

GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE ACCESS  
TO THE ENGLISH COAST

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** DEPUTY LEADER: COUNCILLOR GEORGE  
CLEMENTS  
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR GEOFF  
BLACKWELL

**LEAD OFFICER:** KEITH PARKER – HEAD OF LEISURE AND  
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ENGINEER

**Summary and Recommendation:**

DEFRA recently published its consultation on proposals to improve access to the English Coast. The consultation paper summarises the fact finding and research carried out by Natural England along with its assessment of the possible delivery options.

Copeland's suggested response to the consultation was provided by the Flood and Coastal Defence Engineer following consultation with colleagues in the Council, Natural England and members of the North West Coastal Group.

It is recommended that members note the Government's consultation on the proposals to improve access to the English Coast and approve the response prepared by the Flood and Coastal Defence Engineer.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In June 2007 DEFRA published its consultation on proposals to improve access to the English Coast. Provision for extending access to the coast was made in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. A commitment to improve coastal access was included in the DEFRA Five Year strategy in December 2004.

1.2 Natural England was asked by the Government to provide comments and expert opinion on the Government's Vision for improved coastal access. That vision includes providing a coastal environment where rights to walk along the length of the English coast lie within a wildlife and landscape corridor that offers enjoyment, understanding of the natural environment and a high quality experience; and is managed sustainably in the context of a changing coastline.

1.3 The consultation paper summarises the fact finding and research carried out by Natural England along with its assessment of each of the delivery options that could be used to improve access, i.e. use of the Highways Act 1980, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and/or voluntary measures.

1.4 Copeland's suggested response was established by the Flood and Coastal Defence Engineer in consultation with officers from other departments within the Council, the Duddon Estuary Partnership, Natural England and the North West Coastal Group. A copy of the full response is provided within the Appendix.

The Council's suggested response can be summarised as follows:-

- The Council is supportive of the vision to improve access to the English Coast .However, a blanket right to roam may not always be appropriate, especially where visitor safety and wildlife conservation are an issue.
- A flexible approach should be adopted that takes change on the coast into account and management decisions must be taken with reference to the Shoreline Management Plan.
- The role of education as a visitor-management tool should be advocated at an early stage and this is important for sensitive wildlife sites such as St. Bees Head, Eskmeals and the Duddon Estuary.
- The Council endorses the proposal for reduced liability for landowners and sees this as important for achieving the desired outcomes.

## **2. Argument**

2.1 As a maritime local authority it is in the Council's interest to respond to proposals that will affect the coast and how increased access will affect residents in Copeland.

2.2 Copeland's coastline is unique and one of its best natural assets. Much of the coastline is important for wildlife and some of Cumbria's best bathing beaches are to be found here. Access to the coast is important for tourism and plays a key role in the regeneration of Copeland.

2.3 As a landowner it is important that the Council responds to ensure that its views and concerns are raised.

## **3. Options to be considered**

3.1 N/A

## **4. Conclusions**

4.1 As a maritime local authority and coastal land owner it is important that Copeland responds to the Government's proposals to improve access to the English Coast.

4.2 Copeland is generally supportive of the vision to improve access to the English Coast where it will not conflict with visitor safety and/or wildlife conservation.

4.3 As a land owner Copeland endorses the principle of reduced liability for landowners.

4.4 It is recommended that members endorse the informed response outlined in paragraph 1.5 above.

## **5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)**

5.1 None

## **6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN**

6.1 None

### **List of Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Copy of Copeland's full response to consultation on access to the English Coast

### **List of Background Documents:**

**[www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coast-access/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coast-access/index.htm)**

### **List of Consultees:**

Vic Emmerson, Environmental Health Manager, CBC  
Chris Pickles, Community Renewal Team Leader, CBC  
Mike Sharrock, Health and Safety Officer, CBC  
Natural England  
Duddon Estuary Partnership  
North West Coastal Group/SMP2 Steering Group

### **CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES**

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed . This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	None
Impact on Sustainability	None
Impact on Rural Proofing	None
Health and Safety Implications	Access to coast has implications for visitor safety and land owner liability. These concerns have been raised in the response.
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	None
Children and Young Persons Implications	None
Human Rights Act Implications	None

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**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Consultation on Proposals to improve access to the English Coast  
Response proforma**

Please use this proforma to answer the questions in the above document. The closing date for the submission of responses is **Tuesday 11 September 2007**.

Responses should be clearly marked in the subject field **Consultation on access to the English coast** and should be sent:

- by email to: [coast.consultation@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:coast.consultation@defra.gsi.gov.uk)
- or by post to: Andrew Crawford , Coast and Open Access Team, Zone 1/01, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EB

The email address may also be used for general queries relating to this consultation. Please mark the subject field **Consultation on access to the English coast**.

To help us analyse responses, please provide details of yourself or your organisation (\*if appropriate below)

In line with Defra's policy of openness, at the end of the consultation period copies of the responses we receive may be made publicly available through the Defra Information Resource Centre, Lower Ground Floor, Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR. The information they contain may also be published in a summary of responses. If you do not consent to this, you must clearly request that your response be treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in email responses will not be treated as such a request.

You should also be aware that there may be circumstances in which Defra will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations.

Defra's confidentiality statement in full can be found at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coast-access/letter.htm>

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Website *	<a href="http://www.copelandbc.gov.uk/">http://www.copelandbc.gov.uk/</a>
Date of response	30/7/07

NB: on the form below, please leave the response box blank for any questions that you do not wish to answer. Responses including any general comments you might wish to make are welcome on any number of the questions.

For each question it would be helpful if you could please indicate whether you agree, disagree or are uncertain by marking the box (as appropriate).

<b>Chapter 2: Vision and Outcomes</b>			
<b>1 Do you support this vision? If not, what vision do you have for improving access along the English coast?</b>			
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Yes. Copeland BC would advocate mixed management options for doing so. A blanket right to roam is not always appropriate, especially where visitor safety and wildlife conservation are an issue. It may be best in some circumstances to link up existing rights of way (eg, Ravenglass estuary and surrounds).</p>			
<b>2 Do you have any comments on Outcome 1?</b>			
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Agree with comments and principles.</p>			
<b>3 Do you have any comments on Outcome 2?</b>			
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Agree with comments.

Copeland advocates a better connectivity of coastal paths and circular walks within the context of a defined coastal zone as a way of allowing for greater access to the coastal environment in a controlled way. In many areas this may not require an open access type approach and could be better for wildlife.

As a coastal landowner Copeland are concerned about issues of safety and liability and are keen that increased access to the coast does not increase land owners liability.

4 Do you have any comments on Outcome 3?

Yes



No



A holistic approach to the management of the coastal landscape is advocated by the Council. The softening of intensive agriculture behind the foreshore would complement the existing Shore Line Management Plan as well as future landscape and wildlife conservation proposals (eg, South Shore, Whitehaven to St .Bees Cliffs).

However, careful consultation will be required with conservation bodies (eg, RSPB) with regards to potential implementation of restrictions or seasonal closures at wildlife sensitive sites eg, St. Bees Head and Duddon Estuary.

5 Do you have any comments on the relative importance of the three Outcomes?

Yes



No



Outcome 3 may require the greatest input. All 3 outcomes are important in their own right and Copeland recommends that a mixture of all 3 approaches may be the best way forward according to the individual circumstances of different coastal sections.

However, Copeland is keen to ensure that education is right at the very heart of the Outcomes and management procedures required for their implementation. Education should be viewed as a management tool in its own right. It is the only way by which all important changes in attitude and behaviour may result which in turn has lasting benefits for wildlife conservation that go beyond site specific level.

### Chapter 3: Factfinding and conclusions drawn

6 Are there any other sources of information you are aware of which you consider should contribute to the evidence base?

Yes



No



Shoreline Management Plans  
 Making Space for Water  
 Breeding bird data  
 Biological Data Networks  
 Flood risk data  
 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment  
 Coastal Monitoring Data and individual studies  
 Education Research

7 Do you agree with Natural England's overall picture of the current access situation on the coast? Any there any other studies that might support these conclusions or add to them?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Agree with the overall picture presented but again disappointed by no reference to education or visitor management. See comments to question 8 below

8 Do you agree with Natural England's strategic conclusions? If not, what aspects of Natural England's strategic conclusions do you disagree with, and why?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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This Council believes that a flexible approach should be adopted that takes change on the coast into account and management decisions must be taken with reference to the Shoreline Management Plan.

Improving access to the coast should not just been seen as opening up the coast for access purposes. Improving access to Coastal Land, the Foreshore and the Marine Environment provides a wonderful opportunity to engage people with the natural world and to nurture a greater understanding and empathy with it. This also has long term social and environmental benefits for the local and wider community. The Council is keen to see these are made key objectives of any legislation brought into implement proposals for improved coastal access. Wildlife conservation, coastal access and education must work together to achieve higher level outcomes for wildlife conservation and visitor management.

9 Are there any other perspectives or factors that you think should be considered?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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The Council advocates the role of education as a visitor-management tool .This is important for sensitive wildlife sites (eg, St, Bees Head, Drigg, Eskmeals and the Duddon Estuary) and for safety reasons (St. Bees cliffs and Duddon estuary).

Visitors need to understand why a management option has been put in place (eg> signs to restrict access) so that they can empathise with it.

A wider safety education campaign should be advocated especially for unsafe area such as unstable cliffs (South Shore, Whitehaven) or where there are fast tides (Duddon Estuary).

The coastal environment in Copeland presents an opportunity to ease pressure of visitor numbers on the adjacent Lake District National Park by encouraging estuary and coastal visits (care needed with sensitive wildlife sites however). The special nature of Copeland's coast should be regarded as a very special natural asset.

The Council is keen that land owners have a reduced level of liability towards visitors – this issue is seen a potential obstacle in the implementation of any coastal access agreement.

Copeland's coast also includes the Sellafield nuclear power station and this has obvious visitor safety and site security issues that will need to be addressed.

**Chapter 4: Work undertaken on benefits and costs**

10 Do you have any comments on the benefits and costs identified in the partial Regulatory Impact Assessment?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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We welcome the benefits in principle but are unsure how they would take effect or of the accuracy of any figures used.  
There should be a greater emphasis placed upon the potential economic impact of coastal access upon the regeneration of an area – particularly for maritime coastal authorities such as Copeland .

11 Are there any other benefits and costs that are relevant to the options which should be considered?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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See question 9. There is opportunity to relieve visitor pressure on adjacent tourist hot spots.

An increase in visitor numbers to an area could increase the economic value of an area which will have implications for the policy options identified within the Shoreline Management Plan.

**Chapter 5: Option 1 – Highways Act 1980**

12 Do you agree with Natural England's assessment of option 1 – use of the Highways Act 1980?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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The use of the Highways Act may not be flexible enough to allow for a 'roll back' in areas affected rapid coastal erosion (eg, St. Bees Head and South Cliffs, St Bees) except where the Shoreline Management Plan identifies the rate of erosion to be minimal. There is also some uncertainty that the Highway Authority are able to achieve these outcomes.

A more flexible approach is advocated.

13 Do you agree with our assessment of the likely scale of effect?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**Chapter 6: Option 2 - Section 3 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**

14 Do you agree with Natural England's assessment of option 2 – the use of section 3 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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The Council endorses the proposal for reduced liability for landowners and sees this is critical.

The principle of CRoW Section 3 should be applied to the coastal zone in areas where 'open' access would conflict with wildlife interests (dependent upon anticipated visitor numbers and specific management interventions for specific sites).

Consideration should be given for landowners to nominate areas of land for open access.

15 Do you agree with our assessment of the likely scale of effect?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**Chapter 7: Option 3 – Voluntary measures to create permissive access**

16 Do you agree with Natural England's assessment of option 3 – the use of voluntary measures to create permissive access?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Agree provided that the landowner is made fully aware of the possible consequences and is happy to accept them.

It is important that access can be mapped and is made available and accessible for and by the public.

Access agreements and permissive access would be desirable but in practice could leave some areas of the coast inaccessible (Duddon Estuary) and this would reduce continuity of access. Copeland suggest the use of voluntary measures as the 1<sup>st</sup> part of a phasing in of the access arrangements combined with a national trail. The second phase could involve identifying areas where open access should be legislated for.

17 Do you agree with our assessment of the likely scale of effect?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Compensation should be made available but only where livelihood is likely to be adversely affected.

**Chapter 8: Option 4 – proposal for new primary legislation**

18 Do you agree that the Government should introduce new primary legislation to allow for a tailored access regime around the coast? If not, which of the options would you prefer?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Agree.

19 Do you think that spreading room (such as headlands, viewpoints or uncultivated land) along the coast is important?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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With the proviso that this should be tailored to suit the terrain/habitat/wildlife. Spreading room such as with key headlands (St. Bees) may present important opportunities for wildlife (eg> chough) as well as education. Headlands and viewpoints in Copeland also provide for important interactions in between the coastal foreshore and the marine environment, such as by providing opportunities for watching marine mammals (dolphins, harbour porpoise etc..).

20 Do you believe it is important to formalise access to beaches?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Yes – access to beaches should be formalised except where there is conflict with wildlife. In such situations access should be seasonal.

Copeland advocates the use of coastal zoning for the management of recreational use and in preventing conflict between different user groups.

Copeland is keen to ensure that the different user groups are not unfairly treated and that existing access arrangements such as via Byways and byelaws for vehicles, horses and small boats are not diminished. The Council recognises that in some instances and in some locations a seasonal ban or zoning may be required but that is preferable to the total exclusion of a user group.

21 Do you have any comments on the proposal for a statutory methodology?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No X	<input type="checkbox"/>
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22 Do you agree there should be a right of appeal against Natural England's application of the statutory methodology?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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23 Do you have any views on this approach to protecting important wildlife and habitats?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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It is important to protect wildlife and habitats – much of Copeland’s coast is designated for wildlife conservation. Education must play a central role in managing them (see response to questions 5 and 8).

There should be links to Shoreline Management Plans, Making Space for Water and Catchment Flood Management Plans.

24 Do you agree that planning and implementation should be undertaken through access authorities wherever possible and funded by Natural England?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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The Council believes that it should fall to Natural England with the necessary funding being made available to them, in full consultation with local authorities.

25 Do you agree that Natural England should have powers to do such work itself where the access authority was unwilling to act?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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26 Do you think it is important that local solutions should be designed in consultation with local interests?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Yes – but also within the context the wider regional or national interest too.

Local Land Owners and user groups must all be consulted.

27 Are there any partners that you consider Natural England should particularly involve in its consultations?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Landowners – examples in Copeland could include Muncaster Estates, British Nuclear Group and British Nuclear Fuels

- Maritime Local Authorities
- Environment Agency
- Network Rail
- North West Coastal Group and Cell 11 Working Party
- European Marine Site Partnerships
- Local Ramblers Associations
- Parish Councils
- RSPB
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- Crown Estates
- Cumbria Sea Fisheries
- Ministry of Defence
- BNFL
- North West Development Agency
- British Mountaineering Council
- RNLI

28 Should any legislation enable conditions to be placed on access if necessary (eg seasonal diversions to protect sensitive species or permanent diversions as a result of coastal change and realignment)?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is important to protect sensitive species provided there are sensible seasonal or voluntary restrictions.

Any legislation or seasonal restrictions must be accompanied by the appropriate educational tool.



29 If so, should it be the responsibility of Natural England or the access authority to plan for and implement such conditions?

Natural England but only in consultation – see response to 27.

30 Do you agree 10 years is a reasonable timescale for implementation? If not, what period should the implementation programme be over?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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31 Do you have any comments on Natural England's assessment of costs?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No X	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Likely to be underestimated.

32 Do you agree that compensation should not be paid in respect of the new right of access?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Compensation should only be paid where is it clearly demonstratable that a loss of livelihood would result.

33 If you disagree, in what circumstances do you think compensation should be paid, and why?

See 32 above.

34 Do you agree that the reduced level of occupiers' liability introduced for access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 should also apply to coastal access?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is as essential for Copeland as it would be elsewhere.  
It is also the common sense approach. People using the coast need to be aware of the risks but also accept them and be responsible for their own actions. Providing information to enable them to make an informed choice is also important especially where there are unstable areas of ground (eg> St. Bees), high or fast tides or estuaries (the Duddon and Ravensglass).

35 Do you have any comments on Natural England's proposals for complementary work to enhance coastal landscapes and wildlife?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Copeland advocated the use of education as a management tool (see response to question 5 and 8) and stresses its importance in achieving higher level outcomes for wildlife and visitors.

Copeland's coastline is also an historic environment that is linked with its social well being and sense of identity. We would like to see these factors are taken on board and not forgotten at the expense of the natural environment – we believe they are complementary.

Copeland would be concerned about any 'landscaping' work that is undertaken for the above reason and suggests that any such work is only carried out following full consultation.

The marine environment in Copeland is underused and understudied and yet huge potential exists. We ask that the marine environment is not forgotten. The Solway Coast and the Irish Sea is known for its regular sightings of basking shark, common and grey seals and has resident populations of harbour porpoise and an understudied population of bottlenose dolphin. Greater access to the coast presents opportunities for greater interaction with such wildlife. However, this needs to be done in the context of coastal zoning and the implementation and enforcement of codes of practice and guidelines for wildlife/dolphin watching.

36 Do you have any other general comments on Natural England's proposals for new primary legislation?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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It will require effort to ensure that bureaucracy does not detract from work on the ground.

Access for visitors on foot must not be at the expense of other 'users' as identified below – see response to question 37.

37 Do you agree with Natural England's assessment of the outcomes its recommended approach would deliver?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Mostly agree. The public will and should have greater access to the coast on foot. However, this must not be at the expense of other existing users (as was the case with CRoW) without consultation unless there are genuine wildlife conservation concerns.

Access to the coast for climbers, fishing, kayakers, wind surfers and other similar uses should also be extended within the legislation following the principles of coastal zoning as appropriate for each activity on its own merit.

38 Do you agree with our assessment of the likely scale of effect?					
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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**Chapter 9: Other issues**

39 Do you believe there is a need for higher rights (rights other than a right of access on foot for open-air recreation) around the coast?					
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes – as outlined in response to questions 36 and 37.

The public will and should have greater access to the coast on foot. However, this must not be at the expense of other existing users (as was the case with CRoW) without consultation unless there are genuine wildlife conservation concerns.

Access to the coast for fishing, climbers, kayakers, wind surfers and other similar uses should also be extended within the legislation following the principles of coastal zoning as appropriate for each activity on its own merit.

Use of vehicles on existing 'bye ways open to all traffic' should be maintained and no downgrading of such routes as was the case with CRoW.

The creation of rights for other users is welcomed and encouraged. Cycling and Kayaking are but 2 activities with potential for wider enjoyment in Copeland that would be relatively low impact (provided appropriate or seasonal guidelines are followed in wildlife sensitive sites).

Other more intrusive higher level users – such as power boats – may be regulated through other legislation or by effective integrated coastal zoning.

40 Do you have any information on demand for, and opportunities to provide for higher rights?					
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

41 Do you consider there is a need for more advice or information on possible visitor safety risks being available to the public if access to the coast was improved? If so, are there any particular issues that the advice and information should cover?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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YES.

Cliff safety – this should include information on dangers of cliff top collapse and potential for mobile coastal slopes (such as at South Shore, Whitehaven and St. Bees).

Cliff safety also needs to include reference to walking UNDERNEATH or at the base of cliffs to ensure visitors are fully aware of the dangers.

However, certain users groups may already be aware of the dangers (eg> climbers at St. Bees) and they should be allowed to take the risks if that is what they so choose.

Copeland would like to see this as part of a national safety education campaign that is rolled out at the same time as the implementation of improved coastal access.

The danger presented by tides is ever present and should also be reinforced.

Visitors require safety education but ultimately must be responsible for their own actions.

42 Do you agree with Natural England's advice that improving access to salt marshes and mudflats should not be a national priority in its own right?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Copeland suggests that unrestricted access to saltmarshes and mudflats should not be a national priority in its own right for safety reasons.

43 Are there any other issues we need to take into account in assessing how we might improve access to the English coast?

Copeland would like to ensure that education is central to improving access on the coast – see response to questions 8 and 9.

Education can improve visitor enjoyment and wildlife conservation if built into the management of the coast from the on set and not just 'tagged on as an after thought'.

Integrated coastal zoning of certain activities also needs to be taken into account eg> kite boarding and jet skiing.

Before access is improves there needs to be baseline information on areas to avoid such as breeding birds for example and other seasonal wildlife issues (eg> natterjack toads).

Reference to Shoreline Management Plans and close consultation with lead maritime local authorities and relevant officers is also important.