

## SATIN Case Study - John Muir Way (Blackness to Bo'ness Section)

### Organisation Name

Falkirk Council Development Services,  
Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT) and  
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)

### Infrastructure Location

Shore of the River Forth - Coastal  
path between Blackness and Bo'ness



**Falkirk Council**  
*Development Services*

### Date of Completion

30-Sep-2014

### Context

This project's delivery has substantially improved a section of the John Muir Way Coast to Coast long distance route, and through its delivery has completed a high quality walking and cycling route between Blackness and Bo'ness. The project has re-established a route between the two communities and through its design and delivery has developed it into an all-weather multi-use route, which now provides a safe off road route between these two destinations and will enable the re-alignment of the National Cycle Network NCN 76 route.

The route now offers the easiest of gradients possible and its delivery has enabled people living in the local communities to use the route as part of their everyday travel choice. The gentle gradient has also encouraged people who are less active to try cycling or walking as the first steps towards a more active lifestyle or for those more adventurous souls to walk parts of the John Muir Way.

### Technical Aspects

Substantial construction works were undertaken to reinstate the sea wall defences and to reinstate and upgrade approximately 1.6 km of path of between 1.8 - 2.5 metres wide sealed bound surface, along the shore of the River Forth between West Terrace, Blackness and Carriden Wood, Bo'ness. This project through its delivery also now provides an upgraded cycle route link for the NCN 76 route.

The path was constructed as per Sustrans recommended standards for 'Paths and Areas Free from Motor Traffic' for shared use cycle tracks/ footpaths.

Physical works included:

- Site and vegetation clearance to improve accessibility and sight lines
- Reinstatement and construction of appropriate sea defences and stabilisation works per engineering recommendations
- Realignment of boundary fences to enable minimum width standards of path to be achieved in a short section of the route
- Creation of an appropriate sealed bound surface path.



Before



After



Before



After





Before



After

## Outcomes

The completion of the coastal treatment and path construction works has enabled the opening up of a 4 km-(c.2.5mile) route along the banks of the River Forth between Bo'ness and Blackness as part of the delivery of the John Muir Way and re-alignment of the National Cycle Network NCN 76 route. The official opening of the new route took place on Saturday 25th April 2015.

Click on this link ['John Muir Way'](#) to view YouTube video of John Muir Way Blackness to Bo'ness path upgrade.

Click on this link ['Local Community to Celebrate Opening of Blackness to Bo'ness Section of the John Muir Way'](#) to read CSGNT press release.

Click on this link ['The John Muir Way'](#) to read a news article in the Forth Estuary Forum's Forth Sight newsletter (page 12 and 13), about ensuring the Blackness to Bo'ness section of the John Muir Way was accessible to all.

More after construction photos...













## Financing

Funding for the project amounted to just over £700,000 and came from Sustrans Community Links, Sport Scotland, Falkirk Council, Scottish Natural Heritage and Falkirk Environment Trust (landfill tax), with significant support from the two local community councils and two landowners.

## Evaluation

The project since its completion has been a huge success with the level of use of the path over the old structure up some 300% so far. The replacement has clearly been worthy of the expenditure, given the new level of use, but also has opened up a completely new route to a much wider range of users.

## Key Learning Points

The project was designed and the contract managed by Falkirk Councils' Engineering Design Unit. The project was competitively tendered during September 2013 and 4 tenders received. Through full assessment of the tenders received, Rainton Construction Limited were found to be have the most competitively tendered price to undertake the works over a 23 week contract period.

The land on which the project was delivered is in the ownership of the Braes of Burnshot Farm and The Pauls Stacks Farm, and both, were wholly supportive of the proposals and assisted hugely in enabling the contractors to access the site and deliver the significant works required.

Planning permission for the project was required due to the scale and sensitivities of the project and this was granted by Falkirk Council Development Management with a number of restrictions in access and timing applied.

The delivery of the project was fairly onerous and a sizeable amount of additional works were required to meet the planning conditions, which required completed specifications with all of the contingency sums within the contract used for this purpose. These additional works were largely funded by Falkirk Council through a reallocation of available capital budget.

## Contact Details

Angus Duncan  
Falkirk Council  
Abbotsford House  
Davids Load  
Falkirk  
FK2 7YZ  
01324 504928  
[angus.duncan@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:angus.duncan@falkirk.gov.uk)