

Kingham to Bourton on the Water

Greenway Design Summary



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Photo taken from Maugersbury looking south over disused railway

We work for and with communities, helping them come to life by walking, wheeling and cycling to create healthier places and happier lives for everyone. www.sustrans.org.uk

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Introduction

From 2023 to 2024, Sustrans was commissioned by Cotswold District Council to produce concept designs for a greenway along the former Banbury and Cheltenham Direct Railway. The railway alignment runs between Kingham and Bourton on the Water, with a branch to Stow on the Wold.

This work followed on from a crowd funded feasibility study published by Sustrans in May 2022 on the greenway route. The map in figure 1 below shows the current preferred alignment, that broadly follows the former railway corridor, and has additional connections to other towns and villages, including Stow on the Wold, Maugersbury and Bledington.

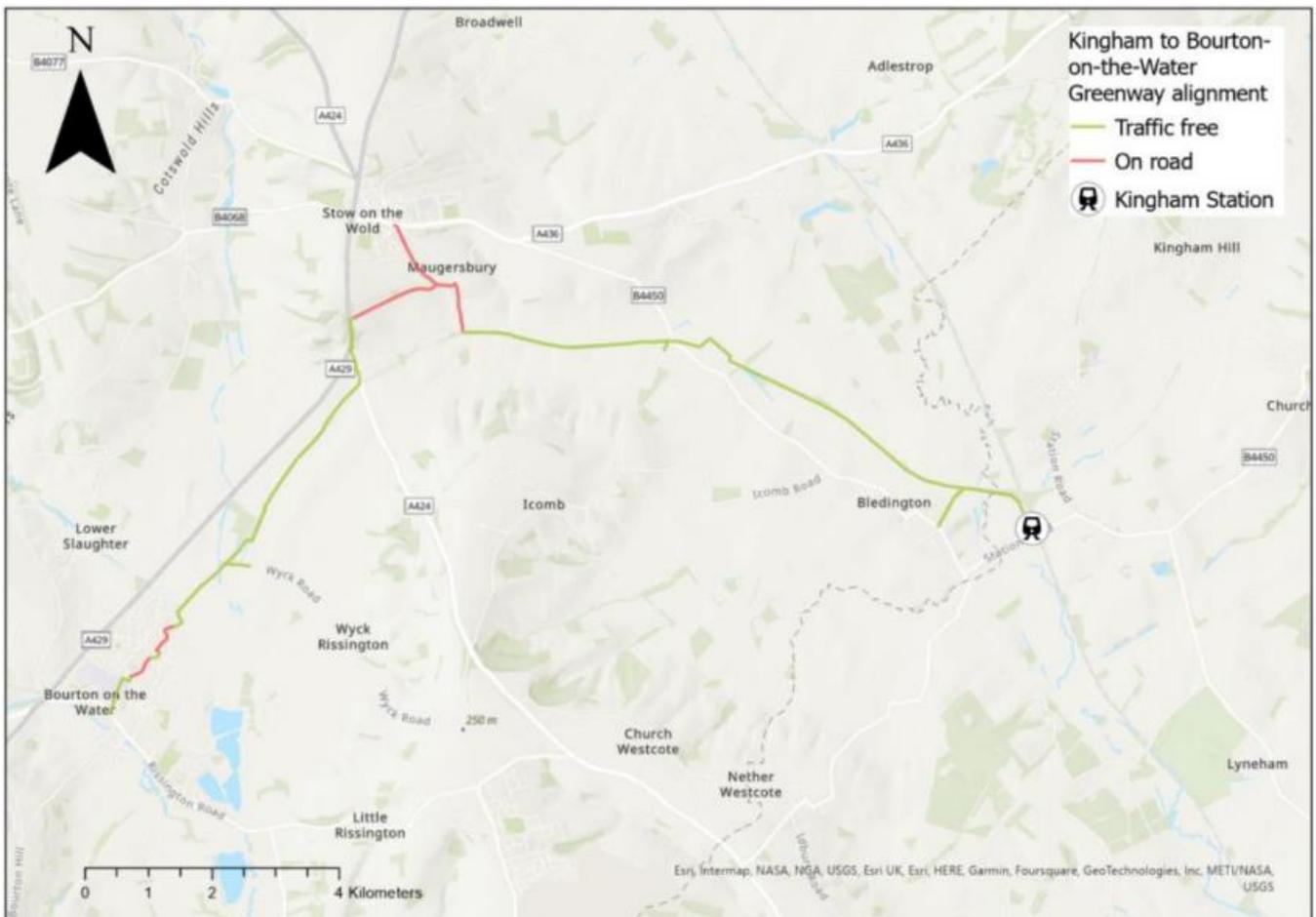


Figure 1 - Map of current proposed greenway route



Proposals

The greenway between Kingham to Bourton on the Water has been designed to a width of 3m. Although a sealed surface is recommended for maintenance ease, a rubber crumb or surface dressing could be added to make the shared path more in keeping with the rural area, as shown in figure 2.



Figure 2 - example of a greenway along a disused railway in Stonehouse

The majority of the greenway follows the former railway corridor between the outskirts of Bourton on the Water and Kingham station. The path deviates towards Maugersbury in order to cross the A424 at the A429 junction. Connections to Maugersbury, Bledington and Stow on the Wold are included, along with link paths to connect the greenway to nearby lanes and the villages of Wyck Rissington and Icomb. Regular seating spots are included to provide community spaces and resting places. Installation of gateway features, artwork, cycle parking and wayfinding at the ends of the route and where the nature of the route changes are also included to reflect the local heritage of the area.

Socio Economic Benefits

Despite being an Area of Outstanding National Beauty situated between some of the more densely populated areas in England – the Midlands, the Bristol area and the home-counties – much of the Cotswolds is only easily accessible by car. In recent years this has become increasingly problematic for some of the most scenic destinations in the Cotswolds, including Bourton on the Water, which have become inundated by tourists travelling by car.¹

The walking and cycling route Sustrans have designed will help address this issue, along with:

- Connecting towns and villages otherwise only connected by road network and infrequent bus services. The two railways in the Cotswolds only provide north to south connections, with transport poverty creating rural hardship for many people living in the region.²
- Benefiting the health and wellbeing of people living in the Cotswolds. 16.7% of Year 6 children were recorded as being obese in 2021.³ A safe greenway will encourage active travel for younger and older generations by creating safe routes away from cars
- Encouraging sustainable tourism the designed greenway allows people to cycle from Kingham train station to Bourton on the Water which could encourage more tourists to travel via public transport.

¹ [Bourton-on-the-Water: Coach ban being considered - BBC News](#)

² [Hidden Hardship: Everyday Experiences, Coping Strategies, and Barriers to Wellbeing in Rural Britain](#)

³ [Local Health - Office for Health Improvement and Disparities - Reports: get a dashboard on a custom area](#)

Next steps

Detailed engagement should be carried out with landowners and tenants along the route to seek their views, and determine the optimum alignment. It is recommended that the Stow on the Wold to Bourton section is delivered first as it connects two towns within Cotswold District.

More funding needs to be secured for the next design phase of the project, and for the ecological surveys as recommended by the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). These surveys would be vital for any designs to be approved in a planning application.

Going forward, stakeholder engagement should also be considered with the communities of Bourton on the Water, Stow on the Wold and Kingham to promote the route and confirm public support.



Figure 3 - Photo showing track of former railway and Lower Slaughter bridge