

Worcester - Malvern Cycleway Feasibility Study



June 2012

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**REPORT INTENDED TO BE PRINTED IN FULL
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Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day.

We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in. It's time we all began making smarter travel choices.



1. Purpose of this report

1.1 Introduction

The Malvern Hills AONB kindly commissioned Sustrans to undertake this feasibility study. Development of a cycle route between Worcester and Malvern fits many of the AONB's Strategic Objectives (see Section 2 for more information).

It has long been Sustrans' desire to see the creation of a new stretch of National Cycle Network (NCN) to link Malvern and Worcester. This new stretch of route would be approximately 6 kilometres long (from outskirts to outskirts) and would be numbered NCN 46.

Of all the routes Sustrans wishes to see created in the West Midlands, it is fair to say that this particular stretch of NCN 46 has garnered the most public interest, and this has only intensified as the Lottery funded cycling and walking project in Worcester, delivered in partnership between Worcester City Council, Worcestershire County Council and Sustrans, has neared completion; this project, which centres on the new Diglis Bridge, gives a direct cycling and walking route right from the city centre all the way out to Worcester's outskirts at Powick Hams.

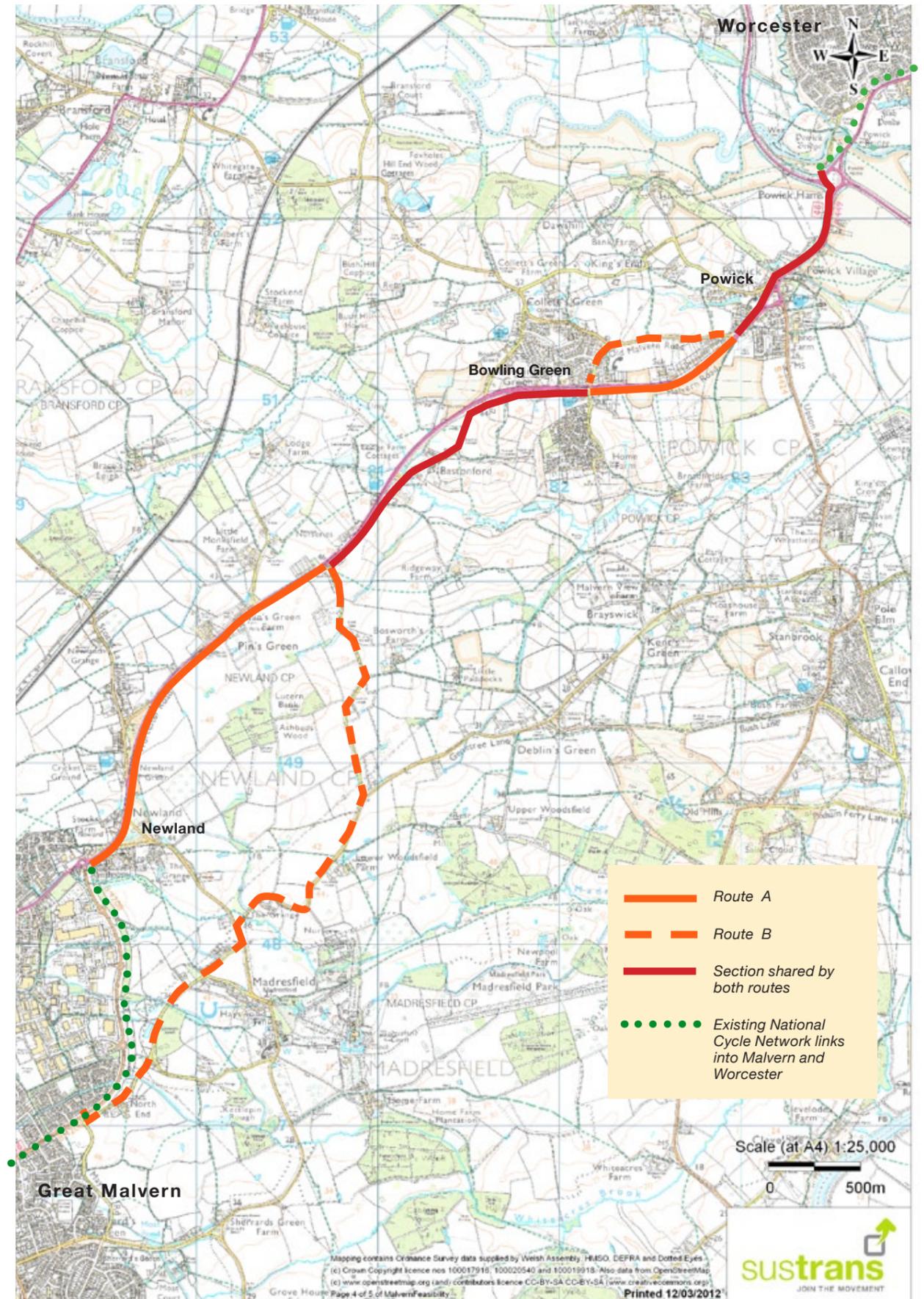
At 6 kilometres long (and perhaps 10 or 12 kilometres door-to-door) the distance between Worcester and Malvern is eminently suitable for regular cycle-commuting. Linking Worcester (which is already well connected in the National Cycle Network) with Malvern will also increase the opportunities for both recreational cycling and cycle tourism. There is much interest in recreational cycling locally, witnessed by both towns having their own thriving cycling clubs, and by the growing success of the recently formed "Just Leisure Rides" (see Section 8 for more information on Just Leisure Rides), whilst increased opportunities for cycle tourism fit very well with other local initiatives, such as the excellent "comecyclingLedbury" web resource and the marketing of local hotels, such as the Diglis House Hotel in Worcester, as being 'cyclist friendly'.

With the public interest in a route (mentioned above) has come a number of suggestions for routes for the link to take; to make sure that the public's opinion was properly known a formal consultation was undertaken as a part of this study.

This report seeks to assess the 'verdict' of this collected opinion, and to match it with the technical issues that must be addressed when creating new cycle routes.

This report also sets out estimates for the various costs associated with the development of the link and it discusses the possibility of delivering the works in phases, to suit possible sources of funding.

Map showing the proposed routes between Malvern and Worcester



1.2 Geographical background

In transport planning terms, the area's focus is very much on Worcester as the main location of services and facilities, and a major hub for transport, providing connections to the West Midlands, the South West, the rest of the United Kingdom.

Approximately 286,400 people live in South Worcestershire, with 94,700 of those living in Worcester and 75,000 in the Malvern Hills District. Approximately 70% of Worcester City residents live and work within the city whilst 59% of Malvern Hills District residents work near where they live.

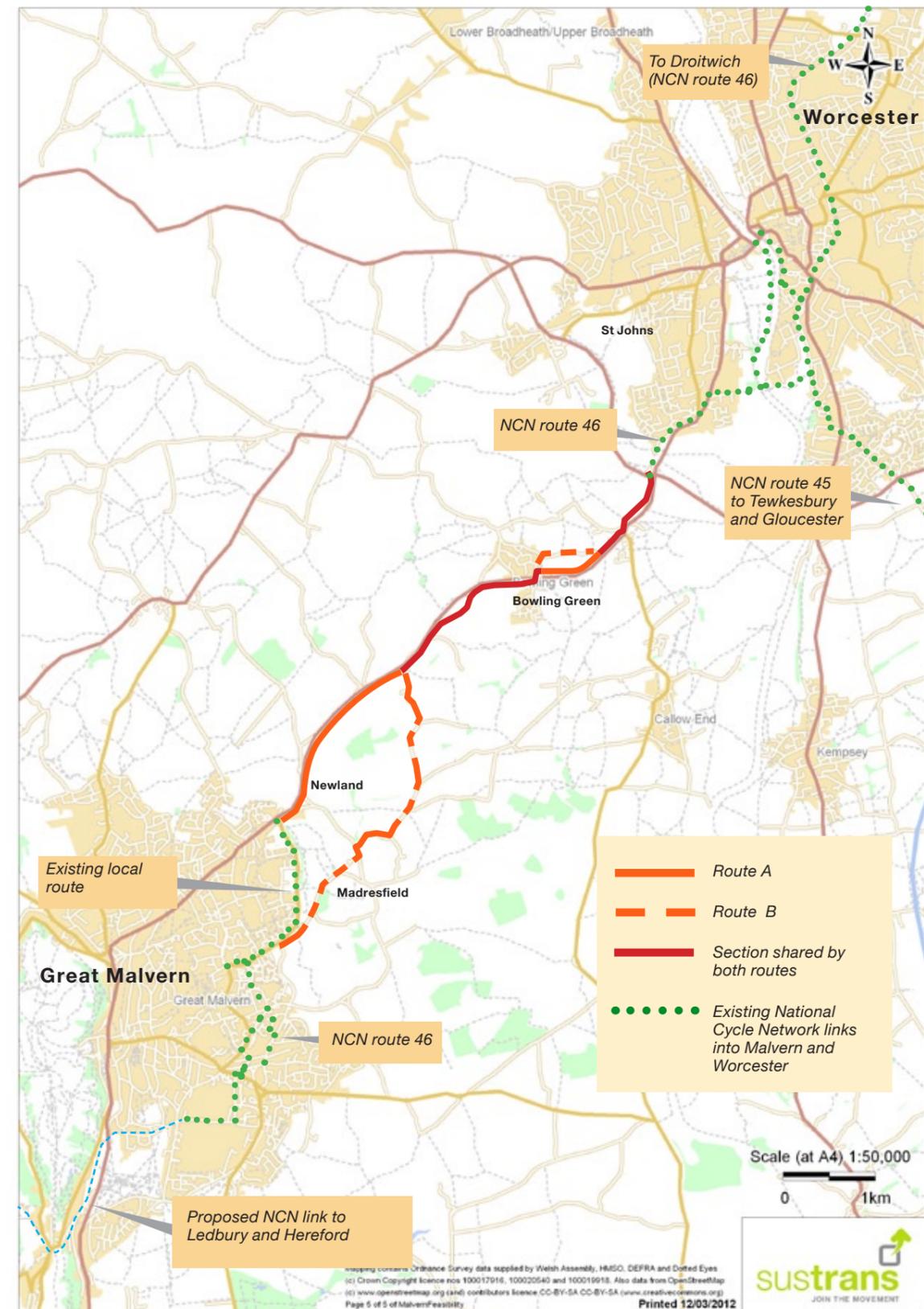
Malvern Hills has an ageing population structure with a higher proportion of its residents over retirement age than in Worcester (24.5% compared with 17.5%), while Worcester has a greater concentration of working age residents (64%). This trend is forecast to continue.

The following table, extracted from the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan, sets out how the residents of Worcester and Malvern travel to work.

Table 1.1 Mode of travel to work

Mode of travel to work	Malvern Hills %	Worcester %
Work at home	14%	8%
Train	2%	1%
Bus	2%	5%
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	1%	1%
By car	70%	65%
Walking/ cycling	11%	19%
Other	1%	1%
total	100%	100%

Map showing the proposed routes and NCN connections in Malvern and Worcester



2. Policy context

2.1 Introduction

Developing new routes to add to the National Cycle Network meets many objectives at national, regional and local level. This section of the report brings together key policies and plans to which the development of a route linking Worcester and Malvern aligns perfectly, and it opens with Sustrans' own narrative on the need for the National Cycle Network.

2.2 Sustrans' 'National Cycle Network Strategy 2009-2013'

In the UK we are travelling further and faster than ever before. We are also using our cars more, often for short journeys that could be walked or cycled. The National Cycle Network provides alternative routes to car travel for many everyday journeys. As climate change emissions from car travel continue to rise and obesity from lack of physical activity rises in epidemic proportions, alternatives have never been more necessary.

As governments of the UK search for policies that lead to a sustainable transport system the National Cycle Network provides an exemplar for the creation of environments that enable people to walk and cycle for their everyday local journeys. Catalysed by UK legislation for statutory reduction in climate change emissions governments, businesses and individuals are now beginning to be faced with choices that will over time associate a number of costs to high carbon behaviour – making walking and cycling more necessary.

At present only 2% of journeys in the UK are undertaken by cycle with many other countries having a much high proportion – The Netherlands for example has 27% of all journeys undertaken by cycle.

The National Cycle Network is one of the ways that Sustrans seeks to influence the proportion of UK journeys that are taken on foot and by cycle. Sustrans calls on the Governments of the UK to adopt policies that will enable 4 out

of 5 local journeys to be made by foot, bike and public transport by 2020. By providing both strategic infrastructure and routes, the National Cycle Network provides a practical alternative for people's everyday journeys, thereby contributing to the achievement of the 4 out of 5 journey objective.

Enabling people to cycle and walk more will tackle five critical challenges:

- **Obesity and related health conditions** – enabling people to be more physically active for everyday journeys (like cycling to school or walking to the shops) will transform the health of adults and children throughout the UK.
- **Climate change** – personal car use is responsible for 13% of total carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the UK. Enabling people to leave their car behind for many of the 58% of car journeys that are less than 5 miles (and longer journeys as a result of better integration of travel) will make an important contribution to achieving the UK's CO₂ reduction targets.
- **Energy security** – as oil becomes more expensive, and as the UK seeks to de-carbonise the energy used in our homes, hospitals, schools and other essential places, enabling people to travel in the most energy efficient way possible for short, local journeys will increase our economic resilience in the face of rising energy prices.
- **Congestion** – Car traffic has increased some 15% in the last ten years with resulting congestion in Britain costing £10 billion per year. Enabling people to choose an alternative to car travel will reduce congestion and improve quality of life.
- **Liveability and place making** – by improving the place/built environment and enabling people to walk or cycle to local facilities the liveability of neighbourhoods and town/cities will be enhanced which in turn has a profound effect on the quality of life experienced by those people.

2.3 Malvern Hills AONB 'Management Plan 2009-2014'

Extracts from the two key sets of Guiding Principles/ Strategic Objectives in the "Sustainable Communities" chapter of this management plan, which support the development of a cycle route to link Worcester and Malvern, are set out below.

Tourism, recreation and access

Guiding principles:

TP1. The development and management of tourism and recreation in the AONB should take place within an overriding framework of sustainability. It should be based on good evidence, respecting the character of the area and the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.

Strategic objectives:

TO1. Encourage and stimulate sustainable tourism and recreational use of the AONB, providing a quality visitor experience that helps to protect the local environment, contributes to the health of the community and supports the economy of the area.

TO2. Provide enhanced sustainable access and accessibility to recreation and tourist facilities and the public rights of way network.

TO3. Pursue appropriate opportunities to spread recreational use to those areas which can sustain it and which will benefit from it.

Transport

Guiding principles:

TRP1. The impacts of the private car should be reduced. Wherever possible, local people and visitors should be able to access their desired destinations in the AONB by public transport services and other sustainable alternatives to the private car.

Strategic objectives:

TRO2. Ensure that all road and infrastructure improvements (including lighting and signage) are designed and implemented to have minimum impact on the special character of the AONB.

TRO5. Investigate the development of dedicated routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders within the AONB.

TRO6. Develop, support and promote sustainable transport options to meet local transport needs.

2.4 Malvern Hills AONB 'Subsidiary Purposes'

Two of the Malvern Hills AONB's "Subsidiary Purposes" also align perfectly with the development of the route:

Purpose to have regard to the principles of sustainable development: 'Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment'.

Purpose to have regard to the needs of recreation: 'the demand for recreation should be met insofar as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty'.

2.5 The Malvern Hills Partnership's 'Sustainable Community Strategy'

Development of a route fits perfectly with the Partnership's strategy that seeks to "raise awareness of key environmental issues and to drive down our reliance on fossil fuels. The Partnership knows that an environmentally friendly district that understands the environmental and financial impacts of climate change will lead to a need to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions."

"This partnership working will lead to a reduced carbon footprint for the district and an increased public understanding of what can be done to tackle climate change."

2.6 Worcestershire County Council Local Transport Plan 2011-2026; 'Objectives'

Table 1.2 from this plan fits the Worcestershire LTP3 objectives to national and local objectives. It can be seen from this table that the development of a route to link Worcester and Malvern fits the first five Objectives perfectly, and with reasonable care would fit the final one (the Asset Management Objective) too.

2.7 Worcestershire County Council Local Transport Plan 2011-2026; "The South Worcestershire Rural Package"

The Local Transport Plan splits the County into areas and then sets out proposals for schemes in each area. Development of a cycle route to link Worcester and Malvern appears in the Plan's "South Worcestershire Rural Package", as set out in the abstracted table (Table 1.3).

Table 1.2 Worcester County Council Local Transport Plan Objectives

National Transport Objectives	Worcestershire Community Strategy Objectives	Worcestershire Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) Objectives
To support national economic competitiveness and growth, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks.	Economic success that is shared by all Stronger Communities	To support Worcestershire's economic competitiveness and growth through delivering a reliable and efficient transport network: The Economic Objective
To reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change.	A better environment for today and tomorrow	To reduce the impacts of transport in Worcestershire on the local environment, by reducing noise and transport-related emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcomes of tackling climate change and reducing the impacts of transport on public health: The Environment Objective
To contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life-expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health.	Communities that are safe and feel safe	To contribute towards better safety, security, health and longer life expectancy in Worcestershire, by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport and promoting healthy modes of travel: The Health and Safety Objective
To promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society;	Stronger Communities Meeting the needs of children and young people	To optimise equality of opportunity for all of Worcestershire's citizens with the desired outcome of creating a fairer society: The Equality Objective
To improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment	A better environment for today and tomorrow	To enhance the quality of life for Worcestershire's residents by promoting a healthy, natural environment, conserving our historic built environment and preserving our heritage assets: The Quality of Life Objective
	Economic success that is shared by all Stronger Communities A better environment for today and tomorrow	To enhance the quality of Worcestershire's Transport Asset, through sensitive and appropriate design with the desired outcome of reducing the costs and inconvenience of maintenance works: The Asset Management Objective

Table 1.3 South Worcestershire Rural Package

Scheme name	Potential Funding Sources	Description	Cost	Risk to WCC	Risk detail	Timescale
A449/ A4440 MALVERN-WORCESTER (M5 Junction 7) Inter-urban Corridor	LTP/ Developers/ Maintenance/ Sustrans	This proposed scheme would involve a comprehensive corridor-length programme of improvements to transport infrastructure on this critical inter-urban route. This scheme will include junction enhancements, street furniture (including signage, lines and lighting) decluttering, replacement and enhancement, as well as the provision of an off-road walking and cycling route along the A449 between Worcester and Malvern.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Risk associated with technical issues, costs and funding	MEDIUM

2.8 Summary

As can be evidenced from the above, there are many local, regional and national policies and plans that support or align with the creation of a cycle route to link Worcester and Malvern, across the gamut, from environmental concerns to health concerns, from social equity concerns to value for money concerns, and from local economy concerns to quality of life concerns.

3. The routes

This report assesses the feasibility of two distinct but overlapping alternatives for linking Malvern to Worcester.

3.1 Route A

This route follows the A449 Worcester Road/ Malvern Road, all the way from the Newlands roundabout (at the junction with the B4208) to the Toucan crossing of the A4440 at Powick Hams. It would take the form of a shared use footway for the greater majority of its length, the only two exceptions being where it would follow the route of the old road through Bastonford, and where it would follow the existing cycle route along the service road at Powick Parish Hall (i.e. on-road here). Some of the footway is shared use already, some would need to be re-designated as such, and a stretch of some 440 metres of shared use footway would need to be built, immediately to the south of The Halfway House public house at Bastonford.

At its Malvern end the route would tie in with the existing shared use footway that follows the B4208 through the retail park and the Enigma Business Park, which in turn connects to the existing stretch of NCN 46. At the Worcester end it would tie in with the combination of greenway/ shared use footway/ quiet road NCN 46 that connects right into the centre of Worcester.

The route would be on the South East side of the A449 at the Malvern end, where it would remain until the junction with Old Malvern road and Hospital Lane, where it would cross over to the North side of the road (using the signals to cross over). The route would then remain on the North/ North West side of the A449 until it met the toucan crossing at Powick Hams.

Those that favour this route seem to do so because it offers the most direct and therefore fastest route between the two places.

This route would traverse a significant amount of

shared use footway, but with few junctions, only one crossing of the A449 required and very few crossings for private properties encumbrances to reasonable progress for the cyclist would seem to be acceptable limited.

3.2 Route B

This route seeks to replace as much of the shared use footway alongside the A449 as possible with 'quiet road' route. The sections common to both routes are those for which no sensible quiet road alternative exists. Route B varies from Route A in two stretches; between the outskirts of Powick (Malvern side) and the junction of the Old Malvern road and the A449/ Hospital Lane, Route B would follow Old Malvern Road, and; Route B would leave the A449 again at Hawthorn Lane, following this lane, then Jennet Tree Lane and then North End Lane to arrive in Malvern at the point where the existing NCN 46 starts alongside the B4208.

Those that favour this route seem to do so because they favour as much quiet road riding as possible (the A449 is a busy and therefore noisy road to be alongside), or because their destination in Malvern is in the central or southern areas of the town.

3.3 Callow End Route

Some favour a route that, from Powick follows the Upton Road to Callow End, where it turns onto Jennet Tree Lane. This route then follows this lane until it meets Route B at the junction of Hawthorn Lane and Jennet Tree Lane, where after the route is the same as for Route B.

This route is particularly favoured by employees at the Malvern Hills Science Park, who use it already to commute to work from Worcester.

3.4 Other routes

Ahead of the commission to undertake this Feasibility Study, Sustrans investigated a number of 'off-road' routes within the vicinity of Home Farm and Broadfields Farm in Powick, assessing whether these might enable the route to 'leave' the environs of the A449 sooner (when heading in a Worcester to Malvern direction). None of these routes proved practicable and were not developed beyond initial scoping.

4. Route details: Map 1

The following notes are written from the perspective of a journey taken in the direction of Malvern to Worcester. Paragraph numbers correspond to locations marked on Map 1.

- Existing macadam footway in good condition, generally 1 metre wide, but with a 'verge' roughly 1.2 metres wide between the edge of the path and the boundary fence, so some widening is possible. This stretch is approximately 120 metres long. Highway sign would need to be altered to remove support post from the path.



- Crossing of junction between Worcester Road and Madresfield (southern arm). Reasonably good visibility here, but could consider tightening turn-radius of left-turn out of Madresfield in order to reduce vehicle speeds. Consider painted treatment on the carriageway surface to indicate cycle route crossing.



- Approximately 160 metres of existing macadam footway in good condition, generally between 1 and 1.2 metres wide. There is a bus stop with shelter here, which could cause some conflict between cyclists and bus passengers, but the limited use of the stop means that this is unlikely to be a particular problem. Plenty of space to widen the path, which would require land owner permission and the repositioning of the bus shelter and lamp columns. Path could be routed around the rear of the bus shelter, but this would be somewhat of a deviation and would therefore be of questionable utility.

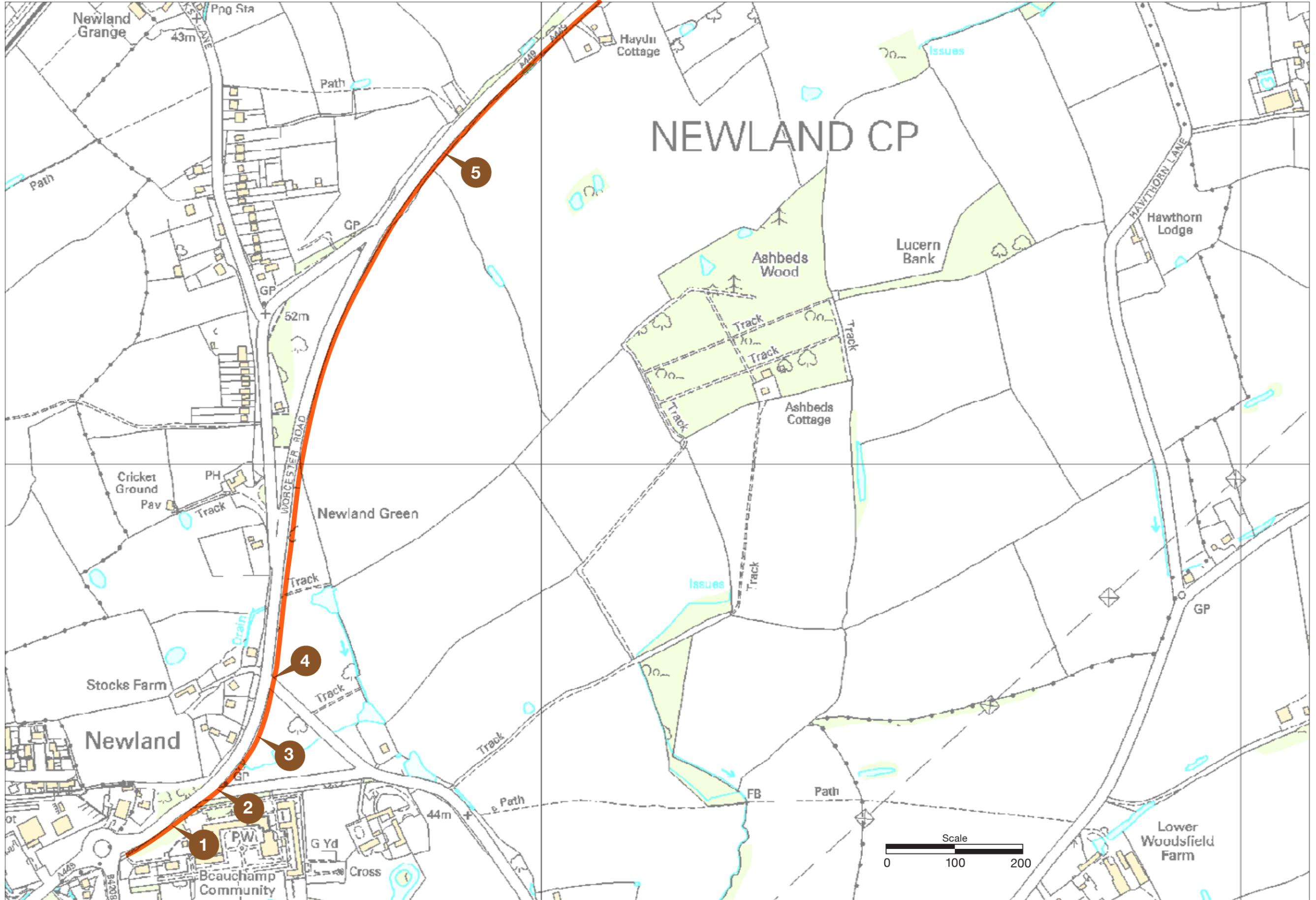


- Crossing of junction between Worcester Road and Madresfield (northern arm). Good visibility here, but could consider tightening turn-radii of junction in order to reduce vehicle speeds. Consider painted treatment on the carriageway surface to indicate cycle route crossing.



- Existing footway, generally poor condition macadam and gravel. Some stretches tend towards mud in wetter months. Some 'humps' in the surface (e.g. where manhole covers sit slightly proud of the prevailing path surface). Path generally 0.7 metres wide for the first 120 metres after Madresfield junction, after which the footway is generally 1.5 to 1.6 metres wide (this as a result of the 'siding-out' work undertaken by the Parish Council). There are two bus stops with shelters in this stretch (the first opposite Stocks Lane, the second near to the junction with Hawthorn Lane), but with limited utilization of the stops it is unlikely that conflict between cyclists and bus passengers would be a particular problem. Total length of this stretch is 1.9 kilometres. Highway sign (for Leigh Sinton turn) could be re configured in order to remove its support posts from the path. There are two farm accesses crossing the path in this stretch, which might require extra maintenance (to remove excess mud from the footway).





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Route Details: Map 2

6. Junction of Worcester Road and Hawthorn Lane. Poor inter-visibility here between traffic emerging from Hawthorn Lane and those that might cross over the junction. Consider if there is the possibility of increasing visibility (would require hedge and fence removal) or whether hatching on the road might 'push' vehicles towards the centre of the carriageway. Consider painted treatment on the carriageway surface to indicate cycle route crossing.



7. 440 metre long grass verge with no path. Verge generally 6 metres wide at Hawthorne Lane end, reduces to 3 1/2 - 4 metres wide (flat, but with a further 2 metres of bank) from end of lay-by (which is on the opposite side of Worcester Road) onwards. Kerb along here is chamfered and might need replacing with vertical kerbs to comply with design standards. There is a memorial here to three people who died in a car crash on this road in 1998. In addition to a new path being needed here, two traffic signs will need reconfiguring as they both present an obstacle at present. Two road signs would need to be repositioned.



8. Entrance to Ridgeway Farm. Reasonably good visibility, but consider improving on southern side of junction. Consider painted treatment to road surface to indicate cycle route.



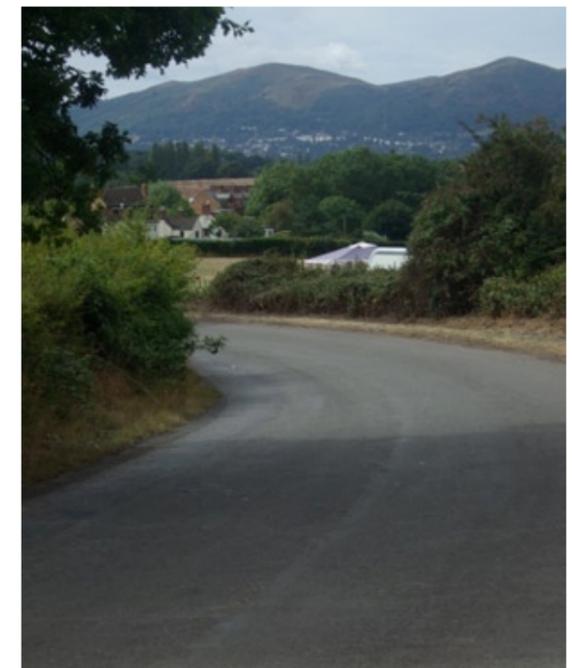
9. Car park with glass recycling banks. Route could come through car park area without need for any modification. Some risk of broken glass associated with glass recycling facilities, but cyclists could choose route through car park to avoid any glass. Short stretch of path would be needed to cross grass verge at Malvern-end of car park.

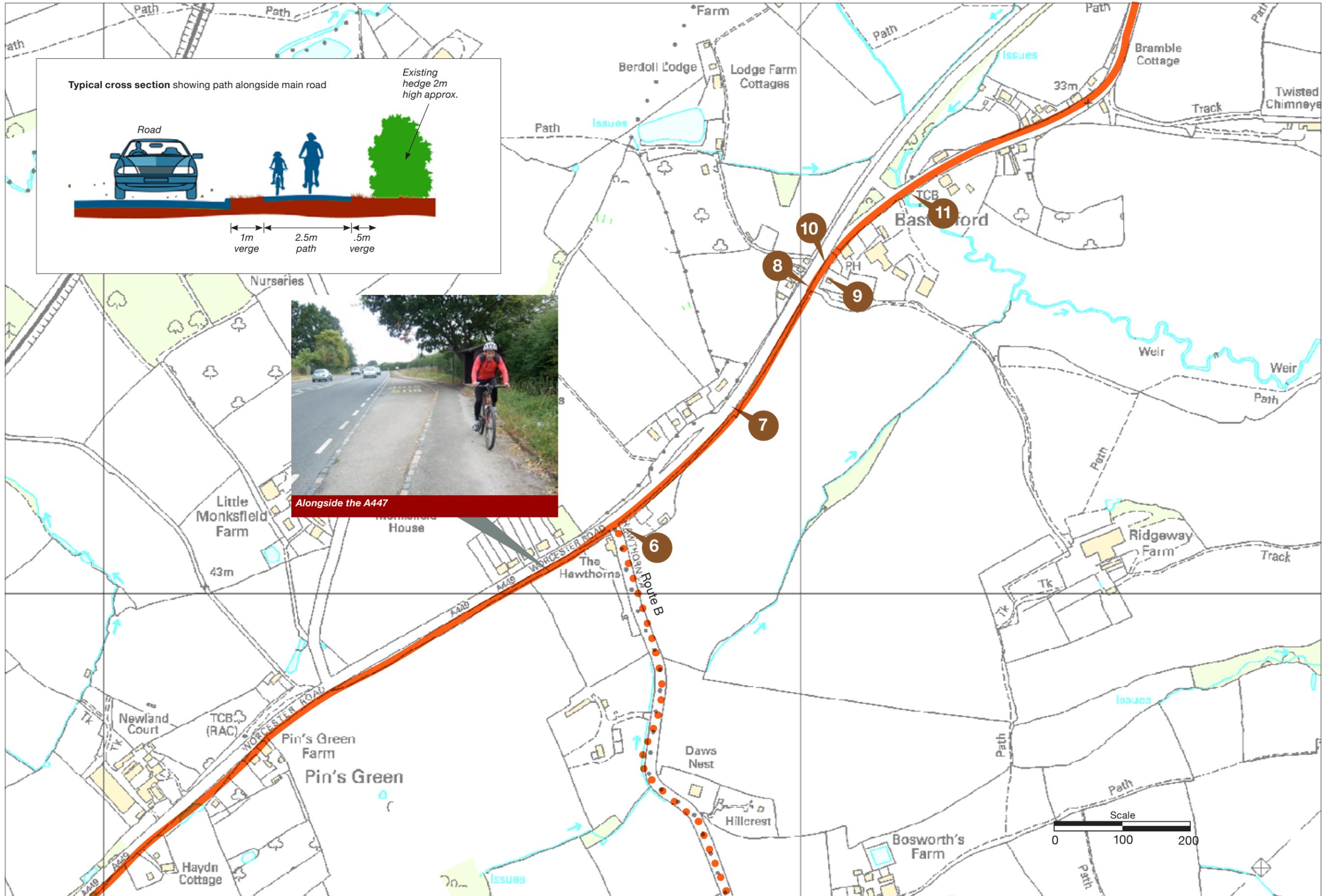


10. Level change between car park and frontage of the Halfway House Inn. A flight of 3 steps gives access between the (lower) public house frontage and the (higher) car park. The landlord of the public house is amenable to discussing the replacement of the steps with a ramp. However, there is limited space here, with access to a store room and to car parking space coming past the steps; so a full DDA compliant ramp might not be possible. Consider space available, to determine whether or not a ramp can be made to fit here, or, if not, whether the existing steps could be widened and a wheeling ramp added.



11. The 'Old Road' through Bastonford. Ideal road for route with very low volume of traffic / low speed. No treatment needed (other than confirmatory signage).





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Route Details: Map 3

12. Transition between end of Old Road and existing path. An informal ramp seems to be in place to ease the transition between the road surface and the path. Consider replacing with dropped kerbs.



13. Existing tarmac footway, 540 metres long, initially across an open grass area (the first 100 metres or so) and then alongside the road carriageway. Path condition varies between reasonable and poor. Between 0.7 and 0.9 metres wide (but possibly wider under the encroaching grass) up to "The Crown" public house, 2.1 metres wide in the 'dip' in front of The Crown, then 1.3 metres wide between The Crown and the junction of Worcester/ Malvern Road and Hospital Lane. There are two lamp posts in the footway in this last section, reducing the clear width to 0.97 metres; consider moving posts. Consider painted treatment across the public house car park entrance.



14. Junction of Malvern Rd, Hospital Lane and Old Malvern Road. Route would use the existing traffic signals here (which have a pedestrian phase) to cross the Malvern Road and then Hospital Lane. Consider upgrading the signals to toucan status; consider altering the timings of the signal phases.



15. Existing shared use footway, good condition, 2.4 metres wide. No work needed.



16. Shared use footway ends in front of Powick Parish Hall and route then follows very quiet service road, approximately 400 metres long. At junction of service road with Old Malvern Road, route re-takes the form of an existing shared use footway, with dropped kerbs in place. Service road is one-way at this end, against the direction of travel in these notes. No work needed either in the 'on-carriageway' stretch of the service road nor on the shared use footway.





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Route Details: Map 4

17. Junction of service road with Old Malvern Road. Consider widening the traffic island in the middle of the crossing (but it does seem likely that most if not all crossings of this junction are undertaken in one movement, negating the need to widen the island to 'standard width'). Consider painted treatment to carriageway to indicate cycle route crossing (however, there is 'ghost island' hatching in the centre of Old Malvern Road and hatching of both of the turn-in and out radii, so additional 'treatment' might be unnecessary or overly confusing here).

There is a bus stop with shelter here, but the relatively low usage of the stop combined with excellent visibility means that cyclist/bus stop user conflict is unlikely. Surface here excellent. Consider localised re-instatement of full width of path. Consider resurfacing/surface repairs.



18. Route follows existing shared use footway, 2.4 metres wide, generally good condition for 60 metres until officially shared usage ends.



Footway then continues as a 'footway only' for a further 325 metres (where it meets junction with King's End Road). 2.4 metres wide for the first 130-140 metres, but lamp posts and telegraph poles (at the back edge of the footway) reduce the clear width to between 1.8 and 1.9 metres in places. Surface ranges from reasonable to poor macadam. Then, in the next 150 metres, footway narrows to 2 metres, with a stretch nearing 1.6 metres in width; but much of this narrowing could be offset by removing build-up of soil on footway edge.



Surface ranges from reasonable to poor macadam. For the final 40 metres or so of this stretch, the path returns to 2.4 metres wide.

19. Junction of Malvern Road and King's End Road. Remnants of previous cycle route across this junction remain in place (in the form of a 'lined' route across the junction, with hatching either side). Consider reinstating it, this would require new dropped kerbs, removal / repainting of the lined route and some works to bring the route onto the footway on the Worcester side of the junction. Also consider segregating cyclists so that those heading to Malvern 'face' the oncoming traffic (in other words, using the on-carriageway cycle lane), whilst those heading to Worcester drop around the tight bend in the footway, to cross King's End Road perpendicularly, away from Malvern Road. The advantage of this arrangement is that it allows cyclists using the on-road facility to see directly any motor vehicles that might be about to cross their path (as there is no turn into the King's End Road allowed from Malvern bound traffic), whilst separating that cyclist movement from those cycling in the opposite direction.

Or, consider on-carriageway cycle lane to carry both directions of travel. Consider adding coloured treatment to carriageway surface to indicate cycle route. Consider adding 'rumble strips' of setts, parallel to and either side of the cycle lane. Consider removing, say, 5 metres of guard rail and kerb at Worcester side of junction to 'ease' the route back on to the footway.



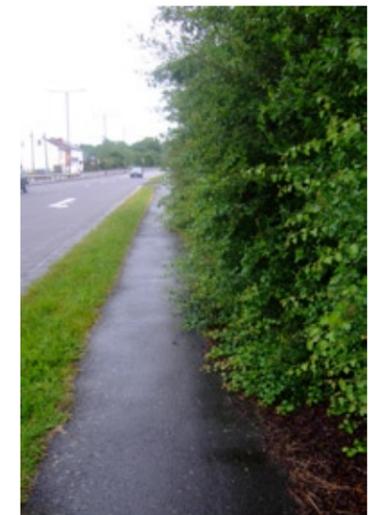
20. Footway alongside road carriageway, from junction with King's End Road, to side turn for field and flood alleviation scheme access. Approximately 290 metres of footway in reasonable condition, variable width, but typically 2.8 metres total width (reduced to 1.8 metres clear width by lamp columns and telegraph poles) along house frontages, and between 1.8 and 2 metres wide beyond the end of the house frontages.

After the houses the existing shared use footway begins again. Footway surface is reasonable, with a few patch repairs perhaps being desirable.

It is clear that the footway that runs along the frontages of the houses in this stretch is used for car parking. This reduces the clear width available for pedestrians (at present) and for cyclists (as proposed). Consider conversion to shared use footway. Consider if footway can be widened to increase clear space for cyclists and pedestrians where cars park on the footway.



21. Existing shared use footway that links directly to the Powick Hams toucan crossings, and thus to the Worcester Connect2 scheme. 350 metres long. Surface in good condition. Consider cutting back (rather than just trimming) adjacent hedge to increase width and to improve visibility around the bend on the approach to toucan.



Route Details: Map 5

22. Junction of North End Lane and Townsend Way / B4208. The B4208 is a busy road serving the Enigma Business Park and adjacent retail development. The junction is the point where North End Lane becomes Townsend Way and it is also the point where the statutory speed limit changes; 30mph heading towards Great Malvern / 40mph heading towards Enigma. Confusingly, the side road is also called North End Lane, as is the next turn off of that.

NCN exists as a shared use footway alongside North end Lane/ Townsend Way; consider linking this to the North End Lane that is the quiet lane via the existing island in the main road and then by formalising the footway that leads to the quiet lane as a shared use path.



23. North End Lane, to junction with Madresfield. An on-road route here, with no intervention, other than signage, necessary.



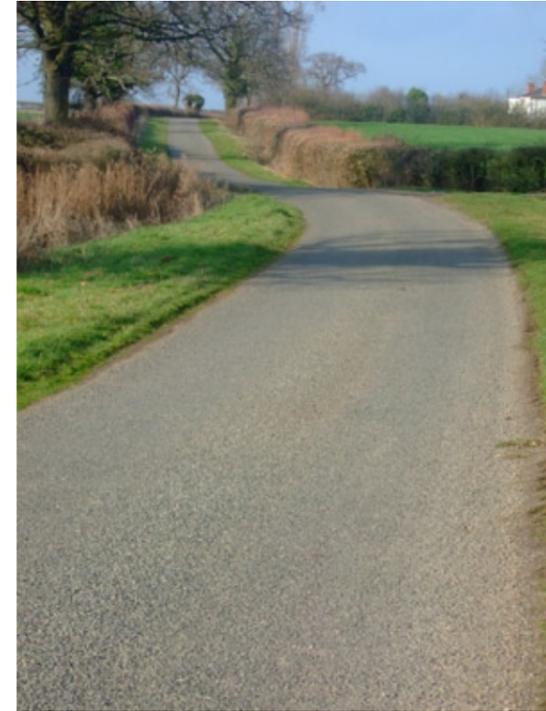
24. Madresfield. An on-road route here, with no intervention, other than signage, necessary.



25. Jennet Tree Lane, to junction with Hawthorn Lane. An on-road route here, with no intervention, other than signage, necessary.



26. Hawthorn Lane. An on-road route here. The carriageway is narrower here (less than 3m wide) with reduced visibility in some places. Consider a safety audit/ signage (with signs on posts or painted onto the carriageway).



27. Old Malvern Road. An on-road route here, with no intervention, other than signage, necessary. If route is not to pass along this road, consider adding NCN link signage at junction with Collett's Green Road.

The following sections (28/ and 29/) considers an alternative route, used by some of those that responded to the public consultation. This alternative route would continue along Jennet Tree Lane (i.e. not turn left into Hawthorn Lane), at end of which left onto Upton road and then onto Powick to join Malvern Road.

Callow End

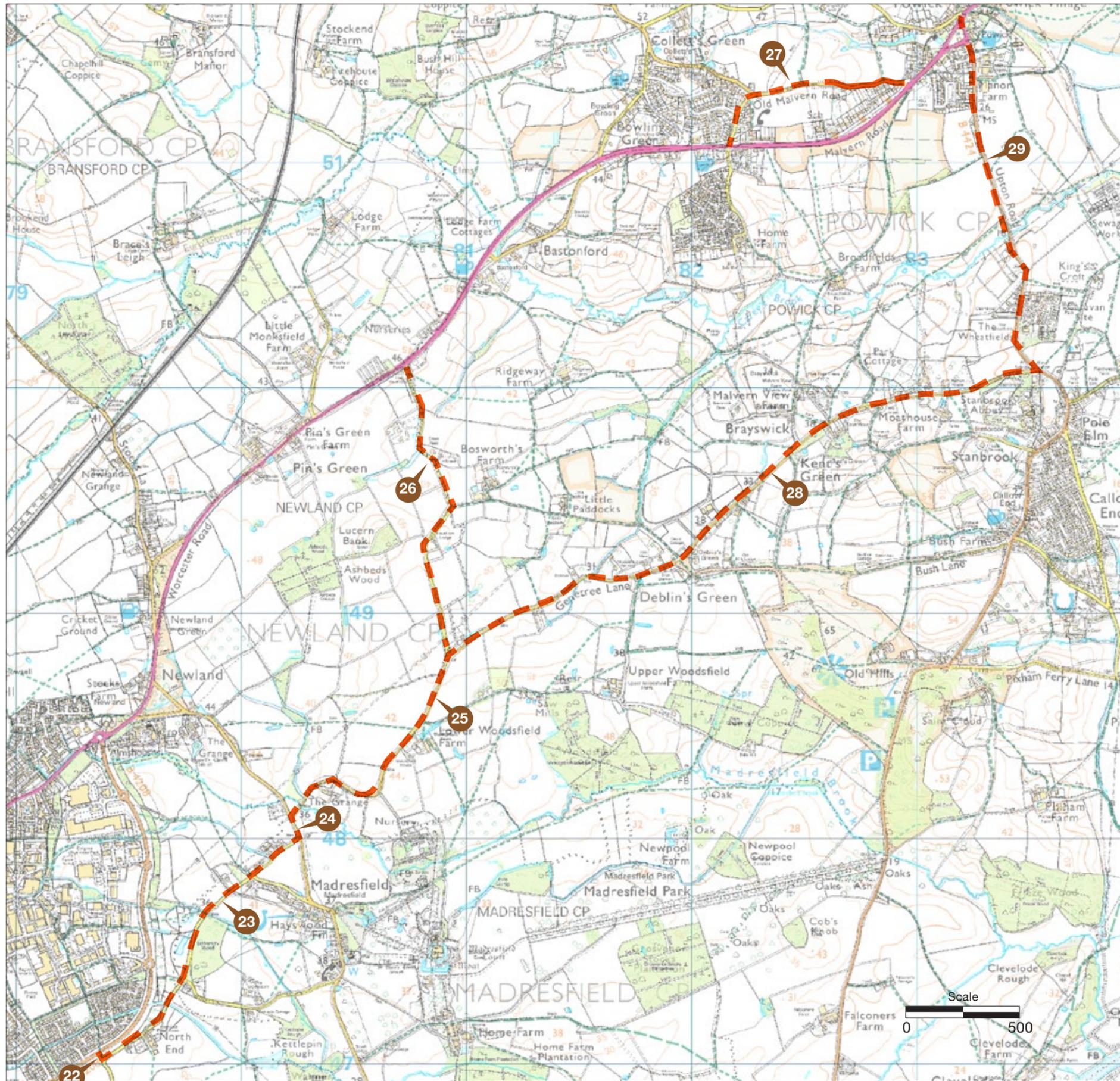
The following sections (28/ and 29/) consider an alternative route, used by some of those that responded to the public consultation. This alternative route would continue along Jennet Tree Lane (i.e. not turn left into Hawthorn Lane), until Upton Road is met, where the route turns left and then continues on to Powick to join Malvern Road in Powick.

28. Jennet Tree Lane remains a pleasant route to cycle on beyond the turn-off to Hawthorn Lane, reinforced by stretches of 30mph limit at Deblins and at Callow End.



29. Upton road is a very busy, narrow road with little or no room for any intervention. It does not appear to be a suitable route for the NCN to take.





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5. Consultation

Ahead of this study, it was clear that there has been interest in the development of a cycle route to link Malvern and Worcester; a number of people have contacted Sustrans over recent years, calling for such a route to be developed. Interestingly, those that called for the route split pretty equally between those that wanted the route to follow the A449 all the way between the two towns, and those that wanted the route to use 'quiet roads' as much as possible.

It was thus clear that an essential part of any investigation into the feasibility of this route should be a formal public consultation to canvass views on which way the route should go.

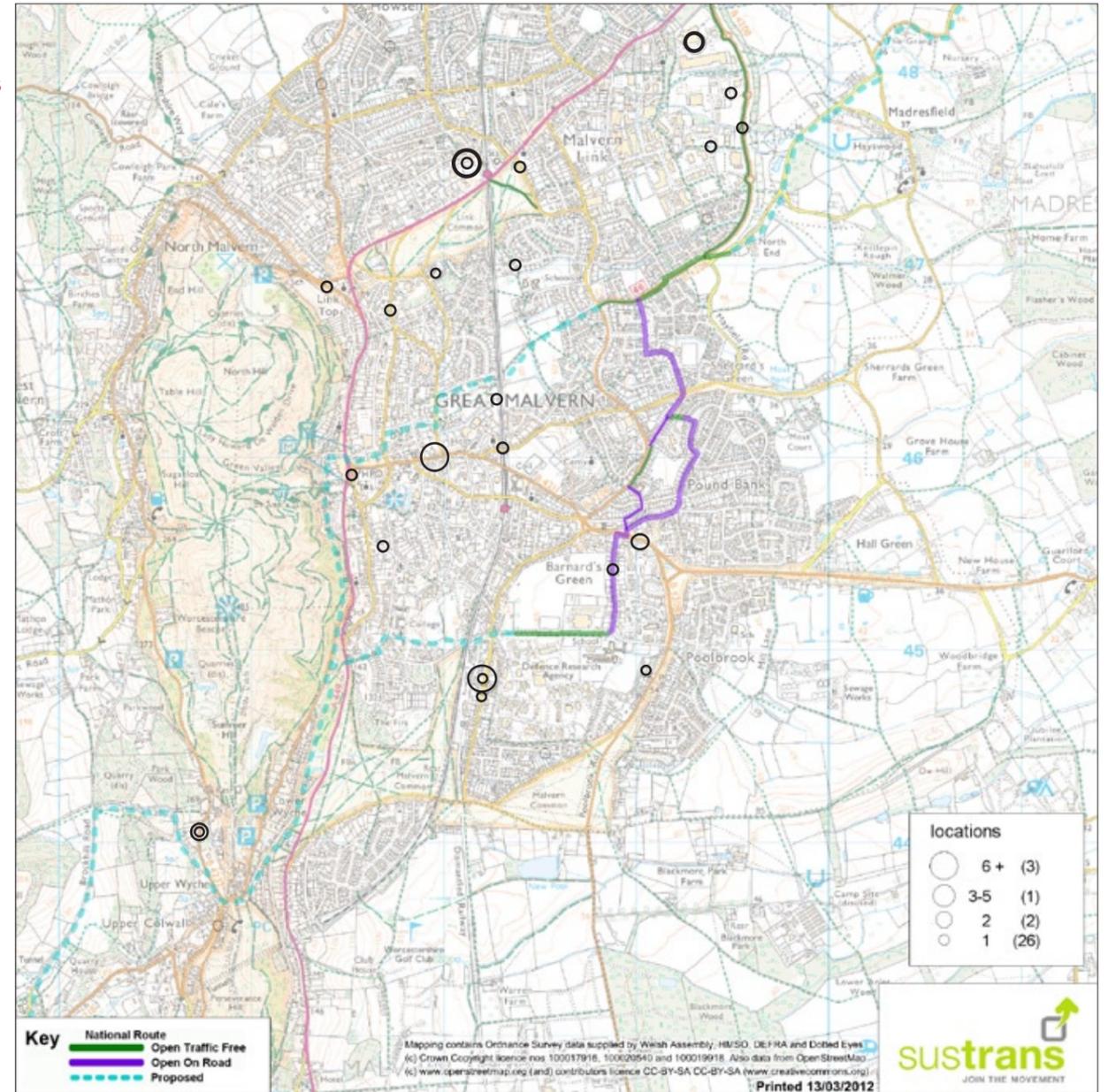
Letters were hand delivered to residents along both routes (approximately 90 letters), inviting them to share their views either in writing or via email, and inviting them to come to a 'drop-in' session, which was held in Powick Parish Hall on 2 February 2012. Coverage of the consultation, and of the drop-in session appeared in the local media, as well as on the Sustrans, "Just Ride" and County Council web sites. Posters

advertising the consultation went up in local bike shops, tourist information centres and libraries in both Malvern and Worcester. Seven local groups and six local cycling clubs were consulted. A copy of the letter delivered to the residents; a copy of the local paper's coverage; and a list of the groups consulted all appear in the Appendix.

A questionnaire was given out at the drop-in session, a copy of which appears in Appendix A. Those that shared their views via email were invited to answer the same set of questions.

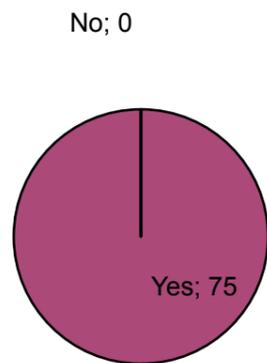
56 members of the public responded to the consultation via email; 2 members of the public responded by letter; 33 people attended the drop-in session and of these, 29 completed questionnaires. Some people sent an email and completed a questionnaire; these duplicates have been removed from the counts. The results of the public consultations are represented in the following graphs, and the responses from Natural England and from Malvern Hills District Council appear in the Appendix:

Respondents' Malvern destinations

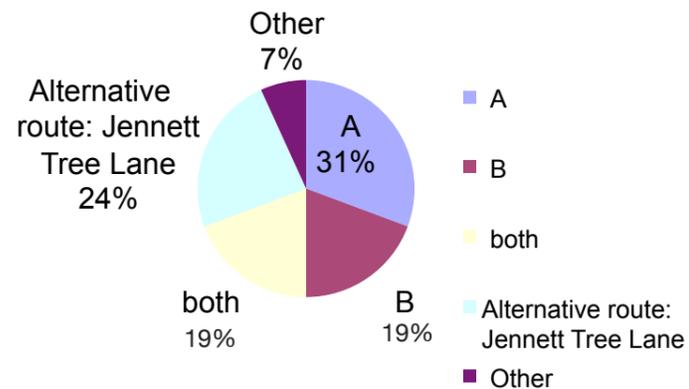


Consultation responses

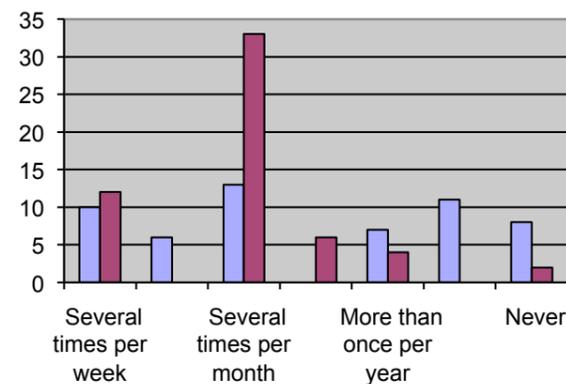
Are you in favour of creating a route?



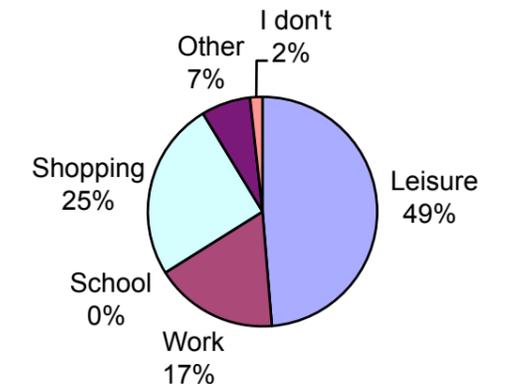
Which route do you prefer?



How often do you/would you cycle between Worcester and Malvern



Why do you cycle?



6. Assessment of routes

Of those that responded to the public consultation, 75 said they were in favour of a route being developed (a resounding 100%; not everyone who responded answered the “are you in favour” question, and one resident, who lives adjacent to the A449, on the opposite side of the road to the proposed route, did say at the drop-in session that she opposed any cycle route being developed near where she lives, but she declined to fill in a questionnaire).

31% of respondents favoured Route A, 19% favoured Route B whilst 24% favoured a route based around Upton Road and Jennet Tree Lane.

In order to assess the desirability of any of the proposed routes, it is worth first noting Sustrans’ guidelines for the National Cycle Network.

6.1 The National Cycle Network standard

The aims of the National Cycle Network are:

- (i) to provide a nationwide network of safe, attractive, high quality routes for cyclist which also extend the provision for walkers and wheelchair users;
- (ii) to promote cycling as a form of transport. The Network will be aimed at providing a standard appropriate to the needs of inexperienced or novice cyclists;
- (iii) to stimulate wider measures benefitting cyclists and pedestrians, and help to promote local networks.

The National Cycle Network Routes must address the means of persuading those who currently do not cycle to start to do so. To this end they should be of a particularly high quality and be:

- safe, continuous and attractive to encourage novices to cycle
- useful for all manner of routine journeys for local people and existing cyclists
- so memorable for visitors and tourists that people starting with a recreational trip are persuaded to cycle more.

In developing the ideas for Route A and B, Sustrans has sought to ensure that “...the needs of inexperienced or novice cyclists” are met and in so doing has endeavoured to propose routes that create “ the means of persuading those who currently do not cycle to start to do so”.

It must be acknowledged that 24% of respondents favoured a route based on Upton Road and Jennet Tree Lane. However, Upton Road is a very busy and narrow road, with blind corners and summits. The 24 hour vehicle count for this road is 6936, with a mean speed of 44 mph (survey undertaken in 2010). The Department for Transport’s “Local Transport Note 2/08” sets out the vehicle speed and number parameters for the development of cycle routes; ranging from low speed and low number = no intervention needed, cycle route can be on the carriageway, to; high speed and high number = route should be on a track (i.e. not sharing the carriageway with motorised vehicles in any way). Comparing these data with the table’s parameters suggests that, if a cycle route is to be created along Upton Road, then it should be on a track. Unfortunately there isn’t room within the existing road corridor to create a cycle track, and to create one outside of the corridor would be prohibitively expensive if not impossible. In its current condition, with the traffic volume it carries, Upton Road unfortunately cannot be considered suitable as a route for the National Cycle Network.

In the consultation documentation, Route B did show Old Malvern Road being included. Some respondents questioned safety on this road, but it is not clear whether this is a real issue or the perception of one. That said, there is a cycle route already in place that follows the A449 (on very good shared use footway and along a very quiet service road) for the length that would be served by Old Malvern Road, so it must be questioned what benefit there would be in ‘deviating’ onto Old Malvern Road.

Sending the route along the top of Powick’s newly constructed flood bank was considered in this study. Following such a route would be a complete deviation off of the most reasonably direct route and therefore has been deemed unsuitable for further consideration.

Sustrans does normally advocate that National Cycle Network routes are clearly defined, so as to be as easy as possible to follow either on maps or on the ground. This means that ‘braids’, where a route splits into two before coming back together again, are normally to be avoided. In this case, however, there could be a sound rationale for delivering both Route A and Route B:

There is a strong demand for both routes (particularly when factoring in that the Upton Road/ Jennet Tree Lane route shares the same connection to Malvern as Route B).

Malvern is orientated in a north-south direction, with many distinct destinations, so two routes, with one connecting to the northern end of the town and one connecting somewhere near to the middle would seem to be quite desirable. (See the plot of the Malvern destinations in the Consultation section of this report.)

It might be expedient to deliver Route B (with all those sections that are common to Route A too), to then follow on with the final sections of Route A (improving the footway, from the Newlands roundabout to the junction with Hawthorn Lane) when funding allows.

The main thrust of the Natural England response is the advice to adopt a methodical approach in the development of a route(s). The development of the route ideas to date has been entirely consistent with this advice, and with ‘only’ 440m of roadside verge being potentially impacted upon by new path creation, there ought to only be a very low risk that environmental concerns might reduce the ultimate success of the scheme.

As can be seen from the response (copied in the Appendix), Malvern Hills District Council is entirely supportive of the development of a route, not least because it would support its own “Route to the Hills” project.

7. Technical considerations

There would be little benefit, beyond the very short term, in undertaking any of the proposed surface improvements with unsealed materials. Where ever Route A and Route B propose that an existing footway is either widened, resurfaced or patch-repaired, or where new build path is proposed, this work must be done in dense bituminous macadam (or other similar ‘sealed’ surfacing material).

Considering the distance of the route proposed, it is to be welcomed that there are only two stretches along its length that could be technically challenging. These locations are the crossing of the mouth of the junction with King’s End Road in Powick, and the stretch of (proposed) shared use footway along the house frontages in Powick (opposite the petrol station).

It is understood that there used to be a ‘cycle lane’ painted across the mouth of the junction with King’s End Road (indeed, the remnants can still be seen), but it appears that this facility ceased to exist in usable form when the adjacent bus stop was reconfigured. With some work it should be eminently possible to reinstate the crossing; the ‘build-out for the bus stop does appear advantageous, since it creates a physical separation between the cycle-lane crossing of King’s End Road and the main-road traffic.

With the current practice of cars being parked on the footway, a shared use footway along the house frontages in Powick could be considerably sub-standard (in width). That said, the user would necessarily be at the back edge of the footway (the clear space left by the parked cars) and hence relatively protected from the main road traffic. If the practice of parking cars here cannot be changed, it would be useful to establish if there is any possibility of widening the footway to give more space to the footway user.

Table 2.
Cost estimates

Section*	Description of works	Priority	Estimated costs Route A	Estimated costs Route B	Estimated costs Route A + B
1	Widen existing path; 1m x 120m dbm	High	£3,160		£3,160
2	Carriageway painting; 8m x 2.m	Medium	£500		£500
	Tighten turn radius; 1 No.	Medium	£2,000		£2,000
3	Widen existing path; 1m x 160m dbm	Medium/Low	£4,190		£4,190
4	Carriageway painting; 8m x 2.5m	Medium	£500		£500
	Tighten turn radii; 2 No.	Medium	£4,000		£4,000
5	Patch repairs	High	£2,500		£2,500
	Widen existing path; 1.5m x 120m dbm	High	£4,720		£4,720
	Reposition signs	High	£300		£300
	Widen existing path; 0.7m x 1.8km dbm	Medium	£33,025		£33,025
6	Carriageway painting; 6m x 2m	Medium	£500		£500
	Fence and hedge set back	Medium	£700		£700
7	Construct new path; 2.4m x 440m dbm	High	£27,700	£27,700	£27,700
	Replace existing chamfered kerbs; 440m	High	£16,300	£16,300	£16,300
	Reposition signs (2 No.)	High	£300	£300	£300
8	Carriageway painting; 6m x 2.5m	Medium	£500	£500	£500
9	Construct new path; 2.4m x 4m dbm	High	£300	£300	£300
10	Construct new access ramp; or construct wider steps with a wheeling ramp	High High	£3,500	£3,500	£3,500
12	Install dropped kerbs	Medium	£160	£160	£160
13	Widen existing path; 1.5m x 250m dbm	Medium	£9,830	£9,830	£9,830
	Resurface existing path; 0.8m x 250m dbm	Medium	£3,470	£3,470	£3,470
	Reposition two lamp columns	Low	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
	Carriageway painting; 6m x 2.5m	Medium	£500	£500	£500
14	Install Toucan crossing signal equipment	Medium			
18	Resurface existing path; 2.4m x 80m dbm	Medium	£3,330	£3,330	£3,330
	Widen path; 0.8m x 150m dbm	Medium	£3,150	£3,150	£3,150
	Resurface existing path; 1.6m x 150m dbm	Medium	£4,160	£4,160	£4,160
19	Carriageway painting and other re-lining works; 25m x 2.5m	High	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500
	Removal of 5m of guard rail and 5m of kerb	High	£750	£750	£750
	Install dropped kerbs	High	£160	£160	£160
20	Resurfacing of existing path; 80m2 Can footway be widened; 120m of kerb repositioning and path construction	Medium High/ Medium	£1,390	£1,390	£1,390
21	Cut back hedge/ vegetation; 250m	High/ medium	£1,530	£1,530	£1,530
	Direction signs for Route A	High	£1,920		£1,920
	Repeater signs for Route A	High	£940		£940
	Direction signs for Route B (over and above those for A)	High		£4,000	£1,330
	Repeater signs for Route B (over and above those for A)	High			£700
	Total		£138,485	£83,530	£140,515

*Note; section numbers refer to paragraph numbers/ map locations in the Route Details chapter of this report

The kerbs that run alongside the verge on which the new-build shared use path is proposed (between the junction with Hawthorn Lane and the Halfway House) are chamfered and guidance suggests that these should be replaced with vertical kerbs for safety reasons, although this might not be the case if a 0.5 metre wide verge can be achieved, between the carriageway and the new path. The same applies to the existing paths, some of which have chamfered kerbs.

Some respondents to the consultation raised concerns over safety on Hawthorn Lane, suggesting that its width and its sinuousness could leave the cyclist vulnerable. Before developing a cycle route along here it would seem appropriate to first make a formal assessment of safety.

To link from the Halfway House's car park to the road that passes through Bastonford, it would be best if the route could pass over the steps that currently give access between the pub and the car park. Ideally these steps would be replaced with a ramp, but there might not be enough room for this, so the next best alternative would be to widen the steps and to add a wheeling ramp. Any proposed changes here must not affect the operation of the public house and must first be approved by the landlord.

The following table sets out the various interventions required for the two routes and it attributes cost estimates and a 'priority' level to each of these interventions. The priority levels are; "High", meaning the intervention is essential before that part of the route can be deemed fit for use; "Medium", meaning that the intervention is desirable, but could follow on after the route was open, and; "Low", meaning that the intervention is desirable, but could be left until funding became available.

- The estimated cost of delivering Route A only is £138,485.
- The estimated cost of delivering Route B only is £83,530.
- The estimated cost of delivering both Route A and Route B is £140,515.

The cost estimates are based on quotes received by Sustrans for its own projects, all over the country (the cost of new-build path construction, for example, is the average of 16 projects' costs). These are estimates only, meant simply to give a starting point for assessing the construction costs of creating the route(s).

It is important to note that the costs on which these estimates are based come from 'typical' Sustrans schemes, which, almost by definition, tend to be well away from the carriageway, and tend to be for the construction of unbroken lengths of path. The creation of the routes discussed in this report will require significant road traffic management -for safety purposes- and will require the establishment of a number of separate 'sites' (and site compounds); each adding significantly to the cost of realising the scheme, compared to the cost of a typical Sustrans scheme.

The estimates include for the cost of new kerbs alongside the stretch of new-build path (Hawthorn Lane to the Halfway House), but do not include for new kerbs to replace chamfered kerbs elsewhere. If subsequent detailed design reveals that these other chamfered kerbs also need to be replaced, the cost of the scheme will rise accordingly.

The estimates do not include the cost for converting the traffic signals to include a Toucan phase (rather than the existing pedestrian phase) at the Old Malvern Road/ Hospital Lane/ A449 junction. This conversion, essential to make the route as user-friendly as possible, would add to the cost of the scheme.

The actual cost of creating these routes will only emerge once all necessary detailed design work is complete and once a contractor has been brought in. The cost of managing the project will also need to be factored in. (N.B. early involvement of a contractor can be beneficial, ensuring that scheme development embraces 'buildability'.)

8. Volunteers and Behavioural Change

Nationally Sustrans benefits greatly from the support of many volunteers, and this is certainly the case in South Worcestershire which has one of the strongest volunteer teams in the Region. The volunteers look after the National Cycle Network, fixing minor defects and reporting faults, and they do much to raise awareness of the Network and to encourage others to use it. Sustrans volunteers would bring the same level of commitment to a route between Malvern and Worcester, and 4 of them are already in place, ready to look after and to promote the new route once it is in place.

One of the wonderful outcomes from the recent cycling and walking developments in Worcester is the creation, by Sustrans volunteers, of "Just Leisure Rides". Inspired by the new facilities, the volunteers decided to set up this group, with the purpose of attracting novice or inexperienced cyclists to get their bikes out of the shed and to take part in a regular sociable leisure ride. They are very keen to see the creation of a route out to Malvern, to add to their repertoire of routes. Two other groups that also run sociable leisure rides, the Malvern St James Cycle Group and the Worcester section of the University of the Third Age, would both also like to see this route developed.

Worcestershire County Council has been very successful with a series of 'behavioural change' interventions over recent years. These include the "Choose how you move" campaign and the "Bikeability" programme (which is currently underway). Choose how you move was very

successful at helping and encouraging residents of Worcester to make local journeys via sustainable transport means, whilst Bikeability is a training programme that helps people to gain the confidence to ride a bike. The Council has recently been successful in obtaining Government funding for its ambitious Worcester Transport Strategy; this includes funding for further behavioural change work, and this can only help improve still further the modal split, as evidenced in Table 1.1.

9. Conclusions

There is a good demand for a route between Malvern and Worcester to be developed, as evidenced by the response to the public consultation. Worcester and Malvern are big centres of population and employment, easily within cycle commuting distance of each other, and there is a growing interest locally in leisure cycling; further compelling reasons to develop the route.

It is Sustrans' aspiration to extend the National Cycle Network, beyond Malvern and over the border into Herefordshire, ultimately linking to Hereford and beyond. Development of this route would be a very good step in that direction.

There are a few technical difficulties to resolve, but these do not appear insurmountable.

In view of the above, it is recommended that funding be sought to complete the development and then construct a route between Malvern and Worcester.

In view of the 'spread' of the consultation respondents' Malvern destinations, and the split in support across the route options, it is recommended that attempt be made to deliver both Route A and Route B. It might be necessary to phase the delivery, so that Route B is opened first, followed by Route A as and when the funding became available.

It is not clear that the Old Malvern Road section of the proposed Route B would be particularly useful, and there is an existing cycle route

already in place on the equivalent stretch of Route A; for these reasons it is recommended that the Old Malvern Road section of Route B is not implemented.

10. Development in Malvern and beyond

Proposed Route A connects directly with the existing, purpose-built shared use footway that follows Townsend Way all the way through Malvern Retail Park and Enigma Business Park; giving direct access to a major shopping area and a major employment centre in Malvern.

Proposed Route B ties in directly to Malvern's existing stretch of NCN 46; this gives direct access to the shopping centre of Barnard's Green and to both Malvern Hills Science Park and Malvern Technology Park; giving direct access to a major shopping area and two major employment centres.

So by tying in to these existing facilities, both routes link directly to some very significant destinations in Malvern. At the point where proposed Route B meets the existing stretch of NCN 46, the shared use footway mentioned above connects too, so both routes give access to both sets of locations.

Extending the existing NCN 46, beyond the Malvern Technology Park, through Malvern and on to Colwall and Ledbury has been investigated as part of this study.

Historically, Sustrans' own assumed route through Malvern was to travel approximately due-west until joining Wyche Road/ Lower Wyche Road/ Old Wyche Road as the series of roads to follow in order to crest the hill at the Wyche cutting. This is a difficult route! Certainly Old Wyche Road does appear to be impossibly steep, at least in terms of appropriateness as a route for the National Cycle Network.

The route could instead simply follow Wyche Road. This is still a 'hard climb', but one that could be deemed acceptable. However, it

is a busy road, with some blind corners and stretches of parked cars. It might be possible to convert the eastern footway to shared use. The eastern side would be the favourable side to convert as there are far fewer private frontages on that side of the road. It might also be appropriate to split the provision, so that the uphill direction is on the shared use footway, but with the downhill provision being on the road.

An alternative to crossing the hill at the Wyche cutting would be to send the route further south first, to then cross the hill via Hollybush.

Annual average daily traffic figures for the 4 key road routes over the Malvern Hills are as follows:

A438 Hollybush	1616
A449 British Camp	5942
B4218 Wyche Cutting	6420
B4232 West Malvern Rd	1139

This would indicate that West Malvern Road could be the best route over the hills. It is, however, a relatively narrow road that is narrowed further by the presence of parked cars for long stretches along its length. The safety implications of this would need to be assessed before this could be promoted as a cycle route.

The 'next best' crossing of the hills would appear to be Hollybush; with no parked car problems, this might be the better option for crossing the hills, although connecting Hollybush to Malvern might prove tricky.

Appendix: Worcester and Malvern route consultation questionnaire

Malvern/ Worcester NCN Feasibility Consultee list

Groups

- South Worcestershire Cycle Forum
- Local Sustrans volunteers
- Transition Malvern Hills & Transition Worcester
- Cycle Malvern/ Malvern Trail
- Ledbury Cycle Action Forum
- Malvern Civic Society

Clubs

- Worcester St Johns
- VC Sevale
- Worcester & Malvern CTC
- Ledbury CTC
- Malvern Cycle Sport
- Climb on Bikes Cycling Club

Shops and businesses

- Climb on Bikes
- Bricycles
- Worcester Cycle Centre
- Green Bike Company
- Malvern Bike Hire Company
- The Halfway House

Landowners and individuals

- Madresfield Estate
- Malvern Hills Conservators

Councils

- Malvern Town Council
- Route to the Hills project team
- Powick Parish Council

Schools

- Powick Primary School

20 January 2012

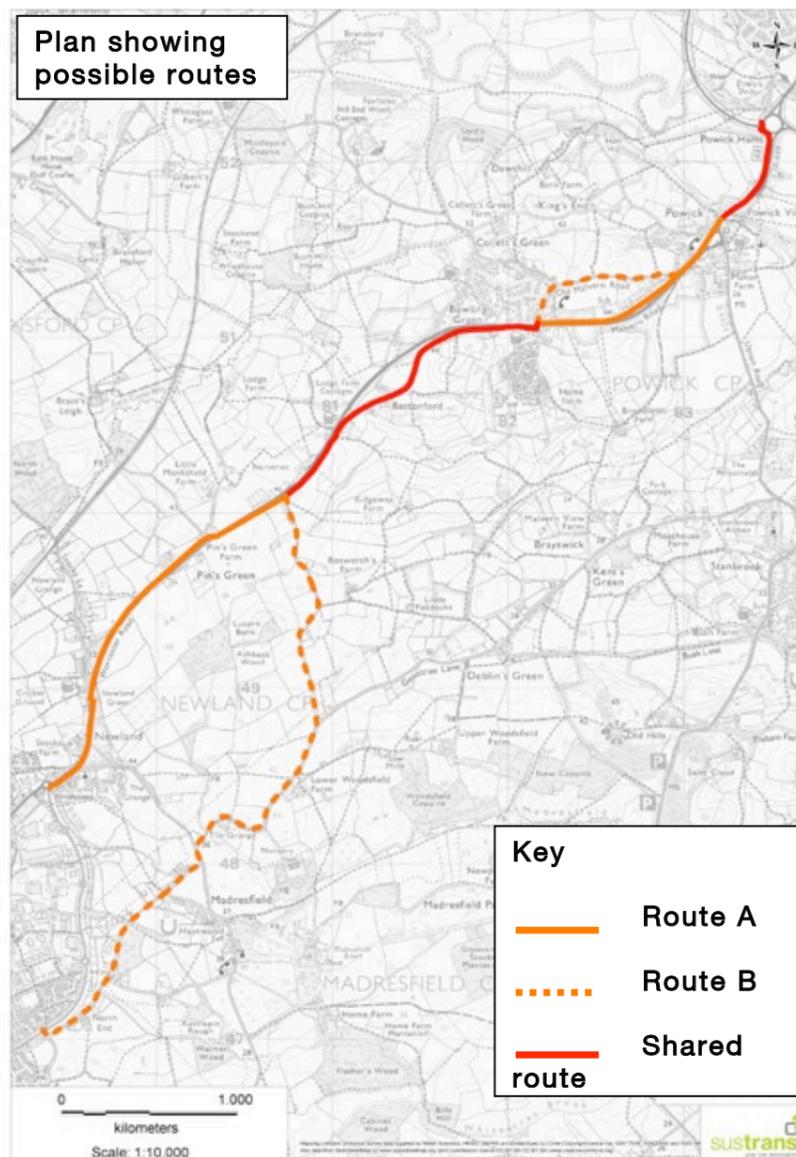


Dear Householder,

WORCESTER TO MALVERN CYCLE ROUTE

Sustrans, the charity enabling people to make more of their everyday journeys by foot, bike and public transport, is working on the development of a new cycle route to link Worcester and Malvern. Worcestershire County Council and the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are assisting with the study, with the work funded by the AONB.

Currently working on how the route would look, we have come up with two suggestions; one route taking the form of a shared use footway alongside the A449 road, all the way from Powick to the outskirts of Malvern (Route A), the other route using this same shared footway for part of the way, but using quieter back-roads for the rest (Route B).



Formal consultation letter to residents

Newspaper coverage

Cycle route plan views are wanted

IEWS are wanted on plans for a new cycle route which would link Worcester and Malvern.

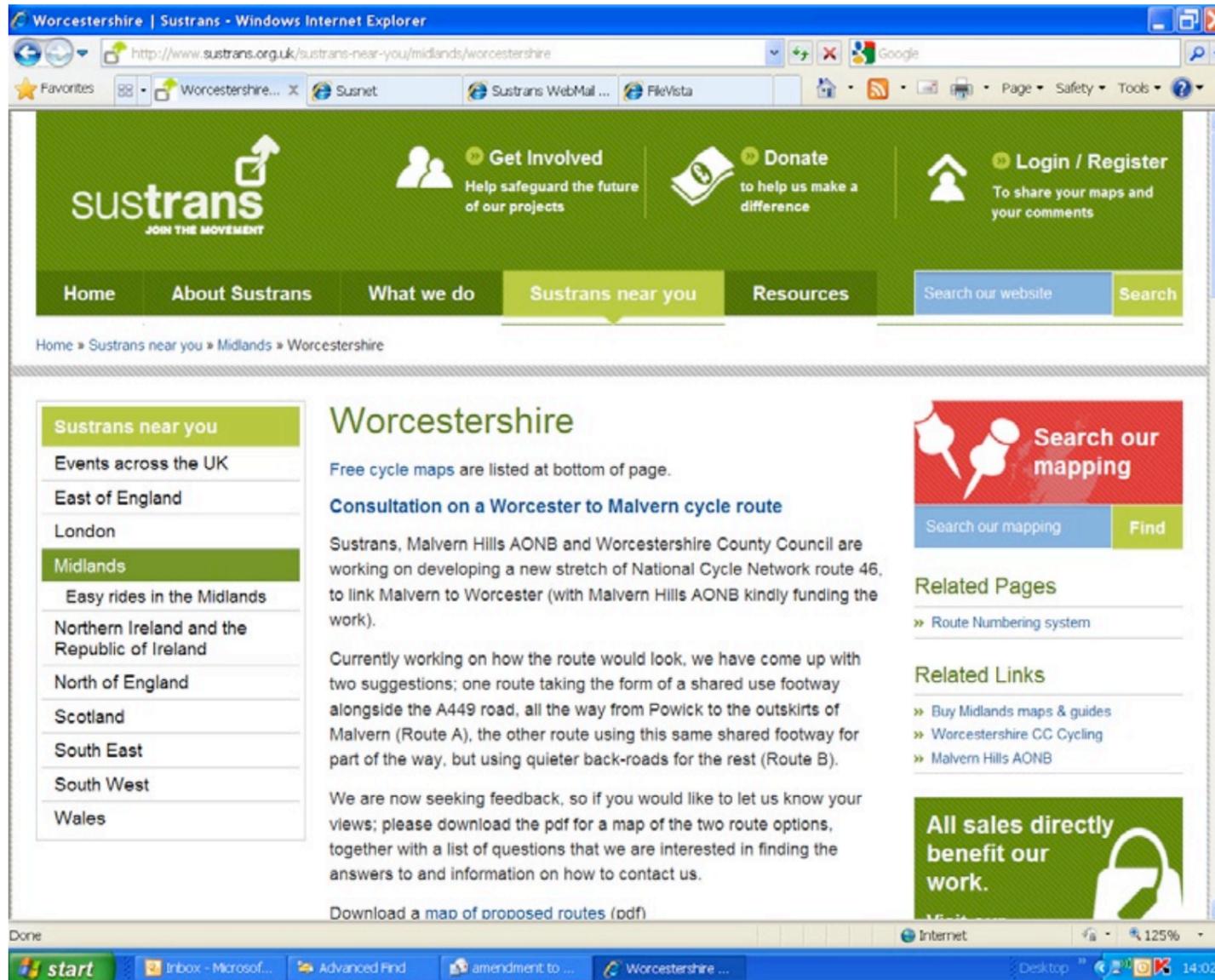
Sustrans, a charity enabling people to make more of their everyday journeys by foot, bike or public transport, has put forward two suggestions for the route and wants to hear what people think.

Information on the routes and on how people can contact Sustrans with their thoughts can be obtained by sending an e-mail to consultation@sustrans.org.uk.

There will also be a drop-in session on Thursday, February 2, from 3pm to 7pm at Powick Parish Hall.

The last day of the consultation is Friday, February 3.

Consultation coverage on Sustrans' web site



- Binding Margin -

Questionnaire

WORCESTER TO MALVERN CYCLE ROUTE

2 February 2012

Please circle each answer that applies:

- 1/ Are you in favour of a cycle route to link Worcester and Malvern being developed?
Yes / No
- 2/ Do you favour Route A or Route B? Or would you prefer both to be developed, or would you like to see a different route altogether developed?
A / B / Both / Different route
- 3/ Which of the following best describes how often you cycle between Malvern and Worcester?
Several times a week / Several times a month / Once a year / Never
- 4/ With a dedicated cycle route in place, how often would you anticipate cycling between Malvern and Worcester?
Several times a week / Several times a month / Once a year / Never
- 5/ What is your most regular start/ finish destination in Malvern (road name or location –such as “Science Park”- is all that is needed), and where would it be once a route was in place?
.....
.....
.....
- 6/ Which trips do you cycle for? (Please circle each that applies):
Leisure / Work / School / Shopping / Other / Do not cycle'
- 7/ Please share with us here any other comments you might have:
.....
.....
.....
.....



email response from Malvern Hills District Council

**Written response
from Natural
England**

Hi Henry,

A very interesting read, as a cyclist I would definitely support this project.

**Worcester – Malvern Cycleway Feasibility Study
Response on behalf of the Route to the Hills Partnership**

The Route to the Hills plan provides a strategy to improve and enhance the two key areas of public open space in the centre of Great Malvern; Priory Park and Rose Bank Gardens. In addition, the concept of a “Route to the Hills” linking the town of Great Malvern to the Malvern Hills been developed to strengthen the link between the town, the hills and transport routes, maximising the economic and social benefits of the project. To view the plan, please refer to the project plan on the Council’s Route to the Hills web page: www.malvernhills.gov.uk/routetothehills

The Route to the Hills Partnership Board is made up of the following organisations, who have all endorsed the project plan; Malvern Hills District Council, Malvern Town Council, Malvern Civic Society, High Street Malvern, Malvern Priory PPC and Malvern Hills Conservators.

As the Worcester –Malvern Cycleway project clearly supports the aims of the project, I confirm that the Route to the Hills partnership supports the project. The partnership would not have a preference about which route was favoured.

In the future, the Route to the Hills Partnership would support the development of future cycle routes which link the Worcester-Malvern Cycleway to Great Malvern, Great Malvern Station and the Malvern Hills.

I hope this gives you enough information, if not please let me know.

Regards,

Manda

Manda Graham
**Community Development Officer
Community Services**

Direct Line: 01684 862312

Mobile: 07967 479463

Customer Services Tel: 01684 862151

Mailing & Office Address: Malvern Hills District Council
The Council House, Avenue Road,
Malvern, Worcs, WR14 3AF

Visit www.malvernhills.gov.uk for information, support and advice.

Date: 6 March 2012
Our ref: 46146
Your ref: Email 16.2.12



Sustrans

Natural England
Consultation Service
Hornbeam House
Electra Way
Crewe Business Park
CREWE
CW1 6GJ

T: 0300 060 3900

For attention of Henry Harbord

By Email

Dear Henry

Worcester to Malvern cycle route – Potential route alignments

Thank you for your email and letter to my colleague Hayley Pankhurst consulting Natural England on 16 February 2012. Hayley has passed your letter to me as I live locally and know the majority of the proposed route(s) reasonably well.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Consultees

We propose that you contact Emily Barker at Worcestershire County Council (01905 766723) to share the consultation with the Green Infrastructure Partnership and encourage opportunities for feedback on your proposed routes so far.

Scoping

You will need to ensure that you adopt a methodical approach to the project so as identify key issues and avoid unwelcome surprises. Although the project would appear to involve limited change to the existing routes a step by step approach will help a great deal. You could use our Environmental Impact Assessment scoping template as a ‘checklist’ for those issues within Natural England’s remit. I attach a copy for reference. Bear in mind this text is geared up to ‘significant environmental impacts’ and you will need to judge the appropriate level of detail to apply based on the nature, type and scale of impacts the cycle route options entail.

Natural England
Foundry House
3 Millsands
Riverside Exchange
Sheffield S3 8NH

www.naturalengland.org.uk

The County Council's Worcestershire Habitat Inventory will be a good reference in order to understand what habitats have been recorded along the routes¹, while the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre² have records of species. You should use these historic records as foundation for deciding the scope of any 'field survey' (for example along the 440m stretch of the A449 where the new route is proposed).

Bearing in mind the green infrastructure context for the project it would be good practice to factor in any 'spin off benefits' that the project might allow. This might be hedgerow restoration for example or ditch clearance/improvement. These are just examples and other possibilities may well surface as the project evolves.

Comments on the routes

The options you have set out appear to offer contrasting strengths and weaknesses. The following comments are offered for information only as they are largely based on personal knowledge of the routes rather than records or evidence held by Natural England.

The colour coding indicating the route options is confusing. The red route is shown intermittently though I doubt you intended this? I offer comments segregating the routes as follows:

Powick Hams to Newland exclusively using the existing A449

This route is car dominated and de-restricted stretches would appear to be an unsympathetic environment for cyclists. A cycle route along this alignment would appear to be direct and is likely to be preferred by cyclists travelling to or from North Malvern and Newland.

Powick Hams to Malvern (avoiding A449 wherever possible)

The dotted line route from the A449 junction with an unclassified single track road (close to Worcestershire Animals Rescue Shelter) as far as Malvern offers a less intimidating route for the cyclist. The route is fairly level and passes through attractive countryside with views to the Malverns when travelling west.

This route might be preferred by cyclists starting or finishing their journey in Great Malvern. It appears less direct than the A449 option. We do not know the Old Malvern Road route at Powick so we cannot offer comments.

While we cannot comment authoritatively on safety aspects along either route it would seem pertinent to seek relevant information from Worcestershire County Council highways in order to weigh up the routes' relative safety credentials.

For any correspondence or queries relating to this consultation only, please contact me using the phone and/or email details below. For all other correspondence, please contact the address above.

¹ Speak to Emily Barker about the WHI.

² Tel – 01905 759759

Yours sincerely,



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Annex – See below