

North West Leicestershire

Cycling Strategy

Part 1: Coalville

April 2012

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1. Introduction

This cycling strategy has been commissioned by North West Leicestershire District Council to maximise the tourism, active travel and recreational cycling opportunities for residents and visitors to North West Leicestershire.

This document is Part 1 of 3 which focuses on the cycle network in and around Coalville, and has been produced in consultation with local stakeholders. Part 2 covers Ashby de la Zouch and the surrounding area, and Part 3 looks at the Northern Parishes. The strategy seeks to identify a potential network of cycle links to overcome current barriers to cycling, and enable more people to cycle as a regular mode of transport. Other measures such as cycle training, publicity and cycle storage are also identified, which should further encourage use of any infrastructure that is provided. A cycle map of aspirations for North West Leicestershire also forms part of the strategy, provided as an Appendix to this document and electronically at www.nwleics.gov.uk.

The strategy will initially concentrate on the Coalville area, with a focus on identifying the priority gaps in the existing cycle network. The document in turn should enable the District Council to bid for funding to construct the infrastructure required to plug these gaps.

Furthermore, Leicestershire County Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) seeks to ensure that transport continues to play its important role in helping Leicestershire to continue to be a prosperous, safe and attractive County. The quality of local transport is critical to the success of local economies in a number of different ways. It enables people to get to work and access services and facilities such as shops and healthcare, enable children to get to school, and businesses to receive materials and distribute goods.

A good transport system helps to build a growing economy and strong, sustainable, safe and healthy communities. In turn, many of the LTP 3 activities will also help to improve quality of life, particularly by reducing the negative impact of traffic and transport on individuals, communities and our environment. For example, efforts to tackle congestion and reduce CO₂ emissions from road transport will play a significant part in helping to tackle the challenge posed by climate change, and will help improve air quality and improve people's health.

Analysis of the LTP3 evidence base has identified its areas of focus as being in and around Loughborough and Coalville, where we need to stimulate economic growth and reduce carbon emissions. The development of this Cycling Strategy supports the following of Leicestershire County Council's LTP3 objectives:

- To encourage active and sustainable travel.
- To improve the connectivity and accessibility of our transport system.

Furthermore, Coalville is named in Leicestershire County Council's Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid, which if successful, would focus Capital investment in the town to deliver packages of measures to make better use of the existing highway, public transport network and supporting the needs of the business community. The bid will also complement the County Council's approach to their sustainable travel campaign to help people get fit, save money, have fun and help the environment - by leaving their cars at home.

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2. Background

2.1 Context of Coalville's Transport Network

Coalville is the largest of five priority towns in the district of North West Leicestershire. The district's largest employment sectors are manufacturing, transport and logistics which is strongly influenced by East Midlands Airport and the proximity of key strategic transport links such as the M1, A42 / M42 and A50.

Coalville, with a population of approximately 31,000, is situated on the A511 trunk road between Leicester and Burton-upon-Trent, close to Junction 22 of the M1.

There is little existing cycle infrastructure in the town. Although National Cycle Route 52 runs through Coalville, there is a missing section of the route through the town centre, a solution to which has been problematic for a number of years.

2.2 Local Issues: Economic Issues

The Coalville Town Centre Vision (Master Plan) was produced in 2007. The vision states that 'the town centre is reasonably economically healthy in its own terms, but is underperforming and fails to meet local needs, in particular in terms of the quality of food , other retail and the leisure facilities on offer.'

In addition to a strong reliance on the manufacturing, transport and logistics sectors, the role of the visitor economy is also important in both Coalville and North West Leicestershire, with a strong influence from the National Forest and East Midlands Airport.

The Masterplan (2007) identified the following specific issues as potential barriers to the economy:

- A poor image and lack of identity;
- Lack of cohesion between different parts of the town centre;
- The environment of the town centre is generally poor;
- Conflicts between pedestrians and cars in the town centre;
- Lack of facilities for young people;
- Perceived levels of business crime;
- A poorly developed night time and leisure economy;
- Undeveloped links between the town centre and major local attractions;

- A poor environment for disabled people and families;
- Lack of extended opening hours;
- Mean household income in Coalville is considerably lower than that of North West Leicestershire and Leicestershire;

The Regional Spatial Strategy (2009) proposed that 10,200 new dwellings be built in North West Leicestershire between 2006 and 2026, a 26% increase over 2006 levels. This includes a Sustainable Urban Extension at Coalville.

2.3 Local Issues: Environmental Issues

There is an Air Quality Management Area within Coalville. There is limited data on CO₂ emissions in Coalville, but North West Leicestershire has significantly higher per capita CO₂ emissions than other districts in Leicestershire. These emissions are also higher than the average for the East Midlands and England. The per capita CO₂ emissions from transport in North West Leicestershire are also the highest in Leicestershire and are over one and half times higher than the England average. This could be attributed to the surrounding strategic road network and East Midlands airport.

2.4 Local Issues: Social Issues

Social issues have an impact on what is required from the local transport network. For instance, areas of low income would rely more on low cost forms of transport, particularly to get to employment and essential services such as healthcare.

- The nearby Greenhill North East and Greenhill centre wards make up two of the top four most deprived wards in Leicestershire;
- Of the 10 most deprived areas in North West Leicestershire, five are in Greenhill / Coalville areas;
- There are some areas of health deprivation - two areas in Greenhill are within the 20% most deprived areas in England;
- There are 18 neighbourhoods with high incidences of anti-social behaviour in Leicestershire – Coalville Centre is the 4th highest;
- There is a need to build on work done as part of the 'priority neighbourhoods' project undertaken in two of the more economically and socially deprived areas around Coalville – the Coalville, Thringstone & Whitwick Ward area and Greenhill Ward.

2.5 The Role of Cycling in Tackling Local Issues

Transport can play its part in helping to tackle a number of the issues identified above.

- Improving cohesion between different parts of the town centre;
- Improving the environment of the town centre;
- Resolving conflicts between pedestrians and cars in the town centre;
- Offering services and facilities that will help to develop the leisure economy;
- Improving links between the town centre and major local attractions;
- Ensuring that services and facilities take account of the needs of disabled people and families.

As the existing cycling network in Coalville is poor, with little existing infrastructure, investment in a more cohesive cycling network has obvious advantages in tackling the issues listed above. Cycling has zero emissions, is a good form of exercise and is a low cost form of transport.

It is also important to keep in mind that a network of new cycle routes is not provided just for cyclists, and that the creation of good quality, safe and easily accessible routes are equally beneficial for pedestrians, and particularly people with pushchairs, wheelchair users or those using mobility scooters.

3. Training, Publicity and Promotion

3.1 Training

Cycle training is provided through Bike4life, a Leicestershire County Council initiative which covers Bikeability Levels 1, 2 and 3 for children between the ages of 8 and 14. Take up for the training is good, with 265 children from nine schools in the Coalville area participating in the programme during the academic year 2010-2011 (the Coalville area includes Hugglescote, Ravenstone, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick).

Leicestershire County Council is currently developing a programme of adult cycle courses in the North West Leicestershire area to teach non-cyclists to ride and encourage adults who already cycle to feel more confident. Courses are delivered by experienced National Standard Instructors, and participants gradually develop the skills and confidence to cycle for leisure or to work. The sessions include basic bike checks and minor repairs. Venues for these courses are being arranged for Coalville and will be open to all residents.

3.2 Publicity

Recently, significant investment has been made in developing cycle infrastructure around Loughborough. As part of this a comprehensive signing strategy was installed to provide clearly defined routes between key destinations in and around the town. The signing not only provides information to cyclists, but also highlights the existence of the network. The scheme has provided a blue-print for the introduction of colour-coded cycle signing of networks, which could be introduced in other major market towns in the County, such as Coalville,

There is an opportunity for any new cycle network in Coalville to be designed more coherently with a view to implementing a similar signing strategy, giving the network a 'brand' and raising its profile.

In terms of written publicity, Leicestershire County Council has released six cycling maps, one of which covers the Coalville area. These maps provide information of existing cycle routes and could be used to publicise the introduction of any new cycle infrastructure. Copies of the map are available through libraries throughout Leicestershire, the District Council Offices, Leicestershire County Council Customer Services, and electronically on the Leicestershire County Council website at www.leics.gov.uk/index/environment/sustainability/greentravel/cycling. Provision of information boards displaying the Cycle Map could also be considered to raise their profile.

3.3 Promotion

Increasingly developers and employers are being asked to produce workplace travel plans either voluntarily or as part of a planning condition. A workplace

Travel Plan details the implementation of measures to actively encourage the use of sustainable travel alternatives to and from a site and discourage Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) use.

Workplace travel planning has multiple benefits to employers, employees and the local community by helping to reduce congestion on site and the surrounding highway network, reducing the cost of travel and pressures on car parking, encouraging a healthier workforce and making an employer more accessible to a wider workforce.

Leicestershire County Council is currently working with 50 large employers including Caterpillar, Next and Loughborough University and numerous smaller businesses within Leicestershire. As part of their Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) business travel planning will continue to play a significant role in promoting sustainable travel.

Businesses in and around Coalville have also been engaged as part of the LSTF bid, with the information gathered being used in the delivery of schemes for road improvements, training and promotion.

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4. The Network Development Plan

In order to identify a potential network of cycle routes in Coalville, the following methodology was adopted.

- identify the existing cycle network;
- identify key destinations and trip generators where people are most likely to want to cycle to, and where people are cycling from; these being services and facilities (employment, areas for shopping, schools etc.) and attractions (National Forest sites, leisure centres etc.)
- identify the gaps in the network and determine how these gaps could be filled;
- identify the most desirable routes, determined both by destinations and as routes attractive in themselves for leisure and exercise cycling.

4.1 The Existing Network

Currently there is little existing infrastructure for cyclists in Coalville. Shared use footway/cycle tracks have been provided along Whitwick Road and Stephenson Way, between the Morrison's roundabout and Stephenson College. There is also a traffic-free cycle track which leads from Stephenson Way, near Stephenson College, to Swannington.

The Sustrans National Cycle Network (a network of signed routes spanning the UK) Route 52 passes through Coalville, through Ravenstone and Snibston, then north along Whitwick Road, continuing north off-road towards Whitwick and Thringstone. However, there is a missing section through the town centre between Snibston Discovery Park and Hotel Street.

There are existing Toucan crossings (which allow cyclists to cross without having to dismount) on Hotel Street, Whitwick Road, and on Stephenson Way at the Broom Leys Road signal junction, west of the Whitwick Road roundabout and Thornborough Road roundabout. The Coalville cycle map was produced in April 2011, showing the existing infrastructure and recommended routes, which are roads that are recommended for cyclists but do not have any measures specifically for cyclists. A copy of the map is included in **Appendix A**.

4.2 Development of Potential Routes

A series of consultation meetings were held in order to identify the key destinations and trip generators in Coalville. The consultation group included officers from North West Leicestershire District Council, Leicestershire County Council, a Local District Councillor for Coalville, CTC (Cyclists' Touring Club) and Sustrans. One of the key focuses for the identification of potential cycle routes is the need to get people to places of employment and retail, thus

supporting economic growth. Participants were asked to provide information about local trip attractors including places of employment, areas for shopping, leisure, and education, and any routes that are already being well used by cyclists. They were also asked to identify the current barriers to cycling, such as busy roads with a high proportion of HGV traffic, and poor surfaces. A network of the key destinations was created to use as a base for developing the network further, and is included in **Appendix B**.

From this information gaps in the network became apparent, and potential routes identified and surveyed on site. The surveys have been undertaken in line with the cycle audit process as described in the DfT Local Transport Note 2/08 Cycle Infrastructure Design, and assessed the general principle and deliverability of a scheme. The aspirational routes are shown on the plan in **Appendix C** and a list of the suggested routes in **Appendix D**. Each of the routes listed includes the location and suggested measure to enable cycling. It is intended that the measures described are not prescriptive and further surveys and design work should be undertaken should a proposal be promoted further.

The aspirational cycle network does not pre-empt any future development in Coalville, and is based on the current need for movement. Notwithstanding this, it is important that adequate provision of safe and coherent pedestrian and cycle links is provided for as part of any future developments in the Coalville area.

4.3 Other Measures

Cycle Parking

The installation of cycle parking would further promote use of the cycle network.

Schools have been invited by Leicestershire County Council to make a bid for funding for cycle parking; however historically the response from schools in Coalville has been poor. It would therefore be beneficial to promote cycle parking in schools in the Coalville area, particularly considering the high uptake of cycle training in schools.

Cycle parking would also be useful at key locations such as the town centre, The Hermitage Leisure Centre, Stephenson College and large employers. Funding may be available through Leicestershire County Council's Transportation Capital programme if money is available and the need for facilities is identified through LTP3 activities. Funding may also be available through developers if the provision of cycle parking is considered appropriate.

Information Boards

Information boards displaying the Coalville Cycling map would be useful in key locations around the town, not only to assist cyclists to plan their journey, but also to highlight the existence of the cycle network. Suggested locations

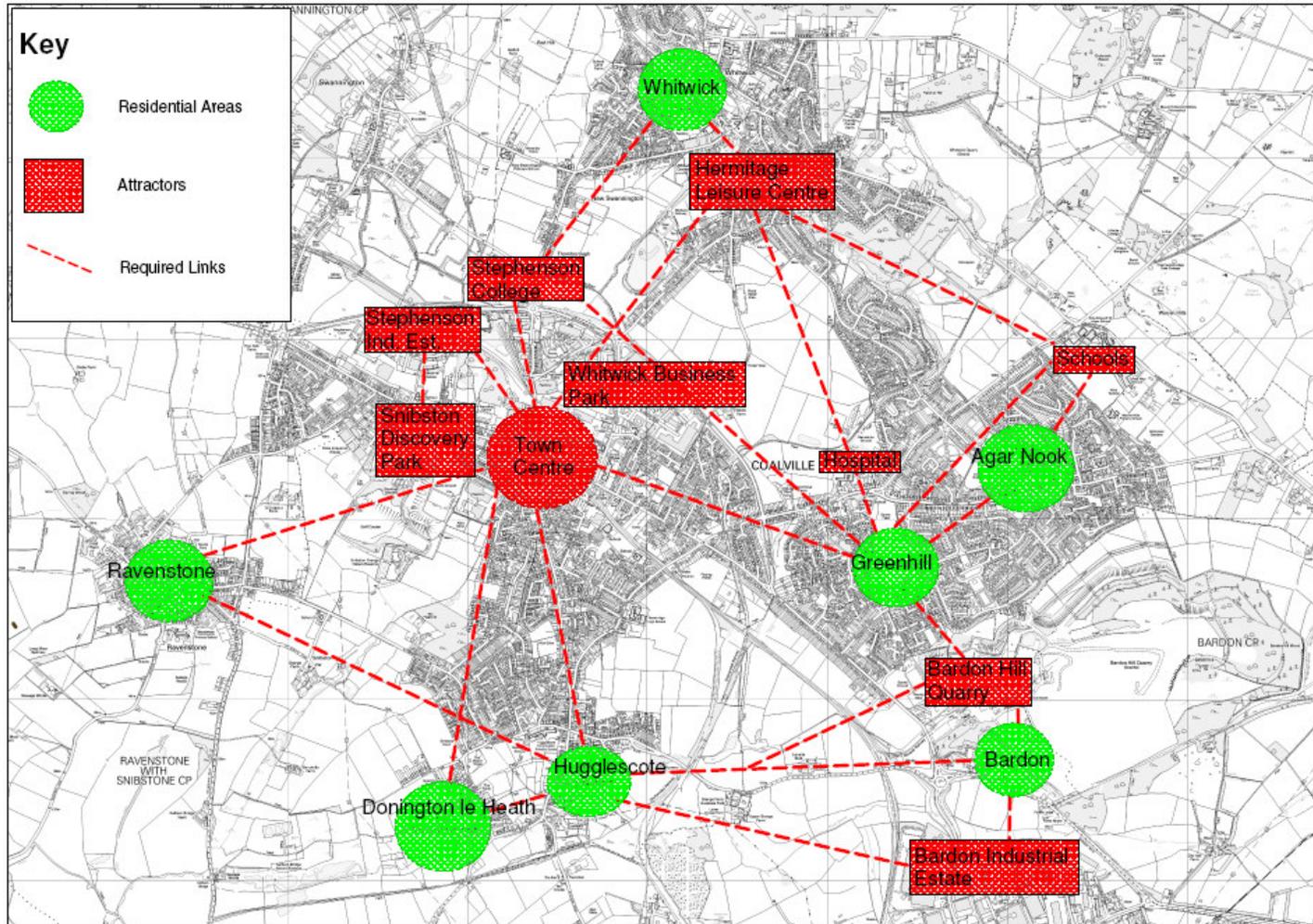
for these boards are shown on the plan in **Appendix C**, which include various points around the town centre, and at significant points on routes into the town

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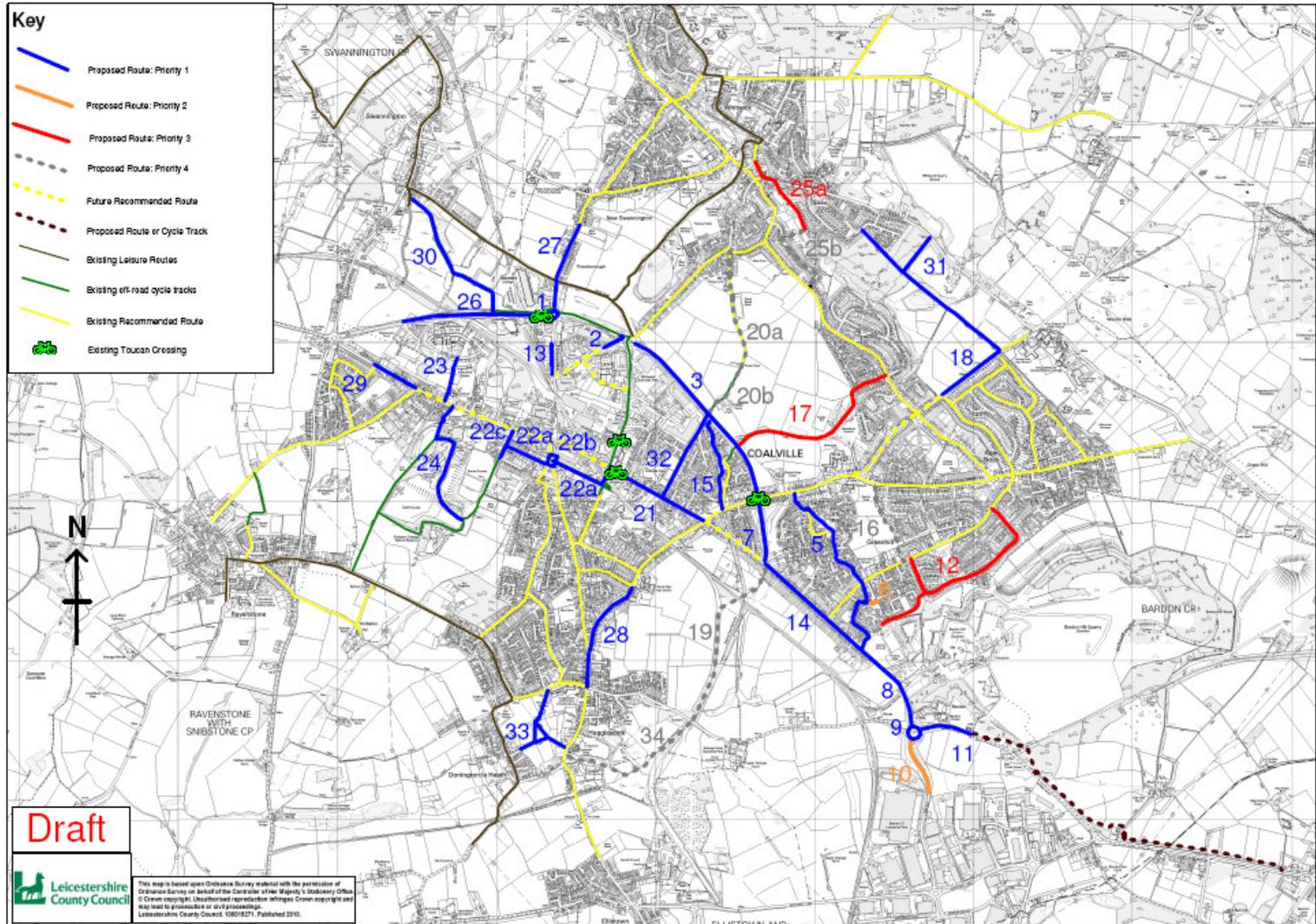
5. Appendices

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Appendix B: Links Required to Key Destinations



Appendix C: Plan of the Aspirational Coalville Cycle Network



Appendix D: Potential cycle links for Coalville.

Key to Priorities:

Priority 1: Quick wins – minimal works incl. signing, lining and minimal widening.

Priority 2: Larger value schemes and schemes which rely on other schemes being completed ahead of their implementation to make coherent links.

Priority 3: Includes schemes which would be riskier in terms of delivery due to land issues and high costs.

Priority 4: Link would be worthwhile but could not be built in the short term.

No. on plan	Location	Route	Indicative Works Cost (as of Nov 2011)	Priority	Notes
1	A511, Stephenson Way/ Thornborough Road roundabout.	Toucan crossing and provision of shared use track.	£30,000	1	Existing shared use track along Stephenson Way and now provided past Lidl.
2	Comet Way Link – Stephenson Way to Comet Way.	Widen existing track, signing and lining.	£10,000	1	Conversion of footpath O7 to bridleway. Minimal consultation. Link into western side of industrial estate.
3	A511, Morrison's (Whitwick Road) roundabout to Broom Leys Road.	Widen existing footway to create shared use.	£150,000	2	Levels look challenging near the Whitwick Road roundabout and long stretch of widening required, therefore high cost scheme.
4	No route 4				
5	Broom Leys Road to Bardon Close (The Palaces Estate to The Cricketers' Estate (Greenhill)).	Upgrade of existing footpaths through estate.	£50,000	1	Conversion of footpaths, widening of existing link, and refuges.
6	Link between Cricketers' Estate and Harker Drive.	Provide link through embankment.	£20,000	2	Ramp already in place from Harker Drive development. Small embankment would need cutting into. Short link across verge onto quiet road.

No. on plan	Location	Route	Indicative Works Cost (as of Nov 2011)	Priority	Notes
7	A511, Stephenson Way, Bardon Road to Broom Leys Road.	Provide new cycle track in verge.	£75,000	2	Would need to be segregated due to line of trees. 40mph speed limit on road. Short section of shared use at either end to link Bardon Road and Broom Leys Toucans.
8	A511, Bardon Close to Birch Tree Roundabout, incl. Quarry entrance.	Shared use footway/cycle track.	£150,000	1	Attention needed taking the track past the quarry entrance. Long length of footway to be widened hence high cost. Already well used commuter route.
9	A511, Birch Tree roundabout.	Shared use links including Toucan on Bardon Road.	£50,000	1	Possible retaining structure required alongside Grange Road/Reg's Way arm.
10	Birch Tree roundabout to Bardon 22.	Shared use track into industrial estate.	£50,000	2	Off road track warranted heading towards Birch tree as up hill, high HGV traffic flow and 40mph limit. Possible retaining structure required.
11	A511, Birch Tree to Proposed Quarry cycle track.	Shared use footway/cycle track.	£25,000	2	Link would be required from St. Peter's Church to Birch tree roundabout. Already good width with minimal construction.
12	Bardon Close to Bradgate Drive.	Shared use footway/cycle track.	£80,000	3	Potential land ownership issues - ROW
13	Thornborough Road – Lidl to Comet Way		£20,000	1	To link into existing short section on Thornborough Road.
14	Bardon Road, Stephenson Way to Bardon Close.	Possibly shared use footway/cycle track.	£50,000	2	Removal of parking would be a sensitive issue.
15	Long Lane cycle track.	Signing of route.	£5,000	1	Check whether route needs to be upgraded to bridleway as already highway.
16	Cropston Drive to Greenhill Road.	New cycle track.	£150,000	4	NWL land.

No. on plan	Location	Route	Indicative Works Cost (as of Nov 2011)	Priority	Notes
17	Hall Lane (Rugby Club) to Long Lane.	Off road cycle track.	£250,000	4	Leisure route. Provision of cycle track along disused railway line. Environmental/land issues
18	Meadow Lane, Castle Rock link	Conversion of lay by to cycle track/lane	£60,000	1	Scope for either cycle track or contra flow cycle lane. Potential problems with occasional parking.
19	Long Lane to Grange Road.	Provide new cycle track along disused railway line	£300,000	4	Leisure route. Area identified for housing growth.
20a	Hermitage Leisure Centre – Stephenson Way (phase 1 Hermitage to Green Lane).	Surfacing improvements/signing.	£20,000	4	
20b	Hermitage Leisure Centre – Stephenson Way (phase 2 Green Lane to Stephenson Way).	Surfacing improvements and Conversion of Footpath to Bridleway.	£30,000	4	
21	London Road, Hotel Street to Forest Road junction.	Advisory/virtual cycle lanes & signing	£50,000	3	
22a	NCN52 through town centre Part 1 - Phoenix Green to Oliver's Crossing – signing. Margaret Street incl. Oliver's crossing, Owen Street crossing and Asda footbridge.	Signing only.	£7,500	1	Planning Permission for large town centre development likely to change route of NCN, therefore signing only at this time.
22b	NCN52 through town centre Part 2 - Jackson Street, Oliver's Crossing to Margaret Street – shared use.	Provision of shared use facilities and signing.	£15,000	1	Crossing with a refuge required on Stephenson Way.
22c	NCN52 through town centre Part 3 - Owen Street to ASDA various minor improvements.	Dropped kerbs Owen Street, path realignment at Margeter Street footbridge and ASDA link inc signing throughout.	£15,000	1	
23	All Saints School, Telford Way to Ashby Road	Surface improvements, removal of speed hump and vegetation. Replace/provide bollards.	£15,000	1	Conversion of footpath N97 to Bridleway. Area of unadopted road needs surfacing.
24	Chiswell Drive to Snibston Grange	Improvements/corrections to developer scheme and signing.	£3,000	1	Developer to provide corrections to cycle facilities on Chiswell Drive to make up to adoptable standard.

No. on plan	Location	Route	Indicative Works Cost (as of Nov 2011)	Priority	Notes
25	Holly Hayes to City of Dan to The Hockley (NCN 52 link)	PROW – provision of shared track & new bridge. Improvements to crossing on City of Dan.	£5,000	3	Planning application submitted for new community centre. Site in centre of route adjacent City of Dan.
25b	Holly Hayes to Hall Lane	PROW – provision of new cycle track.	£30,000	4	
26	Stephenson Way – Thornborough Road to Hoo Ash Island	Continuation of shared cycle track/footway.	£80,000	2	Leicestershire County Council scheme to reduce speed limit.
27	Thornborough Road – Coalville to Whitwick.	Provision of shared use.	£60,000	2	On road at Church Lane (traffic calmed from then on).
28	Forest Road, Newbridge School to Hugglescote.	Shared use footway/cycle track.	£60,000	3	Junction improvement undertaken at Hall Lane
29	Ashby Road, Ravenstone Road to Hoo Ash Island	Shared use footway/cycle track, inc signing only to town centre	£30,000	3	Traffic calmed from Ravenstone Road to town centre.
30	Swannington to Stephenson College	Signing only of off road track	£5,000	1	BOTAT
31	Holly Hayes to Castle Rock	Conversion of part footway to bridleway, signing, gateways and surface improvements.	£100,000	1	Request made via Castle Rock School Travel Plan.
32	Stephenson Way to London Road	Surface improvements and signing.	£20,000	1	
33	Hugglescote Park links	Widening existing tracks and signing.	£30,000	1	
34	Hugglescote, Grange Road to Station Road	New off road cycle track	£200,000	4	High risk due to land and construction issues but worthwhile.