

# Accessing the North West Coast...

Summary of the workshop  
that took place on 20<sup>th</sup>  
June 2011 in  
Morecambe and  
the associated  
consultation

# Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
National Coastal Access Update	2
The North West Coastal Trail – delivering added value	4
What is currently happening or planned on access around the North West coast?	7
Cumbria	7
Lancashire	7
Merseyside and Cheshire	8
What can organisations be doing to improve access on or to the coast?	9
Key targets for future development	12
Cumbria	12
Lancashire	13
Merseyside and Cheshire	15
Should we establish a NW Coastal Trail Access Delivery Group?	16
Conclusions and next steps	18
Appendix A: Programme	19
Appendix B: Delegates	20
Appendix C: Consultation questions	21
Appendix D: Consultation respondees	23

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# Introduction

The North West Coastal Trail Steering Group – a group established by the North West Coastal Forum<sup>1</sup> to take forward an ambitious project to create a multi-use path along the North West of England's coast – decided to hold a one-day event in the early summer of 2011 exploring and helping to answer the following questions:

- ⇒ What is happening with the Coastal Access scheme established by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2010? How is this affecting the North West coast?
- ⇒ How does the proposed multi-user North West Coastal Trail fit in with the delivery of this new statutory scheme? How will it complement and add value to the national scheme?
- ⇒ What access projects are already happening in along the North West coast? How do these fit with the new statutory scheme and the North West Coastal Trail?
- ⇒ Are there any major issues or opportunities for targeting investment and improving access to and along the coast, for example raising the priority of coastal access work in Local Development Frameworks / Plans, Rights of Way Improvement Plans and Local Transport Plans or work on new or existing access routes that can help fill gaps or provide links to other routes?
- ⇒ How can we improve communication and sharing of information between those involved in delivering coastal access, the NW coastal Trail and other access and planning projects such as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Landscape Partnership Schemes?

The event was aimed at Local Authority Access Officers, elected members, Local Access Forum members and interest groups such as Ramblers, BHS and Sustrans.

It took the form of a one day workshop with presentations and break out sessions designed to capture what is already taking place to further access on the North West coast and future opportunities and priorities for access. As not everyone who wished to could attend an open consultation using the same questions ran until 12<sup>th</sup> August 2011 and was widely publicised through the North West Coastal Forum's website and e-newsletter.

The event and consultation were organised by and on behalf of the North West Coastal Forum. They were entirely separate from any of the formal consultation work that Natural England has or will undertake for the roll out of the national coastal access scheme (English Coastal Route) in Cumbria.

The event and associated consultation summarised by this report together aim to provide:

- ⇒ a clear understanding about the 'roll-out' of the national coastal access scheme and what it may mean for local authorities and other organisations along the North West coast.
- ⇒ a clear understanding of the North West Coastal Trail vision and current project proposals
- ⇒ a clearer understanding about how the North West Coastal Trail vision and the national coastal access scheme can fit together - with an understanding of the added value to be provided by the Trail
- ⇒ a better idea of the current and planned access and recreation initiatives that are located along the North West coast and key targets for future development

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<sup>1</sup> The North West Coastal Forum is a non-profit, multi-sector stakeholder partnership which aims to promote and deliver integrated coastal zone management for the long term sustainability of the north west's coast. The North West Coastal Trail project helps to meet all of its underpinning objectives, but in particular the one relating to improved recreational opportunities and visitor experience. For more information on the Forum see [www.nwcoastalforum.org.uk](http://www.nwcoastalforum.org.uk)

# National Coastal Access Update

*Danny Moores, Lead Advisor, Coastal Access Delivery Team (Cumbria Stretch), Natural England*

## Brief background to the project (Natural England advice to Government / Coastal Access Audit)

An Audit was undertaken in 2008 (launched in August 2009) and showed the extent of current access on the coast:

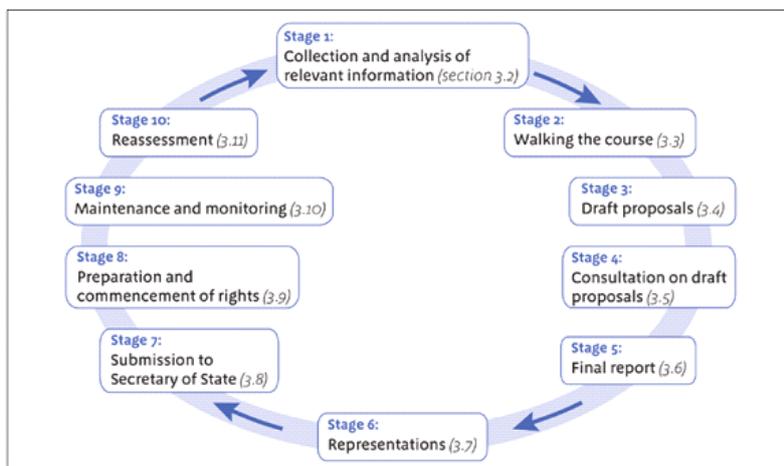
- The English coastline is 2748 miles long.
- A satisfactory legally secure path runs along 66 per cent of its length.
- There is no satisfactory, legally secure access along 34 per cent, or about 1000 miles of coastline which is either inaccessible or lacks secure (legal) access.
- The Audit can be viewed at:  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/coastalaccess/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/coastalaccess/default.aspx)

## The current position (Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 / Coastal Access Scheme)

- 2000: After over 100 years of popular campaigns, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act creates rights of access to mountain, moor, heath and down.
- 2003: The Labour Party Five Year strategy makes improved coastal access an early priority for a third term in government.
- Feb 2007: Natural England advises Government to legislate for improved coastal access.
- Dec 2008:
  - ⊃ The Marine and Coastal Access Bill enters Parliament.
  - ⊃ Natural England publishes its draft Scheme for coastal access.
- **11th November 2009 – Bill receives Royal Assent !!**
- March 2010: Coastal Access Scheme setting out the approach Natural England will take to discharging the coastal access duty is approved.

## The implementation process (10 stage cycle – shown in coastal access scheme)

Figure 5: Overview of the implementation process



### Other lead stretches (five)

- Weymouth (expect new rights to commence by July 2012)

Others (expect new rights to commence by 2014):

- Somerset (Minehead to Brean Down)
- Durham, Sunderland and Hartlepool (Seaton Carew and South Bents)
- Kent (Ramsgate Pier to Minehead)
- Norfolk (Weybourne to Sea Palling)

### Cumbria Coastal Access

Approximately 30km in length (Whitehaven to Allonby).

Natural England expect to implement coastal access rights by 2013/14 (3 to 4 years to have the new rights confirmed)

### Where we are now (July 2011) – Cumbria Project:

The Natural England coastal access team has:

- Established a working relationship with the local access authority on the stretch plus the Cumbria Local Access Forum
- Had a dialogue with Natural England local Nature Conservation specialists to begin an initial assessment of sensitivities on the stretch – and relevant external organisations
- Made contact with major local stakeholders
- Identified some of the key strategic locations
- Started more detailed planning for the work

For up to date information on the progress in Cumbria see:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/coastalaccess/cumbria/default.aspx>





# The North West Coastal Trail: delivering added value

*Caroline Salthouse, Regional Coastal Project Officer, North West Coastal Forum*

## The Vision

**When complete, the North West Coastal Trail will be a continuous, multi-use coastal trail from Chester to Carlisle linking together the natural, cultural and historical assets of the North West coast.**

## Development

- Longstanding idea (over 20 years)
- Formalised in 'Research into Integrated Coastal Planning in the NW Region' (DETR 2000)
- Trail Steering Group formed in 2002 under North West Coastal Forum; members currently:
  - ⊃ BHS
  - ⊃ Sustrans
  - ⊃ The Ramblers
  - ⊃ Natural England
  - ⊃ Sefton Council
  - ⊃ Lancashire County Council
  - ⊃ Chair: Sue Kidd, Liverpool University

## The North West Coastal Forum

A not-for-profit multi-sector partnership with the aim of promoting and delivering integrated coastal zone management for the long term sustainability of the region's coast:

- Improved recreational opportunities and visitor experience
- The economic potential achieved in ways which safeguard, enhance, restore and sustainably use our natural and cultural assets
- Improved well being of coastal communities
- Raised appreciation of the North West Coast
- A high quality natural and built coastal environment able to adapt to climate and other change
- Well-integrated planning and management of the coastal zone

## Taking the Trail Vision Forward

- Many local authorities and other bodies signed up to the concept in 2003
- Much research carried out to confirm the concept:
  - ⊃ Route audit: 'missing links'
  - ⊃ Feasibility study
  - ⊃ Implementation Framework
  - ⊃ Strategic Positioning / Business Case

- More recently firmly embedded in local and regional economic and Green Infrastructure plans/strategies/policy
- All change with Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009?

### **North West Coastal Trail Strategic Objectives**

- Support Natural England in the development of the Coastal Access Scheme
- Develop access opportunities for cyclists along the coast
- Develop access opportunities for horse riders along the coast
- Deliver elements of the Coastal Trail through the strategies and activities of coastal Regional Parks and other initiatives
- Embed the Coastal Trail into sub-regional strategies

### **Value of the North West Coastal Trail**

- Economic, social and environmental benefits including:
  - ⊃ Better access to and along the coast
  - ⊃ Increased economic opportunities including rural diversification
  - ⊃ Marketing opportunities
  - ⊃ Health benefits
  - ⊃ Community volunteering opportunities
  - ⊃ Greater recognition of the value of our coastal natural, historic and cultural assets
  - ⊃ Opportunities for their enhancement

### **Added Value to the National Scheme**

- The NWCT vision is for a **multiple use** trail i.e.
  - ⊃ Cycling and horse-riding are part of the vision (so a 'braided route' where needed)
  - ⊃ Provides a strategic reason to fund local Higher Rights routes
  - ⊃ The NWCT vision also includes:
    - All ability access
    - Quality standards (consistency)
    - Links to public transport
    - Links to inland or circular routes
    - Appropriate interpretation
    - 'One stop' website for NW coast access

## What does the Trail NOT do?

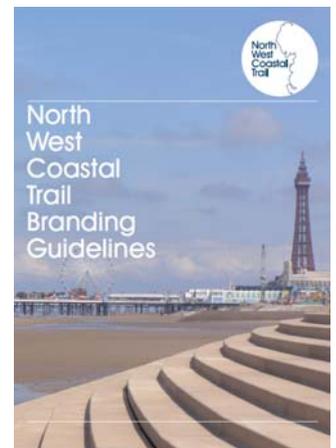
- Duplicate work being done for the National Scheme:
  - ➔ Natural England sits on the Steering Group
- Usurp local branding:
  - ➔ The trail logo is not intended for use on waymarkers but can add brand value to marketing leaflets, web, etc., e.g.:

*'XYZ cycle route forms part of the NWCT'*

- Seek to impose a route on any location:
  - ➔ the Trail is a partnership project and organisations / communities will always have a say
- Have any resources other than time
  - ➔ But we will seek funding / help others in funding bids

## Benefits of NWCT to Date

- Input into development of National Scheme – place on National Implementation Advisory Group
- Assisting local projects gain funding through their contribution to a 'strategic project' e.g. H2H, Wyre Way Coastal Trail (Sea Change)
- Worked up reports on benefits available for use by others developing NW access schemes
- Brand developed and available for use by NW Access authorities
- New Coastal Forum website with dedicated Trail pages (growing)



For up to date information on the Trail's progress see:

<http://www.nwcoastalforum.org.uk>



# What is currently happening or planned on access around the North West coast?

Delegates and respondents were asked to provide details of any local plans, projects, schemes that include work on paths, cycle or bridleways that link to or run along the North West coast

Cumbria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hadrian's Wall Park National Trail National Trail - Bowness on Solway to Carlisle</li> <li>• Hadrian's Cycle multi-use pathway across Allonby Bay, lead by: AONB, Cumbria County Council, Hadrian's Wall Company</li> <li>• Workington: cycle / walk bridge washed away in floods now on site being rebuilt</li> <li>• Hadrian's Cycleway and Coast to Coast route</li> <li>• Colourful Coast Project led by National Trust – Access between St Bees and Whitehaven improvements to footpath, signage and interpretation</li> <li>• Ravenglass – aspiration to put in cycle path</li> <li>• Links to the 'Eskdale Trail' from Ravenglass and the coast</li> <li>• Hadrian's cycleway extension south from Ravenglass to Millom</li> <li>• Rights of Way Improvement Plan suggestion – cycleway from Millom to Gutterby and cycleway from Gutterby to Annaside</li> <li>• H2H LPS – Morecambe Bay Landscape Partnership Scheme – building on railway and stations, enhanced disabled access, trampers and special routes</li> <li>• Grange-Over-Sands: Clare Lane Bridge has been reinstated to cross the railway line to the promenade</li> <li>• Arnside Viaduct: Provision is being made for a walkway alongside the viaduct while the viaduct is closed for repair. Finance for the walkway itself not yet found.</li> <li>• Hincaster Trail – nr Milnthorpe/Arnside. Community-based work to create a multi-user trail along disused railway line.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grange-Over-Sands – The assumption that cyclists were not allowed along the promenade was incorrect. There is no by-law prohibiting this</li> </ul>
Lancashire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H2H – Morecambe Bay Landscape Partnership Scheme – seeking to build on railway line – addressing disabled access</li> <li>• Sand Dune Management Plan – enhancing 'managed' access to beach</li> <li>• New Way of the Roses Coast to Coast route Morecambe to Bridlington. Opened in 2010</li> <li>• Existing Morecambe – Lancaster etc. links already in place. Plans to extend into Hornby or Sedbergh</li> <li>• Sea defence works programme Blackpool/ Wyre &amp; Fylde – improved access and more attractive experience</li> <li>• Work to improve or repair the footpath which approximates to the Definitive Map route (which itself is on an impassable line) south of Warton Airfield on the north side of the Ribble Estuary. LCC Public Rights of Way – contact Steve Williams</li> <li>• Upgrade footpath to cycletrack or bridleway – sea wall from Knott End to Fluke Hall – LCC Cycling Officer, Alasdair Simpson</li> <li>• Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park is promoting the environmental and related recreational-assets of the coastal estuary and its hinterlands as a driver for economic and social gain. There are a number of inter-linked access projects at various stages of funding linking the gateway towns of Burscough in the south and St. Annes in the north and the environmental attraction of Brockholes Wetlands Reserve in the east. Utilising existing PROWs, quieter roads, tow paths, concessionary routes and unmetalled highways, a series of interpreted walking trails and cycle routes linking attractions and accommodation are being constructed, designed or planned. LCC is presently a key partner in this and the trails mentioned above are within the present Commissioning Plans. The coastal path will become a key facility within the Park.</li> </ul>

## Lancashire (continued)

- River Douglas Linear Park (Tarleton/Hesketh Bank) is looking to link the Rufford Branch canal at Sollom with the estuary coastal path at the SE end of Ribble Marshes NNR. The aim is to have a multi-use path along this stretch of coast that will probably be the route of England's Coastal Trail. Money has just been released to a contractor to start land searches etc. following the publication of a Feasibility Study in 2010. The Linear Park is in the present Commissioning Plan.
- Lytham Open Golf 2012/Lytham Hall/Lytham In Bloom (international competition) are the present foci on the north side of the Ribble Estuary. A recent survey of the PROWs in Lytham and Freckleton has been undertaken and work is on going to improve the cycling and walking connectivity of Lytham Hall. LCC are leading on these initiatives and all fall within the Commissioning Plan.
- Preston Guild Wheel is a 21-miles family-friendly orbital cycleway of Preston due to open in July 2012. This will link attractions such as Preston Docks, Brockholes Wetlands Reserve and Visitor Village, Millennium Link and Lancaster Canals, Red Scar Woods SSSI complex and Preston's Avenham and Miller Parks.
- Improvements proposed on access between Fleetwood nature Park and Stannah Country Park (along the west coast of the Wyre Estuary). – contact Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council.
- Blackpool – new promenade, new trams, cycling development town
- Cycle routes extended from Blackpool to Lytham and inland to Freckleton Lytham – redevelopment of obsolete industrial sites through planning agreements public access secured along edge of estuary
- Whitewood (on foot) link inland from Granny's Bay to Lytham and back to coast
- Preston Guild Wheel – for delivery in 2012 – partly coastal - canal and city links
- Development of improved access through Ribble Coast and Wetlands access group.
- Bridging the Douglas River – aspiration for cycle path
- River Douglas Linear Park between Tarleton & Hesketh Bank, West Lancashire
- Preston to Southport link to RSPB reserve (over River Douglas)
- Sefton/West Lancashire LSTF Bid cycle/pedestrian links from Sefton to West Lancashire linking tourist attractions

## Merseyside & Cheshire

- Connect 2 route Hightown – Formby remains a reserve scheme but still an aspirational route for Sefton Council.
- Connect 2 route Liverpool, Everton Park & The Mersey, links to NCN Route 81 and subsequently the TPP solves current problem of lack of access the docklands north of Liverpool City Centre
- St Helens, Halton Warrington – Expression of interest submitted to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) for a proposed circular 'Greenway' route including Sankey Valley, St Helens – Widnes former mineral railway line and the Transpennine Trail – which would link to the NWCT from the mid Mersey basin.
- ERDF/LTP joint funded 35 mile Wirral Circular Trail is almost finished. It is a circular route, aimed at increasing tourism and uses existing paths and the National Cycle Network / Wirral Way. The route is complete; signage on the adopted sections is now complete. Working with council's marketing team to produce promotional material (including an 88 page booklet, maps and route information for each of the seventeen 2 mile sections. [www.visitwirral.com/wirralcirculartrail](http://www.visitwirral.com/wirralcirculartrail)
- Neston to Welsh border: New Lead Officer Laura Shakeshaft is to look at options for providing a cycle link.

## General comments

- Should look for links on shorter loops that link to key coastal settlements or rights of way network
- Spreading room – this seems a dangerous concept if implemented on all land types. Salt marsh is highly dangerous when tides are considered. The public may be lulled into false security.
- Who after implementation is responsible/liable re: health and safety implications due to accidents?
- Shoreline Management Plan: check out the preferred policies for sections of the coast  
[www.mycoastline.org](http://www.mycoastline.org)
- Natural England needs to talk to the North West Coastal Group. NWCG covers Lancashire, Cumbria & Cheshire/Merseyside
- Need to explore additional funding sources e.g. Defra Pathfinder monies for coastal adaptation

# What can organisations be doing to improve access on or to the coast?

The full question asked was:

**'What can local authorities and others be doing in advance of the national scheme roll out to improve access to the coast?'**

The raw data from this exercise have been drawn together to produce recommended actions, with, where possible, identified deliverers.

Action	Who should be involved?
<p><b>Promoting the benefits of coastal access</b></p> <p>Promote to local politicians and others such as the health sector the economic, social, health benefits of improved coastal access including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism and economic benefits of the Trail</li> <li>• The economic opportunities of the coast</li> <li>• The associated community benefits</li> <li>• The health agenda of the Trail e.g. Nordic Walking</li> <li>• New opportunities to promote what is already there</li> <li>• Walking and cycling are cheap and low carbon activities</li> </ul>	<p>Local Authorities, Parish Councils, North West Coastal Forum, Natural England</p>
<p><b>Engagement &amp; inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage the health sector and the private sector</li> <li>• Engage the Tourist Boards, including bringing them onto the Trail Steering Group, and encourage them to start making early connections along the route and link promotional activities with local businesses. As an example Lancashire County Council is a key partner in an initiative to link Tourist Board promotional activities with local businesses. Lancashire is providing expertise and a strategic vision to help partners join up their ideas to provide meaningful nodes along the coast that connect attractions within walking and cycling distance.</li> <li>• Establish strong links with and between the voluntary sector (including interest groups) and coastal local authorities, including encouraging Local Authorities, Parish Councils and other relevant organisations to sign up to the Coastal Trail concept</li> <li>• Raise coastal access at a high level to win Local Authority buy-in (members then officers), emphasise the positives such as the connection to the local economy and tourism and bring Councillors on board to raise the political profile of the route, recognising that members change over time so this needs to be an ongoing activity; encourage councillors to become champions of the cause.</li> <li>• Ensure Local Authorities are aware and understand what the implications are for rolling out the Trail. i.e. what powers they have for preparing for the Trail</li> <li>• Prepare communities for consultation. Using existing communication channels , e.g. Neighbourhood Forums</li> <li>• Provision of information &amp; reassurance – the better people understand something the more likely they are to agree trade offs; remove the fear factor.</li> <li>• Ensure good communication and consultation with and consideration of wildlife and SSSI governing bodies to reduce future problems re coastal access.</li> <li>• Hold a Forum for Local Authorities and interest groups which can be used for exchange of good practice and discussion of practical issues.</li> </ul>	<p>Local Authorities, Parish Councils, North West Coastal Forum</p>

Action	Who should be involved?
<p><b>Using existing processes: Statutory Access</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update Rights of Way Improvement Plans (should be reviewed every 10 years in light of coastal access route)</li> <li>• Natural England have simple to understand information about the national Coastal Access Scheme and what it means for others which can be circulated.</li> <li>• Advertise successes (e.g. Weymouth) to alert public/land owners/users etc. to the national coastal route.</li> <li>• Check coastal routes for historical rights that could be added to the Definitive Map and Statement to secure rights</li> </ul>	<p>Local Authorities, Parish Councils, Natural England, North West Coastal Forum</p>
<p><b>Using existing processes: Local Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage the planners and make sure that the route is properly reflected in planning documents including the Local Development Framework/ Local Plan and Local Infrastructure Plans.</li> <li>• Build in to local plans opportunities for developing coastal access through the planning process and planning gain</li> <li>• Development planning – casework/consultations. Don't compromise chance to put coastal route next to the sea by plotting development site there.</li> <li>• Explore the possibility of gaining external contributions through Section 106 agreements for coastal developments and raise rights of way up the priority list for Section 106 monies</li> <li>• Monitor planning applications along the coastline</li> </ul>	<p>Local Authorities, Parish councils, North West Coastal Forum</p>
<p><b>Using existing processes: Coastal Defence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that Coast Protection Authorities are aware of the Marine and Coastal Access Act and the need to provide coastal access</li> </ul>	<p>Local Authorities, Environment Agency</p>
<p><b>Funding issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Sustainable Transport Fund bids could be used to source funding for Trail works</li> <li>• Persuade the tourism associations to establish a visitor payback scheme. In so doing establish a link between their businesses and the development/maintenance of the Trail. A lesson learnt from the Hadrian's Wall path is don't wait until the Trail has been developed as it is too late then. Sufficient numbers of micro-donations, say on a bed-night basis will make a very useful contribution.</li> <li>• Maintain finance – Keep it up! E.g. with volunteer groups/Sustrans model 'adopt a path'</li> <li>• Keep projects alive, e.g. by getting others to do work even if the Local Authority doesn't have the resources (e.g. Ribble Coast &amp; Wetlands project being taken forward in conjunction with Groundwork)</li> <li>• Encourage strategic investment in improving the quality of the route in key places. Decent signage and gates are useful, but the surface of the path itself may not be so important.</li> <li>• Feasibility studies and consultation using plans, photos, etc., can be done by organisations such as Sustrans in advance of funding coming available to implement the route</li> </ul>	<p>Local Authorities, Tourism Associations, North West Coastal Forum, other partners e.g. Sustrans</p>

Action	Who should be involved?
<p><b>Continue to Look for Route / Project Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the roll out of national coastal access there is a risk that Local Authorities will sit back waiting for it to come to their area and in the meantime miss opportunities for pedestrian and higher rights; they should be encouraged to still look for opportunities &amp; improves access to/along the coast, e.g. circular links (access/transport). For example a suggestion was that Lancashire County Council Environmental Projects (South and North Area Teams) could negotiate additional access where contacts with landowners exist and potential for improved access is thought possible.</li> <li>• Information gathering/finding out what other organisations are doing/planning</li> <li>• Look at existing routes and prioritise to produce a hierarchy; include this in strategic plans.</li> <li>• Identify linkages with rest of rights of way network and key settlements e.g. shorter footpath or bridleway loops</li> <li>• Look for some short term quick wins, e.g. Blackpool, that can be seen to be contributing to and making progress towards the final route.</li> <li>• Start to tackle some of the intractable elements.</li> <li>• Develop 'bottom drawer' plans for the location of the route in advance of roll out, possibly using help from the Ramblers/Sustrans and BHS. In many places approximately 80 % of the route will be relatively easily defined.</li> <li>• Develop links with initiatives such as the Energy Coast Masterplan to secure access improvements</li> <li>• Don't be too rigid about the coastal route - if there is a place of interest slightly inland then bring the path inland. Also be aware that MOD land, nuclear power stations and wildlife habitats may create the need for alternative routes.</li> <li>• Establish a best practice forum of key players (practitioners group), including the tourist boards, to share common understandings, initiatives and best practice.</li> <li>• Encourage diversification – Farms, etc., &amp; businesses</li> <li>• Lobby the Environment Agency to incorporate coastal access as a key issue to consider in all projects.</li> <li>• Identify volunteers / create volunteer groups to 'adopt' or look after stretches of coastal trail and 'champion' sections of the trail, improve its condition, etc.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for encouraging more bikes on west coast trains</li> <li>• Adopt 'branding guidelines' across the NW coast to increase the profile of the trail</li> <li>• Promote the coastal access that is already in place</li> </ul>	<p>Local Authorities, Parish councils, North West Coastal Forum, Local Coastal Partnerships, SUSTRANS, Ramblers, other interest groups, community volunteers</p>

**Additional comments received:**

The question pre-judges, in that Local Authorities are not doing anything. In fact coastal access, parking, tourism and many other objectives are part of the core work of Local Authorities. In the Solway Coast AONB and Allerdale Borough Council area there are already paths and cycle routes which are maintained and marketed in a vigorous way including the Cumbria Coastal Way, West Cumbria Cycle Network, Allerdale Ramble, Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail.

We are all too risk averse which is often used as an unsubstantiated argument for disallowing equestrian access. Unless there are or have been factual instances of danger it should be assumed the route is open to all at their own risk.

# Key targets for future development

The full question asked was:

**'Identification of key targets for future development – are there any 'quick wins'?'**

Respondents were asked to give any particular issues to do with access to or along the coast. Some examples were given as prompts for the kind of information needed:

- *Gaps in between routes which if joined would create better access*
- *Condition of the route (surface or surroundings)*
- *Lack of appropriate infrastructure (as well as things like stiles this could also include public transport links, car parking, toilets, seats, etc., that would make a route better to use)*

They were also asked, where possible, to assign a priority value as follows:

L = low      M = medium      H = high      N = no opinion

Cumbria
<p><b>High Priority &amp; Quick Wins:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ravenglass Estuary: opportunity for pedestrian/cycle/horse riding across the viaduct. Extension to route 72</li> <li>• Concern that South Lakeland District Council's decision to close toilets could jeopardise the Miles without Stiles initiative</li> <li>• Identifying gaps is highest priority but might not necessarily be a quick win</li> <li>• One high priority 'missing link' is access to the Kent viaduct (at Arnside). Not only would it be very attractive to potential users as 'something to do' but also highly practical, in terms keeping the trail direct, close to the coast and away from busy roads. Arnside and Grange already have the necessary infrastructure to assist users (toilets, train line, car parks). There's a similar case to be made of the Levens viaduct (and perhaps other places too)</li> <li>• Duddon Estuary area: quick win - the bridge over a small stream at 217802, just north of Dunnerholme headland, between Askam and Soutergate, Kirkby. Progress on foot across the salt marsh was blocked by a bridge that had been washed away; This missing link did not completely obstruct the route, but made it more difficult than it should be.</li> <li>• Much more significant is the need to improve the route crossing the Duddon river. There is a pedestrian route from Foxfield, via Broughton, and with a new section of footpath along the A595 as far as the main road bridge. Then the road is most unattractive as a walk or cycle route, no path, windy, busy and dangerous. There is a significant gap before you reach the coast again close to the railway crossing. A footbridge is, and preferably cycle route actually on the existing railway viaduct, similar to that over the river Mite at Ravenglass. The same idea would also be useful on the railway crossing over the river Esk.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Medium Priority:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signposting existing routes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Low Priority:</b> No responses</p>
<p><b>No Opinion or Unassigned:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian/cycle routes across railway viaducts of estuaries</li> <li>• Pedestrian/cycle access across Ravenglass viaducts</li> <li>• Less restrictive access – stiles to gates, etc.</li> <li>• For access to west Cumbria, work with Network Rail to improve services on west coast rail line</li> </ul>

## Lancashire

### High Priority & Quick Wins:

- Blackpool – all the route is well in place, just needs to be taken through the process
- Use of existing infrastructure to minimise environmental impact, even if this means compromising proximity of route to sea.
- Proper Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for new routes.
- Enhance the condition of router, way marking and publicise access points.
- Improve coastal path (promenade) Lytham. In dangerous condition for people disabilities especially. I also saw child fall off in bad area. Is putting people off.
- From Knott End to Fluke Hall the sea wall provides footpath but is also usable as a de facto bridleway and consideration is being given to formalise this.
- Exclusive housing developments fencing off rights of way, e.g. Lytham Quay (it appears the Council are now aware and hoping to deal with it)
- Historical research to record public rights: Definitive Map Modification Orders may take years rather than weeks but are quick win in that they require no additional funding and have statutory process. Nor are they dependent on negotiation
- Lytham to Wyre Estuary beyond Fleetwood is mostly roads and promenades making quick win if any remaining prohibitions on cycling/horses were removed and some road sections are tolerated.
- From Lower Heysham to the north end of Morecambe Golf Course is multi-user promenade or similar. The first section is statutory footpath – upgrading this could be a quick win.

**Medium Priority:** No responses

**Low Priority:** No responses

### No Opinion or Unassigned:

- De facto routes may be a way of connecting on initial routes (linear). The riders have useful knowledge of routes presently on the ground so unifying their knowledge on the ground is vital.
- Equestrian and cycle access is very important to deliver added value
- Identify current proposals where coastal access could be considered – opportunities for funding & opportunities to incorporate improvements.
- From Cumbria County boundary towards Silverdale towards there is statutory bridleway on the foreshore but it is not an easily usable path for cyclists and the final 200m has no statutory status; the route turns inland at that point
- Access round Jenny Browns Point is on foot only from Browns Houses – higher rights at this point would probably be difficult to negotiate and would require infrastructure. From Browns Houses access is along a very quiet road but moves inland by 500m until Silverdale. However, a newly recognised bridleway runs from the north end of the Moss up towards Silverdale and the lanes into Silverdale are already designated as cycleway.
- Access north from Carnforth across Leighton Moss alongside the railway is possible on foot but there is no statutory access and as a nature reserve may not be open to upgrade.
- From Station Road, Hest Bank *de facto* bridleway access along the compacted shingle and grass is possible and well used towards Carnforth, statutory footpath exists just above the shingle for much of the way and for some sections there is a good track. Some improvement would be necessary for general cycle use in places put would appear possible. This section could be a realistic possibility for upgrade, where necessary, and some minor works.

## Lancashire - No Opinion or Unassigned (continued)

- From Morecambe Golf Course to Station Road level crossing at Hest Bank is a short missing link (there is a statutory footpath as far as the footbridge over the railway but it runs to and through a sometimes busy car park (for a health & fitness club). From the footbridge to the Station Road level crossing the sea defence is made of a steep bank of boulders with mud at the bottom and the railway fence at the top. It is difficult to know what could be done here without major works.
- The coastal footpath around the headland at Heysham is statutory footpath but not suitable for upgrade to bridleway although quiet roads to Lower Heysham exist
- The next section through to Heysham is impassable due to the nuclear power station and commercial docks but a reasonable bypass route is available.
- From Overton to Sunderland via the tidal road and back up to Carr Lane is good access for bridleway users with walkers able to follow the shoreline round the point itself. However this section is isolated as getting to both Overton is difficult and there are no obvious solutions; joining Carr Lane northwards along the coast is mostly via caravan site roads – this is practical but it is not known whether it would be possible to negotiate permission or dedication.
- Access round Bazil Point is on foot only and not suitable for upgrading
- Access from Heaton to Overton is very poor and the roads without provision for pedestrians, cyclists or horses although the lane is designated as a cycle route.
- At Lancaster the Lune can be crossed on foot at Carlisle Bridge (railway) or otherwise by the Millennium Bridge. Permissive cycle track provides access along the north side of the Lune Estuary to Snatchems where a little-used road can be used to almost to Heaton
- Glasson Dock to Lancaster is usable as bridleway as a mixture of permissive route along the old railway, statutory bridleway and minor road. There is also a loop of footpath closer to the shoreline west of Lancaster.
- Bank Houses to Glasson Dock has statutory footpath access and also bridleway access if a 1km route via Slack Lane (400m inland) instead of hugging the shoreline west of Cockersand Abbey is used.
- Cocker Bridge to Bank Houses is either bridleway, quiet road or footpath usable as bridleway.
- Fluke Hall to Cocker Bridge (Cockerham) has a sea wall that could be used as a basis for access but not currently provided with a usable surface or access rights/permission for a section of it. This would be a worthwhile alternative to the A road which is currently the nearest access to The Bay and could be achievable.
- Most of the Wyre Estuary has access on foot from the coast to the Shard Bridge on both sides. Some of this is also bridleway
- Access from Freckleton to Lytham would be expensive to upgrade beyond footpath due to the nature of the terrain.
- Access on the north side of the Ribble Estuary is proposed as cycleway from Preston towards Savick Brook but there is no bridge without heading inland to the A583 and since Freckleton Pool also has no bridge it would be necessary to follow the A583/584, mostly dual carriageway, Preston to Freckleton would be a valuable link but difficult to achieve
- Authorities could prioritise coastal route 1) through Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 2) through Local Access Forum Ribble Estuary – environmental considerations include birds. Access is good on foot but further rights likely to be resisted for fear of disturbing the birds although linear park will improve access and there is the aspiration to make a multi-user path.

## Merseyside & Cheshire

### High Priority & Quick Wins:

- Hightown link providing continuous route between Seaforth to Preston
- Improve/create link between Neston and Chester area
- Liverpool Waters Development (Peel Holdings): ensure pedestrian and cyclist access is incorporated into scheme plans

### Medium Priority:

- Ensure local links from railway stations to coastal routes

**Low Priority:** No responses

### No Opinion or Unassigned:

- Commission someone to write 'the Wirral Coastal Route'
- Local Authority to sponsor Coastal Marathon with entry fee and prize Local hostelry at each end of Wirral route e.g. Harp pub near Seacombe to have a card and clocking system cf Yorkshire 3 Peaks Harton café
- Publish the route with any gaps and invite people to suggest how to fill in gaps



# Should we establish a North West Coastal Trail Access Delivery Group?

A discussion was held on the best mechanism for taking the work forward, focussing on whether or not to create a North West Coastal Trail Access Delivery Group.

## Background

The current North West Coastal Trail Steering Group, although containing key bodies, is quite small and more expertise is needed. This could be done by expanding the existing Steering Group (it used to be much larger) or by establishing a sub-group, possibly containing Local Authority Access Officers. Any group or sub-group established would be maintained by the North West Coastal Forum secretariat.

## Issues raised

A key concern is the danger of a new group being just another talking shop.

There were also questions on how it will deliver things on the ground and how it would obtain resources needed for delivery.

To be successful any new group would need to have the support of Local Authorities and others, including those who know how to access suitable resources and others carrying out similar initiatives.

It was noted that aims and objectives may be clear at the outset but could shift over time.

There was some concern that such a group might muddy the water as Natural England is taking forward coastal access on a section of Cumbrian coast and will be setting up their own engagement mechanisms. However it was noted however that Natural England does not have plans for a liaison officers group because it is only a short, 30km, stretch and they would prefer to keep in touch with local groups via the North West Coastal Forum and the Local Access Forum. It was agreed that lessons learnt from the Cumbria Lead Area for coastal access would be useful – these may be available in 2012.

## Ideas discussed:

### *Making use of other relevant groups*

An alternative suggestion to creation of an entirely new group is to have the Trail as a standing agenda item at other relevant group meetings, for example the existing Regional Local Authorities Access Group.

### *Establishing Local area groups*

As delivery is likely to be at County Council level or sub-County Council level it was proposed that local groups: Cheshire, Lancashire, Merseyside might work. The Trans-Pennine Trail model which was used during early thinking on the North West Coastal Trail has county-based groups. This is the model proposed by earlier North West Coastal Trail research. Establishing a local group could help delivery as the people would know the land and the landowners. A Merseyside and Cheshire Coastal Access Group has been meeting for several years to share information on Trail-related projects but similar groups in

Cumbria and Lancashire were not established due to a desire by Access Officers in those counties to see what was happening with the national scheme first.

It was noted, however, that there is a place for a strategic group over and above local ones. An example cited where this might have been useful is a situation at Barrow where planning applications may have compromised the national route due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of coastal access needs by local planners and the Planning Inspectorate, particularly because coastal access has not come to their area and may take years to do so. The ability to learn strategically from other areas by joining up would therefore be useful.

### *Practitioner or Advisory Group*

A practitioners group would help to inform the Steering Group how to get things delivered on the ground and would help join the Trail together from area to area but it would need a clear brief.

Experience from Hadrian's Wall Path: they established a Steering Group and an Expert Advisory Group. The EAG meets a month before the Steering Group and filters action/makes recommendations to the Steering Group. They also advise the Steering Group as needed. This has proved a good model as people can be brought in to the Expert Advisory Group as and when needed so it has flexibility.

Another useful model is the Ribble Coast & Wetlands project which has a Steering Group which is strategic and an Access Group for delivery.

### **Recommendation**

Although there was not unanimous support for any one of the proposed options there was general agreement that the Trail project would benefit from having a better mechanism to bring practitioners' advice and experience to the Steering Group and to help deliver the Trail on the ground.

The Trail Steering Group will consider the options discussed. Any resulting new group or groups will have clear briefs and the format and structure will be available from the North West Coastal Trail pages of the North West Coastal Forum website <http://www.nwcoastalforum.org.uk/nw-coastal-trail/>



## Conclusions and Next Steps

It is clear that the roll out of national coastal access will be a very long term process and may take 25 years to achieve on the current trajectory.

The North West Coastal Trail, as a multi-use project, has an important role in not only helping to prepare the way for national coastal access roll out but also to ensure that higher rights such as horse-riding and cycling interests are taken forward strongly. **There was recognition that there is a lot of enthusiasm for the Trail and this could be a key factor in helping to promote coastal access to a wider audience.**

At the workshop questions arising during discussions included: Can the North West afford to wait that long for good coastal access? If not what can we do now to assist earlier delivery?

There was a general consensus that we should not wait, there is an opportunity to anticipate the roll out of coastal access and tackle the most intransigent issues so it can be delivered very quickly when it arrives. We should also lobby for faster roll out and more resources to deliver coastal access.

It is apparent from the responses from both the workshop and the consultation that there is a lot of coastal access improvement work already going on in North West England and that there are many opportunities for 'quick wins' which should be actively pursued.

**General suggestions for all organisations on how to take coastal access work forward included:**

- Look wider than local authorities as lots of other interested bodies could work in partnership to delivery it more quickly, for example: surveys, etc., formal requests to formalise certain routes and force the pace
- Engage political champions. It is really important to have Councillors in each Local Authority on the coast to champion the cause and to act as a local advocate
- Look for opportunities for funding through other schemes:
  - Ensure coastal access is included as part of coastal defence schemes and coastal defence planning
  - Maximise opportunities to gain coastal access improvements from planning s106 agreements - legally-binding agreements or planning obligations associated with the granting of planning permission to make a development more acceptable.

**Specific suggestions for the North West Coastal Forum:**

- Maintain the profile of the North West Coastal Trail
- Promote the concept of a multi-user route
- Highlight the benefits provided by the Trail
- Find and support local champions in local authorities – champions being Officers and Councillors.

The findings from this workshop and consultation will now be considered by both the North West Coastal Trail Steering Group and the North West Coastal Forum Management Board.

Finally, the North West Coastal Trail Steering Group would like to thank all those involved in the workshop and the subsequent consultation.

# Appendix A: Workshop Programme

## Accessing the North West Coast *A North West Coastal Forum Networking and Communications Event*

20<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Midland Hotel, Morecambe



### Programme

Conference Chair: Sue Kidd, Chair of the North West Coastal Trail Steering Group

- 10:15**     **Arrival and registration**
- 10:30**     **Welcome**  
Conference Chair
- 10:35**     **National Coastal Access Update**  
Danny Moores, Lead Adviser in Natural England's North West Coastal Access Delivery Team
- 11:05**     **The North West Coastal Trail – delivering added value**  
Caroline Salthouse, Regional Coastal Project Officer, North West Coastal Forum
- 11:25**     **Introduction to the break out sessions and comfort break**
- 11:35**     **Break out session 1: What is currently already happening or planned on access around the North West coast?**
- 12:10**     **Break out session 2: What can local authorities and others be doing in advance of the national scheme roll out to improve access to the coast?**
- 12:45**     **Lunch**
- 13:30**     **SUSTRANS**  
Huw Davies, National Cycle Network Director, Sustrans
- 13:50**     **BHS**  
Christine Peat, Regional Bridleway Officer, BHS
- 14:10**     **The Ramblers Association**  
Keith Johns, The Ramblers Association
- 14:30**     **Break out session 3: Identification of key targets for future development – are there any 'quick wins'?**
- 15:00**     **Open discussion: Should we establish a NW Coastal Trail Access Delivery Group?**  
Led by Conference Chair
- 15:10**     **Summing up**  
Conference Chair
- 15:20**     **Event Close**

# Appendix B: Delegates

## Accessing the North West Coast 20<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Midland Hotel, Morecambe



### Attendees

Susannah Bleakley	Morecambe Bay Partnership
Laurence Browning	Lancashire Wildlife Trust
Dominic Carr	West Lancashire Borough Council
Rebecca Cathey	Lake District National Park Authority
Huw Davies	Sustrans
Peter Edge	Lancashire Association of Local Councils
Paul Drinnan	Fylde Borough Council
Jayne Elliott	Lancashire County Council
Tom Fell	Grange and District Wildfowlers Association
Lis Fell	Cumbria LAF
Cllr. Martin Forshaw	West Lancashire Borough Council
David Goode	Lancashire LAF
Steve Graham	Royal Haskoning
Meg Green	Friends of the Estuary (Lytham)
Jim Green	Friends of the Estuary (Lytham)
Sue Harrison	Lancashire LAF
Trevor Harwood	Independent Ecologist
Brian Irving	Allerdale Borough Council
Keith Johns	Ramblers Association
Stephen Kent	West Lancashire Borough Council
Sue Kidd	University of Liverpool
Alasdair Lindop	North West Coastal Forum
Adele Mayer	Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council
Dave McAleavy	Sefton Borough Council
David McGlade	Hadrians Wall Heritage
Danny Moores	Natural England
Andrew Needham	
Cheryl Nicholson	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Rachel Osborn	Copeland Borough Council
Chris Peat	British Horse Society
Michael Prescott	Lancashire LAF
Graeme Proud	Allerdale Borough Council
Alice Rickwood	Sustrans
David Robinson	Lake District National Park Authority
Caroline Salthouse	North West Coastal Forum
John Sellers	Southern Uplands Partnership
Andrew Shore	Environment Agency
Malcolm Large	Seafish
Dick Thomas	Halcrow
Richard Toon	Lancashire LAF
C Towneley	
James Widdop	St Helens Council
Sylvia Woodhead	Cumbria LAF

# Appendix C: Consultation Questions



Consultation until 12<sup>th</sup> August 2011

## Accessing the North West Coast

The North West Coastal Trail project is a long-term plan to achieve a continuous multi-use coastal trail running along the coast from Chester to Carlisle encouraging residents and visitors to explore, appreciate and enjoy one of the North West's greatest assets: our coastal landscapes, heritage and settlements.

As part of this project the North West Coastal Forum wishes to collect information on existing and planned coastal access in the North West to supplement the outcomes from a recent workshop (Accessing the North West Coast, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Morecambe).

The purpose of the consultation is to produce an up-to-date picture of activity and opportunities which are contributing or could contribute to the creation of a continuous route for cyclists, horse-riders and pedestrians when accessing the North West's coast. It will provide an update to a gap analysis carried out in 2002.

More specifically we are interested in what access projects (delivered by access authorities and others such as Sustrans / BHS, etc.,) are already happening in along the North West coast and whether there are any major issues or opportunities for targeting investment and improving access to and along the coast, for example raising the priority of coastal access work in LDFs, ROWIPs and LTPs or work on new or existing access routes that can help fill gaps or provide links to other routes?

The results of this consultation and the recent workshop will be published in a report which will be available to download from the North West Coastal Forum website ([www.nwcoastalforum.org.uk](http://www.nwcoastalforum.org.uk)) in early autumn 2011.

### **IMPORTANT: ACCESS IN CUMBRIA (WHITEHAVEN TO ALLONBY)**

Natural England is currently collecting information for the above area as part of the preparation for the roll out of the national coastal access scheme. The North West Coastal Forum does not wish to duplicate or detract from the Natural England call for information.

**If you only have time to consider one of these consultations please send any information you have relating to Whitehaven to Allonby direct to Natural England at [cumbria.coastalaccess@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:cumbria.coastalaccess@naturalengland.org.uk) by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011**

Examples of the types of information Natural England are interested in hearing about are:

- Where would it be most useful to try and secure improvements for people with limited mobility, horseriders and cyclists;
- Any strategic issues along the stretch – proposed developments, land management issues, environmental sensitivities;
- Any key points of interest, other access routes or publicly accessible areas near to the coast, which Natural England might attempt to link in to the new coast path.

## NORTH WEST COASTAL TRAIL CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

### 1. What is currently already happening or planned on access around the North West coast?

For example local plans, projects, schemes that include work on paths, cycle or bridleways that link to or run along the North West coast.

*Type of information that would be useful:*

- *Project / Path / Scheme name*
- *Area where it applies (start and finish if possible)*
- *If known, who is leading on this work? (organisation and, if possible, name and contact details)*

### 2. What can local authorities and other organisations be doing in advance of the national scheme roll out to improve access to the coast?

*Type of information that would be useful:*

- *Organisation name*
- *Suggested action*

### 3. Identification of particular issues relating to access to or along the coast and key targets for future development – are there any ‘quick wins’?

*Type of information needed (not intended to be a comprehensive list):*

- *Gaps in between routes which if joined would create better access*
- *Condition of the route (surface or surroundings)*
- *Lack of appropriate infrastructure (this could include public transport links, car parking, toilets, seats, etc., that would make a route better to use)*

*Please also note whether or not you think the issues identified above should be a low, medium or high priority for action by using the following codes:*

*L = low*

*M = medium*

*H = high*

*N = no opinion*

**Thank you for you time**

#### **Please send your response to:**

Caroline Salthouse  
North West Coastal Forum  
c/o Sefton Council, Ainsdale Discovery Centre, The Promenade  
Shore Road, Ainsdale-on-Sea, Southport PR8 2QB  
Email: [caroline.salthouse@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.salthouse@sefton.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0151 934 2966

## Appendix D: Post-event Consultation Respondees

Keith Johns, Ramblers Association

David Goode, Public Rights of Way Manager, Lancashire County Council

Sue Holden

Alan Tyldesley, West Lancs Cycle Group