



Section H

# Leisure and recreation

H1

Cycle track

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# H1: Cycle track

## Environmentally sensitive area – failure to consult

Mrs Baker complained that a council did not consult properly about the proposed route of a cycle track.

### Consultation

1. The cycle track was constructed through sand dunes between two towns. Mrs Baker lived in one of the towns and regularly walked along the shore.
2. There was local concern about the environmentally sensitive nature of the dunes and the need to prevent erosion and preserve wildlife and plant species habitats.
3. The Ombudsman found that Mrs Baker's complaint was fully justified. The council failed to consult organisations like English Nature and other amenity groups, or local residents. It was likely that, if proper consultation had taken place, the cycle track would have followed a different route along some of its length.

4. The Ombudsman found there was a general consensus that to remove the track after it had been laid down would be worse for the environment than retaining it. The council agreed to:

- monitor regularly the regeneration of the dunes and take action if alien plant species appeared;
- commit an extra £1,000 to environmental projects in the area in consultation with local environmental and amenity groups; and
- pay Mrs Baker £100 in recognition of her time and trouble in pursuing the complaint.

*(Report 00/C/17366)*