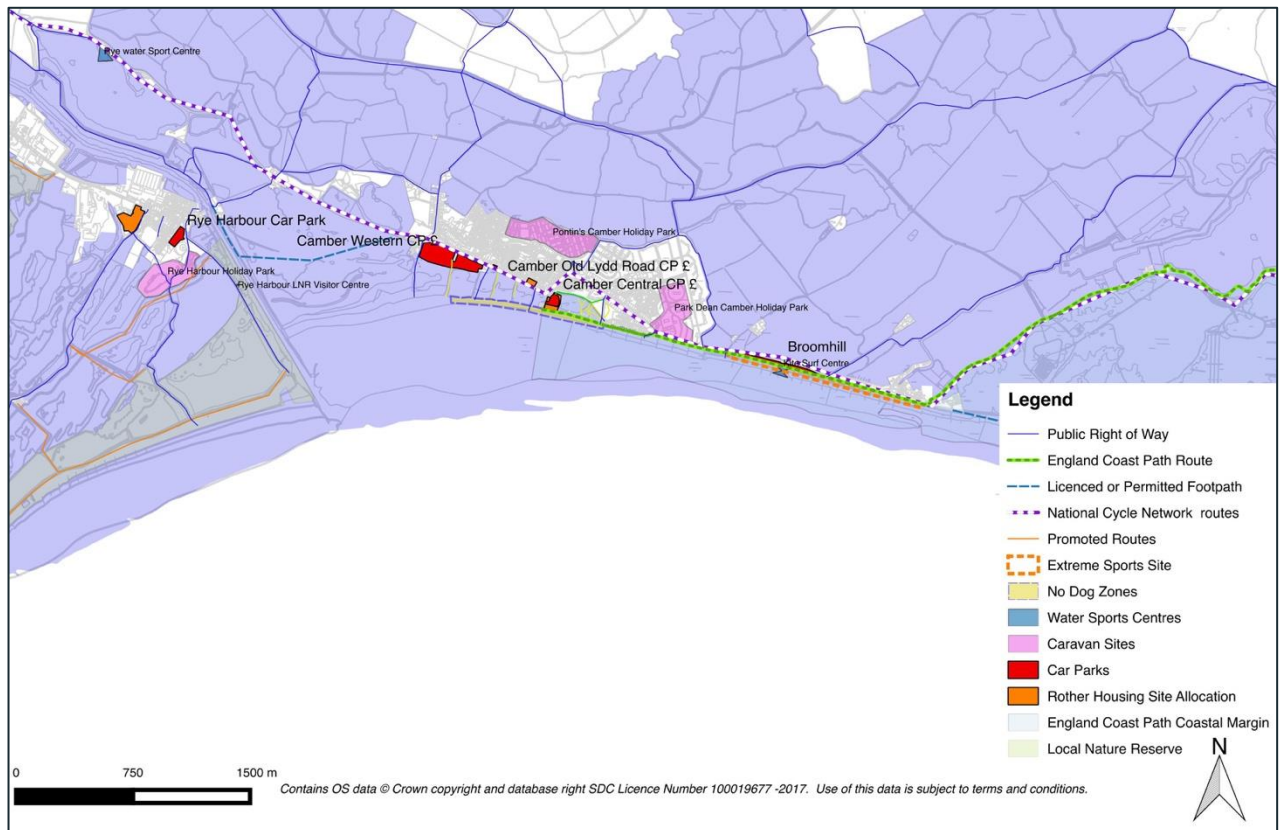
²² [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#), [Natural England](#), and [Environment Agency](#)

Issues and conflicts

The reserve is also very popular as a recreational area and attracts high numbers of visitors. Although a wildlife reserve, its appeal is not confined to wildlife watchers, with walkers, cyclists and families regularly visiting. The access track is level and flat, making this an easily accessible route to the sea.

However, the central area in the LNR is privately owned and therefore some activities cannot be controlled. Changes to the management of Rye Harbour may impact on this area.

Camber Dunes and Broomhill



Plan 10 - Camber Dunes and Broomhill Sub Area

Site ownership and management

Rother District Council

Rother District Council owns and manages the car parks and beach areas next to the dunes. The stretch of foreshore at Camber is defined by the Crown Estate Commissioners under the terms of a lease dated 5th March 2001 to Rother District Council (RDC). Most of foreshore to west of Dungeness Point is Crown Estate and the estuarine Rother. The lease is on a 50-year term commencing on 10th October 1998. It follows for the purposes of the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 that RDC are the occupiers of that foreshore section which includes Camber Sands and Broomhill Sands to the east. The area included in the land leased to Rother District Council abuts land owned by the Ministry of Defence at Lydd Ranges. RDC have responsibility down to mean low water mark, and so have a responsibility to demonstrate “duty of care” down to this line.

East Sussex County Council

East Sussex County Council owns the sand dunes towards the eastern end, covering about 53 acres.

ESCC own land approximately 40 small parcels of land adjacent to Camber Sands and Bromhill Sands. See Plan 6 – Land Ownership map.

Rye Golf Club

Rye Golf Club is situated on the eastern side of the River Rother opposite Rye Harbour and the nature reserve and alongside the Camber dunes. Rye Golf Club owns the western end of the dunes, up to the harbour arm.

There is a licenced (permissive) path that runs through the site, which follows an old tram route, although it is not advertised and is mostly used by local people. Sustrans Route 2 runs along the Camber Road.

During the summer months, there are isolated illegal car parking problems – particularly along the privately owned access road - and sometimes visitors can be found walking through the course in an effort to get to the beach. It is possible that some of this activity could be due to visitors wishing to avoid the car parking fees at nearby car parks in Camber.

Site Management Plans and management arrangements

Rother District Council, employs two full-time Coast Control Officers (east and west) who are based at Central Car Park, Camber park from 1st April 2017 to 30th October. The busy sections of the foreshore are patrolled by additional seasonal staff during July and August. Responsibilities are split according to the nature of the ground behind the seashore: where the ground lies lower than the seashore and would flood if sea defences failed the Environment Agency is the body responsible for carrying out works to prevent that flooding, where the ground lies higher than the seashore and would erode if attacked by the sea, Rother District Council is the Coastal Risk Management Authority. The Environment Agency acts as an executive agent of the government department Defra which has the overall policy responsibility for coastal defence. There is now Lifeguard presence from the end of May to 1st October, and a Beach Patrol in the school summer holiday period. East Sussex County Council do not have an on-site staff presence but periodically visit the site to address issues and carry out low level routine maintenance.

Rye golf course commissioned a management plan (undertaken by the Sports Turf Research Institute) and works closely with Natural England to manage the dunes. There is a photographic record kept of plants and vegetation found. A large section of the western end of the dunes lie within the Camber Sands and Rye Saltings Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), while the rest is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). An area of Sea Buckthorn is cut and burnt each year between October and February and the regrowth sprayed the following spring. Vegetation along the paths is cleared during the summer to keep paths open.

Byelaws, site rules, codes of conduct applicable to the site/area

Byelaws made under Section 82 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 by Rother District Council for the prevention of danger, obstruction, or annoyance to persons using the seashore. The byelaws apply to all areas of seashore that border the District of Rother within the civil parish of Camber lying to the east of the River Rother and to the West of the boundary with the Borough of Shepway. There are signs on the beach setting out the byelaws but there is little uniformity in style and thus the message becomes diluted. There are dog restrictions on the beach and a zone for kite/wind surfing and sand yachting at the Broomhill Sands end of the beach which ends at Jury's Gap.

Car parking arrangements

Camber Central car park is a pay and display car park with 130 spaces. Camber Western has 800 (summer only) and is pay on entry. Old Lydd Road has 80 spaces and is also a pay and display.

There is also a car park at Broomhill Sands which is free. Numbers of tickets purchased at these car parks has been increasing since 2013.

Main access points and routes and promoted routes

The England Coastal Path stretch from Folkestone finishes at Camber sands. There are also PROW running from the road to the beach through the dunes. However, the most direct route through the dunes from Camber Western is not a PROW and is used by most people from the car park to the beach. There is a network of desire lines throughout the dunes, which are badly trampled in many places. NCN Route 2 runs along the coast road.





Figure 18 - Types and signage styles at Camber

Issues and conflicts

The development of new or enhanced walking and cycling routes beyond the village will need to be carefully assessed for potential impacts on the sensitive areas. Any intensification of recreational use will need to be assessed.

Byelaws and management operations are in place to guide and protect visitors but they do not necessarily protect the environment. For example, there are dog controls in place on stretches of beach in the summer months for the benefit of visitors, but no controls for the winter months when over-wintering birds may be vulnerable to disturbance. There are activity zones which allocate areas for specific activities, and restrict their use outside these areas. These zones appear to be effective and could be extended for the winter months to protect the birds from disturbance.

A multi-faceted approach is therefore needed: on-site signing, visitor education and information, reinforced by messages appropriate to the visitor, supported by on-site personnel conveying education messages. New or extended byelaws or orders, and the extension of activity zoning to control activities. These actions should be backed up with on-site wardening and enforcement where necessary.

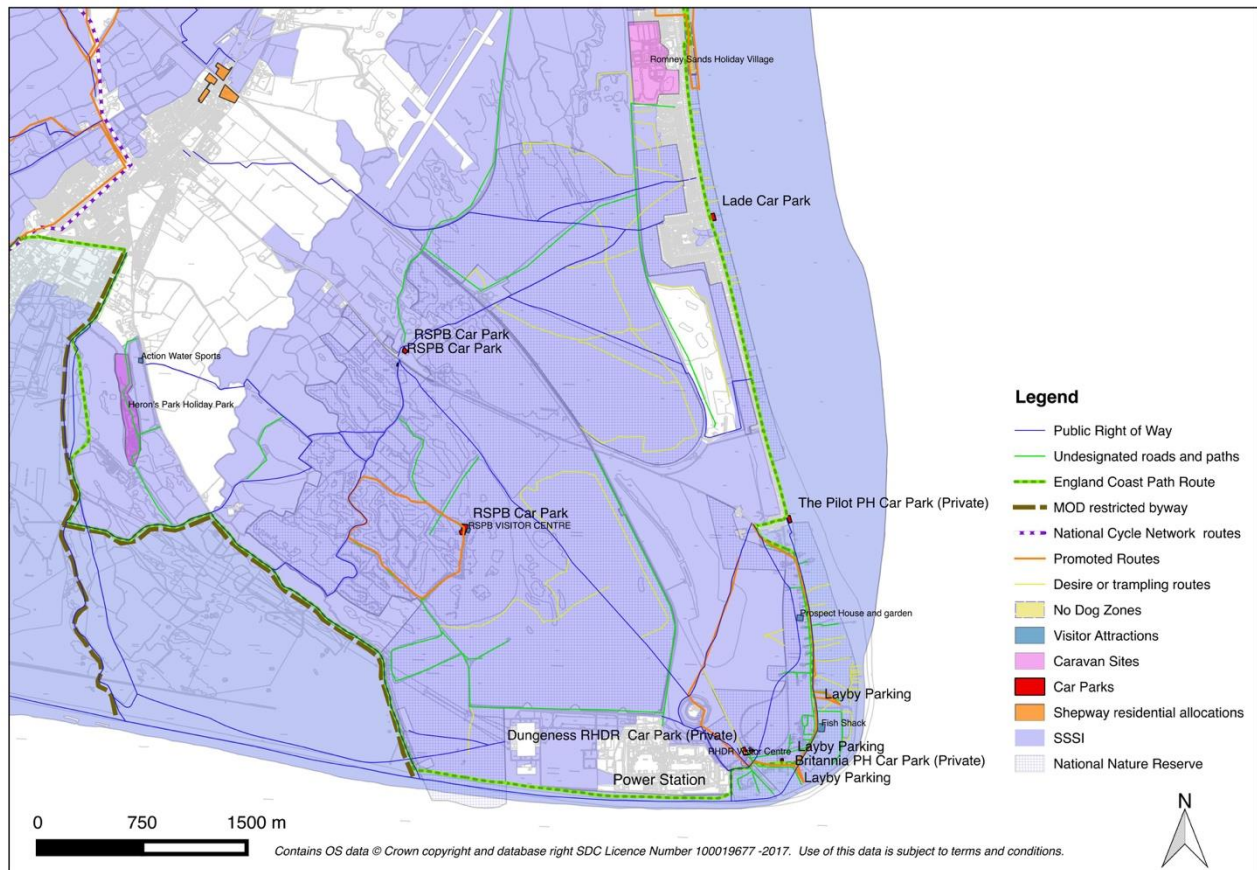
Car parking numbers show that visitor numbers to this area are increasing. There is clear evidence that the pressure of many thousands of visitors causes damage to the dunes, causing erosion and leading to 'blowouts'. If visitors can easily follow the existing paths, do not create new paths and do not wander through the dunes, this helps to limit damage. An effective way to achieve this is to clear the paths each spring to make them easier to use than wandering through the dune. It is also important that they are discouraged as far as possible from creating 'sun traps' and 'sand slides'. by physically containing the number of paths through the dunes, keeping these areas well-maintained and supporting the changes with signage and education/wardening to encourage compliance and behaviour change in visitors.

The proposals for closure and redevelopment of the Central Car Park may help to support the integrity of the dunes in that area by reducing visitor pressure. However, visitors from holiday parks and the overflow car park are likely to continue to use the routes through the dunes. It is proposed that the routes are retained but the 'spreading space' is minimised, and interventions including stabilising vegetation and sand fencing are used to make it easy for users to stick to the path.

The need for greater coordination between the owners of the dunes is of critical importance. The publicly accessible areas have several owners, with varying levels of funding for their management. The EA no longer provides funding (from Defra) as the dunes are of a sufficient size to pose minimal risk in terms of sea defence. However, the dunes are accreting in this area and the paths need to be cleared annually. This management is critical to ensure that visitors use existing paths and do not create additional routes, as previously described, but the exercise is becoming more costly. There is currently a lack of coordination and partnership working concerning the management of the dunes, both in terms of the physical management on the ground and the overall approach to income-generation and financial viability.

The management plan of 2010 led to some works taking place around Camber Central car park including reinforcing the dunes with sand fencing and new vegetation, but the plan has not been updated and is now not being implemented. A balance needs to be struck between stabilising the dunes to prevent sand inundation in Camber village, allowing the natural succession of dune habitats to support biodiversity interest and managing recreation and this requires a clear and costed management plan, with agreed responsibilities and to ensure this is implemented. More zoning of activities may be required.

Dungeness Point and the National Nature Reserve



Site ownership and management

Dungeness Estate

Dungeness is a private estate covering the south eastern part of Dungeness Point. It forms a major part of the National Nature Reserve. It is largely owned by EDF, who own Dungeness B (Dungeness A belongs to Magnox and will be decommissioned soon). However, EDF ownership does not include the houses, gardens and businesses, including the Lighthouse, the Britannia and the Pilot pubs and the Romney Hythe and Dymchurch Railway (although EDF owns the car park area) and the fishing boats.

There are lease agreements between EDF and some of the fishermen; and there are problems associated with the fishing use on the site – detritus such as nets, rubbish, containers and cables can be found on the beach.

Natural England owns land opposite Lydd on Sea.

Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway

The terminus for the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway (RHDR) line is located in the Dungeness Estate. The RHDR have re-built and extended the cafe on the site at the terminus. This café will be open for longer hours and on more days than previously, and will host events and group bookings. In addition, the train will operate more frequently from 2017, thereby increasing the potential number of visitors to the estate. The improvements to the café will extend to other improvement to visitor facilities including boundary car park fencing, and areas tarmacked in key places to improve access and parking (for landownership details see Plan 6)

RHDR owns the station area the café and the rails; and has a right of way over EDF land. Since 2014 RHDR has been working to a 30 year self-sustaining plan of which the cafe improvements are the first stage. The railway attracts 180,000 visitors per year, of which 130,000 are estimated to get off the train at Dungeness.

The RHDR is also planning a new station for Hythe and have other plans for a new heritage centre along the route from Hythe to Dungeness. It advertises through Visit Kent to SE London and Essex as well as leaflets to local areas and other light railways. There are plans to provide online ticketing soon and an ambition to link tourist routes to the Royal Military Canal for a better visitor experience. However, most people find out about the train by word of mouth. RHDR would welcome more information/ tourist / signage in the cafe as well as better interpretation for visitors around their site; and they would welcome some use of the cafe for interpretative information for the Dungeness area.

RHDR is a not-for-profit company with 50 employees (the 3rd biggest employer in the area) and it has 150 volunteers.

RSPB

The RSPB land holding at Dungeness is quite extensive and forms a significant part of the NNR. Most visitors access the site via Visitor Centre. Nationally, the RSPB has streamlined its visitor ambitions, so now each site is considered part of a strategic plan which is centrally driven. The RSPB is currently undertaking a project to determine where and when to invest in our reserves to ensure the most effective use of money. This is a national project and will take some time to complete. Suitable sites will be developed for visitors in order to help generate income. The RSPB has previously stated its intention to limit visitor numbers to the reserve at 40,000 per annum. Currently the site attracts 26,000 so they have capacity to attract a further 14,000 visitors per year. Visitor numbers peak in summer although they do not consider themselves to be a tourist destination. RSPB tickets its visitors and they are surveyed regularly so they are confident about numbers. Visitors mainly keep to the designated routes around the site (for landownership details see Plan 6).

MOD Lydd Ranges

On the Dungeness Estate EDF is responsible for what are in effect, the publicly accessible areas down to the high-water mark on the beach, which is then owned by Shepway. There are no specific site byelaws but it is subject to the usual regulatory framework of a public area. EDF posts site 'rules' for visitors on noticeboards around the site. There is a (recent) prominent sign board at the main entrance and other sign boards on the site. The boards include an extensive list of rules.

Other relevant codes of conduct include the national Code of Conduct for angling; (See also Romney Marsh Sub-area report)

Lydd Ranges are situated on the reclaimed land of the historic Romney Marsh. The ranges have been used for military training for over 150 years (for landownership details see Plan 6)

Lydd Ranges are used for live firing with a Danger Area extending out to sea. Red flags are flown in periods of live firing during which access is prohibited at the public access points along the foreshore and Galloway's Road.

Along the coastal edge there is a potential issue with sea flooding. At the time of drafting this report, this was being discussed between NE, EA and the MOD. There is a bank along the coastal boundary called the Victorian Green bank which may play a role in flood prevention.

Site Management Plans and management arrangements

The Dungeness estate is managed on a day to day basis by two Romney Marsh Countryside Project officers. The employment of these officers is funded by EDF, and the work is overseen by an Estate Manager working on behalf of EDF. RMCP produce regular reports on management issues affecting the estate.

RSPB has recently acquired Lade Pits (the Denge Sound Mirrors which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments are located here) and is concerned about pressure from visitors in this area. There is no public access to the sound mirrors although the RSPB runs open days to this site from time to time. They would like to improve the site for both wildlife and people. The site does suffer from anti-social issues (littering, dog fouling, illegal fishing, and various other activities), and they are trying to reduce these.

They recently conducted a community consultation and have received positive feedback to tackle the following:

- Increase RSPB presence on site by recruiting volunteers to walk the site and engage with visitors
- Formalise access points in key areas which currently have desire lines (from memory there will be 4 formal access points)
- Introduce and formalise permissive paths
- Increased interpretation on site with maps of permissive footpaths
- Introduce dogs on leads signage
- Increased no fishing signage
- Increase the number of Sound Mirror events to allow increased access

- Restrict access to sensitive areas during the bird breeding season

Management of MOD site is set out in the MOD's 'Integrated Rural Management Plan' (IRMP) for the site. This includes topic chapters including Access and Recreation, Ecology and Conservation Management. There is also an Operational Plan with key annual objectives, all army personnel must stick to designated routes on site. Bylaws restricting public access are published at the site entrance, together with timings and dates of firing. Dogs are never allowed on the ranges.

Byelaws, site rules, codes of conduct applicable to the site/area

Access to the Dungeness Estate is generally permitted but permission must be gained before filming or photographing for commercial reasons. Details can be found on the website www.dungenessestate.co.uk. This website also sets out a code of conduct for all visitors (for landownership details see Plan 6). No vehicles are permitted on the shingle and no digging is allowed. There is also a prohibition on fires and pyrotechnics.

The MoD have prepared the "Lydd Camp and Lydd Ranges Byelaws 1988" which address the use of land and sea areas within their allocated boundaries; enforcement, warnings to vessels and the public. At the MOD site flag-flying times are published on various websites and notices – this could probably be improved as the focus is on information and not interpretation. Due to the nature of the firing range and exclusion zone at sea has been set up to prevent navigation in this zone. Vessels in the sea are controlled when the firing ranges are in use. Shipping has a right of passage but systems are in place to ensure that vessels don't stray into the exclusion zone at the wrong times.

Kite-surfing takes place close to the exclusion area, but the activity remains outside the exclusion zone.

Car parking arrangements

The Dungeness Estate is a unique landscape to which many visitors are drawn each year. There is a car park at the RHDR visitor centre/station which is rarely at capacity but informal parking on the road edges takes place in many areas – mostly associated with various visitor attractions. There are also some small laybys around the estate but informal parking is a significant problem.

The RSPB has three car parks on their land which is adequate for their needs. Both the Pilot pub and the Britannia pubs have private car parks for patrons. There is a free car park at Lade and it is possible to park on the coast side of the road from Lydd-on-Sea to the Romney Sands Holiday Park.

Main access points and routes and promoted routes

Dungeness Estate

Within the estate there are some complex issues relating to access. Several public rights of way including the England Coastal Path run through the estate, as well as undesignated roads and paths leading to properties and businesses. Many desire lines are also visible. The RMCP staff spend a lot of their time tackling access issues including parking or driving onto the shingle (and vehicles becoming stuck in the

shingle), non-permitted film crews, quad bikes and illegal parking of motor homes. Day visitors to the site – some with their dogs - trample over the shingle and its fragile vegetation, particularly from the car park/train station towards the beach. The problems relating to the type and large volume of public access are recognised by the site managers and methods of access control are under consideration. It is understood that a vehicle counter has been installed to monitor vehicle numbers. It is necessary for the site owners to inform visitors about various aspects of this private estate and its access and what is required of visitors. The current signage has evolved over time and may not be fulfilling the role for which it is intended.

RSPB Site

The RSPB does not consider a better connection to Dungeness Point as a priority and would not use their resources to facilitate this, although they would not actively discourage this. Moreover, the PROW from Dungeness is not widely used and an increase in use might be detrimental to the shingle vegetation. However, a signpost to the RSPB reserve from Springfield bridge might be a consideration. RSPB does not restrict access on its land currently.

MOD

There is a permissive path along the east of the site which has posed management problems for the MoD – its status is to be confirmed. There are a few issues with illegal access around or close to the perimeter of the camp (e.g. anglers accessing Denge Marsh and Heron's Park out of hours). When there is no live firing access is possible along a permissive path that runs along the coast.

A PROW and permissive route along the coastal boundary to the Ranges are often closed due to firing, when Red Flags positioned at Jury's Gap and Denge Marsh lookout posts are up then the path is closed.

The England Coastal Path is routed inland around the north of the site so that the coastal route is avoided. The coastal boundary route can be problematic as there is no fenced boundary - dog walkers and people using the beach for horse-riding could access the site. However, the Environment Agency has carried out coastal improvement works at Broomhill Sands which has made it more difficult for people to access the path from the west at high tide, due to the placement of rock armour.

Issues and conflicts

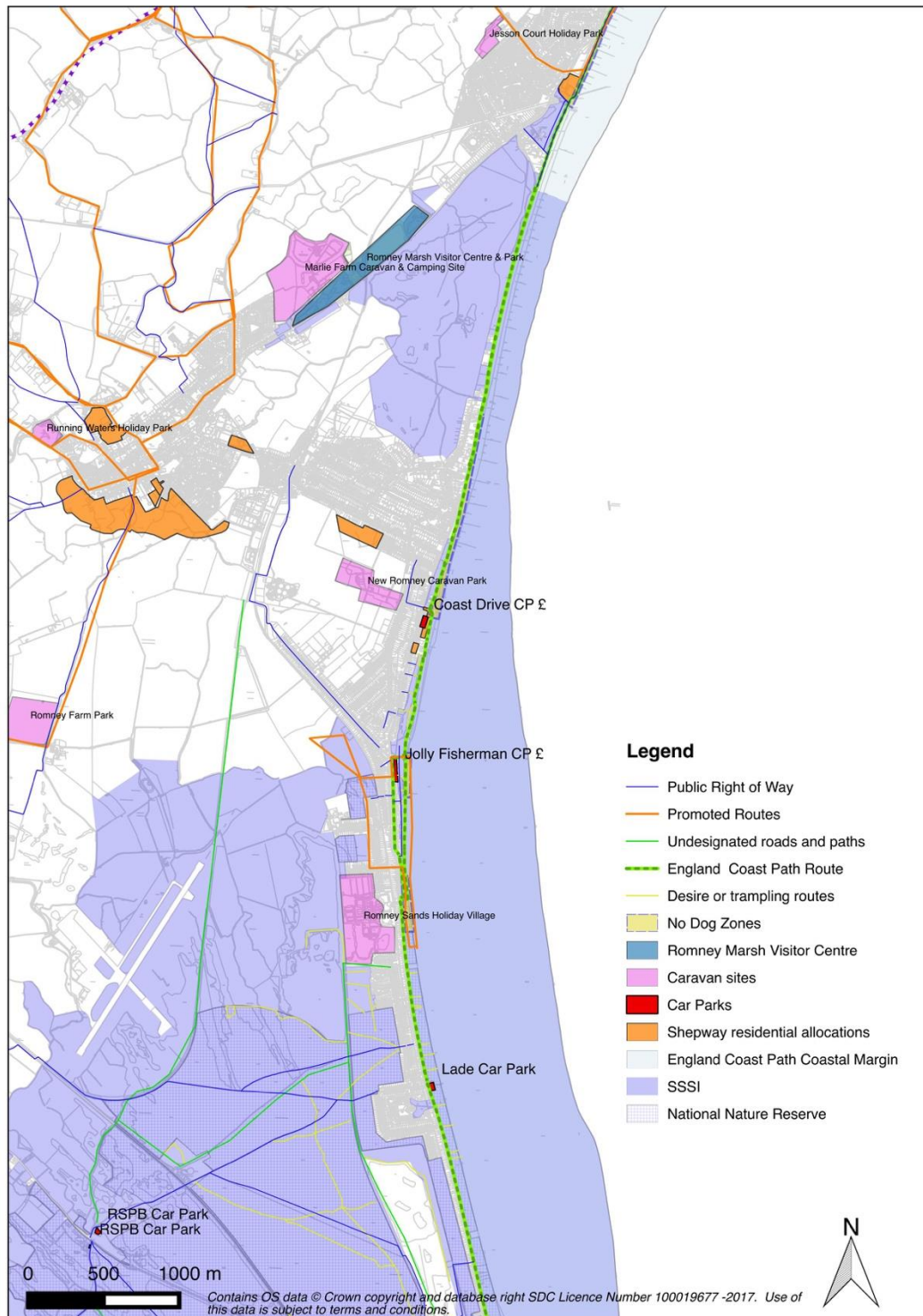
There is a small number of key points of access to the estate; the main access from Dungeness Road; The Pilot Pub; the RHDR station and café; the England Coastal Path. All entrance/arrival points should be made clear (e.g. with gateways or other entrance feature) to make visitors aware they are entering a special place.

A comprehensive approach is needed to vehicle access and movements on the estate. This should be supported by enhancements to permitted parking areas where necessary. Parking restrictions on the estate might be supported by a system of enforcement.

Currently visitors may walk over the shingle at the estate and on other areas beyond the boundaries within the RSPB reserve and the wider NNR. It is known that shingle vegetation is susceptible to damage by trampling.

There is a need to better understand the impact of the boardwalk on the surrounding wildlife. The current boardwalk provides a destination in an otherwise featureless area, and enables access to the beach. Some activities in the area need to be better controlled and managed (e.g the litter and debris left by some anglers, and the driving of 4x4 vehicles across the shingle areas); ideally by a Code of Conduct of other local agreement that must be signed up to in order to retain membership and access.

Romney and Lade Foreshore



Plan 11 - Romney and Lade Foreshore Sub Area

Site ownership and management

Shepway Council

Shepway Council own the Greatstone and Littlestone Dunes and are designated as open spaces. The rest of this area is privately owned.

Caravan Sites and Holiday Villages

There are two coastal holiday parks and four more set back from the coast.

Both of the coastal sites offer the option of owning a caravan, so are potentially occupied all year round. Caravans are also available for lettings or you can bring your own tent, motorhome or touring caravan. Both describe themselves as pet friendly and with a dog-friendly beach opposite.

Site Management Plans and management arrangements

Defra/EA funding is provided for the management of Greatstone Dunes for flood defence. The focus is on sea defence (fences and re-profiling which might include paths).

The EA funding has also been used to remove buckthorn from the dunes over the past 5+ years; the idea being that the buckthorn was damaging the integrity and form of the dunes which in turn reduced their effectiveness as a sea defence, and this funding is also used to keep 3 pathways clear annually (usually undertaken in late spring after the worst of the storms). The RMCP have assisted by removing buckthorn from other areas and now all Shepway District Council owned dunes are pretty much free from buckthorn. Both SDC and RMCP keep on top of any re-growth during the winter periods and marram grass is re-establishing over much of the dunes.

Other than SDC's contribution to the RMCP there is no additional funding for the dunes control.

SDC's Grounds Maintenance team carries out much of the work on the dunes, including the fencing (on behalf of the team) which traps the sand and reinforces/maintains the flood defence capability.

The agreement for the EA Funding only mentions sea defence work, specifically maintaining the paths, clearing buckthorn and providing fencing.

SDC has a Memorandum of Agreement which deals with the governance of the WCCP/RMCP as a whole, and a Memorandum of Understanding, which allows WCCP/RMCP to manage sites on SDC's behalf.

A stewardship scheme agreement is still in place for the Dunes and this has been used to help support management there. Greatstone Dunes are within the Natura 2000 Network Sites – Dungeness Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI. RMCP also monitor the rare plants and report back to Natural England.

There is evidence of garden expansions and land grab by residents and some garden flytipping. Shepway District Council maintain the sand fencing through an Environment Agency grant which is done in the winter.

Byelaws, site rules, codes of conduct applicable to the site/area

Shepway byelaws prohibit cars, motorbikes and quadbikes; horses with carts are also not allowed to access from the main access points - but some do, illegally. Although there is unrestricted access to the dunes, most people keep to the footpaths. Please see the section on byelaws for more information about restrictions. Shepway byelaws are sometimes vague about activities allowed on the beaches and signage is patchy and uncoordinated.

Car parking arrangements

There are three car parks in the area; Coast Drive pay & display, Jolly Fisherman pay and display and Lade which is free. There are also casual laybys at Coast Drive, Littlestone Wall, Marine Parade and Clark Drive. Numbers of tickets have been increasing since 2013 - by 39% at the Jolly Fisherman.

Main access points and routes and promoted routes

The England Coastal path runs along the beach at this point and there are public footpaths here. Through the dunes, most people seem to be using the PROW and promoted routes.

The Greatstone Shingle Trail goes along the front of the sand dunes from the Romney Sands to the Jolly Fisherman car park and links to a small private car park owned by the Romney Sands Holiday Village, although this car park is now closed. It is managed by the Romney Marsh Countryside Partnership. The England Coastal Path also runs through the area, which is signed but the signage is visually uncoordinated and sometimes the route is ambiguous.

Issues and conflicts

Signage is visually uncoordinated and in some places inadequate; providing confused messages and poor guidance for users. The signage and waymarking for routes - in particular the ECP - needs improvement; and messages are needed to urge people to stick to the paths. The type and form of messages need to be tailored to the range of visitors using the area i.e. locals may not respond to signage (that they see regularly), and some reinforcement of these messages may be needed by a local 'officer' and educational/informative displays or events. Occasional visitors may respond to signage, although care needs to be taken to ensure that language and graphics on signage are visible as well as engaging.

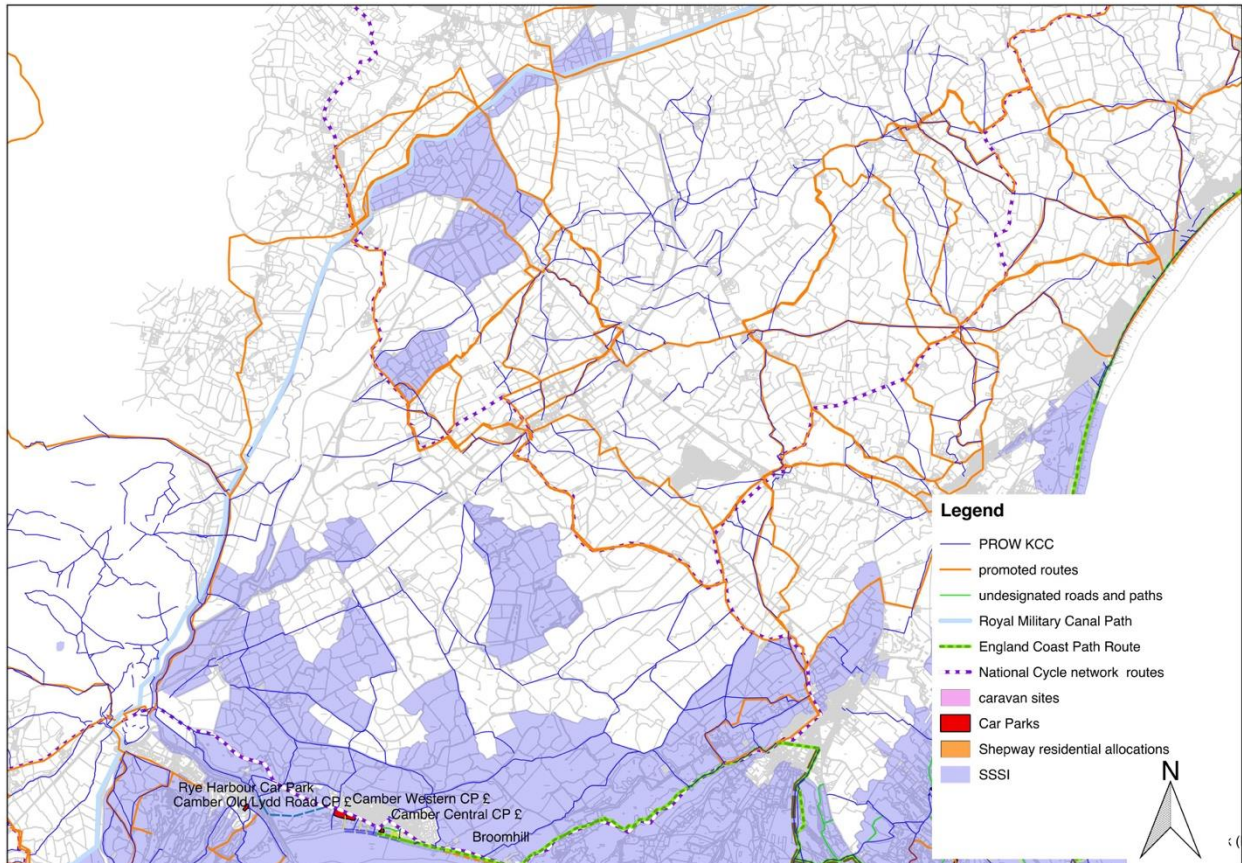
The issues around recreation pressure along this section of coast may be more about the wide distribution of pressure. For example, the Jolly Fisherman car park receives a lot of visitors, but access to the beach is well-managed ie into a few good paths which are easy for visitors to use (the routes are dug out and sand fencing is in place so it is controlled access). This is made possible by consistent funding and coordinated effort.

However, at the Romney Sands Holiday Village there are no clear paths or sand fencing. Vehicles are parked all along the coast road with corresponding tracks across the beach. At Lydd-On-Sea tracks across

the beach also correspond to the ends of roads from the residential area. This is a sensitive area and it is suggested that – for visitors in vehicles - a similar approach be taken in this area to the Jolly Fisherman. For more local site users, other methods should be employed to urge them to stick to a few paths. This may be achieved through on-site interpretation, local leafleting and on on-site officer presence at particular periods of the year.

General Points – Apart from the Dog Control Areas (summer only) there is no zoning of activities in this area. Activity zoning could help to gather particular site users in a smaller number of areas, rather than spread recreational pressure over a wider area. Designated activity zones could also help prevent putting shoreline birds to flight, particularly in the winter months. However, as stated previously, further information is needed to better understand winter roosting and feeding areas.

Romney Marsh



Site ownership and management

Most of this area is privately owned.

Brett leases 750 acres of land from two landowners – All Souls College (Oxford) and Balcombe (private landowner). Brett has been extracting gravel from this site for the last 40 years.

Site Management Plans and management arrangements

Some of the Brett gravel pits have been restored into lakes, and some are either being restored or are still active. The pit lakes nearest to the coast are brackish, and moving towards freshwater further away from the coast. The lakes are situated on what was a river system. The Kent Penn Wall runs across the south of the site, in which there are sluice gates to control water levels. The lakes fill naturally, and Bretts manage them as a unit to some extent regarding control of water levels.

The smaller lakes around the processing area are currently part of the silt-filtering process and function as settlement ponds. There are 3 lakes at the northern end of the gravel working, just outside Lydd, which

are no longer active workings, and they are now fishing lakes used by anglers and managed by Mid-Kent Fisheries. The other lakes and pits are not publicly accessible (Brett have recently completed a programme of boundary fencing).

All the lakes and pits (including Lydd Lakes) are under Brett's lease. They won't be handing back any of the sites for another ten years, and may be expanding into other areas (there is a reserved site in the East Sussex area).

The restoration plans for each site are set out in principle when the site obtains planning permission; but as that's years before the site works complete, these plans are regarded as a guide, and the final plans have some flexibility. All restoration plans are for lakes (they are not permitted to fill any of the pits with waste of any kind).

Brett are planting reeds and other planting around the lakes, for the benefit of wildlife. They are flexible about the idea of islands in lakes and scrapes as part of the restoration.

Byelaws, site rules, codes of conduct applicable to the site/area

Shepway Byelaws apply in this area. The Angling Trust produces a national Code of Conduct for Coarse Anglers (updated in 2010), which provides advice to coarse anglers on how their actions could affect the environment and guidance for fishery owners and managers. The IFCAs²³ for Kent and Essex and for Sussex produce 'Byelaws for Fishing' and voluntary codes of conduct for types of fishing (see Visitors Report for details).

Car parking arrangements

There are car parks in Lydd.

Main access points and routes and promoted routes

There are many PROW and promoted routes in this area, particularly to the north of Walland Marsh. The Romney Marsh Countryside Project produces leaflets and booklets promoting walking and cycling in this area. (Romney Marsh Meanders cycle routes 2,3, 4 & 5 and The Magic of Romney Marsh walking routes 4,5,6 and 7)

Issues and conflicts

Access promotion - There are several plans for future increased access promotion in this quiet area, including through the Camber SPD and upgrading the Royal Military Canal. The implementation of these proposals should give due regard to the designated areas and provide information to visitors e.g. potentially to keep dogs on leads in some areas, to keep to the paths and information around the sensitivity of the nature conservation interest. As this area crosses two district and two county authorities, coordination is needed to ensure consistent messages. The installation of interpretation where existing or new promoted routes cross Natura sites should be considered (e.g. existing routes across Fairfield, The Dowels and Warehorne).

²³ Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities

The development of visitor attractions including promoted walking and cycling routes, and accommodation such as caravan and camping sites could result in increased pressure on the area. The development of tourism, recreation or access should take account of the sensitivity of the wildlife sites, but also the potential for the rich wildlife of the area to make a positive contribution to the perception and positioning of the area. Measures could be taken to improve the experience of visitors, including investment in signage and interpretation, education relating to the wildlife heritage, and a broader spectrum of accommodation provision.

Summary Conclusions

Access is a complicated issue and not always easy for visitors to understand.

Land Ownership

The Dungeness Estate has significant access issues which need to be addressed. Informal parking on road edges causes damage to the shingle, although there is usually capacity in the car park. Visitors do not keep to the designated paths (although signage asking them to do so is sporadic) EDF are best placed to address these issues.

The RSPB has capacity to absorb more visitors in their part of the reserve – the area is well managed and interpretation is good.

Byelaws and Enforcement

Byelaws in Rother are fairly comprehensive, and are adequate in controlling access if properly enforced. In Shepway the Byelaws are more difficult to assess. There are difficult to find and it's hard to understand to which areas they apply. Signs on site setting out byelaws are sporadic It may be necessary to review these to see if they are adequate in protecting the most vulnerable areas.

There are Dog Control Orders on the beaches in summer, but these are primarily in the interests of holiday makers – dogs are also a problem to many bird species during the winter months. However, these sites are often promoted for dog walking on the internet or via social media. Parking areas within the strategy area might also need to be reviewed over the entire year. There are no dog controls at the times of year when over-wintering birds are present.

There is some activity zoning on the beach at Camber and Broomhill and Pett Level and Winchelsea - where kite surfing / wind surfing etc are permitted (horse riding is only allowed at certain times in other locations). Again, this is these byelaws are primarily in the interests of holiday makers. There is potential for more zoning of activities, which might apply all year round.

There are extensive byelaws to protect the LNR at Rye Harbour, but these do not apply to the central (privately owned) area, which might be vulnerable.

Car Parks

As Camber Western is closed in winter it naturally makes it harder for walkers in the winter months to walk along to that end of the foreshore and disturb the birds. However, the Camber SPD detailed closing Camber Central and extending Camber Western – which could increase impact if this is then open all year round. Car parking information shows that visitor numbers are increasing, so a strategy for dealing with this needs to be considered urgently.

Access – general conclusions

The open nature and special character of the area is something that is most valued by visitors and Plan 7 shows the areas which are generally accessible, or may seem to be as far as the general visitor might perceive. This includes those areas where access is permitted or legally allowed, including rights of way, accessible nature reserves including Rye Harbour LNR and publically owned land, along with areas where the public do access without explicit permission given (*de facto* public access). It is not easy to distinguish between these areas and this is particularly acute on the Dungeness Estate.

As a result, visitor access may be exerting pressure on the wildlife, although where access is carefully controlled and visitors are guided around the site (on boardwalks as they are in the RSPB Reserve) this is less evident.

There are access infringement issues in many areas – access to the Camber and to a lesser extent the Greatstone Dunes, is not controlled sufficiently. More could be done here to control public access. For example, although there are public rights of way across the dunes informal routes are preferred by visitors, possibly encouraged by the position of car park paying points.

Much more now needs to be done at Dungeness to protect, restrict and control access within the NNR. This might need to be a more in depth study to look at visitor management, interpretation, sustainable parking areas, controlling illegal parking and protecting of vulnerable areas as one overarching exercise. A formal ‘entrance’ or toll road to the estate has been mooted and these ideas need to be considered within the overall proposals.

The ad-hoc approach to managing increasing visitor numbers is not working – a more coordinated approach which includes appropriate enforcement is now required. It is not clear if any enforcement currently takes place, although infringements seem to be commonplace, particularly on the Dungeness Estate.

Trampling of fragile gravel communities is a particular problem at Lade pits. Physical methods of controlling access need to be considered in some areas. Innovative fencing solutions should be researched which might be in keeping with the landscape character, the ‘openness’ of the landscape could be sustained if there were discreet zones where access to very vulnerable species was controlled.

There is generally a good rights of way network and many interesting promoted routes in the strategy area. There are opportunities to improve access in particular in the rural hinterland of the area, by enhancing existing routes (eg to cycling and horse-riding) and developing new link routes. However, sometimes these skirt or intersect sensitive areas (around Appledore and Brenzett and these areas should be monitored in future.

Although the open character of the strategy area should largely be maintained, there is no doubt that visitor numbers are increasing. If the integrity of these areas is to be sustained then a combination of controlled access and enforcement needs to be considered.