

***PLANNING STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED SEA WALL
REPAIR AND REINFORCEMENT WORKS, CONSISTING OF THE
INSTALLATION OF GEOTEXTILE-WRAPPED ROCK ARMOUR AT
PARTON TO HARRINGTON SEA WALL, NORTH-WEST OF LOWCA,
WHITEHAVEN, CUMBRIA.***

September 2021



Network Rail is proposing to undertake a programme of sea wall repair works to the section of the Cumbria Coast railway north of Parton Station. The works are required in order to maintain the safe operation of the railway, and reduce the risk of coastal erosion impacting upon rail operations.

The site is located approximately 700 m north-west of Lowca, near Whitehaven, Cumbria. Network Rail propose repair and reinforcement works to the existing operational railway at a site known as Parton to Harrington Sea Walls No. 3, located at Cuning Point (grid reference NX 97922 2288). The site is approximately 600 m in length with a total footprint of 5,223 m², of which 3,637 m² will fall outside Network Rail's existing operational land boundary.

The work will involve the installation of rock armour wrapped in geotextiles, known as a 'Dutch Toe', where unprotected headland, placed beach material, and stone pitching are currently present. The installation of new rock armour will tie in with existing rock armour along the defence. An existing culvert structure already carries water from Andrew's Gill under the rail track and a new pipe and headwall will be created to manage this flow.

Planning Policy

Relevant National and Local planning policy is outlined below:

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out the Government's vision for planning to help achieve sustainable development. Central to this is that economic, social and environmental gains should be sought through the planning system.

NPPF Chapter 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy) states (paragraph 81):

Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

NPPF Chapter 9 sets out the government's vision for how the planning system should promote sustainable transport. Paragraph 104 states that '*Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*

a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;

- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.*

Paragraph 110/111 goes on to provide guidance for considering development proposals relating to transportation:

Paragraph 110: In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;*
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;*
- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code 46; and*
- d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.*

Paragraph 111: Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Chapter 14 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change) states at Paragraph 152:

The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028

The following policies from the Core Strategy are of relevance to the determination of the application:

Policy ENV2 – Coastal Management

To reinforce the Coastal Zone's assets and opportunities the Council will:

F Work with partners to manage the risks associated with coastal erosion and flooding and ensure that all new development is located outside areas identified as being at risk either now or in future phases of the Shoreline Management Plan

Policy ENV1 – Flood Risk and Risk Management

The Council will ensure that development in the Borough is not prejudiced by flood risk through:

E Support for new flood defence measures to protect against both tidal and fluvial flooding in the Borough, including appropriate land management as part of a catchment wide approach

Policy T1 – Improving Accessibility and Transport

vii) Maintaining and improving the stations, infrastructure and services on the Cumbria Coastal Railway

Assessment of Scheme Proposals

The scheme proposals are essential works to safeguard the operations of the Cumbria Coast railway, to enable it to function in a safe and efficient manner. As noted in the Copeland Local Plan, the railway is essential to the functioning of the local economy. The scheme will deliver essential maintenance to the railway, the principle of which is supported through Policy T1. At the national policy level, there is reciprocal policy support offered through NPPF Chapter 9.

Turning to the scheme's relationship with flood defences, it is clear that the scheme will assist in efforts to prevent coastal erosion, which has the potential to adversely impact on the railway's operations. The principle of this form of development is clearly supported through Local Plan policies ENV1 and ENV2, in addition to the provisions of NPPF Chapter 14.

It is clear, therefore, that there is strong policy support for the proposed maintenance works, both at the local and NPPF scale. On this basis, it is requested that planning permission is granted for the scheme.

Network Rail
One Eversholt Street
London
NW1 2DN

www.networkrail.co.uk