



MontytraX Feasibility Study – Phase 2

Final Report – June 2017



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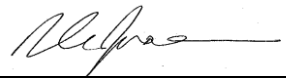
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Appendices

Appendix A - MontytraX Phase 2 Study Brief

Appendix B - Sustrans Volunteer documents

Appendix C - Sustrans Walking & Cycling Network Development Guide

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 Sustrans Cymru has been commissioned by MontytraX to undertake this Phase 2 Feasibility Study that follows on from the 2016 Phase 1 audit and mapping exercise in Montgomeryshire, north Powys. This study will concentrate on the three main project outcomes from the Phase 1 study – Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path; MontytraX Circular Cycle Route; and an agreed selection of Community Walks.

‘MontytraX is a community supported project that aims to develop an active travel and leisure network in North Montgomeryshire using where possible old railway lines, back roads, public rights of way, forestry tracks and road verges in order to provide a viable north Montgomeryshire route linking local participating communities to existing Sustrans and other routes to facilitate cycling and walking into and through the area both for recreation and non-vehicular access.’

1.2 The aim of the study is to provide further details on the three main projects so that they can be taken forward for funding prior to the delivery stage and implemented on the ground. The Phase 2 study brief is included within the Appendices

The project has the following objective:

- To undertake a Feasibility Study in the following three areas, ensuring that the studies on each will ensure the projects will be ready to proceed to apply for funding:
 - Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path
 - MontytraX Circular Cycle Route
 - Community Walks

The Study Area

1.3 The overall study area is the north Powys region which is still known locally as Montgomeryshire. As the Phase 2 study is looking at specific project areas these have been detailed in each element. The Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use path is concentrating on the disused railway line between Llanfyllin and Llanymynech; the MontytraX Circular Cycle Route is covering the area outlined in the Phase 1 study; and the Community Walks are located around Banwy (Llangadfan & Foel), Llanfyllin & Llanfechain; Llanymynech and Llangynog.

As part of the Community Walks element, it was agreed that for the Guilsfield area an outline study would be carried out on a potential circular shared use walking & cycling route as preferred by the local community, as opposed to a Community Walks study.

Consideration has been made for information from just outside these areas as users of the assets will not be confined to county boundaries and will travel to the locations that they wish to use or enjoy.

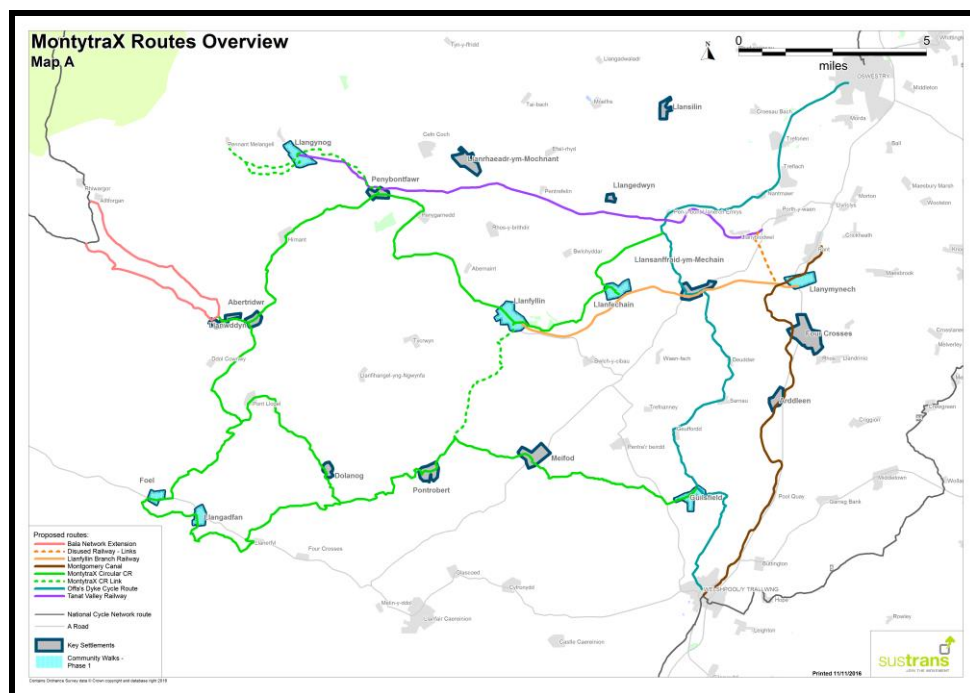


Figure 1.1 – Study Area overview from Phase 1

Report Structure

1.4 Following the Introduction as above, the structure of the report is as follows:

- **Section 2:** explains the methodology and requirements for the study;
- **Section 3:** provides an overview of the three main project areas, plus the Guilsfield study;
- **Section 4:** provides the details on Mobility, Sight and the Welsh Language as detailed in the project brief;
- **Section 5:** looks at how the project can add value to the area;
- **Section 6:** looks at funding opportunities and project management issues;
- **Section 7:** provides examples of similar projects and contacts;
- **Section 8:** provides recommendations on how to engage with volunteers;
- **Section 9:** looks at the issues raised by Powys CC Countryside Access Officer; and
- **Section 10:** provides the recommendations, summary and conclusion.

Due to the size of the overall project and the study areas, additional documents have been prepared so that the three delivery projects can

be moved forward at different stages. The following provides an overview of all the MontytraX Feasibility Study Phase 2 documents:

Document Reference	Title
201	MontytraX Feasibility Study - Phase 2 – Main Report
201A	Business Case Assessment
201B-1 to 5	Sustrans Volunteer Documents (Appendix B1 – B5)
202	Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path: Route Feasibility Study
202A	Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path: Route Feasibility Study – Appendix A: Land Ownership
202C	Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path: Route Feasibility Study – Appendix C: Outline Ecological Desk Study
202D	Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path: Route Feasibility Study – Appendix D: Route Plans
203	MontytraX Circular Cycle Route - Study
203A-01 to 12	MontytraX Circular Cycle Route – Route Plans (x 12)
204	MontytraX Community Walks - Study
205	Guilsfield - Study
205A	Guilsfield – Overview Plan

2 METHODOLOGY

Study Purpose and Requirements

2.1 The feasibility study's main objective is to ensure that the following projects will be ready to move forward and apply for funding:

- Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path
- MontytraX Circular Cycle Route
- Community Walks

The project specification asked for information required within the project areas such as construction details and costs, land access, maintenance costs and any potential hidden costs.

The overall costings of the projects have been included within the relevant (sub) studies. Whilst these costs have been taken from similar projects around the county, exact costs for certain elements, including accessing land are dependent on detailed tenders and land negotiations being drawn up.

2.2 The specification asked the study to consult with the local community where relevant and throughout this Phase 2 study Sustrans has engaged with the local community representatives where relevant and further details are included within the relevant project (sub) studies.

2.3 Recommendations regarding accessibility for all - mobility, sight and welsh language where to be included and these have been included in the project (sub) studies where relevant with an overview included in Section 4 below.

2.4 Details of how the projects could add value to local identity and natural and cultural resources where required and again these have been included in the project (sub) studies where relevant with an overview included in Section 5 below.

A separate Business Case Assessment document has been prepared as part of the study, which highlights the additional value that the main project outcomes can add to the local area.

2.5 The specification asked the study to identify where the project will go after the feasibility and potential funding opportunities and project management options have been included in Section 6. Examples of similar projects from other areas have been included within Section 7 and these will provide further information on how the MontytraX project may be able to progress.

2.6 A number of issues were raised within the project specification via the Powys CC Countryside Access Officer. Whilst a number of these included statements relating to the Public Rights of Way network and its legal backing, the issues have been covered within Sections 8 & 9

that looks at volunteering opportunities for the projects as well as the specifics.

- 2.7 The documents produced by the study are to be made public and will assist the MontytraX community group for raising sponsors and financial backing as well as public support.

The majority of the documents will be suitable for the public to view but the land registry and outline negotiations involved with the Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path study have been separated out due to the confidential nature of some of this information.

3 PROJECT OVERVIEWS

Introduction

3.1 An overview of each project is included below with full details provided in each separate report.

Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path

3.2 This study investigates the possibility of creating a traffic free shared use path between the towns of Llanfyllin and Llanymynech along the alignment of the disused Llanfyllin Branch railway line. The path should be suitable for all users, have a reasonably flat gradient and be direct between the communities of Llanfyllin, Llanfechain, Llansantffraid and Llanymynech.

3.3 This report looks at a description of a preferred route and what would be required in engineering terms to construct a route to three potential options:

- A path which would allow able bodied people to walk the along the full length of the route;
- A path which would allow walking, cycling and disabled access along the full length of the route;
- Open a path which would allow walking, cycling, horse riding and disabled access along the full length of the route.

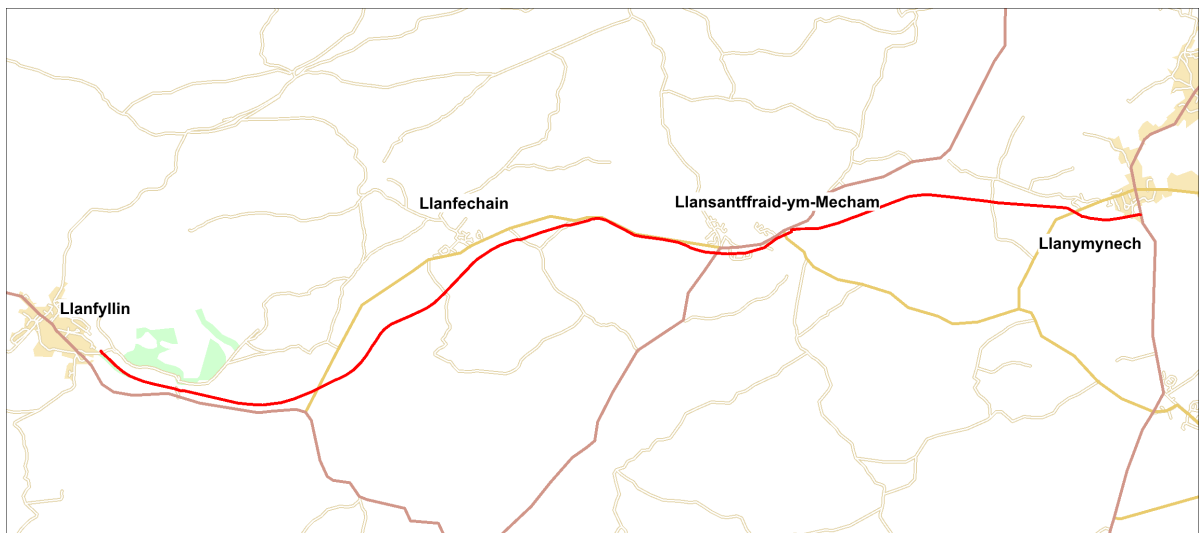


Figure 3.1 – Location plan showing the alignment of the disused railway line.

3.4 From looking at the engineering issues a cost estimate has been made based on a cost per metre for the path plus other features such as bridges and design & management. The construction cost for the highest level option (walking, cycling, horse access & disabled access) of the whole route (13km/8mile) is estimated at **£3,258,524 (plus VAT)**. Whilst

these costs do at first seem high it should be noted that this is for a completed route constructed to current design standards and there are a number of options available to construct the route in stages, potentially using volunteers on some sections and then improve the standards as the project develops. Whilst these costs may show that the development of this route is not feasible, when considering the overall costs of associated benefits (see Section 5), this does not take into account the desire from the local communities to open up this facility and re-connect these settlements. If the will of the communities involved is determined to develop this route then a staged approach to land negotiations and fund assembly does make the project viable.

- 3.5 In order to construct a route from Llanfyllin to Llanymynech it would be almost impossible to get all the land acquisitions, planning, detailed design and funding in place as one program. Therefore it is suggested that the route is looked at in more manageable steps. These steps are suggested along with interim alternative routes on quiet roads.
- 3.6 To follow the alignment of the disused railway to form a walking and cycling route faces many challenges and a phased approach needs to be considered for the routes development. Existing quiet lanes from Llanfyllin to Llanfechain present an alternative which makes the development of the disused railway alignment route in this area less pressing. As suggested in the study, the first section for detailed development should be between Llanfechain and Llansantffraid. Once complete then an almost continuous route will exist between Llanfyllin and Llansantffraid if the quiet alternative lanes are used.
- 3.7 It will be important to engage with Powys County Council with regards to the suggested highway sections in Llanfechain and especially in Llansantffraid where we have not identified an alternative to the main A493. The section between Llansantffraid and Carreghofa represents a huge challenge but when completed will allow walkers, cyclists and horse riders a unique view into the countryside.

MontytraX Circular Cycle Route

- 3.8 The MontytraX Circular Cycle Route is aimed at the leisure cyclist market who want to tour the area and see key destinations or landscapes as part of the journey. It is not intended as an 'active travel' route that could be used for utility type cycle trips.
- 3.9 It is feasible to develop the MontytraX Circular Cycle Route within a fairly short timeframe as the route is all on road and no serious barriers have been raised with any potential partners. A number of the key tasks could begin in the short term to agree the final route proposal and investigate potential funding sources.
- 3.10 Following the initial feedback from Powys CC Highway and the Welsh Government over the trunk road section of the proposed route, ongoing

discussions should continue at the earliest stage if the project is to move forward.

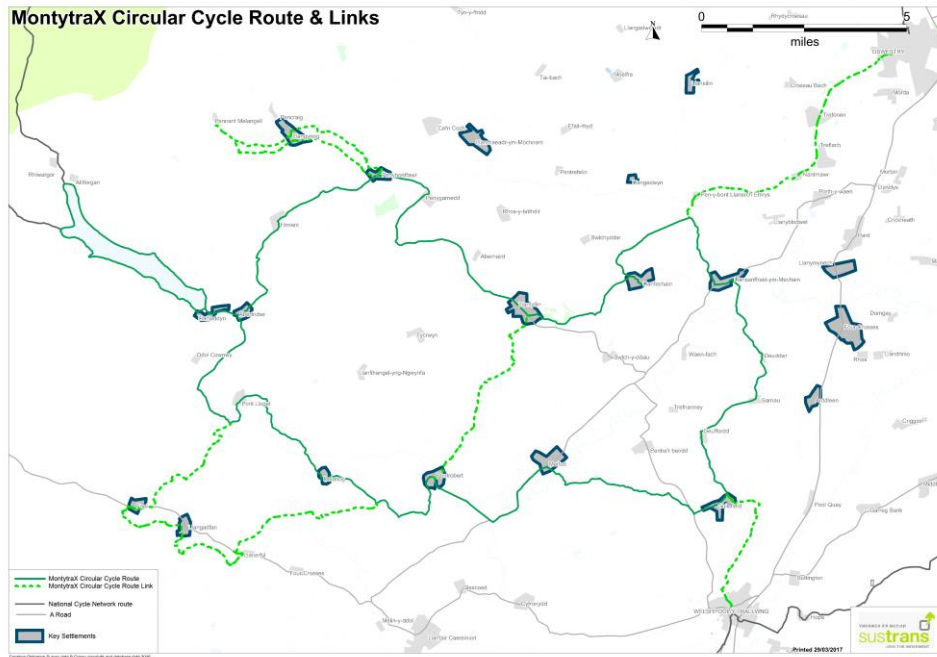


Figure 3.2 – Overview plan of Circular Cycle Route

- 3.11 A marketing and promotional package for the Circular Cycle Route should be agreed at an early stage, possibly as part of a wider MontytraX marketing exercise, as this will help with the offer of the route and help to market it at its specific audience.
- 3.12 At this stage the proposed project cost to develop the Circular Cycle Route are **£21,530 + VAT**. This cost includes an allowance for developing the final alignment and obtaining consents as well as the complete signing of the route. It does not include any marketing or promotional costs at this stage as the MontytraX group would need to decide if a sellable map was produced or a free leaflet & map was preferred. An overall marketing plan for the complete MontytraX project could also be developed with the separate projects then jointly promoted as part of this central plan.

Community Walks

- 3.13 The aim of this study was to provide further details of the proposed Community Walks in the selected settlements (Banwy - Llangadfan & Foel; Guilsfield; Llanfyllin & Llanfechain; Llanymynech; and Llangynog) as well as any other issues that needed to be taken into account. The proposed Community Walks can then be used to move forward the proposal by the MontytraX community group.
- 3.14 Following representations from the Guilsfield community it was agreed to postpone the Community Walks element in that area and an outline study

would be carried out on a potential circular shared use walking & cycling route. This was carried out and a small separate study was produced.

- 3.15 Overall it is feasible to develop the MontytraX Community Walks within a fairly short timeframe as they all utilise existing rights of way. A number of the Key tasks could begin in the short term to agree the final route proposals and investigate potential funding sources.
- 3.16 There is a large amount of support in each community for the walks and harnessing this support will strengthen the overall MontytraX group as real projects come forward.

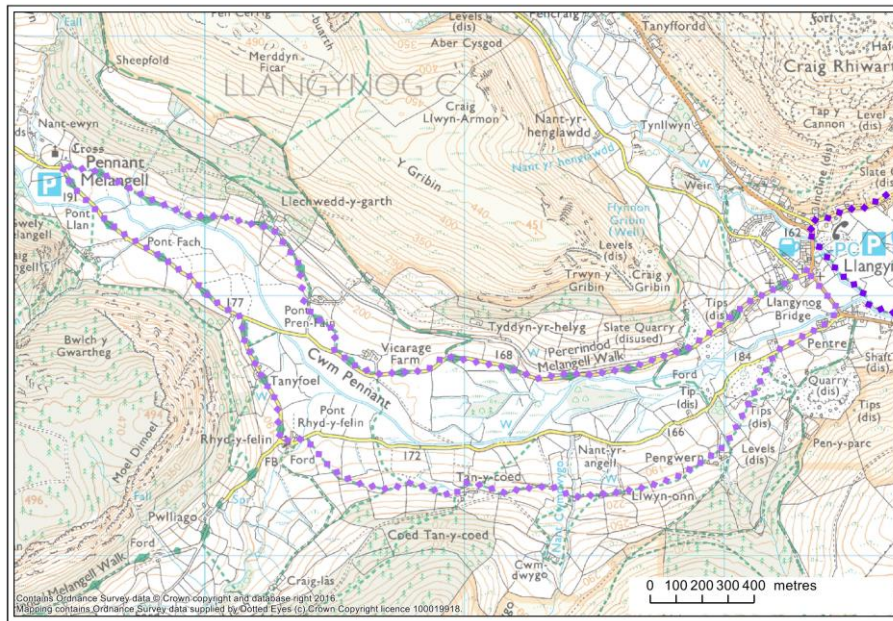


Figure 3.3 – Example of Community Walks route (Llangynog – Loop 2 walk)

- 3.17 At this stage the proposed project cost to develop the four Community Walks, including producing associated leaflets & map are **£29,068 + VAT**. This cost includes an allowance for path upgrades and improved signage, though there is the potential to reduce this costs using volunteers. An overall marketing plan for the complete MontytraX project could also be developed with the separate projects then jointly promoted as part of this central plan.
- 3.18 Volunteers could be used to map out the detailed route alignments and schedules of potential improvements. This could reduce the overall costs of the project and the time could be used as match funding for any funding bids. Engaging with the Powys CC Community Delivery project is also recommended to understand how that project has improved and maintained public rights of way.

Guilfield

- 3.19 As noted in 3.14, a separate study was proposed for Guilfield and overall it is feasible to develop a circular walking and cycling route on the edge of the Guilfield community. Breaking the route down into deliverable sections will assist in moving the project forward in stages and help to maintain the support from the local community. It has been recommended that sections of the existing footway within Guilfield are also upgraded as part of the proposals, though these can be delayed until the new sections of route are completed.

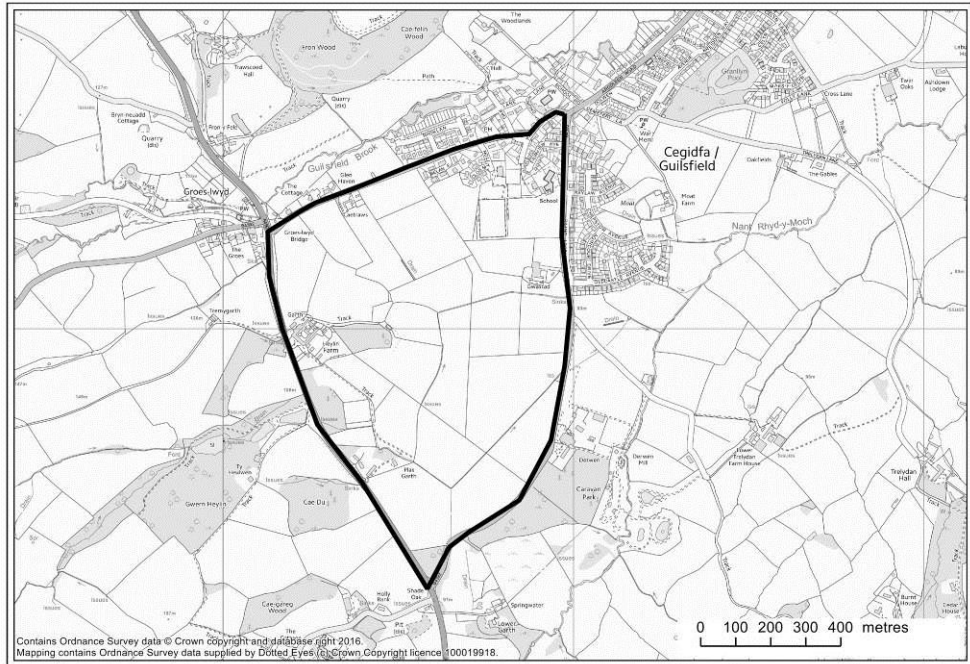


Figure 3.4 – Overview of Guilfield study area and proposed route

- 3.20 At over £500,000 the complete scheme costs may seem high for a project of this scale but the study provides a breakdown of some key sections of the route that could be developed in the short term or via third party planning gain. The study also provides guidance on the next stages that the community can work through to move the project forward.
- 3.21 Ownership of the project should be discussed with the Community Council so that suitable agreements can be put in place prior to funding and land negotiations being developed. The County Council should be kept informed of all developments as there may be opportunities for further support as things develop.

4 ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL - MOBILITY, SIGHT AND WELSH LANGUAGE

Introduction

- 4.1 The study asked for recommendations regarding accessibility for all - mobility, sight and welsh language, to be included and these have been included in the project (sub) studies where relevant

It should be noted that whilst the project (sub) studies have aimed to ensure accessibility for all is considered, due to the nature of this study, purely feasibility at this stage, then a number of these issues will need to be considered further in the pre-works or development phase.

Mobility

- 4.2 Some of the overall aims of this project are to increase usage and access to this part of the county. The intention is to deliver this by improving existing and opening up new walking, cycling and horse-riding routes and increased mobility must be considered at all stages as the projects develop.
- 4.3 It must be noted that the rural and challenging nature of the existing environment will be a barrier to the mobility of some users, but improved access points on the walks and the use of unrestrictive access barriers on the Llanfyllin Branch shared use path will all help to increase access.
- 4.4 The development of the Llanfyllin Branch shared use path is likely to be a very long process and at first the route may be opened up for able bodied people as funding and resources allow. Overtime the route can be improved and an all-inclusive trail can be developed and promoted.
- 4.5 The proposed Circular Cycle Route uses the existing road network which is challenging in a number of locations due to the topography of the area. It will be vital that in any proposed marketing materials the challenging nature of the route is included so that people who are novices or unable to ride this type of route are aware that this may not be for them.
- 4.6 Some of the proposed Community Walks have already been upgraded with gates (as opposed to stiles) and improved access points, but the nature of the majority of the routes is to utilise existing rural public rights of way. This may prove to be a barrier to some users, but overall the walks aim to improve access which should in turn improve how people can use the routes.

Sight

- 4.7 Again it must be noted that the existing environment may be an issue to some people with partial or complete sight loss. As the projects move forward every effort must be made to be as inclusive as possible as

routes are opened up and promoted. Some of the issues noted under the Mobility section are also relevant, but any marketing materials should be produced for people with sight loss where possible.

Welsh Language

- 4.8 Sustrans operates in Wales using two languages. Sustrans' Welsh Language Scheme forms part of our commitment to high quality bilingual communications within Wales, and has been developed to enable Sustrans Cymru to make sustained progress towards its objectives.
- 4.9 As this study is a technical document, and there was no specification within the project brief to produce a bilingual document, this it has been prepared in a single language.
- 4.10 As the MontytraX projects move forward to the delivery phase and a marketing & promotional plan is developed it would be recommended that:
- bilingual project marketing materials are produced
 - ensuring social media promotion is bilingual wherever possible
 - bilingual publicity materials are provided and notices of any public meetings.

It should be noted that some of the above is already in place and the MontytraX promotional flyer has been produced bilingually and the project team is working with Menter Maldwyn (<http://www.mentrauiath-gogledd.com/eng/webyep/maldwyn.php>)

5 ADDING VALUE

Introduction

- 5.1 The project specification asked the study to clarify how the ‘network could add value to local identity and natural and cultural resources’.

All the elements of the MontytraX projects should be backed up with a marketing and promotional offer and a number of examples were included within the Stage 1 study. Any promotional materials can include details on what the wider area has to offer so as to spread the benefits across the region.

Existing information, such as the work of the Llanfyllin Civic Society or the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Area, should be shared within any new projects marketing material to open up this information to a wider audience.

- 5.2 As and when the Llanfyllin Branch Line is opened up, information boards detailing the local identity, heritage and ecological value of the area can be included. There may even be opportunities to improve the ecological value of some sections of the disused railway and further details have been included within the Ecological Desk Study.

Any map or website associated with the Circular Cycle Route can include information on the local area as well as highlight key destinations and points of interest along the route. The community group should continue to work with local interest groups and the community councils, as well as Powys CC Tourism department, to widen the appeal of the projects at every opportunity and maximise the potential benefits.

Business Case

- 5.3 As part of the Phase 2 study a Business Case Assessment has been carried out. The full report is included as a separate document with an overview provided below.

Economic benefits of the MontytraX Initiative

The economic benefits of the MontytraX initiative outlined in this document have been appraised on the basis of expected annual cyclist and pedestrian usage on the MontytraX Circular Cycle Route and Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use path after the entirety of both routes have been constructed. The economic benefits (as per WebTAG) of this annual usage have been appraised as if observed for the next 30 years (i.e. a 30-year appraisal period has been used). The recreational expenditure benefits are calculated as an estimate of annual expenditure.

All estimates of cyclist and pedestrian usage are provided as an annual number of trips observed on either the MontytraX Circular Route or the

Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use path. These Annual Usage Estimates (AUEs) have been drawn from comparable data at baseline, selected according to geographic characteristics and infrastructure type. The post-construction usage estimates have been developed using evidence from the Infrastructure Impact Tool (IIT) on the basis of an annual number of trips.

When appraising a post-construction scenario where the MontytraX Circular Cycle Route sees a 19% increase in cyclist trips and the Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use path sees a 173% increase in cycling and 58% increase in walking trips above baseline:

- The combined economic benefits of both route developments over a 30 year period are **£2,574,803**, inclusive of **£702,000** health-related economic benefits.
- The estimated tourism-related economic benefits of developing both routes is **£200,051** per year with **2.9 FTE** jobs supported. This includes **£120,117** of annual expenditure by recreational cyclists. These tourism-related benefits are additional to the combined economic benefits.

Llanfyllin Branch Shared Use Path

- It is estimated that every year **8,797** cycling trips and **18,177** pedestrian trips could be occurring on the route, given an estimate of usage relevant to the path using three comparable railway path sites.
- The Infrastructure Investment Tool (IIT) suggests that cycling usage on the route will increase by **173%** to **24,022 cycling trips per year** if the complete route is constructed. A case study suggests that pedestrian usage will increase by **58%** to **28,720 pedestrian trips per year**.
- For the scenario where cycle usage increases by 173% and pedestrian usage increases by 58%, the health-related economic benefits are estimated to be **£662,000** over a 30-year appraisal period.
- In the 173% cyclist increase and 58% pedestrian increase scenario, the economic benefits of this walking and cycling usage are estimated as **£2,026,301** over a 30-year appraisal period.

MontytraX Circular Cycle Route

- An estimate of baseline usage that is relevant to the MontytraX Circular Cycle Route has been developed from five comparable cycle path data sites. This estimate of current usage is **16,648** cycling trips per year. The pedestrian usage of this route is expected to be negligible.
- The IIT suggests that cycling usage on the route will increase by **19% above the estimated baseline** to **19,811** trips per year once the route has been developed, from pre to post intervention.

- For the scenario where cycling usage increases by 19%, the estimated health-related economic benefits are **£40,000**.
- For a 19% increase in cycling trips above baseline levels, the estimated economic benefits of the MontytraX Circular Cycle Route are **£548,502**.

6 FUNDING & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Introduction

- 6.1 This section explores potential funding opportunities that may be available to the MontytraX project group as well as issues and recommendations for Project Management as the schemes develop.

Funding

- 6.2 There are a number of potential funding streams available for the project to move forward which include:

Funder: Visit Wales

Fund: Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF)

The RTEF fund's purpose is to contribute to the delivery of a 10% growth target set out in the Tourism strategy 'Partnership for Growth' and is aimed at projects that:

- Support destinations across Wales to promote and develop distinctive, high quality visitor destinations through the delivery of their destination management plans.
- Enable destinations to maximize the benefits from aligning with Visit Wales' product-led thematic year approach.

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/dmwales/support/regional-tourism-engagement-fund-rtef>

Funder: Visit Wales

Fund: Tourism Product Innovation Fund (TPIF)

The purpose of the TPIF fund is to work with tourism sector partners across Wales to deliver the 10% growth target set out in the tourism strategy. The fund aims to encourage closer joint working between tourism consortia, partnerships and trade groups and to develop and improve the product offer to visitors which will benefit the tourism sector, local communities and critically, help to grow the tourism economy in a sustainable way.

By working together in a co-ordinated way, trade partners will be able to contribute to the delivery of the action plan external link, a framework for action – the 3 year plan to deliver the Strategy, and help grow the value of tourism, stimulating local jobs and ensuring the sustainability of the sector in Wales. Closer collaborative working will also enable partners in the sector to explore new ways, at local, regional and national levels in Wales.

Project proposals will need to:

- develop or enhance tourism products that have been identified as priorities within the tourism strategy and action plan

- be in line with Visit Wales’ thematic ‘Years of Experience’ approach
- meet the needs of one or more of Visit Wales’ target market segments
- demonstrate the ability to have an impact in the market place over a longer period of time

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/dmwales/support/tourism-product-innovation-fund-tpif>

Funder: Welsh Government

Fund: Various

Recommend signing up to a range of Welsh Government newsletter to keep up to date about the available funds.

<http://gov.wales/news-alerts/?lang=en>

Funder: WEFO / Welsh Government Rural Affairs. Regional Development Plan

Fund: Sub measure 7. Infrastructure funding

Potentially there could be additional funding in the Rural Communities Development Plan fund, which can cover infrastructure to support tourism.

<http://govhttp://wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/wales-rural-development-programme-2014-2020/rural-community-development-fund/?lang=en>

Funder: Arwain

Fund: Leader

Potential for further development funding to prepare projects for delivery stage:

<http://www.arwain.wales/>

Funder: Local Authorities (Powys CC)

Fund: Rights of way Improvement Plans

This is an annual Welsh Government grant provided to LA’s for the implementation of their Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

<http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/countryside-outdoors/footpaths-bridleways-and-other-public-rights-of-way/rights-of-way-improvement-plan/>

Funder: Local Authorities (Powys CC)

Fund: Local Transport Funds (3 x funding streams)

Annual Welsh Government funding for local transport schemes. Llanfyllin has gained from Safe Routes in Communities grant. Most funds directed towards active travel but some potential in key settlements.

Would need to work in partnership with Powys CC as only LA's are able to bid for funding:

<http://gov.wales/topics/transport/planning-strategies/local-transport/local-transport-fund/?lang=en>

Funder: Big Lottery Fund

Fund: People and Places

Funding capital and revenue projects that encourage co-ordinated action by people who want to make their communities better places to live.

<https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/funding-finder>

Funder: Trust Funding website

Fund: Various

This website can be used to search for trust funding using a range of filters:

<http://www.trustfunding.org.uk/search.aspx>

Funder: Charities Commission website

Fund: Various

This website can be used to search for trust funding using a range of filters

<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/ShowCharity/RegisterOfCharities/AdvancedSearch.aspx>

Funder: People's Health Trust

Fund: Active Communities

Active Communities is a funding programme for community groups and not-for-profit organisations, with an income of less than £350,000 a year or an average of £350,000 over two years, seeking investment of between £5,000 and £50,000 for projects lasting up to two years. We're looking for small and local projects, genuinely designed and run by local people. By small, we mean just a small group of people on an estate, in a few streets or villages.

<http://www.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk>

Funder: Railway Heritage Trust

Fund: Grant

Have been known to support projects on disused rail lines, especially where old structures are being brought back into use.

<http://railwayheritagetrust.co.uk/>

Funder: Heritage Lottery Fund

Fund: Grant

From archaeology, to historic parks including precious memories and rare wildlife. HLF use money raised by National Lottery players to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about. Has funded a number of disused railway based projects, especially structural based schemes.

<https://www.hlf.org.uk/>

- 6.3 Further discussions should take place between representatives of the MontytraX group and funding contacts so try and find out at the earliest opportunity what funds may be suitable for the project. Powys CC and Arwain fund managers should also be updated on how the project develops so that any opportunities for funding to take forward the separate schemes can be maximised.
- 6.4 The Circular Cycle Route and Community Walks projects could be developed and delivered fairly easily if funding was secured. As the Llanfyllin Branch Line shared use path requires land assembly and a number of consents to be obtained prior to any construction work stating, it is recommended that further development funding is secured as the next stage. The Guilsfield project is to be progressed locally and further options for that scheme are included within its study

Project Management

- 6.5 The ideal scenario for the project would be to secure further development funding to appoint a Project Manager who could assist with the next stages of the project and prepare a funding bid.
- 6.6 Sustrans has previously prepared a Walking & Cycling Network Development Guide that provides further information on areas to consider and tasks to be carried out as projects such as this move forward. A full copy of the document is included in Appendix C.

7 SIMILAR PROJECTS

Introduction

- 7.1 Information on similar projects to be developed by the MontytraX group will provide useful contacts and learning opportunities as the project moves forward. Example projects include community led initiatives as well as partnership arrangements with community and county councils.

Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path

- 7.2 The Burtonport Old Railway Walk project from Donegal is a good example of a community led greenway initiative on a disused railway. The group did all the fundraising and land negotiations, used local contractors and manage/maintain the path themselves (they sell Friends of the Path membership cards to go towards maintenance costs):

<https://www.facebook.com/Burtonport-Old-Railway-Walk-Siuloid-An-Sean-Bhothar-Iarainn-269487733102487/>

- 7.3 The Aln Valley Railway Trust are working with Sustrans and Northumberland CC on reopening an old line for both a heritage railway and adjacent cycle path:

<http://www.alnvalleyrailway.co.uk/>

- 7.4 The Peckham Coalline is a major project run by community members who came together and ran a successful crowd-funding campaign to fund a feasibility study for their project:

<http://peckhamcoalline.strikingly.com/>

- 7.5 The Wakefield District Cycle Forum (the local cycle campaign group including Sustrans volunteers) have developed a some greenway routes in their area:

<http://www.cycling-wakefield.org.uk/>

- 7.6 The Peak Pedals Group delivered the new walking and cycling trails, which included the Monsal Trail, in partnership with Derbyshire CC:

http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/cycling/pedal_peak/default.asp?VD=pedalpeak

- 7.7 The Frome Missing Links project helped to connect an existing railway path into the main community:

<https://fromesmissinglinks.org.uk/>

- 7.8 The Steam Coast Trail is an ongoing project to build a network of multi-user paths around West Somerset:

<http://www.steamcoasttrail.org/>

MontytraX Circular Cycle Route

7.9 The **Radnor Ring, National Route 825**, is almost a circular cycle route around the old county of Radnorshire in south Powys. The route follows a mixture of country lanes, river valleys, traffic-free trails and mountain roads, offering unparalleled views of some of Mid Wales' most spectacular scenery. The route was known as a 'regional cycle route' until 2012 when the route was resigned as part of the NCN and a new map published. The route is a challenging ride and at 84 miles in length can be easily covered over 2 days or taken as a long circular day ride. There are a number of points of interest along the route to keep visitors in the area and these include the National Cycle Museum in Llandrindod Wells and the Offa's Dyke Centre in Knighton.

Whilst the route was developed by Powys CC in partnership with Sustrans, it is a successful example of a circular challenge route similar to the proposed MontytraX Circular Cycle Route. Additional information is available at

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/route/radnor-ring>

<http://www.midwalesmyway.com/cycling-0>

7.10 In 2011/12 the **Keep Wales Tidy - Green Links** project developed a network of routes around Holy Island (Holyhead and Holy Island, Anglesey). The majority of the routes used the existing highway network, though some traffic-free links were included where available. A network of routes was developed and signed throughout to provide a better product to the end user and to offer a variety of options. Additional options were provided that formed a wider network for the user, enabling them to explore the area and access the variety of local destinations

The main aim of the project was to increase opportunities for visitors and residents to access the area's outstanding countryside and coastline and generate economic benefits for tourist operators, as well as creating job opportunities and health benefits for local residents.

The project was led by Keep Wales Tidy and developed in partnership with the Isle of Anglesey CC who supported and approved the network. A similar proposal has been recommended for the Circular Cycle Route which will need to include Powys CC as the highway authority.

The project was part of a wider initiative that included bike hire and additional information is available at:

<http://www.cybi-bikes.co.uk/>

Community Walks

- 7.11 In the Stage 1 feasibility study the **Denbighshire CC Community Miles** project was used as an example of a successful project to open up a series of community based walks to link villages and other places of interest as well as providing circular routes in the area. A case study was provided by Denbighshire County Council's Countryside Services and this provides further information to build on. Additional information and contact details are available at:

<http://www.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk/community-miles/>

- 7.12 The '**Powys CC Public Rights of Way Community Delivery Project**' is currently being set up and further details are included within Section 9 below. This project will be very relevant to the MontytraX project as it sits within the same county and is very close in geographical terms. On-going dialogue between the group and the Powys CC Countryside Access Officer, as well as the Community Delivery Project Officer, is recommended to maximise the benefits for both projects.

Contact Details

- 7.13 A number of personal contact details associated with the above examples are available, but have not been included within this main report. These can be provided to the MontytraX project group as required.

8 VOLUNTEERS

Introduction

- 8.1 The feasibility study asked ‘how volunteers are to be identified within the community and trained’ by the MontytraX community group ‘to undertake practical works on public rights of way that have been deemed to be important to the community.’ The same approach could be taken for any permissive routes that are developed as part of the project.

Sustrans has an established volunteer ranger programme which involves over 350 volunteers in 22 groups across Wales monitoring and maintaining 1400 miles of routes. The organisation has experience of engaging with community groups, individuals and establishing volunteer groups to undertake maintenance of routes.

- 8.2 The study also asked ‘what liaison there would be between the Community Council and County Council to maintain records and good lines of communication.’

At this stage Community Council’s are not directly involved with the MontytraX project at a delivery stage but their representatives are part of the Steering Group and feeding into the project. The Powys CC have also been involved with the Steering Group but are not members and it is worth noting that a number of Powys CC departments could be involved in the overall project.

Sustrans Approach

- 8.3 In addition to community engagement as noted above Sustrans provides training on ‘How to organise’ a workday as well as providing support to risk assess workdays and ensure they are undertaken safely.

For a new route a number of methods can be used to engage with the local community:

- Local Residents Groups
- Advertising to existing groups such as environmental and community focused groups
- Recruiting volunteers through the areas Volunteer Centre under the umbrella of the WCVA
- Online and using social media including the Volunteer Wales recruitment website
- Advertising activities using signage placed on the route
- Engaging with local employers as part of their corporate social responsibilities.

- 8.4 Sustrans oversees hundreds of workdays every year and the safety of the public and volunteers during these workdays is paramount. A training course has been established to train volunteers on how to plan, risk assess and manage a successful workday. A training hand book has

been created as well as guidance notes for specific tasks and toolbox talks for safety briefings.

For reporting problems with routes a defect report form can be used; examples of issues that might be reported include signing, vegetation, drainage, vandalism and surface problems.

The risk assessment and planning document should be used to record the contact details of participants, this information can be used for the reporting on the number of participants involved in workdays but other methods can be used if equality data is required.

A number of standard documents have been prepared by Sustrans as the volunteer programme has been developed and copies of the following are included within the Appendices:

- Sustrans Safeguarding Guidance
- Sustrans Risk Assessment
- Sustrans Toolbox Talk Example
- Sustrans Defect Report Form
- Sustrans Organising a Workday Handbook

Powys County Council Approach

8.5 Powys CC are in the process of setting up a new project based around the public rights of way network and Town & Community Councils. Further details are included in Section 9 below and lessons learnt from this project will be useful for the MontytraX project as it moves forward.

9 POWYS CC PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY SPECIFICATIONS

Introduction

- 9.1 A number of detailed project specifications were included within the Phase 2 feasibility study brief which had been included by Powys CC's Countryside Access Officer and relate to Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network.

The majority of the points raised relate to the statutory duties involved with PRoW and how County Councils and Community Councils may be effected by them.

The issued raised by these specifications and statements have been considered throughout the study where they effect each particular work area. Due to the inclusion of the points within the original brief it was felt that an overview should also be included.

Project Specifications

- 9.2 The study specification stated that 'The works will be to replace and maintain structures (stiles and gates) and to ensure the route is open and available. It will not be to open "virgin" paths, but rather keep paths open on what has already received work. The structures are the responsibility of the landholder, so this is not statutory. However, the Council is obliged to contribute 25 per cent towards maintenance and repairs for structures under s.146 Highways Act 1980. Considering this work is undertaken by volunteers and the materials are being provided, then this obligation is more than met.

Whilst the above needs to be considered with both the Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path, that is crossed by a number of PRoW, and the Community Walks, that are all based on PRoW, one of the main elements of this study is to investigate the feasibility of opening a 'virgin' path along the disused railway.

It is understood that at present local authorities are under an immense pressure to reduce overall costs and the PRoW network is feeling this more than some other areas. Similar responses have been received from Powys CC Highways on the development and management of the disused railway path and so as part of this study the options for the community, Town & Community Councils or community groups, to own, manage and maintain any new routes has been included within the Llanfyllin Branch Railway Shared Use Path study.

- 9.3 The study specification went on to state that 'There is a potential concern about non-Powys volunteers undertaking works on public rights of way without the Council's knowledge. Town and Community Councils of course have a power, under s.43 Highways Act 1980 if they wished to have volunteers undertaking works on their behalf, but it is a question of how this power is exercised that needs to be explored.'

Powys CC are in the process of setting up a Community Delivery project that will work with the PRow team and local Town & Community Councils and volunteers and this project will be useful to explore the above issues further and agree suitable working arrangements which can then be shared across the county. Further details are included below.

Section 8 has provided details of how Sustrans volunteer ranger programme has worked with volunteers on both its own land as well as that managed by local authorities. The lessons learnt from that programme and the documents included will be useful in preparing an agreed method of work and communication between the County Council and any volunteer community groups.

- 9.4 The study specification also stated that ‘Any statutory work that will be required can only be undertaken by the Council as part of this project as statutory work cannot be included. However, the Community Council can otherwise undertake statutory work and therefore how the Community Council takes this on after the project and continue doing so needs to be explored. The Council of course has duties with regard to sustainable management of its functions and duties, and this questions needs to be asked. Any work undertaken by the Council for this project would not receive special treatment and would not be prioritized above normal working practices. Consideration needs to be given as to how effective the volunteers would be in opening up public rights of way by only spending money on non-statutory works as part of this project?’

Working methods trialled and agreed as part of the Community Delivery project will be beneficial in answering some of the issues raised above and it is recommended that the MontytraX steering group continue to liaise with the Countryside Access Officer and the Community Delivery project officer.

Some of the more project specific details relating to the PRow network could be developed by the MontytraX project as funding allows. Localised issues that have been raised by the steering group and fed into this study could also be put forward as part of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultation and RoWIP2 development. Again the MontytraX steering group should continue to liaise with the Countryside Access Officer on this issue.

Powys CC Public Rights of Way Community Delivery Project

- 9.5 Powys CC are in the process of setting up a Community Delivery project which has received funding via the Rural Development Plan and is based around the PRow network.

The Vale of Montgomery project will be based around the Rural Cluster Group, Montgomery Town Council and the eight surrounding Community Councils. It will have a dedicated project officer and will look at opportunities to:

- Prioritise Public Rights of Way – following consultation with the community
- Open up existing Public Rights of Way – that have been blocked or become overgrown
- Maintain the Public Rights of Way – using volunteers trained and supported by the County Council

This project will be useful to trial and agree what procedures are needed for volunteer and community groups to prioritise the PRow they see as important to their area, work with the County Council on an action plan and then implement and maintain any improvements in the longer term. As noted above it is recommended that the MontytraX steering group continue to liaise with the Countryside Access Officer and the Community Delivery project officer as this interesting project moves forward.

10 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The proposal to develop the three main projects under the MontytraX banner is a bold initiative, with costs expected to be over £3.5 million + VAT. If the Guilsfield scheme is included as part of this project then the overall costs will be over £4 million + VAT.
- 10.2 All projects are feasible in terms of delivery, though the biggest issue to overcome will be securing suitable funding, and land assembly for the Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path.
- 10.3 The Circular Cycle Route and Community Walks projects could be developed on a much quicker timescale and these should be moved forward for delivery (including a promotional & marketing package) in the first instance as funding allows.
- 10.4 The MontytraX project team should continue to build on the relationships with landowners along the Llanfyllin Branch Line and start to progress detailed discussions with the prioritised sections. Additional development funding should be investigated, and secured, so that land agreements and consents can start to be put into place and outline designs and detailed costs can be progressed.
- 10.5 The additional points raised within the separate project studies should also be taken into account so that these continue to move forward and maximise any opportunities that may arise in terms of funding or resource support.
- 10.6 Relationships with Powys CC and other key stakeholders should be kept open and developed as the projects move forward. There are a number of different departments in PCC who have an interest in this project and all should be informed of progress, including any local political contacts.
- 10.7 The overall benefits to the communities involved, both in financial as well as social terms, should be shared with the wider communities so as to engage a wider audience and gain additional support from an early stage.

Appendix A

MontytraX – Phase 2 Study – Project Specification for Tender Brief

Phase 2 MontytraX Feasibility Study

MontytraX is a community supported project that aims to facilitate a feasibility study into the development of:

- 1) An active travel and leisure network in North Montgomeryshire using where possible old railway lines, back roads, public rights of way, forestry tracks and road verges in order to provide a viable north Montgomeryshire route linking local participating communities to existing Sustrans and other routes to facilitate cycling and walking into and through the area both for recreation and non-vehicular access.
- 2) Local communities cycling and walking routes

In September 2016, Sustrans was commissioned to provide information that would help identify potential routes for future development and linkages with other tourism assets in the study area.

The project had the following objectives:

- To map existing provision of walking and cycle routes across the north Powys region (Montgomeryshire), including horse riding where possible.
- To map potential provision of walking and cycle routes across the north Powys region (Montgomeryshire), including horse riding where possible.
- To identify walking and cycle related tourism offer, including horse riding where possible.
- To note opportunities for circular routes, based on the above, with good access and economic impact.

More specific geographical areas of the project include Llanfyllin, connections to the canal at Carreghofa, the cycling destinations of Llangynog and Llanwddyn through Bannw to Guilsfield.

The following outputs will be delivered as part of this project:

- Written report; mapped related tourism offer; mapped existing & potential routes
- Walking and Cycle routes, including horse riding where possible, of all types, categorised according to suitability for different audiences (e.g., traffic free, family friendly, mountain biking, road cycling, long distance linear, circular etc.)
- Links to Walking and Cycle focused amenities
- Links to communities
- Annotated electronic or paper maps for project use

The following route options are recommended by Sustrans to be taken forward into the Stage 2 Feasibility Study:

1) Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path

There is a great deal of support in the Llanfyllin and Llanfechain areas to develop a shared use path along the line of the disused Llanfyllin Branch railway. Initial contact has been made with a number of the landowners along the railway and this support, along with the support of the steering group, should be maximised at this stage.

2) MontytraX Circular Cycle Route

The MontytraX Circular Cycle Route has the potential to be an 'easy win' for the steering group and provide a springboard for additional projects within the area. Further work is required to select a preferred route alignment which could include sections already highlighted by the Offa's Dyke Cycle Route study and connect to the National Cycle Network and other existing routes to extend the benefits.

3) Community Walks

The Community Walks programme (perhaps branded with a MontytraX related name) could be rolled out first in the most supportive communities which include:

- Banwy (Llangadfan & Foel)
- Guilsfield
- Llanfyllin & Llanfechain
- Llanymynech
- Llangynog

Project Specifications of the MontytraX Feasibility Study Phase 2

To undertake a Feasibility Study in the following three areas, ensuring that the studies on each will ensure the projects will be ready to proceed to apply for funding:

1) Llanfyllin Branch Line Shared Use Path

2) MontytraX Circular Cycle Route

3) Community Walks

1) It will clarify the costing of the different parts of the route studied - eg accessing land, ensuring new routes are legally available (i.e non-permissive access)- improving track surfaces etc, and cost of keeping it in good working order after the project. We would want to know costs of management and supervision of the project and any hidden costs we would not be aware of.

2) It will consult with members of the local community where relevant, to ensure the feasibility study outcome takes into account concerns, obstacles, good local knowledge and reasonable aspirations for the area.

3) It will need to ensure the study includes recommendations regarding accessibility for all - mobility, sight and welsh language.

4) It will clarify how the network could add value to local identity and natural and cultural resources.

5) It will identify where the project will go after the feasibility
- incorporate research into future funding opportunities
- advice on how to ensure the project can be managed well so that it is sustainable practically

6) Provide information of successful similar projects to gain advice and support. This would provide local communities with the information required on how to develop and manage the part of the route they are responsible for to ensure MontytraX is sustainable

7) The feasibility should include how volunteers are to be identified within the community and trained by the Community to undertake practical works on public rights of way that have been deemed to be

important to the community. The feasibility should include what liaison there would be between the Community Council and County Council to maintain records and good lines of communication.

8) The works will be to replace and maintain structures (stiles and gates) and to ensure the route is open and available. It will not be to open "virgin" paths, but rather keep paths open on what has already received work. The structures are the responsibility of the landholder, so this is not statutory. However, the Council is obliged to contribute 25 per cent towards maintenance and repairs for structures under s.146 Highways Act 1980. Considering this work is undertaken by volunteers and the materials are being provided, then this obligation is more than met.

9) There is a potential concern about non-Powys volunteers undertaking works on public rights of way without the Council's knowledge. Town and Community Councils of course have a power, under s.43 Highways Act 1980 if they wished to have volunteers undertaking works on their behalf, but it is a question of how this power is exercised that needs to be explored.

10) Any statutory work that will be required can only be undertaken by the Council as part of this project as statutory work cannot be included. However, the Community Council can otherwise undertake statutory work and therefore how the Community Council takes this on after the project and continue doing so needs to be explored. The Council of course has duties with regard to sustainable management of its functions and duties, and this questions needs to be asked. Any work undertaken by the Council for this project would not receive special treatment and would not be prioritized above normal working practices. Consideration needs to be given as to how effective the volunteers would be in opening up public rights of way by only spending money on non-statutory works as part of this project?

11) Finally produce a document which will be made public and would be able to be used for raising sponsors and financial backing with advice, if not practical support.

Appendix B

Sustrans Volunteer Documents

Due to the size of some of these documents they have been attached as standalone files:

B1 - Sustrans Safeguarding Guidance

B2 - Sustrans Risk Assessment

B3 - Sustrans Toolbox Talk Example

B4 - Sustrans Defect Report Form

B5 - Sustrans Organising a Workday Handbook

Appendix C

Sustrans Walking & Cycling Network Development Guide

Walking and Cycling Network Development Guide

This guide is designed to help local communities through the process of developing a new route or network for walking and cycling. Sustrans has been helping to deliver the National Cycle Network for over 20 years, including greenways, long-distance touring routes, links to schools and urban streets. Over this period we have gained considerable experience across all aspects of walking and cycling strategies, network development, route design and community engagement. Our engineers have detailed knowledge of highway design and have worked on some of the most prominent cycling projects across the country.

Sustrans is a charity and our goal is to get more people walking and cycling rather than make a profit. As such we are able to offer very competitive rates and a service that is flexible and focussed on outcomes that can be delivered.

Local communities are well placed to make the initial case for a new route or network as they know the area and can gain support from local people and politicians. It does need motivation and commitment, with a typical project taking five years or longer from concept through to completion of construction. Sustrans can provide support through every stage of the process, with local communities taking the lead.

The main stages of walking and cycling route development are outlined below:

1. Identifying opportunities
2. Getting people involved
3. Feasibility study
4. Stakeholder engagement
5. Land negotiation
6. Preliminary design
7. Planning permission and other consents
8. Funding
9. Detailed design
10. Construction
11. Promotion
12. Maintenance

1. Identifying opportunities

Many people have a clear idea of their needs, maybe a route linking a village and the neighbouring town, or a network of safe routes around a school. In this case it is important to check local Council plans to see if there are existing proposals. It is also possible that a route is identified as part of the National Cycle Network, so do check with your local Sustrans Network Development Manager.

If the aims are wider, such as developing a network of routes across a whole town, Sustrans can help with the following:

- drafting an Active Travel Strategy

- data analysis to combine geographical information with population demographics, key trip generators, economic growth areas to determine likely route corridors
- assessment of existing routes
- production of maps and diagrams

2. Getting people involved

At a later stage it will be important to show local support for your project and it is never too early to get local people involved. You can team up with existing community groups or start your own – Sustrans can provide contacts with similar groups across the country, who may be able to help. We can also help in contacting local Sustrans volunteers – there are over 4000 across the UK.

Your local Councillors (Community, Town, County etc.), AMs and MPs can be very helpful and their support can be invaluable.

Starting an online petition is one way of gauging the level of support and for finding potential supporters. Social media is also a powerful way to “test the market” and find people who can help.

3. Feasibility study

Once the opportunity is identified, a technical study will be needed to determine the feasibility of the route or network and to give an indication of cost. This could be a very basic assessment of the route alignment, or a more detailed engineering study with technical drawings and schedule of costs. The feasibility study can include:

- Written foreword by influential supportive project partners;
- Introduction including history, aim and objectives;
- Other schemes and opportunities in the area;
- Local and government policies that support this project’s aims and objectives;
- Consultation undertaken;
- description of the current problems and obstacles to walking and cycling;
- An estimate of the likely number of users
- Potential economic benefits of the proposals;
- Route design, highway interventions, environment, structural liability and ecological issues;
- Land ownership
- Detailed maps and plans with proposal descriptions, cross-sections, alignment diagrams and photos.
- Technical information showing best practice from nationally gained knowledge;
- Estimated costs and identification of potential funding sources;
- Realistic programme of works and section phasing recommendations;

4. Stakeholder engagement

When the ideas are well developed and some work has been done on the technical feasibility of a proposal, it is important to contact those people and organisations with a direct interest in the route. This could include:

- Sustrans
- Landowners
- Local businesses
- Local walking, cycling and other interest groups in the area
- Local authorities
- Local politicians at all levels – Community Councillor to AM/MP
- Statutory interests such as Network Rail, Natural Resources Wales, CADW, Environment Agency, Natural England

We recommend open and transparent communication with all parties, clearly setting out the proposal and the benefits to the local community. You may encounter some opposition, but it is better to know about this at an early stage before too much time and money is spent on developing your preferred route. It may be better to present a number of options rather than a single route proposal, so that people can make an informed choice. Sustrans has a speciality team that can help with community engagement and organisation of consultation events.

It is very helpful if you can get the proposal adopted within any Local Plan’s and any other local strategy or planning documents. This will increase the chances of funding from future developments in the area. Neighbourhood Plans are becoming increasingly important, so look out for these and make sure your proposal is included.

5. Land negotiation

If your proposal crosses private land, you will need to obtain a formal agreement from the landowner. It helps to do some research before you approach the landowner; Sustrans can help and may be able to handle the negotiations for you. We have a wealth of experience having concluded over 850 land agreements. Some landowners will simply want fair compensation for the loss of land, while others may have good reasons for opposing any developments. Sustrans Design Manual has a chapter on “Land, Legal and Planning”, which is a useful starting point. This chapter includes detailed guidance on the legal options available.

Assembly of land to create the best possible route is the most important task in the development of traffic free routes. Negotiators must be patient and respond to the needs of the landowner. It can take more than one year to complete a legal agreement as land agents, valuers and solicitors maybe involved in addition to the landowner.

6. Preliminary design

This is the first stage in the design process, when a qualified engineer will need to draw up some initial plans and cross-sections prior to submitting a planning application. These plans will be detailed enough to assess the physical works required to build the route, but will not generally be sufficient for construction. Local authority engineers may want to comment on the designs, especially if they are being ask to maintain the route.

All stakeholders will need to be consulted and given the opportunity to make comments that can influence the designs. Public consultation is recommended, both online and through drop-in exhibitions. This is a valuable opportunity to

demonstrate public support for the route and to identify any concerns about the proposals. Sustrans has a large team of engineers, urban designers and technicians who can help prepare the designs and provide cost estimates.

7. Planning permission and other consents

Most traffic free routes away from the highway will need planning permission, but you should check with your local planning authority. They can also advise on the planning process, the documentation required and the planning fee. Preliminary designs at a scale of 1:2500 or larger will be required, along with a Design and Access Statement, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Flood Risk Assessment if necessary. Detailed advice is available in the Sustrans Design Manual.

You will need to allow three months and sometimes longer for an application to be determined. The planning authority may impose conditions that will need to be satisfied before work can start on site, such as further ecological surveys. Anyone can submit a planning application, but if you need expert help Sustrans could be the planning agent and submit on your behalf.

8. Funding

Dedicated funds for walking and cycling are limited, but there are occasional calls for schemes that you should look out for. In some cases, the money must be spent in a short time, so it is important to have secured all landowner agreements and planning permission before a funding bid is submitted. Local authorities may have their own funds, or may be able to apply on your behalf to their Local Enterprise Partnership or central government. Some organisations can provide lists of funding sources, which might include:

- Section 106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy
- National Park funding allocations
- Landfill Communities Fund
- A private deal with a landowner or developer
- Local transport funds
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- National government funds
- National Lottery
- Local trusts and charities
- Local Councillor discretionary funds

It can be difficult to secure funds for design and planning work, but these can be included in a larger application for capital funds to build the route. Design and supervision is a legitimate cost in any construction project.

As a registered charity, Sustrans is able to apply for most sources of funding and we have been successful in many hundreds of applications in our own right and on behalf of others. Our business development team may be able to assist with your funding strategy or with writing funding bids.

9. Detailed design

Detailed drawings and cross-sections, typically at a scale of 1:500 will be needed to instruct contractors and to gain approval from local authorities. These drawings will include all the details of construction method, materials, earthworks, drainage, fencing and access controls needed to build the route. Sustrans engineers and designers have designed hundreds of walking and cycling routes, including bridges, tunnels, earthwork ramps and many miles of paths, so we will be pleased to assist.

10. Construction

It may be useful to approach contractors for a quote prior to submitting a funding application, so that you have a better idea of likely costs. They are generally willing to quote against a preliminary design, but the more details you have the better. You should always allow a generous contingency of 20% or more, because there will inevitably be unforeseen circumstances once works start on site. You will need to include VAT in your budgets.

Most funders will require a competitive tender process with at least three quotes and this is a sensible precaution in any event, to ensure that good value for money is obtained. An engineer with experience of contract management will be needed to lead the tender process and to prepare suitable contract documents. Sustrans has more than 20 years' experience in dealing with specialist contractors and can help with the procurement process.

The contractor will be asked to provide a construction programme and duration for the works. There may be seasonal or ecological constraints that will affect start times, but you will need to allow a minimum of three months to appoint the contractor and allow them to mobilise. Frequent supervision of the works is needed to ensure that the path is built to the appropriate standard and the correct materials are used. Landowner and other stakeholders will need to be informed as work progresses and to arrange access for plant, materials and equipment.

11. Promotion

When the route is completed and ready for use, it is important to inform everyone that it exists. A celebratory event involving the local community is a good starting point and local press will often send a reporter or photographer. Social media can complement more traditional press releases and printed material. A programme of events, walks and rides can also help to raise the profile and get more people involved.

12. Maintenance

Although this is the last section, maintenance should be considered at the outset. Good design and construction can help to reduce long term maintenance costs, but all paths will need regular attention to keep them in good condition. The best solution is for the local authority to adopt the path as part of their highway network, although they will welcome local volunteer input in litter picking, vegetation clearance and reporting of major issues.

If the route is to be part of the National Cycle Network, Sustrans volunteers will be able to help with maintenance, both for routine tasks and occasional workdays. If

there is no local volunteer group, Sustrans can help establish one and provide materials and support to get started.

References

Sustrans Design Manual <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-services/what-we-do/route-design-and-construction/route-design-resources>

Paths for All produce a useful “Community Paths Guide”, which is a practical guide to improving existing paths <http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa/creating-paths/community-paths-guide.html>

Contact

For more information and support, contact the local Sustrans office