

14th December 2021

North Somerset Council Announcement

Work begins to complete £3.1m Weston to Clevedon cycle route

12:23pm - 14 December 2021

Construction work has begun to build missing sections of the keenly awaited cycle route between Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare.

The £3.1m Pier to Pier Way, which is jointly funded by North Somerset Council, National Highways, Department for Transport via Sustrans and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, is set to open in the summer.

The route has received considerable public support, with a Facebook page with over 1500 supporters and the planning application received over 550 comments and letters of support.

The completion of the route is a long-held council ambition, with work completed over the years to find a plan acceptable to landowners, stakeholders and funders alike.

The Pier to Pier Way will also provide an important active travel route, that will welcome walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, and is expected to serve 70,000 one-way trips a year. This will result in 145 tonnes of CO2 savings every year.

Active travel is a vital part of North Somerset's zero carbon ambition, with the ability to bring immediate reductions in emissions from the UK's most polluting sector, as well as delivering significant health and wellbeing benefits.

The path will form part of Route 33 of the National Cycle Network between Bristol to Seaton <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/find-a-route-on-the-national-cycle-network/route-33/>

The initial work involves building a new river crossing and repurposing existing ones over the Congresbury Yeo and Oldbridge rivers, to separate farming works, vehicles and livestock from the public path.

A 1.4km section of new path, following the former Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway will connect to quiet lanes either side. Improvements to signage and existing route sections will also follow and a replica of Wick St Lawrence Station Halt is planned to be included as a gateway feature for the cycleway. The attractive new route cuts 6.5km from the current road route between Weston and Clevedon. It will help walkers, cyclists and horse-riders avoid longer and busier routes including sections of the A370 and J21 of the M5.

It is expected that the Pier to Pier Way will become a catalyst for sustainable leisure and tourism, as well as enabling and encouraging cycle commuting in the region.

The works have been funded by:

- National Highways (formerly Highways England) - £1.3m
- The Department for Transport (DfT) through walking and cycling charity Sustrans' Paths for Everyone programme - £800,000
- The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development - £561,000

- North Somerset Council's Highways and Transport Capital Programme - £451,000.

The National Highways funding of £1.3m is from its Designated Funds programme designed to benefit people, the economy and the planet with an overall investment of £936m between 2020 and 2025.

Cllr Mike Solomon, North Somerset Council's executive member with responsibility for sustainable travel said: "We are very pleased to see work starting on this complex and exciting project which has taken a great deal of unseen hard work.

"We are very grateful for the co-operation and support of the various landowners and stakeholders involved, including the Environment Agency, and not least the confidence of the scheme funders, all of which have been essential to make this scheme possible."

Sean Walsh, Route Manager for National Highways, added: "We're committed to improving safety and encouraging cycling and walking. This new cycle and walking route will make it much safer, quicker and easier for cyclists and pedestrians to travel between Weston and Clevedon, helping to support modal shift for local trips.

"We're delighted to be partnering with North Somerset Council to realise this project – a glowing example of how this funding can make life better for communities living and working near our roads."

Jon Usher, Head of Partnerships at Sustrans added "It's excellent to see this long-awaited project coming to fruition. It is part of our Paths for Everyone programme, completing a missing link on the National Cycle Network.

"The route will be safer and a more enjoyable way to travel by foot or wheel between the two towns. It will connect two thriving communities and open up a brand new sustainable tourism route for the region - helping the area's economic recovery from the pandemic."

The link forms part of the North Somerset Coastal Towns Cycle Route, of which the very popular Brean Down Way has already been delivered. The final phase will be the continuation of the route from Clevedon to Portishead, with links on to Bristol.

Ends

Work begins on pier-to-pier cycle path in North Somerset

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Work to build a cycle path linking the Grand Pier with Clevedon Pier has begun. - Credit: Axbridge-Cheddar Cycle Walkway

Work has begun to transform North Somerset's coastline to create a pier-to-pier cycle lane between Clevedon and Weston for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.

The £3 million project is expected to open next summer and will connect to Route 33 - the National Cycle Network between Bristol and Seaton.

The scheme has been a long-held ambition for North Somerset Council and is integral to its zero carbon emission pledge by aiming to reduce CO2 emission on the route by 145 tonnes each year.

The council's executive in charge of sustainable travel, Councillor Mike Solomon, said it was an 'exciting project' that has undergone a lot of work behind the scenes.

"We are very pleased to see work starting on this complex and exciting project which has taken a great deal of unseen hard work," he said.

"We are very grateful for the co-operation and support of the various landowners and stakeholders involved, including the Environment Agency, and not least the confidence of the scheme funders, all of which have been essential to make this scheme possible."

Initial works will involve building a new river crossing and repurposing existing ones over the Congresbury Yeo and Oldbridge rivers - this will separate farming works, vehicles and livestock from the path.

More than 70,000 one-way journeys are predicted to be made along the route each year.

The path will link the Grand Pier with Clevedon Pier

Sean Walsh, route manager for National Highways, added: "We are committed to improving safety and encouraging cycling and walking.

"This new cycle and walking route will make it much safer, quicker and easier for cyclists and pedestrians to travel between Weston and Clevedon, helping to support modal shift for local trips.

"We are delighted to be partnering with North Somerset Council to realise this project – a glowing example of how this funding can make life better for communities living and working near our roads."

Plans layout a 1.4km section of new path, following the former Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway will connect to quiet lanes either side.

Improvements to signage and existing route sections will also follow this route and a replica of Wick St Lawrence Station Halt is to be included as a gateway feature for the cycleway.

Walkers, cyclists and horse riders will avoid longer and busier routes by taking the pier to pier path - including sections of the A370 and J21 of the M5.

North Somerset Council, National Highways and the Department for Transport via Sustrans and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development will cover the £3.1 million costs.