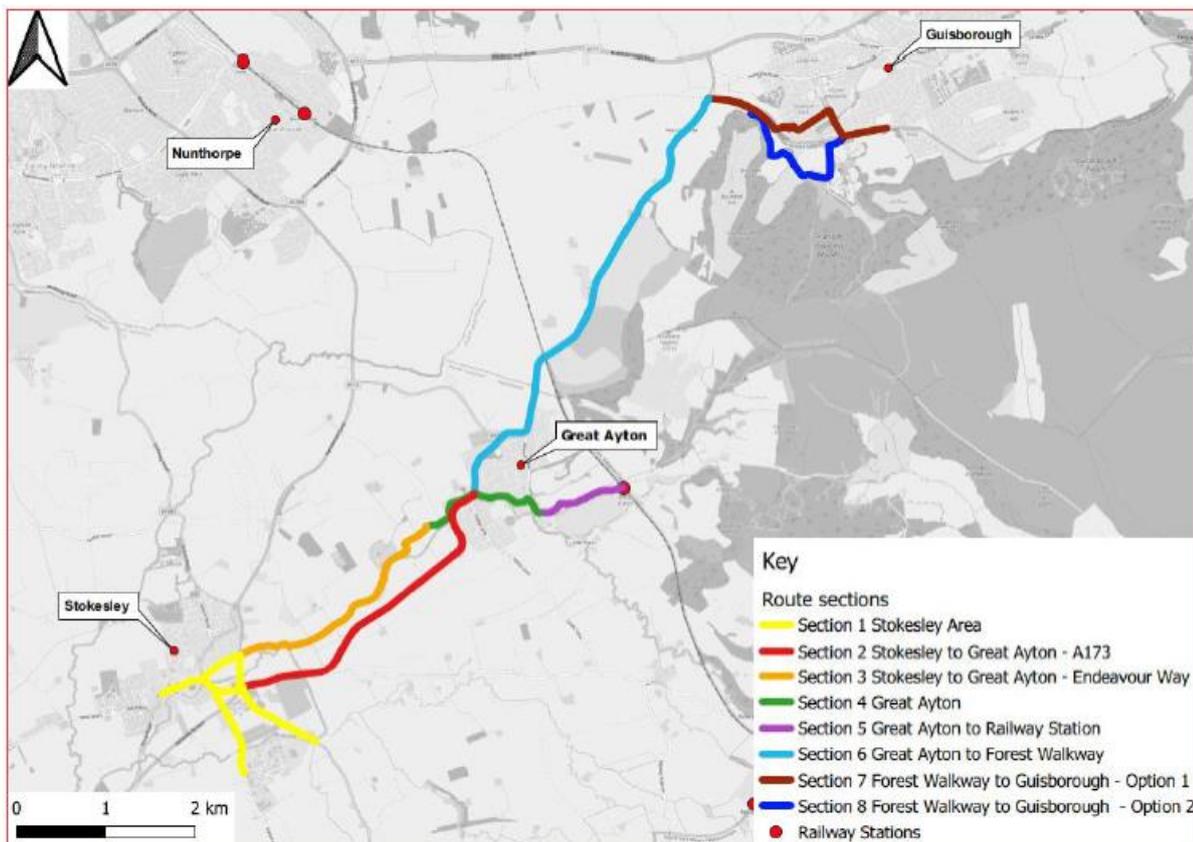


## Stokesley, Great Ayton and Guisborough cycle route study – Update January 2022

Cycling requirements for Stokesley and surrounding villages has been the subject of community led investigation for over ten years, resulting in the identification of a potential cycle route linking Stokesley, Great Ayton and its railway station. Building on this work, North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC) commissioned WSP in January 2021, to undertake an independent feasibility study of the emerging routing options to help inform the identification of possible interventions and a preferred option. This included connections to the Nunthorpe to Guisborough Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) route, one of six priority cycling and walking corridors identified by Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to encourage more trips to be made on foot or by cycling.

Figure 1: Route extents



As part of the study, a comprehensive review of the local area profile was undertaken assessing local geography, demographics, existing travel patterns/ networks, origins and destinations, future development, traffic counts/collision data and forecasted growth in cycle trips. The data collected was analysed and used to support and inform the development of proposals.

Route condition audits were undertaken in Spring 2021 to establish the existing facility available to cyclists in the study area. The Department for Transport (DfT) Cycling Level of Service Tool (CLOs) was used to aid the audit process. The condition audits considered the existing network against the five core design principles, which represent the essential requirements to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot. These are Coherence, Directness, Safety, Comfort, and Attractiveness. The CLOs assessment of the existing network identified poor scores for many of the links considered, primarily due to the speed of traffic on shared carriageway space and no segregated cycle facilities.

To further support the identification of issues and inform the recommendations of the study, the Public and Active Transport - Stokesley and Villages group (PAT) coordinated a survey of local residents about cycling in the area. There were 318 participants and the responses received demonstrated support for improved cycling infrastructure in the area, particularly traffic free routes. Following the survey an interactive workshop was then held with key stakeholders at which the results of the condition audits and draft proposals were presented. The feedback received was used to revise the proposals, reflecting local insight on the main issues and opportunities for developing cycling infrastructure in the area.

Concept designs for the proposals were produced in accordance with the latest design guidance (LTN 1/20) and take into account the needs of cyclists and pedestrians, considering other user requirements such as wheelchair use, mobility scooters and prams/pushchairs. The proposals include segregated shared use tracks along the majority of the route so that cyclists do not have to mix with motor vehicular traffic. There are also changes to a number of major junctions proposed to improve pedestrian and cyclist facilities, as well as side road treatments to provide continuity of the footway and cycle tracks.

Preliminary scheme cost estimates have been developed for the entirety of the route (excluding land costs) and whilst these are significant, there are opportunities to phase delivery and bring forward sections of the route independently to increase funding likelihood. For example, the off road route between Stokesley and Great Ayton (Endeavour Way).

Focusing on the Endeavour Way, there are still a number of hurdles to overcome to make this route a reality. Notwithstanding high scheme costs and 'low' benefit-cost ratio (BCR), compensation to landowners would also need to be negotiated to enable the widening of the PROW footpath to 3 metres in width – increasing the overall cost of the scheme.

Forecast cycle trip growth is limited, even with a projected uplift due to current low baselines. The PAT group believe that anecdotally baseline cycle counts are higher and I have advised them to undertake cycle counts in the summer to confirm the baseline. A revised baseline can then be assessed against sensitivity tests included in the report, potentially increasing the scheme BCR. The latest census data, expected early 2023, may also support the view that current baselines are low.

At present, funding opportunities for a route such as the 'Endeavour Way' are limited. Future rounds of Active Travel Funding (ATF) is a potential option, but scheme cost and criteria alignment may prove to be an issue, alongside other competing schemes across the county.

NYCC will continue to assess future funding opportunities and now have a clearer picture of the type of infrastructure needed, indicative costs and a value for money assessment of all sections of the route between Stokesley, Great Ayton and Guisborough.

Alex Kay, Senior Transport Planning Officer, Highways and Engineering, NYCC