

# Rural Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan



# Foreword

Foreword from the *North York Moors National Park Authority Chief Executive Officer, Tom Hind*

The development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for the North York Moors, is a vital step towards enabling more people to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park sustainably, delivering on our ambitions to lift the nation's health and wellbeing and contribution to reducing carbon emissions. By shaping a more accessible, active, and low-impact way for people to experience the National Park—whether they live here, work here, or are visiting—we are helping to conserve what makes this landscape special while opening it up for more people to enjoy.

We are deeply grateful to Active Travel England whose funding has enabled us—and all England's National Parks—to begin shaping ambitious, place-based active travel strategies. Their investment recognises the importance of ensuring even our most rural and remote areas can benefit from high-quality cycling and walking networks.

Thank you to all those who have contributed so far. We look forward to continuing this work — towards a greener, healthier and more accessible North York Moors National Park.

*Tom Hind*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



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# INTRODUCTION

What is a LCWIP and why do we need one?

# INTRODUCTION

The North York Moors National Park (NYMNP) encompasses a stunning rural expanse of heather moorland, ancient woodland, hills with steep valleys, and coastline bordering the North Sea.

In 2024, Active Travel England announced £1m for National Parks to develop their own Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP).

LCWIPs offer a strategic way to identify cycling and walking improvements for an area, enabling a long-term approach to developing networks and routes. LCWIPs are instrumental in leveraging funding from national and local streams.

North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA) wants to increase the prominence of the National Park as a premier cycling destination, and to transform the ways people move to and around NYMNP by promoting active travel. It seeks to invite tourism in a way that supports the ecology of the National Park and surrounding areas.

## LCWIP Objectives

- Develop a long-term active travel network plan which, when implemented, will allow easier access to the national park for visitors and residents by active modes;
- Produce a prioritised list of active travel corridors, which can be used to pursue future funding opportunities, considering the dual function of routes into and within the park for both everyday journeys and recreation; and
- Propose route alignments and high-level improvement opportunities for active travel access into the park via the gateway towns of Guisborough, Scarborough, Whitby, and Thirsk.



Photo: Dependable Productions

# THE LCWIP PROCESS

Baseline Evidence

- Who uses the park?
- What active travel routes exist?

Network Planning

- Where do people want to travel to and from?
- Are there gaps in our existing walking and cycling network?

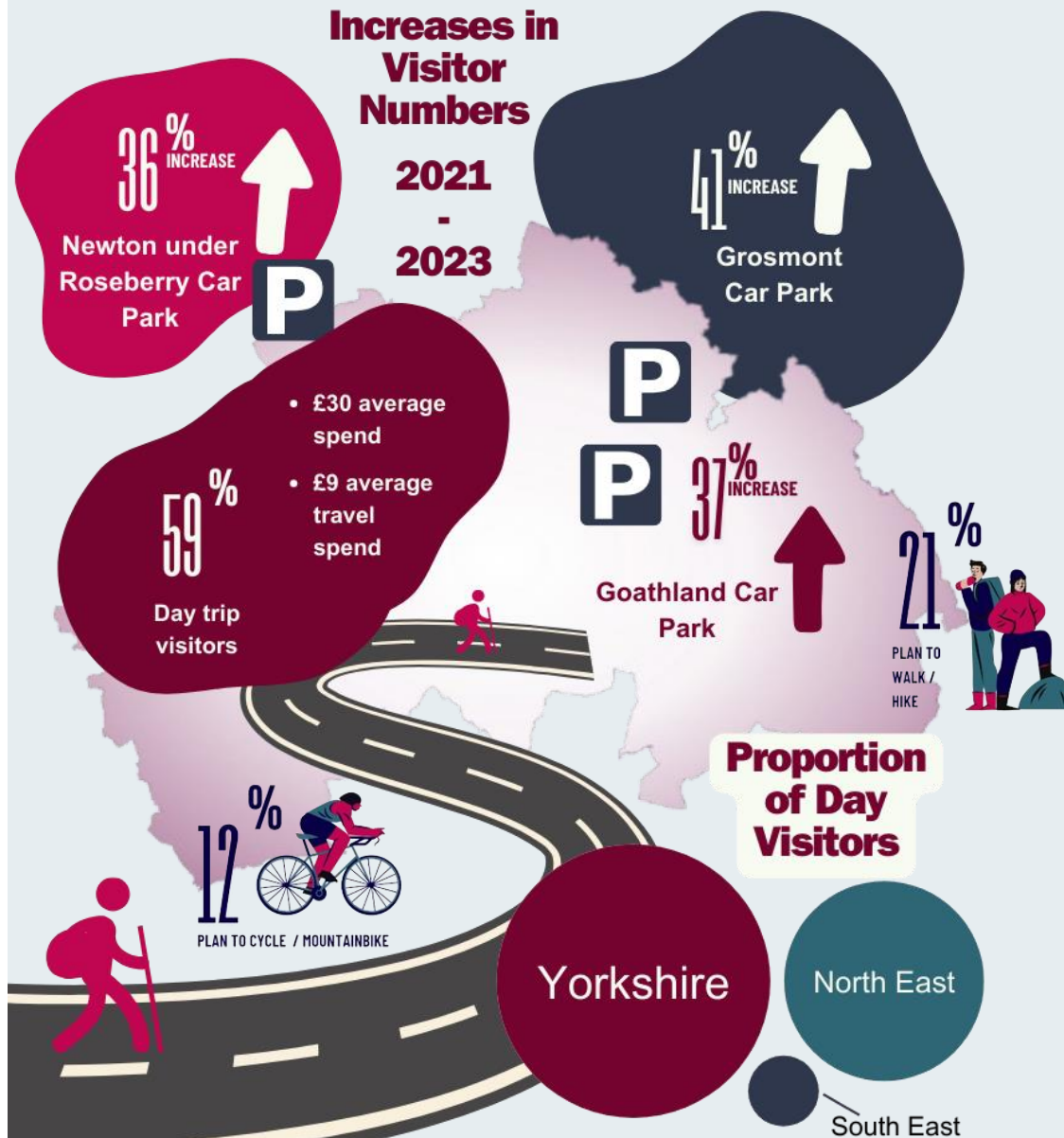
Route Prioritisation

- Where should we invest first to make the most impact?

Concept Designs

- What could the schemes look like?

# THE NATIONAL PARK IN NUMBERS



- 41% of visitors are on a short break or longer holiday
- 57% of visitors are female
- 2% of visitors are part of a minority
- 18% of visitors have a disability

In 2019, it was estimated that 13.28 million visitor days were spent within the National Park. This had an economic impact of £749 million which helped provide 11,300 full time equivalent employees.

By 2023, 14.5 million visitor days led to £1.05 billion in economic impact.

At the same time, car parks within the national park have seen unprecedented demand, with an average 17% increase in cars from 2021 to 2023. The number of cars and the rate of increase is unsustainable for the National Park and its surrounding towns.

# WHY ACTIVE TRAVEL?

Currently, 90% of visitors travel to the National Park by car, while 1% of visitors arrive by bike, and 3% on foot. A study identified that 21% of visitors planned to walk or hike more than 2 hours, and 12% of visitors planned to cycle or mountain bike. This highlights the importance of improving the active travel network to support healthy activity.

Active travel can play a crucial role in supporting public health and wellbeing. It is one of the simplest and most effective ways to enable adults and children to meet recommended levels of physical activity. A lack of physical activity is the cause of one in six deaths in the UK and costs the country an estimated £7.4bn per year, which include £0.9 billion to the NHS alone.

Creating a place that lifts the nation's health and wellbeing is one of the objectives included in the North York Moors National Park Management Plan 2022-2027. The plan outlines the aim to increase the awareness of, and access to, the National Park among underserved communities, particularly those in the surrounding area. It emphasises the importance of improving opportunities to travel sustainably in the National Park for visitors and residents. One of the ambitions is for the region to be carbon negative by 2040.

The plan builds on existing initiatives and routes that the NYMNP supports, such as Miles without Stiles and Tramper Hubs, both of which aim to provide a Park that is more accessible for a range of users.



This LCWIP is an opportunity to start the process of  
**CREATING REAL CHANGE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.**



Photo: Hewit & Walker

# CURRENT CONDITIONS

Who lives in and visits the National Park?

What is active travel like in the National Park?

# KEY DESTINATIONS

The park is a mostly rural, and sparsely populated expanse of moorland, which attracts day and overnight visitors for various outdoor activities, as well as to visit the small villages and settlements.

The park straddles the boundary between Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and North Yorkshire Council. The councils are responsible for the roads in each of their areas within the National Park. Popular settlements for tourists include Robin Hood's Bay and Helmsley. Key settlements on the edge act as gateways to the park including Whitby, Pickering, and Guisborough.

Popular destinations within the park include natural landscapes, historical sites, villages and towns, coastal experiences and outdoor activities. Also, there is a range of historical and cultural activities regularly taking place in the park such as monthly farmers' market and food and beer festivals.



Some of the most popular destinations include:

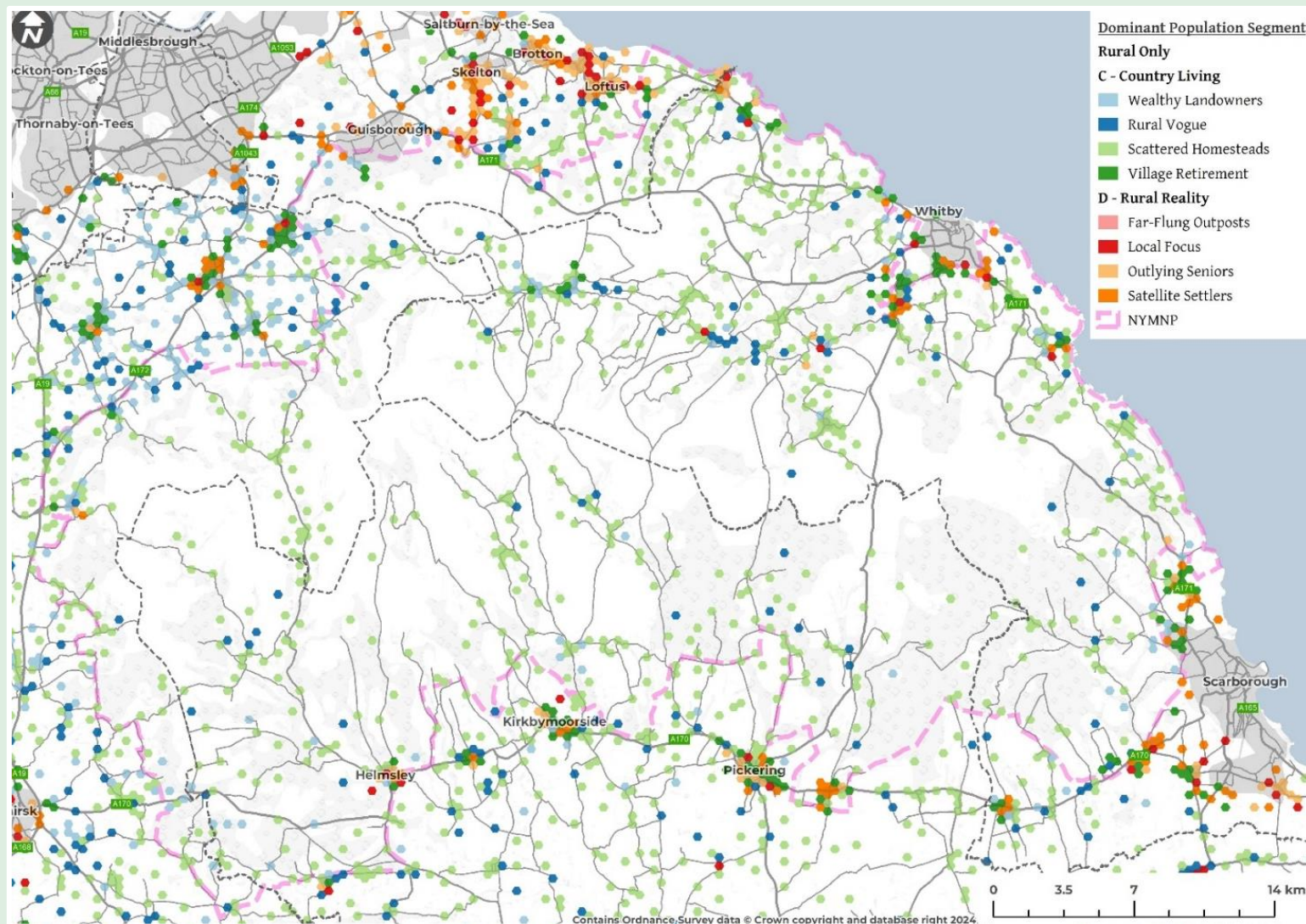
- **Dalby Forest Visitors Centre** is one of the most popular destinations, providing a gateway to the forest which attracts visitors for walking, running and cycling.
- Popular natural landscapes in the park include Sutton Bank and Roseberry Topping;
- The **North Yorkshire Moors Railway** is a heritage railway which line which runs north to south and connects into the Esk Valley line.
- National trails such as the **Cleveland Way** and the **Moor to Sea Cycle Network**.

# PERSONAS

We consulted Experian Mosaic data to on habits and lifestyles to create Personas of people living in and around the National Park. These lead to of residents and visitors.



Personas of residents and visitors help us think about real people and make sure we plan for everyone.

Personas give a sense of the experience of typical people who enjoy the National Park, and their concerns.





# RESIDENTS

Six personas were created that show typical lifestyle habits of people who live in the National Park. The personas focus on the ways people who live in the National Park move around it, and what they need in order to walk, wheel and cycle more. These help us understand what routes and improvements residents will value. Here are two example residents in different parts of the National Park.

ALAN	Description	Mobility	PRIYA	Description	Mobility
 <p><b>Age:</b> 56-65</p> <p><b>Purchasing power:</b> Low</p> <p><b>Tech/internet familiarity:</b> Low</p> <p><b>LCWIP focus:</b> Utility walker + Leisure walker</p>	<p>Alan is an older working-age man on a modest wage, living in historic terraced home which he owns with his wife. Alan is a farming contractor, and he doesn't spend much time online outside of work apart from chatting with family on Facebook.</p> <p>Alan lives in cottage in Egton within the National Park. The village has a convenience store, a pub, a B&amp;B and a bus stop.</p> <p>He values the small community and the natural beauty he lives in, but access to services and facilities are a concern to him, especially as he gets older.</p>	<p>Alan often walks in the village, but he's forced to have a car to travel further afield as public transport in the village is limited, although he uses the bus where possible.</p> <p>When Alan retires, he would like to get rid of his car to reduce expenditure, but he is not confident that he can solely rely on public transport.</p>	 <p><b>Age:</b> 36-45</p> <p><b>Purchasing power:</b> High</p> <p><b>Tech/internet familiarity:</b> Medium</p> <p><b>LCWIP focus:</b> Leisure walker + Leisure cyclist (hybrid pedal bike)</p>	<p>Priya owns a large detached house with her partner and young child in Ingleby Greenhow, a small village on the north west boundary of the national park and next to Battersby Train Station.</p> <p>Priya and her partner both work managerial jobs in Middlesbrough and have a high household income. Priya's partner is a keen leisure cyclist and often goes on day tours around the National Park.</p> <p>Their daughter currently goes to the village primary school but will have to travel further when she goes to secondary school next September.</p>	<p>Priya and her partner own two cars they use for most journeys.</p> <p>Battersby Train Station is nearby and would get them to work quickly, but the one morning service is after they start work, so they are forced to commute by car.</p> <p>Priya's partner is a keen leisure cyclist and often goes on day tours around the national park.</p>

# VISITORS

Six personas were created, showing how different people like to use the National Park as visitors, and what issues they face when they want to walk, wheel, and cycle when they visit. Here are two examples of Personas of visitors to the National Park.

Name	Description	Mobility	Name	Description	Mobility
<p><b>HOWARD, JESS &amp; ANGELA</b></p>  <p><b>Age:</b> Parents with children aged 5-15</p> <p><b>Length of stay:</b> Day trip, no overnight stay</p> <p><b>LCWIP focus:</b> Leisure cyclists (e-bikes or pedal bikes)</p>	<p>Howard and Jess are the parents of Angela, aged 9, travelling into the National Park to go on walks or cycle rides on trails in nature. They are typically travelling from nearby to car parks at trailheads, spending the day in that location, before travelling home again.</p> <p>These groups typically don't spend much money due to their short trip, but may buy lunch if there's a location available, and typically rent their bike if they are cycling.</p>	<p>Howard and Jess drive from their home some distance away from the National Park, park at trailheads, and remain there until they leave the National Park again.</p> <p>They have an EV that they need to charge during the day.</p> <p>They would prefer to hire bikes on site rather than bring their non-mountain bikes on the trail.</p>	<p><b>DENISE &amp; SHANE</b></p>  <p><b>Age:</b> 20-35</p> <p><b>Length of stay:</b> Weekend</p> <p><b>Accommodation:</b> Camping on site at event</p> <p><b>LCWIP focus:</b> Utility walkers</p>	<p>Denise and Shane are friends in the 20s and 30s who are visiting the national park for a music and crafts festival. They're camping on the site of the festival but will need to leave the site to get supplies.</p> <p>The event has a packed schedule so they're keen to spend as little time as possible travelling/cooking etc.</p>	<p>They took a train and a shuttle bus to the festival site. They must take public transport or get a lift for when they need to leave the site.</p> <p>They have previously talked about bringing bikes to festivals but are worried they'll get stolen/damaged.</p> <p>A 'pop up' mobility hub with cycles to hire would be helpful.</p>



# ACTIVE TRAVEL

NYMNPA manages and maintains around 2,200km (1,400 miles) of public rights of way, with open access for walkers extending across the open moorland, as well as Forestry England woodland.

Key long-distance walking routes within the park include the Cleveland Way covering the entire North Yorkshire coastline, Guisborough, Northallerton and Helmsley. For example, Wainwright's Coast to Coast route runs through the park for 47 miles, from Ingleby Cross to Robin Hood's Bay.

Several long-distance cycle routes run through the park. Surfaced routes suitable for all cycles include the scenic North York Moors National Park Cycleway, which runs for 171 miles through the heart of the park, and NCN routes 63 (Kilburn to Swanby), 656 (Coswold to Hawnby) and 165 (Whitby to Great Ayton). All of these routes contain very challenging sections of gradient, making them primarily suited for leisure trips by experienced cyclists, rather than for travel place-to-place. The Cinder Track (part of NCN1) is a popular 21-mile route linking Scarborough to Whitby. This flagship route is primarily traffic-free and avoids steep gradients.

Moor to Sea Cycle Network and Explorer Routes from Kirkbymoorside, Scarborough, Whitby, and North Riding Forest Park are all suitable for off-road cycling

## CYCLE HIRE

There is cycle hire available at several tourist destinations within the National Park, including Dalby Forest and Sutton Bank, and at larger settlements on the park borders, including Scarborough, Whitby, Guisborough, Pickering and Helmsley.

## TRAMPER NETWORK

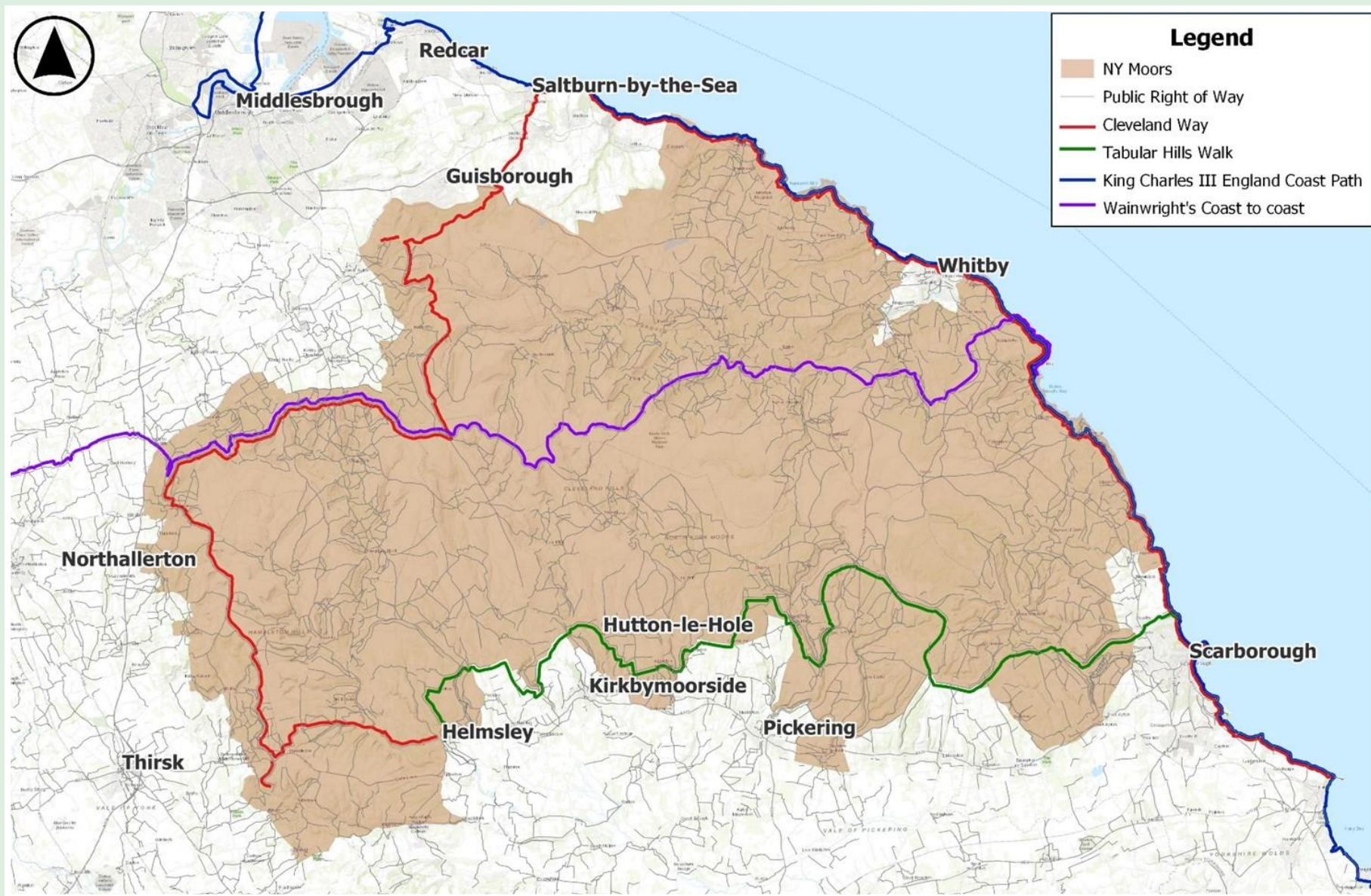
North York Moors Mobility is a scheme which offers the hire of Trampers (electric all-terrain mobility scooters) from seven destinations within the park, including Dalby Forest, Danby Lodge and Sutton Bank, allowing visitors with limited or poor mobility who have difficulty walking to cover rough ground and gradients of up to 25%.

### WHO CYCLES?

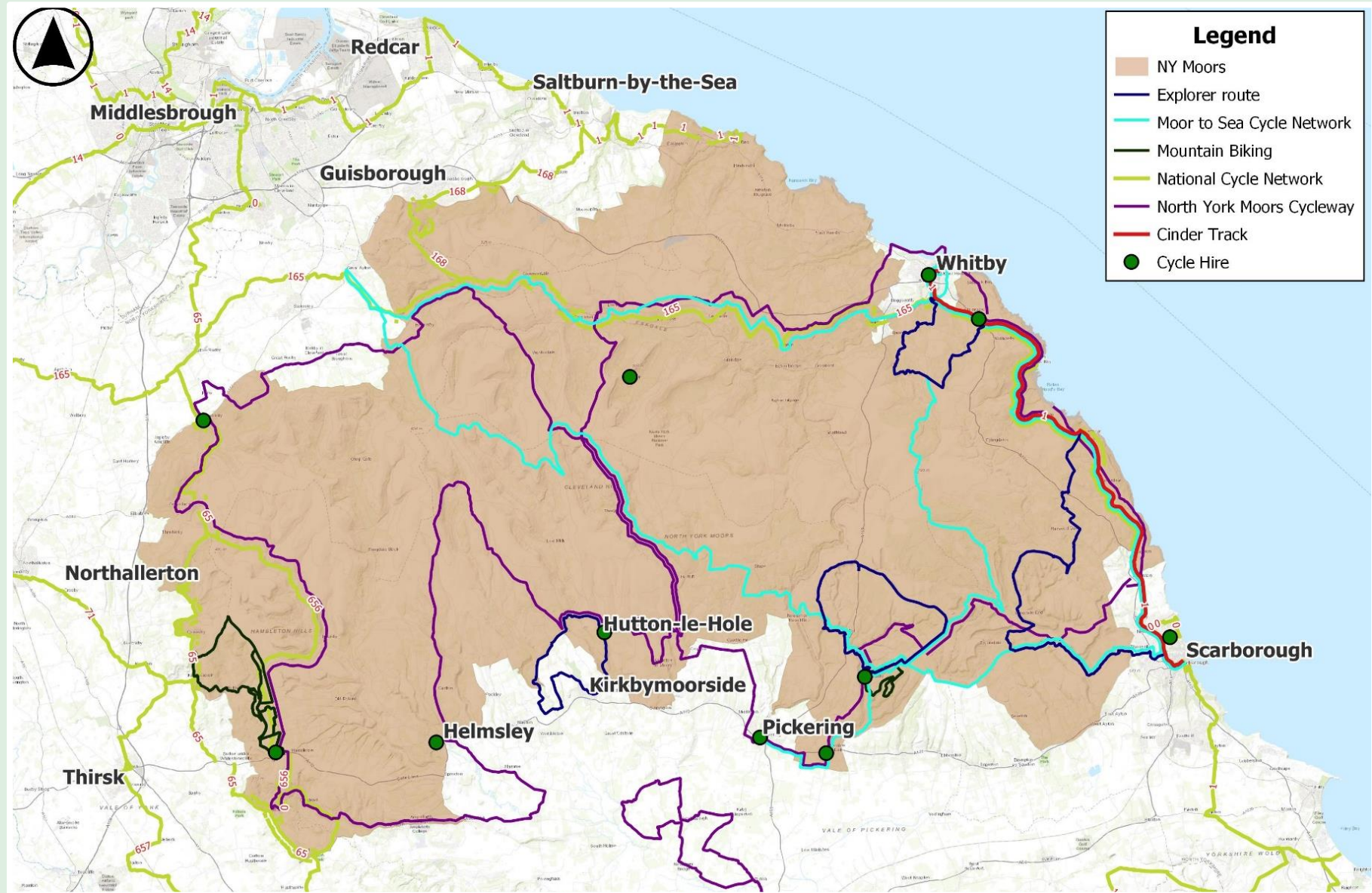
Data shows that the type of people most likely to cycle in the National Park are confident sport and leisure cyclists, aged between 35 to 54. However e-cycle usage has grown in recent years creating opportunities for a wider range of people to cycle on challenging gradients.



# EXISTING WALKING ROUTES



# EXISTING CYCLE ROUTES



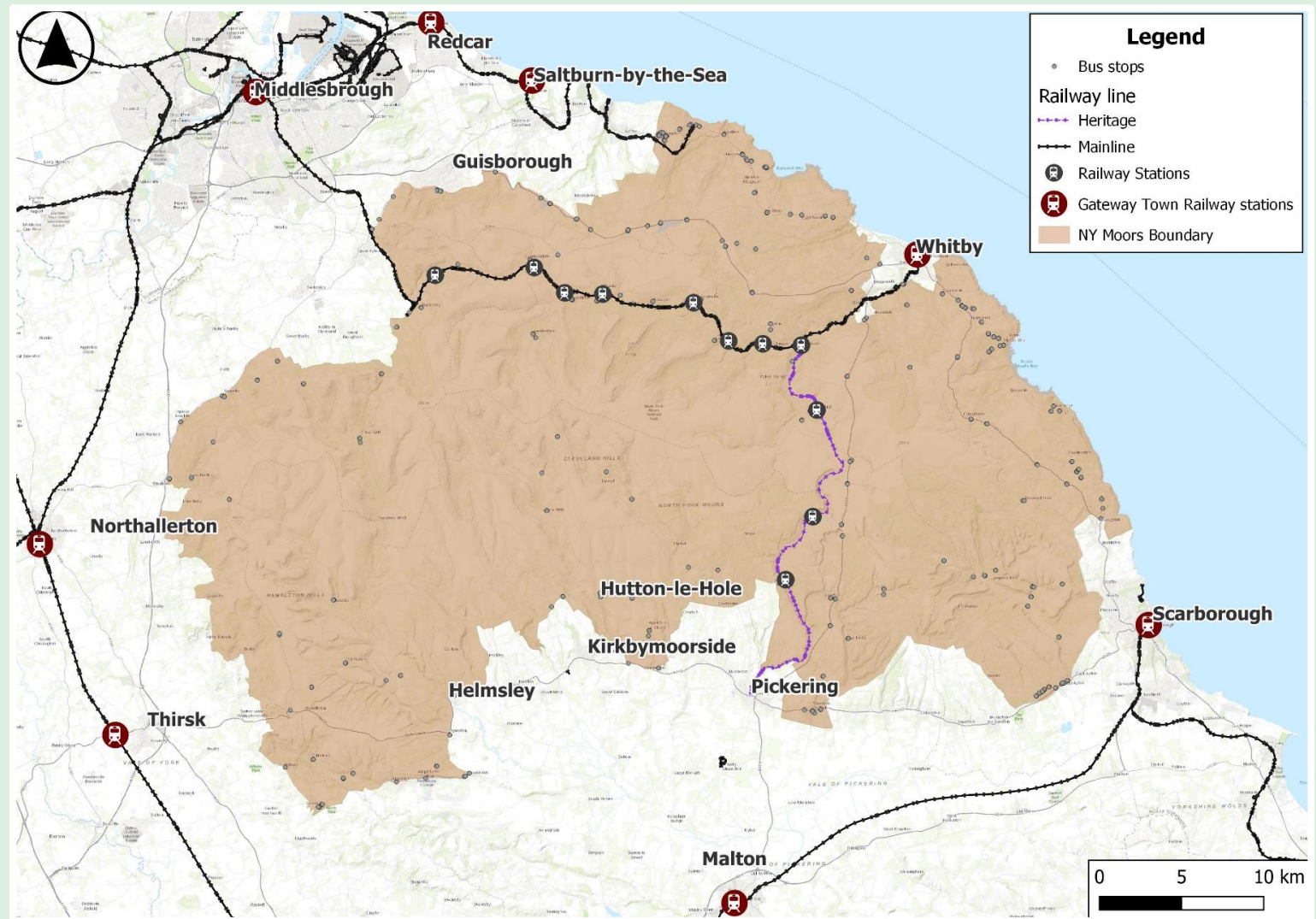
# PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The National Park can be reached by train and bus.

The Esk Valley Railway Line has five daily services running from Middlesbrough to Whitby. Particularly busy stations include Great Ayton, Glaisdale, Egton and Grosmont. Most services offer spaces to accommodate cycles and mobility aids.

The North Yorkshire Moors Heritage Railway runs several times a day between Whitby and Pickering. This also has space for cycles and smaller mobility scooters.

There are also several buses to and through the National Park, as well as the Moorsbus community bus which runs on weekends during summer months.



# A FUTURE ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK

What are the key routes that will allow more people to walk, wheel and cycle in the National Park?

# OUR ASPIRATIONAL NETWORK

Through research and engagement with stakeholders, we developed an aspirational active travel network which would serve the whole National Park.

The network is made up of corridors which look at:

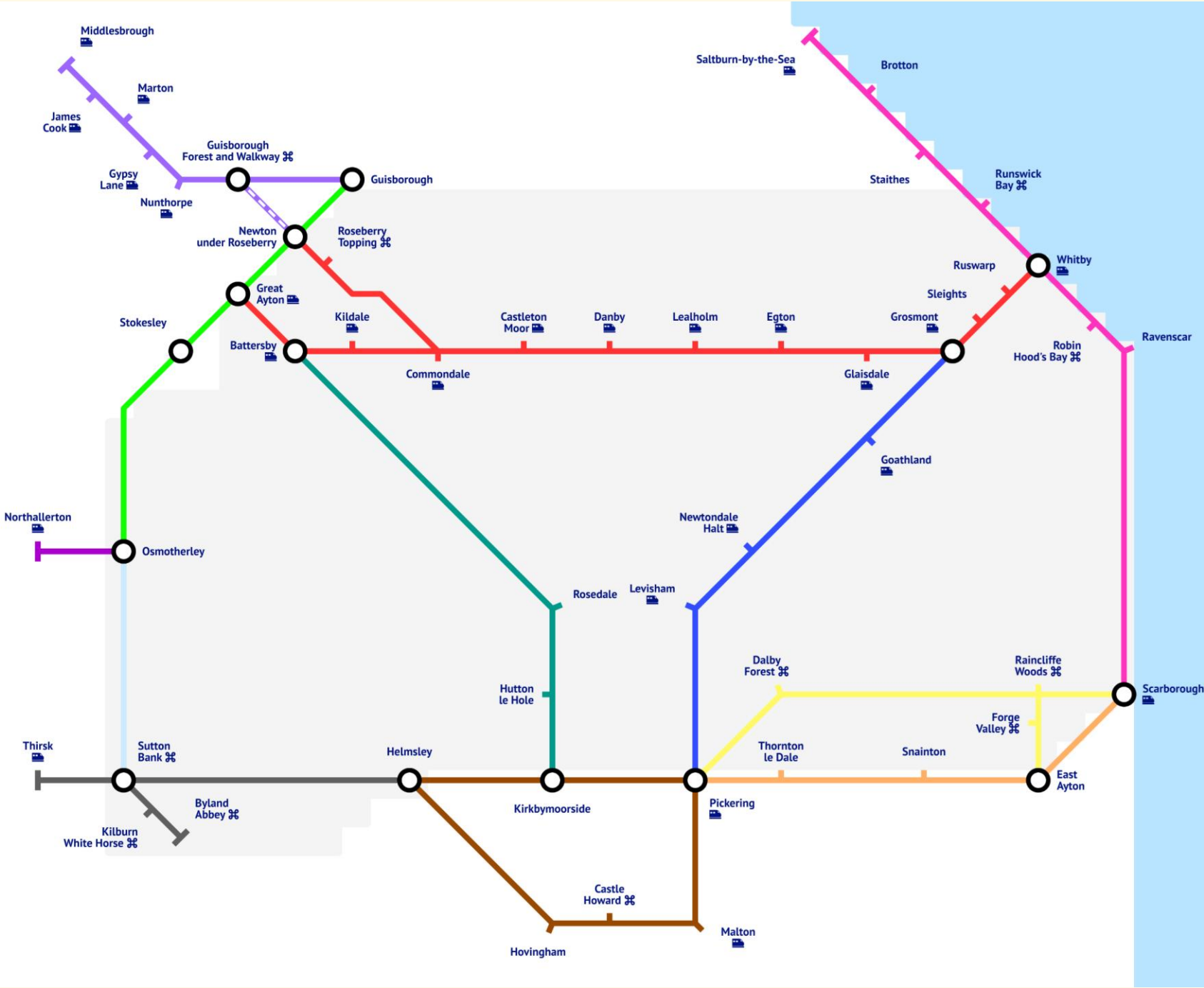
- Where people live or where they arrive at the National Park such as at railway stations or from gateway towns on the edge of the National Park.
- How they travel to and through the National Park, such as by bus train, or car.
- What they want to do when they get here, such as going on a long walk, driving to a scenic spot, or visiting one of the National Park Centres.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Key stakeholders provided valuable local knowledge and helped to identify important themes that any future network should take into account:

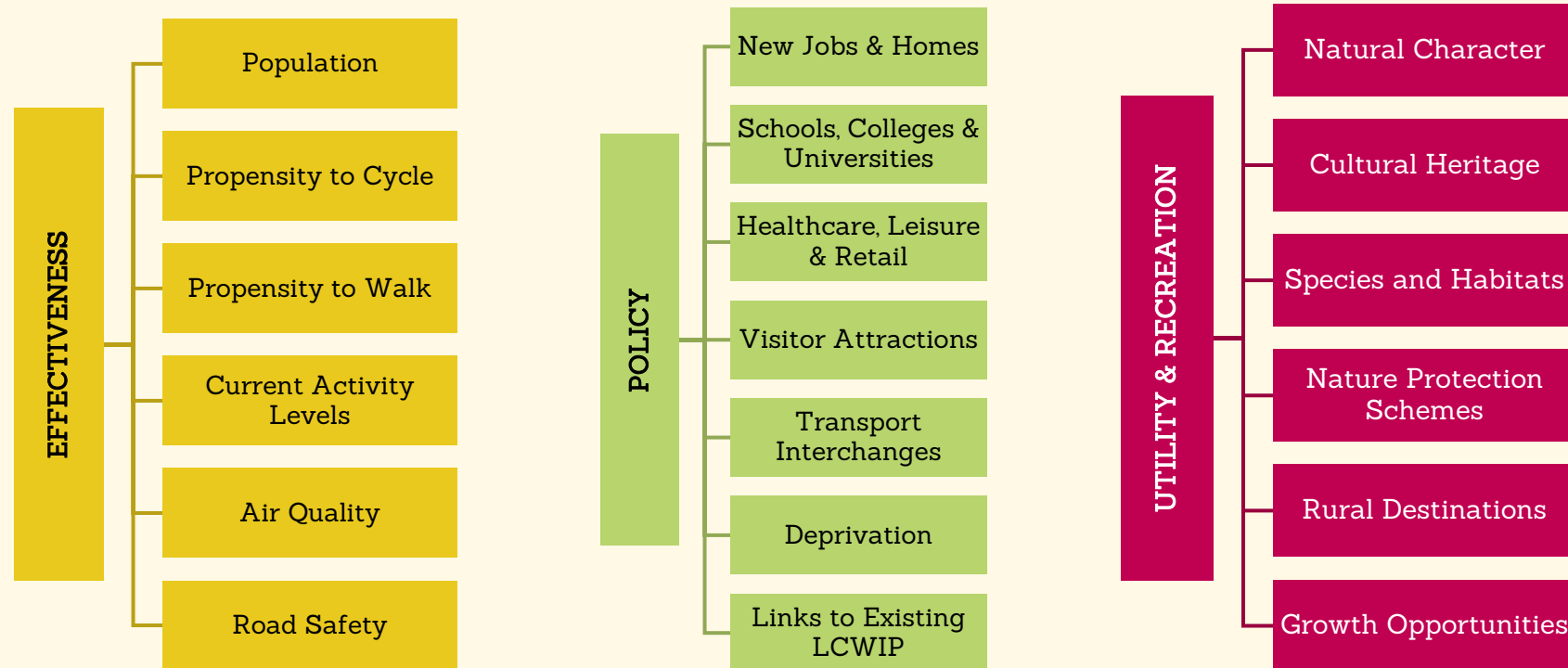
- The importance of accessibility for as many users as possible such as wheelchair users, families with young children, and horse riders.
- Consider the impact on underserved communities, for example, there may be a village with no bus service but there is a local shop within a reasonable cycle distance. A new cycle network could make it easier to go the shops without relying on a car.
- Creating opportunities for multi-modal journeys. This means a journeys where it is easy to get a bus or train to a location then continue to your destination on foot or by cycle.





# TOP PRIORITY CORRIDORS

All the corridors were scored against three groups of criteria: effectiveness, policy and rural utility and recreation.



By thinking about opportunities to improve access to the park by active travel and the practicalities of building high quality routes, four corridors were identified as top priority:

- **Teesside to Guisborough and Roseberry Topping:** Close to urban areas so opportunities for utility journeys by walking, wheeling and cycling.
- **Thirsk to Helmsley:** Sutton Bank makes this valuable for tourism access by cycling.
- **Esk Valley:** Improvements to existing NCN would provide connections to railway stations along the Esk Valley Line. Opportunity for a long-distance route and localised community improvements.
- **Scarborough to Pickering:** Dalby Forest provides opportunities for an attractive cycling recreational route.




# IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

What could new active travel routes look like?

# TYPES OF ROUTES

Once we had our top priority corridors, the next step was assessing the best route to get from A to B. Routes were scored on existing conditions, opportunities or improvement and how well they fit with the National Park's goals.

We know that the rural nature of the National Park is what makes it so special and so any new routes need to be sensitive to the surrounding area, therefore we considered three types of routes which are most appropriate for a rural setting.

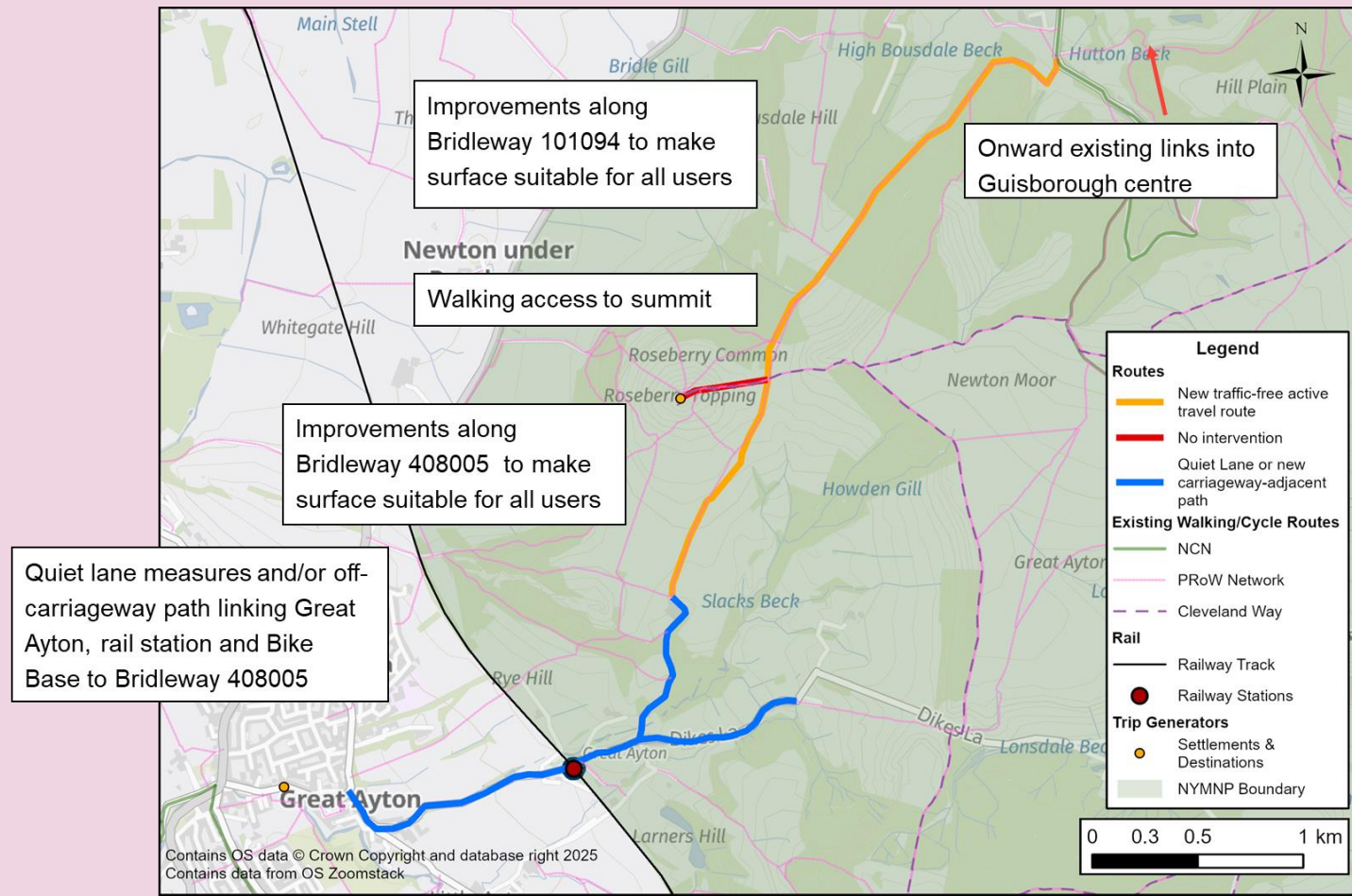
TYPE	WHERE?	COST	DESCRIPTION	
Quiet Lane	Country roads with low existing traffic levels	£ (~£20/m)	A cheap, easy to implement, low impact solution on roads that do not currently see much traffic. Speed limits should be reduced, ideally to 20mph.	
Shared use path	Country roads where a quiet way is not suitable	££ (~£300/m)	A path designed for walking, wheeling, and cycling, separated from vehicles. These could be alongside roads or slightly set back. Landowner permission would be required if outside the highway boundary.	
Greenway	Existing unsurfaced bridleways and footpaths	££ (~£300/m)	A path designed for walking, wheeling, and cycling, separated from roads and vehicles. This might involve upgrading existing paths / Public Rights of Way or creating new routes. Landowner permission would be required.	

The maps on the following pages show a possible route for each priority corridor and what treatment each section might have. Note, these are early-stage concepts, so they need more in-depth design. They will be subject to what is possible to build, landowner discussions, and community feedback.

# GREAT AYTON to GUISBOROUGH, via ROSEBERRY TOPPING

**Route Length:** 6.7km  
**Cost estimate:** £3.2mil to £9.2mil  
**Public Transport:** Great Ayton train station, Arriva 28A, Moorsbus Route M4  
**Facilities:** Cycle hire (Bike Base: Dikes Lane, Guisborough)  
**Constraints:** Short sections of very steep gradient

**Reasons for Prioritisation:** High strategic priority  
 Links two major settlements to key visitor destination  
 Complements without duplicating existing studies in Teeside-Guisborough area  
 Potential for a highly attractive route



# THIRSK to HELMSLEY, via SUTTON BANK

**Route Length:** 27km

**Cost estimate:** £12.5mil to £37.2mil

**Public Transport:** Moorsbus Route M4

**Facilities:** National Park Centre (Sutton Bank), Trammer hire (Sutton Bank), Cycle hire (Sutton Bank, Helmsley); Nature hub, Art trail, and horse ties (Sutton Bank)

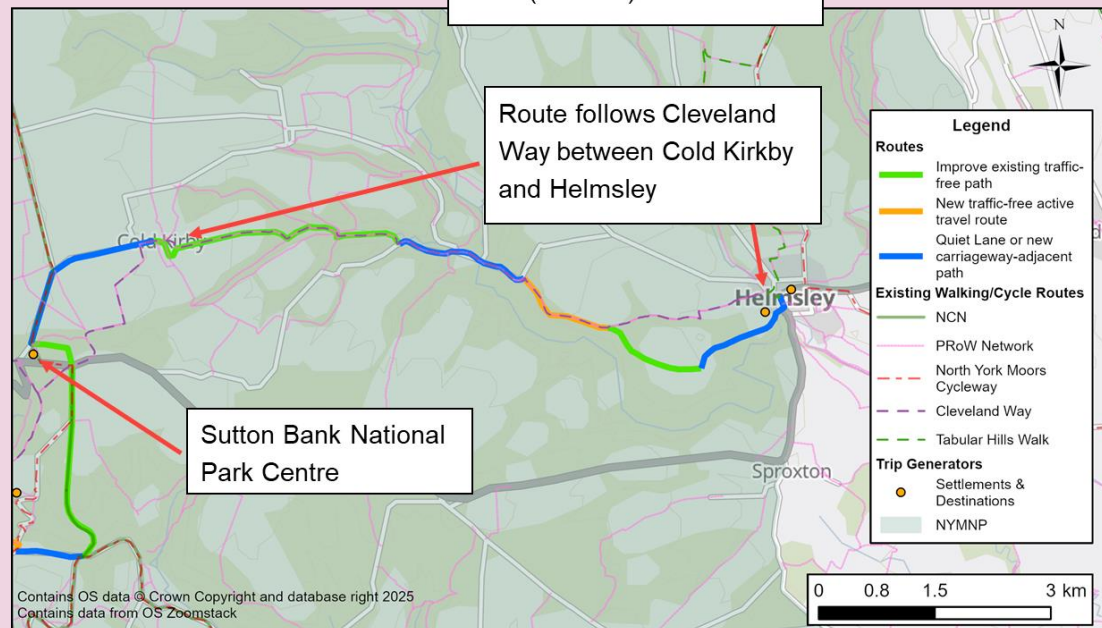
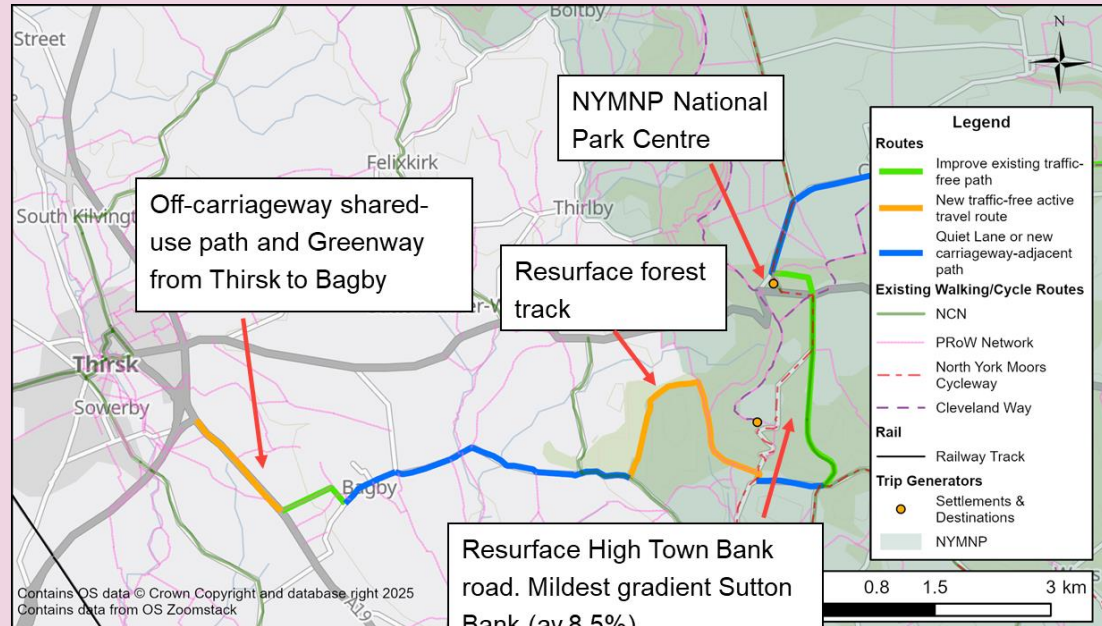
**Constraints:** Very steep gradients approaching Sutton Bank

**Reasons for Prioritisation:** High strategic priority

Links two major settlements to key visitor destination

Preferred to caravan route which bypasses Sutton Bank

Potential for a highly attractive route



# ESK VALLEY: GROSMONT NETWORK

**Route Length:** 10.2km

**Cost estimate:** £4.8mil to £14mil

**Public Transport:** Esk Valley Railway Line (Grosmont, Egton Bridge), Heritage line (Grosmont, Goathland)

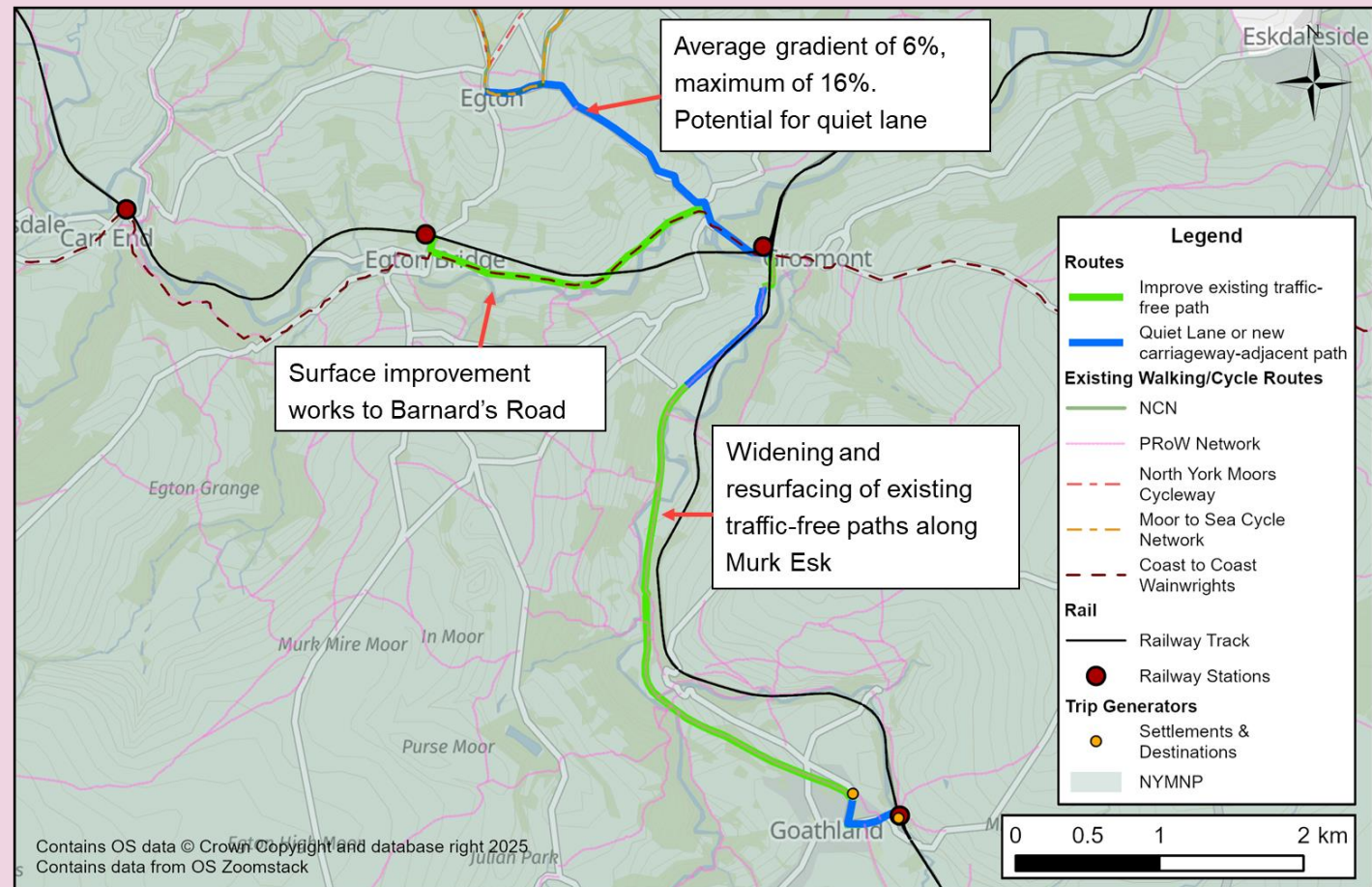
**Constraints:** High gradients between Grosmont and Egton village

**Reasons for Prioritisation:**

Targeted interventions around key rail stations deemed more feasible than improving entire Esk Valley.

Mini-network around Grosmont links key settlements to stations, promoting multi-modal travel

Grosmont to Goathland route has high potential for an attractive leisure route facilitated by rail journeys



# ESK VALLEY: GLAISDALE, LEALHOLM & DANBY

**Route Length:** 5.9km

**Cost estimate:** £400k to £8mil

**Public Transport:** Esk Valley Railway Line (Glaisdale, Lealholm, Danby);  
Moorsbus route M3 and M6 from Danby south and west

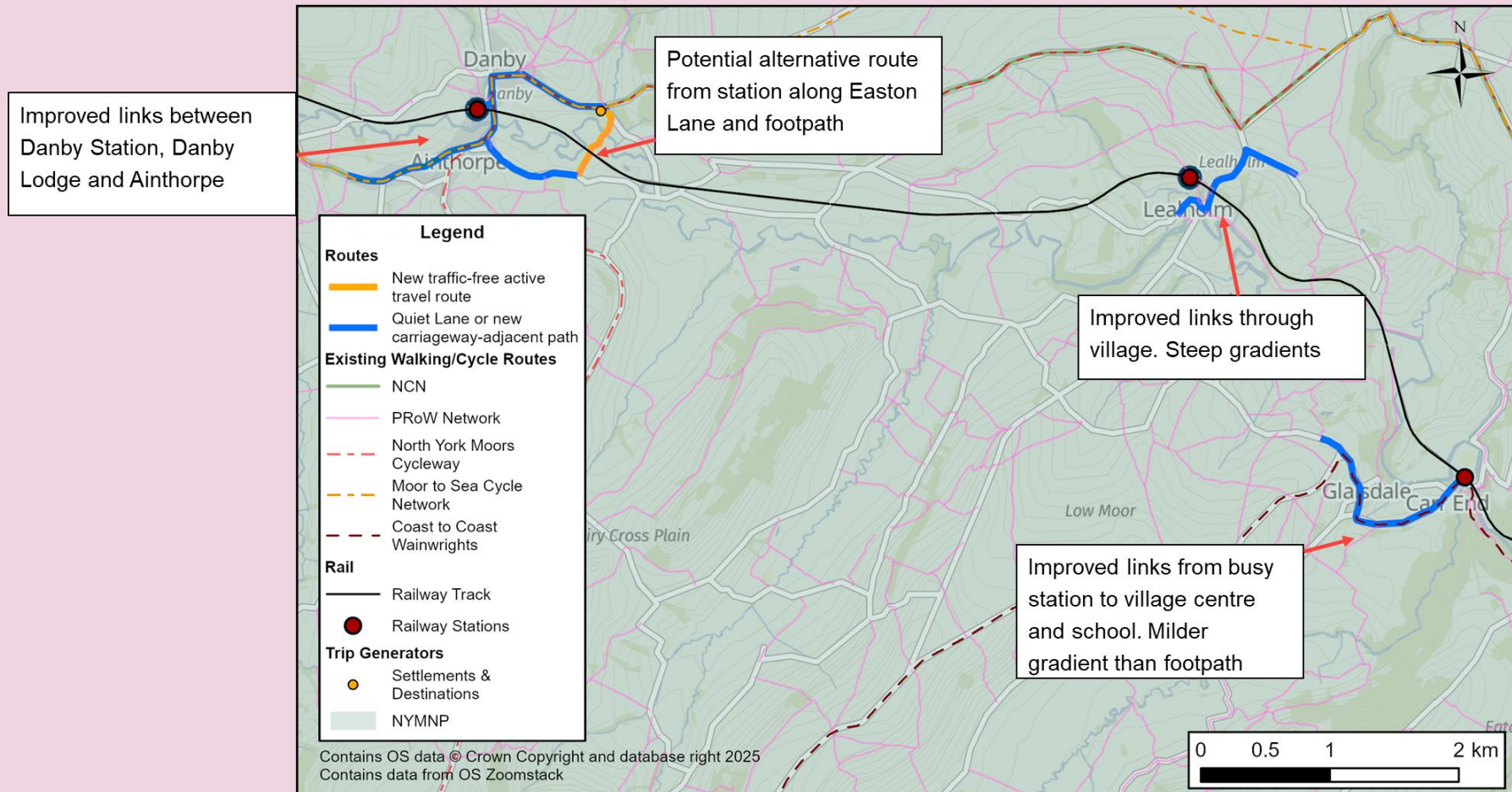
**Facilities:** Danby Lodge National Park Centre

**Constraints:** High gradients in all sections

**Reason for prioritisation:** Targeted interventions around key rail stations deemed more feasible than improving entire Esk Valley.

Links key settlements to stations, promoting multi-modal travel

Improvements at Danby highlighted as a key intervention in stakeholder consultation



# SCARBOROUGH to PICKERING, via DALBY FOREST

**Route Length:** 36km

**Cost estimate:** £16.9mil to £49.7mil

**Public Transport:** Pickering Rail Station (heritage line), Scarborough Rail Station, Bus Route 128

**Facilities:** Forestry England Visitor Centre (Dalby Forest), Trammer hire (Scarborough), Cycle hire (Pickering, Thornton-le-Dale, Dalby Forest, Scarborough)

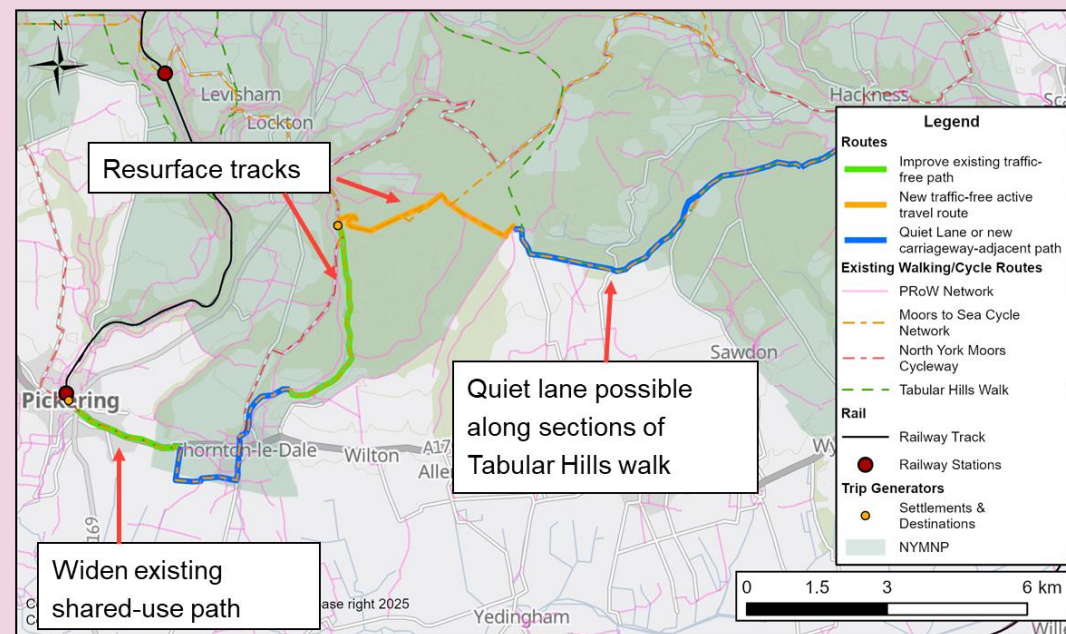
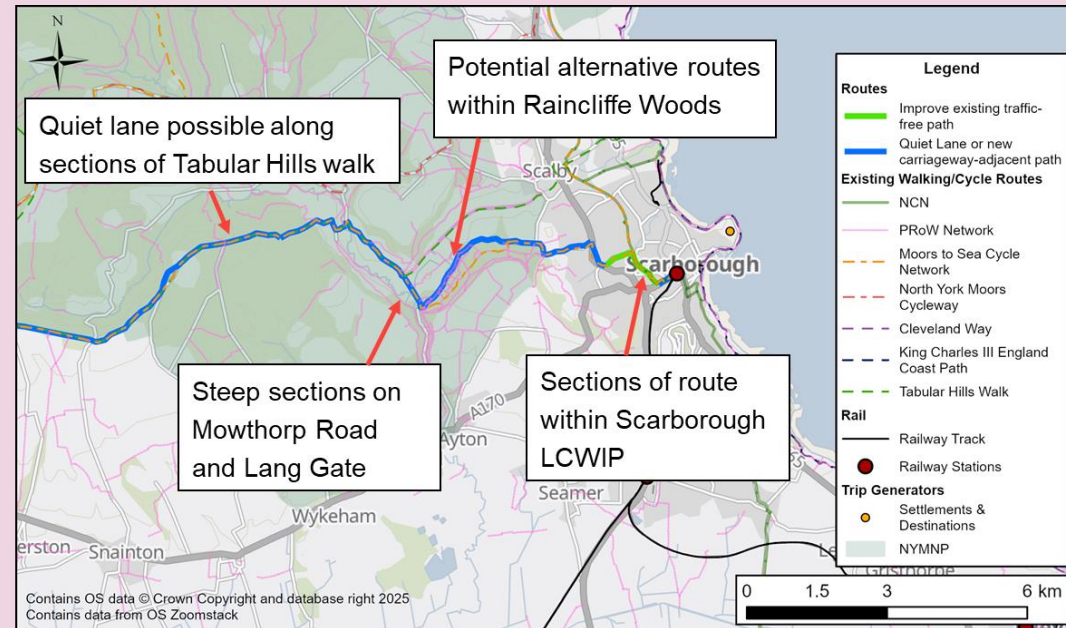
**Constraints:** Steep gradients

**Reasons for Prioritisation:** High strategic priority

Links two major settlements to key visitor destination

Preferred to route following A170

Potential for a highly attractive route



# PARK WIDE CONSIDERATIONS

As well as new routes, other park wide considerations can help make walking, wheeling and cycling easier for more people. Some of these could include:



## CROSSINGS

Safe and appropriate crossings are crucial for ensuring a consistent level of service, particularly on traffic-free routes. The type of crossing provision will depend on traffic volumes, speeds with reference to anticipated demand to cross the road.

## EQUESTRIAN

New paths can be designed to accommodate horse riders, such as adjacent bound or unbound paths.



## WAYMARKING

As well as standard signposting to mark routes, attractive totems or interpretation boards can add value to public spaces rather than providing additional 'street clutter' in more sensitive areas, such as the National Park.



## MOBILITY HUBS

A network of rural mobility hubs could help facilitate modal shift to multi-modal journeys. These could be focussed in existing transport hub locations, such as train stations, or visitors attractions and car parks.



## E-BIKE CHARGING

Due to the number of routes affected by significant gradients through the National Park and the increase in popularity of e-bikes amongst the general public, the National Park could benefit from an expansion of the current network of charging points.



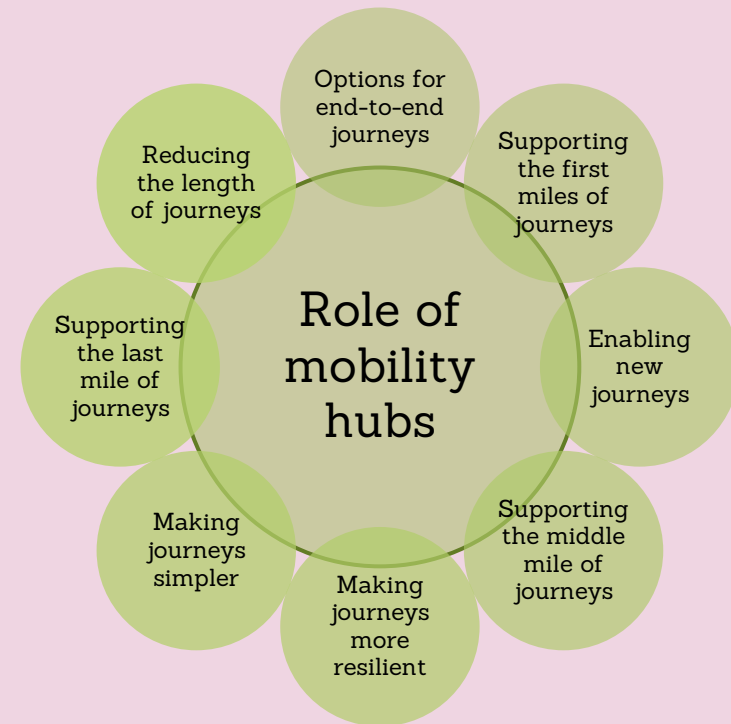
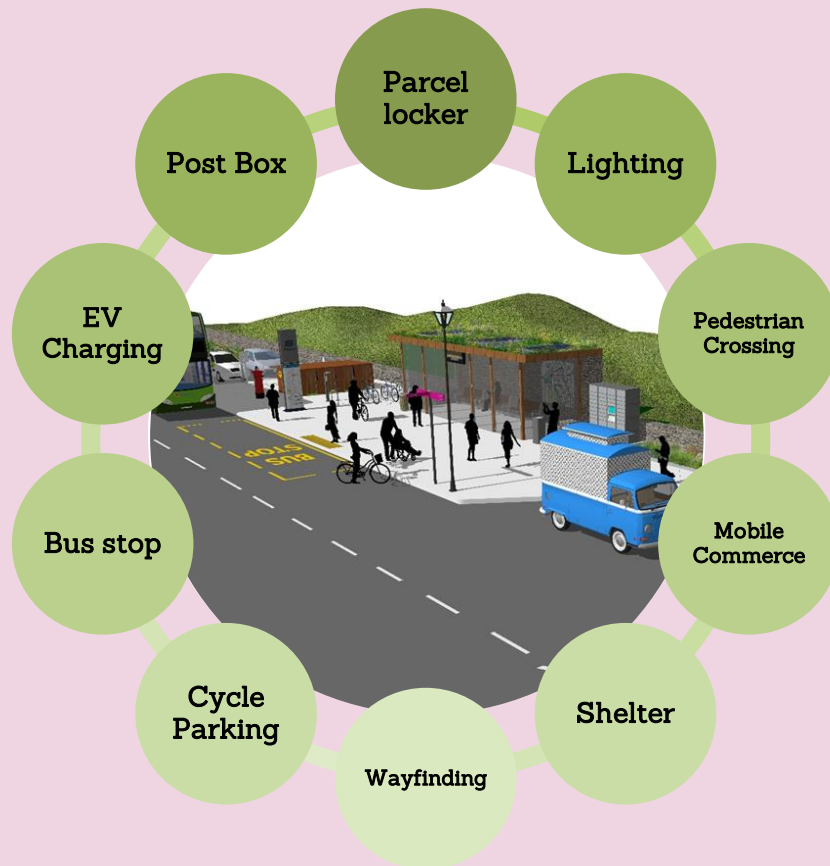
## SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION

In areas where routes will not be developed, active travel users may benefit from traffic speed reductions where they are required to share the road with vehicles.



# MOBILITY HUBS

As well as an aspirational network, active travel could be supported by mobility hubs in strategic locations. Mobility hubs are a key means for encouraging a range of sustainable modes of travel. Modular and scalable, the components that make up hubs can vary and should respond to the existing transport service and the aspirations of the National Park and needs of the community. Mobility hubs can have the flexibility to be scaled to suit changing conditions and demand.



Mobility hubs are typically interchanges between different types of transport such as getting the bus to a hub where you can then rent an e-bike to explore further. They can also include other useful community services such as parcel delivery lockers, tourist information, and small or mobile shops or cafes, such as a food van.

The next page shows examples of how mobility hubs can be applied at various locations throughout the National Park.

# MOBILITY HUBS (cont.)



## GATEWAY

- Sites on the outskirts of the National Park with existing public transport connections such as railway stations and Park & Ride/Park & Stride locations
- Access into the National Park
- **Example location:** Pickering Heritage Railway Station



## CORRIDOR

- High-frequency public transport routes, villages and small towns, railway stations
- Amenities for people travelling along the corridor, including waiting areas, toilets, refreshments, cycle storage
- **Example location:** Glaisdale Railway Station



## COMMUNITY

- Embedded in local communities
- Community cycle hire, car clubs and demand responsive bus services
- Community shop, hall or post office.
- **Example location:** Rosedale Abbey Community Primary School



## DESTINATION

- Major visitor destinations and attractions in the National Park
- EV charging, cycle hire and parking, rugged mobility scooter (Tramper) hire
- Visitor information, toilets, high quality public realm, Wi-Fi and phone charging, hot food/drink options
- **Example location:** Dalby Forest Visitor Centre



## ACTIVE MOBILITY

- Smaller locations where the public transport network intersects with key active travel trails.
- Facilitate activities such as hiking and mountain biking
- Waiting facilities, a water fountain, footwear cleaning, and public realm and active travel infrastructure upgrades
- **Example location:** Hole of Horcum car park



## POP-UP

- Temporary locations during peak visitor times and specific events (festivals, fairs etc.)
- Cycle hire, a demand responsive travel point, or temporary upgrades to a bus stop such as a covered waiting area.
- **Example location:** Staxonbury Music Festival

# NEXT STEPS

# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This LCWIP was funded through Active Travel England and is a long-term plan for an aspirational active travel network in North York Moors National Park.

Corridors will be move to the design stage one at a time, when funding becomes available, and will often be delivered in phases. Long distance routes over an area the size of the National Park may take several years to design and deliver and so the next steps are for the North York Moors National Park Authority and local councils to work together to adopt this plan and seek funding to develop routes further. Along the way, the local communities will be involved in making decisions about where routes go and what they look like to make sure they meet the needs of the people who will use them.





Cover photo: Dependable Productions