

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000:

PROPOSAL FOR A LONG TERM DIRECTION BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY

SUMMARY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Prepared by Natural England

1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Case Reference Number: | 2015027550 |
| Name of site/land parcel: | Pevensy Levels NNR |
| Access Authority: | East Sussex |
| Relevant Authority: | Natural England |
| Local Access Forum: | East Sussex |

Natural England proposes to give a direction on the site that would last for longer than six months continuously. The Act requires us to consult publicly on all such proposals for 'long-term directions'.

2. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY PROPOSAL

i) Summary of proposed direction to restrict access

The proposed direction will maintain the current management practice of excluding dogs all year round from Pevensy Levels National Nature Reserve (NNR).

ii) Why is a statutory restriction necessary?

NNRs are defined areas of land and they are an attraction for visitors. They represent the best examples of a particular habitat in the country and their purpose is enshrined in law¹. They are defined as:

(a) land managed solely for a conservation purpose, or .

(b) land managed not only for a conservation purpose but also for a recreational purpose, if the management of the land for the recreational purpose does not compromise its management for the conservation purpose.

Pevensy NNR is owned by Natural England and Sussex Wildlife Trust. The part of the reserve owned by Natural England has been dedicated as open access under s16 of the CROW Act. The site is designated as a Ramsar site, Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Area of Conservation and an NNR.

¹ Section 15 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1949 (amended by Schedule 11 NERC Act 2006)

The site is very important for overwintering waders and wildfowl. It is also important for breeding lapwing and supports a number of other breeding birds such as yellow wagtails, redshank, and warblers. Its breeding bird assemblage includes National BAP species. There are few suitable alternative sites for breeding lapwing in this area and the SSSI as a whole regularly supports over 1% of the total British population. The site is also important for overwintering waders and wildfowl.

Other interest features on the site include an outstanding dragonfly population, nationally scarce vascular plants and an outstanding invertebrate assemblage that is associated with the freshwater ditches. The SSSI is also home to the very rare ramshorn snail.

CRoW access includes the right to bring dogs; however, while people have previously been able to access part of the site on foot, dogs have always been excluded from the whole site due mainly to the sensitivity of the overwintering and breeding birds but also because of potential disturbance to the fauna and flora of the ditch system.

An Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal (ASF) was carried out to establish the likely effect of introducing open access onto the site. This appraisal meets Habitat Regulation requirements in assessing impacts and, in line with Natural England's duty under CROW as the Relevant Advisory body on nature conservation, was carried out by the Responsible Officer (the Natural England officer responsible for the Site of Scientific Interest). The conclusion of the assessment was that the predicted low levels of access on foot would not cause a likely significant effect but that the introduction of dogs to the site would.

iii) What is lowest level of restriction required?

A 'dogs on lead' restriction and also a seasonal exclusion were considered. However, these options would not replicate the existing management and do not provide the level of mitigation required by the ASF. Therefore the proposal is a year-round dog exclusion that maintains the current management arrangements.

3. SUBMITTING COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED DIRECTION:

If you wish to comment on the review of this direction then you must do so before 8th January 2016 directly to Colin Godfrey (colin.godfrey@naturalengland.org.uk) or in writing to Natural England, 2nd Floor Lancaster House, Hampshire Court, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 7YH. A map accompanies this notice and is

attached and can be seen on the [Consultation Pages](#) of the Government's Website².

Using and sharing your consultation responses

In line with Natural England's [Personal Information Charter](#), any comments you make, and any information you send in support of them, will help us to determine the application and / or determine if the restriction is still necessary in relation to the review or reassessment of a current direction.

We may wish to pass such comments or information to others in connection with our duties and powers under the open access legislation. This may mean for example passing information, including your name and contact details, to the Secretary of State or their appointees, the Planning Inspectorate or to the relevant access authority(s).

We do not plan to publish individual comments in full, but we may publish extracts from them when we report on our consultation(s).

There may also be circumstances in which we will be required to disclose your response to third parties, either as part of the statutory process for consideration of representations and objections about our decision, or in order to comply with our wider obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you do not want your response - including your name, contact details and any other personal information – to be publicly available, please explain clearly why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. However, we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded as binding on Natural England.

² https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?publication_filter_option=consultations. To access the consultation enter "Open Access" into the free text box titled "Contains" and then filter by "Natural England" in the Department drop down.