

Little Eaton Greenway Community Engagement Report

December 2022

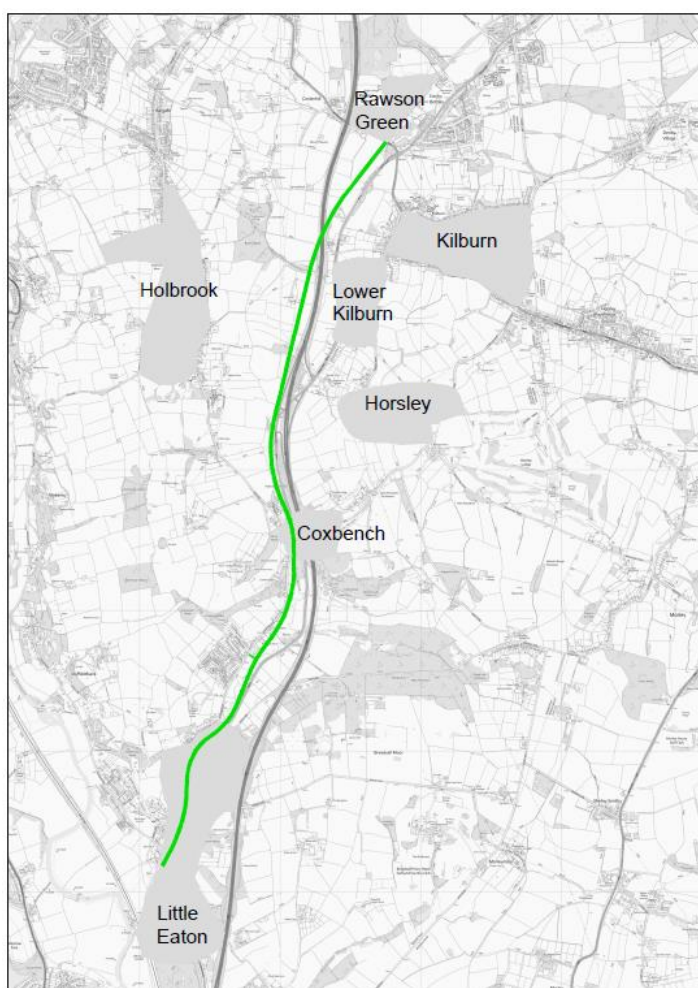
ACCESSIBLE FINAL v2 December 2022



“This project will revolutionise how we travel to school and work. It will increase the independence the children can have in commuting safely away from cars and promote sustainable modes of transport.”

Executive Summary

Derbyshire County Council acquired the Little Eaton Branch Line in 2014 with the purpose of developing the former railway as a multiuser path for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders. The route is 3.5 miles in length between Duffield Road and Rawson Green and will extend the National Cycle Network route 54 from Derby City to form the next phase of the Derbyshire Key Cycle Network development towards Ripley.



To seek local opinion and encourage participation in the project process, a community engagement and stakeholder event took place in September 2022 which attracted **168 attendees**. A four week online public survey was held throughout October which received an additional **318 respondents**.

The Findings

- From the 318 responses to the survey, results showed that **97% support** the project and almost 90% would use the Greenway at least monthly.
- Most indicated they would use the Greenway by walking, almost three quarters wished to cycle and half to use it for running. There was also a significant demand to ride horses, commensurate with the number of stables in the area.

- Predominant reasons for accessing the Greenway were for leisure, health and fitness and access to nature. However, scores for accessing shops and journeying to work were also significant.

We learnt ...

There is a significant local interest and support to re purpose the former railway line for public use by creating a safe space in which to move and play. Support was evident that developing a Greenway would be a positive outcome for the local community that would help boost economic benefits as well as a thriving environment. It was noted many participants supported the continued development of the wider Key Cycle Network (KCN) with numerous requests for additional links and connections to Ripley, Denby, Belper and Duffield. Although support for the project was remarkably high, participants did note some concerns including; security, potential flood risk and wildlife loss and these issues should come under careful consideration during the planning stages.

Community Engagement & Stakeholder Event

The event took place on 28th September 2022 to encourage members of the communities living along the line and interested stakeholders to view and comment on the project proposal. The O.A.P. Hall on Barley Close Little Eaton provided a perfect venue to exhibit plans of the route, 'before' and 'after' photographs of past projects, display banners and a comments sheet. A four week online survey launched on the same day and was also advertised at the event by QR codes placed around the room. The Little Eaton Greenway Supporters group also exhibited a display to show the work the volunteers have been doing to keep the southern section of the route open for walkers.

An event poster was widely distributed and displayed at various path junctions and access points along the route, in local shops, pubs, cafes, and was shared with schools and three Parish Councils. The poster was also shared online to stakeholder groups including both local and national area based walking, cycling and horse riding groups.



The event was open for a seven hour period to give people the option to drop in over lunchtime, during the afternoon or early evening. Attendance was continuous throughout this period, with 168 attendees recorded. The Little Eaton Primary School Council also attended the event with their Head Teacher.

Primarily, interest and discussions were both positive and enthusiastic for the project. Comments left were supportive. It was noted that there were some objections and concerns regarding landownership boundaries, security, and loss of wildlife. All were directed to complete the broader online survey.

Some comments received ...

“Amazing idea ... especially for horse riders ... all round positive”

“Great idea ... would be amazing for local transport and leisure”

“Great ... will be a fantastic opportunity to make the most of the green space”

Online Survey

The online survey was available on the Derbyshire County Council Consultations web page and was live from the date of the community engagement event held on 28th September for four weeks. The survey received **318 responses**.

- The significant majority of respondents had a Derbyshire postcode with a few from Nottingham.
- The gender split was 51% female and 49% male.
- Ages ranged from 1 to 89, Figure 1 below identifies the ages recorded and shows that over 50% of respondents were aged 40+ and 50+.
- 5% of respondents recorded themselves as disabled.
- 97% of respondents recorded themselves as White British.

Figure 1: Age ranges of survey respondents

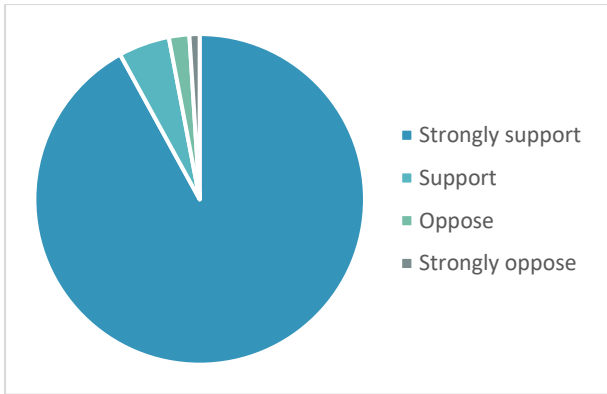
Ages	<30	30 - 49	50 - 69	70 - 89
Respondents	21	129	134	18
%	7.0	42.5	44.5	6.0

Engagement Insights

We asked ...

Do you support the project?

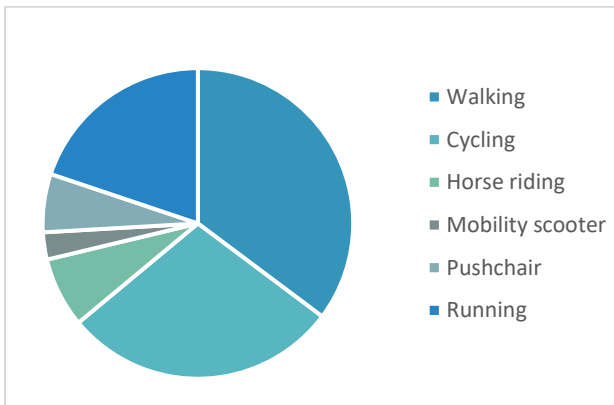
- The survey identified that 97% of respondents strongly support or support the project, and 3% opposed or strongly opposed the project.



We asked ...

How would you use the Greenway?

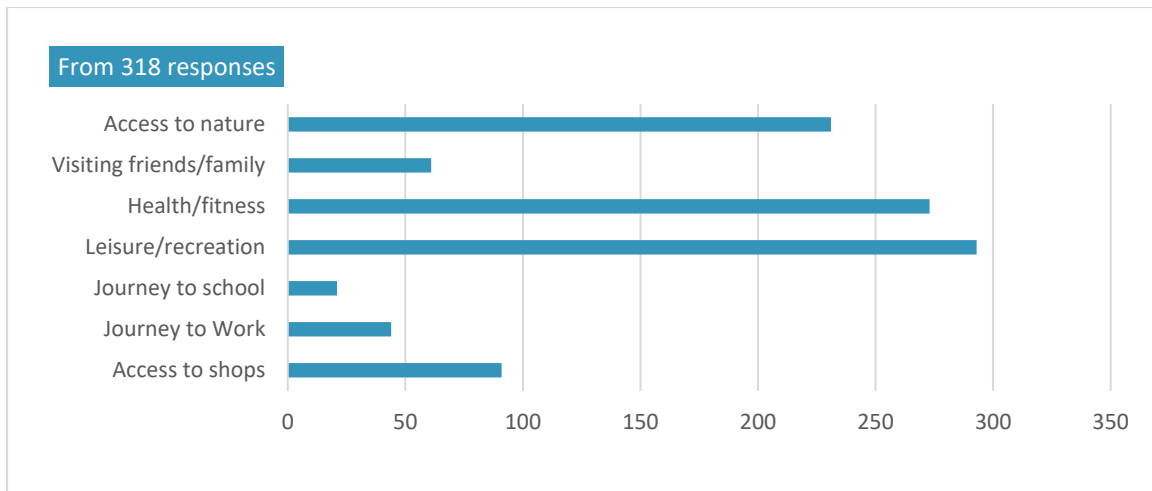
- The survey showed a significant demand for walking (87%) and particularly for cycling (71%). Almost half the respondents indicated use of the Greenway for running (49%). Horse riding (18%) was also a popular choice, reflecting the large horse community in the area. Demand for use with mobility scooters (7%) and push chairs (15%) is also significant and should be considered in all factors of design.
- The survey allowed respondents to select as many categories as applied, therefore the percentages reflect the number of respondents who made each selection. For example, 87% of all respondents selected walking.



We asked ...

For what purpose would you use the Greenway?

- Most respondents indicated that leisure and health would be the main purposes of their visits, with almost three quarters selecting access to nature. A third would use the Greenway to access shops, and many would choose to use the greenway to visit family and friends or journey to work and school.



- We were also told that the Greenway would provide a safe space away from traffic, be useable for dog walking, and disabled mobility aids.

We asked ...

How often would you use the Greenway?

- A high demand for the Greenway was established with 46% saying they would use the Greenway at least several times a week. A further 41% of respondents told us they would use the greenway 1-3 times a month. Combined, this suggests 87% of respondents would use the Greenway monthly and supports the idea that there would be a regular pattern of use.

We asked ...

Where would you like to access the greenway?

- All access points marked on the map were supported but particular interest was shown from the Rawson Green entry point. There were many requests to extend the route along the remaining line to Denby Bottles, towards John Flamsteed Secondary School, and particularly to connect the route to the Ripley Greenway further north. Popular requests were also made to access the route from the Barley Close flats in Little Eaton and an additional connection to the Bell & Harp pub on Alfreton Road.

Some comments received

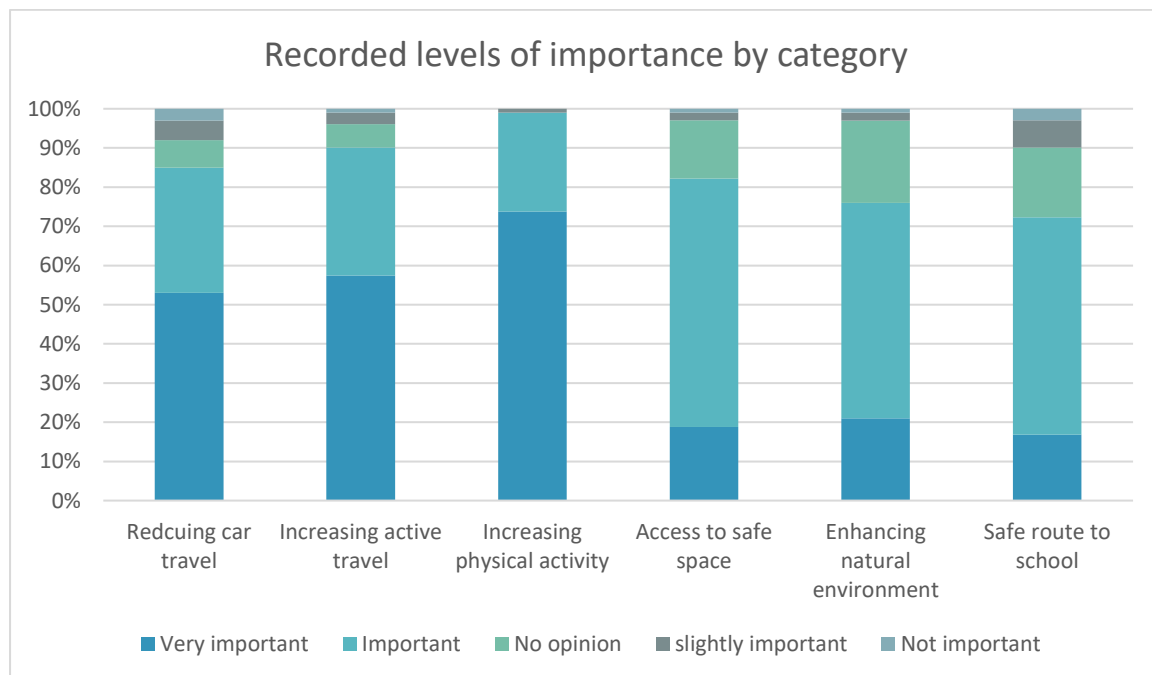
“It would be great if continued from the Ripley Greenway meaning that I would not have to use the road to commute.”

“It would be amazing if it could be linked up with the Greenway in Ripley. The connecting stretch between Lumb Farm and the new Greenway is along a busy road and doesn’t feel safe enough for buggies, dogs and young kids learning to ride a bike. But if there was a link that allows safe access from Ripley, the new proposed Greenway would be absolutely amazing for those of us who like running, cycling and taking a little trip to little Eaton on the weekends”

We asked ...

How important are the following to you?

- The data received indicated a high degree of importance across all categories. Of particular note is the importance to increase physical activity at a combined ‘very important’ + ‘important’ score of 98% and increasing active travel score of 91%.



- We also asked for other suggestions of what was important to respondents. Written answers included the following;
 - Provision of adequate facilities
 - Safe off road riding
 - Making space useable for everyone to improve mental health
 - Getting away from traffic & pollution
 - Local history of the railway
 - Disabled access to the countryside and access for adapted bikes
 - Building a complete off road network
 - Bring wasted land back to good use

We asked ...

For further comments and suggestions

“Absolutely fantastic idea”

“It’s a great idea and would be lovely to have a safe cycling space especially when out cycling with younger children.”

“It is a much needed facility to make the village safer”

“This would be a great resource to improve cycling and walking access out of Derby to the northern cycle and walking routes of the county.”

“It would make it a lot nicer going to visit my family in Holbrook cycling that way and also the horses I ride from Holbrook would benefit from this being opened up”

“It’s a great idea. We need more cycleways to enable safer cycling away from busy roads. My wife and I cycle thousands of miles a year from Belper. Anything that makes cycling easier and safer has to be good.”

“Strongly support the scheme - makes complete sense to link existing greenways/cycle paths”

Themes raised from the comments

Whilst many comments were supportive there were inevitably some questions and concerns. These are the main themes that were heard.

We heard you say ...

Joining routes together and building connections to other routes and through our villages would add value.

What we are doing

We are building a network of shared use off road routes across Derbyshire. Each project is just one piece of the jigsaw. The Little Eaton Greenway fits into a longer proposed route between Derby City and Ripley.

Visit the Derbyshire Mapping Portal and select “Cycle Routes” from the menu to see both built and proposed sections across the County.

[Derbyshire Mapping Portal - Derbyshire County Council](#)

We heard you say ...

Encouraging regeneration and securing economic local benefits for the area is needed.

What we are doing

The development of a network of routes will contribute to economic regeneration by providing safe and pleasant spaces for local daily movement and by improving the visitor experience to attract tourism.

We aim to develop links to hospitality businesses such as cafes, pubs, restaurants, and accommodation providers, as well as local shops, and visitor attractions.

We heard you say

How will this affect the environment and the natural wildlife? I am worried nature will lose out.

What we are doing

We have engaged with an independent ecologist to ensure we also deliver improvements to biodiversity. Although some trees will inevitably need to be removed, many new areas will be planted.

We will remove invasive species and create new viable habitat in appropriate spaces. All affected habitats are surveyed, and mitigations are carefully chosen to create a thriving natural corridor.

We heard you say

Flooding has been an issue with Bottle Brook overtopping the river banks. What measures are being considered to prevent the trail from making things worse?

What we are doing

We are working closely with both our own flood team and the Environment Agency to ensure that any development will not have an adverse effect on the local hydrology. Drainage is a key part of any trail design; it can help the flow of water through better drainage provision and maintains the integrity of the site without flood damage.

We heard you say

The path must be fit for purpose, the surfacing should be suitable for all activities.

What we are doing

A shared use space requires careful consideration. A balance will need to be struck to find the right level of comfort for a variety of users. The environment also plays a part to allow wildlife to co-exist alongside people. The changes between urban and rural sections may require different treatments and both planners and funding agents will have an opinion. Many of the rail trails around Derbyshire have a semi bound surface to provide an all-weather path with grip and drainage.

We heard you say

The access points and gates along the path must be accessible for people with disabilities, including adapted bikes.

How will motorbike access be denied?

What we are doing

All new path development must consider the Equalities Act 2010 regulations and if access restrictions are found to be necessary, to slow users at roadsides for example, appropriate furniture will be installed to allow mobility scooters and adapted bikes to access the route.

We can no longer install furniture that prevents or deters motorbike access as this would also discriminate against legitimate users of the trail.

Conclusions & what we learnt

Summary

The evidence supports the progression of this project and provides a clear understanding that the general population would welcome and enjoy the development. This evidence will be used to support the planning process and funding bid opportunities.

Demand

There is a high local demand to re purpose the former railway line for public use by creating a safe space in which to move and play. This study provides evidence that local residents will use the new route for physical activity and travelling to work and school. There is also a clear demand to use the space to access nature for recreation as well as to support mental health. Support was evident that developing a Greenway was a positive outcome for the locality that would help boost economic benefits as well as a thriving environment.

Connectivity

It was noted many participants supported the continued development of the wider Key Cycle Network (KCN) with numerous requests for additional links and connections to Ripley, Denby, Belper and Duffield. Particularly, requests were received to extend the project north of Rawson Green to Denby Bottles following the remainder of the track bed, at one time proposed by the former coal site Cinderhill redevelopment plan. This would provide access to the BDenby Hall Business Park, The Denby Pottery visitor centre, and John Flamsteed Secondary School.

There was also much interest to make the connecting paths form the nearby communities safer and suitable for use as many are currently in poor condition.

Concerns

Although support for the project was remarkably high, participants did note some concerns including; security, potential flood risk and wildlife loss and these issues should come under careful consideration during the planning stages.

Concern was also raised regarding the possibility of trespass by people and dogs onto adjacent land and the effect this might have on livestock and property. It is recognised that a development of this type will bring change and that appropriate solutions and boundary treatments are discussed and planned with neighbouring landowners.