

ACCESS NEWSLETTER

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Natural England launches public consultation on Weymouth Bay coastal access proposals

Natural England issued its first draft coastal access report today for a stretch of the English coast between Portland and Lulworth Cove in Dorset. The draft report describes in detail how Natural England propose to align the English coastal route (path) and coastal margin (spreading room) and improve public access along this particular stretch of coast. These proposals arise from Natural England's statutory duty under Part 9 of The Marine and Coastal Access (MCA) Act 2009 to improve public access to the English coast.

A public consultation on the contents of the draft report will now run from 15 October 2010 to 10 January 2011, and anyone is welcome to submit their views. Natural England's draft report, together with further information on how you can comment on the draft proposals, can be viewed/downloaded [here](#).

The consultation provides an opportunity for Natural England to take on board people's views on its proposals before it submits its final Weymouth Bay report to the Secretary of State for approval (provisionally) in late February 2011. Weymouth Bay and Portland Harbour are the venues for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games' sailing competitions and it is hoped that this first stretch of the new coastal access right will be delivered in time for the sailing events in July 2012.

Coastal access – next steps

Defra Ministers have also asked Natural England to identify a further five 'lead' areas where delivery of the new coastal access right will start in 2011. Today, Natural England has announced that the current plan, subject to the precise start and finishing points being discussed further with the respective local authorities, is for the five areas to be:

- Cumbria (Whitehaven to Allonby)
- Kent (Dover to Ramsgate)
- Norfolk (Sheringham to Happisburgh Common)
- Somerset (Minehead to Stert Point)
- Sunderland to Hartlepool (including Durham)

When deciding on the locations for these lead stretches, Natural England were asked to take into account the views of local people and the tourism and economic benefits that improvements to access would be expected to bring.

Public rights of way – Combined Orders regulations

The Public Rights of Way (Combined Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 ([S.I. 2010 No. 2127](#)) came into force on 1 October 2010. The 2010 Regulations amend the existing 2008 Regulations by prescribing additional modifications to those Orders for which model forms are prescribed. The main changes are to enable an Order to describe in detail how the definitive map and statement is to be amended, and to more clearly identify the Orders as Combined Orders.

Defra has now updated its Combined Orders Regulations [guidance](#) so that it now covers the amending Regulations. Other changes have also been made to make the guidance more helpful for practitioners.

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) 2009 – 2010 (first) annual report published

MENE is a new survey commissioned by Natural England, Defra and the Forestry Commission to provide baseline and trend data on how people use England's natural environment. The survey was commissioned in order to:

- Understand how people use, enjoy and are motivated to protect the natural environment
- Provide data that monitors changes in people's use and enjoyment of the natural environment over time – at a range of different spatial scales and for key groups within the population

MENE collects a wide range of statistical information – including: types of destination; duration of visit; mode of transport; distance travelled; spending made; main activities undertaken; and people's motivations for a visit. The survey also collects data on people who do not visit the natural environment and their reasons for not doing so.

MENE will help increase our understanding of how and why people interact with the natural environment. The results will be of benefit to the design and implementation of many projects that work with people and the environment.

The first annual report for the 2009 - 2010 survey was published on 6 September 2010. Further information, including the full annual report, technical report and details of the survey methodology, is available on the Natural England [website](#).

If you have any queries about the above, please email us at: coastal.access@defra.gsi.gov.uk