

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO EXTEND ST BEES HEAD HERITAGE COAST DEFINED AREA

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Allan Holliday

LEAD OFFICER: Chris Hoban

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of an assessment that has been produce which reviews the defined area of St Bees Head Heritage Coast and to request that the Council undertakes a public consultation to seek views on the recommendation in the study to extend St Bees Head Heritage Coast defined areas in a northwards direction.

Following the outcome of the public consultation the Council, as the relevant Maritime Local Authority, can decide whether to extend the defined area of the St Bees Head Heritage Coast.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members consider the proposal to extend the St Bees Head Heritage Coast Defined Area. Also, that Members agree that the proposal to extend the St Bees Head Heritage Coast be presented at Full Council in December with a recommendation that the Council undertakes a six-week public consultation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Over the past few years the Council has been working with the National Trust and Natural England to explore the options to extend the St Bees Heritage Coast.
- 1.2 St Bees Head is the only Heritage Coast between Wales and Scotland, and the only area of high sea cliffs in the north-west. A Heritage Coast is defined by agreement between the relevant maritime local authorities (Copeland Borough Council) and Natural England. A briefing note was prepared by Natural England in 2015 to explain the definition and purpose of a Heritage Coast. This note can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role>
- 1.3 In 2016 Land Use Consultants (LUC) were appointed by the National Trust to assess the land to the north of the existing St Bees Head Heritage Coast defined area to determine whether any of this land may have the characteristics that would merit its inclusion within the St Bees Head Heritage Coast. this work was completed in the form

of the report *Review of the defined area of St Bees Heritage Coast and the case to extend it northwards*. This can be found at Appendix A to this report.

- 1.4 The review document evaluated and assessed ten terrestrial sub-areas; a plan (Figure 8) of which can be viewed on page 19 of the LUC document. Appendix 2 of the document provides recommendations as to whether each of the sub- area's should be included as part of the Heritage Coast. Two of the sub-areas (5 and 10) are thought to meet many but not all of the relevant Heritage Coast criteria therefore recommendations also cover a proposed Gateway area and key Gateway points.
- 1.5 A plan showing the proposed extension is attached (**Appendix B**)
- 1.6 In light of recommendation to change the boundary of the Heritage Coast, a proposal has also been made to a change of name to something like 'St Bees and Whitehaven Heritage Coast' to better reflect the extended area.
- 1.7 In order to make changes to the defined area of a Heritage Coast the Council should consult with the public and stakeholders.

2.0 BENEFITS OF HERITAGE COAST DEFINED AREAS

- 2.1 Benefits of Heritage Coast definition bring recognition of the quality of the coastal area, and in so doing, generate better opportunities for grant funding and tourism.
- 2.2 Heritage Coast definition better enables maintenance and improvements to the health of inshore waters and their beaches through appropriate environmental management measures.
- 2.3 Heritage Coasts are protected through the planning system. National Policy determines that Local Authorities should 'maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes.' This can also ensure that development is of a higher quality where it does take place.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Extension of the Heritage Coast would provide further protection, management and enhancement to the Borough's coast line and beaches and encourage additional tourism opportunities and grant funding along the 'Colourful Coast' area of Whitehaven.
- 3.2 The detail and recommendations for the proposed extension to the Heritage Coast will be discussed at the meeting. It is then requested that Members agree to a period of public consultation.

- 3.3 The findings of the public consultation will be presented to LDF Working Party and then Full Council in Spring 2019 with recommendations for any extension to the defined area.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Review of the defined area of St Bees Heritage Coast and the Case to Extend Northwards

Appendix B Plan demonstrating the proposed extension