

Coastal Access Variation Report Calder viaduct to Seascale promenade, VR9 (Whitehaven to Silecroft)



Representations with Natural England's comments

August 2021

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1. Introduction

This document records the representations Natural England has received on VR9 from persons or bodies. It also sets out any Natural England comments on these representations.

2. Background

Natural England's report setting out its proposal to vary the route between Calder Viaduct and Seascale promenade, part of the open Whitehaven to Silecroft stretch, was submitted to the Secretary of State on 17 February 2021. This began an eight-week period during which representations and objections could be made.

In total, Natural England received three representations pertaining to VR9, all of which were made by organisations or individuals whose representations must be sent in full to the Secretary of State in accordance with paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 1A to the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. These 'full' representations are reproduced in Section 3 in their entirety, together with Natural England's comments.

3. Representations and Natural England's comments on them

Full representations

Representation number:
MCA/WHS/VR9/R/33/0080

Organisation/ person making representation:
[Redacted] – Historic England

Route section(s) specific to this representation:

Whole report

Other reports within stretch to which this representation also relates:

N/A

Representation in full

Historic England considers that the proposed variation to the coastal access proposals between the Calder viaduct and Seascale promenade would have little or no impact on the historic environment, due to the nature of the work proposed. There would certainly be no impact on designated heritage assets such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings, or registered parks and gardens.

Natural England's comments

Natural England is grateful to Historic England for its comments confirming little or no impact to the historic environment.

Relevant appended documents:

N/A

Representation number:

(i) MCA/WHS/VR9/R/34/0013 and (ii) MCA/WHS/VR9/R/35/0012

Organisation/ person making representation:

[Redacted] - (i) The Ramblers and (ii) Open Spaces Society

Route section(s) specific to this representation:

Whole report

Other reports within stretch to which this representation also relates:

N/A

Representation in full

The Ramblers and Open Spaces Society have previously visited this site and are aware of the significant coastal erosion that has now occurred, necessitating a proposed diversion.

In principle we welcome this temporary diversion but, because of the close proximity of the proposed route to a sensitive wildlife site, we would not wish to see this as a permanent diversion. Nor would we wish to see the route eventually diverted to the inland side of the adjacent railway line.

We would strongly encourage Natural England to work with the operators of Sellafield (whose employees use this cycling route as a way of commuting to and from work), Sustrans and Network Rail, as well as Cumbria County and Copeland Borough Councils, to urgently explore ways of restoring the original route, albeit involving some engineering work.

Natural England's comments

Natural England thanks the Ramblers and Open Spaces Society for their joint comments in response to this Variation Report. Whilst we have classed this as two representations, the comments are the same, so we are responding here to both.

It should be noted that this Variation Report seeks only to add rollback status to the trail sections in question, in order to facilitate more efficient responses to future coastal change; and does not seek to propose any future route, nor negate the requirement for further consultation with relevant parties before any changes to the route are carried out.

As such, it is specified in the report that all of these trail sections would be classed as 'complex rollback' for the reasons detailed therein, and that the relevant organisations in relation to the natterjack toad reserve and the Local Wildlife Site would be consulted at that stage. These consultations

were also carried out in relation to the temporary route which the representation refers to, and the permanence of this route would be subject to continued conversations with those organisations.

Regarding the cycle track, we have worked with the relevant parties from the start, to identify and progress the available solutions. Marine and Coastal Access legislation provides a duty for Natural England to create access on foot only, so ultimate responsibility for the future of the cycle route would lie outside of our legal and budgetary remit; and of course, any developments would also be subject to similar environmental considerations as have been raised in relation to the England Coast Path. However, we would like to assure the Ramblers and OSS that all relevant parties remain in contact regarding this issue, and the latest advice regarding the cycle route can be accessed via Sustrans' website.

Relevant appended documents:

N/A