

# Derwent Valley Cycleway – a Multi-Use Trail

## Belper West Bank Section

### Introduction to Planning Application

(Rev. 18.07.2024 TW)



*The Derwent Valley Trust is applying to Amber Valley Council for Planning Permission to develop a cycleway on the west side of the river Derwent. This document forms an introduction to the application, and hence to the on-line Planning Application form and all accompanying documents.*

*"Promoting sustainable access within the valley"*



**DERWENT**  
VALLEY TRUST  
WALKING | CYCLING | PADDLING | RIDING | ART

The planning application is made up of these documents/forms:

**Introduction (this document)**

**On-line Planning Application form**

**Design and Access Statement (with associated maps)**

**Statutory Biodiversity Metric Spreadsheet (with associated maps)**

**Further Documents:**

**Plans and Maps**

Location Plan

**Technical Reports**

Ecology Survey

Environment Agency (letter)

Heritage Report

Tree Survey

**Letters of Support**

Amber Valley Borough Council

Belper Town Council

Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

Transition Belper

**Sections in this Document**

- 1 The Derwent Valley Trust
- 2 The Derwent Valley Cycleway – a Multi-Use Trail
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References

For brevity, the *Derwent Valley Cycleway – a Multi-Use Trail* is referred to simply as *the cycleway* in this document.

## 1. The Derwent Valley Trust

The Derwent Valley Trust (DVT, or “the Trust”), <https://www.derwentvalleytrust.org.uk/>, promotes the history, arts, wildlife, access and leisure opportunities that surround the River Derwent along its 55 mile course through the Derbyshire Dales, the Peak District, and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

The Trust’s purpose is to promote sustainable and inclusive access to the landscape, culture and facilities of the Derwent Valley for recreation and active travel. The Trust’s vision and mission is to be the leading charitable organization and the preferred partner for initiating, planning, establishing and supporting maintenance for sustainable and inclusive access, active travel and integrated transport within the Derwent Valley. The Trust works to plan and develop sustainable access projects in partnership with other organisations.

The Trust has already established the Derwent Valley Heritage Way, a walking route along the valley, from Ladybower reservoir in the north to Derwent Mouth near Shardlow. It is now working to create a traffic-free cycleway along a similar route, formally called *the Derwent Valley Cycleway – a Multi-Use Trail*. As this name suggests, the cycleway will be available to walkers, joggers, horse riders and wheelchair users as well as cyclists. In most places the cycleway cannot follow the route of the Heritage Way, due to the need for gentler gradients, and an appropriate cycling surface.

## 2. The Derwent Valley Cycleway – a Multi-Use Trail

The *Derwent Valley Cycleway – a Multi-Use Trail* is being designed to follow the course of the River Derwent as closely as possible. This has the benefits of ensuring a relatively flat route and providing scenic views and access to the many riverside attractions.

Much of the cycleway falls within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and links a number of significant population centres including Derby, Duffield, Belper, Cromford, Matlock Bath and Matlock. The cycleway will link with Sustrans Route 54 (the High Peak Trail) and will link and overlap with Routes 6 and 680, (Reference 1), becoming part of the wider network. The route is earmarked by Derbyshire County Council as essential to their Key Cycle Network provision in the county. Particularly it fills the gap between routes in the south and north of the county, linking them up to enable connections to longer routes across the wider region.

The cycleway will have positive benefits for commuting, tourism, health, and family leisure opportunities. Derwent Valley Mills is the only World Heritage Site in England without adequate cycling provision. Increased numbers of tourists will help to sustain enterprises such as cycle hire, B&Bs, cafés and pubs. Existing tourist attractions will benefit from the increased number of visitors arriving using the cycleway.

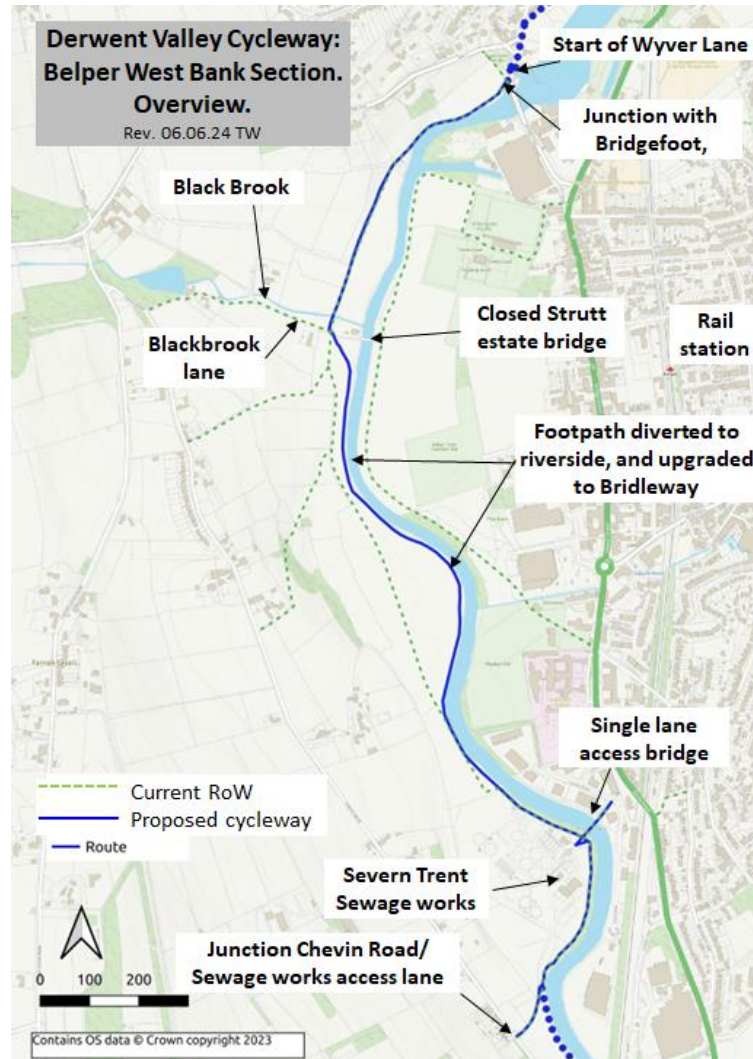
The DVT has divided up the overall cycleway route into sections, with the intention of developing sections separately, as funds permit. It now wishes to develop the section which runs to the west of Belper. This is the subject of the current planning application.

## 3. The Belper West Bank Cycleway Section

The Belper West Bank cycleway section is shown in outline in Figure 1. Although it is viewed as an integral part of the overall cycleway, it forms on its own a completely viable and attractive trail. At its northern end it meets Bridge Foot, which then provides a link to the start of the completed Wyver Lane section. At its southern end it joins Chevin Road around a mile north of Milford and will ultimately link with an onward section to Duffield and on to Derby. The route passes the Severn Trent sewage works towards the south, and here a single lane access bridge gives a possible link to Goods Road, in the south of Belper. Further north, the route also passes

the closed Strutt estate bridge, now classified as a monument (Reference 2). If opened to the public – as is anticipated – this would provide valuable opportunity for linkage to the centre of Belper.

Much of the route is on existing footpaths, which will need to be upgraded to bridleways to permit the use of cycles and horses. In parallel with this upgrading, the Trust is applying, in consultation with landowners and the Ramblers Association, for the route of certain footpaths to be adjusted. These are alluded to in the figure, and detailed in the Design and Access Statement.



**Figure 1: Map of Proposed Route**

This section shares the benefits of the Derwent Valley Cycleway overall, with these particular highlights:

**A safe off-road alternative to the A6 through Belper.** Belper is a thriving and bustling town, but its centre is particularly busy. A safer alternative to the A6 will encourage cycle commuting and thus reduce traffic and pollution through the town.

**An attractive tourist and leisure route.** The route provides a step back from the town to view the Derwent Valley Mills landscape in context and links Belper and Milford Mills for tourist access. If the closed Strutt estate bridge is opened, the walking routes on the east bank of the river will be linked to the west side, providing figure of eight or shorter routes for Belper residents.

## 4. Stakeholders and Landowners

There are numerous stakeholders in this project, the principal ones being shown here.

<b>Councils</b>	Derbyshire County Council Amber Valley Borough Council Belper Town Council
<b>Landowners and Tenants</b>	Severn Trent Water The Cousins Trust Tenant Farmer
<b>Charities and Special Interest Groups</b>	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust  Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Ramblers Association Sustrans
<b>Residents and businesses</b>	Belper and Milford residents Retail outlets, hospitality venues

The Trust have good working relationships with all of these and have consulted extensively with them. This is evidenced further within the planning application and the letters of support.

The Trust has been in extensive conversation with landowners, with further detail below.

**Severn Trent** is the landowner and operator of the water and sewage treatment works land at the southern end of Figure 1. They are supportive of the cycleway and have agreed to the principle of upgrading the current footpath across their land to a bridleway to widen access to other groups as well as walkers. Subject to planning permission, they have encouraged the Trust to apply to their Community Fund for possible financial support to implement the works.

**The Cousins Trust** is the landowner and landlord to the farmer on the land in the northern and central sections of the area covered by this planning application. They are supportive of the cycleway and have agreed to the principle of upgrading the current footpath across their land to a bridleway, and to the rerouting of certain footpath sections. Subject to planning permission, they and their tenant farmer have agreed to support the Trust to implement the works and to enable the optimum management of the cycleway and farming activities once completed.

### **Unknown Ownership**

It has not been possible to determine ownership of the path section immediately south of Bridge Foot.

## 5. The Cycleway in Strategic Plans

A number of statutory bodies and organisations, already listed as stakeholders, have included the Derwent Valley Cycleway, including the Belper West Bank Cycleway section, in formal strategic planning documents. Each of these has undertaken its own process of public consultation and scrutiny. Hence wherever the cycleway is included in such plans, it will have been subject to an overall consultation process. Key strategic plans are identified in the Appendix.

## 6. Public Consultation and Communication

The Trust maintains engagement with its supporters through a quarterly newsletter, distributed electronically to over one thousand subscribers, many of whom are resident in Belper and Milford. It provides topical updates, and seeks views on this and related projects. Copies of past newsletters can be found here: <https://www.derwentvalleytrust.org.uk/cycle/cycle-newsletter/>

The Trust appears in numerous local events, with recent examples tabulated below (much impacted by Covid in 2020-21). At such events the Trust has a stand with route maps and other information on display. Numerous conversations are held with members of the public, information about the cycleway is communicated, and opinions are sought and evaluated.

Year	Event	Dates
2019	Derwent Valley Campaign Ride	May 18 <sup>th</sup>
2021	Transition Belper Eco Market	September 12 <sup>th</sup>
2022	Belper goes Green	June 10 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup>
	Derwent Valley Heritage Way Publicity Weekend, the "Nail Trail"	July 9 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>
2023	Transition Belper Eco Market	June 11 <sup>th</sup>
	Duffield Carnival	June 24 <sup>th</sup>
	"The Duffield Carnival Eyes Have It". Music Festival	July 7 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup>
2024	On yer Bike Belper	March 16 <sup>th</sup>
	Belper Goes Green	June 7 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup>
	Duffield Carnival	June 29 <sup>th</sup>

## 7. A Note on the Biodiversity Net Gain Analysis

As is required, the statutory Biodiversity Metric has been completed, and accompanies this application. In this, the route has been divided up into 11 different sections, each of distinct habitat or use. Because much of the route is already an established pathway, bordered by differing habitats, the overall environmental impact is limited.

Although the planning application is for a strip of land 4 m wide, the cycleway itself will be only 3 m wide. Encroachment onto the bordering strips on either side of the cycleway, 0.5 m wide, will occur during the construction phase and be only temporary. All habitats in these border areas will be returned to their original condition. Thus the Biodiversity Metric evaluates only a 3 m wide strip of land, of the cycleway itself.

The cycleway does enter the Riparian Zone of the River Derwent, particularly at its northernmost end, where it runs directly alongside (and above) the river. However it is noted from Reference 3, page 41 that established footpaths and river crossings are exempt from categorisation as riparian encroachment, hence these regions are not further evaluated.

### References

1. The National Cycle Network. Sustrans. <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network/> Accessed June 2024.
2. Monument record MDR11584 - Strutt Bridge, Belper Meadows, Belper. Derbyshire County Council. <https://her.derbyshire.gov.uk/Monument/MDR11584>
3. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. User Guide. February 2024. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.



## Appendix: Strategic Plans

### 1. Belper Town Council

#### **Neighbourhood Plan for Belper Civil Parish. 2019-2028**

<https://www.belpertowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/103/2023/04/belper-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>

In *Section 20, Sustainable Travel* there is a recognition of the poor cycling provision in Belper, with inclusion of the “Belper Cycling Quality Tube Map” prepared by the Trust. There is recognition of the need for more cycling opportunities, for recreation, tourism and commuting. The Derwent Valley Cycleway is described in Paras 234-236, with the expectation that it will be completed, in order to meet the above needs. Among others, these recommendations are made:

#### ***NPP 16 Increasing Cycling and Walking***

- 1. Where feasible, development should provide links to safe walking and continuous, safe, cycling routes to:**
  - a) the Town Centre, facilitating access to schools, the surrounding countryside and public transport hubs - minimising the need for car use: and**
  - b) along the Derwent Valley including along the west bank of the River on Wyver Lane, as part of a wider tourism initiative to link up the Mills from the Silk Mill to Cromford.**

#### **Belper Active Travel Master Plan. March 2024. (Consultation Draft)**

This develops the D2N2 (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire) Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP, see below), and contains much material from the neighbourhood plan. In its *Cycling* section, it again recognises the need for better cycling provision, and includes the “Belper Cycling Quality Tube Map” prepared by the Trust. Under *Planned Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Infrastructure* it describes positively the plan for the Cycleway.

Under *Derwent Valley Cycle Route* the plan states “*The Belper Active Travel Masterplan should therefore maximise the potential of this new route via local linkages such that it is of use to those living in the town, but also draws tourists from the route into town.*”

On page 57 the cycleway is described and endorsed as a needed strategic route.

### 2. Derbyshire County Council

The Derbyshire Cycling Plan, 2016-2030 <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/transport-plans/sustainable-travel/cycling-walking-plans/cycling-and-walking-plans.aspx> expresses the ambition “*By 2030, Derbyshire will be the most connected and integrated county for cycling in England, recognised as a world class cycling destination for all.*” The Council has developed a Key Cycle Network, described as “a strategic network for the county with connections to key destinations, towns, villages, transport hubs, employment and housing areas with long distance trails and loops which support the visitor economy.” Thus it is clear that the Council is strong supportive of improved cycling provision.

In 2021 the Council commissioned a feasibility study of the full length of the cycleway, including the present section alongside Belper, with the work contracted to AECOM. The Trust shared numerous documents and information with AECOM, and meet regularly to provide their input. While the study has been now been completed, it is not yet in the public domain. However

members of the Trust have been able to view the report on a confidential basis, and are aware that it is positive about the route overall, and the Belper West Bank section.

### **3. Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS)**

The DVMWHS have been consistently supportive of the cycleway, as it will provide access to the site, with low environmental impact. In their Management Plan (2020-2025)

<https://www.derwentvalleymills.org/about-the-derwent-valley-mills/the-management-plan/>

they make these recommendations:

#### **OBJ 3.10**

**Support organisations, such as the Derwent Valley Trust, in developing walking, cycling and waterway leisure routes through and beyond the DVMWHS.**

#### **ACT 3.10.1**

Encourage the development of business cases, route, land ownership investigation, relevant permissions and assembly of funding for an off-road cycle route through the DVMWHS...

### **4. The Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire (D2N2) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

The partnership sponsored a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for the Councils of Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, in order to define how future cycling related funds from Central Government are spent in the region. This was available for public consultation, which closed in March 2023. The LCWIP is now being used to inform further travel plans, including the Belper Active Travel Plan (see above).