National Cycleway in association with HS2: Preliminary Feasibility Study

Staveley to Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Fieldwork Note Annex B11

Route maps and notes  December 2015
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 Canals & Rivers 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.

From Staveley to Kirkby-in-Ashfield we selected a direct route southwards close to the HS2 Rail alignment, and also an additional option looping westwards via Chesterfield and existing railway paths, re-joining the direct route at Hardwick Hall. Chesterfield is also the starting point for a linking route to the Peak District which is discussed in detail in Appendix B19.

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.

Area covered by Route Annexes
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 (Redcliffe Bridge, Bristol)

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 Project: Staveley and Chesterfield to Kirkby-in-Ashfield

This section has to navigate through a veritable maze of railway paths and links based on the extensive colliery lines in the area. We eventually decided that the optimum route should run south from Staveley to Bolsover and Hardwood Hall from where there is the framework of existing paths through to Sutton in Ashfield and thence to Kirkby-in-Ashfield.

This preferred easternmost route is shown highlighted in green.

To back this up we suggest a western loop to take in Chesterfield.

This segment of the HS2 Cycleway tackles a number of local issues. One of these is to connect the whole of Skegby and Sutton in Ashfield to Sutton Parkway station. This is a core objective of the work where we need an exemplar greenway and town promenade to make the journey attractive and rewarding.

To complete our notes we would be remiss not to comment on some of the other routes in the area all of which are valuable for their local communities and can be arranged to connect through to these HS2 Cycleway routes.

**Preferred (eastern) option**

1. The route should start in the attractive town centre of Staveley and either go south on the existing railway path to reach the Country Park or cut across town to reach the mothballed Bolsover railway line.

2. The tracks have now been lifted from this closed line, which is planned as part of the Bolsover Loop Project. It passes through the large Markham Vale Redevelopment Project which is currently in hand. It is important that the former railway is seen as the green corridor through this area, that individual developments face onto it, that good links are included and that the continuity of route is maintained.

3. The Council would also like to make a good path along the closed railway to Clowne. And local links to Mastin Moor and Woodthorpe do need to be incorporated in the rail project.

4. There are a number of good connections from Bolsover to the existing Stockley Trail. This good railway path runs out at the Rattleston Road and continues as a well-made path beside the stream.

**Western option**

This western loop is longer than the direct route south via Bolsover, but it does connect through to Chesterfield, and so could serve more people. The two routes together will make an excellent circuit for local people and visitors to the area.

1a. Existing canal path is generally excellent. There are a few details where options and links could be enhanced. Much of the towpath is sufficiently wide and the restoration of the canal has given full attention to towpath users.

2a. The canal path is constrained on its approach to Chesterfield and the current Trans Pennine Cycling option is signed via the main road with cycle lanes. It would be better to continue on the towpath.

3a. At the station a good link to the town centre is already partly in place.

4a. A current scheme is constructing a path away from the station area via this former railway. For part of the way there is the potential of a good route along the west side of Derby Road although the final 250 metres or so will need some careful detailing in order to reach the excellent River Rother Path.
HS2 Cycleway Project: Staveley and Chesterfield to Kirkby-in-Ashfield

- Traffic free and access roads
- On road
**Preferred (eastern) option**

5. There is a complex of ramps crossing a haulway embankment here, before the path continues down an attractive valley.

6. Climbing up past the Stockley Ponds, the track is now a roughly sealed road ending at the pub on the main road.

7. A way has to be made to Adit Hucknall, possibly partly on the line of the old railway and up the field edge.

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**Western option**

5a. The redevelopment along the floor of the valley should deliver a greenway route from Chesterfield to Grassmoor. This could start with Ingleton Road and follow the east side of the mainline railway, or could run on the west side through new developments.

6a. Define the route through Grassmoor by careful urban landscaping.

7a. Follow the Five Pits Trail as far as possible.

8a. The main road requires a safe crossing with good continuity to follow the Five Pits Trail south. The first part of this is a good field boundary route, but at the location of the junction of paths a removed accommodation bridge has resulted in very steep gradients which need to be eased.
HS2 Cycleway Project: Staveley and Chesterfield to Kirkby-in-Ashfield

Traffic free and access roads
On road

Stockley Trail

5a
6a
7a
8a
Preferred (eastern) option

8 Follow attractive minor roads and onto Hardwick Hall’s Drive – the side wicket gate is open when the main gate is shut.

9 The Hardwick Estate roads are a delight. One new field edge path is needed so as to avoid the steep cleft of Lady Elizabeth’s Wood.

10 Follow very quiet roads past Norwood Lodge to join the Treversal Trail.

11 This passes the Café and information centre.

12 The trail continues and only a short section is needed to reach Alfreton station on the Chesterfield line.

13 Follow the trail east to Skegby.

14 The Skegby Trail is another excellent route – we are almost spoilt for choice. This bridge though has been removed resulting in a very steep climb. To make the route to Pleasley an everyday route for ordinary people, a bridge re- instatement is required here – perhaps at a level two or three metres below the original alignment.

15 The Mansfield Road bridge has been removed and it is essential that a new bridge is put in place over this busy road. The approaches can be built out in earthworks so as to leave only a short 30-40m bridge span.

16 Interesting rock cutting, although this prevents connection to adjacent housing.

17 Good connections to Quandale Avenue and Greenbank Drive. Street lighting starts at this point.

18 The bridge under Stoneyford Road has been removed. Given the potential value of this traffic free route, a new subway should be placed through the embankment to maintain the profile of the path and to provide a traffic free crossing.

19 The route runs along the Northern View Terrace. In fact the adjacent railway land is unused and a tree lined avenue along its boundary would be a much better arrangement, and this could lead to the existing pelican crossing near the school.

20 Either the path past the school needs to be widened by 2m into the adjacent sports area, or the whole path needs to be re-routed to the west of the sports centre.

Western option

9a Continue via minor roads through Astwith village. At the crossing of the main road, B6038, try to negotiate a link in the field edge on the east of the road.

10a Negotiate with the estate to make a new route avoiding the worst of the hills on the existing minor road.

11a Agree the best way to tackle the hill up to Hardwick Hall, maybe via the existing bridleway, or some new alignment.

12a The Tibshelf Trail continues southwards and makes for an alternative route, serving further local areas. But we have not recommended it for the main HS2 route, preferring to go via Hardwick Hall.
HS2 Cycleway Project: Staveley and Chesterfield to Kirkby-in-Ashfield
21 More unused ground where development should include a tree lined avenue through to the start of the shopping street. The existing crossing may be sufficient.

22 Along Outram Street there is a wide ornamental pavement on the north side of the road. This could be utilised for shared use provided continuity at side road crossings is resolved.

23 Continue through the traffic free shopping streets to the Market Square.

24 Arrange the route to go south across New Street. Remove one rank of car parking to give a direct route through to the Main road (high pavement).

25 There are a number of options here, depending upon where best to put the necessary crossing facility.

26 Measures are needed to make Hardwick Lane more attractive, including tree planting, so as to create a promenade feel.

27 At its southern end, join the existing traffic free bridge over King’s Mill Road East.

28 Overhaul the path and unused access road to make an attractive section.

29 The wide footway on the north side of Penny Emma Way is suitable for shared use.

30 Make a crossing before Oddcroft Lane and a new final link to the station.

31 Make a crossing of this main road.

32 The old railway route makes an excellent path direct to Kirkby-in-Ashfield. Lift the redundant tracks at the south end.

33 The footpath climbs steep steps up to Southwell Lane. It would be much better to pass under the bridge, parallel to the track, to give a direct connection to West Park. With this link the whole railway path and reclaimed mining area to the north could become an extension of West Park and its paths.

34 Join Forster Street for a residential road route to Victoria Road for the station.

35 Widen the footway into the road by 1m over the bridge and either side so as to allow shared use.
These two maps and notes record our observations on making a direct route linking Chesterfield and Bolsover, and of linking together the numerous sections of good railway paths which currently don’t form complete and useful routes. All these routes would be valuable links for local communities, and, taken all together, would make for a significant regional resource.

Completion of the central north/south route is tricky, but there do seem to be some possible lines of attack. The long railway path running south from Bolsover currently ends at the main road in Arkwright Town, whereas if it could be extended a little further southwards it could make a number of useful connections.

1a The existing railway path south of Staveley is good and has the valuable bridge under the main road still intact.
1b The immediate way is blocked by a new factory but it should be possible to pass around one side or the other?
1c Stay up high for an even gradient through to the bend on the unadopted road.
1d Try to keep to the contours as far as the main road.
1e A new path on the field edge would be required as far as the country park, as the road is busy. So this may not be the best way through.
1f The route south, by the unadopted road, may be difficult to achieve agreement on. It drops down a good way to the brook before climbing up under the A61.
1g There is a large drop from Temple Normanton. A field edge path is needed to reach the green lane a zig-zag path down the field to finally join the Five Pits Trail.
2a The first part of this railway route is occupied by houses, but if access could be gained, then there is a really useful 1km of route which is well used by the public.
2b Regrade ramps to road crossing at grade.
2c The most difficult section is across to Cock Alley as the ground climbs steeply. Despite the negotiation required the only solution is to continue on the railway formation as far as possible, then to negotiate along the field boundary until the road is reached, then to create a new path inside the field edge as far as Cock Alley.
2d Follow this good minor road through Callow Green, to continue eastwards on the unadopted road.
2e From the summit (146m) construct a new route through the landscaped open cast workings to fall at an even gradient to cross the Sutton Scarsdale Road, via the remaining railway bridge, and continue at an even gradient to Longcourse Farm.
2f Follow the general line of the footpath under the M1 to reach the Blockley Trail and Bolsover.
2g The Sutton Scarsdale route follows these unadopted roads and tracks through to the village.
2h This minor road is generally lightly trafficked. The third east west variant is to follow the railway paths through to Holmewood Country Park, and then make up the foot path route through Heath. Because of the gradients this option may best be left as a walking variation.
3a Existing railway paths.
3b Make up this footpath to Heath.
3c Tackle the gradient down the hill to cross under the M1 for the footpath link to the Blockley Trail. It may be that HS2 Rail earthworks could help us here.
HS2 Cycleway Project: Staveley and Chesterfield to Kirkby-in-Ashfield