

## **NORTHERN PARISHES CYCLING NETWORK PLAN**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report, prepared for North West Leicestershire District Council by Sustrans, presents a Cycling Network Plan for the Northern Parishes of the District. Implementation may be secured with particular help from Leicestershire County Council, the Government Office for the East Midlands, the Highways Agency, National Forest Company, East Midlands Airport and key landowners.
- 1.2 Principal proposals are presented under the working title “Eye of the East Midlands” in Schedule A. These would serve the development hot-spot around Kegworth, Castle Donington and EMA and include commuting links to Long Eaton, Shephed and Loughborough. Delivery could be achieved largely via Highways Agency investment following completion of the present round of Multi Modal Studies.
- 1.3 Other suggested priorities include routes from Ashby de la Zouch to Staunton Harold, Coleorton and Worthington respectively; all as detailed in Schedule B.
- 1.4 Illegal camping is a pernicious problem in the Northern Parishes area. Site security must be considered as a top priority issue wherever new access is proposed.
- 1.5 A map of the whole project area is tucked inside the back cover.
- 1.6 References to sites outside North West Leicestershire must be read as indicative and are presented here for information only.

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 Due to the essential need to cut our use of fossil fuel, promotion of cycling is now a key element of public policy at national and local level. After years of being dismissed as irrelevant, the bike is now accepted as an efficient, environmentally sound and healthy means of travel which can provide a realistic alternative to the car for short [say 5-6 miles] daily trips.
- 2.2 This impetus stems from consensus amongst most Nations as to the urgent need to address climate change. As a result, Local Authorities and other transport providers have been charged with setting targets to increase walking and cycling to help meet global “Kyoto” imperatives.
- 2.3 North West Leicestershire District Council has already adopted Cycling Network Plans for the Coalville, Ibstock and Ashby areas. This report is the last in the series and covers Castle Donington, Kegworth, Diseworth, Belton, Osgathorpe, Breedon on the Hill, Worthington, Osgathorpe, Newbold, Thringstone, Swannington, Staunton Harold and associated villages.

### **3 The Northern Parishes Cycling Network Plan**

- 3.1 Evolution of the plan was steered by representatives from Kegworth Parish, Castle Donington Town, North West Leicestershire District and Leicestershire County Councils, the National Forest Company, Ramblers Association, Cyclists Touring Club, Council for Protection of Rural England, British Horse Society and Sustrans.
- 3.2 The Plan focuses upon :--
- Remediating present severance.
  - Extending and connecting existing trunk road cycle paths.
  - Creating safe routes to schools, residential and employment sites, East Midlands Parkway railway station and East Midlands Airport.
  - Developing rural links to encourage cycling as a sustainable and healthy leisure pursuit as well as enhancing the District Council's "tourism product".
- 3.3 This issue [1<sup>st</sup> November 2002] represents the post-consultation draft for consideration by Members of North West Leicestershire District Council.
- 3.4 If / when the Council approves the report, a number of its recommendations will need further discussion in the communities most closely involved besides also being subject to land availability and civil engineering constraints.
- 3.5 Besides cyclists, proposals are intended wherever practicable also to serve walkers and horse riders.

### **4 Resources**

- 4.1 Existence of an approved Cycling Network Plan significantly assists the resourcing process. In particular it can be used for:
- (i) Guiding District Council development control officers in framing Planning Conditions and negotiating Section 106 contributions to off-site works.
  - (ii) Shaping priorities within the Local Transport Plan in which cycling figures as an important element of integrated transportation strategy.
  - (iii) Responding to Highways Agency consultations regarding Trunk Road investment.
  - (iv) Developing funding bids to EMDA, Landfill operators, Lottery etc.

## **5 Multi Modal Corridor Studies**

- 5.1 The Government has commissioned a number of consultative studies to determine how far current strategic transport problems may be addressed by trying to spread travel demand more evenly across modes.
- 5.2 Three such studies coincide in the Kegworth / Castle Donington Area. These include the M1 (East Midlands) Multi Modal Study [MMS] and the A453 Road Study in respect of which GOEM is currently considering the results of the final round of consultation. The A42 / M42 MMS is less advanced. Consequent investment should help to deliver significant elements the proposed network.

## **6 The “Eye of the East Midlands” Project**

- 6.1 Direct access to the trunk road network and to East Midlands Airport has already attracted a number of big employers to Kegworth and Castle Donington. More would like to move in and East Midlands Parkway railway station is due soon. Long Eaton, Diseworth, Loughborough and Shepshed lie within easy cycling distance.
- 6.2 Theoretically, cycling should be an ideal mode in this compact development hot-spot. In practice, the major roads and their feeders squeeze through too few Trent and Soar crossings and are so daunting that most local people have little choice but to drive, thus exacerbating an already difficult traffic situation.
- 6.3 Creation of an “Eye of the East Midlands” [ETEM] cycling network is thus highly recommended. This may be readily achieved by joining up existing cycle tracks and quiet lanes via new infrastructure associated with trunk road improvements and other major development projects. The idea is developed in Schedule A.

## **7 The National Forest Company**

- 7.1 The southern part of the plan area falls within the purlieu of the National Forest Company [NFC] which has contributed to production of this text. Issues of sustainable living and tourism promotion both figure prominently on the agenda of the NFC which has now approved a complementary cycling strategy of its own.

## **8 National Cycle Network**

- 8.1 Local sections of Sustrans’ National Cycle Network include the existing Loughborough to Derby leg of Route 6. New Route 52 leaves Route 6 near Osgathorpe and can already be ridden via Grace Dieu into Coalville. Extension of NCN 52 to Stratford upon Avon is planned by 2005-6.
- 8.2 “Eye of the East Midlands” proposals will help to extend NCN Route 15 [Boston-Grantham-Nottingham] via East Midlands Parkway station, Kegworth and the existing A6 cycle tracks to meet Route 6 at Loughborough.

- 8.3 Proposals are made in Schedule 2 to extend Beaumont Way to Worthington and Ashby as part of Route 88 which is planned to reach onwards to Lichfield by 2006-7. Eventually it is hoped that this will form part of a coast to coast “challenge” route between Cardigan Bay and Norfolk, provisionally dubbed “Barmouth to Yarmouth”.

## **9 Next Steps**

- 9.1 The proposed network will come together, piece by piece, as resources become available. To this end, once approved, this report will be annexed to the North West Leicestershire Planning Constraints Database.
- 9.2 The public manner in which the report was prepared also makes it suitable for reference by Leicestershire County Council in developing its Local Transport Plan.
- 9.3 Particularly as regards development of the “Eye of the East Midlands” network, it is recommended that the District Council should share the content of the plan with neighbouring Authorities and use it to inform responses to Multi Modal Study consultations.
- 9.4 Though notionally conceived within a ten-year time frame, cycling plans evolve month by month. It is thus suggested that a District-wide cycling forum should continue to meet at [say] six-monthly intervals in order to guide the process.
- 9.5 Subject to its approval by the District Council, the Northern Parishes Cycling Network Plan will also inform Sustrans’ local agenda.
- 9.6 The proposed Staunton Harold to Ashby Route [Schedule B, page 12] may in particular be commended for the attention of the National Forest Company and of the County Council’s Rights of Way Team.
- 9.7 The Highways Agency should be asked to repair severance imposed by the design of its A42 Ashby junction in order to reinstate the previously popular commuting and school route to Ashby from villages in the Coleorton area [Schedule B, pps 12, 13].
- 9.8 Proposed improvements at the A42 Ashby junction would also allow extension of Mr John Blunt’s Beaumont Way to accommodate the Worthington to Ashby section of Sustrans’ Route 88 [Schedule B, page 13].
- 9.9 The District Council may also wish to take a view on the suggestion for a “Regional Icon” landmark sculpture [Schedule A, pp 6 and 10].

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### **Security, Schedules, Maps and Routes**

All proposals discussed below are presented subject to the proviso that associated project design must be ruled by the need to prevent land-invasion. Illegal camping has become a serious and highly emotive issue in the Northern Parishes and failure to recognise this would seriously compromise the utility of the Plan.

Schedule A deals with the “Eye of the East Midlands” or ETEM [introduced on page 3]. Schedule B presents recommendations for the remainder of the Northern Parishes area. Schedule C lists routes which, by and large, may be ridden as they are. A map showing the whole plan area is tucked inside the back cover.

Technically all roads in the Northern Parishes Area apart from the M1 could be mapped as useable by cyclists. However, conditions on most A and B roads are far from ideal and, except where specific works are proposed, these classified routes are mostly ignored.

On quieter routes, traffic patterns fluctuate hugely at different times of day, week and season. Over longer periods, new buildings appear and demand for movement at any given point grows or is diverted. Though deciding just what to show on the map can be a slightly arbitrary process, members of the Northern Parishes group [3.1] have expressed quite clear views on most sites and routes. Categories keyed on the maps thus distinguish :--

- “Regular cyclist’s routes” which carry intermediate traffic flows and are generally busy in commuting or school peaks. The map notation [a small blocked square along route-lines] also signifies difficult intersections between main and quieter roads.
- “Easier routes” including quieter roads, existing off-carriageway cycle tracks beside main roads and traffic-free paths such as Cloud Trail.
- “Proposed easier routes” along which improvements deserve high priority.
- “Other Rights of Way” such as byways and bridleways where cyclists have a legal right to ride though where surfaces may be rough and sometimes muddy. Repair or new-metalling may not be cost effective and, in many cases, could harm the essential character of the route.
- “Other potential routes” that may be considered as suitable subjects for future negotiation despite current lack of access rights for bikes or horses.

## **SCHEDULE A : “EYE OF THE EAST MIDLANDS” PROJECT**

Severance caused by the Rivers Trent and Soar, by the development of Castle Donington airfield in World War 2 and, more recently, by the building of the M1, A42, A50 and A453 roads is severe and worsening. Significant improvement may nonetheless be expected to follow completion of the current crop of Multi Modal Studies [MMS].

The new East Midlands railway station at Ratcliffe on Soar is expected shortly. Kegworth and Castle Donington hope to see their historic main streets by-passed and calmed. Related ideas for a new Soar foot- and cycle bridge at the eastern end of Kegworth bypass and for a similar structure crossing the Trent at King’s Mills are also popular.

Loughborough, Shepshed and Long Eaton lie within easy riding distance of employers in the Kegworth / Castle Donington area. Though these settlements fall outside North West Leicestershire, the Highways Agency should be urged to include suitable cycle commuting routes in its post-MMS package of works.

In 2001, East Midlands Airport published its Landscape Strategy envisaging, inter alia, better public access around its site. Subject to negotiation with the owners, Castle Donington Motor Racing Circuit could also accommodate new “greenway” links.

Such a high profile locality would be an ideal setting for a regional icon landmark sculpture answering Gateshead’s “Angel of the North”. Though not strictly a cycling issue, the interaction of landscape, transport, public art and regeneration is an important theme in the work of Sustrans as partner in the preparation of this report.

Overall, the scope for improving the cycling environment here rivals that normally found only in new towns. However, to realise this potential, North West Leicestershire will have to initiate positive collaboration with neighbours and with GOEM. The working title “Eye of the East Midlands” [ETEM] is used here to refer to such a joint initiative.

***Schedule items 1 to 24 are mainly trunk road related and [with the exception of 2] should be resourced by GOEM and / or the Highways Agency.***

- 1-3-4-5-6-7-8** The A453 Road Study recommends creation of an off-carriageway cycle path between West Bridgeford and Kegworth. This may readily be extended to EMA.
- 2** East Midlands Parkway station planning application shows cycle links to the A453 and below it to Ratcliffe on Soar. During consultation, comments included pleas for cycle storage at the station and measures to manage “rat-running” on minor approach roads [see 72]. Though planning consent has now been granted, development of the station is currently stalled by a land issue.
- 3** Links between the proposed A453 track and Ratcliffe and Long Lanes.

- 4-5** Just to the north-east of Junction 24, an accommodation road burrows below the A453 and links through to the existing cycle track from Kegworth.
- 4-12** If upgraded for public use, this accommodation road would also allow riders from Derbyshire / Cavendish Bridge to reach Kegworth without having to brave the present crossings at Junction 24 [5-17, 11-17].
- 5-6** Here, the A453 cycle track would follow the eastern margin of the [possibly to-be-widened] M1 southwards as far as Ashby Road [Kegworth west] bridge.
- 5-17** Although cycle tracks presently lead to and around M1 Junction 24 [see also 11-17], none of the arms of the roundabout are signalled. Though useable at quiet times, heavy traffic commonly makes J24 a very dangerous place for cyclists. Toucans might help but would reduce the traffic capacity of the junction. 4-12 and 6-7 represent two key elements of a solution.
- 6-7** Construction of a cycle / bridleway bridge over A453 is a key element of the “Eye of the East Midlands” network. Besides maintaining the continuity of the A453 track without the need for capacity-restricting Toucans, it would help to re-create a route for non-car travel between Kegworth and Castle Donington [7-9 below].
- Dialogue with East Midlands Airport [EMA] authorities suggests that a bridge could be built here without affecting aircraft flight paths.
- 7-8** The A453 cycle track would link into Pegasus Business Park as shown in the EMA Landscape Strategy [see also 43-44-45].
- 7-9** The EMA Landscape Strategy admits public access along the northern site perimeter where creation of an all-weather track would allow Kegworth students travelling to Castle Donington College to avoid Junction 24. This link is highly recommended as a pro-multimodal measure for support by GOEM / HA.
- Though willing to facilitate such a link, Airport authorities confirm that it must remain a permissive route in order to allow swift closure in the event of an emergency. This would prevent its adoption as highway. Nonetheless, workable alternatives for delivery include *eg* the licensing of an appropriate strip of land to a Parish-based group or to Sustrans.
- 7-10** This western verge link between the proposed A453 bridge and existing A50 facilities at 10 would open a good commuting route between Pegasus / EMA and communities beyond the Trent.
- 10-11** Responding to vigorous local objections to original proposals for a flat A50 crossing, a subway was provided here for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- 10-31** Existing A50 [South side] cycle track.

- 11-12** A lightly-used access track shares the M1 bridge at J24a with the motorway slip road. Besides preserving the historic link between Castle Donington and Warren Lane, this would form part of the proposed commuter route from Long Eaton to EMA. Should plans for the once-mooted A50-A453 connector road ever be revived, they should not be allowed to compromise the integrity of this key link.
- 11-17** This existing section of the A50 cycle track is spoiled by flat road crossings at J24 which could be bypassed by provision of the links described at *4-12*, *7-8* and *7-10*.
- 11-16** Existing A50 [North side] cycle track.
- 12-13-15** Warren Lane, gated midway at the request of the Kegworth community, forms part of the Midshires Way long distance bridleway and is popular with walkers, cyclists and horse riders [ditto *56-57*].
- 13-14** A new track built alongside the Castle Donington railway between Warren and Lock Lanes would form the key-stone of the proposed Long Eaton-Kegworth / EMA commuting link. The Trent is already bridged on this line; the canal is not. This measure would also by-pass the problem section of the B6540 [north of *15*].
- Provided construction is robust enough to allow vehicular access, this link would also improve maintenance access to a section of railway that the M1 [East Midlands] Multi Modal study proposes for use by a new passenger service.
- 15-16** Feeding the A50, the narrow, heavily trafficked B6540 is shunned by most cyclists. Local opinion strongly favours provision of an off-carriageway track. Representatives of Castle Donington Town Council, the British Horse Society and Sustrans visited the site and concluded that there is scope for a path on the south side of the B6540 but only as far northwards as its junction with Warren Lane [*15*]. Beyond this, the road is too constrained to accommodate a safe riding route and a new Trent crossing is needed, ideally as described at *13-14* above.
- 17** See *5-17* and *11-17* above.
- 18** The safety of this recently completed cycle track is seriously compromised by unprotected road crossings at Donington Park Roundabout. Realisation of proposals made at *6-7* and *7-8* above would solve this problem and provide a more direct route between Kegworth and EMA / Pegasus Business Park.
- 19-20** Support for a southern bypass is strong in Kegworth though an associated cycle track would have to contend with dangerous crossings, especially at Junction 23a. The project specification should call for Toucans from inception [see also *22-23*]. However, please note that the line shown on the map is indicative only.
- 21** It has been suggested that the Kegworth Bypass contract should incorporate a new Soar bridge. This would serve [non-car] commuters from Sutton Bonnington [via Soar Lane and a short length of towpath] to the EMA employment area.



**22-23** A link alongside the [possibly to be widened] M1 would serve commuters from Shepshed and Loughborough to ETEM employment sites. Toucans would be needed at Junction 23a.

**24** To provide a direct link between the northern parts of Shepshed and 22-23 this present footpath could be up-graded to bridleway and metalled for all-weather use.

**Note** Though outwith the ETEM area, the A42 junction at Ashby de la Zouch is also a Highways Agency responsibility which deserves attention in the context of the A42 / M42 MMS. Please see 88 and 89 in Schedule B.

***Schedule items 31 to 79, though integral with the Eye of the East Midlands concept, are matters for Local Highway and Planning Authorities.***

**31-32-33** Castle Donington Town Council requests provision of an off carriageway cycle track between the A50 / B6540 junction [already provided with shared paths] and Wilsons' new estate road [33-34]. Besides extending the proposed B6540 track [15-16], this would create an all-weather alternative to 32-63.

**32-63** The existing track running below the A50 is popular but frequently floods.

**33-34** Wilson's new estate road is already provided with a good shared use path.

**34-35** Wilsons' estate road is shortly [November 2002] to be extended to the old power station site. The project will incorporate a new railway bridge and cycle track with links to Back Lane and Trent Lane.

**35-36** Though not yet figuring in any programme, the idea of completing a western bypass for Castle Donington was welcomed during preparation of this report subject to the new road not having to be funded by further housing development.

**36-37** Existing shared use path alongside recently re-aligned road.

**36-45** The existing shared path does not at present extend as far as the EMA circuit crossing at 45. New construction is needed in the highway verge.

**37-38** Completion of a bypass [35-36] would enable the present main road through Castle Donington to be calmed, possibly as part of a town-wide 20 mph zone, though this would require further local consultation.

**38-39** The track from the old Castle Donington station site and Hemington is identified by the Parish Council as a useful commuting route but needs repair.

**40** Local opinion strongly favours construction of a new bridge over the Trent at King's Mills to serve walkers, horse and bike riders. The feasibility of this idea is currently being investigated by the Cyclists Touring Club.

- 43-44-45** East Midlands Airport Landscape Strategy envisages a link from the A453 [8] into Pegasus Business Park [43] whence a link would extend along the southern boundary of the site. A safe A453 crossing will be needed at 44 to serve commuters from Diseworth. The crossing at 45 will have to be linked [see 36-45] with the existing shared path [36-37] from the Castle Donington direction.
- 46-47-48** Service roads at the Motor Racing Circuit are already ridden unofficially by local people. Although the site clearly becomes too busy on event days for such use, there may be scope for negotiating more formal arrangements to allow riders from Castle Donington to reach Cloud Trail at Wilson.
- 48-49-50** Castle Donington Town Council is already negotiating with Racing Circuit managers with a view to allowing horse riders to use the existing public footpath that skirts the northern boundary of the site. To prevent hoof damage to presently soft surfaces, metalling would be needed.
- 51** The consent of the owners of Donington Hall would be needed for public use of the old road between the Racing Circuit and Park Lane. This issue is to be progressed by local negotiators, probably in association with the Town Council.
- 54-55** Completion of Kegworth southern bypass [19-20] would allow the present A6 road through Kegworth to be calmed, possibly as part of a village-wide 20 mph zone, but always subject to further local consultation.
- 56-57** Long Lane and Ratcliffe Lane, gated at the request of the Kegworth community, forms part of the Midshires Way long distance bridleway and is popular with walkers, cyclists and horse riders [ditto 12-13-15 above].
- 60** A “Regional Icon” such as Gateshead’s “Angel” has to be seen from main road and rail routes. The M1 MMS recommends introduction of a strategic passenger rail service via Castle Donington. A site near J24a where the new rail axis meets the M1 and A50 trunk roads could thus be considered for such a landmark.
- 63-64** Derbyshire County Council plans on-carriageway cycle lanes from Cavendish Bridge towards Derby.
- 65-66-67-68** Midshires Way runs up from Buckinghamshire. As far as Warren Lane [12-13-15], it is enjoyed by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Northwards from Sawley it serves only walkers due to lack of a suitable Trent crossing and to difficulties in safely accommodating horses on the busy local road network.

Longhorse Bridge [67], crossing the Trent just east of Great Wilne, is currently closed for renewal. Fundraising is in hand for a new structure that is planned to serve cyclists and horses as well as walkers. The project partnership includes British Waterways, several Local Authorities and the British Horse Society.

Besides the bridge itself, approaches would be needed from the B6540 [65] where a signalled crossing would be essential. Between 65 and 66 a route could be made alongside the [possibly to-be-widened] M1. From 66 to 68 a new path could be created on land adjacent to the towpath. At 68, riders would join an existing lane.

- 69** To accommodate horse-use northwards from Great Wilne, the present Midshires Way footpath would have to be re-categorised as a bridleway. The Derwent bridge would also have to be replaced by a structure with wider deck and higher parapets.
- 71** If the Soar towpath is to be improved for cycling as has been suggested, a Management Agreement between British Waterways and either Nottinghamshire or Rushcliffe Borough would be needed. Though BW would normally agree to contribute, the partners would probably have to raise most associated funding.
- 72** Already busy at commuting times, the lanes between Sutton Bonnington, Kingston and Ratcliffe will be harder pressed after the opening of East Midlands Parkway railway station [2 above]. If riders are to retain safe access here, combinations of calming and off-carriageway measures will have to be considered.
- 73-74-75** Cyclists and horse riders cannot presently use the footpath from Ratcliffe to the site of the old Trent Lock ferry. Upgrading of the present footpath to bridleway has been proposed though this could only happen with the consent of landowners. A costly new bridge over the Trent would also be needed.
- 74-77** The British Horse Society proposes that this public footpath should be upgraded to become a bridleway.
- 75-76** Provision of an all-weather surface on the field footpath between Trent Lock and Trent Lane would have to be negotiated with the owner. However, allied with the proposed new link between 13 and 14, this would create an excellent route from Beeston / Long Eaton to employment sites at Castle Donington and Kegworth.
- 75-78** The British Horse Society proposes that this public footpath should be upgraded to become a bridleway.
- 79** Hyam's Lane could provide a convenient though presently rough commuting link between Diseworth and ETEM employment sites. To realise this potential, a simple adjustment to accommodate cyclists is needed at the Donington Park Services end where official access is presently only open to pedestrians.

## **SCHEDULE B : OTHER PROPOSED ROUTES AND MEASURES**

Two groups of projects warrant particular attention in the wider Northern Parishes area. The first would seek to create a trail between Staunton Harold and Ashby de la Zouch.

The second would follow repair of the severance imposed by the building of the A42 which should be urgently pressed in the context of the A42 / M42 Multi Modal Study. The dual aim would be [a] to reinstate the Coleorton to Ashby commuting / school route and [b] to complete the Worthington to Ashby section of Sustrans' Route 88.

### ***Staunton Harold to Ashby de la Zouch***

**82** Staunton Harold is one of the most agreeable and popular of Northern Parishes' visitor attractions. The access road through the grounds between Heath End and the B587 near Smoile is open at all reasonable hours.

**83** Between Staunton Harold and the B587 south of Lount, the new Jaguar Wood will incorporate tracks [as shown] for public access on foot, bike and horseback.

**84** Subject to negotiation of permissive access [possibly in the context of a future National Forest Tender Scheme] this largely private track between Jaguar Wood and Heath End would offer a pleasant circuit based on Staunton Harold.

**83-85-86** No public way presently exists between Jaguar Wood and "Ivanhoe Way" [85]. From 85 to 86, the route carries public footpath status only. At 86, riders already have a three-way choice of bridleways, east or westwards on the metalled farm access road or south to Ashby on Featherbed Lane.

Subject to negotiation [also possibly in the context of a future National Forest Tender Scheme], a riding-route could be created between 83 and 86 to provide the long-imagined link between Ashby de la Zouch and Staunton Harold.

### ***A42 Ashby Junction, Coleorton and Worthington***

**88-89** The A42 roundabout is a highly dangerous place for walkers and cyclists for whom a shared path with Toucans crossing both south-side slip roads and the A511 is needed. A link in the northern verge of the A511 to Corkscrew Lane [89] could then reinstate a school / commuting route from Coleorton that was destroyed by the design of the new A42 [see also 90].

If the A511 link were built at the top of the present road embankment, retention or revetment would be needed to widen the verge. Carriageway narrowing would also have to be considered at the Lounge Coal Disposal Point [CDP] bridge.

If the A511 link were built at the bottom of the bank, some [agricultural] land-purchase would be necessary. A lower level path would also cross the line of the CDP rail head-shunt on the level. This option would thus rely upon dovetailing in time with non-rail redevelopment or restoration of the CDP site [also see 125].

Action here should be urged in the context of the A42 / M42 Multi Modal Study for funding by the Highways Agency.

**90** Though little more than a three mile ride, cycling between villages in the Coleorton area and Ashby was effectively prohibited in the early '90s by the design of the new A42 and A511 roads. As a corollary to 88 and 89 above, safety measures would be needed at the A512 Coleorton crossing at 90.

**91-92** Mr John Blunt's excellent Beaumont Way is currently marred by bad highway links which would be resolved at the Ashby end by the A42 measures described at 88-89. At the northern end, Mr Blunt agrees in principle to creation of a new section using the old Smoile railway bridge to avoid Melbourne Road.

**92-93** A short link crossing reclaimed land to the Melbourne Road bridge below the A42 is recommended though construction may have to wait until gassing at the site has ceased. Safety measures would be needed at the B587 crossing [93].

**92-94** Extending Beaumont Way to the North of Melbourne Road would necessitate agreement with landowners, Coal Contractors, with Mr Blunt who has already acknowledged his support-in-principle and with the community at Newbold.

**92-95**

Subject to such agreements, an appealing trail could be made at this forking-point of the old railway. One arm would link Pipeyard Lane, 94, the second, via a short [clear-view through] tunnel, would join School Lane at 95.

**94-96** Provisionally, cyclists may use the lane from Newbold to meet Cloud Trail at Worthington. However, new Local Plan Policy T14 safeguards the parallel derelict railway that will hopefully be reclaimed in due course to make an end-on connection between Beaumont Way and Cloud Trail.

### ***Other Routes and Measures***

**97** The B5324 near Griffydam is problematic. The lower [western] crossing has in the past been remodelled to create clear sightlines at what remains a long hill taken at high speed by drivers. The upper [eastern] crossing, though level, is even more difficult due to the hill-brow that entirely obscures west-facing sight-lines.

Of the two, local cyclists prefer the lower crossing which may generally be tackled with fair safety by most competent riders. Additional measures may be needed, subject to safety audit.

- 98** Though closed to motor traffic years ago, the old road between Newbold and Gelsmoor remains open to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- 99** Local riders confirm that the least threatening point at which to cross the B5324 is at “The Railway” public house though, even here, safety measures would be desirable. From here, a shared track is requested in the southern verge of the B5324 to serve riders from Lower Moor Lane whose direct crossing to Melbourne Road is acknowledged to be highly dangerous.
- 100-101-102** Though the Peggs Green [102] end of this section of old railway has already been reclaimed as public open space, the complexities of acquiring the length between Gelsmoor [100] and Stoney Lane [101] have yet to be addressed. Work here is nonetheless supported by new Local Plan policy T14 and will hopefully achieved in due course.
- 102-103-104** Ten years ago, Leicestershire County Council dismissed the idea of reopening the old railway tunnel below the A512 at Peggs Green as impracticable. When completion of the trail from Gelsmoor [100-101-102] is planned, any further extension will thus have to be off the line of the old railway. A local view favours up-grading the footpath from the Peggs Green recreation ground towards the A512 which would be crossed at 103 to reach Mill Lane, 104.
- 105-106-107** Further local consultation would be needed to determine if and how a link may best be made between Limby Hall Lane and Main Street, Swannington, which riders would use as far as “The Robin Hood” public house [106]. From the latter, the old Byway to the A511 [107] has been recently restored.
- 108-109** At Sinope, routes from Packington and Ravenstone to Coleorton are obstructed by traffic on the A511. Subject to safety audit by the County Council [as 111], the favoured location for a crossing would be 108. This would have to be linked via a track in the southern verge of the A511 [109] connecting with the byway from Ravenstone [110] and the road from Alton Hill.
- 113** Quiet lanes from Griffydam and Osgathorpe to Thringstone meet the A512 at a dangerous staggered junction. The Northern Parishes steering group proposed introduction of verge paths and a straight-over crossing as at Grace Dieu [114].
- 114** National Cycle Network Route 52 intersects the A512 at Grace Dieu where, by installing appropriate warning signs, building tracks in both verges and cutting back previously unmanaged vegetation, a safety-audited and approved crossing has been engineered. This will hopefully provide a precedent for tackling other difficult crossings including 90, 108 and 113.
- 115** The recently opened Grace Dieu Trail is part of National Cycle Network Route 52.
- 116-117** In 1977, part of the old Charnwood Railway was adopted by Shepshed Town Council to commemorate the Queen’s Silver Jubilee though, respecting the security of Blackbrook Farm, the trail ended at 116. Now that Grace Dieu Trail is proving popular, the idea of linking the two sites has been proposed.

However, since the need for security is just as pressing now as in 1977, progress would depend upon agreeing an off-railway route, possibly shadowing the line of the older canal which looped northwards away from Blackbrook Farm. This has been broached in general terms with the owner, Squire de Lisle, who is willing to consider any well-founded proposition subject to the views of his tenant.

**123** Forty Foot Lane is a rough byway which, at one point, threatens to collapse into a deep drainage ditch. Subject [i] to repair and [ii] to agreement with managers of the Motor Racing Circuit and Donington Hall [48-49-50 above] this would complete an appealing link between Park Lane, Castle Donington and Cloud Trail.

**125** Lounge Coal Disposal Point [CDP] is presently mothballed. At redevelopment, it is urged that planning conditions should be used to secure access tracks : -

- To and from Packington via Corkscrew Lane south of A511.
- below the A511 at the rail underbridge to join the proposed new A511 verge track described at 89 above.

Amongst other route options thus created up, the Lounge CDP link would serve as part of the “rim” of the Ashby Exercise Wheel as proposed in the earlier Ashby Area Cycling Network Plan.

## **SCHEDULE C : PRESENT CYCLING ROUTES**

The following [mostly generic] route types may by and large be used in their present condition.

- 132** Regular Cyclist's routes or main road crossings, sometimes carrying fast and / or heavy traffic and thus not recommended for use by inexperienced riders.
- 133** Easier routes including quieter roads, off carriageway cycle tracks and traffic free trails.
- 133** Other rights of way, generally Byways or Bridleways, where cyclists have a legal right to ride though where surfaces may be rough and sometimes muddy. Repair or new metalling may not be cost effective and, in many cases, could harm the essential character of the route.
- 135** Oaks Road into Charnwood Forest from Whitwick connects with Charley Road from the A512 to a T-junction near Bawdon Castle Farm. Together they offer generally quiet riding conditions whose steepness [in parts] is rewarded by fine views northwards towards Castle Donington.



**North West Leicestershire**

# **NORTHERN PARISHES CYCLING NETWORK PLAN**

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