Devon County Council

DEVON COUNTYWIDE LCWIP

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Devon is a largely rural county in South-West England. Compared to the national average, Devon residents have higher access to cars or vans, with 84% of households having access to one or more car or van.

Compared to the national average, Devon has a higher number of cycling trips for leisure, and similar levels of cycling for other purposes. Home to a wide range of coastal towns and Dartmoor National Park, as well as other Areas of Natural Beauty, Devon is also a popular tourist destination and is recognised as a prime location for walking and cycling holidays. It has a number of branded trails catering for a variety of non-motorised users. Sustainable transport options are encouraged on the Visit Devon website, with cycling promoted as one of the best ways to enjoy Devon.

Further developing active travel opportunities and infrastructure is a key priority in Devon. This is to give people more travel choices to enable access to jobs, education, shops, healthcare and leisure opportunities more conveniently, more affordably and in more environmentally friendly ways.

The wider societal cost of not investing in walking, wheeling and cycling is high, and the case for investment in active travel is strong. Evidence highlights the significant benefits generated by investing in active travel infrastructure. These include:

- Carbon Emissions - Encouraging a shift from private motor vehicles to active modes will facilitate a reduction in carbon emissions, helping to achieve the county's net zero ambition.
- Air Quality - A reduction in private motor vehicle journeys, and subsequent reduction in congestion, will reduce the number of harmful pollutants released into the air.
- Public Health – Increased physical activity reduces the risk of many chronic illnesses as well as improving fitness. Active travel also contributes to improving mental wellbeing.
- Local Economy - Infrastructure improvements will better connect people to services as well as to employment and education opportunities.
- Social Mobility - Creating well-connected communities through safe, accessible, and free travel options.

Devon County Council (DCC) has a proven track record in encouraging increased active travel levels through its planning and delivery of extended multi-use trails as well as interventions in major urban areas. There are a series of adopted active travel strategies and plans across the county. In 2015, a Cycling and Multi-Use Trail Network Strategy (MUT) was developed and adopted. The MUT is a countywide active travel strategy focused on providing sustainable travel options in rural areas, supporting economic growth, health, leisure, and social mobility for all. Going forward, the strategic function of the MUT will be developed by the Devon Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This will maximise future funding opportunities as the Government will require active travel schemes to be a part of an LCWIP.

The Countywide LCWIP develops upon the existing MUT to identify potential high-level routes for connecting market towns and smaller communities across the county. This will help to inform active travel's place in the emerging Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP) and will be one of the key documents feeding into its development.

The objectives of the Devon Countywide LCWIP are:

- To provide an aspirational long-term strategic network plan for walking and cycling links between Devon's towns and communities.
- To use evidence of existing and potential future demand to plan and design interventions which will:
    - support the health and wellbeing of all users;
    - improve accessibility and social sustainability;
    - accommodate growth;
    - deliver economic benefits, and;
    - respond to climate change.
- To design a prioritised programme of infrastructure interventions and improvements for future investment, considering existing plans, strategies and priorities across the county.
- To support and improve active travel safety.
- To make the case to Government for future funding for strategic walking and cycling infrastructure outside of urban contexts, ensuring investment is targeted where it can have the greatest impact.

LCWIP PROCESS

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at a local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing active travel networks and form a vital part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle. LCWIPs are instrumental in leveraging funding from national and local funding streams. LCWIPs are intended to:

- Plan for cycling and walking using evidence and data on existing and potential future demand;
- Plan cycling and walking networks that meet core design outcomes and the needs of users;
- Target investment where it can have the greatest impact; and
- Identify cycling and walking infrastructure improvements in readiness for funding bids.

The Devon Countywide LCWIP has been developed in accordance with the methodology outlined in LCWIPs Technical Guidance. This entails a six-stage process as summarised below:

Stage 1: Determine the scope – establish the geographical context and arrangements for governing and preparing the plan.

Stage 2: Gathering information – identify existing walking and cycling patterns and potential new journeys. Review existing conditions and identify barriers to walking and cycling. Review related transport and land use policies and programmes.

Stages 3 & 4: Network planning for walking and cycling – identify origin and destination points and active travel flows. Convert flows into a potential network of routes which complement and build upon the existing MUT and determine the improvements required.

Stage 5: Prioritising improvements – prioritise improvements to develop a phased programme for future investment; and

Stage 6: Integration and application – integrate outputs into local plans, policies, strategies and delivery plans.

The remainder of this document details how the Devon Countywide LCWIP was developed and sets out a prioritised programme for its delivery.

GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT

Devon has historically had significant success in encouraging increased cycling levels through investment in, and delivery of, rural cycling trails and interventions in urban areas. The MUT Strategy builds on this by setting out a high quality network of urban and rural routes. Figure 1 shows the geographical extent of the Countywide LCWIP, as well as the existing Multi-Use Trail (MUT) Strategy and the LCWIPs already adopted or in development.

- **Exeter LCWIP**, adopted in January 2024, sets a target for 50% of work trips originating in Exeter to be made via foot or cycle by 2030. The focus of the plan is to create a coherent cycling and walking network in the city, that connects residential areas with schools, key economic hubs and public open spaces.
- **Heart of Teignbridge LCWIP**, adopted in January 2024, covers Newton Abbot and the surrounding area, focusing on enhancing existing, and creating new, cycling and walking routes in the area.
- **Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam LCWIP**, adopted in January 2024, covers much of the estuary from Bideford to Barnstaple, including built up areas. The LCWIP considers how connections will link to onward destinations in the wider area where applicable.
- **Cullompton and Tiverton LCWIP** *(in development)* will focus on a core area encompassing Cullompton and the proposed Culm Garden Village, whilst also considering links in and around Tiverton. This includes links to Tiverton Parkway station and towards Exeter.
- **Clyst Valley and New Communities LCWIP** *(in development)* covers the area surrounding the Clyst Valley in East Devon, which has seen considerable levels of development in recent years. This includes the sites of the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone and the first phases of the Cranbrook new community.

Figure 1 also shows the LCWIPs in development in Torbay and Plymouth, although these are outside of Devon County Council's administrative boundary.

The Countywide LCWIP will complement these existing LCWIPs, identifying routes between urban settlements with a focus on connecting rural communities.

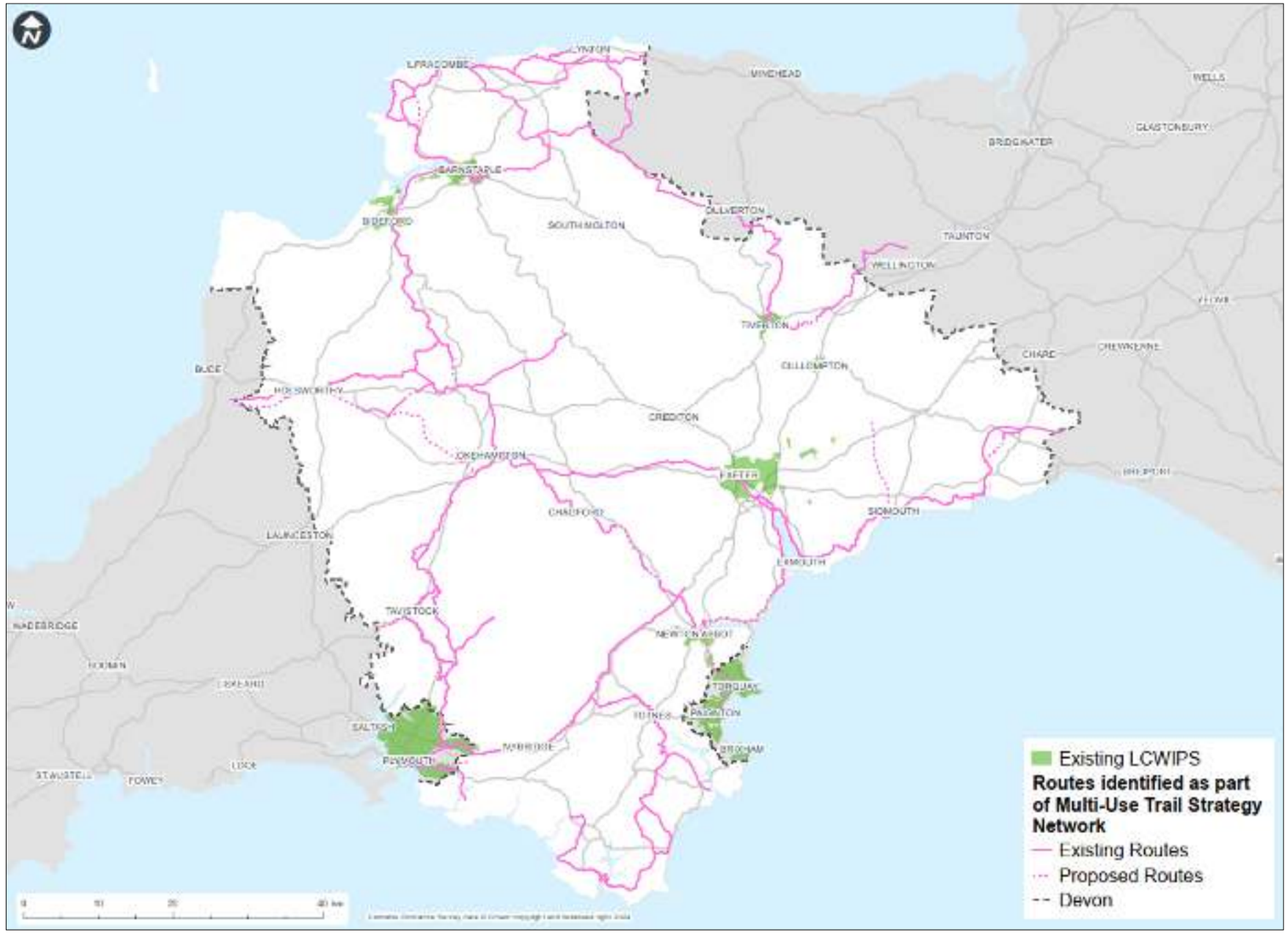
There are other LCWIPs developed by authorities separate to Devon County Council, whilst these have not been included on the map, Devon County Council is committed to working in partnership with other local authorities to support the delivery of shared active travel amibitions for local areas.

GOVERNANCE & ENGAGEMENT

The project forms part of a wider programme to deliver growth and supporting infrastructure in the area.

This document has been informed by engagement with key internal and external stakeholders. This includes District Council officers and National Park Authorities.

Figure 1 Geographical Scope of Devon Countywide LCWIP



2. GATHERING INFORMATION

THE CASE FOR WALKING AND CYCLING

The Devon & Torbay Local Transport Plan 4 (currently in development), has the following vision: "Transport will facilitate sustainable growth and support reaching net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. Well-integrated, accessible and inclusive transport will improve travel choice and benefit the health and wellbeing of everyone.". This aligns with the Government's ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choice for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey. The benefits of this would be substantial: supporting public health and wellbeing; more vibrant towns and public spaces, and low carbon travel patterns becoming commonplace.

RESPONDING TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Devon County Council and all the District Councils have declared a climate emergency and have signed the Devon Climate Declaration. Reducing transport greenhouse gas emissions (GHG's) will be essential to meet both national and local climate commitments, because transport contributes approximately 30% of Devon's GHG's and is the sector with the largest emissions across the county. The Devon Carbon Plan identifies that reducing the need to travel and shifting to sustainable transport options such as cycling and walking are some of the most important ways to tackle transport emissions.

ACCOMMODATING GROWTH

There is a national shortage of housing, and across Devon accessible housing, and accommodation options that support people to live in the community, are limited. As such there is a need for improvements to transport infrastructure including a substantial shift to cycling and walking. The Countywide LCWIP will be important to making sustainable planning decisions that reduce the need to travel by private car.

SUPPORTING HEALTH, WELLBEING AND ACCESS FOR ALL

Active travel can play a crucial role in supporting public health and wellbeing. 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.[i] Improving active travel networks can decrease this impact by encouraging cycling and walking as a common form of exercise for more people. Ensuring cycling is accessible to everyone, by focusing on inclusive "All Ages and Abilities (AAA)" design as a key consideration when developing and delivering schemes through the LCWIP process.

In addition, an estimated 28,000 to 36,000 deaths a year, as well as many chronic health conditions, are attributed to long-term exposure to air pollutions[1], which would be improved by reducing transport emissions.

Furthermore, it is recognised that active travel infrastructure helps improve road user safety, particularly for vulnerable road users.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Devon is a dispersed and rural county. Of the county's 422 parishes, 97% have a population of less than 10,000 and 75% have fewer than 1,000 inhabitants.[2] This brings with it many spatial challenges in terms of service delivery and meeting the needs of communities, in particular for the 18.4% of households that do not have access to a car[3]. It is important that all residents can access employment and education opportunities, key services, and facilities.

Beyond this, enabling people to cycle and walk increases the level of social interaction on streets and in neighbourhoods, which builds levels of trust in communities and has been shown to have a positive impact on issues such as loneliness.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The Department for Transport's 'Gear Change' document states that cycling contributes £5.4bn to the economy per year and directly supports 64,000 jobs. A review of national and international studies showing the economic value of investing in cycling infrastructure[ii] found:

- Cycle schemes can achieve more for less, producing between £5 and £35 of benefit to the economy for every £1 spent;
- Cyclists visit local shops more regularly, spending more than users of other modes of transport;
- Per square metre, cycle parking delivers 5 times higher retail spend than the same area of car parks;
- Public realm improvements, including those that cater for cycling, have been shown to result in increased trade at local businesses;
- Neighbourhoods with cycle-friendly characteristics are more desirable or have higher property values; and,
- Cycle tourists on average spend 9% per head more per trip than users of other modes of transport.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-england-publishes-air-pollution-evidence-review

[2] https://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Rural-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2010-13.pdf

[3] ONS Census 2021 Car or Van availability by household composition

POLICY CONTEXT

There are clear opportunities to support environmental, health, social and sustainable mobility goals by better connecting people and places with targeted investment in active travel infrastructure. This is evident in both national and local policy that has guided and shaped this LCWIP process. A summary overview is provided below.

NATIONAL POLICY & PLANS

Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking (DfT 2020)

Sets out Government's vision for delivery of high quality cycling and walking infrastructure, with local authorities being expected to deliver a step-change in the Level of Service for cycling and walking. It announced the establishment of Active Travel England, who will assess local authorities' performance on active travel, with findings influencing the funding authorities receive across all transport modes. The accompanying Local Transport Note 1/20 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' sets out new ambitious cycle design standards.

Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy (DfT 2019)

Nine principles to address the challenge of transforming towns and cities to meet current and future transport demands. Includes the principle that *'walking, cycling and active travel must remain the best option for short urban journeys'.*

Inclusive Transport Strategy (DfT 2019)

States that an inclusive transport system must provide inclusive infrastructure, with streetscapes designed to accommodate the needs of all people. LCWIPs identify improvements to build active travel networks and key routes fit for all users.

Clean Air Strategy (DEFRA 2018)

Outlines how achieving modal shift is key to delivering emissions reduction. LCWIPs have a part to play in tackling the climate emergency by reducing emissions through the delivery of walking and cycling options for journeys.

The second cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS2, 2022)

Aims to make active modes a natural choice. Locally targeted investment via LCWIPs enables people to be connected with places, creating vibrant, productive and healthier and places and communities.

Everybody Active, Every Day (Public Health England, 2014)

Indicates how the built and natural environment impact on the travel choices people make and highlights the necessity for effective urban design and transport systems which create 'active environments' to promote more liveable communities.

LOCAL POLICY & PLANS

Local policy relating to cycling and walking is contained in a range of documents, outlined below. These policy documents give strong support for cycling and walking. Several documents, including the Local Transport Plan, are currently being reviewed, making this an ideal time to bring forward, and further integrate, walking, wheeling and cycling proposals.

Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3), 2011 – 2026

The vision of the Devon and Torbay LTP3 states "the transport system will offer businesses, communities and individuals safe and sustainable transport choices, helping to deliver a low carbon future, a successful economy and a prosperous, healthy population living in an attractive environment…". It aims to "Make Devon the place to be naturally active" through investment in walking and cycling and states that "Devon & Torbay will seek to negotiate the delivery of improved pedestrian and cycle connections from nearby new development to transport interchange points". It also aims to "prioritise investment in routes that link schools, housing, employment and leisure trips with high quality segregated paths in urban areas and rural cycle network in Devon will be developed by using opportunities offered by disused rail tracks which link into towns and rural villages. These connections will also be part of improving the wider leisure network for walking, cycling and horse riding with scenic routes".

A new local transport plan – **Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan (LTP4)** – is currently in development, expected to be in effect 2025 – 2040.

Devon Infrastructure Transport Plan (V1.2)

The Devon Transport Infrastructure Plan states, "Schemes will be supported where they achieve one or more of the following: modal shift towards public transport; modal shift towards active travel; increase in electrification; reduction in road capacity where this supports sustainable travel or improved air quality. Additionally, it proposes to "develop and maintain cycle paths and public rights of way; and maintaining key roads to a safe standard and promoting cycle ways and footpaths".

Devon Cycling and Multi-Use Trail Network Strategy (2015)

The Cycling and Multi-use Trail Network Strategy aims to "set out how to prioritise the plans and proposals for developing the cycle and leisure route network against changing and challenging financial circumstances". The strategy planned to develop a segregated, high quality multi-use network of routes and trails that provide access for all and promote healthy, active lifestyles in Devon.

DESIGN GUIDANCE

It is recognised that the majority of design guidance for active travel infrastructure is focused on urban contexts. However, the Devon's multi-use trail network is broadly situated in rural contexts. There is therefore an understanding that a bespoke or flexible design approach may be necessary to design and deliver schemes which embrace this rural context.

EXISTING TRAVEL PATTERNS

Figure 2 shows the population distribution throughout Devon. This shows that the majority of the densely populated areas are in the south and south-east of the county, with further population hotspots in the north-west around Barnstaple and Bideford. These are the areas where the majority of trips are expected to happen. However, the majority of Devon is very rural in nature with sparsely populated areas.

Despite this, data suggests that in 2022 more than three-quarters of adults in the county walked or cycled, for any purpose, at least once a week. This was similar to the national average (DfT Statistics CW302 and CW302).

At the national level, the most common purposes for cycling trips in 2022 were for leisure (36% of trips), commuting (30%), travel to education (13%) and shopping (11%). Walking was most common for travelling to education (19%), to shops (15%) and for leisure purposes (14%). The remaining 52% of walking journeys were for a mix of other purposes, including 'just going for a walk' (National Travel Survey 2022).

The 2021 census took place when there were Covid-19 travel restrictions still in place which would have skewed the results as this included travelling for employment, education, and leisure. Therefore, the 2011 census is the most recent year for which comprehensive data on travel was collected.

The most common journeys for work in 2011 are highlighted in Figure 3. These are primarily to Exeter, Plymouth, Tiverton and Sidmouth. Across the county, 46% of commuting trips were under 10km, 30% of which were walked or cycled whilst 62% were completed by car.

The Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) forecasts potential future demand for cycling, to work and to school, under different scenarios, accounting for trip distance and topography. The scenarios are based on 2011 data for travel to work (national census) and travel to school (schools census). The most ambitious forecasts suggest up to 21% of commuting journeys and 24% of education trips made by Devon residents have the potential to be cycled, if the correct infrastructure and supporting measures are in place.

Figure 2 Population Density in Devon (2021 Census)

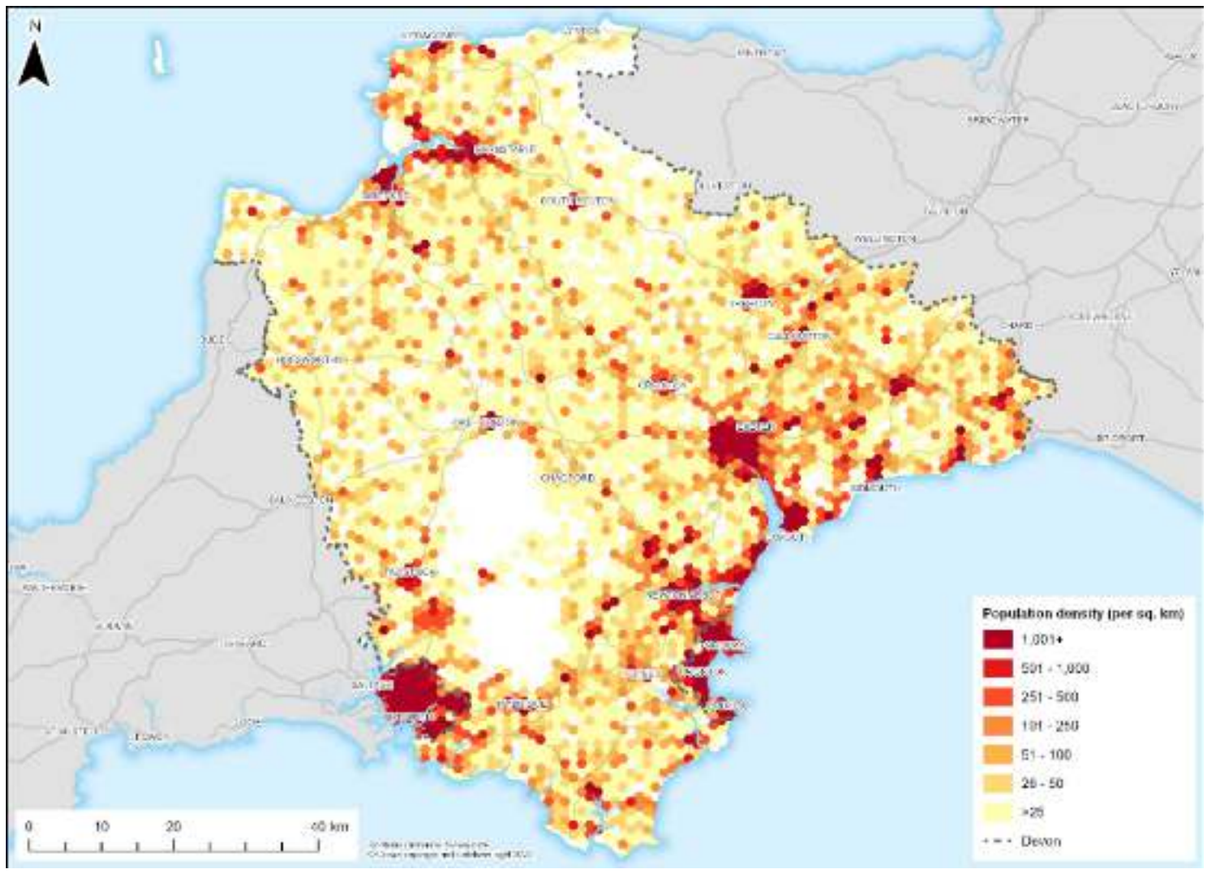
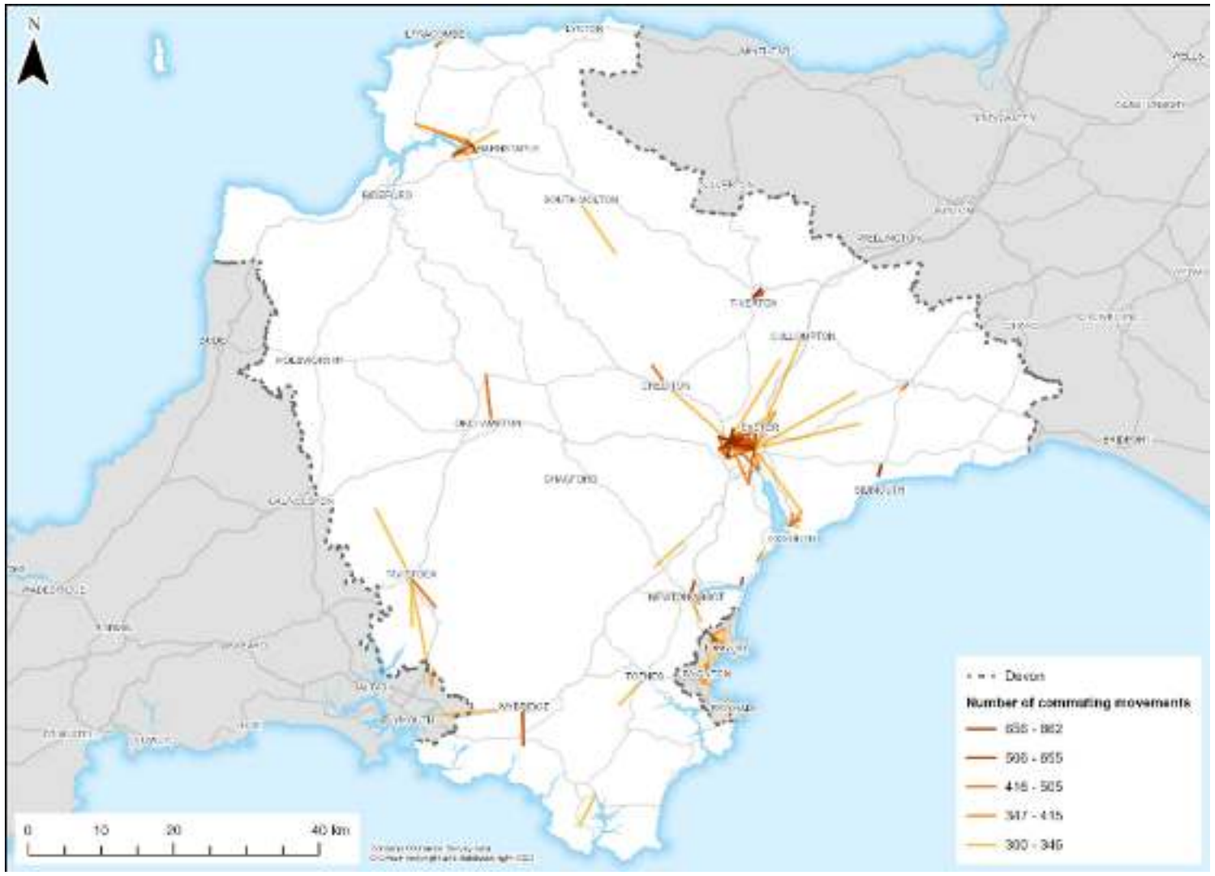


Figure 3 Most common journeys to work (2011 Census)



3. NETWORK PLANNING FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL

The Countywide LCWIP network has been developed by combining corridors identified through GIS origin and destination analysis, strategic routes in existing policies such as the MUT and other routes which have significant levels of development and support.

ORIGINS & DESTINATIONS

The LCWIP Technical Guidance sets out that identifying demand for a planned active travel network should start by mapping the main journey origin and destination points.

The Propensity to Cycle Tool discussed previously is widely used for this purpose, however, it has the disadvantage of using 2011 census data and only accounting for commuting trips made by cycle.

To overcome this, a bespoke Geographic Information System (GIS) computer model was developed for the Devon Countywide LCWIP. A summary of this is detailed here.

The GIS model was used to calculate the likely scale of active travel trips which could be enabled between locations if high-quality infrastructure was in place.

This considered links from the towns and villages, where people live, to key journey destinations. These destinations included education, employment, personal business (GP etc), access to public transport (rail stations and bus stops), shopping and leisure. The model created trips from populated areas to these destinations if they are reasonably accessible via foot or wheeling (up to 2km) or by bicycle (up to 8km).

A variation of the model was also used to understand leisure/ tourist trips. This focused on links from tourist accommodation, such as holiday parks, to leisure attractions. Trips from holiday parks are only created for certain trip purposes, i.e. trips are not expected for commuting purposes.

The GIS tool then produced a key output showing a network plan of straight-line corridors between the origins and destinations.

The process described above is heavily data led and has been complemented by stakeholder engagement and local knowledge. As such, the list of straight-line corridors which resulted from the model had weightings applied and was further filtered. The result was thousands of desire lines, which were subject to further review and consolidation, to ensure that every Devon district outside of Exeter was represented in the final top 10 priority corridors identified for further consideration.

ROUTE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Having determined the top 10 desire lines, the next phase of the process was to identify actual routes that can accommodate these desire lines. For example, via existing roads or paths, or identifying opportunities to create new infrastructure.

A route review process was undertaken for each of the desire lines. Reviews were completed by trained auditors either carrying out site visits, for newly identified corridors, or by desktop review following the principles of the DfT's Route Selection Tool (RST)[4]. The main purpose of the audit process was to assess the suitability of a corridor in its existing condition against the core design outcomes of being **coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive**. The process also enabled the easy comparison of alternative routes, should any be identified.

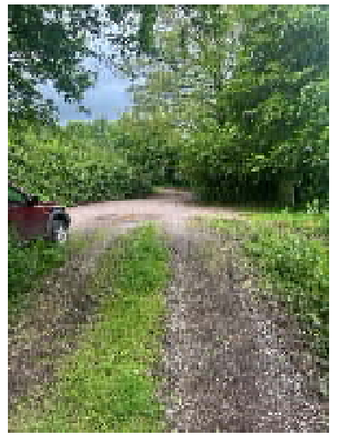
The broad approach initially reviewed the most direct route along the corridor. If this was suitable for 'All Ages and Abilities' cycling, or could be made so, then this became the preferred route option. If the most direct route could not be brought up to a suitable standard, then alternative routes were considered, and the process repeated. For the majority of routes, the most direct route was used as these could be brought up to the relevant design standards.

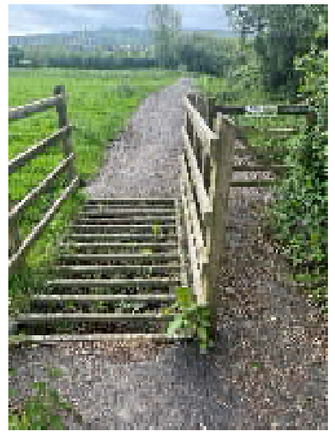
The following factors were considered when undertaking the audits and determining the potential route improvements:

- The quality of existing active travel provision/ infrastructure;
- The potential of the route to connect other origins and destinations within the corridor;
- The potential for, and feasibility of, route improvements, based on any apparent constraints;
- Identification of critical junctions, to determine how these could either be avoided or enhanced to make the route more attractive, safe and direct for people walking or cycling; and,
- The potential for integration with other proposed improvements, identified through the policy review and engagement with Officers, to add wider value.

A suite of plans showing the context of each corridor and the proposed improvements are shown on the following pages.

Figures 4 and 5: Photos of route audits





[4] Planning local cycling and walking networks, Department for Transport, 2017

DEVON COUNTYWIDE LCWIP ROUTES

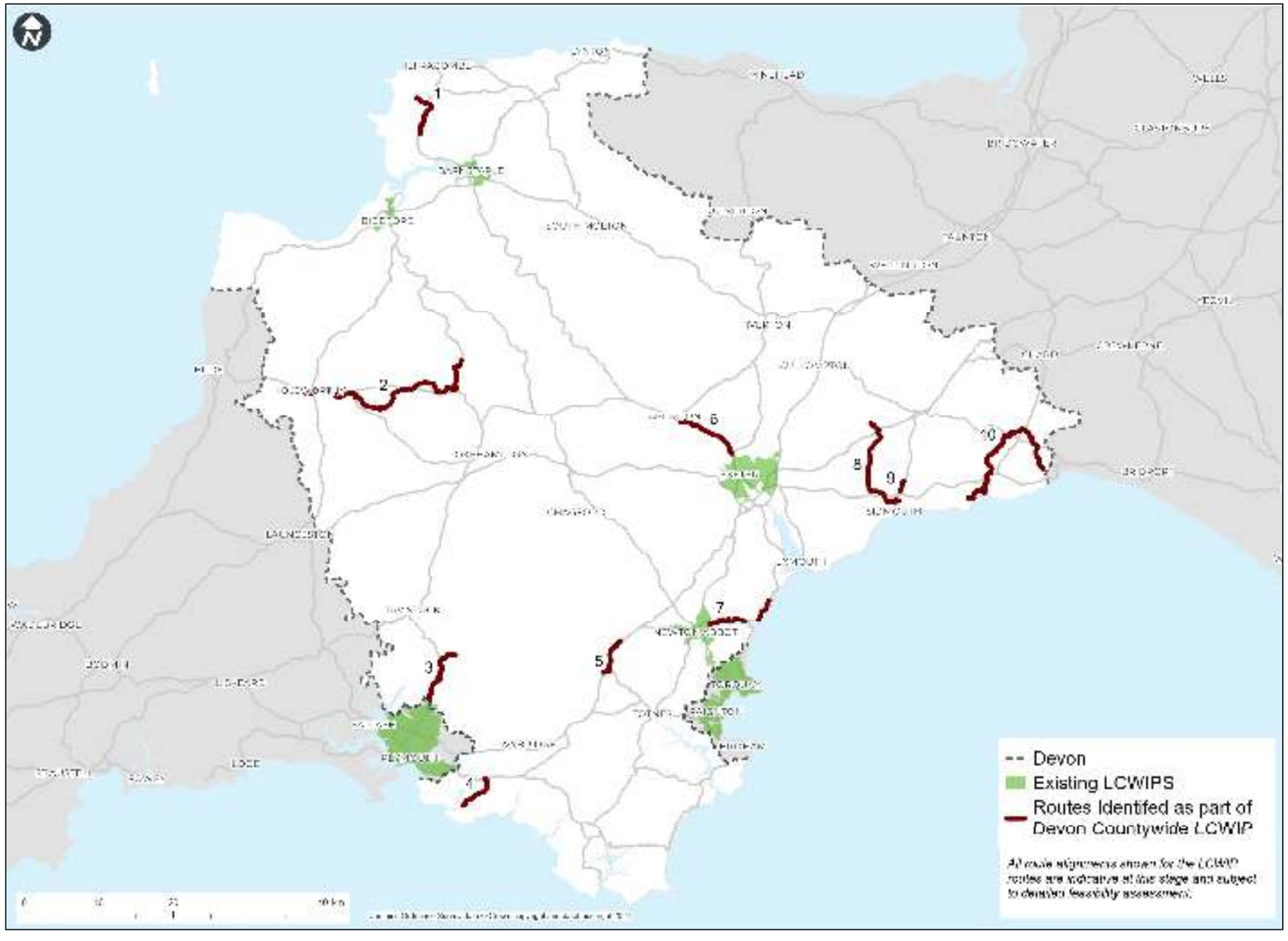
Following the identification of key desire lines and the audit process, 10 routes for improvement are proposed as part of this report, as shown in Figure 6. The Devon Countywide LCWIP aims to focus investment on corridors identified as having high demand, or are forecasted to have high potential for active travel.

The LCWIP does not include detailed plans for every route or identify every aspiration for active travel improvements across the county. As designs progress for individual routes, detailed design elements, such as accomodating horse riders, will be explored and consulted upon.

The routes below are set out in an west-to-east order, relative to their georgraphy.

- Route 1: Tarka Trail (Knowle to Willingcott)
- Route 2: Ruby Way/Tarka Trail (Holsworthy to Meeth)
- Route 3: Roborough to Dousland
- Route 4: Yealmpton to Newton Ferrers
- Route 5: Ashburton to Buckfastleigh
- Route 6: Boniface Trail
- Route 7: Teign Estuary Trail
- Route 8: Otter Trail
- Route 9: Sidbury to Sidford
- Route 10: Beer to Axminster and Uplyme

Figure 6: Routes identified as part of the Devon Countywide LCWIP



ROUTES

ROUTE 1 – TARKA TRAIL (KNOWLE TO WILLINGCOTT)

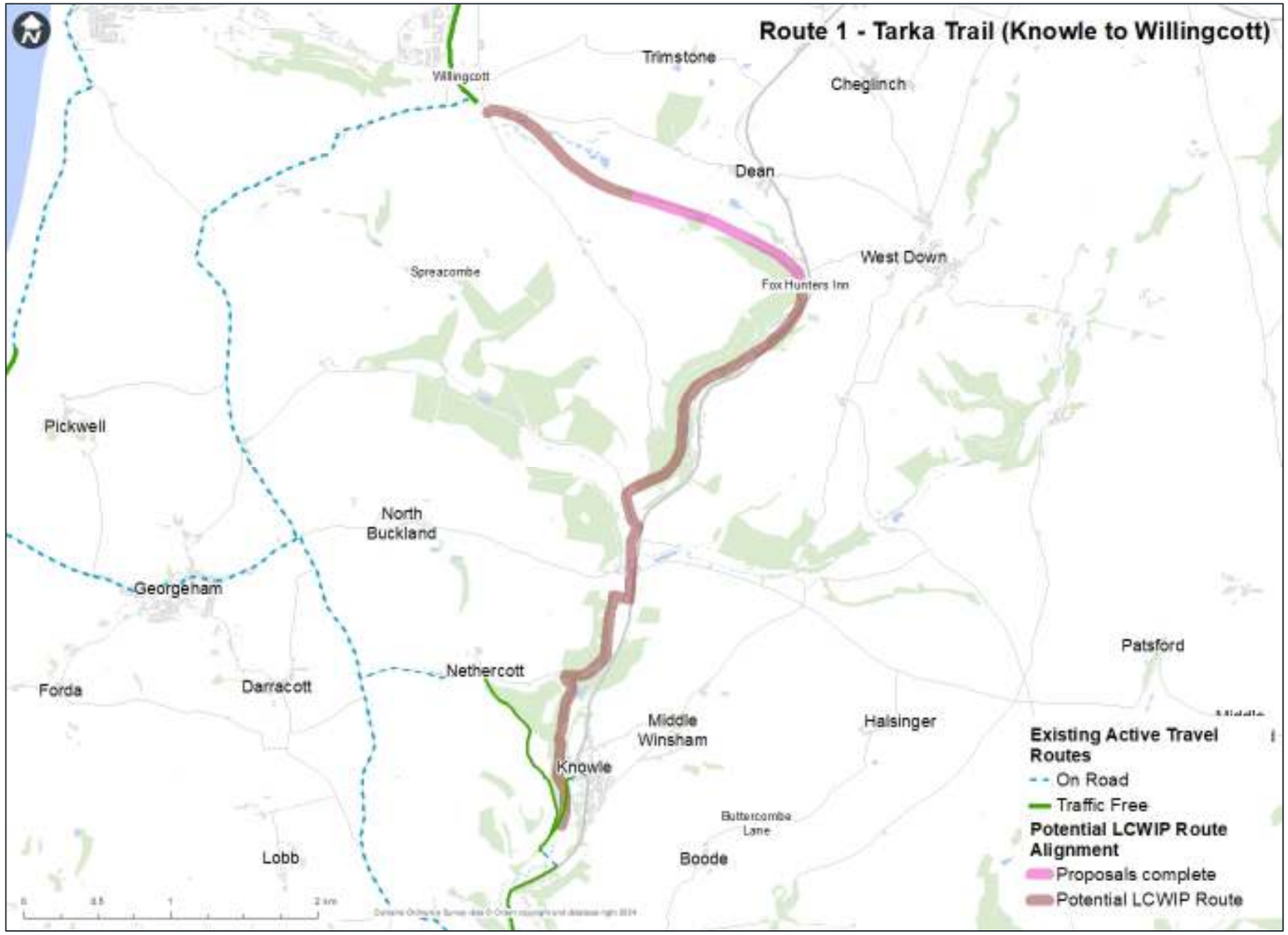
The Tarka Trail, an existing multi-use trail between Ilfracombe and Braunton, is highly valued locally as a safe walking route to school and work and connects rural and isolated households with leisure and shopping amenities. It also encourages inclusive connection with the North Devon UNESCO biosphere.

This route is an opportunity to provide the missing link of the Tarka Trail with a 7km stetch between Willingcott Hill Road, Woolacombe and Knowle. The route would be mostly off-road and segregated from traffic (apart from a small length on Nethercott Road where the alternative route options are limited).

There is no current infrastructure for people walking, wheeling and cycling along the route hence this will increase opportunities to commute actively and promote a safe leisure cycling route for locals and tourists.

This route is split into six phases. Phases 1 and 2 were completed in July 2024 and Phase 5 was completed in March 2024. Devon County Council aims to construct the remaining portions of the route as soon as practically possible but this will be dependent on external grant funding.

Figure 7: Route 1 – Tarka Trail (Knowle to Willingcott) indicative alignment



Detailed Design Public Feedback

Following public engagement, comments regarding detailed design have been collected, which will considered at future stages of development. Among others, this includes:

- Utilise disused railway line where possible
- Improve signage in the area
- Segregation from motor traffic.

Case for investment and opportunity

Completion of the route will benefit all residents in the geographical area due to increased connectivity between Ilfracombe and Barnstaple, without the need to remove highway space. It is expected that extension of the Tarka Trail will increase walking and cycling tourism in the area, improving economic prosperity.

Key Origins and Destinations

The route connecting Woolacombe to Knowle can be used to access the areas of Nethercott, North Buckland Spreacombe, West Down and Bradwell.

The Willingcott to Knowle section of the Tarka Trail would fill in the gap between Braunton and Ilfracombe, for people to be able to commute and travel for leisure.

Additionally, there are many camping and caravanning club sites, hotels, cottages, and guest houses along the route, which is expected to attract tourists to the route.

Leisure and Tourism

Devon Coast to Coast NCN27 currently connects Braunton to Willingcott Holiday Park on road along Buckland Cross and Georgeham Road.

Alignment

Many sections of the route are currently progressing and are anticipated to be delivered by spring 2025:

- The route through the Willingcott Holiday village is currently under construction by a third party as a requirement of their planning permission.
- Planning permission for the route between Buttercombe Lane and Foxhunters (Phase 2) has been secured and construction of this section was completed in July 2024. The stretch between Willingcott Holiday Village and Buttercombe Lane (Phase 1) was mostly constructed in 2023, was completed and resurfaced at the same time as Phase 2.
- Construction of the Nethercott Road section (Phase 5) of the Tarka Trail was completed in March 2024.

Of the remaining sections, Knowle to Nethercott Road (Phase 6) would be the next priority followed by Spreacombe junction to Nethercott Road (Phase 4), which would reduce the length of alternative routes needing to be used. These proposals will also be subject to further public consultation and there may be alternative route options for Phase 4, for instance reducing the number of crossings of the river Caen.

Finally, Spreacombe junction to Foxhunters (Phase 3) and Willingcott Bridge Junction are likely to be the last phases to construct. This is due to the length of the section and constraints due to the number of large structures needed to complete it and the associated costs involved.

Challenges

Land Ownership

The proposed route is predominantly off-road and will require land purchase/ agreement to successfully complete the route. The landowners have been engaged with from the beginning.

Natural Surveillance

The traffic-free route will have a low level of natural surveillance as the route will not be lit.

Gradient

The route follows the old railway line where possible, providing a low gradient alternative for families to cycle for leisure or people to commute for work.

High Traffic Volume

The A361 is not a suitable alternative route. Vehicles travel at high speeds along the hilly A-road making it an unsuitable option. This route is part of the Safer Roads Fund as well, which looks to decrease speed of vehicles to ensure improved safety for drivers and other users.

Gaps in the Route

The scheme is constructed and funded incrementally by phases. The full benefits are only unlocked once all the phases are completed. There is an element of risk of the developer not completing their section as well as not enough funding secured to construct all the phases.

Environmental Considerations

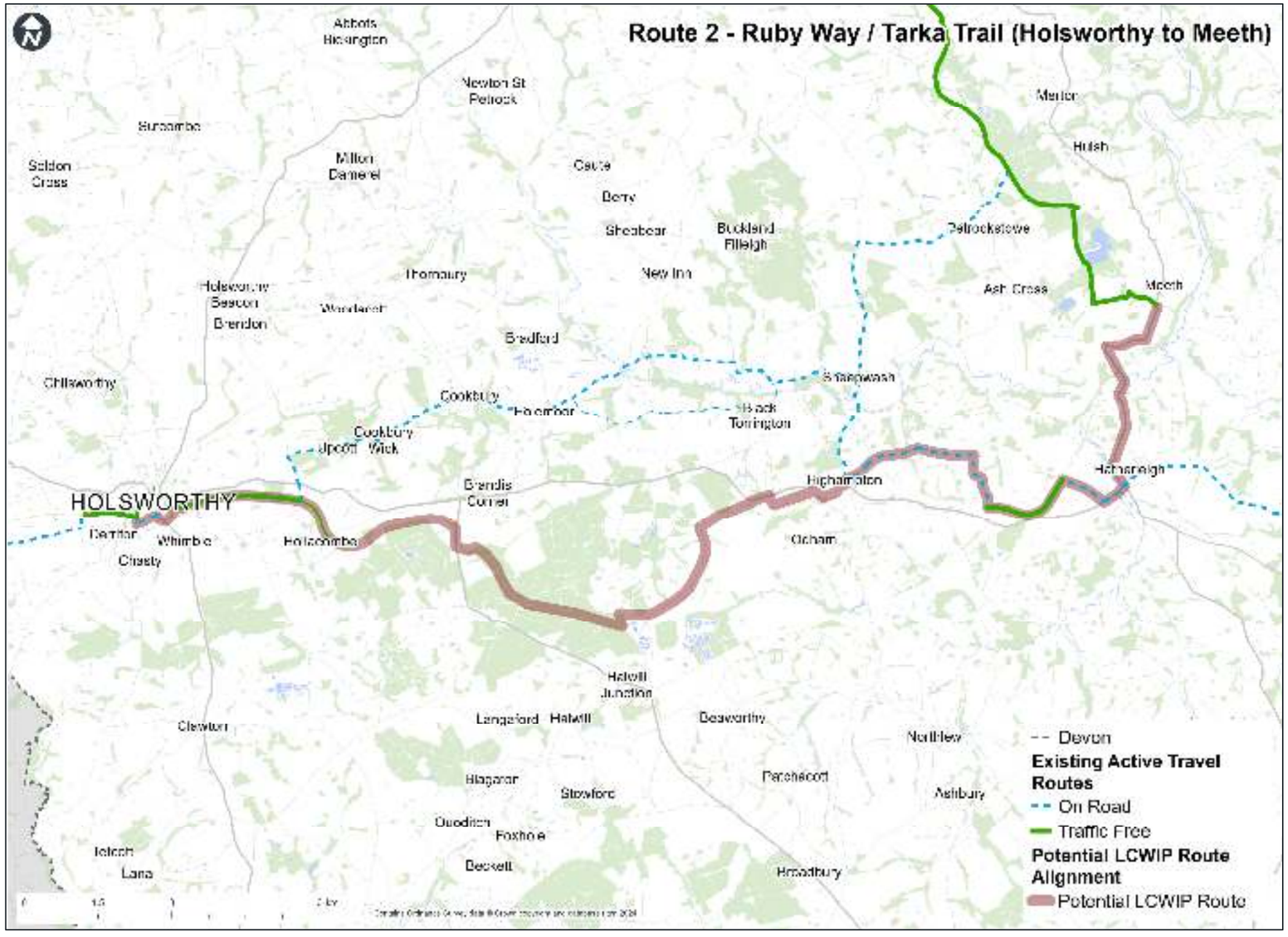
As the route is built through woodland along the old railway line, DCC is always looking for options for environmental mitigation and aims to replace any disturbed habitat locally where possible.

ROUTE 2 – RUBY WAY/TARKA TRAIL (HOLSWORTHY TO MEETH)

Ruby Way is a proposed recreational multiuse trail stretching 40km from Bude (Cornwall) to Hatherleigh and onward to Meeth, passing through both Torridge and West Devon. At the eastern end, this would link into the Tarka Trail, towards Bideford, and the Pegasus Way, towards Okehampton. The section of the Ruby Way proposed within this LCWIP is the section between Holsworthy and Hatherleigh. Between these two settlements there is an existing cycle route – NCN3 and NCN27 – along quiet roads, but the completion of the Ruby Way would provide a mostly off-road alternative.

The proposed route looks to take advantage of existing bridleways, routes, tracks and quiet roads, before rejoining NCN27 at Highampton towards Hatherleigh. The trail will be accessible for everyone, although it might have different surfaces at different sections. It will promote a safer leisure walking, wheeling and cycling route for locals and tourists and will connect rural and isolated households with leisure and shopping amenities.

Figure 8: Route 2 – Ruby Way/Tarka Trail (Holsworthy to Meeth) indicative alignment



Detailed Design Public Feedback

Following public engagement, comments regarding detailed design have been collected, which will considered at future stages of development. Among others, this includes:

- Utilise disused railway line where possible.
- Improve signage in the area.
- Full segregation between modes.

Case for investment and opportunity

Completion of the route will benefit all residents in the geographical area due to increased connectivity for all between Holsworthy and Hatherleigh, and to the surrounding countryside, without the need to remove highway space. It is expected that the completion of the Ruby Way will increase walking, wheeling and cycling tourism in the area, improving economic prosperity. It will also provide public health benefits to residents and improve levels of inactivity.

Key Origins and Destinations

The route connecting Holsworthy to Hatherleigh can be used to access the areas of Hollacombe, Brandis Corner and Halwill Junction. It would fill the gap between Holsworthy and Hatherleigh for people to be able to travel for leisure, as well as specific leisure destinations such as Cookworthy Forest.

There are numerous camping and caravanning club sites, hotels, cottages, and guest houses along and nearby the route, which is expected to attract tourists along the route. Once complete, the route itself will act as a tourist attraction which will boost the local economy.

Alignment

The route is complete between Holsworthy and Hollacombe, and then between Highampton and Hatherleigh. Much of the off-road route between Hollacombe and Highampton is also complete, although with some gaps.

Holsworthy and Hatherleigh have multiple pinch points within the town centres as the roads are historic and narrow. These areas are under review to ensure a continuous and safe trail.

The route would be phased into a number of sections with the majority of phase 1 (Hatherleigh to Cookworthy Forest) already completed. There is a short section which would follow the A3072. A further road safety review will need to be carried out to assess the suitability of that link and further work will need to be carried out to see if it is possible to follow the disused railway line, which would provide an off-road track.

Phase 2 covers the route through Cookworthy Forest, this is mostly in ownership of the Forestry Commission. Some path surface improvements are needed and the last section linking to the crossing of A3079 will need to be fully developed still.

Phase 3 requires a safe cycle and pedestrian crossing across the A3079. Phase 4 would complete the link along the disused railway line between A3079 and the existing path at Hollacombe.

The route carries on from Hatherleigh to Meeth, to enable it to link into the Tarka Trail and create an active travel link between Torridge and North Devon.

Challenges

Land Ownership

The proposed route is predominantly off-road and will require land purchase/agreement to successfully complete the route. The landowners have been engaged, with 85% of the land assembled by DCC already.

It also needs to be considered that parts of the trail go through land owned by the Forestry Commission.

Gradient

The gradient changes of the NCN3 and NCN27 are significant, hence an alternative, lower changes in gradient and off road as much as possible route is proposed. By following the disused railway line, gradients will be more gradual compared to the NCN routes.

Coles Mill Viaduct

The Coles Mill viaduct, in Holsworthy, requires significant repair and preventative works, and will then require ongoing maintenance. However, there is a local community aspiration to restore the viaduct and letters of support have been written by the Holsworthy mayor. Future ownership of the viaduct also needs to be resolved with current discussions taking place with Historic Railway Estates.

Ecological Sensitivities

The environmental surveys that were carried out in November 2023 reported presence of dormice and bats nesting.

Road Crossings

There are crossing points across roads that need improving.

ROUTE 3 – ROBOROUGH TO DOUSLAND

Drake's Trail (NCN 27) offers walking, wheeling, and cycling access from Tavistock through Yelverton to Clearbrook and onwards into eastern Plymouth. However, Drake's Trail currently heads east at Clearbrook Leat car park and connects into Plympton in the east of Plymouth, bypassing important employment, residential and new development areas in the north of the city including Roborough, Woolwell and Derriford.

This proposed new route starts on the northern edge of Plymouth and continues north to the Clearbrook Leat carpark, and then continues onwards towards Yelverton and on to Dousland.

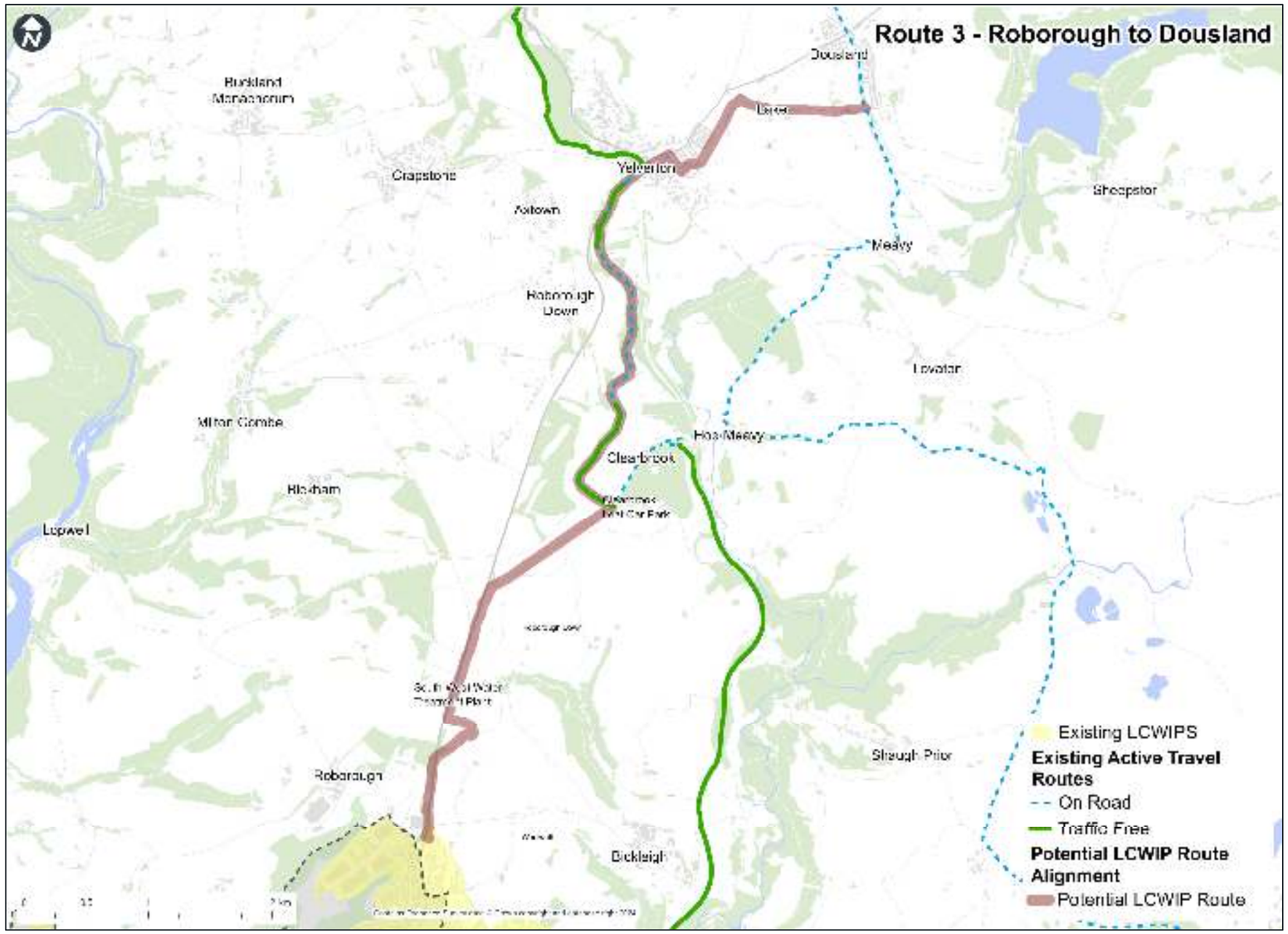
The existing travel network between Tavistock and Plymouth primarily consists of the A386 road corridor. This is a busy route with average daily traffic of 16,000-18,000 vehicles and this is predicted to increase due to nearby housing sites allocations. The road does not have suitable footways and is not wide enough to allow cyclists and vehicles to share road space and is not providing a safe and accessible route for people walking, wheeling and cycling.

Detailed Design Public Feedback

Following public engagement, comments regarding detailed design have been collected, which will considered at future stages of development. Among others, this includes:

- Remove barriers for cyclists where the route meets the NCN.
- Improve car-parking to encouage part-commuting and leisure use.
- Ensure surfacing and any fences are mindful of the moorland environment.

Figure 9: Route 3 – Roborough to Dousland indicative alignment



Case for investment and opportunity

This route would complete a missing link in Devon's existing active network. It would provide communities on Dartmoor with a way to reach shops, services and employment centres on the northern edge of Plymouth using active and sustainable modes. It would also open up access to the employment and leisure activities in Dartmoor for those living in northern Plymouth, reducing reliance on motor vehicles and reducing pressure on the existing A386. The existing A386 is unsuitable for non-motorised users, and high volumes of traffic deters all but the most confident cyclists, walkers and wheelers. A new multi-use trail would instead encourage sustainable lifestyles by providing a new high quality off-road active travel link for leisure and commuting activities in the area.

Local analysis using the DfT's 'Propensity to Cycle Tool' has demonstrated that the introduction of safe and attractive infrastructure between Clearbrook and Roborough could bring increased cycling numbers and associated cost savings to public health. The route would provide good accessibility for users, linking to Roborough/ Plymouth in the south and to Drake's Trail with connections to Tavistock in the north. The route also links to three existing car parks at Clearbrook Leat, Roborough Down Lane and Little Down Lane for convenient access to the route.

Public Support

The route has received large public support and positive feedback. A public consultation was held on the proposals in 2022. The majority (89% of the 809 respondents) supported the principle of the route with 76% favouring an alignment adjacent to Plymouth Leat.

Alignment

Following the public consultation on the portion of the route between Roborough and Clearbrook, the alignment adjacent to Plymouth Leat is being progressed.

The route will begin at Roborough and travel across agricultural land before crossing the South West Water access road. It will utilise an existing track along a byway/unclassified country road to head towards the SWW Treatment Works. The section of route around the SWW Treatment Work itself will likley require the removal of some healthland planting.

The route will head northeast for approximately 1km, cross Little Down Lane and follow an existing track to Clearbrook Road, where it will run along the southern verge to Clearbrook Leat Car Park. To achieve the 3-metre path width (as recommended by LTN 1/20) some heathland planting would need to be removed.

From the carpark, the route will extend onwards along existing active travel infrastructure to Yelverton roundabout and will then follow the disused railway line to Lake Lane before following the main road onward to Dousland.

Challenges

Gradients

Short sections of the route have gradients over the recommended limits in LTN 1/20. These could potentially be overcome by earthworks or short sections of meandering routes.

Vegetation Removal

This route would involve removal of some heathland and lowland dry acid grassland priority habitats, loss of some trees and removal of some mature hedgerow at the southern end of the scheme on the approach to the A386.

Dartmoor National Park

Any proposals located on Dartmoor Common Land are subject to Dartmoor National Park's planning approval process, which includes going before a Planning Inspectorate.

The Dartmoor Local Plan contains policies which aim to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area and therefore the route design needs to:

- Have minimal impact on the landscape.
- Not be noisy or intrusive.
- Not harm, damage or disturb the designated sites and habitats in the park.

Other Landowners

Much of the route is on third party land and as such may require negotiating and purchasing land.

Other Challenges

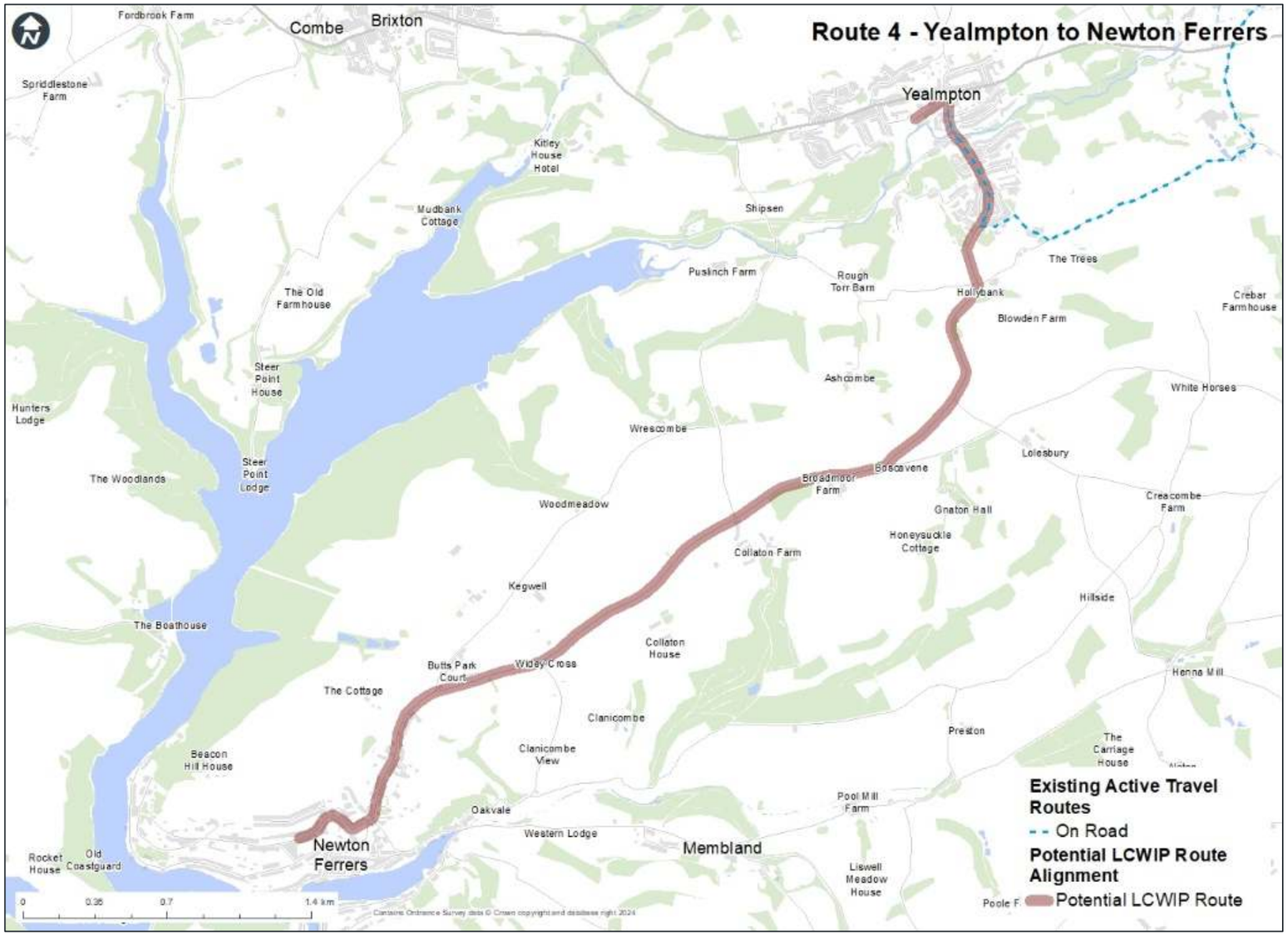
Most of the sections in the route are proposed as off-road multi-use paths passing through agricultural fields or vacant land. There is no surveillance along the majority of the route which may negatively impact perceived safety, particularly for vulnerable users.

ROUTE 4 – YEALMPTON TO NEWTON FERRERS

The proposed 5.8km route is situated in South Hams southeast of Plymouth. It connects the villages of Yealmpton and Newton Ferrers, via rural roads along the B3186, east of the River Yealm. The two villages have steep gradients, but the route connecting them is relatively flat.

The NCN28 cycle route starts in Yealmpton before heading east towards Salcombe to then link to Totnes. Between Yealmpton and Newton Ferrers, people cycling must use the carriageway in mixed traffic, as there is no cycle infrastructure. Providing a cycling link between the two settlements, offers an opportunity to connect Newton Ferrers to the existing wider high quality cycling network. The proposed route is situated entirely within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), where the natural beauty of the designated landscape is conserved and enhanced.

Figure 10: Route 4 – Yealmpton to Newton Ferrers indicative alignment



Detailed Design Public Feedback

Following public engagement, comments regarding detailed design have been collected, which will considered at future stages of development. Among others, this includes:

- Use high quality surfacing that considers all modes.
- Full segregation between modes.
- Set route back from the road.

Case for investment and opportunity

The total population of Yealmpton and Newton Ferrers is 3,367 with the majority (2,418) living within Yealmpton (2021 census).

Key Origins and Destinations

Local amenities in Yealmpton include the school (Yealmpton Primary School), community centre, shops such as Ben's Farm Shop, pubs and restaurants. Locals and tourists are also attracted to Yealmpton by the annual Yealmpton Agricultural Show organised every July.

Newton Ferrers is a tourist destination, located 16km from Plymouth and promoted as a hidden gem of South Hams. This idyllic village is situated on the bank of the Yealm estuary, which is part of the South West Coast Path and is surrounded by ancient woodlands and creeks.

Alignment

The approach towards improving the cycling infrastructure between Yealmpton and Newton Ferrers focuses on three goals across the short, medium and long term:

Short Term

Create a signed cycle route between the two villages, where all modes can share a common surface at low speeds. This would be publicised as part of the NCN. There is a risk that without further investment the route will not meet the NCN's design principles as it is currently unsuitable for most people.

Medium Term

In the medium term, cycle provision between and within the villages should be improved, including addressing pinch points between cyclists and vehicles. This would include investigations into The Borough/Torr Hill/New Road junction, Torr Lane, Parsonage Road and a bridge over the River Yealm. Opportunities to create village-wide cycle networks would also be maximised, for example by formalising the use of cycles along the River Yealm Nature walk (an existing bridleway used an alternative to the B3186) by upgrading the route to a shared use path.

Long Term

The long-term goal would be to strategically upgrade the existing infastructure to provide a safe and coherent long-distance active travel environment between the two villages, with the potential to provide a protected cycleway parallel to the B3186.

Challenges

Gradient

The gradient of the route within the villages themselves could be a barrier to active travel, particularly wheeling and cycling, for most people. Although there are no alternative direct routes, these sections of the proposed route may need to be classified as an advisory only.

Traffic Speeds

Along the B3186, between the two villages, the speed limit is derestricted. This, when considered with the traffic volumes, will have a direct impact on the level of segregation required between cyclists and other road users.

Road Width Constraints

Within the two villages road width is limited. The most challenging sections to overcome include the existing bridge over the River Yealm and Ford Road (both in Yealmpton), and Yealm Road in Newton Ferrers. In these areas it is likely that cyclists and pedestrians will need to use the road with mixed traffic.

Natural Surveillance

The rural nature and lack of artificial lighting along the B3186 results in minimal natural surveillance between the two villages which could decrease the perceived level of safety, particularly for vulnerable users.

Land Ownership

Improvements outside of the highway boundary may require additional land. Landowners would need to be identified, approached and willing to sell to progress the development of this route.

Environmental Considerations

Various environmental considerations may impact the proposals along this route. Sections of Yealmpton are in flood zones which would need to be investigated and considered. Equally, infrastructure improvements would need to be sympathetic to the special landscape qualities of the AONB in which it is situated, and the nearby Yealm Estuary which is a Special Area of Conservation and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

ROUTE 5 – ASHBURTON TO BUCKFASTLEIGH

The proposed 5.2km route, situated on the southeast edge of Dartmoor in Teignbridge, connects the towns of Ashburton and Buckfastleigh.

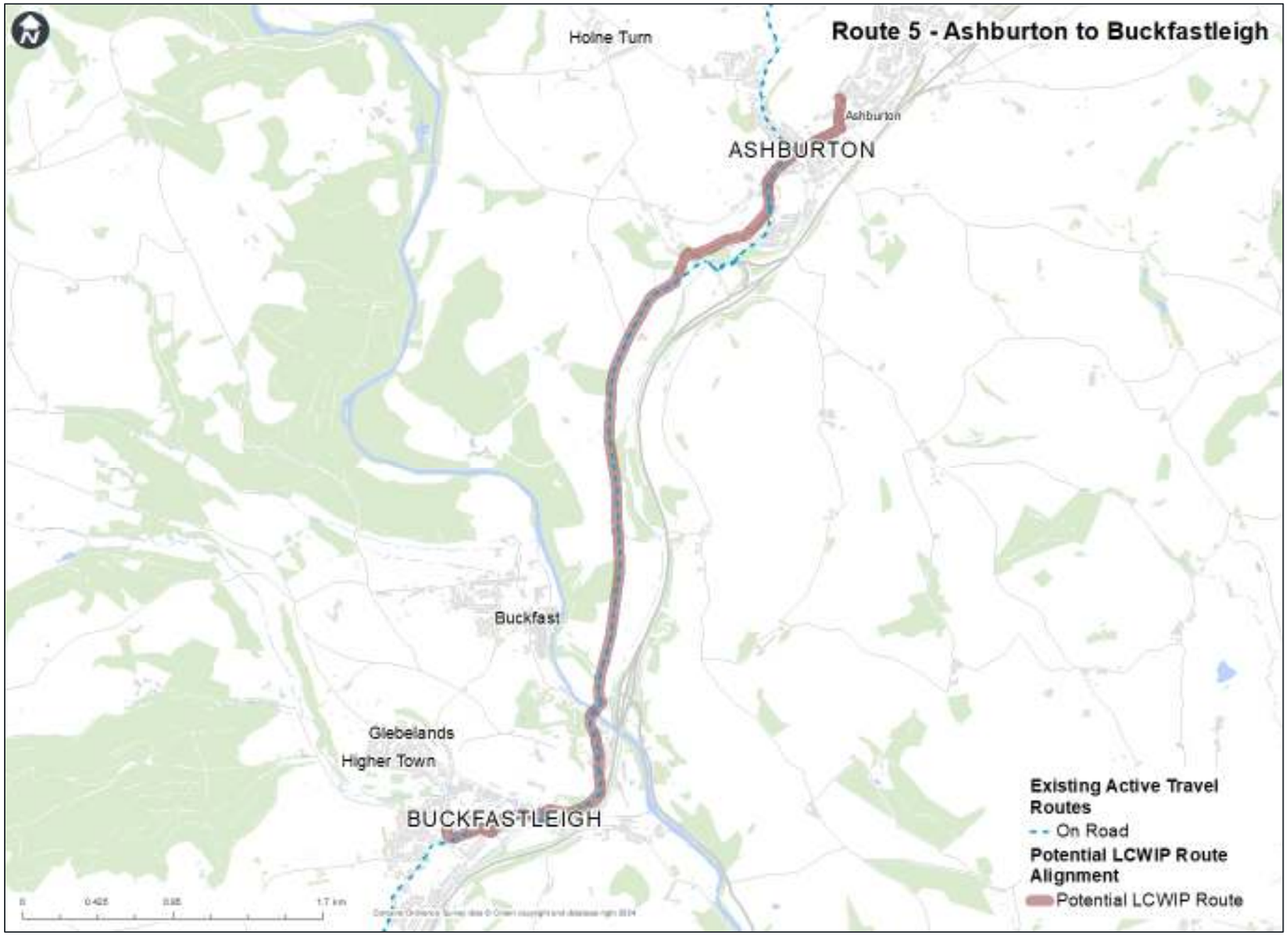
The existing route between the settlements is designated as part of the NCN Route 272, which connects the towns of Bovey Tracey, Ashburton and Buckfastleigh. Route 272 forms part of a wider 140km circular cycle route around Dartmoor National Park – The Dartmoor Way – but is largely on-road which is unsuitable for families and less confident cyclists.

Within both Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, the existing route is well-lit and overlooked by both residential properties and businesses. On exiting either town, it follows Buckfastleigh Road, parallel to the A38, along the River Ashburn Valley. Buckfastleigh Road is a national speed limit two-way mixed traffic rural road. There is an existing footway along one side of the road, but the surface is poor quality and overgrown by vegetation. This makes it difficult to navigate and may discourage people from choosing to cycle or walk and is not inclusive for people who are disabled or use mobility aids.

This scheme proposes to develop and upgrade the section of the NCN272 between Ashburton and Buckfastleigh. For example, upgrading the section of the route along Buckfastleigh Road, with a parallel and off-road shared use path would create a coherent, high-quality link between the towns that is suitable for all. The majority of this route can be classified as mostly flat. Whilst there are hills to be climbed and descended, the gradients are not exceptionally steep.

Within the two towns, there will be a range of desire lines depending on the exact origins and destinations. As such, the route shown links the two town centres, from which onward connections are possible on the relatively low traffic residential streets.

Figure 11: Route 5 - Ashburton to Buckfastleigh indicative alignment



<u>Detailed Design Public Feedback</u>

Following public engagement, comments regarding detailed design have been collected, which will considered at future stages of development. Among others, this includes:

- Design interventions where the trail meets the towns at either end.
- Full segregation between modes.
- Clear vegetation alongside the route.

Case for investment and opportunity

The total population of Ashburton, Buckfast and Buckfasleigh is 7,251, with the majority (4,224) living within Ashburton (2021 census).

In the long term, this route has the potential to meet all of the LTN 1/20 principles of i) coherence; ii) directness; iii) safety iv) comfort and v) attractiveness to make it suitable for all people to use. Enhancing NCN Route 272 in this way would also encourage the use of the route for longer journeys as more confident walkers and cyclists can continue from Buckfastleigh to South Brent and Plymouth (using the NCN Route 2).

Key Origin and Destinations

An enhanced/complete route will encourage sustainable travel between education, employment, retail and leisure facilitates such as South Dartmoor Community College, Ashburton & Buckfastleigh Hospital, Ashburton swimming pool, Ashburton town centre, the Buckfast Butterfly Farm and Dartmoor Otter Sanctuary, and Buckfastleigh Open Air Pool & Skatepark. There are also particular tourist attractions which could be easily accessed using the route, such as South Devon Railway (Buckfastleigh Station), a heritage steam railway, or Buckfast Abbey, an active Benedictine monastry which is visited by thousands of people every year.

Alignment

Town/Area-wide Cycling and Walking Access:

Cycling and walking improvements within Ashburton and Buckfastleigh town centres through the introduction of targeted 20mph speed limits. Subject to political and local support, investigate the feasibility of installing a modal filter at: Option 1: Old Totnes Road, Ashburton. Southernmost end near the A38 slip road. Option 2: Peartree Cross, near the bus stop (Stop ID: dvnawpag). This option will require additional infrastructure improvements.

Peartree Cross: Consider providing a formal crossing to aid cycling and walking movements between Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Road. The cost and feasibility of the above options, and the location of the formal crossing will be secured at the detailed design stage and may dictate the final route alignment.

Buckfastleigh Road:

Option 1: Consider constructing a protected space for cycling by widening the existing verge, with appropriate continuous crossings of side roads.

Option 2: Consider introducing speed limits (30mph), removing the central reservation and providing an on-road cycle lane.

Dartbridge Road (B3380), Buckfastleigh: Consider a formal crossing point to aid with crossing the B3380 and enable access to the farm shop.

Dart Bridge Road: Consider reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph, from the mini roundabout to the Elliott Plain/Strode Road junction to improve on-road cycling conditions.

Fore Street, Buckfastleigh: Subject to political and local support, create a cycle street to improve the permeability for cycling, perhaps allowing contraflow cycling along Fore Street.

Station Road and Elliott Plain, Buckfastleigh: Wayfinding should be improved so that users are guided along the correct street when entering or exiting Buckfastleigh town centre.

Option 1: The route follows the existing NCN 272 along Old Totnes Road, joining Buckfastleigh Road in front of the Shell Garage at Peartree via the B3352. This is the preferred option.

Option 2: The route follows Western Road (B3352) and cyclists are signposted around and behind the Shell Garage at Peartree Cross.

Challenges

Traffic Speed

There are various speed limits along the route ranging from 30mph (within Ashburton and Buckfastleigh town centres) to the national speed limit (Buckfastleigh Road).

Subject to political and local support, there is potential to reduce the speed limits within the two town centres from 30mph to 20mph. At 20mph, and where traffic flows are less than 2,500 vehicles per day, cyclists are more likely to cycle on the carriageway in mixed traffic. Therefore, the links between local trip generators, including Ashburton town centre and South Dartmoor Community College, would not need further intervention and could be signposted.

The speed along Buckfastleigh Road and Dart Bride Road could be reduced to 30 mph, although a dedicated lane or track for walking and cycling would still be required to ensure that the provision is suitable for most people.

Road Traffic Volume

In Ashburton, and along Buckfastleigh Road, traffic flows are estimated to be between 2,500 and 5,000 vehicles per day. This level of traffic influences the types of interventions which would be possible and therefore would be a key consideration.

Road Width Constraints

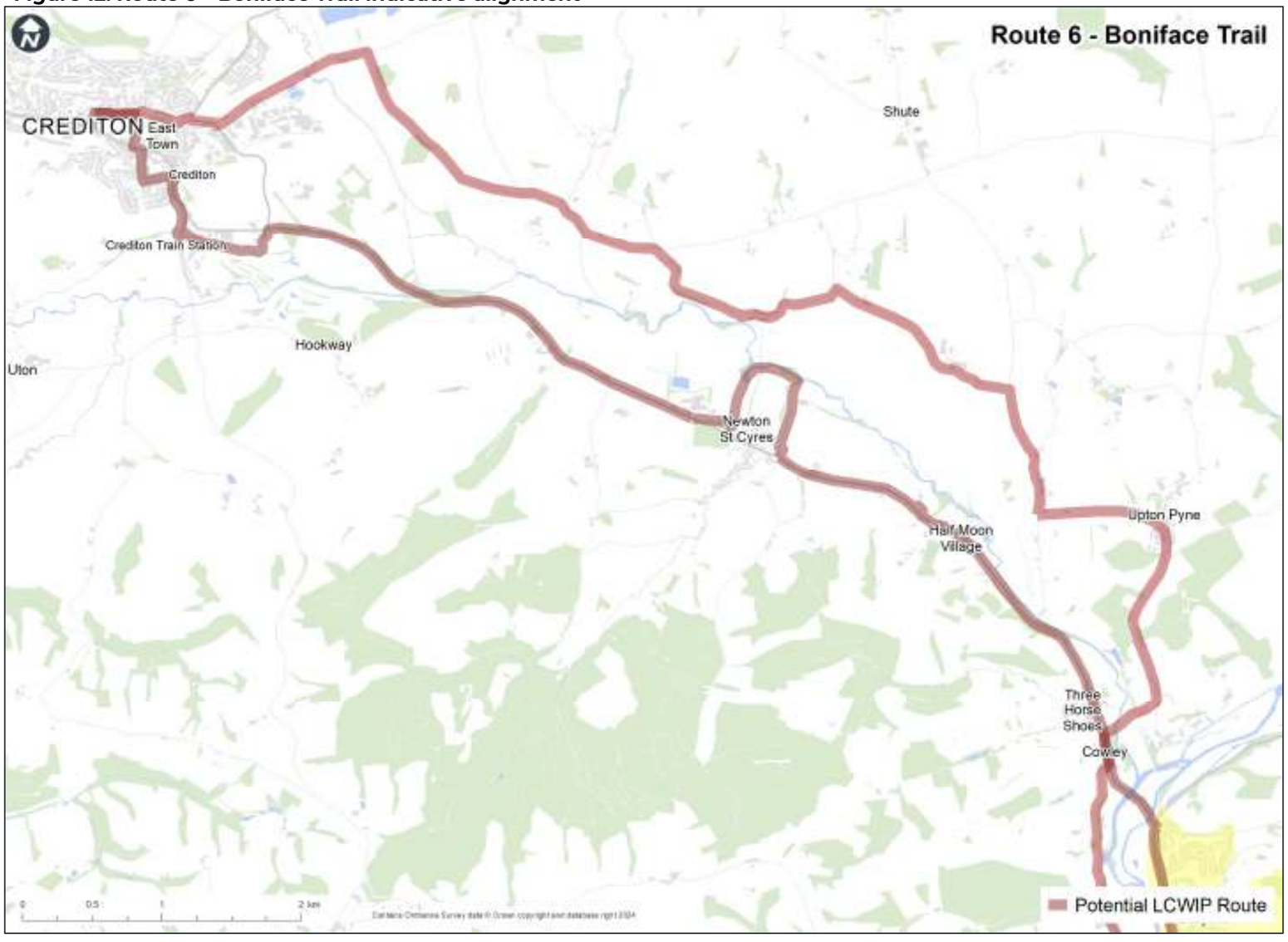
Both Ashburton and Buckfastleigh are historic town centres, with narrow, constrained roads and frequent pinch points. This may result in conflict between cyclists and other road users. Challenging locations include the North Street/East Street junction, Ashburton and Fore Street, Buckfastleigh.

ROUTE 6 – BONIFACE TRAIL

There has been a long-term aspiration to provide an active travel route between Crediton and Exeter, known as the Boniface Trail. This route has been previously looked at by Sustrans and the local Boniface Trail Association. For journeys between the two settlements, there is high demand for sustainable travel, as shown by the number of people using the train which is at capacity in peak periods.

While the distance between Exeter and Crediton is almost 13km, there is no footway to provide a safe walking, wheeling or cycling link between them. The most direct route is along the A377, but this is one of the main road links to northern Devon and, as such, has a high volume of traffic, including a high number of HGVs, passing along it.

Figure 12: Route 6 – Boniface Trail indicative alignment



Detailed Design Public Feedback

Detailed design comments will be informed by the Boniface Trail alignment consultation, which ran October – November 2024.

Case for investment and opportunity

Crediton has a population of 8,000 and is the third largest town in Mid Devon and there are no designated cycling routes in the area. A large number of these residents work or socialise in Exeter and this route would provide an active travel option for these journeys. It would also serve as an alternative mode of travel for leisure and community traffic as well as link together the smaller communities along the route, such as Newton St Cyres. This route would also be used by people travelling to education opportunities at Exeter College and Exeter University, as well as Queen Elizabeth's secondary school, Hayward's Primary School and Landscore Primary school in Crediton.

Alignment

Two options have initially been investigated. These include a route alongside the A377 or making use of quiet lanes to the north of the A377. Both of these options have associated challenges and benefits.

Quiet Lanes

The quiet lanes approach will require upgrades to the footpath leaving Crediton next to the football pitch to link to Shobrooke Lane across the River Creedy. These lanes carry less than 1,000 vehicles a day and so would be suitable for a walking, wheeling and cycling route according to LTN 1/20 guidance, however management of the lanes would be required to reduce volumes of traffic and vehicle speeds. This route would connect to Newton St Cyres along Station Road before rejoining the A377 at Upton Pyne Hill. This route would be cheaper and more deliverable than the direct route, so would have a shorter delivery programme.

A377

The route along the A377 would start at the Tesco roundabout in Crediton with links to the town centre via the train station as suggested in the Crediton Town Centre Masterplan. The route would then run along the northern side of the A377 all the way to the Cowley Bridge Road roundabout on the edge of Exeter. The section between Crediton and Newton St Cyres would require minimal private land and can exploit the verge parallel to the A377 with some minor road realignment. However, the section between Newton St Cyres and Exeter is more challenging and would require some deviation from the A377 through private land to avoid pinch points where houses and cuttings are on both sides of the road.

Challenges

Width Constraints

The existing roads do not have sufficient width to provide space for a segregated walking, wheeling and cycling route. It is likely that a shared active travel route will have to be provided.

Land Ownership

Land that is currently in private ownership will be required to provide a continuous route and engagement with the affected owners to purchase land would be required. DCC would not be looking at acquiring properties to provide either route, only agricultural land.

Topography

Some sections of either route are steep, and it is unlikely the gradients specified in LTN 1/20 guidance can be met for the whole route.

Other Challenges

Providing a link from Cowley into Exeter would be very challenging regardless of alignment.

ROUTE 7 – TEIGN ESTUARY TRAIL

The Teign Estuary Trail between Newton Abbot and Dawlish is a key missing link in NCN 2 and Devon's strategic active travel network.

A section of the Teign Estuary Trail, from Newton Abbot Racecourse to Passage House Inn, was opened in April 2018. The remainder of the route, from Passage House Inn to Dawlish is split into two sections:

Passage House Inn to Bishopsteignton and Teignmouth

The route would be approximately 5km in length from the end of the existing section at Passage House Inn onward to Bishopsteignton and Teignmouth. The western portion of this section would, in most part, hug the estuary but east of Bishopsteignton a route primarily on the northern side of the A381 has been identified which will help achieve desired path widths and estuary views.

Teignmouth to Dawlish

A route between Teignmouth and Holcombe has been identified, beginning in Teignmouth town centre along shared use paths. This would then connect into Dawlish again via shared use paths parallel to the A379, which would be open to cyclists and pedestrians. In addition, there is an existing pedestrian route along the coast.

In the Teignmouth and Dawlish urban areas a light touch approach would be taken; pedestrians would use existing facilities while cyclists would remain on the highway or be routed through quieter, residential routes.

Detailed Design Public Feedback

Following public engagement, comments regarding detailed design have been collected, which will considered at future stages of development. Among others, this includes:

- Vegetation clearance that is mindful of the environment
- Full segregation between modes
- Include interventions within Teignmouth

Figure 13: Route 7 – Teign Estuary Trail indicative alignment

Case for investment and opportunity

Connecting Dawlish, Teignmouth, Bishopsteignton, Kingsteignton and Newton Abbot through the extension of the Teign Estuary Trail would form a national showcase by providing facilities for both leisure and local trips as well as bringing health and economic benefits to the area. It will fill the gap between the existing high quality multi-use routes (Exe Estuary Trail, Stover Trail and Wray Valley Trail) enabling high-quality active travel connectivity spanning from Exeter to the coastal towns and into the heart of Dartmoor. This offers significant tourism and day-trip potential. This would connect into the existing Exe Estuary Trail at Dawlish. The existing levels of walkers and cyclists, and the large number of residents, businesses and visitors in the area highlights the need for delivery.

Key Origin and Destinations

According to the 2021 census, the population across Bishopsteignton, Teignmouth and Dawlish is roughly 30,000. Key origins and destinations in this area include: Teignmouth hospital, Teignmouth Port, Teignmouth Community School, Teignmouth train station, Dawlish Community Hospital, Dawlish train station, Orchard Manor School, Oakwood Specialist College. It would also provide access to the South West Coast Path and active travel access to shops and services in Newton Abbot town centre, Bishopsteignton village, Teignmouth town centre and Dawlish town centre.

Public Support

The existing Teign Estuary Trail plans are incredibly well supported, including by local parish and town councils, the District Council, local businesses and local communities. There is also a Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group who focus on promoting the need for delivery of the project. A public consultation in 2020 received 2,975 responses from the public, with 92% supporting the proposed route.

Alignment

Passage House Inn to Bishopsteignton and Teignmouth

The section between Newton Abbot and Bishopsteignton would run over open land, north of the railway with connections to Bishopsteignton enabling local businesses to benefit from additional trade. It would include sections of boardwalk over land adjacent to the estuary, viewing platforms and a bridge. This route has secured planning permission.

From Bishopsteignton, a shared-use route primarily on the northern side of the A381 has been identified utilising sections of old highway and widening sections of existing footway, to achieve desired path widths and provide estuary views. This would stretch from Bishopsteignton for approximately 1.5km, terminating at the junction of the A381 with the Morrisons.

Teignmouth

Dedicated cycle provision has not been identified past the A381 junction with Morrisons, it is recommended that enhanced wayfinding be used to link the entire Teign Estuary Trail together. Furthermore, to support those cycling on road, signalised junctions along the route could be modified to give priority to cyclists, subject to detailed investigation of the impacts this would have on the overall network.

In Teignmouth, pedestrians would use existing footways. A segregated cycle route is not possible due to urban constraints. It is expected that confident cyclists would remain on the existing highway to navigate the town, whilst those who are less confident would permeate through quieter, residential routes.

Teignmouth to Dawlish

From Teignmouth town centre, pedestrians could use the promenade adjacent to the railway. For cyclists, the route would head northeast using quiet roads and public rights of way, to the south and east of Eastcliffe Mules Park, then shared-use paths parallel to the A379 to Holcombe. Continuing northeast from Holcombe, the route would continue along shared use paths parallel to the A379 to reach Dawlish. There is an existing pedestrian route along the coast.

Dawlish

A light touch approach would be taken with pedestrians using existing facilities. It is expected that confident cyclists would remain on the existing highway, whilst those that are less confident could be routed through quieter, residential routes.

Challenges

Gaps in the Route

There are gaps within this route due to constraints including the nature of the topography and the proximity to the A381, neighbouring properties, the main railway line and the estuary.

Width constraints in Urban Areas

The urban environments (such as in Teignmouth and Dawlish) along the route are severely width constrained. This means that the potential for segregated cycle facilities in urban areas is low in the short term. Therefore, depending on level of ability and confidence, cyclists could remain on the existing highway, or be routed through quieter, residential routes.

Land Ownership

Significant portions of the route proposed between the Passage House Inn and Bishopsteignton is on third-party land. Delivery of the route would require negotiating with and purchasing land from the existing landowners.

Topography

Where the route comes inland from the Teign Estuary, there is the possibility that sections of the route may be of a steep gradient.

ROUTE 8 – OTTER TRAIL

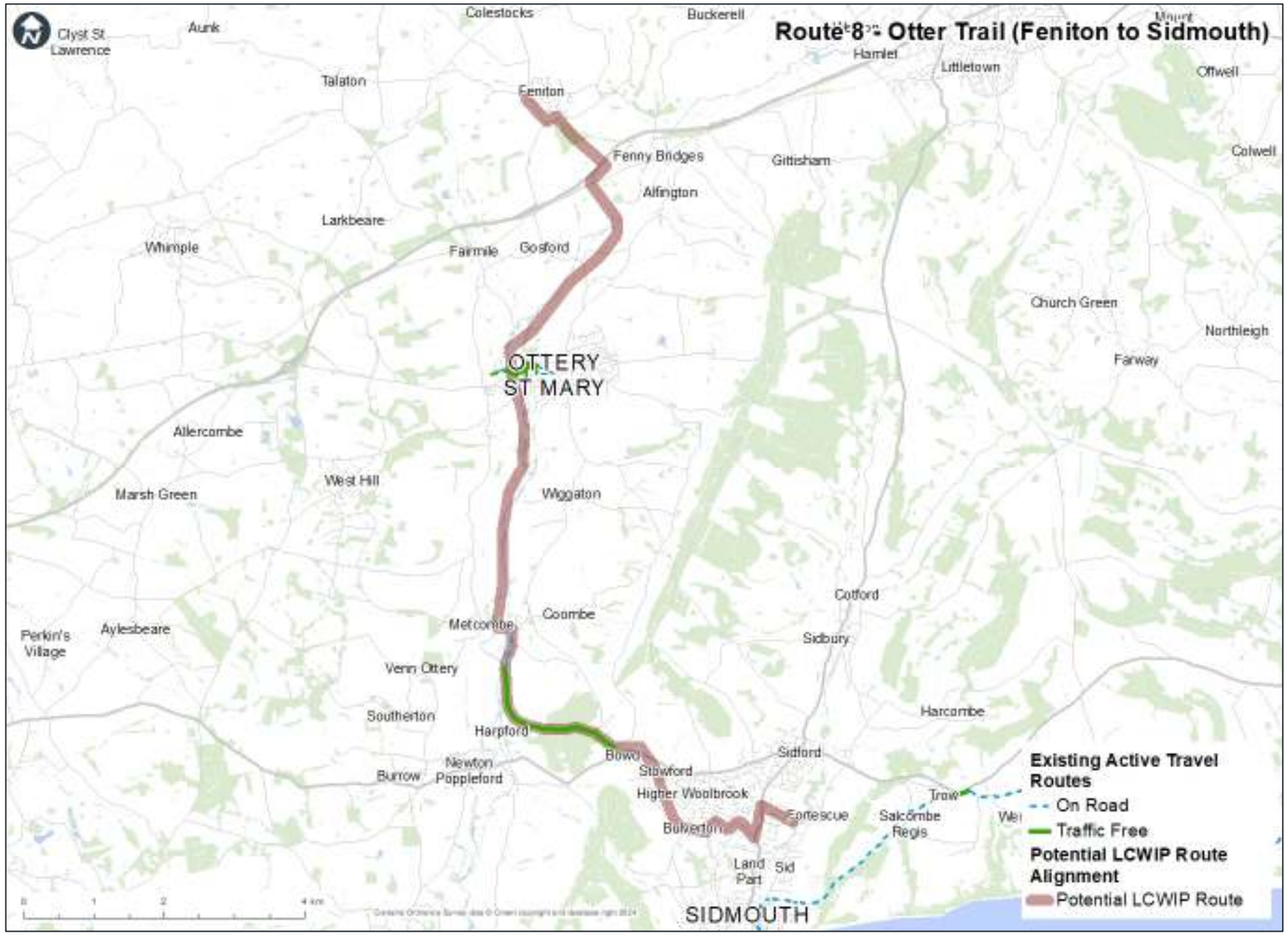
The route would run from Feniton in the north, where a mainline railway station links the area to Exeter and London, to Sidmouth and NCN2 in the south. Along the proposed route are the communities of Ottery St Mary and Tipton St John.

The route roughly follows the disused railway line throughout, but due to varying states of the railway, there are sections where alternative alignments are considered. At this stage of the process the route is a concept to link up settlements. The detail of exactly where the route should go remains flexible.

The terrain of the route is hilly in most of the sections. The sections passing through the towns of Feniton, West Hill, Ottery St Mary, Sidford and Newton Poppleford is close to residential areas and the other sections are mostly agriculture land.

Concepts around this route have been in the public domain since approximately 2000, and have included various feasibility studies, appraisal papers and campaign groups. A feasibility study for the complete route was developed and published by Sustrans in April 2014.

Figure 14: Route 8 – Otter Trail indicative alignment



Detailed Design Public Feedback

Following public engagement, comments regarding detailed design have been collected, which will considered at future stages of development. Among others, this includes:

- Set route back from risk of river erosion
- Ensure surfacing is unbound to retain rural nature of the area
- Address the blind corner at Feniton.

Case for investment and opportunity

The Sustrans feasibility study estimates the total population served by the route would to be around 26,000 (April 2014).

Key Origin and Destinations

The route has high potential use as it connects five settlements, namely Feniton, Ottery St Mary, Tipton St John, Bowd and Sidmouth.

These settlements are not currently linked by any walking, wheeling and cycling provision, the Otter Trail would significantly increase the attractiveness of active travel modes both for shorter distance utility cycling trips, commuting trips and for longer leisure trips. The route would connect into several local schools as well as connecting wider into the NCN 2 route from Sidmouth.

The Sustrans feasibility study highlights the potential tourism value such a route could bring to the area, especially where East Devon is already a popular destination.

The route would also enable multi-modal trips by linking into the Feniton railway station.

Public Support

There is strong and established local support, through campaign groups and research external to DCC, demonstrating a strong local case for the trail.

Alignment

Across the route, there are several sections in which a traffic-free option can be sought. Traffic-free sections could be implemented between Feniton and Ottery St Mary as well as through Ottery St Mary itself, either along existing footpaths or using alternative alignments.

Between Ottery St Mary and Tipton St John, a further traffic-free section could be implemented. This could build on the popularity of the area as a leisure destination.

Between Tipton St John and Bowd, the route would initially follow existing minor roads through Tipton St John, linking to local amenities and then could continue along the old railway alignment as a traffic-free route.

In Sidmouth, the route would be a combination of on-road facilities or using quiet roads and the existing The Byres cycle route.

As this is a long and complex route, detailed feasibility work would be required to assess the deliverability of the above options and identify alternatives where they would be more appropriate.

Challenges

Land Ownership

The main challenge identified for the route is the length of the route combined with the complexity of delivery resulting from numerous land ownership issues that would need to be overcome.

This likely means that the route would be developed piecemeal, with some sections being quick-wins and others taking longer to plan and deliver on the ground.

Environmental Considerations

The route is partly situated in the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which may make delivery more complex.

As the route runs along the River Otter in many places, flooding may also pose challenges. It is important that any detailed design of the route carefully considers climate resilience and flood mitigations where necessary.

Other Challenges

Another challenge of the route would be the sections without natural surveillance which can decrease the perceived level of safety, particularly for vulnerable users. This may make the route less attractive, for example, for commuting trips in the evening during winter. However, the route would be popular with those cycling and walking for leisure purposes.

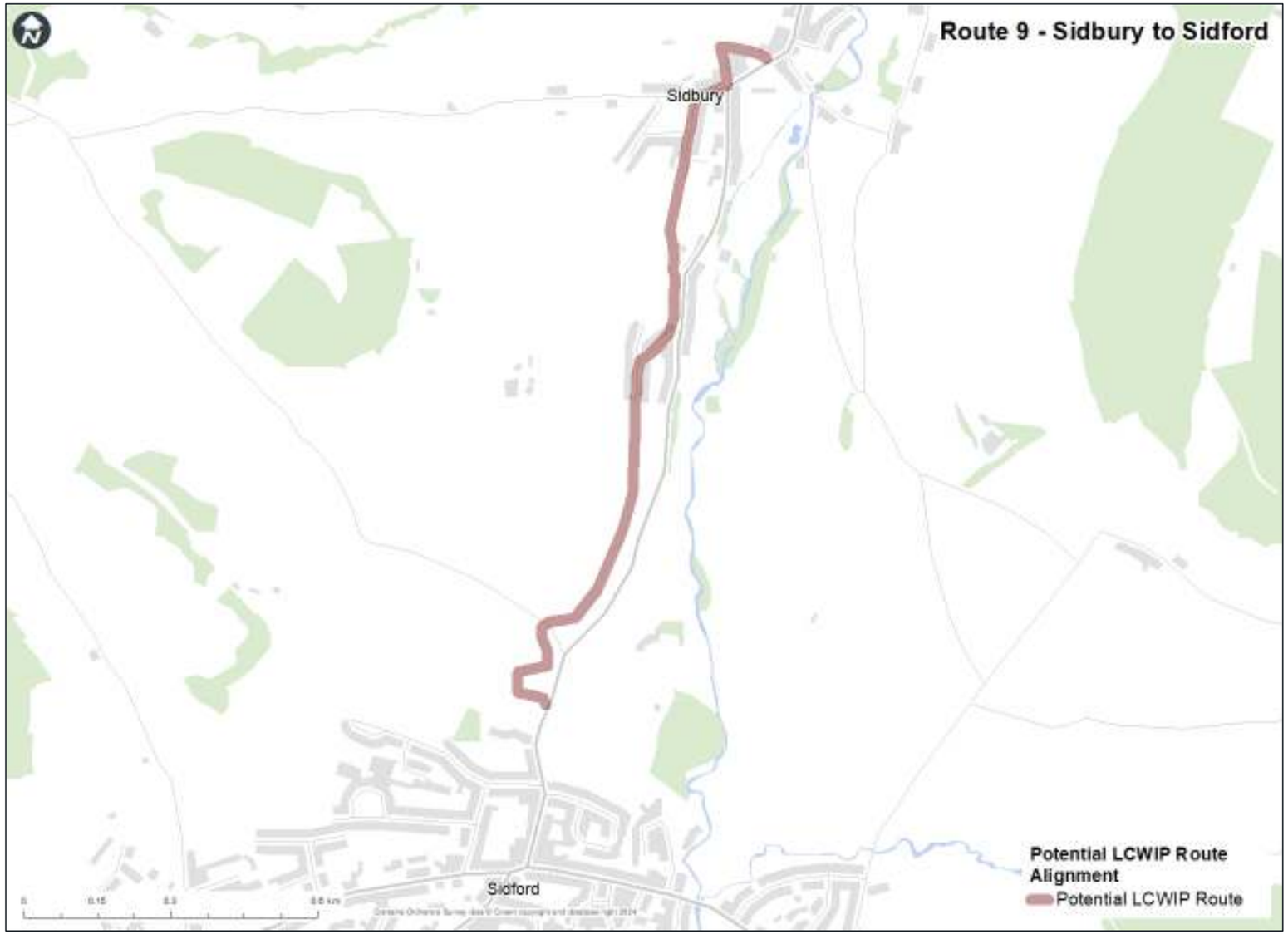
ROUTE 9 – SIDBURY TO SIDFORD

Sidbury is situated 1km to the north of Sidford, connected by the A375. Despite the short distance between the settlements, opportunities for those walking, wheeling and cycling are very limited. The A375 is not suitable for people to travel actively, regardless of ability and confidence level, and there is no dedicated active travel infrastructure.

The total length of the route is 2.5km, primarily, through agricultural fields and residential settlements in Sidbury and Sidford. It starts at Two Bridges Road near Brook Close, Sidford, passing through Hillside and Furzehill before entering Sidbury and ending at Fore Street.

The route will deliver a long-standing ambition to connect Sidbury and Sidford via an active travel route, enabling sustainable journeys and access to the natural environment between the settlements and onwards towards Sidmouth, and the seafront leisure opportunities.

Figure 15: Route 9 – Sidbury to Sidford indicative alignment



Case for investment and opportunity

The entirety of the Sidbury – Sidford route would be approximately 2.5km, a comfortable distance for active travel. This would connect Sidbury with the onward travel opportunities from Sidford towards Sidmouth.

The route would support a population of circa 2,500 in Sidford and Sidbury (2021 census) alongside supporting active travel options for residential development sites around Sidbury and enabling onward active travel journeys to Sidmouth.

Due to the proximity of the settlements, there is very large potential for modal shift for most trip purposes between the settlements.

Furthermore, linking into existing cycling facilities such as The Byes and the Otter Trail would provide wider connectivty from Sidford and Sidbury into Sidmouth and the seafront.

Key Origin and Destinations

The complete route will support residents of Sidbury to undertake short-distance trips by active travel into Sidford and onto Sidmouth, faciliating and encouraging modal shift for a range of trip purposes including retail, education and leisure. This would also provide the opportunity for children to travel to the primary school in Sidbury.

Public Support

Public engagement carried out between November 2023 and January 2024 showed strong public support for the scheme.

Alignment

The first phase of the scheme will provide a new walking and cycling link between Sidford and Hillside, with Phase 2 extending into Sidbury. It will connect from the Ford's development at Two Bridges, crossing the A375 via a new crossing, and continue northbound to the west of the road. A multi-use path would be provided within the existing fields, crossing Ottery Lane and connecting back into the road network at Hillside. It is proposed to progress this first phase of the multi-use trail between Sidbury and Sidford through planning. Further detail of the route will be developed as part of this process.

Additional proposals are also in place to extend the multi-user path connection into the heart of Sidbury, connecting north from Hillside towards Furzehill and removing the need to travel 500m along Chapel Street (A375) to Fore Street. Delivery and timing of this phase will likely be in combination with emerging development proposals and third-party landowners.

No works are proposed to Hillside itself, apart from signage. Signs are proposed along Hillside to denote that this will be used by cyclists and pedestrians, with additional warning signs along the A375 (either side of the Hillside junction) to warn road-users of the likely presence of cyclists. There is also the potential to implement Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in the form of yellow lines at the Hillside junction to limit indiscriminate car parking and improve visibility. However, this would be undertaken separately to the route, by the County Council, if considered necessary.

Challenges

There is no current infrastructure for people walking, wheeling or cycling along the route.

Land Ownership

The proposed route is predominantly off-road and will require land purchase to successfully complete the route.

Infrastructure

The proposed route requires users to cross two roads; the A375 just outside of Sidford, and Ottery Lane. Each crossing will be designed to provide adequate visibility between the path users and road users. At the A375 crossing, a parallel crossing (a zebra-style crossing for pedestrians and cyclists) will be installed and an extension of the 20mph speed limit will be explored.

Environmental Concerns

The area is ecologically sensitive and therefore the selected alignment must consider what vegetation clearance may be required and the potential for flooding due to the proximity to land which is classified as Flood Zone 3, indicating a high probability of flooding.

Ebdon Lane

It will not be possible to connect the route into Ebdon Lane due to the topography and height differences between Ebdon Lane and Hillside.

Other Challenges

The off-highway alignment decreases levels of natural surveillance aloing the route which will need to be considered and addressed through the design process.

ROUTE 10 – BEER TO AXMINSTER AND UPLYME

The proposed 23km route in East Devon connects Beer to Uplyme via Seaton, Colyford, Colyton and Axminster.

The corridor broadly follows NCN Route 2 between Beer and Axminster, shown in blue in Figure 16, connecting key towns and popular tourist destinations. From Axminster the route heads south to Uplyme on the Devon-Dorset border, enhancing connectivity for both residents and visitors.

The hilly topography between Beer and Seaton will be challenging to overcome and careful consideration will need to be given to increasing the width of any cycling provision.

Delivery of improvements to sections of the route between Seaton and Colyford have recently opened. The proposed route will deliver a 3km sustainable travel link between Colyford and Seaton, complementing the in-progress construction of sections of the NCN. This then continues to Axminster via on-road sections of the NCN.

There are no existing cycle routes between Axminster and Uplyme. The proposed route provides an opportunity to form part of the NCN, linking Uplyme with the wider network, with potential for future connections across the County border into Lyme Regis.

Along the length of the corridor, potential improvements would see quick wins such as improved wayfinding and advisory cycle routes alongside more ambitious long-term improvements such as the creation of an off-road cycleway. Overall, the aim is to make the route attractive for year-round usage by removing some of the existing barriers on the route.

Figure 16: Route 10 – Beer to Axminster and Uplyme indicative alignment

Detailed Design

Following public engagement, comments regarding detailed design have been collected, which will considered at future stages of development. Among others, this includes:

- Utilise disused railway line where possible.
- Add crossings to the A35 where possible.
- Set trail back entirely from the road.

Case for investment and opportunity

The population across the six towns is 18,384 with the majority (7,439) living within Seaton followed by Axminster (6,089)(2021 census).

Key origin and destinations

The key origins and destinations along the corridor include settlements Beer, Seaton, Colyton, Axminster and Uplyme; Axminster Railway Station; health care facilities at Seaton and Axminster; primary schools in Seaton, Colyton, Axminster and Uplyme; secondary schools in Colyton and Axminster, leisure facilities in Axminster and Colyton, and large retail stores in Seaton and Axminster.

Leisure and Tourism

At the western end of the corridor, there are a number of tourist desintations including Pecorama - home to the famous PECO Model Railway Exhibition and the Beer Heights Light Railway and the Seaton Tramway.

Seaton and Beer beaches are popular destinations on the Jurassic coast and both offer access to the South West Coast Path. Alongside Seaton beach is the esplanade, where kayaks or stand up paddleboards can be hired on site.

The eastern end of the corridor is within the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and close to several National Trust areas, such as Loughwood Meeting House, Seaton Marshes and Shute Barton.

Alignment

Wayfinding

The proposed route would benefit from information boards and signage highlighting the variety of amenities and tourist attractions. Along the route, wayfinding would be beneficial at key junctions.

Beer to Seaton

Primarily on-carriageway alignment with interventions to reduce traffic flows and speeds. Use of existing off-road footpath adjacent to New Road may require changes to bylaws to formally include cycle usage.

Seaton to Axminster

In Seaton, a new shared-use path at the rear of the residential properties located on The Saltings, connects the off-road provisions between Seaton/Colyford Road juntion and Marsh Lane Cemetery.

Short term: Improving existing NCN alignment and providing new routes between neighbouring communties, to ensure short distance all-year round cycle links.

Long term: A section of shared use trail has previously been proposed along existing public rights of way between Colyford and Whitford. This has the potential to create a safer and more comfortable leisure and long distance route, complementing NCN alignment for short distance utility journeys around the Colyton and Colyford area.

Axminster to Uplyme

A35: Provide a shared use path along the A35, including a new toucan crossing. If appropriate, a small detour to minimise crossing distance may be considered.

Lyme Road (B3261): Short term: There is no highway width available to cater for off-road cycling on this section and therefore a reduction in speed limits or further traffic calming measures will be necessary. Long term: There is likely to be a desire for cycling provision along Lyme Road, especially between Loup Court and the A35(Axminster) and between the A35 and Uplyme village. Due to the levels of traffic, road width and lack of existing footway provision, a dedicated shared use or segregated path parallel to the road is likely to be required.

Challenges

Gradient

The proposed route links the settlements on the Jurassic Coast with primary towns further inland. Both ends of the corridor are steep in sections, especially between Beer and Seaton and Uplyme and Axminster.

Road width constraints

Sections of the route are narrow and may act as pinch points, resulting in conflict between cyclists and other road users.

The key challenges for sections of the route are around the suitability of the on-road sections for all ability levels and the directness of the route.

High traffic volume

For the B3261, the A35 and Lyme Road traffic volumes have been estimated as over 5,000 vehicles per day . Further investigation, such as a manual traffic count, would be required.

Land ownership

Sections of the route such as Axminster to Uplyme and Beer to Seaton with high traffic volumes and speeds combined with narrow roads may be a barrier to some cyclists, especially those cycling with families or for leisure. This may be overcome by providing an off-road, traffic free cycleway next to the carriageway. However, this may require purchasing land. Landowners would need to be identified, approached and be willing to sell to progress the development of an off-road shared use path.

Route flooding

Some sections at lower elevations between Axminster and Seaton, particularly along the Rivers Axe, Coly and Yarty, are at risk of flooding throughout the year. The ambition should be to create a route that is accessible all year round.

4. NETWORK PRIORITISATION

INTRODUCTION

Funding for active travel schemes and infrastructure is typically awarded from the Government and in many cases, it requires Local Authorities to bid. Therefore, it is important that a set of schemes are identified ahead of the bidding process.

Stage 5 of the LCWIP process involves prioritising the routes developed in previous stages and collating a delivery plan. This can be used later to target funding bid to schemes higher in the delivery plan.

APPROACH TO PRIORITISATION

In order to compare the various routes proposed, a number of criteria have been selected. At this stage, any assessment is high-level, and the selected criteria reflects this.

The criteria used is as follows:

Distance between settlements

This criterion reflects the fact that shorter trips are more likely to be replaced by walking, wheeling or cycling than longer trips. This does vary by trip purpose, as longer trips for leisure are more likely to be replaced than those for commuting. To reflect the fact that some of the routes considered in the LCWIP link multiple settlements together, the average length of route between settlements has been used to inform the score. This has been done by taking the total length and dividing it by the number of settlements it connects.

Complexity of delivery

As highlighted when detailing each route, there are various challenges in delivering the planned schemes. These could include width restricted urban conditions or sections where third-party land may be required or where particular restrictions may be in place.

Development stage of the scheme

The routes considered in this LCWIP range from very early stages to previously developed schemes that already have some level of detailed design and traction. Already developed schemes are likely to need less investment and can facilitate quicker delivery.

Cost

This criterion looks at the investment each scheme would require in order to deliver the necessary improvements. At this stage this is a high-level assessment and not indicative of actual development and construction costs which would require detailed design to calculate precisely. This is not available for all schemes at this time.

Scope for developer contributions

Another avenue available to Local Authorities for delivering infrastructure schemes is via developer contributions. These will typically be proportionate to the scale of the development and can be used to fund sections of schemes such as LCWIP routes.

Public Feedback

Through public consultation, it was ascertained the percentage of respondents who considered each route to be their top priority. This resulted in a public priority order, which was combined with other criteria to produce the final priority order.

OUTCOME OF PRIORITISATION

Based on their scores against each criteria, the ten routes have been prioritised into the following groups:

SHORT TERM

- Route 1 – Tark Trail (Knowle to Willingcott)
- Route 7 – Teign Estuary Trail
- Route 9 – Sidbury to Sidford

MEDIUM TERM

- Route 3 – Roborough to Dousland
- Route 8 – Otter Trail

LONGER TERM

- Route 2 – Ruby Way/Tarka Trail (Holsworthy to Meeth)
- Route 4 – Yealmpton to Newton Ferrers
- Route 5 – Ashburton to Buckfastleigh
- Route 6 – Boniface Trail
- Route 10 – Beer to Axminster and Uplyme

Routes have been prioritised to indicate the order in which the County expects to allocate resource to the development and delivery of schemes. Within each route, all routes are the same priotyi. When taking this priority order through to scheme delivery there is a need for a flexible approach, adapting to changing circumstances and opportunities. For example, certain private sector development sites with associated cycling and walking contributions may come forward sooner, or later, than anticipated, and scheme priorities may change to reflect this. There may also be opportunities to incorporate cycling and walking improvements as part of other transport schemes.

5. INTEGRATION AND APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION

The final stage of the LCWIP process considers how the LCWIP can be integrated into local policy, strategies and plans, as well as practical applications of the outputs.

The Countywide LCWIP is intended to ensure that future active travel investment is targeted to where it can have the greatest impact, particularly in terms of increasing the numbers of journeys being walked, wheeled and cycled. This section sets out Devon County Council's intended approach to progressing the LCWIP corridors and integrating the LCWIP into relevant workstreams.

INTEGRATION

The LCWIP will be one of the key documents feeding into the development of the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). It will also be used in other workstreams within Devon County Council, as it can be used to:

- Provide evidence and justification for funding bids and proposals;
- Help develop local planning policy;
- Provide evidence for use in future localised studies;
- Provide information for inclusion in Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements as part of planning applications; and
- Inform the determination of planning applications and inform financial contribution requests from developers.

DELIVERY

Each corridor will require more detailed design, engagement and consultation in order to determine the specific alignment and interventions.

The priority corridors outlined in this document would represent investment in walking, wheeling and cycling that far exceeds £100m. Due to the nature of local authority funding, the majority of funding is likely to come from bids to central Government. The future funding streams are therefore unclear and it would be inappropriate to commit to exact delivery timescales.

NEXT STEPS

The priority corridors identified within the LCWIP will be taken forward as funding becomes available and will be subject to further design work and engagement. Sometimes funding is available for design only, or for construction and delivery.

In broad terms, the next steps for each corridor will be as follows:

- The corridor will be selected for progression; for example where it meets funding bid criteria or will enable new development to be delivered.
- Potential alignments for the route and their feasibility will be investigated, with early stage inputs from, and engagement with stakeholders and the public.
- Then a detailed design will be prepared for a preferred alignment, along with any supporting work to secure necessary approvals and consents, such as with landowners, planning applications or public rights of way orders.

MISCELLANEOUS MINOR WORKS

Alongside the 10 priority routes within this strategy, there are ambitions to improve Devon's existing multi-use trail network. The existing network is an asset enabling residents and visitors to walk, wheel and cycle across Devon. Many of the routes on this network have been in place for a number of years and were designed using guidance that has since been superseded; sections may not be accessible or as user-friendly as they could be. To improve this, a programme of minor improvements will be developed to improve the accessibility of routes and ensure they comply with modern guidance. This will include:

- The removal of staggered barriers or gates that are in place either unnecessarily or too close together.
- Implement dropped kerbs where they are missing or where they do not align with desire lines of users.
- Improving the alignment where short sections of routes aren't coherent .

Reviews and improvements may take place on a route-by-route basis or by taking a more ad-hoc approach based on the priorities of local communities and available funding.

REVIEWING AND UPDATING

The LCWIP will be reviewed periodically to reflect progress made. Updates will indicate significant changes in local circumstances, such as the completion of infrastructure, publication of new policies or strategies, major new development sites, or new sources of funding.

5.1. CONCLUSION

Establishing active travel as the first choice for local everyday journeys has the potential to unlock major benefits, including: improved health; better air quality; improved place-making and town centre regeneration; boosted connectivity; strengthened local communities and economies, and reduced congestion.

In combination with urban LCWIPs across the county, the Devon Countywide LCWIP provides the long-term framework setting out DCC's priorities for routes.

The realisation of these connected networks provided by DCC's active travel strategies will provide transformational opportunities for active travel across the county.

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