

Thames Estuary Path – Basildon, Castle Point and Eastern Thurrock Overview

This overview plan shows the Thames waterfront focused around Vange Creek and Wat Tyler Country Park. The area covers 3 Local Authorities and is an area where walking and cycling links have been very limited. This is a consequence of the local geography, where the creeks are particularly difficult to cross, but also a function of local land usage with much of the land having been inaccessible. There are now ambitious plans to change this as part of the Parklands vision and new opportunities are opening up.

Decisions in this area will have major impacts on the Thames Estuary Path, which barring all other limitations would be expected to run from Mucking Marshes along the Thames, past Coryton and on to Canvey Island before crossing again on to Two Tree Island for Southend. There are major practical difficulties with this and in order to maintain continuity the Thames Estuary Path will need to be given a high priority.

Route development in this area will need to involve Basildon and Castle Point District Councils, Essex County Council and Thurrock Council (Unitary Authority), as well as Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation (TTGDC), Basildon Renaissance Partnership and local partners.

Supporting policies and strategies

In this area the linkages between authorities are vital and it is essential that all authorities are working towards the same aims, because the challenges are large. The major strategic document covering green corridors and access across South Essex is the Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid Strategy¹⁹.

This includes amongst its recommendations the following greenways:

- Fobbing Marshes showing strategic bridging points at Vange Creek and East Haven Creek, as recommended in this report.
- Canvey Loop
- Bowers Marshes
- City to Sea Shoreline

This report recommends some variations on these and provides more details for these long term aspirations.

Barriers to walking and cycling

Levels of cycling in this area are currently low and one of the reasons for this must be the physical barriers. For instance at present cycling between Canvey Island and London Gateway is extremely difficult, despite the fact that as the crow flies the distance is only about 4 miles. There is significant potential for big increases in walking and cycling.

The routing of the Thames Estuary Path in this area is dependent on new river crossings, with new crossings of Vange Creek and East Haven Creek proposed near the existing sluices. Priority needs to be given to these studies to assess the feasibility and impact of these bridges. A direct crossing between Canvey Island and Two Tree Island is considered impractical at present and an alternative route is recommended. Elsewhere the route will need to stay away from the waterfront at the new London Gateway development, although it is hoped that a good route through the site can be developed that suits development plans, provides a suitably attractive route and which encourages staff and visitors to walk and cycle.

Development sites

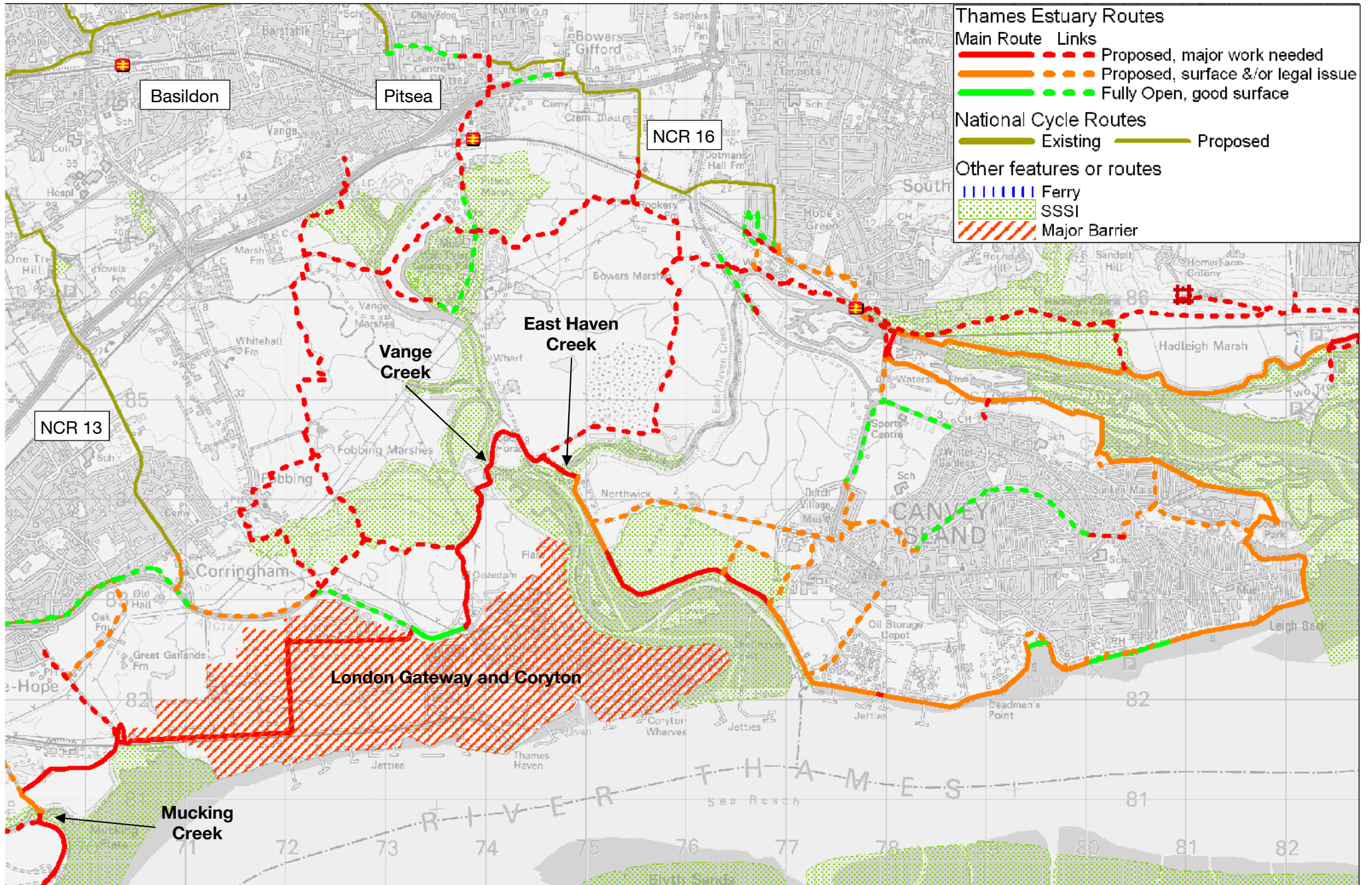
Within this area the London Gateway site is the major development. This provides tremendous opportunities and will transform the area. With 12,000 new jobs being created it is hoped that many staff can be encouraged to walk and cycle and that the Thames Estuary Path can provide a stimulus for this.

National Cycle Network

Proposals for the National Cycle Network (NCN) have been quite distinct to the Thames Estuary Path in this area for two major reasons:

- The NCN is intended to link urban centre with urban centre and priority has been given to taking the route through Basildon.
- There has been a lot of uncertainty about the new links and bridges needed to take the route on to Canvey Island.

As proposals for the Thames Estuary Path progress there is potential for the NCN to be realigned along this route and on to Canvey Island. At present the existing NCN through Basildon offers good potential for circular routes linking with the Thames Estuary Path and there are also good opportunities for routes around Wat Tyler Country Park as new links to the park are developed. Improved links between the Country Park and Pitsea are thus an obvious immediate priority.



Thames Estuary Path – Section 26 Stanford-le-Hope – South Essex

Condition of the waterfront

The waterfront in this area is dominated by the new London Gateway development by DP World which will adjoin existing petrochemicals sites meaning that a large length of the river is inaccessible and an alternative is needed for the Thames Estuary Path. There is no recent history of access along this stretch of waterfront, but there is potential for links through the London Gateway Development that need to be explored and developed in conjunction with DP World.

The London Gateway project is the largest capital investment project and the largest jobs creation project currently in the UK and DP World will be investing in major improvements to the road and rail network in Essex.



Image from London Gateway web-site showing proposed development

With 12,000 new jobs being created, access to the area for employees

should be an important factor. Works have already been completed along The Manorway in Stanford-le-Hope to improve walking and cycling and the Thames Estuary Path is likely to be closely linked with local routes to and around the new waterfront employment sites.

Barriers to development

The major barrier is the need for the route to stay away from the river itself. Options are restricted mostly by the availability of routes (for land and other reasons), which means that the final route is likely to be based on the corridor of the A1014 Manorway. Within this corridor attractive options are limited due to the negative impact of motorised traffic on the area.

Route description

A-B. Indicative alignment for route through London Gateway site to be agreed.

Links and Access

Good links with Stanford-le-Hope are essential and the Thames Estuary Path needs to be integrated into local walking and cycling networks.

L1 Upgrade surface of existing track with public bridleway status for shared use for link with residential area.

L2 Existing minor road – High Road and Springhouse Lane - needs protecting as a Quiet Lane.

L3 On road link with Corringham with pedestrians on the footway. The old centre of Corringham is well worth a detour.

L4 Existing route along The Manorway. In places the route is well set back from motorised traffic and works well. Elsewhere there are places where fencing and barriers restrict access to the path and limit the useful width of the path and this needs addressing. Beyond Corringham the quality of this route is a concern with a shared use path right up against a major road. A new path set away from the carriageway is preferred.



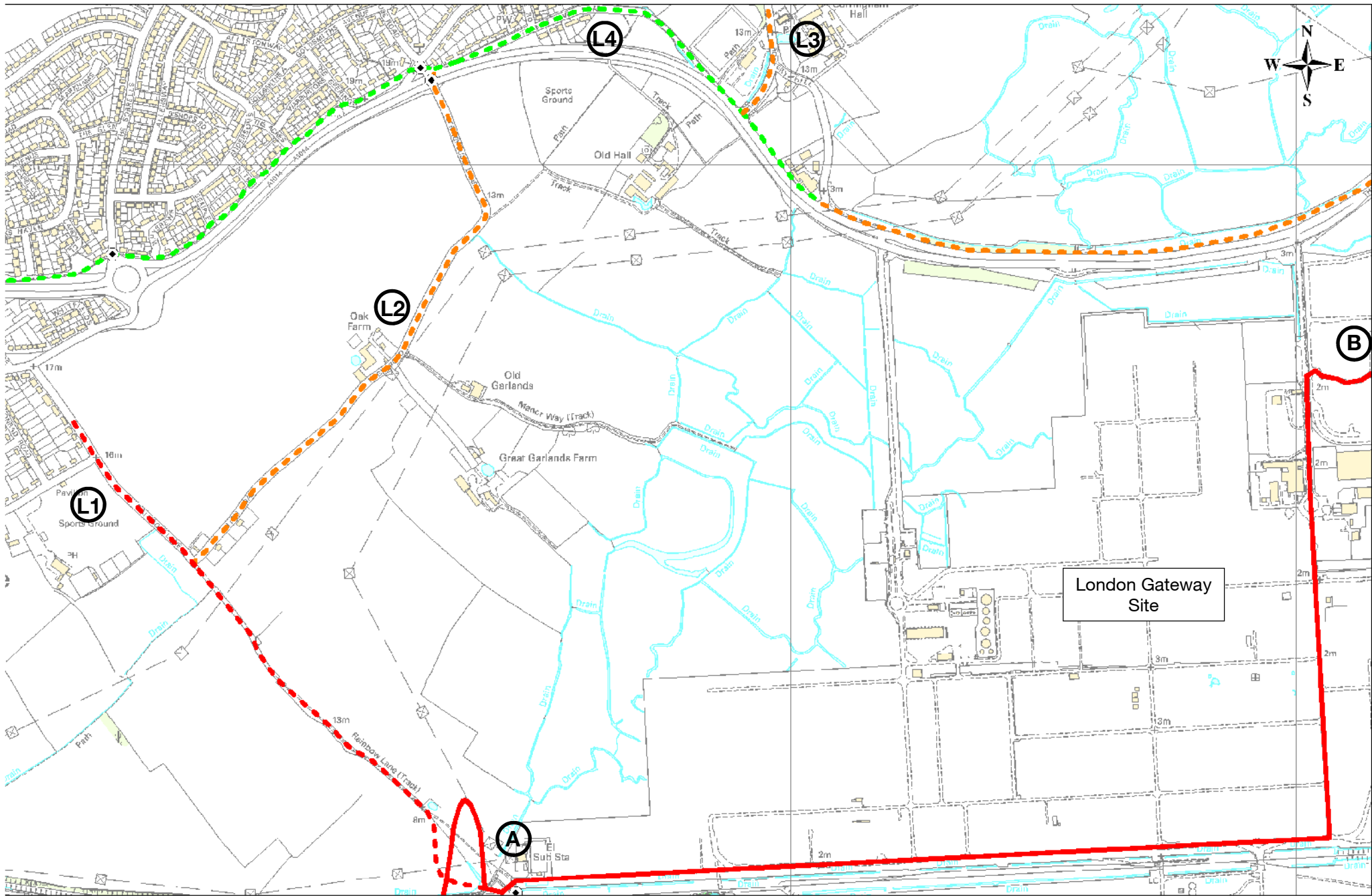
Shared path beside The Manorway within Stanford-le-Hope

Key Recommendations

1. Agree route through London Gateway site.
2. Review landscaping, barriers and links along The Manorway to make a more attractive, useful route.



Shared path beside The Manorway



Thames Estuary Path – Section 27 Fobbing – South Essex

Condition of the waterfront

The waterfront in this area is dominated by the new London Gateway development by DP World which will adjoin existing petrochemicals sites meaning that a large length of the river is inaccessible and an alternative inland route is needed for the Thames Estuary Path.

Barriers to development

The major barriers to route development are the need for the route to stay away from the river itself and the need to establish a new link with Canvey Island across Vange Creek and East Haven Creek.

The area between The Manorway and Vange Creek has not been fully surveyed due to access difficulties.

Route description

A-B. Indicative alignment through London Gateway development needs safe crossing of the Manorway at B.

B-C. Existing route along Manorway. Here the path is set back from the main road and more attractive than further west towards Corringham.



Existing shared use path set well back from the main road

C-D. Suggested alignment following public footpath via Oozedam Farm. The path follows a farm track and includes some barriers that are very difficult to negotiate. Use of this route would be subject to landowner's agreement. There are a number of options that could provide suitable alternatives and all options will need to be investigated further in terms of landowner wishes, ecological impact and impact on the historic environment and landscape.



Oozedam Farm

Links and Access

Good links with Stanford-le-Hope and Fobbing are essential, but these will need to be done in a sensitive manner, particularly with regards to the Marshes.

L1 Existing route along Manorway set back from the road over part of the length and adjacent to the carriageway over part of the length. (See comments on Section 26).

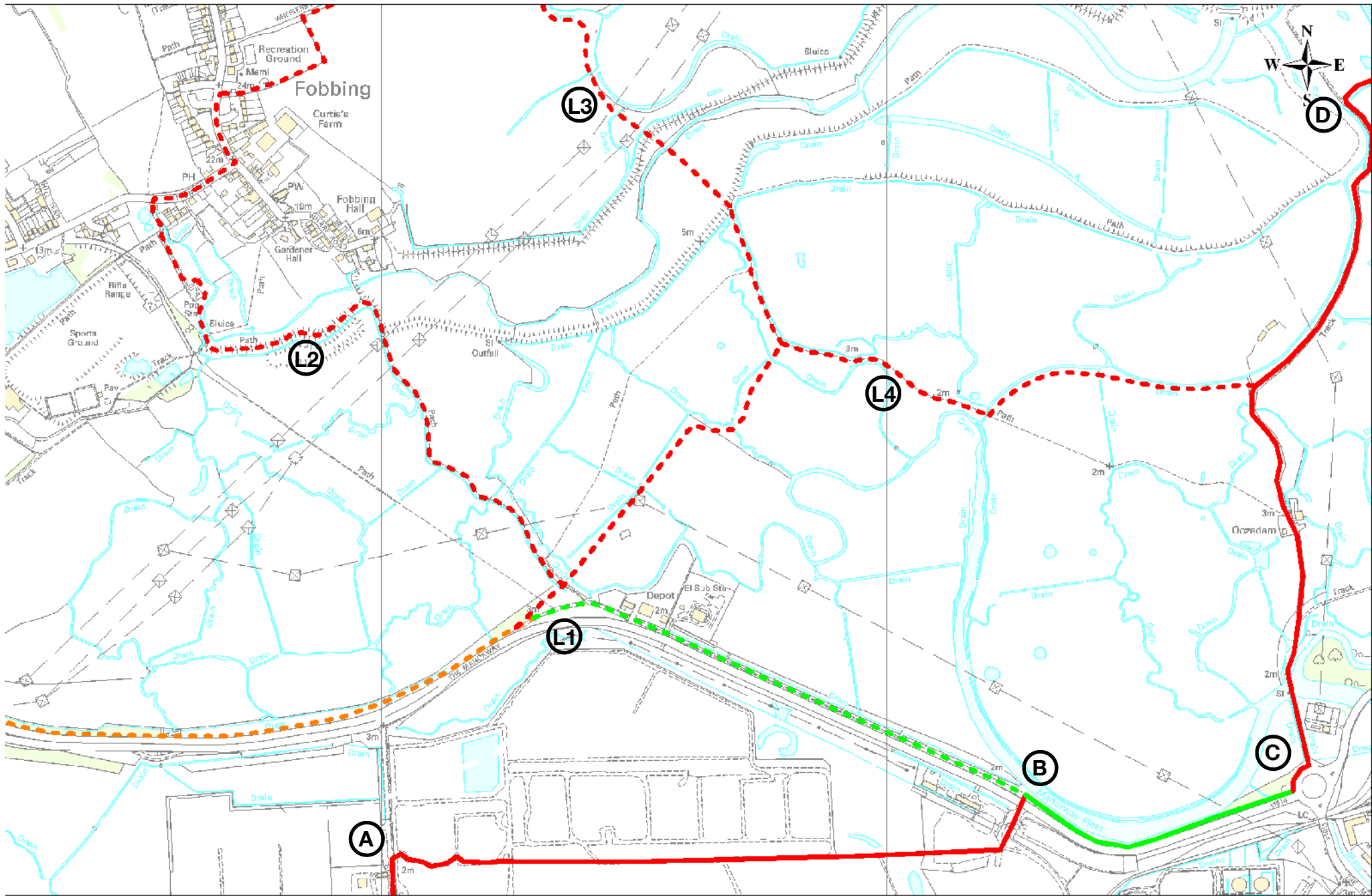
L2 Indicative alignment roughly following existing tracks across Fobbing Marshes for link with Fobbing.

L3 Indicative alignment across Fobbing Marshes and then following foot of escarpment for link with Fobbing village and on towards Wat Tyler Country Park.

L4 Indicative alignment across Marshes for link with Fobbing Sluice and as a possible alternative to the route via Oozedam Farm.

Key Recommendations

1. Agree routes across Fobbing Marshes with landowners and other interested parties.



Thames Estuary Path – Section 28 Fobbing Marshes – South Essex

Condition of the waterfront

The proposed route is away from the waterfront as an option until a new crossing of Vange Creek is achieved and as an option for circular routes and links.

Fobbing Marshes are currently difficult to access and survey but are likely to become increasingly important for their wildlife value and also as important green space for a growing area.

The proposed route follows the natural contours along the edge of the marsh below Fobbing.

Barriers to development

The major barriers to route development are the need not to disturb sensitive wildlife habitats and to satisfy landowners, whilst establishing a route of sufficient quality and convenience as to be useful and popular.

Links and Access

If a crossing of Vange Creek cannot be achieved in the short term, an alternative route will be needed. If a bridge is provided, this route will be an important link for surrounding communities.

L1 Indicative alignment showing a route following field edges, to link up with Fobbing and on towards Wat Tyler Country Park. Route and access rights needs to be agreed with landowner and others. The route needs to recognise habitat, security and financial constraints.

L2 Proposed link with Fobbing via Recreation Ground.



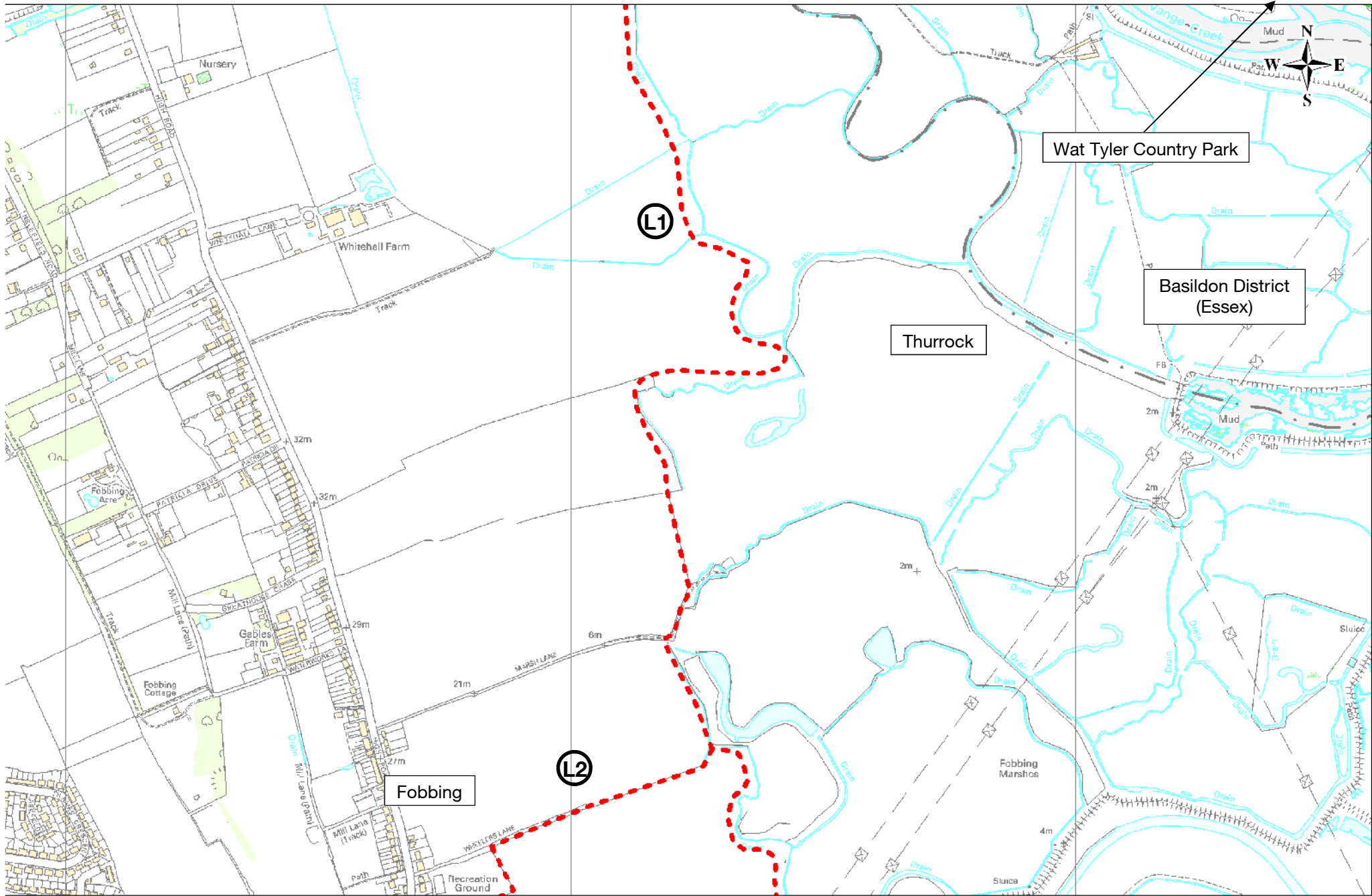
Marsh Lane, Fobbing



Track on edge of Marshes

Key Recommendations

1. Agree routes across Fobbing Marshes with landowners and other interested parties.
2. Install new bridges and construct path for route across Marshes.



Thames Estuary Path – Section 29 Wat Tyler Country Park – South Essex

Condition of the waterfront

The Thames waterfront in this area is difficult to access and continuity along the waterfront is not possible without major new bridges. For this reason options around the creeks have been investigated. These routes are expected to ultimately serve as links rather than as the main path.

The routes will serve to link Wat Tyler Country Park with the River Thames. The Country Park is already popular but there are plans to increase this and a key aspect will be improved access. Wat Tyler Country Park is home to a number of listed buildings as well as Sculptures, Wildlife areas and Visitor attractions.

Wat Tyler Country Park and Central South Essex Marshes are proposed Parklands projects.



Wat Tyler Country Park

Barriers to development

The major barriers to route development in this area are the need for the route to cross Vange Creek, whilst allowing for navigation and the need to protect sensitive wildlife habitats.



Timbermans Creek

Links and Access

Wat Tyler Country Park is close to Pitsea and Basildon, but its main access is along a road shared with lorries accessing the adjacent landfill site. This may only be a temporary problem, but the landfill site will not be complete for a number of years yet. The Country Park has no satisfactory link with Thurrock and this needs addressing.

L1 Indicative alignment for link with Fobbing (see section 28).

L2 Existing public footpath link with Basildon involves at-grade crossings of railway and main road. Good links

with Basildon are an obvious priority in this area and will need more detailed investigation as access opportunities become available.

L3 This is likely to be the best alignment for new bridges over Vange Creek and Timbermans Creek due to the lack of sensitive wildlife habitats near Marsh House and the need to address navigation issues. Works would be dependent on landowner and Environment Agency agreement and would need to cross the former landfill site, which would need detailed surveying.

L4 Possible route avoiding Timbermans Creek.

L5 Indicative alignment showing what appear to be the most obvious route to link Wat Tyler Country Park with the major new Central South Essex Marshes RSPB site. Route and access rights need to be agreed with RSPB and others, as part of Central South Essex Marshes access plans. The crossing of the landfill site access road appears to be one of the major challenges.

L6 A new shared use path is planned beside Pitsea Hall Lane to allow cyclists and pedestrians to avoid lorry traffic. This route needs to extend to Pitsea Station and right into the heart of Pitsea. Major works required.



Pitsea Hall Lane

Key Recommendations

1. Agree route and details for crossing of Vange Creek and Timbermans Creek which is likely to involve two major bridges.
2. Seek to obtain access rights near Marsh House.
3. Install new bridges and construct path for route across Marshes and across landfill site access road.