Introduction

This document is one of 22 Annexes to the main HS2 Cycleway Project Report. It sets out the preferred routes which were identified in workshops, refined in subsequent field surveys and then discussed further with local authorities.

The detailed mapping shows the different traffic free and on road sections, and includes brief notes and photographs describing points of particular interest along the route.

Background to the First Stage

In January 2014, the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned consultants, Royal HaskoningDHV, to carry out a Feasibility Study into creating a series of world class cycling routes from London to Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds. The project considers a study area that is generally three miles either side of the planned HS2 Rail alignment, and was conceived as an opportunity to deliver excellent local facilities for communities along the whole length of the proposed railway.

It is envisaged that each section of cycle route would serve as an important facility at a local level, connecting where people live to where they want to go to; and by linking the individual sections together, a continuous long distance could be created that would provide an attractive leisure and tourism facility as well.

As far as possible the project was also to enhance pedestrian routes, and in some cases bridleways too, all within the context of creating continuous, safe and attractive routes which would encourage the public to cycle for local trips, for leisure and as tourists.

The report of this first phase of work was completed in December 2014. It included a total of 18 detailed annexes, of which this is one, each of which described a section of the preliminary route options in some detail. The routes themselves were derived from discussions with local authorities and other interested bodies, backed up by cycling the routes as far as this was possible.

In order to avoid too much repetition in the text and explanation of details, a selection of photographs of appropriate arrangements and details from both the UK and the Netherlands is included here to indicate the sort of quality of route the HS2 Cycleway aspires to realise.
Second Stage

The second stage of the study was carried out during 2015. It comprised meeting with the local Highway Authorities and with the principal institutional landowners, such as Network Rail and the Canal & River Trust. Following on from these meetings, and any necessary further fieldwork, the route proposals were revised, and a series of "workbooks" prepared covering the details of how the proposed cycleway would interact with Network Rail, HS2 and others. In addition 4 further Annexes were prepared covering links to the Peak District, and HS3 cycle routes from Manchester to Liverpool, Sheffield and Leeds.

Birmingham is an example of the tension between making attractive routes – in this case via the canal towpaths which have a strictly limited capacity – and main road routes which might be of particular interest to the fast commuter cyclist, but which have less attraction for novices, families and all the numerous other daily journeys we do. As far as possible we have tried to combine the best points of both aspects to create the National Route through Birmingham.

Frequently Asked Questions

How will it be funded?
As the project is still in the feasibility stage, no specific funding commitments have been made; part of this study has been to determine the likely costs. However, should the project be commissioned, it is envisaged that it would be funded by DfT separately to current funding packages.

How will it be delivered, practically and politically?
Part of this feasibility study has been to identify potential delivery models. We have recommended that the local Highway Authority takes the lead, backed up by a central support team to handle commonly difficult matters such as land assembly.

How will it affect current funding streams?
It is not expected that this project would affect current funding streams, so that this project would be in addition to existing cycle infrastructure investment. It would, though, be advantageous to badge current schemes as part of the National Cycle Route.

When will it be delivered?
This feasibility study has identified a potential delivery programme based on the dialogue with local authorities. Should the project be commissioned, we expect certain sections will be able to be delivered relatively quickly whilst others may take longer. Alternatively, funding arrangements could dictate that certain sections are delivered in a particular order. The findings of the feasibility study will help inform these decisions.
Design Standards - Summary

A set of design standards was developed as part of the first stage of the feasibility study. These are available as a separate document. The design standards strongly emphasise the need for continuity and integration of cycle infrastructure, and that facilities should be appealing to the end user and also consider the needs of non-users. The design standards are a working document, and will be reviewed throughout this stage of the feasibility study in order to best take into account differing local contexts.

The design standards are consistent with the project’s overall aim of the National Cycleway being a domestic exemplar of what high-quality integrated modern cycling infrastructure looks like: safe, direct, coherent, comfortable and attractive. The design standards also emphasise that adaptability will be important as the UK grows its cycling mode-share.

A strong focus is on the best practice seen in places with high levels of utility cycling like the Netherlands and Denmark. Attention is also paid to inclusivity, which not only covers all potential types of cyclists – including those with mobility impairment – but accessibility for all types of other users who will interact with the infrastructure. Benefits to the wider community should also be encouraged: even if individuals do not directly use the route for transport or leisure purposes, the design should take the opportunity for place-making along the route to improve the attractiveness of town centres or other areas through which the route passes.

The default position of the design standards is that cyclists should be afforded their own dedicated space with physical separation from other users. This is an effort to move away from infrastructure strategies that default to a shared use path, or on-carriageway facilities with limited protection from motor vehicles on busy roads. The design standards, however, do allow for sharing with motor traffic, pedestrians or equestrians in certain circumstances – normally where volumes are low. Steps may nevertheless be required to engineer these conditions where they are not currently present. It is likely that many extant greenways through open space or in the countryside which are shared with pedestrians and equestrians would already be suitable for use by the National Cycleway with few changes necessary. In more built-up environments, however, the design standards promote the implementation of dedicated infrastructure for cyclists, consistent with the best practice found elsewhere in the world where cycling for everyday journeys is commonplace.

The design standards acknowledge the varied contexts of the areas through which the route is likely to pass. Quality of infrastructure should be highest where potential for the route to be used is greatest, which is in urban areas or between sizeable settlements in rural areas. However, designs should not be put forward that prevent further expansion as usage grows or new journey possibilities are created that stimulate demand for movement.
**HS2 Cycleway:**

**A visual checklist of proposed standards**

Throughout the section of HS2 Cycleway route described in these notes, it is intended that the overall route is created to the highest standards of design, of surface, of continuity and attractiveness all based on current best practice guidelines, including the Dutch CROW manual. The following examples drawn from England and Holland indicate what is intended, even though the brief descriptive notes attached to the route section maps may not explicitly say so. The photographs are loosely arranged to run from the town to the countryside ending up with the all-important junction and crossings details. These are required at each and every intersection with trafficked roads.

0. **The HS2 Cycle route will start in the traffic calmed core of the town where cyclists share the road space on equal terms with motor vehicles.** (Massluis)

1. **Almost without exception cyclists will be permitted 2 way down one way streets in order to maximise their direct networks.** (Gouda)

2. **Sympathetic treatment of main street in typical small town**

3. **Closure of main street to traffic.** (Rotterdam)

4. **Typical English town with “pedestrianised” town centre already paved to delineate cyclists.** (Stafford)

5. **The Embankment, London, showing the space created for the Cycle Superhighway**

6. **Where space is limited the removal of the central white line and introduction of advisory cycle provision emphasises the presence of cyclists.** (Gouda)

7. **One lane of the road made into a two way cycling track**

8. **Reallocation of road space through residential development to create 2 way cycle route.** (Breda)
9  Cycle track set well back from main road and separated by avenue trees. (Rotterdam)

10  Wide promenade in urban park. (Tamworth)

11  New cycle track in Warwick University grounds with lighting

12  Typical railway path, 2.5m wide rural areas, 3.0m minimum urban areas. (Derby, Melbourne)

13  Wide towpath on Calder navigation

14  Narrow 2m wide towpath on Erewash Canal; note sealed surface with appropriate coloured gravel

15  Typical National Route in rural areas on lightly trafficked road. (Boxtel to Eindhoven)

16  Typical measures to show traffic on lightly trafficked rural roads on routes advertised for cyclists

17  Quiet lane approaching Lichfield – 20mph

18  Typical minor cul-de-sac in Holland, links to ongoing path for cyclists. No motor vehicles permitted except farm vehicles
19 Similar farm access on the way to Waddesdon

20 National Cycleroute (LF) parallel to main road in rural Holland. (LF13 Alphen)

21 Stone based cycle route through National Forest near Ashby-de-la-Zouch

22 Field boundary path with cattle grid and wicket gate approaching Kenilworth

23 Single stage toucan crossing of dual carriageway in Aylesbury

24 Dual use crossing of side road in Gouda

25 Cycling zebra at Aylesbury

26 Priority crossing of side road at Gouda

27 Path continuing parallel to main road (Gouda). Note the crossing is arranged on the desire line
28 Priority crossing in Rotterdam

29 Continuity of route on London Cycle Superhighway to Canary Wharf

30 Direct priority crossing in Lancaster

31 Direct crossing in York on the desire line

32 Treatment of approaches to splitter island at roundabout in Aylesbury

33 New shared use bridge over railway at Aylesbury Station

34 Tank Top bridleway bridge over M1

35 Major new cycle route attached to railway bridge approaching Nijmegen

36 Wide, on the level, underbridge at Tamworth
HS2 Cycleway: Sutton Park to Birmingham City Centre

The suggested cycling route associated with HS2 runs south from Tamworth, to Coleshill and International on its way to Leamington Spa. The Study then concluded that rather than following the HS2 Rail corridor to the Curzon Street and the City Centre it would be best to consider the best possible alignment for a route from International to the Centre. The route described here runs via Sheldon Country Park and Small Heath Park to link together a number of green and open spaces without sacrificing too direct a route.

From the City Centre a direct route north to Lichfield via Sutton Park seems a most desirable addition to the HS2 Cycleway scheme in order to enable as many local destinations as possible to be served and to provide a through route via the Centre for visitors and travellers on long journeys.

This suggested route is summarised on these 3 maps and then described in rather more detail on the following pages. Lastly the report includes a brief resume of the Grand Union Canal and Cole Valley options for a wholly traffic free route from Curzon Street to International. This is not recommended for the HS2 Cycleway but would be a useful addition.

A Sutton Park is a magnificent open space and resource for the whole City. Any cyclist arriving in the Park cannot but be uplifted and inspired to cycle further. (Notes 1-5).

B The North Birmingham Cycle Route runs down a largely traffic free valley past Witton Lakes. It has great potential and is described in detail from Banner’s Gate southwards in the detailed notes following this summary.

A direct route south from Lichfield via Sutton Park and the North Birmingham Cycle Route to Gravelly Hill and the City Centre is recommended, in addition to the general corridor of HS2 Rail south from Tamworth. The Newhall Valley Country Park offers another route but this is not so direct. The proposed route from Lichfield to Sutton Park is covered in the Stoke-on-Trent and Lichfield section of the HS2 Cycleway Study. This section takes over from the southern end of Roman Road at the boundary of Sutton Park.

The main issues to be resolved are how best to complete a way through the magnificent space of Sutton Park, how to complete the North Birmingham Route past Witton Lakes by overcoming the numerous irritations along the route, how to resolve the forbidding barrier of the M6 and the Gravelly Hill Interchange, and then the optimum way into the centre of the City for a high capacity and popular cycling route.

These notes start at Roman Road in the north.

1. Sutton Park is bounded by a major road – Streetly Lane and Thornhill Road, which prevents a satisfactory link to the Sutton Park entrance at Streetly Wood. The best option would be to provide a good crossing of Rosemary Hill Road and of Streetly Lane just to the east of their roundabout, and then to make a new entrance onto the Park at this focal point.

2. There are a number of tracks within this quarter of the Park and there are two options to reach the key bridge over the railway at Bracebridge Pool. Both would need to be constructed on a slight causeway to overcome the wet ground. One route follows the line of the Roman Road and could be seen as an exercise in reconstruction of their road building techniques. This option leads to an existing level crossing, which cannot be used for the HS2 Cycleway, so a new path would need to be constructed parallel to the main road. The alternative follows a track further to the east. Either way will make for a memorable introduction to Birmingham.

3. Park entrance.

4. The first part of the road is used for cars to reach various small parking sites, then the central section is traffic free past Longmoor Pool to the final section of road leading to the Banners Gate entrance.

5. After a short section of road and parked cars, the drive is again traffic free past Longmoor Pool to the final section of road leading to the Banners Gate entrance.

C The Gravelly Hill Interchange – Spaghetti Junction and its associated main roads, canals and railway, all conspire to make a significant obstacle to reaching the City Centre from the north-east. The study suggests solutions which would have considerable local benefit.

D A combination of local roads and route through Bloomsbury Park, Loxton Park, and other green spaces takes the Cycleway direct to HS2 Curzon Street and its associated landscaping and public areas. It will be an invaluable local access.

E Curzon Street Station needs to incorporate good cycling access from all directions.

6 The towpath of the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal has recently been resurfaced for cyclists, but its width is tightly constrained and its level surface interrupted by numerous bridges over side basins. As a consequence its capacity is limited, and it is only used by more experienced cyclists.

7 The Grand Union Canal towpath has more width, more potential for widening and for making additional access points. It could be developed as a traffic free alternative to the main HS2 Cycleway proposed.

8 There are proposals for a cycletrack along the north side of Nechells Parkway which could lead to minor roads and the University. A number of difficult junctions would need to be resolved and care taken to enhance the environment of such a roadside route.
HS2 Cycleway: Options at Gravelly Hill interchange
HS2 Cycleway: Options at Gravelly Hill interchange
HS2 Cycleway: Sutton Park to Birmingham City Centre

F Make a traffic free promenade at least as far as the Custard Factory and then link through Small Heath Park.

G Utilise a short length of the Cole Valley.

H Link together Oaklands and Gilbertstone Recreation Grounds.

I Create a continuous route through Sheldon Country Park.

J Make the final link to International via an existing corridor adjacent to the railway.

K An alternative to the residential road route first considered would be to forge a route alongside the A45 and its corridor. Here scrupulous attention to quality and detail would provide a fast commuting route although it would be less attractive to a wider range of everyday users.

L Existing greenway towards Coleshill.
**HS2 Cycleway: Sutton Park to Birmingham City Centre**

For points 1-5 see summary, page 6.

6 An existing toucan crossing and a short length of shared use path lead to the start of the Witton Lakes corridor. This is signed as the NCN 535 route.

7 The first section is slightly disappointing because it climbs steeply when one had been expecting to follow the stream valley! The gradient needs to be eased with a longer alignment though this open space.

8 There is a rather nondescript link into Banners Walk which again needs some careful detailing. Walkers can follow the open space. Banners Walk itself could be much improved with avenue tree planting.

9 The greenway valley route makes a number of road crossings. The success of the overall route will depend upon making the crossings easy, direct and attractive. Each should be a gateway to the next section of route and be planted with sentinel trees or similar.

At King’s Road the barriers and central reservation for a two stage crossing need to be replaced with a straight single stage crossing, on the direct desire line, providing good visual continuity without much delay.

10 The King’s Road/Homerton Road section is good, with a smooth path to HS2 Cycleway standards. Its lower section has a brutal palisade fence down its west side which should be removed if at all possible. All along this greenway search for opportunities to make additional links into the adjacent residential streets. This is especially important on long inaccessible streets such as Twickenham Road where future redevelopment schemes should be seen as opportunities for creating links where presently there are none.

11 Homerton Road, a quiet local road, is barricaded off on both sides. The chicanes should be removed, a raised priority crossing provided to slow traffic right down, and a smooth curve made to ease the dogleg into the next section of park.
12 College Road is the next barrier. Again the route detours via a two stage pelican crossing. As at King’s Road the greenway should be realigned to give a smooth flowing ride to a single stage toucan crossing.

13 The section through to Witton Lodge Road runs down a green strip of space adjacent to Hurstwood Road. The path is good, but there is no provision at the three side roads. The path should be eased away from Hurstwood Road at the approach of each crossing and then provided with a raised crossing giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists.

14 South of “The Hurstway” the path is hard beside the carriageway. It would be better to reconstruct it away from the road to give a wide verge with trees planted so as to maintain the parkland feel.

15 At Witton Lodge Road there is a good open single stage toucan, but the route has a large offset detour. On the north side this could be resolved by reconstructing the last 100m of path to give a direct route north. On the south side a completely new link and bridge over the brook is required to create a direct route.

16 Across Perry Common Recreation Ground there are excellent wide open views, almost verging on bleakness. One or two small copse of trees and seating areas would give focus to this section. Also the unsealed path needs to be reconstructed to a full HS2 Cycleway standard - 3-4m wide in smooth asphalt.

17 Perry Common Road has a single stage toucan signal but again an awkward approach detail. This can be resolved by rearranging the final few metres of path either side so as to provide pedestrians and cyclist with a direct onward journey. It may also be appropriate to add a raised crossing to slow traffic generally approaching this crossing, as here and elsewhere the crossing is at the bottom of a dip in the road each way.
18 The whole of the section through to, and past, Witton Lakes is memorable and attractive and all built to a good standard.

19 Marsh Hill is yet another barricaded two stage toucan crossing, adjacent to a school. This needs to be changed to a single stage crossing, with careful detailing of the approach either side and of links to residential roads. Visually this location is the important connection between the Witton Lakes and Brookvale Lake and deserves to be good.

20 The short connecting road is already calmed with a give way to oncoming traffic island (a parallel path might be a better option). George Road needs a raised pavement priority to path crossing, where at present there is no provision.

21 The final section of the valley past the lake in Brookvale Park is again delightful.
22 At Park Road the existing route turns west, up the hill, then dropping down under the M6 to join the towpath of the Tame Valley Canal. This is neither convenient nor direct, and the route involves travelling through the cavernous and dark spaces under spaghetti junction.

This is not an easy place to traverse, but good solutions must be found to connect the north of Birmingham to the City Centre just 5kms away.

One option is to brightly light, and paint white, all the columns and walls under the M6, as well as to surface a wide space, 4 or 5m where this is available, and install a balustrade all through on the canal side. We recommend that this is done anyway as these vaults are a truly fascinating space.

Pedestrians and cyclists would have minimal contact with this underworld, if two direct routes were created, one via the end of Salford Park Lake, and one via the Lichfield Road roundabout itself. These connect through to the network of canals and the two which are currently used as cycle routes to reach the City Centre.

Although both canals are attractive routes, neither is suitable for large numbers of users as they are very narrow in many places, especially the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, and they are relatively isolated from nearby communities. We therefore recommend that the HS2 Cycleway goes centrally through the area via Nechells Park Road and then the string of parks and open spaces to join the railway alignment for Curzon Street and the Centre.

23 The direct route continues down the stream valley to Salford Park Lake, starting with a raised pavement crossing of Park Road to reach Park Approach.

24 The route passes by the Cypriot Centre and its playing fields as a permissive path.

25 This section under the M6 is high and light. The grim palisade fences could be rearranged and set well back from the route of the path.

26 The existing approaches to the canal bridge could readily be eased on either side: on the north by making a direct and even slope in earthworks to reach the top of the existing ramp; and on the south side by making a wholly new and additional ramp curving away from the end of the bridge. These measures would make a great difference in this area.

27 It would be best to pass by under the second arch of the railway viaduct to give more space and views.

28 The path is narrow and bounded by palisade fencing. It should be possible for the Highway Agency to allocate much more space, perhaps around the north side of their compound at the foot of the railway embankment.

29 The Highways Agency access road is an attractive approach to passing under the A38 for the existing bridge over the Tame.

30 Once past all the viaducts and columns and bridges, one can look back across the lake and almost convince oneself that the motorway complex is a beautiful object reflected across the water.

31 The existing exceedingly narrow path to Astonhall Road needs to be replaced with a promenade across the empty development site in a south easterly direction.

32 Provide a raised toucan crossing over Astonhall Road and make a path through the open space opposite to reach the Lichfield Road where another toucan crossing is needed.

33 The key to this route option is to take advantage of eventual redevelopment in this area to make a safe crossing of the main road, a link to the canal, a direct bridge over the canal and a link through to Long Acre. In this study this is shown as being along the unused canal inlet.

34 Provide a raised pavement crossing of Long Acre to reach Eliot Street, past the school for Nechells Park Road.

Notes 35 to 41 describe the additional route via Slade Road.

35 Follow the path through this open space to start the route to Slade Road.

36 George Road needs a shared use pavement along the whole of its south side. This probably means removing parking on this side to allow for a 3m pavement extension.

37 Similarly create space for shared use on the west side of Slade Street to Hillside Road providing raised pavement crossings of each side road. The whole of this route should be viewed as the way to Brookvale Park.

38 There are wide pavements suitable for shared use either side of the railway subway. Although this is rather small it is direct and its sightlines are good.

39 The Lichfield Road roundabout is seen as a problem area. On the face of it provision is made for coming off the Lichfield Road and travelling through to Slade Road via subways in and out of the central roundel. BUT the lack of visibility through these subways, the lack of lighting, the absence of activity and the difficult connecting roads all combine to make this daunting.
We suggest a number of improvements:

a. Open up the 4 subways with blind bends (only the one to Slade Road going north has clear sightlines through).

b. Whitewash and light everything.

c. Rebuild all the plaster with 45° sloping wall to improve visibility, cut out all ground cover leaving only the trees and remove the landscaping feature blocking off the Slade Road exit.

d. Completely remodel the southern subway so it continues straight out, past the builder’s yard, bridges the canal and gives a direct connection to the towpaths.

e. With this through route established, encourage activities to populate the roundabout area by subsidising a café, a bike repair shop, graffiti workshops and a climbing/ropework course. It would be cost effective to contribute funding towards these activities provided they have a remit to provide informal surveillance of the area.

40. The key to making this whole route work is making an extension to the subway under the footway, then cutting through the end of the builder's yard and building and ramping up to cross the canals. Such a measure would immediately remove the current contorted and generally little used options.

41. The main cycleway would then continue southwards on the towpath of the Grand Union Canal as far as Cuckoo Road bridge in order to pass under this busy road safely. Widen the towpath throughout.
41a Alternatively continue further on the canal, widening the path as much as possible by taking in additional space.

41b Ramp off canal and make a new expressway path adjacent to the main road.

41c Any such route adjacent to a main road has to solve the problems of protection from the environmental stress of traffic, connectivity across the road, and continuity at major junctions like these.

41d Move the planned path into adjacent open space.

41e Traffic calm and otherwise render suitable residential roads through Nechells’s Green.

41f Upgrade existing Lawley Middleway crossing.

41g Follow through the University and integrate the National route into the development of Curzon Station so that the whole route acts as a primary feeder to the station.

42 Ease the gradient of this ramp and the connection to Nechells Park Road.

43 Nechells Park Road is the key to making a direct route to the City Centre as it aims straight to it. It is already closed to through traffic as its northern end, and if a further closure could be effected at the railway bridge this would reduce traffic on the road yet further.

44 This southern end is busier and a traffic free shared use path should be created along the west side of the road, by narrowing the carriageway if necessary.

45 The Rocky Lane crossing should be a single stage toucan on a convenient desire line.

46 Make a link across this open space, provide a raised zebra crossing of the road, and cut through the landscaped mound to reach Bloomsbury Park.

47 Make a wide promenade through the Park based on existing paths.

48 Provide a raised zebra crossing of Oliver Street and refurbish the cul-de-sac to provide a clear through route to the subway.

49 If possible ease the gradients either side of the Nechells Parkway subway.
50 Provide a raise zebra crossing of Duddeston Manor Road, a new path through Loxton Park and then a direct crossing of Great Francis Street to reach the attractive park running down to Erskine Street.

51 Move onto the disused railway at a convenient level to run forward behind the West Midland Fire Headquarters. This section cannot be constructed until the HS2 Rail works are complete.

52 Incorporate a good path under the HS2 viaduct to lead through level to the Curzon Street HS2 Station. Ensure that cyclists as well as pedestrians are provided for all the way through to the Moor Street Queensway Promenades. This whole route will now provide a high class connection to the Station or HS2 customers.
 HS2 Cycleway Birmingham City Centre to Birmingham International Station and Airport Section

**Overview**

Preliminary surveys looked at a combination of the Grand Union Canal Towpath connecting to the Colne Valley or the Sheldon Park routes. These largely traffic free routes should be retained as useful components of a City wide cycling programme, and indeed as leisure options for those using the HS2 Cycleway. However the canal towpath is not wide enough to cope with a significant increase in cyclists, and has too few local connections to be a truly useful local resource. We therefore recommend a new 12.8 km route from Moor Street Station to Birmingham International Airport, along as direct an alignment as possible, picking up attractive roads and open spaces along the way.

At some time in the future there may also be the possibility of a good cycling route being developed in association with the planned tramway. Indeed such a resource should be incorporated into that tram scheme.

Birmingham has a large population, and is central to the HS2 routes. It is hoped that all sections of the HS2 Cycleway will be constructed to internationally recognised high standards. This section in particular deserves exemplary treatment, to create an inspiring route suitable for both novice and experienced cyclists, segregated from general traffic over its whole length. These notes propose two-way “promenades” down the roads to create filaments linking the five parks along the route – narrow extensions of each park making them accessible to all.

1. The wide pavement of Moor Street Queensway can be taken as the starting point. It connects to the Curzon Street HS2 Station site and should be connected through the City Centre by a high class walking and cycling route.

2. The area through to Bordesley Street will probably be redeveloped over the coming years and this will be an opportunity for creating a traffic free “promenade” all the way through to Curzon Street and the City Centre.

3. Widen the River Rea bridge linking through to the Custard Factory area. This is an atmospheric area under the railway arches and a national destination for a promenade from the City Centre.

4. Continue along Lower Trinity Street and Adderley Street to cross the Grand Union Canal which requires a good ramped link in any redevelopment. This might be the eventual end of the full tree lined promenade.

5. Take space from the remainder of Adderley Street to make a 2 way shared use path to Watery Lane Middleway. Although this is already an official signed cycle route it has no provision for crossing the wide dual carriageway. Toucan lights are a minimum requirement. Ideally eventual development would include a bridge which could continue on the level to meet Kingston Road as it climbs up the hill.

6. This wide road has space for a good promenade on its north side where it can extend Kingston Hill Park in either direction.

7. This road is closed to traffic, but open to cycling.

8. Coventry Road needs a crossing provision. This could be achieved by stopping up the north end of Author Street to make a direct toucan.

9. Camelot Way has been fenced off for school parking leaving the former footway as a through route. This should be reconstructed at least 5m into Sara Park, so that a good line of trees can be planted to mask the harshness of the fence and reconnect the path with the Park.

10. At Jenkins Street road junction, and similar locations along all these routes, there should be raised tables with all 4 arms marked to give way, to provide continuity and safety.
11 For the whole length of Glovers Road narrow the carriageway and gain sufficient space for a good shared use promenade on the south side of the road (nearby Malmesbury Road is an excellent example of this treatment, which along with a few strategically planted trees has completely changed the character of the street).

12 This small roundabout is reported to cause problems at peak times and it may be better to substitute traffic lights including a dedicated phase through to Small Heath Park.

13 This mature park already has an excellent cycle route through it to a suitable standard for the HS2 Cycleway route.

14 Make a new ramp through to reach Coventry Road. This is a most interesting highway built by Thomas Telford for his mail coach road to Holyhead and Ireland. A monument to this early transportation feat would be fitting at this point of the HS2 route.

15 Take space on the south side of Coventry Road all the way through to the Cole Valley so as to make a wide 2 way shared use promenade, tree lined for as much of its way as possible. Include a good phased crossing of Oldknow Road lights, and a raised pavement across each side road including Talbot Way.

16 If the existing pelican crossing location is maintained then a raised pavement priority is required over Heybarnes Road. Alternatively shift the crossing to just south of this road junction – although this would be less convenient for local residents.

17 Remodel this rather scruffy area as a fitting entrance to the Cole Valley and Haybarn Park.

18 Widen the existing excellent path.

18a Provide a dedicated crossing of both carriageways and of Golden Hillock Road.

18b Construct path in margin adjacent to railway fence.

18c Join, and reconstruct existing rudimentary greenway route.

18d Upgrade light controlled crossing.

18e Find space to enhance the current scheme to something akin to London’s Superhighway cycling routes.
18f Continue planned scheme along north-side of main road. Provide continuity at every junction, make links into every side road, incorporating crossings to link to the communities south of the A45 and enhance the quality of the route with Avenue planting.

18g Provide dedicated crossings of Church Road.

18h And finally connect across Rowlands Road to reach the alternative route coming down from the Recreation ground.

19 Cross on an existing bridge and remodel the small public area through to Berkeley Road.

20 Follow this quiet residential road through to Holder Road. It would be advantageous to close off Fastpits Road to through traffic at its mid-point.

21 Provide a toucan crossing of Holder Road to reach Oaklands Park.

22 A new easily graded ramp needs to be cut through here to climb at a gentle slope to join the existing cycleway which has recently been reconstructed to HS2 standards.

23 From the summit there is a wide vista over Birmingham including views of the City Centre – our destination when travelling northwards.

24 Widen the last section, and rebuild for a more direct alignment to Hob Moor Road.

25 Hob Moor Road has a very wide pavement on its south side which would enable Oaklands Park to be “extended” to the shopping centre.

26 Provide a new direct single stage crossing of this major road – Stoney Lane.

27 Define a promenade path through a rather jumbled area to the Moat Lane Junction. This will need a crossing facility - ideally a raised table.

28 Extend the south side pavement of Moat Lane to reach Gilbertstone Park.

29 This is yet another wide open space on the line of the proposed HS2 Cycleway. Create a tree lined promenade running south, perhaps some 20m into the park so as to be away from the boundary and the backs of adjacent gardens.

30 Cross the side roads here and use the short access road in front of a line of shops.

31 All along this section of the main Coventry Road there is a small service lane, hidden behind a bank which masks the traffic. This makes for a very good route. Provide a raised crossing of Brays Road.
32 A very short section of footpath fronting four houses could be fractionally widened, although future tramway schemes may radically alter the arrangements on the A45.

33 Provide a raised crossing of Barrows Lane to complete the HS2 Cycleway to Sheldon Park.

34 Existing toucan crossing and short lengths of cycle route connect to the shops and across to Wagon Lane for the link to the Grand Union Canal.

35 Sheldon Country Park provides a continuous green space all the way through to the end of the runways. For most of its length a completely new path to HS2 Cycleway standards is needed together with a protected crossing of Church Road. Its first section and its last are already good quality tarmac paths. Make as many cross connections and linking routes as possible.

35a Church Road requires a particularly carefully detailed crossing as it is the only severance over a long length of green space. A raised zebra crossing would be appropriate to indicate to drivers the significance of the country Park and the HS2 Cycleway. Note the awkward barriers in the photograph. The whole of the HS2 Cycleway should be barrier free with concerns of vehicle abuse dealt with by bollards and of motorcycle use by regulations, public surveillance following on from a popular route, and if necessary by police enforcement.

36 Construct a new link to provide a direct route and ease the gradient.
37 A popular viewing point on the flight path to the airport.

37a Existing path runs northwards providing links to the Cole Valley and the direct route to Coleshill and Tamworth.

38 Define the route around Marston Green Station car park.

39 This residential road is generally suitable although raised tables at Land Lane and Elmdon Road would aid those cycling southwards.
Link south towards Solihull
There are two possible options for connecting through at the end of Digby Drive. The direct airport access gates would allow the public to continue straight through a small copse and not pass behind any properties. This links to the existing informal path to the airport which would offer a convenient short cut for local residents who work there.

This unused bridge offers good views over the airport. The wide space is railway land already licensed to Sustrans for the purpose of this path.

This final section of the route joins an existing shared use footway which could usefully be widened onto the space behind.

Make up a good defined two-way cycling route to the station. At present cyclists can make their way to the entrance but not via any formal route.
Notes on options surveyed for the HS2 Cycle route from Birmingham City Centre to the Airport

The City Centre to the Airport is only 12 kms by the direct railway route. Cyclists following this corridor would be mostly on road. The most direct greenway route is via the Grand Union Canal and Sheldon Country Park, but it must be doubted that conventional measures will ever deliver the capacity we seek on the canal paths. The Cole Valley Greenway has the space for considerable width, but it is circuitous and still uses part of the Grand Union Canal, albeit less on this option.

Eventually the study concluded that these greenway routes were not entirely satisfactory for the HS2 Flagship Cycleway, and the highlighted route via Small Heath Park was recommended and is described in detail in this document.

However as a record, these notes set out the survey comments on these greenways which could be a very useful part of Birmingham Cycling Network.

The Grand Union Canal route is much more direct but suffers from its narrow towpath, restricted details and lack of ready and useful access to long lengths of the towpath. The almost parallel route via Small Heath Park is judged to have very much more potential.

The Cole Valley Route has the makings of being one of Birmingham’s longest and most high quality greenways. The recently constructed sections are of excellent quality and it has generally good linkages with adjacent communities. Most crossing roads, and there are only ten in 12 kms, can either be passed under, or have good surface arrangements. It does though feel rather remote, although residential streets are only a stone’s throw away. Only at Stanton Road does it lead directly into a cluster of shopping streets. This is almost inevitable since such places are, by definition, clustered on roads rather than greenways. Much the busiest section (monitored at 4.00 pm on a weekday) was the eastern end where the path was clearly a popular route for pupils and families of every sort.

But this Cole Valley route is just too circuitous to be able to form the basis of a route to the City Centre.
Birmingham City Centre to Airport: Cole Valley and Sheldon Park routes

The Sheldon Park route is shown with red numbers (1-22) whilst the Cole Valley route is described in black numbers (1-18).

Sheldon Park Route
1. Fazeley Street is a signed route but rather built up and commercial.
2. The canal is a lovely route and this first section makes for a radial route into town so has great potential. Mostly the towpath could reach 2.5m width.
3. This long straight section runs parallel to the Network Rail yard, where there must be scope to gain 2 or 3m by adjusting the railway fence. At present there is already a double fence with abandoned land between.
4. The path had not been rebuilt over this section at the time of the survey.
5. Important crossing of Cole Valley Greenway needs to be made a real feature.
6. This narrow section has little scope for widening against factory boundaries. Follow adjacent Armitage Road.
7. Stocksfield Tunnel is long with a very narrow towpath, so is not suitable for cycling. Make a long ramp up beforehand to achieve a 1:20 gradient, or stay high from Armitage Road.
8. Provide road crossing and use stone road by Yardley Cemetery.
9. Join attractive open space and cut easy ramp down to playground to Clay Lane. Provide road crossing.
10. Attractive open space with clear remains of old track, now abandoned and grassed over.
11. Wagon Lane needs promenade on north side to link through to Sheldon Park.
12. Existing toucan crossings need to be carefully linked by promenade.
13. First part of Sheldon Park has an excellent path, which then just stops.
14. Path needs to be built to HS2 standards all through and good crossing of Church Road required.
15. Route then re-joins excellent path across the end of the runway which is a popular vantage point for watching the aircraft.
17. Existing Toucan crossing but off desire line. Requires path realignment on approaches. Also remove barriers at entry to park.
18. Requires a short new link to transfer the cycle route from the eastern side of the brook to the western side, continuing along Bell Walk (western bank of brook). Would probably require a priority/Toucan crossing on Gloucester Way.
19. Shared use cycle track along length of Kingshurst Brook. Approx. 3m wide.
20. Existing Toucan crossing is provided over Chelmsley Road, but a bridge at river level, to meet the existing route on the opposite bank would avoid the need to cross the road completely.
21. Existing bitmac path, approx 3m wide with white line segregated pedestrian/cycle route.
22. Formal cycle route crosses the River Cole and follows Kingshurst Brook to reach Airport and Sheldon Country Park.

Cole Valley route
1. The Cole Valley route really starts in this open space. To the east runs the invaluable Green Lane to Coleshill. Ideally, to maintain the river valley feel, a new bridge over the river and a new path would link to the subway and Clotopon Crescent area.
2. The existing path runs on the north side of the river and under the Chester Road and Moorend Avenue Bridges. There is also a newly constructed (2014) toucan crossing for Chester Road cycleways which needs easily graded direct approach ramps.
3. Existing tarmac paths all needs widening to 3.0m or to the same standard as this formal cycle route crossing here. This route leads down the Kingshurst Brook and provides the direct route to Moston Green Station and the Airport.
4. At grade crossing of Cooks Lane and the very well used path continues towards the lake. This whole section, either side of the road, is well used by school pupils.
5. It would be best to build the main path around the south side of the lake so as to avoid the car park area in the north.
6. An attractive cross valley link.
7. Excellent new construction, 2.5m wide asphalt, between concrete kerbs.
8. It was slightly surprising that the new path did not include a route passing under the side span of Lea Ford Road. Although its present headroom is 1.5m, this could be readily excavated deeper. As it is the surface crossing, with a central island, has rather bulky chicanes either side.
9. Good toucan.
10. A second new section. A cross path at this point would seem to make useful connections and a means of reaching Stechford Station, avoiding the main road.
11. The route currently stops at Stanton Road, with no clear crossing to an informal entry onto grassland south of the road. It might be possible to come through the north span of the river bridge if the Cole was channelled into the south span in normal conditions. A surface crossing would still be needed in flood time.
12. This next section has not been made up. Under the two railway viaducts there is very restricted space, but this can be overcome by negotiating with Network Rail for the use of the whole width of the available arches and cutting back the embankment in between.
13. Approaching Bordesley Green East the riverside is narrow and it would be best to construct the path along the edge of the higher open space. There is no room to pass under the road bridge.
14. A crossing is required for this dual carriageway.
15 A good tarmac path continues.
16 This last section is scarcely passable and needs a complete reconstruction, preferably shifting the path as far as possible from Small Heath Highway.
17 Route joins the Grand Union Canal for Central Birmingham.
18 There is an excellent bridge over the canal but earthworks are needed, to remove the steep gradients and regain the valley floor, after the river's passage via culverts under the railway.