

Natural England to start work on coast to coast National Trail proposal

Natural England has this week started work on planning for a new National Trail based on the iconic Coast to Coast walk across Northern England.

[The National Disability Strategy](#) was launched last week and will see new initiatives introduced to transform the everyday lives of disabled people. Under the proposals is a new 182-mile accessible Coast to Coast footpath which will help more people from all parts of society access Britain's beautiful landscapes.

The existing trail is maintained by landowners, national parks and local authorities. However, granting the footpath National Trail status would unlock Government funding to not only maintain the trail but also to ensure that it is more accessible to those with disabilities. This could include replacing stiles with gates and ensuring that paths are designed to meet specific needs.

Natural England will complete a full audit of the existing route and will assess any improvements that may be needed to bring it up to National Trail Quality Standards. In the longer term, if the Government approves the proposal the project will aim to realise the full environmental, social and economic benefits that a new National Trail will bring by boosting the number of walkers on the trail and helping to link up villages, towns and cities via footpaths.

The proposals will include a map, detailed information about the route, costs of creation and maintenance, as well as proposals for the provision of accommodation, meals and refreshments across the Coast to Coast trail.

Amanda Craig, Director for People and Nature at Natural England said:

We know now more than ever just how important it is to get outdoors and active in green spaces to help boost our physical health and mental wellbeing.

We are delighted to be working closely with the North York Moors, Yorkshire Dales, Lake District National Parks and other partners to develop a proposal for this exciting new route. It will not only improve accessibility for everyone but will also help to boost our engagement with our beautiful natural landscapes.

The work to develop this proposal will be taking place over the course of this year with a view to presenting a formal proposal early in Spring 2022.

As part of its [Landscapes Review](#), Natural England recently announced that Yorkshire Wolds and Cheshire Sandstone Ridge will be considered for status as

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), alongside extensions to the Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONBs..

The proposals follow the [independent review](#) led by Julian Glover which called for action to make our protected landscapes greener, more beautiful and open to everyone. The government will respond to the review's recommendations in full later this year.

At 5,000km when completed, the England Coast Path, will be the longest waymarked and maintained coastal walking route in the world and will allow people to walk around the entire English coast. The project will link up the best existing coastal paths and will create entirely new ones for people to enjoy. There will also be new public rights of access to areas of coastal land such as beaches, cliffs and foreshore.