National Cycleway in association with HS2: Preliminary Feasibility Study

Tamworth to Banbury: Fieldwork notes covering the sections in Warwickshire
Fieldwork Note Annex B14a

Recommended possible main National Cycleway associated with HS2
additional or alternative routes
local links and connections

This Annex also includes a detailed Appendix by way of sketches, illustrating how the planned Kenilworth and Leamington Cycleway (K2L) could be built to the enhanced standards sought by the HS2 Cycleway Project

Route maps and notes  December 2015

Royal HaskoningDHV

John Grimshaw & Associates
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.

This document is a compilation of the various sections of the proposed route through the length of Warwickshire. Rather inconveniently for reference this County was covered in no less than 3 separate annexes, extracts from which are assembled here covering the proposed route from Tamworth to Banbury via Coleshworth, Leamington Spa and Southam.

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.
Tamworth has an extensive network of good cycleways in the south eastern new town area. Despite the possibility of using long lengths of these, a new route down the flood plain past numerous reclaimed gravel pits and Kingsbury Water Park does seem to offer the best route for visitors and best resource possible for local people. A large part of Tamworth will be able to access the HS2 Cycleway via existing networks.

The watery routes continue all the way to the remote Lee Marston parish church, from where a surprisingly good greenway route can be forged across the vast Hams Hall Site to the new bus and cycle bridge over the railway at Coleshill Parkway Station. From there a traffic free route can be created the whole length of Station Road to reach Coleshill's historic High Street, where measures to reduce the impact of traffic are appropriate.

The final leg from Coleshill to International depends on a new bridge over the Stonebridge Road to reach Coleshill's historic High Street, where excellent cycleways include the bridge over the River Tame below Tamworth Castle and Grounds.

Tamworth to Coleshill and Colne Valley Greenway and Birmingham International Airport and Station

7 Link to canal path. This towpath is not suitable for our purpose on account of its restricted width and turnover bridge at Fazeley Junction, also a rather narrow bank running south. It does though make for a valuable local route and is well used by cyclists.

8 The current path is narrow by the housing and diverts away up the hill for a light controlled crossing of the main road. It would be a great improvement to go under the road via the canal bridge on the opposite side to the towpath if a way through to Mount Pleasant can be achieved. There should be room provided a short narrower section is accepted.

9 Minor residential road.

10 Existing toucan lights at Atherstone Street could be better arranged as there are obstructions on the north side.

11 Fazeley Bridge is narrow with narrow footways. It might be considered the most useful to bridge the Tame just south of here to make local connections.

12 Then continue south either on the river bank, or at the edge of the housing developments.

13 Alternatively, continue further south on the east bank on good cycle paths and bridge at a convenient point to pass around the northern edge of the gravel pit workings, or across to run outside the canalside field edge.

14 In the extensive nature reserve, run along the top of the flood bank, parallel to the canal path. This gives good views over the lakes and marshes and bypasses the narrow canal bank which can be maintained exclusively for walkers and fishermen.
Tamworth to Coleshill and Colne Valley Greenway and Birmingham International Airport and Station

15 At Cudworth Bottom Lock join the lockkeeper’s road.

16 Join the excellent leisure path which passes under the motorway by a good open bridge and under the line of HS2 Rail.

17 This joins a tarmac road and runs alongside the extensive narrow gauge Echills Wood Railway to the visitor centre.

18 Follow these generally good stone tracks past extensive lakes.

19 Good footbridge and boardwalk to Kingsbury, passing below the Hall and remains of the castle on its high vantage point.

20 Tarmac old road.

21 Good cycling bridge on line of old road – Hemlingford Bridge

22 Permissive bridleway under main road A4097 – Centenary Way

23 Centenary Way is a permissive bridle path of varying quality on Environment Agency land. It makes for an excellent route, although it is close to traffic noise.

24 It may be possible to make use of this flood span for a more direct route.

25 Markings and crossing provision required over this fast road.

26 The bridleway is narrow behind an EA boundary fence. It would be better to follow their road and re-arrange the gates further south on their site.

27 If permitted the fence should be moved to make a more spacious path.

28 View over fields is very welcome.

29 Short length of local road. The pavement could be improved for walkers and a crossing marked out.
Tamworth to Coleshill and Colne Valley Greenway and Birmingham International Airport and Station

30 This cul-de-sac to the church is a delightful road culminating with a monumental stone cross.

31 This concealed permissive link allows a connection through to the Environment Centre Eon.

32 Narrow cycle paths beside all these industrial distributor roads.

33 It would be much better to create a new link across this large open space so as to avoid most of these industrial roads.

34 Create a new path west of industrial link road.

35 Interesting tarmac link road across remains of railway and good bridge over the River Tame. Alternatively continue along boundary fence to pass under Edison Road and follow track over river bridges to join road just before the bus gate.

36 Links to industrial road with space to make promenade along one side.

37 Make new path in open space against the river, as far as the bus and cycle gate, to new bridge across the main line at the station.

38 Create tree lined promenade on west side of road. This starts as a footway against industrial frontages, the owners of which may be willing to assist with tree planting on their property. It then becomes an attractive walk separated from the road by a line of prunus, then an open space and finally a series of cul-de-sac drives. All through provide continuity at road crossings.

39 Existing zebra crossing perfectly located.

40 The River Cole stone arch bridge is narrow. The adjacent footbridge should be replaced with a wider one for pedestrians and cyclists.

41 Coleshill is a historic town with an interesting main street and a striking church spire on the summit of the hill. This main street deserves to have as little traffic as possible in order to make it more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists – people. Various measures would be appropriate.
42 The Green Lane from Bacon’s End has great potential to connect Coleshill to Birmingham across the HS2 route. The lane starts as a series of residential streets connected by fragments of lanes.

43 The Stonebridge Road is a major barrier. There is no crossing provision at all on this fast and straight road. A bridge is the only solution, with long gentle earthwork ramps, which can be planted up as tree lined avenues to help shield traffic noise. Note that there is a woodland path and a roadside footway on the east side of the road but nothing on the west.

44 The first section of the Lane is now overgrown and scarcely used.

45 The second section is a farm access track and is too steep, its gradient needs to be halved and preferably these earthworks would be parallel to, but separate from the farm road.

46 The bridge across the TWO motorways is level and excellent.

47 The Green Lane is tarmac to start with. When the HS2 Rail goes ahead care should be taken to maintain a direct route and to bank the gradient up to the motorway bridges.

48 This last section of the wide Green Lane is only a narrow path, but set within the original width of land. It could readily be re-built to a good standard.

49 The subway is a commodious bridge, but blocked at the west end with a ruthless palisade fence and small gap. This should be removed and the problem of motorbikes dealt with in some other way.

50 The promenade greenway could be continued in this wide verge/forecourt.

51 Existing path through to Chester Road.

52 New toucan crossing. (Note that it would also be possible to loop around to pass under the side span of this road).

53 New path needed along narrow grassland.

54 Pass under Chelmsley Road Bridge to join start of narrow tarmac path.

55 Formal cycle route crosses the River Cole and follows Kingshurst Brook to reach Airport and Sheldon Country Park.

56 Existing bitmac path, approx 3m wide with white line segregated pedestrian/cycle route.

57 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.

58 Shared use cycle track along length of Kingshurst Brook. Approx. 3m wide

59 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

60 Existing Toucan crossing but off desire line. Requires path realignment on approaches. Also remove barriers at entry to park.

61 Path passes under side arch of railway viaduct to reach Sheldon Country Park.

Notes 62-68 are covered in detail in the Central Birmingham section

62 Existing excellent cycle link to Marston Green station.

63 Follow Elmdon Lane, or construct greenway along airport perimeter green space.

64 At Digby Drive link into track between houses and noise bank.

65 Join path to airport via existing bridge.

66 Construct standard HS2 cycleway path along existing corridor between airport and railway.

67 Existing shared use cycle paths are narrow but mostly can be widened into adjacent space.

68 Clarify and sign cycling destinations at airport and at station as well as route to the International Convention Centre.
This section of the HS2 Cycleroute has a number of objectives including: creating a promenade avenue linking the airport to the HS2 station; enhancing the existing route from Birmingham International towards Solihull and opening up an attractive way to the airport and station from the south; extending the existing Kenilworth Greenway northwards to Hampton-in-Arden; following both the Warwick Road in Kenilworth and The Parade in Leamington Spa to contribute towards creating more attractive and less car dominated central streets; suggesting enhancements to the exiting Kenilworth and Leamington Spa Cycle Route; and including a memorable link to Kenilworth Castle.

The salient points along the routes are described in the following notes, and examples of the standard and quality of route envisaged for the HS2 Cycleway Project are summarised on the next few pages. The route via the HS2 station would become the National Cycleway when it is complete.

1 Planned route from Marston Green can be built all through to the junction for the International Station.
2 Provide continuity at the junction.
3 The existing cycle track is nicely set back behind trees, but needs cutting back hard to gain and maintain the full width.
4 Provide continuity across this junction.
5 The existing route crosses Airport Way at this point and a raised zebra crossing is needed to emphasis continuity of the route.
6 The existing Solihull cycling route is all in place but generally of a, Ope standard and there are numerous details to be attended to.
7 Although the existing path is 2.5m wide its proximity to the main road traffic is wearying and it would be better reconstructed along the field edge. A crossing with a central island is required to reach Shadowbrook Lane.
8 Shadowbrook Lane is an attractive road. Removal of the central white line and adding advisory cycling lanes would be the appropriate solution.
9 A direct promenade route too HS2 station is absolutely essential for the movement of people between all the big sites here. Use the existing bridge under the railway.
10 Create a promenade and avenue all the way to the HS2 station taking in the shores of the lake for an attractive route.
11 Provide a dedicated route to the station entrance and past it to pick up the line of the former railway.
12 Reduce the width of the one way road under the main road to a single lane so as to create the space to take a dedicated walking and cycling route through.
13 Follow the line of the old railway. For the first section use the west side field edge to avoid the industrial use of the site. Towards the south the railway formation is available and informal path Leads to the road.
14 The southern part of this old main road, now a cul de sac, is a bit busy on account of the small business park.
16 Of the options through Hampton-in-Arden, Fentham Road involves quite a climb, Station Road is now blocked by office development at its southern end and the main road is much too busy. We concluded that the best route was to make up the footpath east of the railway to effectively extend the nature park at Packhorse Bridge north to the village.
15 Provide a convenient crossing of the main road to facilitate a link to the station and a continuation of the route.
17 Marsh Lane is most attractive and is all but traffic free as it is a cul-de-sac to the Nature Reserve.
19 The attractive bridleway around the south side of the fishing lake and golf club house (with restaurant) makes for an attractive way through.

20 These roads are quiet and suitable but a more direct route adjacent to the railway fence would be better.

18 The 15th century Packhorse Bridge is a highlight of this route. Its approach paths need to be cleared out and resurfaced. Note the raised walkway for use in times of flood. This leads through to the Back Lane road option for Coventry.

It may be possible to reconstruct this bridleway to a good standard and to join the minor road to Bradnock's Marsh in order to reduce the length of new path required.

21 Construct a good path adjacent to the main road (this will require some realignment of the carriageways opposite the cottages) to reach the hotel and existing crossings and cycle track.
Although it has not been practical to survey links to this proposed station good access to the station is equally important, as is good access to Birmingham International Airport. At this time we have not seen detailed plans for this station, but we must assume that the provision for cycling will be carefully detailed.

These notes consider how best to provide access from the north, from the Airport and Network Rail Station and from the south.

0 Make new route from Elmdon Road bridge to avoid most of Bickenhill road.

1 The “Solihull” route envisages following Bickenhall Road. This is too busy to be an attractive route, so a separate path will need to be constructed.

2 Crossing Coleshill Heath Road will require detail.

3 Blackfirs Lane cul de sac.

4 Main road crossing required.

5 Station approach should be designed with high quality cycling route to station entrance passing under M42.

6 The Airport/Station Link needs to start with a dedicated path via a widened pavement.

7 Utilise the existing subway keeping it open at all times.

8 Make a dedicated promenade route around via car park verges and widened footways to reach the Lakeside. Note that this whole area is only semi-open to the public and a way needs to be found of resolving this regime so as to allow the public at all reasonable times.

9 Attractive lakeside path.

10 Cross the motorway adjacent to the planned Airport Link, or via north side of East Way.

11 Link to station entrance via promenade path.

12 The Link to the South is dictated by how best to cross the A45 Coventry Road. On the basis that at this stage in the HS2 procedures it will be difficult to be fitted in alongside HS2 Rail, the only practical option is to hunt along the alignment of the former railway.

13 Provide crossing of East Way.

14 East Way under the M45 is one way north and the wide carriageway could be reduced to allow a good cycling track along the east side of the road.

15 Although the railway formation itself is occupied by adjacent industrial premises, the route could be negotiated along the field boundary edge.

16 Reach the Old Station Road (a cul de sac, although a cycling link could be made to the Motorcycling Museum at the north end) and travel down to Hampton in Arden.

17 Provide possible crossing of High Street and rejoin the main route from the International Airport.
Birmingham International HS2 Station linkages
HS2 Cycleway Project: Birmingham International to Leamington Spa

22 Existing Cycleway beside new road can be enhanced with avenue trees and continuity provision. Or it might be better to follow the paths through the village open space?

23 Treatment of road approaching Berkswell Station would enhance continuity of route.

24 Link to start of greenway needs to be completed on an embankment to avoid present flooding.

25 The whole greenway through to Burton Green is affected by HS Rail. It is important that the reconstruction of this route creates a greenway feel, that it is to a high standard, that gradient changes are easy (1:25 max to reflect this railway route) and that the road crossing at Burton Green is a protected raised zebra as currently the public enjoy a bridge under the road.

26 Existing Kenilworth Greenway along former railway.

27 Link to Warwick University and Coventry described is separate notes.

28 Connect 2 bridge over Coventry Road.

29 Section of existing path on land held under Licence from Network Rail.

30 Drop down to join Forge Road residential cul-de-sac.

31 Widen footpath over very short section of Stoneleigh Road so as to reach existing signed path.

32 Similarly improve link between the two paths at the end of Park Road, and ease the gradient of the existing path by riverside.

33 This ends at Bridge Street which is rather unfortunate since this is the main A452. However the existing arched bridge under the road is just purpose made for continuing the route straight through into Abbey Park.

34 Currently cycling is not permitted in Abbey Park. However a very few key links would knit together potentially popular route is Kenilworth, would give them a focus and would be a memorable highlight of everyday journeys. There are three routes of great interest.

34a A diagonal route to Abbey End searching out the easiest even gradient possible to reach the top of the hill; and the town centre.

34b A route along the valley floor to cross Castle Road for the back lane used for NCN52.

34c A route to Kenilworth Castle. This might go one side or the other of the lake, cross Castle Road, negotiate the area of the flooding, to pass under the Castle approach bridge for the entrance. Alternatively, or additionally, looping around to the south of Castle Hill and approaching the Castle from the west.
35 The main shopping street – Warwick Road – is level, interesting and much dominated by traffic. If there are schemes planned to ease this pressure this would be of great benefit to the public in this, the centre of town. Traffic is moving slowly and we request the introduction of clear cycling lanes either side in order to enable motorists to maintain a width for cyclist to pass through.

36 The main shopping street will need to be connected via a widened shared use footway on the north side of Warwick Road across the railway bridge to the start of the Council’s Kenilworth and Leamington Cycle Scheme.

37 This Kenilworth and Leamington Scheme is approved and will provide a direct route between the two towns, just over 4 miles long. Our comments are that ..., the road, if this is really necessary, should all be given a rapid response time so as to speed the cyclist’s journey.

38 The Thickthorn A46 roundabout is seen as a major barrier and light controlled crossings of both slip roads are essential. This is particularly important for the southbound road as drivers do not necessarily indicate if they are going this way.

38a If the Thickthorn A46 details are considered unsolvable, then we recommend avoiding it altogether though taking the Rocky Lane bridge over the A46 and crossing the River at Ashow. Such a route would not be materially longer than the Kenilworth and Leamington route, depending upon where in Kenilworth one started from. Its principal points would be:

(i) Follow the most direct and attractive residential roads and links through Kenilworth.
(ii) Rocky Lane is most attractive and only needs resurfacing.
(iii) Take the road to Grove Farm for a field edge route to existing bridge.
(iv) Replace the deck of the existing bridge to match the original somewhat wider bridge and provide an additional span on the south side to overcome the steps and reach somewhat higher, and less prone to flood, ground. Note the remainder of the path would occasionally flood.
(v) Negotiate along the route of the footpath or possibly seek to join the drive to Bericote Farm.

39 Chesford cross roads requires a raised pavement crossing to give a through route for cyclists.

40 Bericote roundabout requires a raised pavement cross on the line of the existing uncontrolled arrangement.

41 It would be a great enhancement if the planned route was to run inside the boundary of the Sports Ground and to be seen as a resource for that facility.

42 Blackdown roundabout, Stoneleigh Road, requires a raised zebra crossing on the line of the current alignment. As with all these situations it is all but impossible for cyclist to be able to negotiate this type of road layout with any confidence or security unless traffic is forced to take account of cyclist movements.

43 The route along the edge of the school playing field is essential for the space and for integrating cycling into the School’s travelling. A 1.4m high fence would be sufficient and would allow the public to enjoy the views over the grounds.

44 Raised crossings or defined shared use zebras should be provided through each side road in Leamington.

45 All through Leamington a 4m wide path would be more appropriately achieved by building out the footway, narrowing the carriageway and removing sections of central cross hatching. With Leamington’s spacious roads these footway should be built out 2m wherever possible in order to allow for roadside tree planting to enhance the ambience of the whole area.
It would be difficult to bypass Coventry – the birthplace of the modern cycle- and a City lying so close to HS2 Rail. A number of options were suggested at the workshops and in the end there was a choice of the main route running via Kenilworth or Coventry, the former being the more direct. This Coventry Diversion is made up of two radial links to the HS2 Cycleway, the first offering a good quality cycling route to and from Birmingham International, and the second a route through Warwick University. The latter in particular follows much of the existing NCN 62 and sets out to resolve its defects and make it a truly attractive route for local people.

Please note that we also investigated an option via Meriden, but for the time being at least have failed to find a satisfactory route from Birmingham International to Meriden itself, although the remainder of the way to Coventry does have some potential.

A It would be most desirable to go via Meriden, the Centre of England. It is not clear how, or if, a good quality route can be achieved, especially at either end, and in dealing with this very wide, former main road.

B A link from Berkeswell to the station could be a reason for going this way but all the roads in this area are uncomfortably busy.

C This direct route via Four Oaks has the most potential of becoming a good route, memorable and popular, but this depends entirely on making a good crossing of the main A452 in association with HS2 Rail.

1 The core HS2 cycle route running from Hampton-in-Arden to Kenilworth.

2 Marsh Lane is interrupted by the main A452, at this point a fast dual carriageway. HS2 Rail is reconstructing the road to pass over the railway which gives an opportunity for the Cycleroute to travel under the road, adjacent to the railway. Such a protected crossing would be well worth achieving as Dale Road beyond is a most attractive traffic free route. The resolution of this crossing is critical to the viability of the route.

3 Dale Road is a soundly surfaced bridleway and miraculously hides the adjacent quarries from view.

4 Back Lane is a little too heavily trafficked to be entirely comfortable. Take measures to reduce traffic by entrance features either end, remove through signing, access only, remove central white line and add cycle lanes and introduce speed tables.

5 Provide crossing of busy Broad Lane via central island and construct cycle track in the adjacent land separated from road by hedge trees.

a) Include a promenade access to the station from the east.

b) Include a crossing under the A452 to reach the open river valley.

c) Make a riverside route along the Blythe passing under the main road at Stonebridge.

b) Make a riverside route along the Blythe passing under the main road at Stonebridge.

d) Work a way past the lakes and past the Stonebridge Golf Club to reach Somers Road.

e) Create a new greenway route in the restoration of the gravel pit workings as a resource for Meriden residents.

f) Main Road has a considerable width which could be reduced to give a wide promenade route through the length of the settlement.

g) As the onward main road to Coventry is far from enticing take the Berkeswell Road to Four Oaks. This road would need some traffic calming measures such as the removal of the central white line and the inclusion of two advisory cycling lanes.
HS2 Cycleway Project: Birmingham International to Leamington Spa: an option via Coventry
There is an excellent track going up the hill past the school.

A route via the brook has been considered in the past but it is slightly more remote than the one followed by the existing signed route to the City Centre via Jardine Crescent.

Measures to reduce traffic on these very quiet residential streets would be useful, such as stopping up through traffic or linking up cul-de-sacs or going through open spaces, as would continuity at junctions.

Jardine Crescent is a noteworthy piece of urban design.

Take the path into edge of Limebrick Park past the shops.

Tile Hill Lane is wide and now lightly trafficked. Add wide cycle lanes or two way track on north side to pick up the eastern fragment of the lane.

This leads onto an existing cycle track on the edge of Hearsall Common. Provide dedicated crossings at roundabout and cross to south side of main road via existing toucan.

Kingston Road may be the best of these parallel streets to develop as the main cycle route.

Sovereign Road is closed to motor vehicles under the main railway and leads to dedicated cycle track (recently rebuilt). The connection beside Sovereign Road and across Butts Road needs to be smoothed out and a new path built south of the tower block to pick up the existing footbridge. This offers a direct route and gives a view of the adjacent medieval bridge.

A dedicated cycle track then leads to the subway under the Ringway and the historic and beautifully managed Spon Street.

It must be admitted that there is no provision at all for cyclists in central Coventry, denying them access to the places potential cyclists most want to go. It is not obvious how to resolve this.

Greyfriars Green is being renewed with an ambitious placemaking park over the Ringway – Friargate Bridge Deck. This may so change the environment that the HS2 Cycleway should follow this corridor, to the War Memorial Park and then via Stivichall Common to rejoin the current University route at the Kenilworth Road.

Or follow the existing long bridge over the railway and the path beside Spencer Park. This could be extended past the tennis courts to reach the end of the Belvedere Road direct. Belvedere Road and Warwick Avenue are pleasant roads with only light on-street parking. The optimum solution would be a 2 way 3m wide cycle track down one side of the road, keeping car parking to the other.

There is an awkward fragment of the Kenilworth Road before joining the green track past the Golf Course. This latter is magical. It needs surfacing and some low level lighting.
22 The existing toucan over Fletchamstead Highway typifies why so few people cycle. It is designed for maximum inconvenience and delay! It should be replaced with a single stage responsive crossing as the example at Aylesbury shown here.

23 It would be possible to enhance the path on the east side of Cannon Hill Road for the shared use route and then follow Ivy Farm Lane which becomes closed to traffic. This is possibly more direct and attractive than the current signed route.
24 Lynchgate Road needs a wide shared use cycle path on its southern verge.

25 Excellent University route.

View of new University route with lighting

26 The route joins University Road through the heart of the Campus. A defined and segregated Cycle track would be a further improvement.

27 Excellent route continues past playing fields.

View of field edge path

28 Diversion for HS2 Rail will be an opportunity of making an easier gradient through the railway.

29 Kenilworth Greenway main route.
Although Stratford is well outside the HS2 three mile corridor, it is a popular destination, so the study team were asked to comment on the works needed to make a good quality cycling route from the main HS2 Cycleway route in Leamington across to Warwick and Stratford.

The existing NCN41 route has some excellent sections, notably the Myton Green Lane and idyllic country lane to Hampton Lucy. However, it has an unsatisfactory exit from Leamington in that it bypasses the historic centre of Warwick and has a long diversion via Loxley at the end, adding an extra two miles to the overall route. The notes here suggest modifications to tackle these points.

1. Section of existing route on busy main roads.
2. Railway station subway and forecourt are confusing.
3. Cycle lanes on rather dreary main road, although a link to the canal towpath would improve this.
4. Much better route would be to go past the Bowling Club on Archery Road and through the Park on one of its wide carriageways which are already popular routes for cyclists. Pelican lights cover the main road crossing at the exit.
5. The path is ridiculously narrow through the railway arch, where there is another open one adjacent, through which the route should be directed (Network Rail).
6. Rather good path separated from road with separate bridge under Warwick line. This route could be enhanced by future redevelopment of adjacent demolished site. The new wildlife fence is rather brutally on the boundary of the path when setting it back a few metres would have provided a much more spacious feel.
7. Existing toucan crosses this road for formal cycle route over canal.
8. Excellent Green Lane with split path. The south side hedge is a bit claustrophobic and would be much better replaced with an avenue of trees giving views over the fields.
9. Shared footway section. Continuity needs improving as it serves schools.
10. Existing toucan leads to a lovely, and unexpected, section of the route.
11. Existing path past the lake and over the river.
12. End of signed route on main road.
14. Main road section needs footway widened by 1m onto the carriageway for shared use. Is there any chance of using the Castle gateway and approach?
15. Castle Street is one way to the west. Travelling towards Leamington, cyclists must use the High Street.
16. Take time out in the babble of town streets around the centre.
17. Below Gate the main road is wide and attractive. Slow speeds would be advantageous and perhaps cycle logos on the road.
18. Start the shared use path as soon as possible with new surface and continuity at all junctions. This path is hard against the road and although there is space it is probably not a worthwhile effort to shift it.
19. There is adjacent rough land – Severn Trent – if one did want to enhance the quality of the journey experience.
20. This excellent bridge over the motorway and slip roads deals with an otherwise impossible set of conflicts. There are unnecessary chicanes, four dismount warnings for the public to ignore and far too much unnecessary steel railings on the approaches. (These could all usefully be recycled elsewhere). The parapets are 1.25m high, for which the current DfT guidelines permit the engineer to decide if they are appropriate or not. As this is much too long a bridge to expect cyclists to walk, the signs should be removed.
21. Short section of path beside the Barford Road.
22. Some markings are required for this currently unmarked crossing.
23. The whole of this lane offers a perfect view of an idyllic English countryside with a good vista over the Avon Valley at one point.
Leamington Spa to Stratford-upon-Avon
Leamington Spa to Stratford-upon-Avon

24 A slightly busier road leads down to the village.

25 The current route hits problems here. The road gets busier, the Charlecote Road is a bit of a rat run (could it be closed to through traffic at the Hotel car park?) and the B4086 carries far more traffic than we can cope with. The ideal solution would be for the National Trust to allow a new path built around the perimeter of Charlecote Park to provide for a memorable experience of a visit there.

26 This public footpath runs to the side of the avenue and former drive, rather than along it. Deer graze throughout the Park but this should be no problem. In Richmond Park there are a number of cycling routes crossing where the herds roam and it is a feature of the trip. Ideally, agreement would be reached to rebuild the drive itself.

27 Again, ideally, one would use the existing bridge, which is currently locked off from October to May each year. Alternatively, a new bridge would be required near the boundary.

28 Ornamental park gates.

29 To by-pass this section of road, which has no footway, a new path needs to be built on the lower field edge. Such a route would be a real boon to Alveston residents who would then be able to walk to Charlecote Park.

30 There is a short section where the river cuts in close and careful work will be needed to build a path up the verge, narrowing the carriageway if necessary.

31 Again past the house, the existing path is narrow.

32 Move with the field edge as soon as possible.

33 Go through the village for pleasure and the Ferry Inn. This is the old road. There is a reasonable path along the north side of the "bypass" but we do not recommend improving this. Ideally one would bridge across near the historic ferry site or maybe at the ford upstream but this would then bypass Charlecote Park so on balance we considered it better to not go that way.

34 There is no choice but to use the footway. This generally has adequate width. Over quite long lengths it could be widened. It also has open views of a number of interesting houses.

35 At this end we need to gain some width which could be by negotiation with owners of small riverside plots and council strips.

36 A crossing of the main road is needed.

37 There is some doubt about whether cyclists should use this excellent tramway viaduct. This should be resolved and the route signed through to the theatre.

38 Use the town streets for a route to the station.
Leamington Spa to Stratford-upon-Avon
Royal Leamington Spa to Southam – 10 miles

This section of the HS2 Cycleway is particularly interesting as the proposed railway offers the chance of resolving a long standing discontinuity at Offchurch where the busy and fast Fosse Way serves the former railway route.

The Welsh Road option was found to be much too busy and hilly. The canal towpath option, whilst shorter, does not offer the same potential of a traffic free link to Rugby Station, as does the old railway which is the route recommended here. To reach Southam itself, a new path up the edge of the former cement works land is required to avoid the A423. This route follows NCN41 but makes some radical improvements to it.

1. An excellent path through open space to the leisure centre.
2. Follow the stone track to the Local Wildlife Site Haymeadow and forge a new link to the canal towpath on roughly the line shown, including a new 15m span bridge over the river. This by-passes the current route with its crossing of the main road, shared use footway, narrow towpath and constricted way under the main road, and would make for a very much better route.
3. This section of the Grand Union Canal is reasonably wide with a good path. It could achieve 2.0 or 2.5m width, without difficulty.
4. The ramp up to the railway could be re-built to give an easier gradient and wider path.
5. Good railway path with views. Needs new surface.
6. This bridge is infilled at a difficult junction with lots of turning traffic. A subway here would be appropriate. Note this could be set square to the road for shortest length and its invert needs to be only about 4m below the road level, so shallow ramps would be needed.
7. HS2 crosses this particularly attractive railway path. It would be appropriate to make a bit of an effort with a bridge over HS2 Rail, which will be in a deep cutting. There is no doubt that the whole character of this beautiful path will changed and, by way of compensation, it would be proper for HS2 Rail to put in the subway under Welsh Road and a bridge over the Fosse Way.
8. This missing bridge has massively affected the use of this railway path. Its replacement can be a simple span on new earthwork approaches with adequate clearance.
9. There is a well-used track through this deep cutting, created by bikes and motorbikes.
10. Under this high lattice steel (listed) bridge, the area is used for motor bike scrambling – something which will stop when a popular tarmac path is put in place.
11. Potential railway path to Rugby.
12. Continue railway path. This whole alignment avoids the long hill up to Snowford Lodge on an otherwise charming quiet road.
13. Existing NCN route 41 including an Armco subway under road.
14. Bridge over canal and 5 arch brick viaduct. This section is currently only used informally.
15. Desirable link to model village.
16. Armco culvert under main road. Careful attention to drainage is needed here to sort out current flooding.
17. Link up on cement works land by agreement with Cemex.
18. Mark out crossing of works road with zebra.
19. Make new route up through former quarry area, all set back as far from main road as possible. Plant up as a tree lined avenue to create an attractive walk for Southam.
20. Formalise crossing of main road and make cycle track around roundabout.
21. Old main road is very wide and cycle lanes are appropriate or narrow carriageway for 4m wide shared use pavement on west side to serve school.
22. (These notes describe link to Long Itchington). Start with constructing 1:20 ramp to canal towpath.
23. Good towpath.
24. Use existing access road to loop around to cross canal on adequately wide main road pavement.
25. Construct new path on wide verge and across works forecourt.
26. Construct link through wooded workings.
27. A ramp down at this point would give good access to the village, or there is a narrow slot before the lock, or the path by the main road could continue for village access.

Alternatives considered and dismissed

A Although this long length of canal towpath offers a more direct route, the works required, and land to be negotiated, are disproportionate to the benefits, AND the opportunity of making a valuable link to Rugby is lost.

B Welsh Road carries an unexpectedly high volume of fast moving traffic and has a poor reputation for cyclists. Its hills are also quite challenging.
National Cycleway in association with HS2: Preliminary Feasibility Study – B14a Warwickshire: Tamworth to Banbury section

Traffic free and access roads on roadsuggested main route

0 0.5 1km 1.5 2.0km

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

A B C

December 2015

Page 29
Southam and Banbury Section

South of Southam the countryside is relatively empty and it has been difficult to decide on how best to meet the HS2 Cycleway objectives of creating a popular and attractive route as well as meeting local needs. Eventually this study concluded that it would be the most valuable to route via Banbury before rejoining the HS2 corridor at Brackley.

Although there is a network of relatively minor roads in this area, a surprisingly large number of them carry rather large volumes of traffic travelling at speed. So for example, the Welsh Road striking away to the south-east from Southam has 3000 v.p.d., well above our target of 1000 v.p.d. or less.

This is an area where the actual corridor of the HS2 Rail does provide much the most satisfactory route and we recommend that by linking up a series of access roads and field access tracks, the Cycleway follows the HS2 alignment as far as Stoneton, for Lower Boddington from where a combination of minor roads and greenways lead on to Banbury.

The existing NCN 48 does travel in the general direction required but its departure from Southam via the B4451 is unsatisfactory and it drifts off to the west without approaching Banbury. Nonetheless we show a possible route using part of this as a rather inferior option – inferior because the HS2 alignment is direct, traffic free and would be a positive resource for the Southam area.

We also considered the possibility of a route further east via Daventry to Heilmdon and Brackley which might make up a part of a “family” of HS2 routes in this area designed to encourage visitors to holiday here as well to bring forward local links such as from Branton to Daventry. This option is shown as a line on a map only because we have yet to discuss it closely with Northamptonshire.

The following notes describe the preferred route, and then the reserve route via Ladbroke and Bishop’s Itchington using the prefix “A”.

1 Coventry Street would hugely benefit from a ‘place making’ programme to give the area a more focussed and popular centre. The study has prepared details for such a scheme at Brackley which might be of interest to Southam.

2a Continue southwards on Abbey Lane and cross the Leamington Road via the existing, shortly to be upgraded lights for a single stage crossing of this main road.

2b The Banbury Road development has provision for a shared use route running southwards. Care should be taken to make this to the best HS2 Cycleway standards and link this through to the Banbury Road itself.

2c HS2 has agreed to provide a new shared use route along the A423 as far as Ladbroke. Again this should be to the Cycleway standards and carefully set back from the carriageway by a wide verge.

3a Cycle into Ladbroke on the Southam Road. This is the way for a route continuing southwards to Banbury largely on existing rural roads.

3b The main route should follow Windmill Lane and the cross the Banbury Road with a dedicated provision to Ladbroke Hill.

3c The main way south would now best be incorporated into the boundaries and access roads associated with HS2.

A1 It is most important that Ladbroke is connected to Southam so as to give this village a positive benefit. This will require a link beside the main road, and a crossing of it, all as part of HS2 road re-alignment works.

A2 Construct a new path separated from the main road by a wide verge with trees to create a promenade and provide a safe crossing of the A423 to Ladbroke so as to make a local route and link for that village to Southam. Note, ideally this road crossing would be incorporated in the HS2 bridge works.

A3 Traffic calm through Ladbroke.

A The existing bridge under the bypass gives a valuable local access to the Southam Fields area. It would be very useful to work out and develop a good route along the network of streets to reach the Town Centre.

B Welsh Road looks on attractive route at off peak times but is in fact used by numerous vehicles driving at high speeds and as a consequence is not comfortable to cycle on.
Southam and Banbury Section

4 The HS2 route has extensive earthworks and plantings over this whole length so it should be possible to include a good route all the way, adjusting the earthworks to provide a reasonably level haunch for the path through to Stoneton. In addition, the path could use the planned agricultural accommodation roads, which could all be linked up.

5 Join the rerouted road from Stoneton.

6 Provide a safe crossing of the “main” road to reach Lower Boddington, and make a shared use traffic free path beside the road through to the village.

A4 This option now joins the minor roads followed by NCN 48 as far as Fenny Compton.

A5 This road from Bishop’s Itchington to Knightcote is quite delightful and is gated at Holmes House, which serves to make it almost traffic free.

A6 The road south from Knightcote is rather busier but still attractive to use and almost completely level.

A7 This last section to Fenny Compton is a bit bleak and would benefit from hedgerow trees, or even perhaps it may warrant a separate field edge path as traffic is heavier.
Southam and Banbury Section

A8 Appropriate measures to calm traffic in Fenny Compton.
A9 Another long quiet road gated at its southern end just before Farnborough. Traffic calm through the village.
A10 There is a bit of a hill here and advantage should be taken to position some convenient benches for stopping off and viewing.
A11 For 300m a new path is required along the field edge to connect the two minor roads without having to come into contact with the main road.
A12 There may be a useful back street route through Mollington, but use the HS2 Cycleway project to calm the existing roads anyway.
A13 The main road crossing at Mollington requires a central island placed across the extensive central area white lining. This will allow cyclists to cross the road in two stages.
A14 Drop down to the core route at Cropredy.
7 Depending upon traffic volumes calm or provide a segregated path on the approach to the village.
8 This road is to be closed to through traffic but a small bridge will give access for cyclist and pedestrians to a quiet rural ride.
9 This road will become a cul-de-sac.
10 Traffic calm through Claydon.
11 Quiet attractive roads continue.
Southam and Banbury Section

12 Traffic calm through Cropredy.
13 At Cropredy we need to join the canal corridor and design a route which can be considered a resource for Banbury. The Oxford Canal was an early contour canal and its bank is narrow with no reasonable way of widening it. For this reason we are aiming to avoid the towpath itself for as much of the way as possible. The first section is a stone access road.
14 This first field seems to be a bit of a public space with moored boats and people sitting around.
15 The bridleway goes over the first bridge and then follows the field edge for 600m to Peewit Farm bridge. Make this whole bridleway up to a good standard with a firm surface.
16 From Peewit to Little Bourton, continue the path along the field edge so as to avoid the towpath. There may be a case for planting a new hedge and then removing the existing one so that the public can see the water. This would result in the towpath area being mostly the preserve of fishermen, uninterrupted by passers-by.
17 For the next 1200m the canal is backed by a new flood bank which has the advantage of giving a good view and a good width for a sound path.
18 Join the canal towpath to pass under the M40.
19 Move into the abandoned field so as to bypass the narrow and steep passage at the lock. There is ample space in the field edge to create a spacious and easily graded path.
20 Rejoin the towpath to pass under the main line railway.
21 Make a link along the edge of the wood, a local nature reserve, to reach the reservoir.
22 Widen the path along the east side of the reservoir, where there is much more space than on the narrow canal towpath.
23 Join the excellent local cycle path through the Country Park passing under all the roads along the route.
24 Complete the riverside way to near the station by defining a route through the small car park and by creating a new promenade as part of any developments in the area.
25 The canal towpath itself could be used as a local link and it would be most desirable to designate appropriate cycling routes to the Town Centre itself.
26 Existing local links via the long spillway of the flood water banks and path under the motorway.
27 Valuable link from Banbury to Chacombe needs a crossing of the main road.
1. Existing signed NCN route to Rugby starting on this section of canal towpath.
2. There are aspirations to complete this railway path through from Daventry to Braunston.
3. Existing signed “Great Central Way” cycle route.
4. Suggested Helmdon and Brackley Railway Path link as part of the HS2 Rail Project.