

**Coast to
Capital**



HM Government



South Downs
National Park Authority

A large, thick, pink circular graphic that is open at the top and bottom, framing the central text.

Centurion Way Feasibility Study

Project Summary

In 2016, as part of the Local Growth Fund (LGF) provision, Coast to Capital launched a feasibility fund to support studies for organisations that were unable to deliver upfront investment. The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) were keen to further develop Centurion Way, a shared path running along the former Chichester to Midhurst Railway line. The Railway line was closed to rail traffic in 1991 and a shared path to Lavant was opened to the public in the 90's and extended by 2 km in 2015 to West Dean Tunnel.



Figure 1: The proposed extension to the Centurion Way and the links to the access network in the South Downs National Park. Source: The Centurion Way Economic Case January 2021

The National Park Authority were keen to further extend the pathway by 5 km to meet the South Downs Way National Trail at Hill Top, Cocking. This would create a link to Cocking and villages in the south with the potential to increase tourism and open communities to possible business opportunities such as cycle hire and repair, accommodation and hospitality as well as providing access to beautiful woodland and countryside.

The completion of the extended route with its added connectivity to the wider access network will bring substantial economic benefits as it will attract greater visitor numbers.

In 2019, cycling and pedestrian counters showed an average of 1,000 trips per week along Centurion Way and the existing aspiration to extend the route was included in the West Sussex County Council 2016 Walking and Cycling Strategy and in the SDNPA's vision for cycling.



An important part of progressing this project was to gain planning permission for the route. Detailed surveys including environmental, geotechnical, topographical and heritage structure surveys were needed to submit with the planning application and the feasibility funding would enable the SDNPA to conduct these to the highest of standard and scope.

£69,297 Local Growth Fund

Project Achievements

Coast to Capital awarded Local Growth Fund (LGF) of £69,297 to contribute to the necessary surveys and in addition, the SDNPA match funded with £127,575 to complete this work. This created a Benefit Cost Ratio of £1:£1.84 for the LGF award.

As a result of this project, planning permission was granted in October 2019 for the full length of the new route. Work now continues to progress towards completion including fundraising for the cost of the works which has reached over £600,000. As the entirety of the works would be a far greater sum, the intention is now to split the route into sections and complete in 3 phases.

Some clearance work around the abandoned Singleton Station has already taken place and work continues to progress the project. Coast to Capital continue to be supportive of the scheme and collaborate where possible.

BEFORE



AFTER



Project Benefits

The initial feasibility funding will enable the creation of benefits and social value for the local community, visitors and the environment.

The SDNPA anticipate that a completed Centurion Way will create substantial health benefits to users which will have an impact on the associated cost of ill health through sedentary lifestyles. Creating extended access to a shared pathway has the potential to reduce road congestion where people would ordinarily travel by car to walking spots and this will have associated benefits to reducing road congestion and improving air quality with reduced carbon emissions. It is also thought that the route will benefit the local economy through increased visitor spending creating the potential for new jobs and businesses in the locality.

All pictures have been provided by the South Downs National Park Authority.