

# Amber Valley Active Travel

## Derby Cycling Group comments

Ian Dent, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2025

This document concentrates on the cycling aspects of active travel within the Borough. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying map.

## Derby Cycling Group

<https://derbycyclinggroup.org.uk/site/>

A volunteer led campaigning group for a cohesive cycle network in and around Derby (including large parts of Amber Valley).

## Amber Valley current situation

Currently there are very few routes specifically for cycling within the Borough. There are extensive opportunities for improvement.

A number of possible improvements are the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council rather than the Borough. Merging of borough and county councils should remove the complication of differing areas of responsibility.

## National Cycle Network

With the exception of the northern end of NCN67 which terminates just north of Shipley Park, there is no National Cycle Network within Amber Valley.

With the completion and opening of the Little Eaton Greenway (2026?) this will be improved with the extension of NCN54 northwards to near Kilburn (Rawson Green).

Amber Valley is an obvious "blind spot" within the existing network <https://explore.osmaps.com/?lat=52.9859&lon=-1.40664&zoom=9.1125&overlays=os-ncn-layer&style=Standard&type=2d> with the lack of the network within the Borough impacting on connections between the existing NCN routes.

## Cycleways

Within the Borough there are very few cycleways with the exceptions being the Ripley Greenway and the NCN and connections within Shipley Park.

## Paths, Bridleways and Tracks

There are a number of paths, tracks and bridleways where cycling is allowed but, in a number of cases, the surface or width is not adequate to support cycling either at all or for large numbers of cyclists. For example:

- Cromford canal towpath between Ambergate and Peak Junction. This is an attractive route but is narrow and there are often conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians. Without extensive widening this would not be suitable as a well used cycling route.
- Old roads north of Langley Mill towards Ironville. Potholes are extensive and require the use of a mountain bike or similar and prevent use by some disability vehicles.
- North Lane between Sunny Hill near Milford and Farnah Green is a restricted byway and is a challenging mountain biking route unsuitable for any other kind of cycle.

Some rarely used roads are good for cycling (e.g. Wyver Lane in Belper) but are not traffic free (even if traffic rare).

## Quiet Lanes

Amber Valley includes one of the few areas of Quiet Lanes within Derbyshire in the area around Hazelwood. Whilst this could be a good treatment for rural, quiet roads, in the Hazelwood example this hasn't been implemented well. The "Quiet Lane" consists solely of signage at the entrance to the quiet area. The roads remain with 60 mph national speed limits and no treatment has been made to the roads to encourage slower speeds or more care from motorists.

It is understood that, on the basis of this example and a few others within Derbyshire, Derbyshire County Council are not in favour of implementing more Quiet Lanes.

However, nationally, there is more support for Quiet Lanes and, with the right treatment to ensure slow speeds and suitability for cycling, could be suitable for a number of roads in the Borough.

## 20 mph Roads

Other parts of the country have been positive about 20mph speed limits, particularly in urban areas. This includes parts of Derby City (Darley Abbey, Littleover and elsewhere).

Amber Valley has very few roads with 20mph speed limits and these tend to be special cases such as private roads or new estates (e.g. Chevin Road in Duffield).

Ripley has a small 20 mph zone (Outram Street and around).

In general, Amber Valley are yet to embrace the benefits of 20 mph zones.

## Rural Roads

A lot of rural roads within the Borough can provide attractive and relatively safe routes for cyclists.

However, in most cases the speed limit on the roads is 60mph and some routes are narrow causing safety issues from sharing with, often fast moving, motor traffic. In addition, surfaces on rural routes tend to be poor with many potholes, particularly to the sides of the roads.

There is the opportunity to make use of a wider network or rural roads improved for safe cycling.

## **On road painted lanes**

There are some lanes painted on roads but these are now nationally accepted as being of little benefit to cyclists and, in some cases, actually increase the risks of cycling.

Where the on road painted lanes exist, they are generally blighted by parked cars, have often had the paint worn away over years, and often have a lot of road debris making them unattractive to use.

## **Destinations**

The planning is likely to consider various classes of “destinations” including:

- railway stations
- significant educational sites (e.g. secondary schools)
- significant employers
- shopping centres

New estates that are planned and are of a significant size should be well connected to existing cycle routes or new cycle routes (outside the scope of the estate) need to be created as part of the developments.

As well as destinations within the Borough, significant locations close to (but outside) the Borough should be considered as important in active travel planning. In particular, areas of development close to the edge of the Borough need to be co-ordinated with neighbouring local authorities (e.g. Mickleover area new estates).

Various tourist destinations need to be considered for safe and attractive access by cycles and these include:

## **Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site**

The only World Heritage Site within the East Midlands is mostly within Amber Valley.

Support for cycling within the WHS is very poor with the only facilities in Amber Valley being:

- old canal towpath between Ambergate and Peak Junction
- a few bridleways with surfaces unsuitable for general cycling

The WHS is of a size (about 15 miles from Masson Mill to Derby Silk Mill) where cycling would be an excellent mode of transport but the lack of facilities make this very unattractive. The WHS management plan includes a goal of establishing attractive cycle routes.

The Derwent Valley Trust (a charity) has been working to develop the Derwent Valley Cycleway along the length of the River Derwent. Portions of the route are already suitable for cycling and wheeling.

## **Kedleston Hall**

Kedleston Hall is the only significant National Trust site (as opposed for land ownership) within Amber Valley.

Cycle access to the Hall is very poor with no safe connections from the surrounding area to the Hall. There is a bridleway to the south of the Hall grounds which is partially a good surface but this does not provide access to the Hall and Park entrances.

## **Allestree Park**

Whilst outside of Amber Valley (it is within Derby City), the Park abuts to the Borough boundary. The Park is the location of the largest urban rewilding project in the country and the intention of the City Council is to make the Park a “destination”.

As the Park is so close to Amber Valley it needs to be considered as a destination for residents of Amber Valley particularly in Quarndon, Duffield and Belper

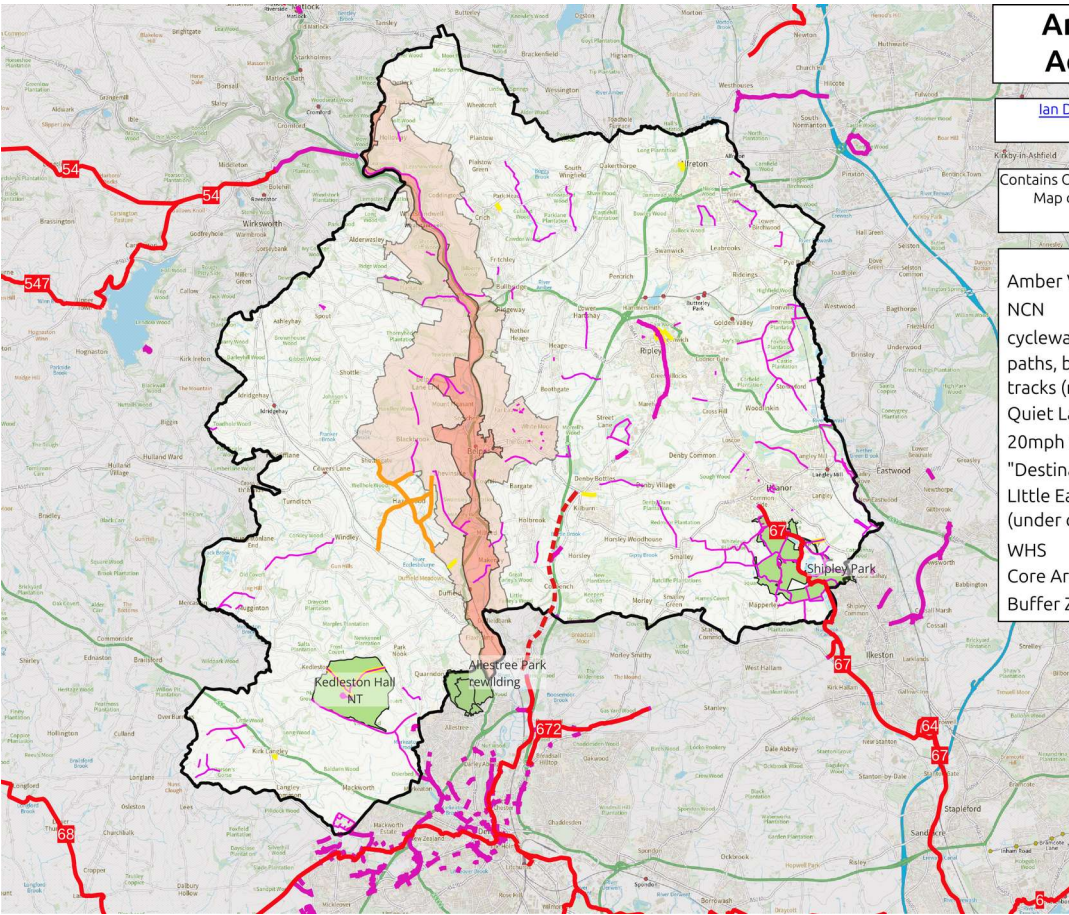
Access to the Park from all directions is poor for all modes of active travel. There are no safe and attractive cycle routes from the north or the west of the Park.

Providing active travel routes within the Park can, as it “touches” Amber Valley, provide benefits for Amber Valley residents by addressing safety issues on the surrounding roads (within Amber Valley).

## **Shipley Park**

The Park is an attractive location for family cycling and is well connected to the south via NCN67.

However, connections to the Park from the north (e.g. Langley Mill, Heanor) are poor.



# Amber Valley Active Travel

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Map data from [OpenStreetMap](#)

- Amber Valley Borough
- NCN
- cycleways
- paths, bridleways and tracks (maybe poor surface)
- Quiet Lane
- 20mph roads
- "Destinations"
- Little Eaton Greenway (under construction)
- WHS
- Core Area
- Buffer Zone

