



Creating a strategic cycle network for East Lancashire:

The creation of an East Lancashire Strategic Cycleway network was first proposed in The East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan, which was approved in February 2014.

View plan at: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/292977/East-Lancs-Masterplan.pdf>

The masterplan sets out the transport priorities for East Lancashire including Blackburn with Darwen until 2021.

Priorities within the masterplan include:

- Improving access to areas of economic growth & regeneration.
- Providing better access to education and employment.
- Improving people's quality of life.

Building an effective cycle network linking towns, employment sites and communities is identified by the masterplan as a key project to be taken forward.

In June 2015 £2.6M of funding towards the creation of an East Lancashire cycle network was secured from the Lancashire Local Growth Deal through the Lancashire Economic Partnership. With local contributions from both Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council a total budget of £5.85m will be allocated to the delivery of 4 schemes over the next 4 years.

Once completed 23km of new and 95km of improved routes will be have been delivered providing enhanced links to the Enterprise Zone at Samlesbury and other key employment sites at Huncoat, Whitebirk, Blackburn Town Centre Rising Bridge, Haslingden and along the Rossendale Valley.

As well as being used for commuting these new cycleways will also provide great benefits for leisure, health and tourism users. The investment will focus on plugging gaps in the existing networks, to maximise connectivity and deliver high quality, end to end cycle networks.

The Routes:

There are four proposed routes identified within the first phase of the East Lancashire Strategic Cycle network development:

1. **Weavers Wheel** (Blackburn with Darwen)

The Weavers Wheel is a 26km route encircling Blackburn town centre based on the Preston Guild Wheel, which attracts nearly 100,000 cyclists a year. As well as the main wheel there will be spurs radiating out to key employment locations such as Samlesbury Enterprise Zone and Whitebirk as well as spokes into Blackburn Town Centre providing direct access to local employment, education, retail and leisure opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists.

2. **Valley of Stone** (Rossendale)

The Valley of Stone is 16.5km long and connects Rawtenstall in the west to Waterfoot, Bacup and Whitworth to the Lancashire border with Rochdale at Healey Dell, as well as providing access to many employment sites along the Rossendale Valley. It is a largely off road route following a former railway line and when completed will provide a real sustainable travel alternative to using the busy roads which run along the main valley floor. The idea for the Valley of Stone has been put forward by the local community and although some sections are already open, the full potential of the route will only be realised once it is fully completed.

View a plan at: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/806068/Valley-of-Stone-.pdf>

3. **National Cycle Route 6** (Hyndburn & Rossendale)

This route is mostly off road and runs in a roughly north-south direction from Accrington in the north to the Lancashire border at Stubbins near Ramsbottom in the south. It is 12km in length and also follows the line of a former railway, although large sections no longer exist such as around Haslingden. It has great potential for commuter use, especially to the employment areas on the west side of Haslingden close to the A56 and it will contribute towards the tourist economy by linking to the East Lancashire Railway and Irwell Sculpture Trail to the south. The route is also part of the wider National Cycle Network Route 6 that connects Watford to Keswick via Manchester & Preston.

View a plan at: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/806071/NCN6-.pdf>

4. **Huncoat Greenway**

The Huncoat Greenway scheme will provide an off road cycle route between Huncoat Village and Accrington. Three sections of the Greenway are already in place but the central part of the route is currently missing which affects how useful it is as a route and limits the number of potential users. Completion of the Greenway will provide cyclists and pedestrians a continuous, safe, off road route just under 2km in length avoiding the busy A679 Burnley Road. The Greenway will connect housing areas to Huncoat Industrial Estate, other employment sites and nearby schools.

View a plan at: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/806074/Huncoat-Greenway-.pdf>