

Norfolk Local Access Forum

Item No.

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| Report title: | Study on recreational impact on internationally-designated wildlife sites in Norfolk 2015-16 |
| Date of meeting: | 19 April 2017 |
| Responsible Officer: | Tracy Jessop, Assistant Director Highways and Transport |
| Strategic impact The report will help inform the emerging NAIP in terms of addressing the balance between recreation and nature conservation thereby helping Norfolk County Council to deliver good infrastructure. | |

Executive summary

A presentation will be given to the LAF on the study commissioned by the Norfolk Duty to Cooperate (DtC) group to gather baseline data on recreational use of internationally-designated sites in Norfolk, and explain how the study can be used to inform the emerging NAIP.

Recommendations

The LAF notes the study and its role informing the NAIP

1. Proposal (or options)

- 1.1. A presentation will be given to the LAF on the study commissioned by the Norfolk Duty to Cooperate (DtC) group to gather baseline data on recreational use of internationally-designated sites in Norfolk, and explain how the study can be used to inform the emerging NAIP.

2. Evidence

- 2.1. Details of the study will be provided in the form of a presentation.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. No direct financial implications for Norfolk County Council from the study.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1. Norfolk is blessed with a large number of wildlife sites that have formal designations recognising their importance for their biodiversity at an international scale. However many of these locations such as the North Norfolk Coast, the Broads and the Brecks are also the locations where Norfolk residents and tourists undertake their recreation. Inevitably, there are frequent tensions between the twin interests of public access and nature conservation.

The presentation that will be given to the LAF on the study commissioned by the Norfolk Duty to Cooperate (DtC) group to gather baseline data on recreational use of internationally-designated sites in Norfolk, and explain how the results of this study can be used to inform the emerging NAIP.

5. Background

- 5.1. Through the Duty to Cooperate (DtC) group, Norfolk County Council and the 7 district authorities in Norfolk, together with the Broads Authority, commissioned a survey of visitor use of internationally-designated wildlife sites throughout the county. The purpose of the study was to help address county-wide issues relating to delivering the emerging local plans for housing and development. The study was coordinated by the Natural Environment Team at Norfolk County Council and delivered by consultants Footprint Ecology.

Data was collected in 2015-2016 at 50 locations within internationally designated sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites) throughout Norfolk. Survey points were located on the North Norfolk Coast, the east coast, the Brecks, the Broads and the Norfolk Valley Fens internationally-designated sites. Surveys involved counting visitors over weekdays and weekends and face-to-face interviews with a proportion of visitors.

The final report on the study was published in January 2017: *Visitor Surveys at European Protected Sites across Norfolk during 2015 and 2016* (Norfolk County Council/Footprint Ecology).

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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