

Annex 1:

# 1.1 Other options considered

Coastal Access: Newport Bridge to North Gare - Maps 1a to 1i

## 1.1.1 Option 1 (Red)

Map: Annex 1a

Section numbers: NNG-S004 to NNG-S066

### Option considered:

We considered aligning the route along a combination of existing public highways, footways, footpaths and bridleways between the junction of the A1046 and the B1275 and the junction of the Graythorp Industrial Estate and the A178 Tees Road.

### Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:

The Coastal Access Scheme stipulates that;

*Beyond the seaward limit, Natural England has a discretion under section 301 to extend the trail further upstream on either side (or both) as far as:*

- *The first bridge or tunnel with pedestrian public access; or*
- *A specified point between the seaward limit and the first bridge or tunnel*

This route crosses Greatham Creek, a tributary of the River Tees estuary over Cowbridge Beck, Claxton Beck and Greatham Beck. These are all tributaries of Greatham Creek and are therefore secondary crossing points. Natural England does not have powers to extend the England Coast Path to these crossings.

We opted for the proposed route as we concluded that overall it struck the best balance, both for the above reason and in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

## 1.1.2 Option 2 (Blue)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S004 to NNG-S028**

### **Option considered:**

We considered aligning the route along an existing public footway, a new public footway on the roadside verge and a highway along Cowpen Bewley Road, then turning east to cut across grazed farmland on a new footpath before turning southeast to run alongside Seal Sands Road on a new footpath on a wide roadside verge ending at Seal Sands roundabout.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

At the pipeline crossing, the route would be aligned along a public highway as there is no footway on either side of Cowpen Bewley Road which narrows between crash barriers on both sides. There is regular traffic on this road which at the time of writing has a 60mph speed limit.

We opted for the proposed route as overall it struck the best balance, both in terms of the safety and convenience of those using the route, and also in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

## 1.1.3 Options 3 and 4 (Cyan & dark green)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S004 to NNG-S022**

### **Option considered:**

We considered aligning the route along existing permissive footpaths, bridleways and tarmac tracks through the RSPB reserve at Saltholme before joining a public footway south of Seal Sands roundabout the A178 Seaton Carew Road.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

#### **Options 3 & 4:**

Dogs are excluded from the RSPB reserve except for a small dog exercise area next to the car park.

The Coastal Access Scheme stipulates in Part B, Chapter 4, Paragraph 4.4.4 that;

*Our route proposals avoid altogether any places where long-term or permanent local exclusions would affect the route, including exclusions affecting only people with dogs.*

On the advice of our nature conservation specialist, the RSPB site policy is consistent with the aims of the site and with Natural England's statutory duty to conserve and protect bird populations.

#### **Option 4:**

The central section of permissive bridleway through the centre of the RSPB site closes for security reasons between the hours of 3:40pm and 10:00am in the winter and autumn months and between the hours of 4:40pm and 10:00am in the spring and summer months.

We opted for the proposed route as taking both factors into account, we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme. The permissive footpath and bridleway will remain available, when open, to people without dogs.

## 1.1.4 Option 5 (Light green)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S006 to N/A**

### **Option considered:**

We considered aligning the route alongside the River Tees estuary on a new footpath before turning north on a new footpath through open waste ground to Huntsman Drive. Then, after crossing Huntsman Drive the route would keep to the east of Dormans Pool along an unmade track before following a raised bank on a new footpath as far as the pipeline at Seal Sands Road.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

The Coastal Access Scheme at Part B, chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.1 stipulates that we must give regard to '*the desirability*' of the route. The waste ground towards the southern end of this section is not pleasant to walk along and would require extensive and costly establishment work.

Where this route meets the pipeline at Seal Sands Road there is no current crossing. Crossing the pipeline at this location would require planning and extensive and costly construction work. The landowner responsible for the management of the pipeline has however, given permission for the route to cross the pipeline on a gantry immediately south of Seal Sands roundabout.

We opted for the proposed route as taking both factors into account, we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

## 1.1.5 Option 6 (Turquoise)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S008 to NNG-S010**

### **Option considered:**

We considered aligning the route outside the boundary of the industrial holding at section NNG-S009. This route would have extended section NNG-S008 a further 10m before turning west to climb over a mound 3m in height, necessitating a set of steps. The route would then continue west along a new footpath to meet section NNG-S010.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

The Coastal Access Scheme at Part B, chapter 4, paragraph 4.3.8 stipulates that we should make the trail as easy to use as we reasonably can for disabled people and others with reduced mobility.

The proposed route takes advantage of a natural gap in the bank, which enables the route to stay low, avoid unnecessary steps and makes it easy to use.

We have also received advice from our nature conservation specialist that the height of the route at the top of the steps would present a sight-lining issue for nesting birds at Holme Fleet.

We opted for the proposed route as taking both factors into account, we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

## 1.1.6 Option 7 (Grey)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S008 to NNG-S012**

### **Option considered:**

We considered aligning the route along a raised track through the centre of the field adjacent to Holme Fleet.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

We have received advice from our conservation specialist that aligning the route along this track would cause significant disturbance to the bird population at Holme Fleet.

We opted for the proposed route as we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

## 1.1.7 Option 8 (Teal)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S008 to NNG-S016**

### **Option considered:**

We considered aligning the route on a new footpath on grass alongside the railway, then turning west to follow the boundary of a petro-chemical plant, before joining the proposed route at the A178 Seaton Carew Road.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

The landowner expressed reservations about the proximity of the route to their holding with regard to site security and health and safety concerns, citing Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) regulations.

We opted for the proposed route as we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme, in particular the requirement to consider the safety and convenience of those using the route.

## 1.1.8 Option 9 (Light blue)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S027 to N/A**

### **Option considered:**

This is a linking option between various combinations of other options considered. The route would establish a new footpath on the southern side of the roadside verge from Seal Sands roundabout alongside Seal Sands Road to meet the junction of options 5 and 10.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

The landowner of the roadside verge is the Port Authority. They expressed concerns regarding this

option both from the public safety aspect - the road is regularly used by heavy goods vehicles - and from concerns about port security in this area.

We opted for the proposed route as we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme in particular the requirement to consider the safety of those using the route.

### 1.1.9 Option 10 (Purple)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: N/A to NNG-S062**

#### **Option considered:**

We considered aligning the route along a currently walked track known locally as 'The Long Drag' which runs northwards from Seal Sands Road to an emergency access bridge across Greatham Creek. After crossing the emergency access bridge, the route would then follow a flood bank adjacent to Greenabella Marsh before turning west to follow a permissive footpath to meet the proposed route at the A178 Tees Road.

#### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

At the southern extent of The Long Drag, it is necessary to cross a railway track with no current formal crossing point. The coastal access scheme lists '*land used for the purposes of a railway (including a light railway) or tramway*' as land excepted from coastal access rights (in full).

The Long Drag is situated within land known as 'Number 4 Brine Field', owned by a chemical company. Although tenanted and grazed, and not part of their core operations, Number 4 Brine Field contains extensive subterranean chemical storage which poses a potential hazard to public safety. This area falls within land subject to COMAH regulations.

The chemical company have offered an access strip within Number 4 Brine Field immediately to the east of Tees Road, running from Seal Sands roundabout to the car park at Greatham Creek. This strip will be fenced to the seaward side and Number 4 Brine Field will form part of a wider restricted zone.

The emergency access bridge at Greatham Creek is kept locked unless in use as part of the formal evacuation procedure of various industrial facilities to the east.

The flood bank to the east of Greenabella Marsh is situated immediately between Tees and Hartlepool Foreshore and Wetlands SSSI to the West and Seal Sands SSSI to the east. Both sites are also part of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA and the area to the east of the bank forms part of the Teesmouth NNR.

Following advice from our nature conservation specialist, it was concluded that aligning the route here, would cause significant disturbance to nesting bird populations.

The permissive footpath running from the flood bank back to the A178 Tees Road is owned by a chemical company, who require users to register with their reception before and after use as a condition of that permission. The reason for this is so that in the event of an incident, emergency evacuation procedures can account for those users. They cite COMAH regulations as the reason for this practice.

We opted for the proposed route as taking into account all the reasons above, we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

## 1.1.10 Option 11 (Orange)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S034 to NNG-S048**

### **Option considered:**

We considered aligning the route through land known as 'Number 4 Brine Field' on a tarmac track, a new footpath following the line of a disused railway and a new footpath heading west to meet the proposed route at the A178 Tees Road. We also considered a variety of other routes through the site not illustrated on the map.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

Although tenanted and grazed, and not part of the core industrial premises, Number 4 Brine Field contains extensive subterranean chemical storage which poses a potential hazard to public safety. This area falls within land subject to COMAH regulations.

The owner has offered an access strip within Number 4 Brine Field, immediately to the east of Tees Road, running from Seal Sands roundabout to the car park at Greatham Creek. This strip will be fenced to the seaward side and Brine Field Number 6 will form part of a wider restricted zone.

We opted for the proposed route as taking into account all the reasons above, we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

## 1.1.11 Option 12 (Magenta)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S028 to NNG-S049**

### **Option considered:**

We considered aligning the route through grassland fields immediately to the west of the A178 Tees Road on a new footpath heading north before following a track leading north-east away from the A178 Tees Road. After 500m the route then turns north-west on a new footpath to arrive at Greatham Creek car park.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

The northern section of this track passes through Cowpen Marsh SSSI and the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA. Following advice from our nature conservation specialist, it was concluded that aligning the route here, would cause disturbance to nesting bird populations.

The landowner to the east has offered an access strip immediately to the east of the A178 Tees Road, which also runs from Seal Sands roundabout to the car park at Greatham Creek.

We opted for the proposed route as we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

## 1.1.12 Option 13 (Brown)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: NNG-S048 to N/A**

### **Option considered:**

This is a linking option between various combinations of other options considered. The route would make use of an existing permissive footpath on the southern side of Greatham Creek from the car park at Greatham Creek to the emergency access bridge.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

Having already ruled out options 5 and 10, this linking option would not be required.

We opted for the proposed route as we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

## 1.1.13 Option 14 (Yellow)

**Map: Annex 1a**

**Section numbers: N/A**

### **Option considered:**

This is a variation of option 13 which makes use of a disused bridge with an access gantry. This variation would enable the route to bypass the emergency access bridge.

### **Reasons for not proposing this option as the route:**

Having already ruled out options 5 and 10, this linking option would not be required.

We opted for the proposed route as we concluded that overall it struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.