

A VISION FOR CYCLING IN NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE



“A North Staffordshire where people have a real choice to cycle to work, to study or for leisure”

Cycle North Staffordshire – 2024

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Achieving the vision

1. How to get more people cycling
2. Potential for cycling
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4. A future network
5. Greenway cycle routes
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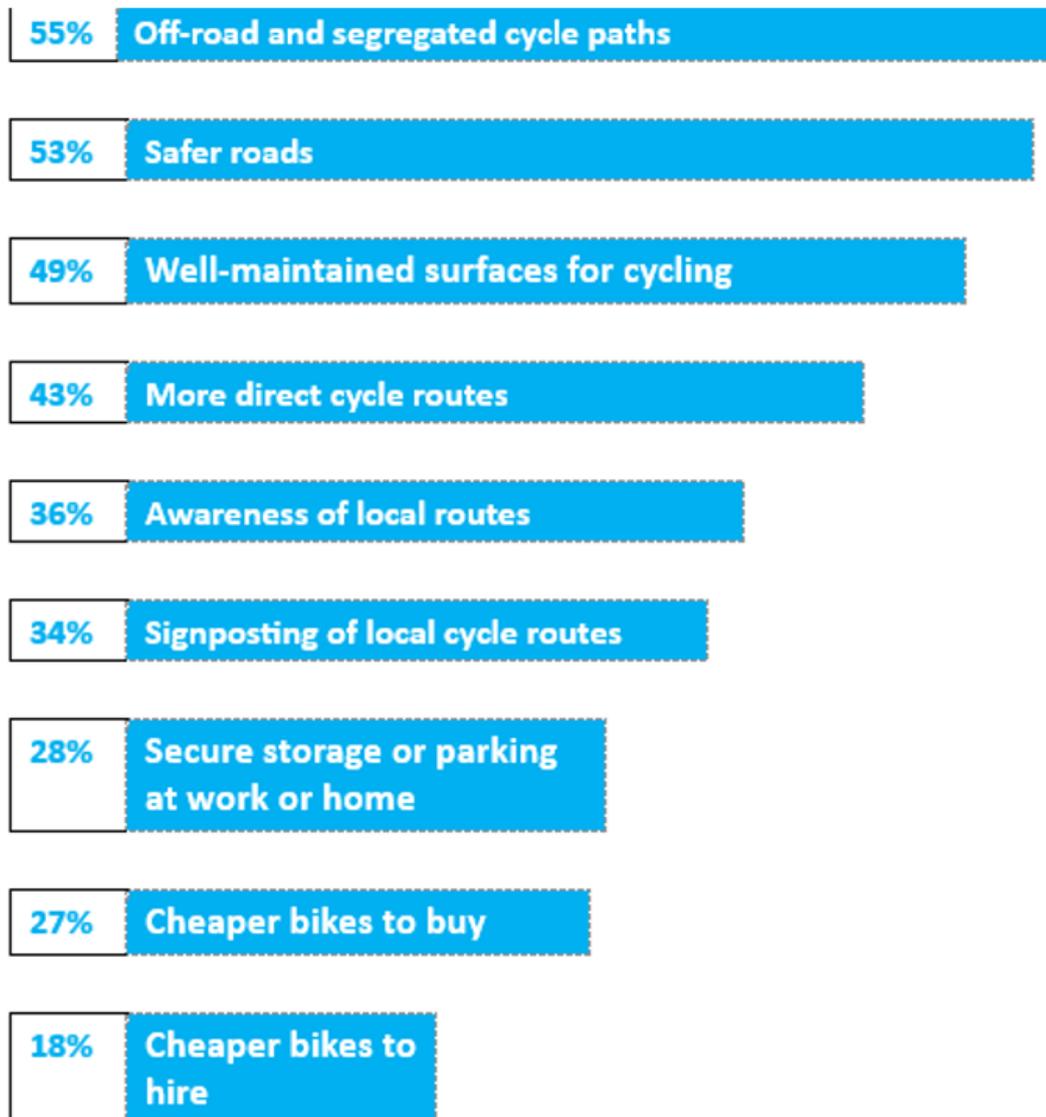
1 How to get more people cycling

To get a significant increase in cycling in North Staffordshire will require a comprehensive safe cycle route network to be identified and implemented. Some of this network will be on road and tackling dangerous driving and enforcing speed limits is a key factor for improving cyclists' safety on road.

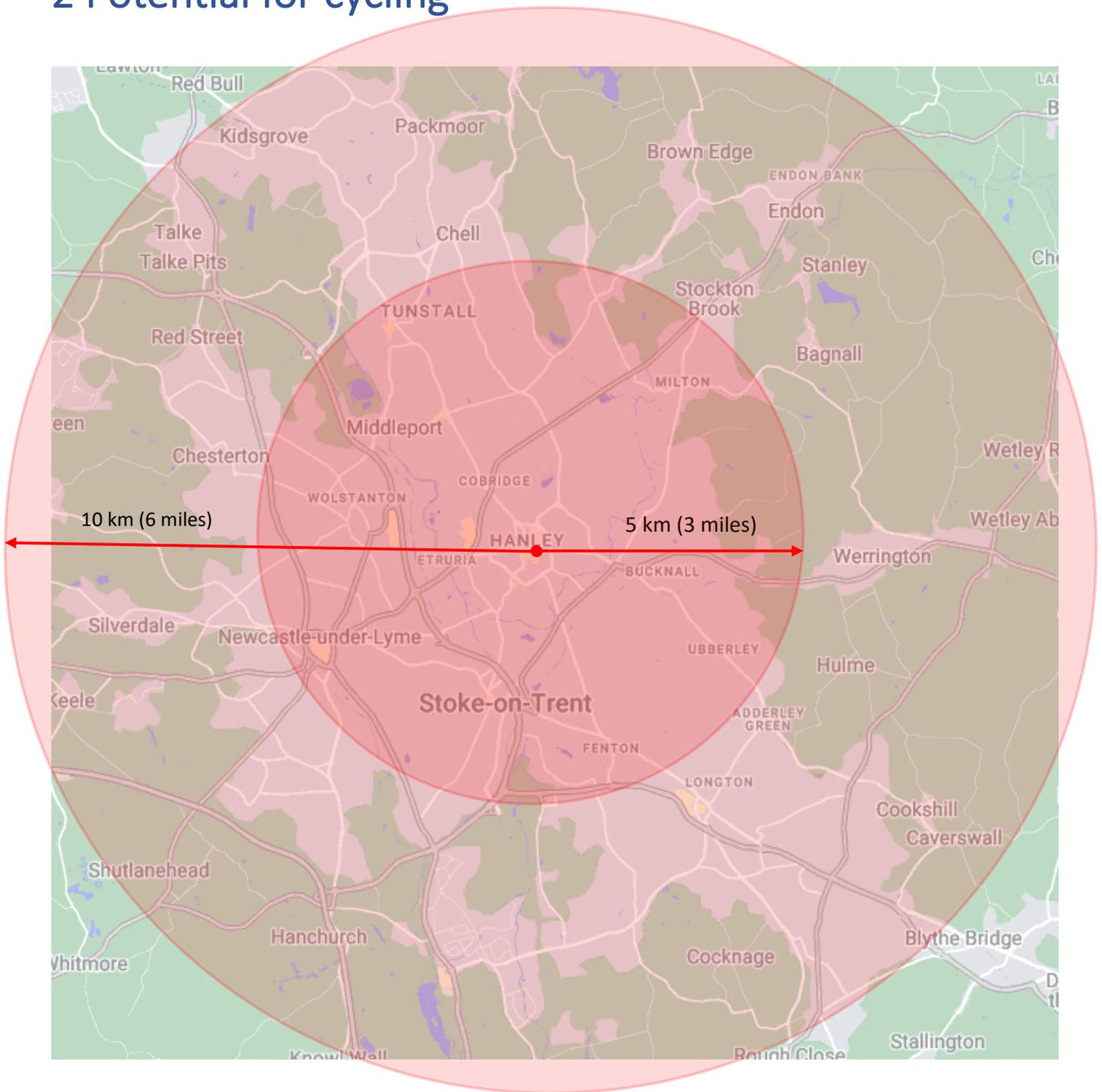
Surveys (such as The DfT NTAS below) show that safety is the key concern preventing people from cycling more. Potential cyclists also want routes to be direct and easy to follow and to be able to find out where the routes are. Where to store your bike at home or at work and the costs of cycling are also important.

What would encourage you to cycle more?

National Travel Attitude Survey 2020



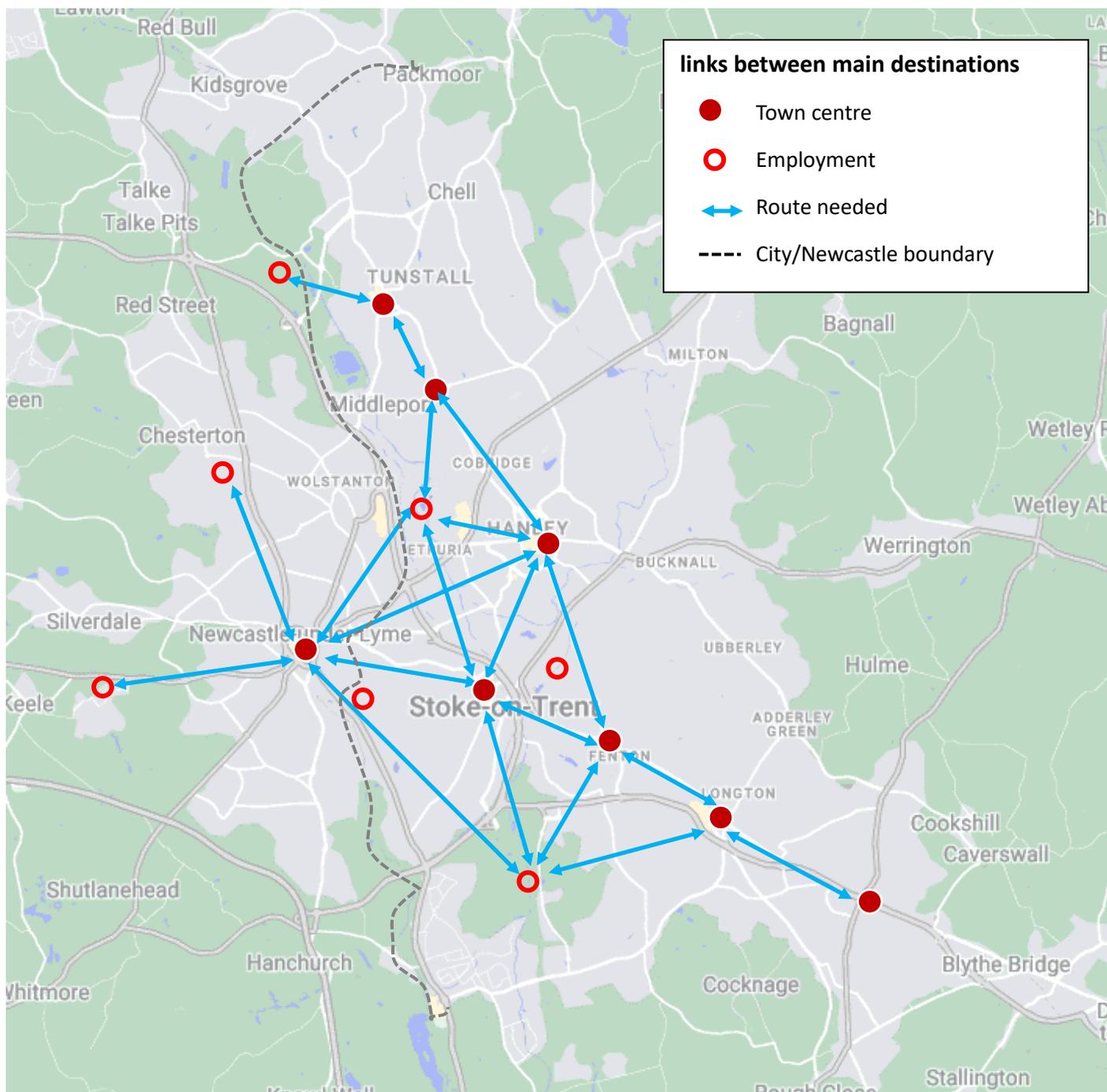
2 Potential for cycling



Most car journeys within the urban area are less than 5 km and a significant number of these have potential to switch to cycling if there were safe cycle routes.

The DfT advises councils to consider potential cycling journeys of up to 10 km (6 miles) when preparing their cycling plans. The whole of the North Staffordshire urban area is within 10 km (6 miles) of Hanley.

3 Where cycle routes are needed

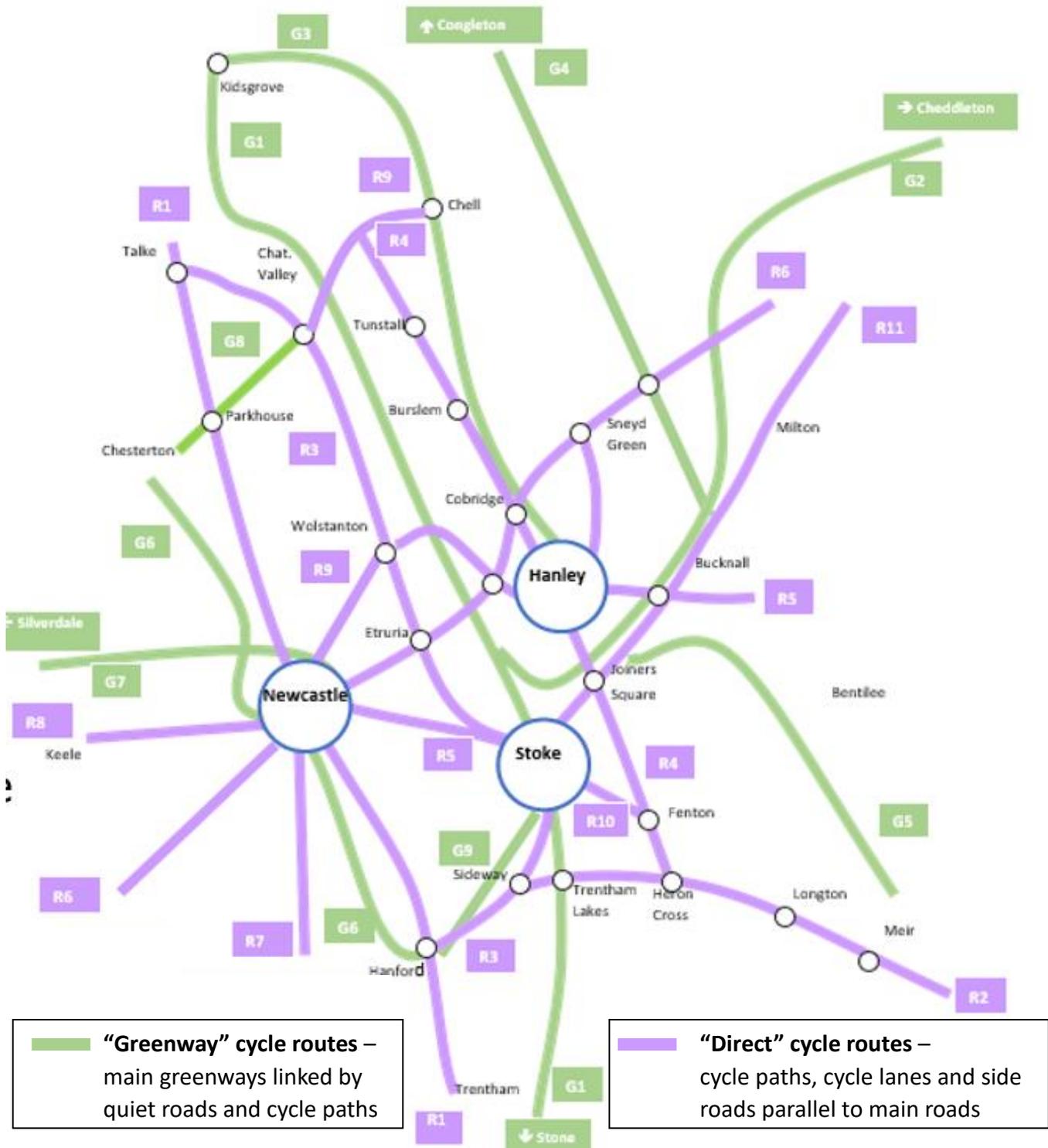


The routes most likely to attract an increase in cycling are those that link to main destinations provided such routes are improved so that cyclists feel safe using them. The most direct routes between destinations tend to follow main roads. Analysing data on existing travel patterns will help forecast which of these routes are likely to attract the most cycle use and help select priority routes for improvement

The parts of a cycle journey that go through residential areas would generally not need cycling infrastructure, particularly if safety were improved by introducing lower speed limits (20 mph) widely across residential areas.

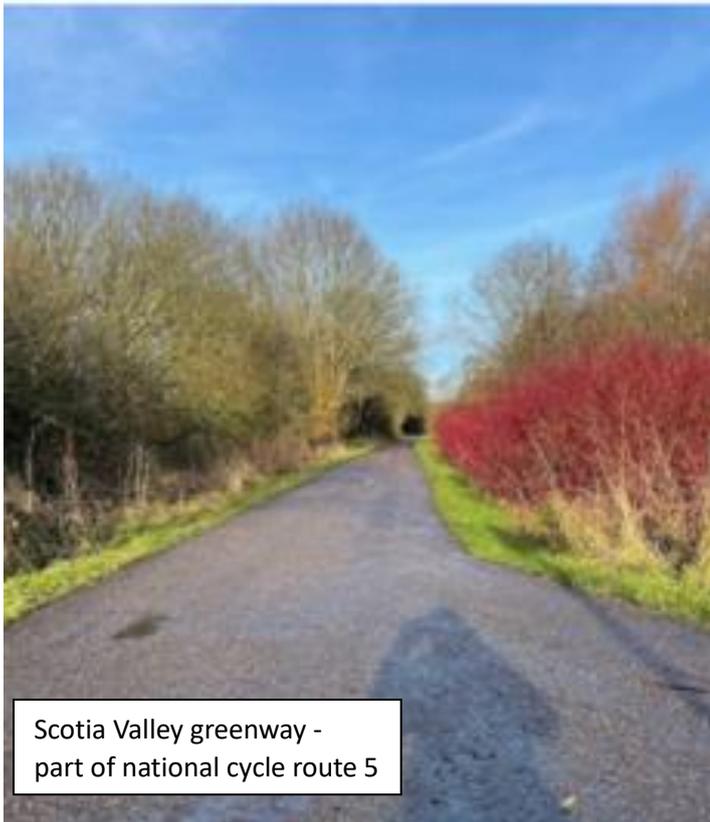
It is worth emphasizing that cyclists need to feel safe along the whole of their cycle route. Priority needs to be given to improving the least safe sections of route rather than improving relatively safe sections of route that may be easier to upgrade.

4 A future cycle route network



This diagram is intended to give an idea of the scope of the strategic cycle route network that is needed in North Staffordshire. It indicates the main existing greenways and main road routes that might be considered for inclusion in a future cycle route network.

5 Greenway cycle routes



Scotia Valley greenway - part of national cycle route 5

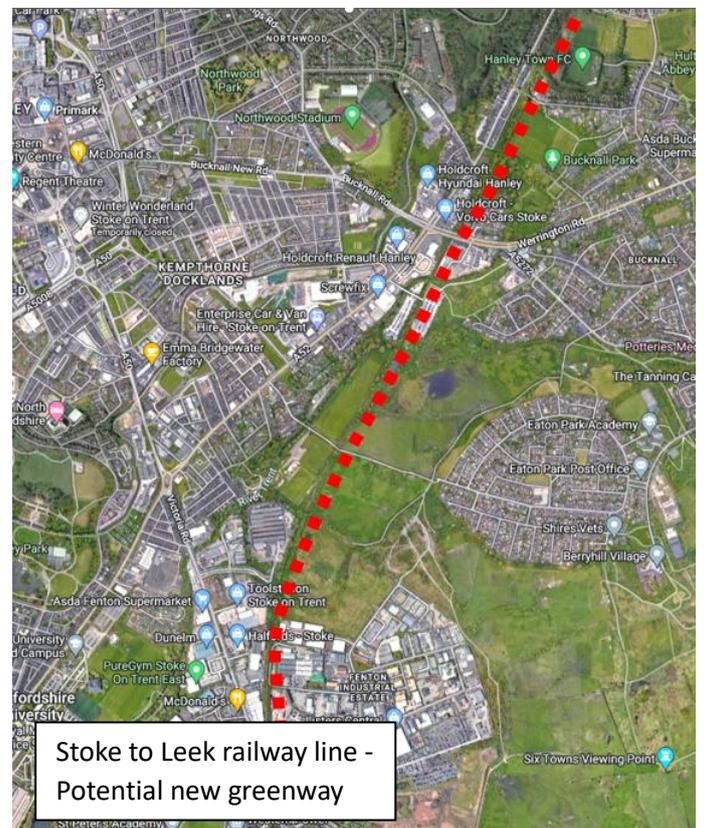
Pros – suitable for all cycling skill levels

Cons – security concerns on some section, lack of lighting, conflict with pedestrians, access barriers.

Future – there is an extensive existing network of greenway cycle routes (see appendix 1) but relatively few opportunities for new greenways. However, there is scope for creating more continuous “greenway” by connecting greenways via quiet roads and sections of shared footway. There is also scope for upgrading greenways and improving access to encourage greater cycle use.



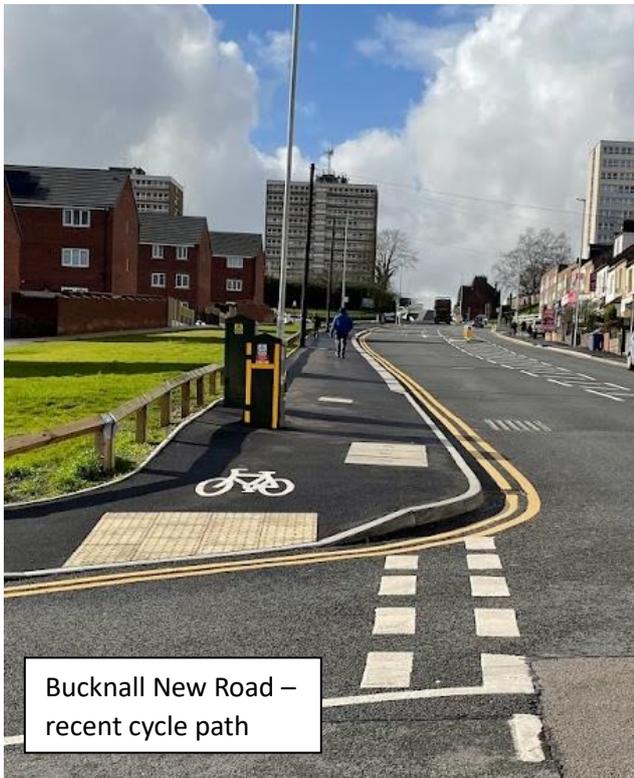
Berry Hill greenway - Improvement needed



Stoke to Leek railway line - Potential new greenway

6 “Direct” cycle routes (on or next to main roads)

Cycle paths - on shared footways



Bucknall New Road – recent cycle path

Pros – suitable for most cycling skill levels.

Cons – lack of priority at side road junctions, street furniture obstruction hazards, inadequate widths, conflict with pedestrians, some too short to be useful.

Future – there are sizeable lengths of cycle path (see appendix 2) many of which were constructed as part of new road schemes.

There are significant lengths of wide footway along main roads that have potential to be converted to shared cycle use to extend the main road cycle path network. On sections of main road where footways are too narrow for shared use with cycles then there are often opportunities to link separate sections of main road cycle path using parallel side roads to provide continuous direct routes



Victoria Road – potential cycle path on footway



Lowlands Road – hazardous exit point from cycle path

Cycle lanes (on road)



Fenton – cycle lane with painted line

Pros – priority at side road junctions

Cons - less suitable for unconfident cyclists if little segregation from other traffic. Cycle lanes often stop at junctions, can be obstructed by parked vehicles, can have inadequate width and hazardous entry and exit points with cycle paths, can disappear due to traffic wear.

Future – There are significant lengths of cycle lane in North Staffs (see appendix 3). Extending or widening cycle lanes would tend to involve either relocating on-street parking or removing turning traffic lanes that get little use or accepting narrower traffic lanes at pinch points e.g. by removing the centre line marking.

Where cycle lanes may be appropriate, and how they are separated from traffic lanes depends on the volume and type of traffic and space available. This also affects whether they will be used by unconfident cyclists.

Using a coloured surface for the cycle lane e.g. across side roads and at transition points to cycle paths can make motorists more aware of the need to look out for cyclists.

Any physical segregation e.g. with kerbing of a cycle lane must have adequate gaps for cyclists so that cyclists do not feel trapped and can safely join the traffic lane when they need to.



Salford – “light segregation” of cycle lane with studs

Side Roads (parallel to main roads)

Pros – suitable for most cycling skill levels especially in 20 mph areas.

Cons – can be devious and difficult to follow, potential conflict with motorists at junctions.

Future – significant opportunities where cycle paths or cycle lanes on main roads are not feasible



Bentilee – quiet side roads parallel to main road

7 The benefits of 20 mph speed limits

A growing number of councils across the UK are adopting a 20 mph approach. There is increasing evidence that wide area 20 mph within built up areas can reduce road casualties by 20% or more.

A pedestrian hit by a vehicle at 20 mph is very much less likely to be killed, particularly for children and the elderly, than if hit at 30 mph (see Appendix 4). A lower speed allows drivers to stop in a shorter distance and a 1% reduction in speed reduces the risk of collision by 6%. This makes areas safer for cycling and walking.

20 mph also reduces noise and pollution as vehicles do not have to accelerate up to a higher speed and it also helps to smooth traffic flow while making little difference to journey times.

Fewer collisions reduce pressure on the NHS and the police and 20 mph is widely supported by the health sector in the UK and internationally. Council resources for road safety are limited and currently only target the worst collision “hotspots”. Wide area lower speed limits can help reduce the risk of collisions at these priority “hotspots” and also at any other hotspots across the 20 mph area.

20 mph is popular with residents and the National Travel Attitude Survey shows that around 70% of residents would like 20 mph where they live. Any future scheme for 20 mph would need to show that it had the support of the community in that area.

“20 mph zones”

There are eight 20 mph zones in North Staffordshire. These are effective in reducing speeds but cover small areas and are generally expensive to implement due to the costs of traffic management measures such as humps. Humps can cause problems for buses, ambulances, and other emergency vehicles and are generally unpopular with residents.

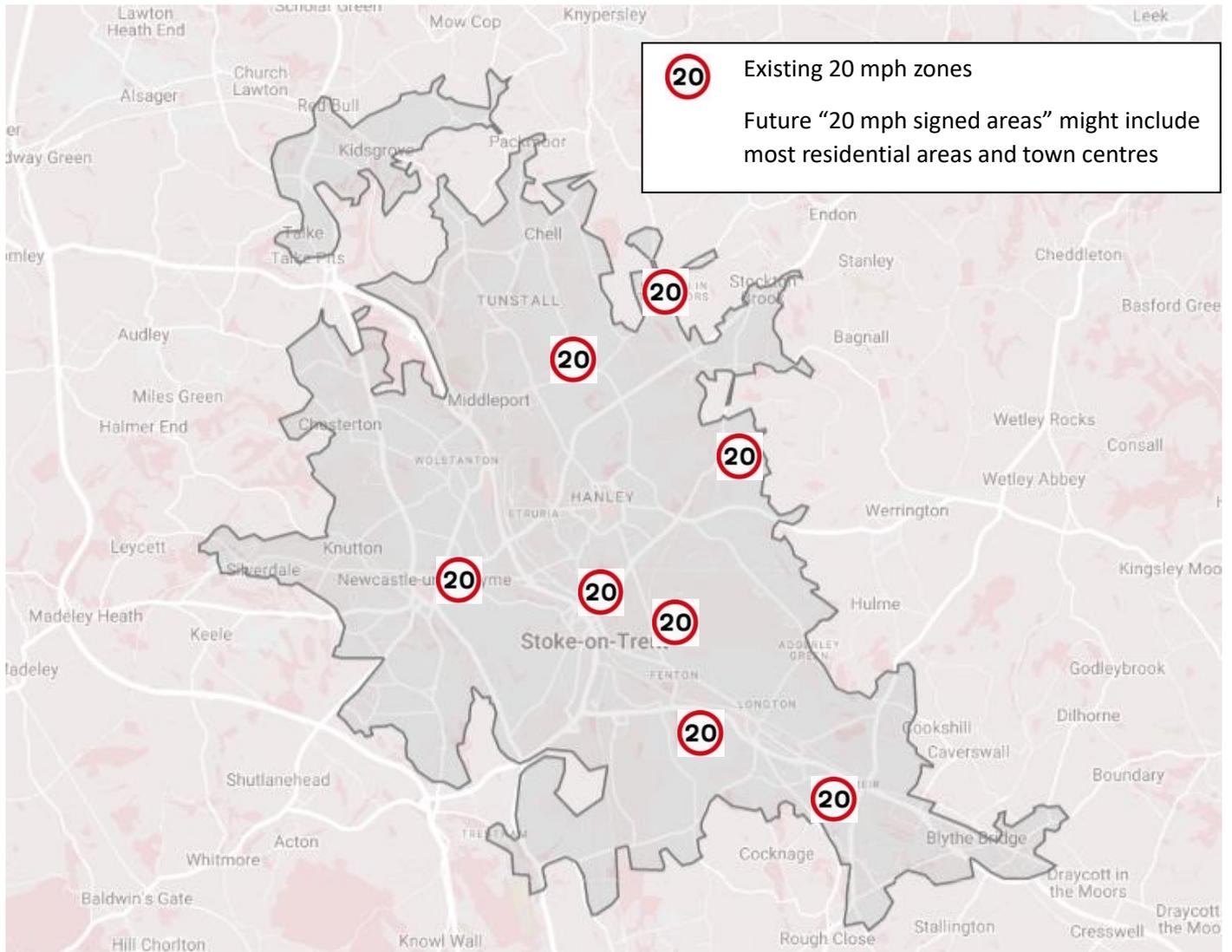


“20 mph signed areas”

These areas only have signs and do not have humps but are nearly as effective in reducing speed as “20 mph zones”. Because they can cover wide areas relatively cheaply this makes them a very cost-effective way of reducing road casualties.



20 mph in North Staffordshire



8 Next Steps

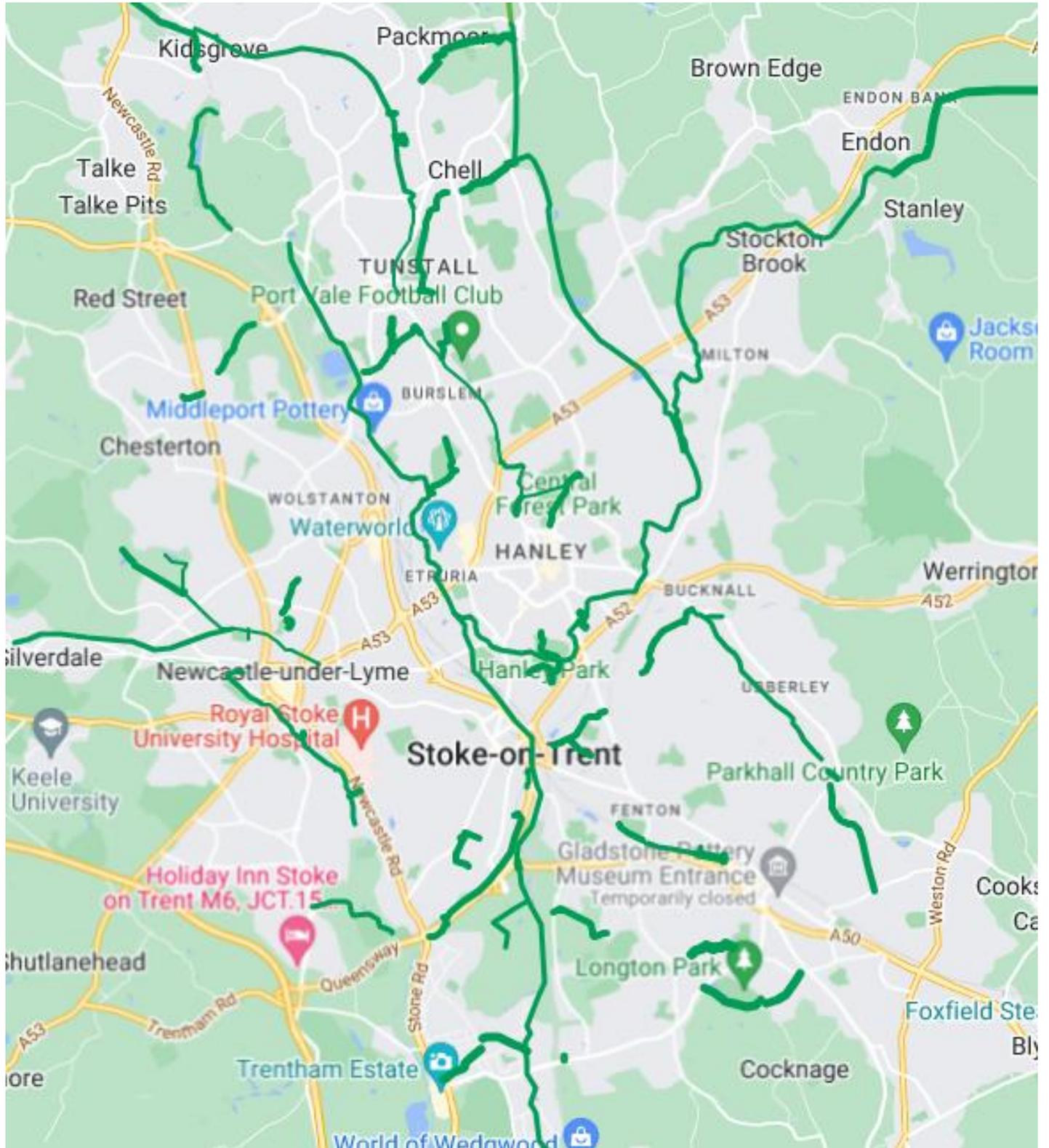
We think that local councils need to:

1. Commit to a plan for a major increase in cycling and walking
2. Identify the future cycle route network needed to achieve this
3. Have a prioritised programme of cycle schemes and for 20 mph across residential areas and town centres
4. monitor cycling and walking levels and evaluate the effectiveness of past schemes

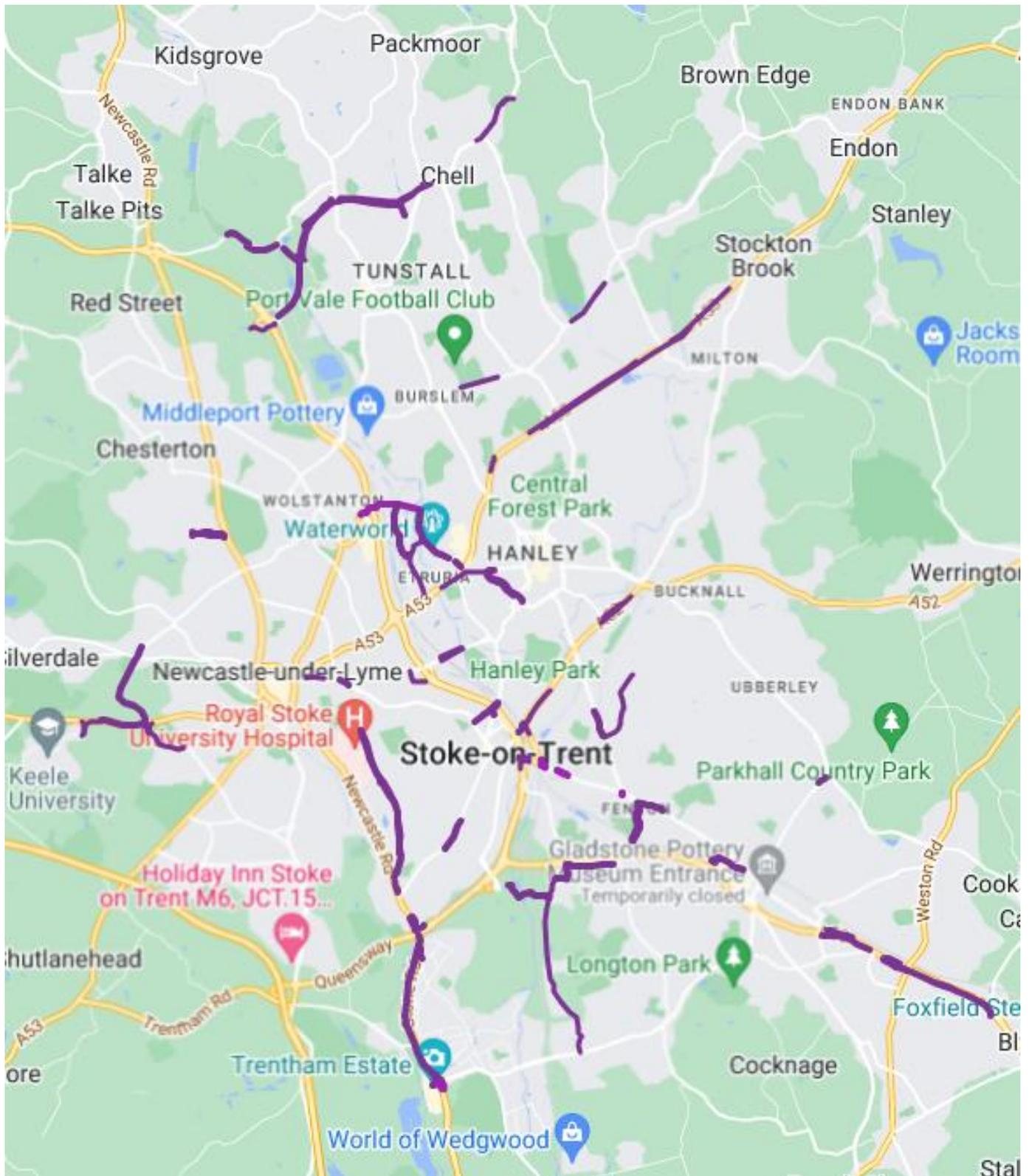
We think that local cyclists can help councils by:

- providing a forum of local knowledge to contribute to the councils' cycling plans and proposals that affect cyclists
- alerting the council to local cycling hazards, route maintenance issues etc
- supporting council action to promote cycling

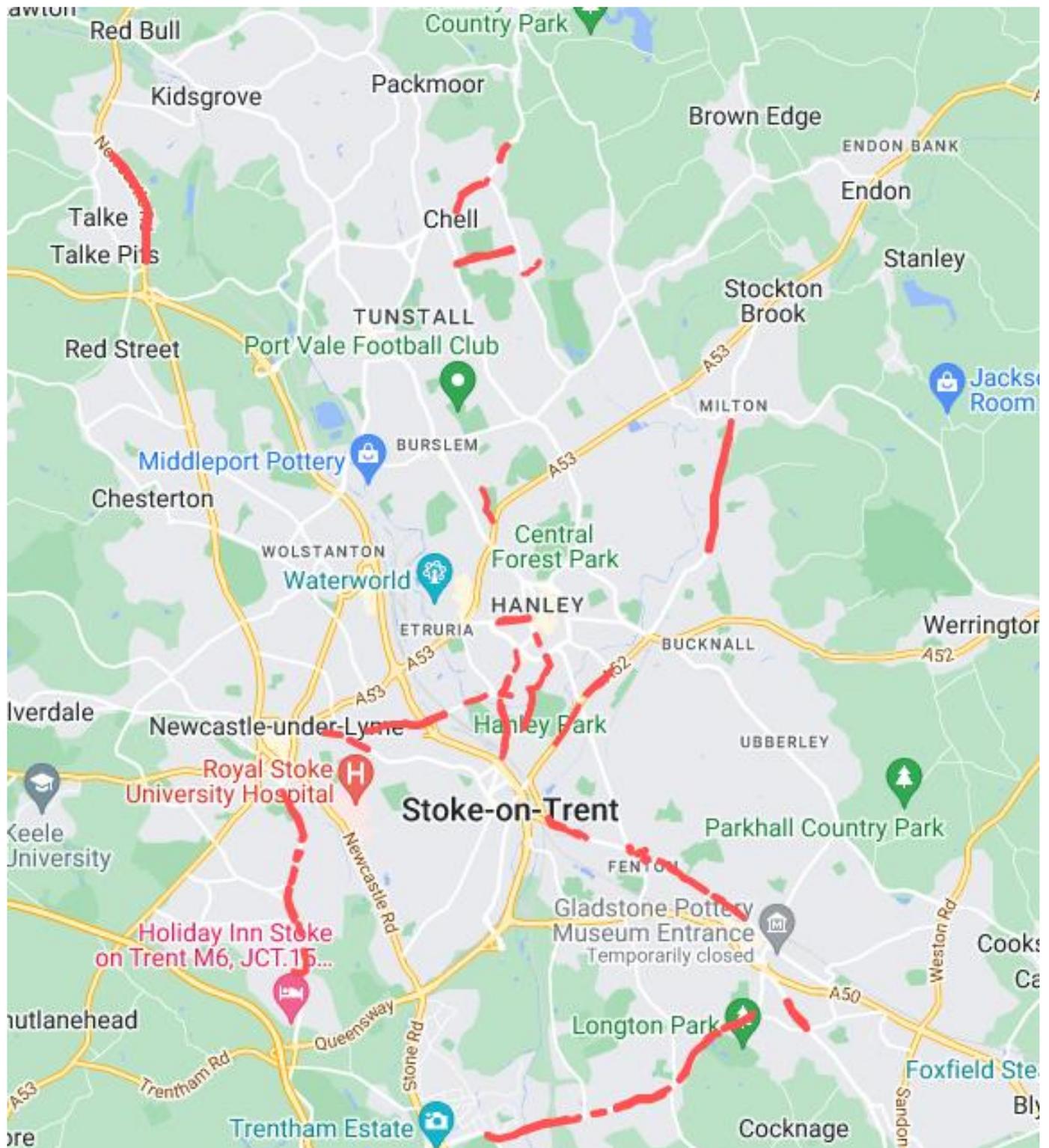
Appendix 1 – existing greenways



Appendix 2 – existing cycle paths



Appendix 3 – existing cycle lanes



Appendix 4 – The benefits of 20 mph

The effect of speed

| | Average for all ages | Over 60 year olds |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| At 40 mph | • 31% are killed | • 98% are killed |
| At 30 mph | • 7% are killed | • 50% are killed |
| At 20 mph | • 1% are killed | • 5% are killed |

Data from Road Safety Web Publication No. 16 *Relationship between Speed and Risk of Fatal Injury: Pedestrians and Car Occupants* - Department for Transport (September 2010)

Impact speeds (MPH) and the equivalent fall from height.



Research shows that 20 mph reduces CO₂ and NO_x levels by 25% compared to 30 mph and also significantly reduces noise levels.

