

1 Executive Summary

The wider Destination Tweed Project is led by Tweed Forum and developed in collaboration with multiple partners. Scottish Borders Council (SBC) are leading on delivering the River Tweed Trail element which is looking to create an attractive and accessible route along the length of the River Tweed, from source to sea, for walkers and cyclists of all ages and abilities. The route, largely off-road, will allow both tourists and locals to explore and enjoy the wider area as well as the heritage of the River Tweed.

This report has considered the section between Fotheringham Bridge and Gytes Park.

Initial route options were developed using information gathered including OS mapping, topographical survey data and historical studies. The routes were assessed against the scoring methodology set out in LTN 1/20, the site constraints encountered and public consultation feedback.

The north route consists of existing paved sections and unpaved grass sections adjacent to the river edge. The majority of the route will consist of new path construction and widening of the existing path at grade resulting in minimal earthworks. The most significant challenge with the northern route is the section adjacent to Hay Lodge Hospital referred to as 'the hump' however there have been multiple detailed studies on this constraint and there are considered to be viable solutions to navigate this. There will also be a requirement to replace the existing footbridge over Eddleston Water and this would also present an opportunity to level and replace the existing steps adjacent to Greenside with an accessible ramp.

The south route has an existing paved path constructed upon an embankment that would require extensive earthworks and tree clearance to widen. An alternative option to divert cyclists through the woodland north of South Parks as highlighted in previous studies would need careful consideration to provide a safe link. There are sections of the path (e.g. the Cauld) that would be too narrow with limited options to widen the path due to private land boundaries and the proximity to the river edge. A number of these constraints are unlikely to have a practical engineering solution that will be achievable resulting in departures from standard for extended lengths. It is therefore considered that the route would be less coherent and provide a lower level of service.

The north route scored higher on the LTN1/20 assessment, was the most popular route at public consultation and was shown to be comparable in cost to the south route.

Therefore, considering the above it is recommended that the North Route is taken forward for further consideration.

The section between Priorsford Bridge and Gytes Park is shared between both routes and therefore it is recommended that this section is constructed initially. This would provide a direct off-carriageway link with Peebles town centre (Tweed Green) and the Tweed Valley Railway Path. This section will be constructed under permitted development but key project stakeholders and Council officers will be consulted on the proposals prior to implementation.