

L4L19 SV7 Summary Sheet:

Site Visit Title:

Nature Recovery as an Approach to Enhancing Natural Beauty

Description:

A visit to the UK's largest coastal wetland restoration project – RSPB's 'Wallasea Island Wild Coast'. Once complete it will be the largest mosaic of wetland habitats of its kind in Northern Europe.

Originally five separate saltmarsh islands, Wallasea Island in the Crouch & Roach estuaries was gradually enclosed by sea defences, then grazed, drained and converted to large-scale arable production. We heard how this landmark conservation and engineering project is transforming Wallasea Island to create a new 1650-acre landscape to help the Essex coast and its wildlife adapt in the face of climate change.

Natural England explained their work on the England Coast Path and the considerations on Essex estuaries and at Wallasea Island when looking to create the county's first National Trail.

Themes:

1. Coastal zone management in response to climate change
2. Landscape-scale change
3. Partnership working
4. Sustainable tourism & England Coast Path

Outcomes and Outputs:

1: Understand some of the issues involved in sustainable coastal management and their impacts on the landscape. Learn what it takes to deliver the largest wetland restoration in the UK.

2. Understand the considerations when aligning a new National Trail around the coast of England. Understand how estuaries are considered, as well as the role of foot ferries.

Lessons Learnt:

1. Work at an ecologically relevant scale;
2. Cultivate the right partnerships;
3. Take people/ the local community along on your journey – right from the start;
4. In changing times stay true to, and trust in, the core aims and vision of your project;
5. Scale up your ambition – think big!

6. Think outside the usual suspects when looking at potential partnerships – think laterally – focus on the quality outcome;

7. Have patience whilst keeping your vision in the forefront;

8. Be courageous!

Quotes:

“Wallasea Island is an amazing place!”

“The England Coast Path sounds like an incredible project to be part of. I look forward to walking it one day”

“I had no idea what to expect – and I wasn’t disappointed”

“The aerial photographs told a very powerful story”

“First time I’ve seen a marsh harrier”

“I always love a boat trip!”

“I really enjoyed it”

Where to find more info:

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Wallasea Wild Coast Project [weblink](#)

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England Coast Path [weblink](#)