

Draft - Stroud District Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Scoping Document

Background/Drivers

1. Government published its 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' on 21st April 2017, following a period of consultation. The publication of the strategy met a requirement Under the Infrastructure Act 2015.
2. The ambition for England is to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey.
3. Shorter journeys such as the commute to school, college, work or leisure trips, should see cycling and walking as the norm for all people whatever their background or characteristics. To realise this goal access to safe, attractive routes for cycling and walking should be substantially increased.
4. There is recognition that the ambition will only be delivered if central government works with local government, businesses, charities, and the public and 'supports local delivery partners to identify and deliver individual and tailored interventions fit for their own local areas'.
5. Together with the strategy, government have published guidance on the preparation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, to help support local delivery partners.
6. The strategy measures cycling and walking activity as stages, as described in the National Travel Survey (NTS). The basic unit of travel in the NTS is a trip, which consists of one or more stages. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the form of transport. Counting cycle or walking stages rather than trips allows the inclusion of journeys that involve cycling or walking but where this is not the main form of transport (for example, cycling to a railway station to catch the train to work).
7. While the longer term ambition outlined in the strategy runs to 2040 objectives are also set out for 2020:

By 2020, we will:

- increase cycling activity, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycle stages made
- increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person
- reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled
- increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school

8. With the following aims set for 2025:
- We aim to double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycle stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025, and will work towards developing the evidence base over the next year.
 - We aim to increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year, to 300 stages per person per year in 2025, and will work towards developing the evidence base over the next year.
 - We will increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025.
9. Should these targets be hit government stresses the benefits will be substantial.

'For people, it means cheaper travel and better health. For businesses, it means increased productivity and increased footfall in shops. And for society as a whole it means lower congestion, better air quality, and vibrant, attractive places and communities.'

10. National planning policy sets out a clear approach to promote sustainable transport. One of the core planning principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework is that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in sustainable locations.

'Walking and cycling should be seen as transport modes in their own right and an integral part of the transport network, rather than as niche interests or town-planning afterthoughts. We need to build a local commitment together to support this national Strategy.'

Gloucestershire's Local Transport Plan (2015-2031)

11. At a more local level support for the aims of the national strategy and national planning policy is already in place as evidenced in Gloucestershire's Local Transport Plan (2015-2031) and the Stroud District Local Plan.
12. Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), as the local transport authority, has a statutory requirement under the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008, to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The LTP sets the long term strategy for transport within the county and the county council commits to actively seek funding to deliver the transport schemes it identifies. With a vision to provide *'a resilient transport network that enables sustainable economic growth by providing door to door travel choices'* the LTP has 4 objectives:
- Support sustainable economic growth
 - Enable community connectivity
 - Conserve the environment

- Improve community health and well being.

A number of challenges are recognised in relation to cycling and walking including:

- Communicating the benefits to health and reduced obesity, of active travel modes
- Delivering a transport network that enables walking and cycling for short trips
- Promote increased levels of physical activity through walking and cycling
- Providing the opportunity for all to receive cycle training
- Increasing the economic benefits of cycle tourism where feasible

13. Six separate Policy Documents have been produced outlining how different parts of the transport network will overcome challenges to deliver the LTP outcomes. Reinforcing the messages within the national strategy, for Gloucestershire, these include, under policy documents related to Cycling, Highways and Rail:

- GCC will deliver a functioning cycle network by improving cycle linkages and safeguard quiet highway connections by working with delivery partners, other agencies, and community stakeholders to identify and remove barriers (physical or psychological) to cycling
- GCC will manage cycle infrastructure in line with the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP), the Highways Maintenance Handbook and other guidance or policies such as the updated Gloucestershire Highways Biodiversity Guidance (2015)
- GCC will liaise with Local Planning Authorities and developers to ensure connectivity between new developments and existing infrastructure and to ensure that realistic opportunities for travel choice are taken up in new developments
- GCC will contribute towards better safety, security, health and thereby longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport. This will be provided by working with partners to improve personal safety perceptions of using the transport network services and promote the use of transport to contribute to enjoyment and psychological wellbeing
- GCC will work with partners to encourage levels of physical activity by encouraging greater numbers of people to walk and cycle short distance trips and to enable children to enjoy more independent, physically active lifestyles
- GCC will support the Rights of Way and Countryside Access Improvement Plan in identifying and seeking to support measures to improve safety, accessibility and the quality of the experience for walkers, horse riders, carriage drivers and cyclists where there is an identified need
- GCC will engage with delivery partners to maximise the desirability, demand and customer experience of using Railway Stations within Gloucestershire. Station facilities need to meet existing and forecasted demand by providing safe and secure facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, bus users and car users

14. The LTP considers the county across six separate travel corridors with a “Connecting Places Strategies” (CPS) for each characterising the distinctive transport issues affecting that area and identifying transport priorities. Countywide transport priorities are also identified together with priorities by different forms of transport, and capital delivery priorities for short term, 2015 to 2021 and longer term 2021 to 2031, periods.
15. Countywide Short-term capital delivery priorities (2015 to 2021) – **cycle** includes
 - *‘countywide Cycle infrastructure improvements’* and *‘Access improvements for Stroud Town Centre’*
16. Countywide Longer term capital delivery priorities (2021 to 2031) - **Rail** include
 - *‘Enhancements at Cam and Dursley, Stonehouse and Stroud railway stations’.*
17. Countywide Longer term capital delivery priorities (2021 to 2031) – **cycle** include
 - *‘Access improvements for Cam and Dursley Greenway to Railway Station’*
 - *‘Access improvements for Cam and Dursley Greenway to Uley’*
 - *‘Access improvements to national cycle route 45, Stroud’*
 - *‘Access improvements for Cainscross roundabout, Stroud’*
 - *‘Access improvement Multi-Use Track - B4008 between Little Haresfield and Stonehouse’*
 - *‘Cycle infrastructure improvements (countywide)’*
18. Within the Stroud CPS it is recognised that the canals and their towpaths are a special feature of the Stroud Valleys and the restoration of the Cotswold Canals has the potential to provide for leisure and commuter cycle routes as do the use of disused railway lines. There is also a real desire to increase cycle use among local communities along with the promotion of leisure cycling for tourists.
19. Within the Policy Document PD 2 – Cycle, GCC states it will implement policy proposals:
 - To improve cycle linkages between and within settlements throughout Gloucestershire by working with delivery partners, other agencies, the community and stakeholders to remove barriers to cycling and consolidate the network
 - To focus investment in cycling in more developed areas and especially where new development is planned
 - To recognise the role and function of the existing quiet lane network and seek to expand this where possible to provide safe cycle linkages
 - To ensure developers assess the needs of all pedestrians and cyclists within their development design and any improvements associated with

the development. All cycle infrastructure provided within the county will be in accordance with Manual for Gloucestershire Streets (MfGS) and Cycle Facility Guidelines

- To ensure all schemes on the local highway network will be subject to appropriate context reports and audits (including Road Safety, Non-Motorised Users, Walking, Cycling and Quality Audits) before design approval
- To support the development and promotion of the leisure cycle network, and Public Rights of Way Network to encourage greater use linking centres of population
- To work in partnership with communities in identifying local transport needs and solutions (through e.g. Parish and Neighbourhood Plans)
- To work with district / borough councils to ensure that new development is well connected to the existing transport network

20. Policy Document 2.2 Cycle Asset Management commits GCC:

- To work with partners to maximise investment in the county's cycle network as funding opportunities arise. This will include working in partnership with, the Local Enterprise Partnership, district / borough councils, Parish and Town Councils, developers, Sustrans, Highways England, and Department for Transport.

21. The LTP includes a target to increase cycle use within the county by 50% from 2015 to 2031.

22. The cycle priorities for improving health and wellbeing include: Access improvement between Eastington and Nailsworth.

23. While £1.2bn is linked to the long term national Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy most of this is already allocated. Similarly the LTP sets out capital delivery priorities but states that the identification of priorities does not reflect a commitment by the county council for funding. However, the county council states they will exploit all opportunities for additional funding where the fund supports the delivery of the LTP objectives. It is also stressed that the LTP will be a living document, and will be updated and amended to reflect the adoption of local plans or national guidance.

Stroud District Local Plan - November 2015

24. Cycling and Walking is already supported within the Stroud district through the Local Plan. Delivery Policy EI13 Protecting and extending our cycle routes states:

'The Council will encourage proposals that develop and extend our cycle network. Major development should provide new cycle routes within the development and connect to nearby established cycle routes'

Development will not be permitted where it significantly harms an existing cycle route or prejudices the future implementation of the following routes:

- *The Eastington to Chalford cycle route*

- *The Eastington to Nailsworth cycle route*
 - *The Cam and Dursley cycle route (and any proposed future extension to Uley)*
 - *The National Cycle Network Route 41 (Bristol to Stratford) and Route 45 (Salisbury to Chester) which cross the District and connecting routes to and from the Stroud Valleys Pedestrian Cycle Trail and the Cam and Dursley cycle route*
 - *Any other part of the cycle network highlighted through the Local Transport Plan.*
25. Mirroring the views expressed in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy the LP recognises that cycling is now increasingly seen as a convenient, cheap and environmentally friendly means of transport and exercise, particularly, for local journeys. As part of an integrated transport policy, the Council is keen to make sure that short journeys by cycle are facilitated by convenient and safe networks that are available to residents, work staff and visitors alike.
26. On the planning of cycle routes the LP states that the following principles should be kept in mind:
- vehicle speeds should be kept down where there are significant numbers of cyclists;
 - conflict between cycles and motor vehicles should be minimised;
 - safe and convenient crossing points should be provided at busy roads and junctions;
 - parking for cycles should be secure and convenient; and
 - potential conflict between cyclists and pedestrians should be avoided where possible.
27. The LP also discusses the role of Sustrans in the district and highlights the focus of this plan in developing shared use paths. *Sustrans continues to implement the National Cycle Network, with Route 41 (Bristol to Stratford) crossing the Severn Vale through Berkeley and Frampton and Route 45 (Salisbury to Chester) linking Nailsworth and parts of the A419 with Stroud. Parts of these routes will be useful for local journeys as well as for recreation. The District Council, in conjunction with the County Council, will investigate connecting links with these routes (some are already part funded and partially in place) through the Stroud Valleys and from Cam and Dursley. The restoration of the Cotswold Canals provides an opportunity to enhance this network.*
28. Local plan Core Policy and Allocation Policies:
- Core Policy CP5 Environmental development principles for strategic sites also includes the provision that: *'Strategic sites will be readily accessible by bus, bicycle and foot to shopping and employment opportunities, key services and community facilities'*.
 - Site Allocations Policy SA1 Stroud Valleys states that Development briefs, to be approved by the District Council, will detail the way in which the land uses and infrastructure will be developed in an integrated and co-

ordinated manner. This includes addressing Cycle and pedestrian routes along the canal and river corridors, linking up with the existing network. Similarly, development briefs, master plans or guidance for other strategic site allocations stipulate requirements to be addressed related to cycling and walking:

- SA2 West of Stonehouse: Cycle and pedestrian routes through the development, connecting Nastend and Nupend with the town centre, Stroudwater Industrial Estate and Oldends Lane and footpath links from the development to the surrounding rural network, including improvements to the canal towpath.
 - SA3 North east of Cam: Extension to the Cam and Dursley cycle route along the line of the disused railway, through to the southern edge of the site and connecting Box Road with Courthouse Gardens. Improvements to Box Road, including the provision of a lit cycleway and footpath between the A4315 and Cam and Dursley railway station.
 - SA4Hunts Grove Extension: Cycle and pedestrian routes through the development connecting with Haresfield Lane and the existing Hunts Grove development.
 - SA4a Quedgeley East: The development of the site will provide contributions to off-site highway works including public transport, pedestrian and cycle links to Gloucester city, Stonehouse and Stroud, in accordance with the recommendations of the evidence base transport assessments.
 - SA5 Sharpness Docks: Cycle and pedestrian routes through the development, connecting with Oldminster Road and the Severn Way, including the restoration of the former railway bridge link and improvements to the high level swing bridge.
 - SA5a South of Severn Distribution Park: The development of the site will provide contributions to off-site highway works including public transport, pedestrian and cycle links to Newtown, Berkeley and Dursley, and other infrastructure including flood defences and biodiversity.
 - Core Policy CP11 related to New Employment Development also carries the proviso that Permission will be granted for industrial or business development, or for the expansion or intensification of existing industrial or business uses, provided that the proposals would be readily accessible by public transport, bicycle and foot or contribute towards provision of new sustainable transport infrastructure to serve the area, in order to make the development accessible by those modes.
29. The Local Plan also maps proposed cycle routes including those that are the focus of this plan. The background commitment and support through policy at national, county and district level is then in place and also supported at the neighbourhood level within respective Neighbourhood Plans in development for e.g. Dursley, Cam, and Stonehouse.

Routes

30. The focus of this plan will be routes from Saul to Stonehouse, Stonehouse to Stroud, Stroud to Brimscombe, Stroud to Nailsworth and between Cam & Dursley & Uley. Routes will be multi user/shared, off road, as much as practicable, with newly built paths or improved surfacing, sign posting and lighting where required. Improvements to cycle parking at Cam and Dursley, Stonehouse and Stroud railway stations will be included. Quality standards will aim to replicate those required on the National Cycle Network (NCN). Projects will work with Sustrans and Gloucestershire County Council to ensure development meets appropriate standards.
31. The regeneration of the Cotswolds Canals will mean opportunities arise to share space along the canal towpath. Engagement with the Stroud Valleys Canal Company will take place to ensure such opportunities are realised and to understand where sharing space is not feasible and alternative provision required.
32. Engagement with developments in the vicinity of routes will also take place to identify where support can be provided through planning mechanisms, Community Infrastructure Levy/S106.

The Cam, Dursley and Uley Greenway

33. The Greenway will be a multiuser (shared) route linking Uley, Dursley and Cam through to Cam & Dursley railway station. In the longer term the Greenway will link through to Sustrans National Cycle Network (NCN), Route 41, at Slimbridge. Route 41 is a long distance route that when complete will connect Bristol, Gloucester, Stratford-upon-Avon and Rugby.
34. Parts of the Greenway route will, by agreement, be provided by developers and opportunities for other developments to contribute to route provision will be explored. The Greenway already has an involved project group, who have received support from key partners, including GCC and Sustrans.
35. In 2008 on behalf of Vale Vision, (the Community Partnership for Cam and Dursley), Sustrans produced: 'A Cam & Dursley Greenway: A Feasibility Study for Vale Vision'. This study has recently (March 2017) been reviewed and an informal audit of requirements made, again by Sustrans, this time on behalf of GCC.
36. The continued interest/involvement of GCC and Sustrans highlights the strong partnership working around the Greenway with a number of other parties taking an active interest. An indicative overall route has been mapped, with the full route split into sections and the current status of each section highlighted, relevant issues raised and potential actions to progress development outlined. Some of the route is already in place although the majority requires full construction, with other areas requiring repair and/or addition of signage etc. Although the Greenway as first envisaged was to be entirely off road, the practicalities of project planning have dictated that some of the route will be on the highway. Alternative routes have been

considered and this will be reviewed as part of this plan. With the likelihood being that some on road travel will be required.

37. Two sections of the Greenway are to be provided as part of developments at Littlecombe and North East of Cam. The Littlecombe development is well underway with housing and commercial build already in place, including part of the Greenway route. As part of this plan engagement with planners and developers will take place to ensure the rest of the Greenway route is built out to the agreed standard and timeframe as detailed within planning permissions.
38. The strategic allocation at North East of Cam includes the other Greenway section to be provided through development. With no permission currently in place start on site is some time off, but again engagement with planners and developer will be required to ensure the respective Greenway section is provided.

Saul to Stonehouse (Chipmans Platt)

39. The Saul to Brimscombe/Chalford route can helpfully be split into sections. The potential route from Saul though to Stonehouse (Chipmans Platt) follows what will be the line of the canal. Restoration in this area is subject to another bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (Cotswold Canals Phase 1B). Should the bid be successful further financial commitments are already in place from Stroud District Council, GCC and the Canal and River Trust (CRT). Having the canal restored would entail restoration of the towpath and having those organisations already signed up should help ensure that the towpath is delivered as a multiuser path all the way through to Saul. It could then join up with Route 41 of the National Cycle Network (NCN) and the Gloucester & Sharpness canal towpath through to Gloucester and beyond. Route 45 of the NCN runs from Saul (where it links to Route 41) through Whitminster to Stonehouse (Chipmans Platt) but the canal towpath would provide a much more direct and safer route with as much of the distance as possible off road. Achieving such a multi user route would face the same obstacles as those facing the canal restoration itself, notably navigating the Chipmans Platt roundabout, crossing the M5 and crossing the A419/A38 roundabout. Although a potential route has been suggested this should be audited to raise any other issues and potential solutions. Sustrans have helped with such an audit on the Cam and Dursley Greenway and as a partner organisation could potentially support with audits of other routes, perhaps at the instigation of the County Council.
40. It may be that the multiuser route could be implemented ahead of the canal restoration. With proper planning with the Stroud Valleys Canal Company (SVCC)/canal team at SDC to ensure appropriate access to the line of the canal for digging out, only minor parts of the route would need restoring once the canal is in water. There are also land ownership issues along the route though and while land owners may be content with the canal being put through they may be less likely to support a standalone multi user route ahead of the canal. Certainly though the potential to bring more public use and related benefits to the area through use of the restored towpath as a multiuser route should be highlighted as part of the 1B bid to the HLF.

41. There is major development due to take place in this area with the West of Stonehouse development. Engagement with the planning team and developers should ensure that support for the multiuser route is also fully explored.
42. Another major development awaiting determination is the 'Eco Park' and new stadium for Forest Green Rovers, which is on the line of the canal. The applicant and landowner, Ecotricity, have engaged with the SVCC already and are supportive of the canal restoration through the site but the application is yet to be determined.

Stonehouse (Chipmans Platt) to Stroud

43. Although Route 45 of the (NCN) runs from the edge of Stonehouse, skirting the A419 and has a spur towards Stroud town, an alternative and more direct route uses the canal towpath. Phase 1A of the canal restoration programme consists of a six mile section between 'The Ocean' at Stonehouse on the Stroudwater Navigation and Brimscombe Port, to the east of Stroud, on the Thames & Severn Canal.
44. The development of the multi use towpath from The Ocean to Stroud is already complete (Route 45 goes from Chipmans Platt to the Ocean) and has according to the Cotswold Canals Trust '*already given a significant boost to cycling, it is well used by family groups, who appreciate the safety offered by a traffic-free path. It is also well used by commuting cyclists between Stroud and the Stonehouse industrial estates, eager to avoid rush hour traffic densities*'. There may be parts of the route that aren't suitable for cycling, particularly where the towpath necessarily narrows due to land ownership issues or other obstacles in the line of the restored canal/ towpath. Work is also ongoing on some sections of the canal e.g. at Wallbridge and Ryeford but the towpath will be rebuilt to standard when completed. Close liaison with the SVCC and Cotswold Canals Trust will be required to look again at any issues, with the potential to use funding from this plan to overcome problems and more widely for upgrading or maintenance required to ensure the suitability of the towpath as a multi user route.
45. Some of the canal and towpath restoration in this area came through planning obligations related to the Ebley Wharf development with some of the work carried out by volunteers and others, including restorative justice groups. Potentially similar support could be provided for towpath upgrades/maintenance or on other areas of multi user route development.

Stroud to Brimscombe

46. The canal towpath multi user route enters Stroud town at Wallbridge before following the canal towpath towards Brimscombe. Opportunities to enhance routes from Wallbridge into the town centre and to the station will be considered and potential routes audited.

47. Providing a multi user path along the towpath from Stroud to Brimscombe would encounter similar issues to those on the route of the canal restoration. While there is a path from Stroud to Brimscombe, it is not up to the standard recommended for shared use by GCC/Sustrans and while the canal is being dredged along the route or restoration not started, as at Canal Ironworks and Brimscombe, it is unlikely to reach that level. Engagement with the SVCC is crucial to keep up to speed with developments and to ensure that when restoration is taking place the use of the towpath as a multi user route is realised and development takes place at an appropriate standard. Although the restored towpath is the obvious multi user route between Stroud and Brimscombe it should be audited to highlight any impediments and alternative routes considered, particularly where it is not practicable for sharing the towpath, through land ownership, space issues etc. When canal restoration work takes place at Brimscombe Port this will include the provision of a multi user trail. Providing the trail ahead of the canal isn't really an option as the extent of the work required at Brimscombe would cause excess damage to the restored route. Much of this route will be about upgrading its quality, following auditing, resolving any issues and improving signage etc.
48. A route from Brimscombe through to Chalford could be considered as part of this plan. HLF only covers canal restoration to Brimscombe Port so route options and delivery would fall outside funding from that source.

Stroud to Nailsworth

49. There are some small sections of local route, non NCN, between Stroud and Nailsworth but the main route is a spur off Route 45 (Stonehouse and Nailsworth Railway Cycle Path) that runs between Stonehouse and Nailsworth. In Stroud the spur starts at Wallbridge and rejoins Route 45 adjacent to Dudbridge Meadow, before following the Bath Road/A46 past Lightpill, North and South Woodchester through to Nailsworth. The route then goes on to Minchinhampton and through into Cotswold District. Potential other routes from Stroud could be investigated and the existing route audited for impediments. The focus, however, on this section should be reinforcing existing routes and improvements/upgrading. The existing cycle track suffers from being overgrown and in places is in such a state of disrepair that cyclists and walkers are as one cyclist comments 'often faced with the dilemma of choosing between riding on the very busy roads such as the A46 and A419 rather than use the cycle track'. Repairing/restoring the infrastructure in this area would provide the opportunity to promote the route for utility but also for leisure/tourism use increasing the number of cyclists and activity generally bringing health and wellbeing benefits, linking in to potential funding opportunities.
50. To increase access and usability for different groups, routes and signage into town centres and signage to the respective nearby railway stations will be considered as well as improving cycle parking levels and standards at the stations. This will involve discussions with Network Rail and potentially accessing funding through them for cycling infrastructure. The County Council will also be an effective partner in this regard and there are already

discussions around increasing car parking at Cam and Dursley station that could be widened.

Other Routes

51. The focus of this plan is the aforementioned multi user routes, but there are also more rudimentary cycle routes across the district which the plan could consider in the future. There are also nascent plans for routes in Standish, linking Little Haresfield and Stonehouse and a route linking Wotton under Edge, Kingswood and Charfield. Potential improvements to NCN 41/45 around Frampton have also been raised.

52. Policy

- Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy - requirement Under the Infrastructure Act 2015
- Gloucestershire's Local Transport Plan (2015-2031)
- Stroud District Local Plan November 2015
- Neighbourhood Plans

Partners

53. A list of interested parties in the cycling and walking plan is already in place and keeping those groups involved and up to date with developments will be a key part of this plan.

- Gloucestershire County Council
- Stroud District Council
- Dursley Town Council
- Cam Parish Council
- Uley Parish Council
- Slimbridge Parish Council
- Stonehouse Town Council
- Standish Parish Council
- Wotton under Edge Town Council
- Sustrans
- Mid Cotswold Tracks & Trails Group
- Vale Vision
- Stroud Valleys Cycle Group (Cycling UK)
- Stroud Valleys Canal Company
- Cotswold Canals Trust
- Canal and River Trust
- Schools - Safe routes to schools
- Health Partnership
- Police and Crime Commissioner Office
- Sport England
- Active Gloucestershire
- Dursley Welcomes Walkers
- Stroud Disability Forum?
- St Modwen
- Ecotricity
- Stonehouse Wheelers

- Stroud Valleys Project
- BTCV
- Dutch Cycling Embassy

Funding Opportunities

54. Although this cycling and walking plan has potentially £300K assigned to it this will not be enough to undertake the level of work required, therefore other funding streams will be investigated. Various sources may be applicable due to the development and promotion of multi user routes having a number of benefits. Opportunities for funding through health and wellbeing, tourism, development and place making funding streams will be explored.
55. The use of volunteers to support development will also be considered. There is huge interest in cycling and walking and the provision of routes to make these easier and safer pursuits can garner effective community support. Harnessing this support, as exemplified by the Cotswolds Canals restoration locally, in terms of route construction and maintenance as well as potential fundraising or support for bidding opportunities could bring significant benefits.
56. Planning gain – developments at Littlecombe, NE of Cam, West of Stonehouse and potentially from other developments, Eco Park, Ham Mill, Brimscombe Port etc.
57. Community Infrastructure Levy Regulation 123 List includes:
 - Canal infrastructure; Infrastructure associated with improving or re-opening the Stroudwater Navigation, the Thames and Severn Canal or the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal including towpaths.
 - Transport: Transport infrastructure including highway improvement schemes, cycling and walking infrastructure and public transport (excluding specific mitigation works on, or directly related to, a development site).
58. Health - Local authority public health teams are key champions for walking and cycling, particularly supporting planning and behaviour change interventions that encourage people to be active both for pleasure and travel. The ring-fenced public health grant will continue until at least 2017-18 and funding for local authorities for public health has been outlined to 2020. It will be essential to engage with local public health colleagues.
59. Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Growth Programme - Rural Tourism Infrastructure. Grants funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), which is part of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). Funding available within Gloucestershire LEP area but not all of district eligible. Minimum grant £35K maximum £170K for commercial projects. Intervention rate dependent on area and commercial nature of project. Programme handbook gives example of possible eligible project under new access infrastructure: *'The local district council is investing in paths to connect up a number of existing*

footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways. This will create a network of easily accessible circular routes of between 4 and 15 miles, which will make the area more attractive for walking and cycling.'

60. LEP priorities include: *create infrastructure to develop outdoor activities particularly walking and cycling for both the Forest of Dean and Cotswold areas.*
61. LEADER – The LEADER scheme is part of the RDPE and is funded by EAFRD. Money from the programme is given to Local Action Groups with grants awarded to local businesses and organisations. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) manages the LEADER scheme nationally on behalf of Defra and makes payments to successful applicants. Cotswold LEADER programme area includes some of the Stroud district but a number of areas ineligible. Minimum grant £5,000. Maximum typically £50,000. Intervention rate 40% to 100% depending on nature of project. Priorities for the Cotswold Leader area include: Support for rural tourism, Provision of rural services and Support for cultural and heritage activity. All three include potential for funding infrastructure/access e.g. footpaths/cycle paths.
62. Sport England Localities Fund - Active Gloucestershire: Sport England looking to invest £130m in 10 localities. Active Gloucestershire already involved with Gloucestershire Moves project. Funding could include infrastructure but target is to increase levels of activity in currently inactive people and overcoming barriers they face.
63. The Gloucestershire Environmental Trust Company - Providing grants from funds generated by the Landfill Communities Fund for the benefit of Gloucestershire. Grants normally between £5K up to £150K. Scheme closes 31st March 2019. Clarity required over eligibility of multi user path but projects need to be discussed with company ahead of application.
64. Stroud District Council - £300K linked to Cycling and Walking Plan, potential to use as match/leverage for above programmes.
65. Gloucestershire County Council – Infrastructure funding through LTP, potential network maintenance funding and link to Sustrans. Councillor transport funding. Close liaison with GCC/Amey will also be in terms of potential funding, expertise, contracting and route construction itself.
66. Town and Parish Councils – Potential funding along routes.
67. Canal and River Trust – Supporting canal restoration and support for towpath use.

Risks/Obstacles

68. Lack of funding to complete all routes. While working to lever as much funding through different sources, it is recognised that costs may be out of scope. Sections of routes will be built out when funding allows and when further funding becomes available, sections and then routes will be linked. This overview plan sets out the main routes and context for support but on

the ground delivery is important, to 'prove the concept', highlight the priority given to cycling and walking in the district and to keep up the positive and proactive partnership built up around the plan.

69. There are a number of issues, impediments along all routes, including land ownership, quality standards, access to routes, path widths, planning, future maintenance costs, user conflict and providing safe mainly off road routes while negotiating the M5, A roads and roundabouts.
70. There is potentially an issue with the 'adoption' of routes, as cycle routes with the attendant maintenance liabilities. If route approved/adopted as cycleway, by GCC they become liable for ongoing maintenance. If GCC are therefore unwilling to adopt, with revenue funding becoming increasingly scarce for local authorities, could become an obstacle to delivery. Clarity and resolution of any issue will be required early on in the process.
71. It is recognised that at some points routes may not meet the accepted guidance standards for shared paths but this is unavoidable. The partnership around the project including GCC, SDC, Active Gloucestershire, Sustrans and various knowledgeable groups from the cycling and walking communities should be able to offer the necessary expertise to overcome issues.
72. Some of the routes are more definitive than others and have been 'audited' more recently. In discussion with partners it may be that Sustrans or similar are engaged to audit all routes to highlight impediments and set down definitive routes. This may also help with funding bids moving forward while crystallising the overall structure of the plan providing clarity to stakeholders and funders what is to be achieved and the sections within the overall routes. Having a standard view of all routes would also be useful to achieve the same quality across the piece and to ensure all groups are working from the same view/baseline.
73. Alternatively engaging volunteer partner groups, with knowledge of the local area could be a quicker and cheaper way of auditing the routes and there is no shortage of groups who would be willing to undertake such a role perhaps under the auspices of GCC or SDC. Government through the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy has released guidance on developing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, elements of which could be used to define routes and required improvements.
74. Increased usage of routes will bring many benefits but will also potentially bring more issues of user conflict. The development, implementation and promotion of a code of use, for the shared space, to alleviate any conflicts from various user groups will help in this regard.
75. The SVCC adopted a Towpath Policy in 2016, adapted from the CRT document 'Better Towpaths for Everyone' A national policy for sharing towpaths. The SVCC state that 'Stroud Valleys Canal Company is committed to providing a towpath available to all users of the canal, and to maintaining and improving the towpath to the best of our ability and resources'. The Principles of Towpath use has ten points including that:

- SVCC recognises the incorporation of towpaths as part of walking and cycling routes
 - Where there are concerns over towpath capacity or condition, we will seek opportunities to secure further external investment.
 - Where towpaths are unsuitable for some uses – too narrow or too heavily-used – we will seek to work with others to provide alternative routes.
76. SVCC already recognises then that they need to engage with others and aim to provide a shared use route along the towpath. This links with the outlook of the CRT, who highlight towpaths, 'in addition to giving access for traditional activities like boating or angling, offer sustainable journey choices, responding to the boom in walking, jogging & cycling.'
77. With the CRT responsible for over 2,000 miles of towpath in England & Wales, in urban and rural areas, it is welcome that they have a positive view of multiuse paths and that the SVCC are following their approach in relation to the canal towpath they are, and will be, responsible for.
78. Another major issue, rather than user conflict per se, is trying to encourage more use of routes for both utility and leisure cycling, where the needs of those undertaking or potentially wishing to undertake those forms of cycling can differ markedly. For 'commuting' cyclists, convenience is seen as of paramount importance, direct routes/shorter distances and fewer obstacles enabling cost and journey time savings. For the leisure user, relaxation, fun, 'family time' and getting outdoors may be more pertinent drivers (of course some will be in both groups, at different times and utility cyclists will have generally been 'leisure' cyclists).
79. While health/fitness and safety are concerns of both groups, they are perhaps for different reasons. Utility cyclists would no doubt prefer an off road direct route, (would be quicker and safer), but are more willing/confident to use the highway where the route doesn't exist or isn't quicker perhaps due to other users. (Potential to develop 'cycleways' on road but with kerb segregation etc is not within scope of this plan). Where leisure users would also prefer off road routes due to safety concerns/lack of confidence using the highway, it is obviously difficult, particularly where space/width constraints are apparent, as in the canal towpath, to produce routes that are suitable/attractive to both groups.
80. Resolving this issue may be beyond the scope of this plan, but it should be recognised and where possible overcome, with routes provided to a standard suitable for both groups including in terms of route width where achievable. Although improvements to NCN routes could be made as part of this plan the more direct routes, using the canal towpath, may be more appropriate for utility cycling. Route definition and auditing should keep in mind the requirements of both groups and consider how and where these could be met.

Timescales

81. Some routes are further ahead than others and even within routes sections will be able to be delivered on different timescales. Some elements of route delivery are linked to planning obligations, for example on the Greenway, at Littlecombe and NE of Cam. At Littlecombe some of the route is already in place while the rest of the site is well on the way to being built out, in contrast NE Cam has yet to receive permission, and so timescales for delivery will be quite different.
82. Engagement with the developers and planners will be required to ensure delivery standards and broach the possibility of an early start on the route at NE Cam.
83. SDC budget is available in the current financial year, 17/18 and will have to be agreed to protect, if not spent, into future years. Funding from other public sector sources may also be determined on an annual basis. Any successful funding bids will have their own timeframes for spend and delivery that will have to be met.
84. Background work on some routes is ongoing so the project has essentially already started. There will certainly be spend this financial year with delivery on different route sections as funding and availability of workforce allows. Other required permissions, consultations etc could also delay delivery. A project end date would therefore be arbitrary but in terms of trying to drive delivery and as many budgetary cycles end in 2020, April 2020, seems a suitable date for project closure.

Costs

85. Costs will only become clear once routes have been audited and obstacles to delivery highlighted and of course the costs will vary between sections that have to be built out and others that need resurfacing or face major impediments. There will also be cost variances where sections could be completed using volunteer labour rather than contractors and depending on whether costs can be reduced through the contracting authority/framework agreements, completing longer lengths of route bringing down overall cost per metre, instead of more piecemeal development etc.
86. As a guide Sustrans produced a cost estimate for a short section of works on the route of the Greenway, as follows:

Works

- Replace fence alongside river – recommended fence height 1.4 m.
- Surface existing compacted stone path (approx.. 45 m) with asphalt;
- Widen existing asphalt path to 3 m over 75 m. Extend path into open space at junction with Ewelme Close to avoid blind corner being created.
- Section of path in vicinity of mature tree to be no-dig construction or other technique to avoid damaging this tree.
- Flush kerbs needed for path interfaces with Ewelme Close carriageway. This is a very quiet cul-de-sac quite suitable for safe cycling.

- New path at eastern end to link to Uley Road. 2.5 m or 3.0 m wide path over 80 m, asphalt surface.
- The path width can only be obtained by building out the existing bank over a length of about 10m by importing fill to widen the available space. Cutting into the bank would have to be done at a lower level steepening the gradient of the climb to Uley Road.
- The recommended 1 in 20 maximum gradient cannot be achieved on the alignment of the existing path, and it may be preferable to curve the path across the slope to achieve 1 in 20, and avoid the root zone of the oak trees in this area.
- Widened opening to 1500 mm to Uley Road incorporating bollard or gateway feature to prevent vehicle access.

Indicative costs for Greenway

- Path construction: £105 per metre for 3.0 m wide path
- Post and rail fencing: £30 per linear metre
- Earthworks: allow £1,000
- Gateway feature / bollard: £250
- Contingency: At this small scale of works, with access difficulties at the west end, compared to the source of the price information, we suggest a 30% contingency is applied.
- Fees: For design, tendering, supervision of works, budget 15% of construction costs.
- Allow additional costs for planning permission; Flood Risk Assessment; Flood Defence Consent; public rights of way consent / Cycle Tracks Act process.
- Our estimate of construction cost, including contingency and fees is £34,000 excluding VAT.

This may not be an atypical budget costing requirement for other areas and it can be seen that in funding terms to complete all of the routes described in this plan major capital investment will be required.