

**Looe Valley Trails
Feasibility Study Lanhydrock – Liskeard - West Looe – Plymouth
July 2017**

**Final Report
Looe Development Trust
July 2017**



This project is funded by:

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Executive Summary

This report recommends the creation of 70 km of new cycle Trails in South East Cornwall, connecting Lanhydrock, Liskeard, Looe and Plymouth, adding to the 21 km Liskeard to Looe Trail recommended in our previous report. The trails are aimed at experienced cyclists and include heritage and ecological interest, as well as some stunning moor and coastal views. Half of the Trail route is off-road with the rest on quiet rural lanes. The Trails connect to the National Cycle Network at Plymouth and Bodmin and have excellent rail access to encourage sustainable travel.

At an indicative works cost for all the trails of just over £8 million and a total project cost of around £18 million, the project could attract between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 visitors to the area each year and is projected to add £2,500,000 net additional spend to the local visitor economy per year.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the second of two reports into the feasibility of creating a new network of Trails in the East and West Looe Valleys. The first study investigated the East Looe Valley between Liskeard and Looe. We recommended a route broadly following the valley with a loop at the southern end up the West Looe river. There is significant heritage interest on this route, which aligns with the branch line railway and former canal linking the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site to the port of Looe. Ecologically there is also much interest particularly in the estuary and we took care to design a route that would respect and enhance the environment. The proposed route in the East Looe valley is designed for moderate cyclists, includes some climbs, and is approximately 20km in length. Some of the route could be developed for mixed use including walkers and equestrians. The first study was funded by the EU LEADER programme, Cornwall Council, the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site, Liskeard Town Council and Liskeard Town Forum.
- 1.2 During the work we carried out extensive consultation and were quickly alerted to the greater potential impact we could achieve if this route was part of a wider network and linked to other trails. We therefore sought additional funding to investigate routes to link the Liskeard – Looe section to Lanhydrock in the west, from where users could access the Camel Trail to Padstow, and to Plymouth in the east. We are grateful for financial support from Looe Town Council, the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP and Cornwall Council to make this additional study possible.
- 1.3 The proposed network of trails would be a significant addition to the tourism infrastructure in South East Cornwall. During the first phase, we conducted desk studies to assess the potential of a Trail investment to generate additional tourism revenue for the area, and concluded that we could anticipate between £2 and £3 million of additional tourism revenue for local businesses if the whole wider network of trails could be implemented. This report therefore focuses on the practical feasibility and cost of creating the additional trails to achieve this benefit, and the environmental and heritage potential of doing so.
- 1.4 The study team was carried on from the Liskeard-Looe route and comprised staff from Sustrans and CORMAC leading on route identification and costing, consultants Andrew Thompson Heritage and Phil Collins Associates for heritage and ecology advice respectively, under the project management of Looe Development Trust. A Steering Group of local stakeholders and funders advised on the final report. The work was carried out between March and July 2017.
- 1.5 The aim of the study is to identify a set of routes which is practically feasible from an engineering and environmental perspective, to identify the potential heritage and economic opportunities, and to provide an indicative costing for implementation.

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2. ROUTE CONCEPT AND ROUTE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The proposed route divides into three sections: Lanhydrock to Liskeard – the Glynn Valley section; Glynn Valley to Looe – the West Looe section; Looe to Plymouth via the Cremyll Ferry. Full information on the preferred route for each section including detailed maps is given in Annexes A-C so we just present a brief overview here.
- 2.2 The character of this route is challenging in places with some repeated climbs and descents in the wooded sections. It is considerably longer in distance than the Liskeard to Looe section at an estimated total of approximately 70 km of which approximately half (34 km) is off-road, mostly in the Glynn Valley and West Looe Valley sections, with all of the rest being on quiet rural lanes. Given this length, our strategy has been to try to work with corporate or estate landowners where possible and to identify suitable quiet lanes to avoid excessive cost. The aim is to appeal to a wider audience leisure cyclists seeking more extensive activity over several days, to encourage more staying visitors to the area. Some sections of the new routes would also offer better access to town and city centres, rail or boat transport for local residents.

The Route Proposals

- 2.3 The preferred route identified is really lovely with varied interest, from the rural and moor views in the Glynn Valley woodland particularly at Largin Hill Fort to the riverside tracks in the West Looe and the stunning coastal route and beach access at Military Road. A series of existing sites would make ideal hubs and stopping points along the route offering local business growth driven by the potentially significant additional visitor numbers as a result of the trail. At this stage, all proposals are conditional on landowner consent.

Glynn Valley

- 2.4 During the first study we were alerted to a potential route from Looe to Lanhydrock which had been mapped by a local cyclist. This route proceeds (with difficulty in some places) from West Looe to Herodsfoot up the West Looe Valley, then uses quiet lanes to skirt round the southern edge of the Boconnoc Estate through the hamlet of Couch's Mill, crossing the A390 at Carnsews approx. 1 mile east of Lostwithiel and then proceeding on quiet lanes to Respryn Bridge and the Lanhydrock Estate (for map see our first report annexes). From Connon Bridge on this route, lanes are also available south of the A390 to connect to Liskeard via Dobwalls. We have explored the on-road sections of this route and consider it perfectly feasible as a low-cost, short term option to enable the Lanhydrock-Plymouth route to be created. However, it is relatively lacking in interest so we have investigated whether a more attractive alternative which would offer better visitor potential is available.
- 2.5 Our early investigations led us to consider the extensive woodland to the south of the A38 and railway in the Glynn Valley, potentially offering the possibility of creating this as an off-road route using existing, improved, forest trails with some lovely views. Between Doublebois and Liskeard there is an existing off-road cycle trail giving access both to the Town Centre and Moorswater on the East Looe section.
- 2.6 Our recommended route uses the existing track from Lanhydrock to Bodmin Parkway then proposes a newly created cycle track heading east from Bodmin Parkway as part of the works to create a new A38 roundabout at this point. Quiet lanes offer a short term alternative between Lanhydrock and the start of the woodland. The route enters high-level woodland south of the railway which is in the management of the Forestry Commission and proceeds using improved forest tracks and contouring round a series of north/south valleys all the way to Bodithiel Wood to the immediate west of Trago. At this point one recommended route continues in the woodland between the railway and the A38 to Doublebois where it picks up the existing track to Liskeard and Moorswater. This route proposes staying on tracks at a high level in order to avoid

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interference with sensitive angling activity on the River Fowey at Two Waters Foot, from which our route is physically separated by a leat. The other route heads south to connect to the West Looe section on lanes.

- 2.7 It should be noted that at this stage that we are currently not in a position to implement this proposal as we have not yet secured landowner agreement from the Boconnoc Estate or Trago Mills whose land would be essential to this proposal (see section 3). The Forestry Commission, who own the westernmost section of woodland south of the Glynn Valley and lease most of the rest between there and Trago, are willing in principle to engage with the project should the landowner agree.
- 2.8 We have considered the possibility of alternative routes to the north of the A38 or to the south of the railway for the Trago to Doublebois section. We are unable to recommend either of these options. North of the A38 would involve two difficult crossings of the trunk road and it is not at all clear after Pengelly Wood how the Loveny Valley could be navigated nor what to do to the east of this point. The A38 itself is too busy to be recommended as a cycle route but an off-road trail adjacent to the southern side of the road would be a theoretical possibility, albeit that it would require cooperation from the same landowners as the preferred route. There may also be significant resistance to this from local anglers who are very active in this stretch of the Fowey. South of the railway in the woods / fields the topography is challenging, access through Trago warehouse areas is a significant problem and the land is in multiple ownership, particularly on the approach to Doublebois, so we consider an off-road route to be very difficult to deliver. The A390 between Taphouse and Redpost is, like the A38, too busy to be recommended as a cycle trail although an off-road track to the immediate north side of the road might be possible subject to landowner agreement. Finally, crossing to the south of the A390 there is a network of lanes through Penellick, St Pinnock, Trevelmond and South Boduel to Combe Junction Crossing in the East Looe valley which may be a suitable alternative if all else fails, although this route is undesirable because it is significantly hilly in places. These alternatives may need to be explored further early in the next phase of work as it would be highly undesirable to lose the Liskeard link from the trail network, although our strong preference is to pursue the recommended route in the Glynn Valley.
- 2.9 Our recommended route in the Glynn Valley from Bodmin Parkway to Liskeard is approximately 23 km which is almost all off-road except for short sections at each end.

West Looe

- 2.10 From the Glynn Valley route at Bodithiel, a short linking section using lanes which cross the A390 between East and West Taphouse offers access via a further lane to the south of Connon Bridge to Deerpark Forest which is in the ownership of the Forestry Commission and where Forest Holidays already operate a small scale cycle hub and cafe. Deerpark Forest can also be accessed from the on-road route from Lanhydrock via Connon Bridge should this option be necessary. A further short section of lane south from Herodsfoot connects to the existing tracks in Churchbridge Woods on the West Looe river and then on to Sowden's Bridge via a section of converted footpath. Here the West Looe route meets the southern loop of the Liskeard-Looe route, continuing into the Millpool carpark in Looe via Watergate and Kilminorth Wood.
- 2.11 There are three sensitivities on this section. The first is at Connon Bridge where, ideally, we would adapt an existing footpath to the north and east of the landfill site. However, the access to the lane at Connon Bridge is not permitted by the owners of Connon Bridge Cottage whose land it crosses. It may be that an alternative access point can be established once the landfill site is closed and reverts to Cornwall Council in 2018, but for the moment the lane appears the only alternative. The second sensitivity is at Herodsfoot where previous consultation drew our

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attention to the need to avoid creating traffic or parking difficulties in this steep and narrow village. We believe this can be resolved through very clear traffic signage diverting people in cars to routes away from the village centre, and with the cooperation of Forest Holidays at Deerpark just outside Herodsfoot village who we understand would be keen to act as a hub location for visitors to this section of trail. The third challenge is between Muchlarnick Ford and Sowden's Bridge. This is currently a little-used footpath which is valued by local residents as a secluded environment. The stretch of river is used by the local angling association, although recently reported catch numbers are very low. Our recommended route here adapts the footpath to the east of the river, staying uphill from the river at the boundary with the fields above. We believe this is far enough away from the river and could be fenced for the most part to avoid conflict, although representation from the anglers indicates they do not agree with us on this. The landowner (Duchy of Cornwall) is willing to engage with the project at the next stage. Without this short section, the West Looe route becomes undeliverable.

- 2.12 We have considered several alternatives in this West Looe section. At Muchlarnick / Sowden's Bridge the topography means there is no alternative but to follow the West Looe valley. We investigated the lanes to the west of the river via Muchlarnick Farm. The lane down to the Ford, despite being an unclassified road, is in practice a farm track which is in very poor condition and extremely steep as it approaches the river – it would be expensive to renovate and we cannot anyway recommend it because of the gradient. Although on this side there is also a footpath through Hobb Park joining the land down to Sowden's Bridge, the landowners make it clear that they do not permit cycling. So we are left with the east side. Further up above our recommended route, the fields become very steep giving practical construction and cost difficulties, and a track here would conflict with farming activity and damage ancient woodland.
- 2.13 Our recommended route in the West Looe valley between Bodithiel and Shallow Pool where it joins the proposed East Looe route is approximately 16.3 km of which 9.4 km is off-road.

Looe to Plymouth

- 2.14 Looe to Plymouth was originally proposed as a section of the National Cycle Network (route 2) but at the time this could not be taken forward. We have revived this proposed route for this study. This proposed section is substantially on quiet lanes. Some steep lanes are inevitable on the initial exit from East Looe, after which our preferred route would follow the coast path through residential roads in Plaidy (currently not adopted – section 3) then an improved bridleway and lanes from Millandreath to Seaton. From Seaton the route then proceeds along the coast road through Donderry to Crafhole, then accesses Military Road after Tregantle Fort. There are glorious coastal views and a series of beach access points along this whole section of quiet road. At the eastern end, the route uses lanes near Rame Head (coast path access for cycles to Rame Head itself is not permitted on environmental grounds, although cyclists would be at liberty to take a break and explore this section on foot) and above the villages of Kingsand and Cawsand from where the Mount Edgecumbe estate can be accessed for the final descent to the Cremyll Ferry, allowing access to Plymouth near Royal William Yard.
- 2.15 There are several points along this section where we have looked at alternatives. Exiting Looe to the East is a potential challenge because a vital section of the roads is unadopted. If access here cannot be negotiated, then the only realistic alternative is to proceed up to Barbican Road and onto the B3257 at St Martin's by Looe, for a short stretch until the turning to Millandreath. Because of the traffic volumes and bends on the B3257, we cannot recommend this route.

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- 2.16 The bridleway to the east of Millandreath is quite steep and would need some improvement to achieve an acceptable standard. The lanes from Millandreath to Seaton via Bucklawren would offer a cheaper alternative. Although all are public highway, local residents and the parish council have expressed doubts as to their suitability. Further consideration and consultation in this area will be required if this on-road alternative is preferred.
- 2.17 At Crafhole, a traffic management scheme is under consideration to ease congestion at the junction in the centre of the village. We have alerted the team responsible to the Trail proposals which will be taken into account. The short section of B3247 between Crafhole and Tregantle is too busy in the summer to be ideal for cyclists. The coastpath here has a permissive arrangement with the MOD to cross the firing ranges when they are not in use, but we understand from MOD that anywhere up to 50% of the time this route could be unavailable. Our preferred long term solution is the creation of a safer off-road track on the southern side of the B3247 from Crafhole to the Military Road turning, which would require the agreement of landowners including the National Trust and MOD (see section 3).
- 2.18 At Mount Edgecumbe, we considered the coastal route via the Minadew Brakes and the coast path. A significant challenge is presented at Fort Picklecombe as to how best to ascend the hill from the coast path to the park. This is exacerbated by a recent cliff fall which has left part of the coast path accessible on foot via a diversion but we can see no way this could be adapted for cycles, meaning that the final approach to the house cannot practicably be via the coast. We also understand that the local community would not support the use of the Minadew as a cycling route as it is currently a well-used and popular walking track. Our recommended route avoids these problems and is, we believe, the most cost effective option as it makes a gentle ascent and uses existing tracks, but it would be possible to create alternative routes across the park which may offer better coastal views. Further discussion with the estate management team and owners is required at the next stage to finalise this section of the route.
- 2.19 The total length of the proposed Looe to Plymouth route (to the Cremyll Ferry) is approximately 31 km which is mostly on-road apart from short sections at Looe, Millandreath and Mount Edgecumbe.

Other Linked Trails and Transport and Access options

- 2.20 South East Cornwall is currently a glaring gap on the National Cycle Network. The proposal would link to the NCN at Plymouth in the east and Bodmin in the west, potentially attracting a significant volume of visitors interested in the long distance challenge or exploring the new area from neighbouring routes on a day-trip basis.
- 2.21 The proposed route offers several specific opportunities for extended longer distance trips by linking to other trails:
- At Lanhydrock, as well as accessing the rides on the Lanhydrock estate, the route links with the Camel Trail offering easy access to Wadebridge and Padstow and the prospect of a coast to coast route which we believe would be a very popular attraction for active families. Cardinham Woods – where there is a small network of trails suitable for touring bikes and more routes in the woodland available for off-roading – is also easily accessible from Lanhydrock
 - From Bodmin Parkway, it is possible to take lanes to Restormel Castle and Lostwithiel. In the longer term, an additional off-road option might be explored for this section. In Bodmin access can be achieved to National Cycle Network Route 3 which extends to the Roseland Peninsula to the south and to North Cornwall and North Devon.

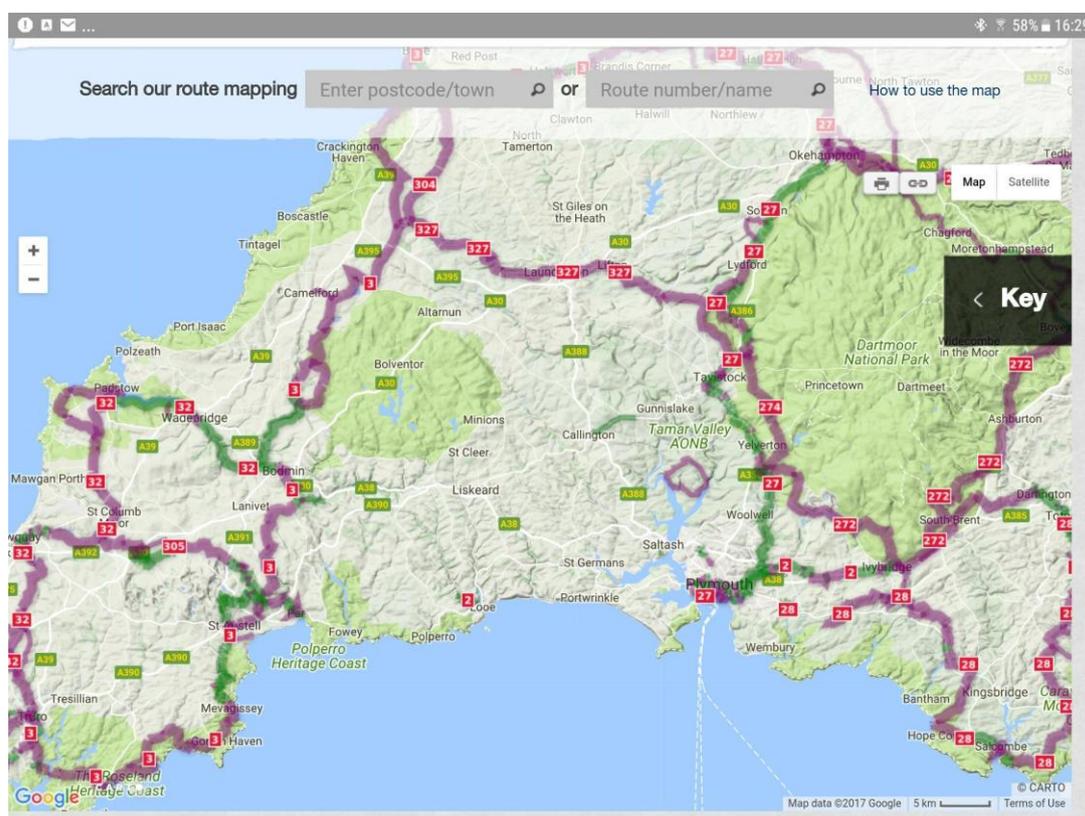
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- From Liskeard and Dobwalls, the Caradon Trail can be accessed up to Bodmin Moor and the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site at Minions and further east to Rilla Mill and Pensilva, from where there is an on-road link to Kit Hill and the Tamar Valley Trails
- In Plymouth via the Cremyll Ferry, access can be gained to the family cycle Trail through Plymbridge Woods (via the city centre) and to National Cycle Network route 27 up the Tamar Valley to Tavistock and Okehampton
- We are aware of interest in the creation of a cycle Trail from Callington to Saltash which would further complement our proposals.

2.22 There are several points on the route which have excellent rail access, on the main line between Plymouth, Liskeard and Bodmin, and branch lines from Liskeard to Looe and the Bodmin – Wenford steam railway. GWR's restrictive policy on the carriage of bicycles on trains is currently a significant impediment to this and both they and the trail may lose potential business as a result, on both the main line and the Liskeard – Looe branch. We strongly recommend that this should be reviewed.

2.23 The Cremyll Ferry from Mount Edgecumbe to Plymouth Stonehouse (near Royal William Yard) is an important transport link to the east of our proposed network. The Ferry already carries bicycles although some increase in capacity may be desirable if this Trail becomes as popular as we hope.

2.24 Finally, parking. We recognise that many Trail users will wish to approach the Trail by car. Parking is already available at Lanhydrock (although this can be full on very busy days in the summer) and Deerpark Forest, in Liskeard and Looe, near Tregantle and at Mount Edgecumbe, and we propose an additional parking facility at Moorswater as part of the proposed heritage hub there. Informal local parking is also available at many points along the route, although as previously mentioned, some of this would cause difficulties for local residents and visitors alike because of the narrowness of lanes and village centres and should therefore be discouraged by Trail signage (e.g. to avoid Herodsfoot).



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3. Land Ownership

- 3.1 Land ownership records along the route have been obtained for this study through the Sustrans license and where required individual ownership information has been purchased. Full details are given in the confidential Annex D to this report. Key points are briefly summarised in this section.
- 3.2 Our brief for this study was not to try to achieve legal agreements with landowners but simply to approach them to test their willingness to engage with the study and to consider allowing a route across their land at a future stage. All parts of the proposed route therefore remain subject to landowner agreement.
- 3.3 Much of the woodland in the Glynn Valley is in the management of the Forestry Commission, either owned by themselves or in the ownership of the Boconnoc Estate. We are pleased that the Forestry Commission have indicated willingness to work with us on the creation of the Trail. Their constraints will be driven by operational requirements – some forest tracks will need to be closed from time to time for logging operations – and may influence the exact routes available. Boconnoc are aware of our interest but have not yet agreed to the proposals.
- 3.4 At Connon Bridge local access arrangements will need to be agreed with the landowner (details in Annex D)
- 3.5 One other key section to the east of the West Looe river between Sowden’s Bridge and Muchlarnick Ford is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall with the land farmed by tenants. There is a public right of way – footpath access – above the east bank and for the most part this is a clearly delineated track. Liskeard and District Angling Society have a license to fish on this stretch of river, and have made it clear to us in consultation that they would object to a cycle trail. A small number of local residents also responded to our initial consultation with concerns about this section. The farming tenancy requires access to the river for cattle and this is also ecologically important to maintain, but there is no in-principle objection. We have consulted the Duchy extensively about access to this stretch and discussions will need to continue into the next phase of development.
- 3.6 In the section between Bodithiel and Doublebois in the Glynn Valley, the preferred route north of the railway line currently does not have landowner consent. Trago are unwilling to accommodate the route because of security concerns and the privacy of a residential property. We have so far also not received any response to our enquiries from the landowners of the final plot towards Doublebois. Again, further details are included in Annex D
- 3.7 On the Looe to Plymouth route access between Looe and Millandreath along the coast is difficult because the network of roads to the eastern end of Plaidy are unadopted. The coast path has a right of way through the area but this is as a footpath only. It may be open to the Council to negotiate adoption and repair/maintenance of these roads in exchange for access. If this is not possible, a safe route will need to be found via St Martin-by-Looe.
- 3.8 At Crafhole we have already touched on the ownership of land to the south of the B3247 leading to Military Road. On leaving Crafhole after a short section of lane, the land to the south is owned by the National Trust who have indicated willingness to engage with us over the creation of an off-road track along the field boundary, and by the MOD around Tregantle Fort where the land is rented out to a tenant for sheep grazing. We have spoken with the MOD landowner requesting consideration of moving the field boundary to widen the verge sufficiently for an off-road track and this is under consideration, although any response is likely to take a considerable time. Once on Military Road, Cornwall Council own land to each side of the initial stretch of road leading to the coast and it may be possible to create additional off-road potential here.

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- 3.9 We have also spoken with the English Nature staff responsible for the England Coast Path 2020 project in this area. This project is designed to take the whole of the Coast Path off-road and although only for walking use could benefit from collaboration in places. The Coast Path at Tregantle goes through the firing ranges which are regularly closed, meaning that the diversion on the B3247 has to be used. A joint approach might be possible if MOD are able to accommodate our request.
- 3.10 At Mount Edgecumbe, the Country Park is owned jointly by Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council and an increase of cycling routes in this area would help to deliver the recently-adopted Neighbourhood Plan. The Mount Edgecumbe local management team is keen to cooperate with the project to increase visitor numbers to the estate. Cycle trails already exist in the park which is also crisscrossed by concrete tracks, and the Barrow Centre has shops and a cafe that would benefit from additional business. Between here and Kingsand / Cawsand, the estate identified a potential route using the Minadew Brakes and tracks towards Fort Picklecombe, with a tricky uphill section before accessing the park. We are unsure of the cost effectiveness on purely cycling grounds of creating a trail at this point compared to exiting the estate at Maker Church and using a short section of the B3247 as far as Maker Heights from where several lane options exist, and we also understand that use of the Minadew might meet with community objections. This will be down to whether landowners and investors have an appetite for the required works at Mount Edgecumbe which would create a delightful route but could probably only be justified as a long term improvements to the estate which could increase visitor numbers. At Kingsand / Cawsand, our proposal is to use Forder Lane and New Road through the village. An alternative on lanes via Wiggle and Treninnow Plantation has been pointed out to us as a way of avoiding the centre of the villages; we believe this to be a viable but much less attractive option so are not recommending it at this stage. A further on road alternative via Millbrook is also possible but we do not prefer it as it bypasses the whole Rame / Mount Edgecumbe section of the route.

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4. Environmental considerations

- 4.1 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was carried out as part of the study. This focused on proposed new off-road sections of the Trail route in the Glynn Valley, West Looe and Looe-Plymouth sections. The full PEA is attached as Annex F.
- 4.2 Both the Glynn Valley and most of the West Looe proposed routes are within Areas of Great Landscape Value which are therefore of County (but not national or international) significance for their landscape character. These areas are also County Wildlife Sites. There are no sites of national or international significance for biodiversity that would be affected by the proposed route.
- 4.3 In terms of the historic environment, Largin Castle is an iron age hill fort significant parts of which are still evident. It is accessible on foot from the adjacent track.
- 4.4 The West Looe supports a range of nationally important habitats, the most significant of which are areas of ancient oak woodland including between Sowden's Bridge and Churchbridge. The Glynn Valley is dominated by coniferous plantation under active forestry management with some sections of ancient woodland.
- 4.5 The river valleys are an important habitat for protected species principally bats and otters. They are of county value for fish – sea trout and atlantic salmon.
- 4.6 Invasive species of rhododendron and himalayan balsam are extensively present across the area.
- 4.7 In terms of the ecological impacts of the proposed trails, these are considered to be very limited where – as is the case for much of the route – the trail will be constructed along existing forest tracks. The impact is unlikely to be as significant as that caused by regular forestry operations. There will be a greater impact where there is proposed new trail construction but this can be mitigated by careful construction practice, woodland and ride management. There will be very limited impact in the Glynn Valley.
- 4.8 There is no significant severance effect because of the proposed extensive use of existing tracks. Route design must avoid severance of the farmland from the river below Muchlarnick to avoid adverse impacts from the loss of grazing access.
- 4.9 There are no significant risks of long term contamination except the spread of invasive species during the construction phase, which should be mitigated as far as possible through good operational management. There are no significant effects on hydrology.
- 4.10 The Looe-Plymouth section is, in the main, on-road so impacts are minimal. The main ecological consideration is in the highly sensitive Rame Head area and around the coast to Mount Edgecumbe, and in view of this we have avoided these sections in our recommended route preferring less sensitive options further away from the coast.
- 4.11 The PEA makes detailed recommendations as to additional surveys and mitigation activity that should be undertaken during the Trail development and implementation phases.
- 4.12 As with the East Looe section, the project offers the potential to engage the local community in the construction and maintenance of the trail and a range of interesting environmental projects could be put forward to Heritage Lottery as part of a suite of activity also involving heritage access and interpretation.

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5. Heritage opportunities

5.1 Desk based research confirms the importance of the three key areas on the route from a heritage perspective: Mount Edgecumbe; Herodsfoot; and Largin Castle. Further investigations of the Limekiln below Shallowpool, on the West Looe route where it meets the Liskeard-Looe section, has identified the potential for an archaeological investigation, clearance and stabilisation, and interpretation of an associated riverside quay which is currently covered by vegetation. Sites at Mount Edgecumbe, Herodsfoot and Largin were visited as part of the study and contact was made with the owner of the Shallowpool limekiln by telephone and correspondence.

5.2 The main locations of interest along the Trail route are:

- The Mount Edgecumbe Country Park includes Grade 1 listed gardens and 55 Grade II and Grade II* listed structures and ranging from the prehistoric period to post- World War II (the grounds were used as an embarkation point for American forces during the D Day landings). The Parkland achieved fame in the 18th and 19th centuries. We believe this has great potential for interpretation and possibly a major project to bring additional buildings back into use. This would need to be taken forward by the Country Park team as a separate initiative from the Trail but would undoubtedly add great attraction to the route.
- The coast from Cremyll to Crafhole is distinguished by a fine set of 18th and 19th century fortifications, all of which are scheduled ancient monuments and some of which are listed. These include: the Blockhouse at Garden Battery, Mount Edgecumbe; the Redoubt Line at Maker Heights; Royal Commission fortifications at Forder Hill; Knatterbury Royal Commission Fortification overlooking Whitsand Bay; Tregonhawke Battery; Tregantle Fort. These could be the subject of interesting digital interpretation for passing trail users.
- There are two medieval crosses on the B3247 coast road section of the proposed route, at Crafhole and Triffle Farm. We understand that the Diocese of Truro has investigated the potential of developing the route from Plymouth / Cremyll to St Germans as part of a new pilgrim trail, and would commend this initiative. However as with any developments at Mount Edgecumbe, we believe this is best taken forward independently of the Trail.
- In the West Looe Valley, Shallowpool Limekiln was identified in the first report. Follow up with the owner has revealed that there appears to have been a quay between the kiln and the river on an area now silted up. This area is proposed for archaeological investigation and interpretation, with further minor works to secure the safety of visitors and the potential to host a community heritage project.
- Herodsfoot is world famous among mineralogists and substantial remains of the mining industry survive on private land. Herodsfoot was also the location of the East Cornwall Gunpowder Mills which supplied blasting powder to mines in what is now the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site, with a further site at what is now Trago Mills. The Herodsfoot site is occupied by Deerpark Holidays where we would commend additional interpretation.
- Largin Castle is an Iron Age hillfort overlooking the Glynn Valley which is in excellent condition. Much of the inner and outer enclosures can still be identified. We recommend this as a potential stopping point on the Glynn Valley route with interpretation for passing Trail users.

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- The proposed routes pass through three main landscape character areas: the South east Cornwall plateau, the Looe Valley Rivers and the Fowey Valley, covered in more detail in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment. There are opportunities for landscape interpretation at a number of points along the proposed route.

5.3 Based on these points of interest, we have developed an overarching interpretive theme, provisionally entitled ‘Wheels of Time’ which is about showing how the landscape and character of South East Cornwall have been shaped by human activity since prehistoric times. Within this overarching theme, four sub-themes are suggested:

- Defending the realm – interpreting the Rame and Whitsand Bay forts on the Looe to Plymouth section of the Trail
- Crosses and Communications – interpreting the pilgrim and traveller route, again principally on the Looe to Plymouth section
- Rural scenes: living from the land – interpreting the complementary and contrasting development of the East and West Looe valleys from the medieval period through mining-related industrialisation and post-industrialisation, and its impact on landscape, people and communities
- Limekilns and limeburners, Zephaniah Job the Lime King – this theme focuses on the East Looe valley including Moorswater and the kiln and quay at Shallowpool.

Mount Edgecumbe forms a distinct geographic unit and we suggest it merits its own interpretation plan with themes developed as a separate project to the Trail. As an important gateway for visitors to South East Cornwall from Plymouth, including a significant population who are often hard to reach, as well as the large number of international visitors expected to attend the Mayflower 2020 celebrations, this should be a high priority.

5.4 Audiences are broadly the same as identified in the Liskeard to Looe section, and it is the longer distance routes set out in this report that will attract the bulk of the staying visitors. Although the routes are more challenging from a cycling perspective, accompanying families are likely to be equally interested in the heritage points of interest even if not cycling the whole trails. This is particularly the case at Mount Edgecumbe but the other sites would also be accessible by some from intermediate stopping points. Cyclists will be defined by their willingness to undertake more challenging and longer distance routes than the East Looe section and there is an opportunity for an innovative approach to interpretation to capture their interest.

5.5 It is sensible to take forward the heritage aspects of the Trails as a whole, so key recommendations across the first and second reports are summarised as:

- Develop digital interpretation media, potentially in partnership with Cornerstone Heritage at Plymouth University with whom exploratory discussions are recommended. Two forms are suggested: a Trail website containing downloadable maps and interpretation material; an app which could be used offline by visitors on the route
- Develop plans for a major Hub project at Moorswater involving both capital investment and revenue funding to develop innovative interpretation methods and engage the local community including harder-to-reach groups
- Physical interpretation at the limekiln at Shallowpool, with investment to secure the health and safety of visitors to this site and a potential community project to conduct an archaeological investigation of the nearby quay. The recommended next step is to engage a field archaeologist to investigate the site’s potential

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- A modest picnic area and interpretation board at Largin Iron Age hillfort. Further advice should be sought about whether easier access could be provided via staging over the ramparts and ditch
- An interpretation panel at Herodsfoot which tells the story of the local mines and gunpowder works. Subject to consultation with residents, this could be in the village itself or at Deerpark
- The possibility of a community project at North Herodsfoot mine should be investigated with the owner, although access is a constraint
- Interpretation panel(s) at Whitsand Bay to tell the story of the fortifications
- Further dialogue with Mount Edgecumbe to explore the possibility of developing and implementing a park-wide interpretation plan linking to the Trail

5.6 Links with three other local initiatives are also recommended. The Sardine Factory at Looe is being developed to include a museum which could be a focus for some of the Trail story. Liskeard plans to enhance its approach to visitor information and the trail branding should link to this. South East Cornwall Tourism Association are refreshing the marketing brand of the wider area and, again, a link should be made with the future plans to promote the Trail.

5.7 Plans for interpretation across this wide range of potential sites and themes require prioritisation and targeting to clearly researched audiences, demonstrating how they meet HLF outcomes for heritage, people and communities. The report suggests prioritising three strands:

- Developing and implementing the heritage strategy identified in the first report (Liskeard to Looe), not least because of its important relationship to the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site. This includes the development of the Moorswater Hub concept, community environmental and heritage projects at various points in the valley, digital interpretation platforms and the development of a Friends organisation to engage the local communities in the ongoing management of the Trail. HLF support should be sought for this with local match from sources such as landfill trusts.
- Interpretation strategy for Mount Edgecumbe Country Park, complementary to the Trail network. This will be up to the Mount Edgecumbe committee to take forward but again could form the basis of an approach to HLF.
- Smaller scale interpretation at other points, funded locally, to be taken forward once the route development is further advanced. A dialogue should be opened with Cornwall Heritage Trust and other local sources over the future funding of this initiative.

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6. Project Costs

- 6.1 The costs of implementing the preferred route in the Glynn Valley and West Looe Valleys have been estimated by CORMAC Solutions as part of the project team and their full reports is included at Annex E. The costs of the Looe to Plymouth section, which is mostly on-road, has been estimated by Sustrans in the Looe to Plymouth report Annex C.
- 6.2 In this covering report we have concluded three minor amendments to the routes costed in the Annex, as follows.
- 6.3 The interim section between Bodmin Parkway and Newbridge Wood (1.6 a-f in the CORMAC report) is considered too expensive at almost £400,000 to be justified, assuming the roundabout scheme at Bodmin Parkway can include a permanent solution. An alternative temporary solution using lanes from Respryn via Gray Mare which would require only minimal signage is proposed for the short term, given that the roundabout will not be implemented until the early-mid 2020's. 1.6 is therefore not included in the costings, but neither is the roundabout solution as this is currently unknown.
- 6.4 At Drift, we assume that option 2.3 will not be achievable so only alternative 2.4 is included
- 6.5 Given that landowner consent for the Glynn Valley route particularly between Trago and Liskeard has not yet been achieved, we have removed the additional loop section north of the railway between Derricombe and Bodithiel from the scheme at this stage (3.2 in the CORMAC report). If subsequently agreement can be achieved so that visitors wishing to cycle this loop could park at Trago, it could be reinstated at a later date.
- 6.6 This section gives the costs estimated taking account of these proposed changes. The figures are therefore slightly changed from those in the Annex.
- 6.7 The estimated costs of implementing each section of the proposal are shown in the Table below:

Cost £	Glynn Valley	West Looe	Looe - Plymouth	Liskeard – Looe
Works total	1,588,200	1,427,200	416,244	4,858,600
Design fees @ 8%	127,056	114,200	33,300	388,688
Supervision fees @ 10%	158,820	142,720	41,624	485,860
Risk @ 35%	555,870	499,600	145,685	1,700,510
Optimism Bias @ 44%	698,800	628,100	183,147	2,137,785
Total	3,128,746	2,812,000	820,000	9,571,442

- 6.8 The total works cost of implementing the project is therefore estimated as £8,290,244 with a total project cost for the capital build of £16,332,188. Some additional costs will be required for planning and highways consultations, to negotiate and conclude legal agreements with landowners possibly including direct financial considerations, and to develop and submit funding bids. These costs are still highly uncertain at this stage with 79% allowed for risk and OB.
- 6.9 The first report used an estimated annual maintenance cost of 2 per linear metre of off-road trail, with an estimated annual total maintenance requirement of £22,000. These new Trail sections would if fully implemented have a total of approx 34km off-road, leading to an annual maintenance cost of around £68,000. The total annual maintenance cost for the whole network would therefore be around £90,000.
- 6.10 Again based on the first report, a budget of £500,000 was set aside after 25 years for overhauling the off-road surfaces for approximately 11km. Pro-rata, the 34 km of additional

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trails are estimated to require around £1.5 million, taking the total repair cost at the 25 year point to around £2 million. A life of 50 years can be assumed on this basis.

- 6.11 The first report included an estimate of heritage costs at a total of £1.1 million including £460,000 for a major project at Moorswater and £300,000 for an active Arts / STEM interpretation project. Most of the heritage recommendations in this report could be accommodated within this budget although we suggest an additional £25,000 to take forward the proposed archaeological activity at the Shallowpool limekiln and a further £15,000 for additional interpretation panels. Mount Edgumbe is not included.
- 6.12 Also in the first report £125,000 was identified for environmental work including studies required to support planning applications of which £50,000 was set aside for mitigation and enhancement projects involving the community. This reflected the sensitive nature of several points on the Liskeard to Looe route. The new routes although longer are much less environmentally sensitive and most sections are already in use as bridleways or footpaths. Some further budget will be required but we estimate this as costing no more than £75,000, taking the total to £200,000.
- 6.13 Design and supervision costs are included in the overall capital budget but the costs of land acquisition, legal agreements and funding bid development are unknown at this stage.
- 6.14 An annual revenue budget will be required to support a ranger to coordinate volunteer involvement and to fund the ongoing marketing of the Trail so that visitor numbers are sustained. This was estimated at £15,000 in the first study and this figure covers the wider network of proposed trails.
- 6.15 Based on these figures a revised budget for the whole project, including the Liskeard-Looe section, is shown at Table 6.1 overleaf.

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Table 6.1 Indicative Project Budget

	Development Phase	Implementation Phase	Total
Heritage			
Liskeard-Looe	148,000	946,000	1,101,500
Lanhydrock-Plymouth	40,000		40,000
Total heritage	188,000	946,000	1,141,500
Environment and Ecology			
Liskeard-Looe	75,000	50,000	125,000
Lanhydrock-Plymouth	50,000		50,000
Total environment and ecology	125,000	50,000	175,000
Planning and legal agreements			
Liskeard-Looe	75,000		75,000
Lanhydrock-Plymouth	75,000		75,000
Total planning	125,000		125,000
Total marketing and PR	15,000	60,000	75,000
GRAND TOTAL REVENUE BUDGET	453,000	1,056,000	1,516,500
Capital build			
Liskeard-Looe	388,688	9,182,754	9,571,442
Glynn Valley	127,056	3,001,688	3,128,744
West Looe	114,200	2,697,800	2,812,000
Looe-Plymouth	33,300	786,7000	820,000
Interim refurbishment (25 year)		200,000	200,000
GRAND TOTAL CAPITAL BUILD	0	16,532,186	16,532,186
Ongoing annual revenue			
Part time ranger		10,000	
Marketing and PR		5,000	
Annual maintenance		90,000	
		105,000	

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7. Economic opportunities and economic appraisal

- 7.1 In our first report on the Liskeard to Looe Trail section, we reported on research evidence into the economic impact of the trail in two ways: the specific opportunities for new business and jobs that might arise from the Trail in particular locations, and the estimated indirect impact of the trail on the tourism economy in the area arising from additional visitor numbers. The second of these, the indirect economic impact on Tourism, was conducted on the basis of the wider network of Trails, as well-evidenced comparators are not available for a Trail of the limited scope of just the East Looe proposal. This work estimated that up to 500,000 additional visitor trips per year could be attracted to the area by the new trails, leading to a net economic impact of between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 per year, arising from a growth of something like 4% to the existing local tourism market. This work stands in the context of the proposed routes covered in this report.
- 7.2 Our brief in this phase has concentrated on identifying direct economic potential from the proposed additional Trail sections. These are summarised below. The local tourism association SECTA identifies a lack of critical mass of ‘things to do round here’ as a key barrier to further growth of the tourism market, with existing businesses in the visitor economy often operating under capacity, so much of the benefit is estimated in terms of growth/sustainability for existing operations rather than the creation of new opportunities
- 7.3 At Lanhydrock which is the western gateway to the new trails, the project would create additional business for the existing cycle hub comprising bike rental and cafe facilities with associated parking. This may provide an opportunity for enhanced profit or expansion, as at certain times of year the existing facilities are operating at capacity. Although the Trail proposed does not directly run through the nearby Cardinham Woods, access is straightforward and there may also be a knock-on effect of growth there supporting additional business to the cafe.
- 7.4 The proposed Trail route in the Glynn Valley passes close to the Trago Mills site where a range of retailers exist including food and drink outlets. It may be expected that these would see a material increase in passing trade based on our preferred route, although this would be much more limited if the Trail is unable to gain landowner consent on this side of the railway as the best available alternative diverts cyclists well away.
- 7.5 Not far from the proposed route south of Taphouse a short diversion on quiet lanes leads to the Porfell Animal Park visitor attraction which may benefit from increased visitor numbers from either Trail users or non-cycling accompanying family members.
- 7.6 The proposed route passes through Deerpark Forest where the existing cafe, shop and forest hub could expect a significant amount of new trade, especially if Forest Holidays are minded to expand parking and cycle hire in this location to encourage visitors to consider it as a start / finish point for day trips. The Trail may also enhance the already buoyant bookings of holiday Lodges on the site.
- 7.7 Additional opportunities in Liskeard and Looe are discussed in the Liskeard-Looe report. East of Looe we would expect cafes, pubs and restaurants at a string of locations along the coastal route e.g. at Millandreath, Seaton, Donderry, Crafhole, Freathy etc. to see an increase in trade. Additional passing trade may also benefit the Monkey Sanctuary visitor attraction which is on the proposed route near Seaton. Further east at Rame, the Canteen at Maker Heights is also close to the route (although this site is currently subject to developer interest) as are the villages of Millbrook, Kingsand and Cawsand where pubs and cafes could also benefit.
- 7.8 As well as the House itself, the Mount Edgumbe estate includes at the Barrow Centre a range of craft businesses as well as a cafe and shop promoting local produce, makers and artists and an activities centre, and the estate has recently ventured into the provision of self-catering holiday

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accommodation. It is easy to see how this could be turned into a significant new hub at the eastern end of the route, mirroring the developments at Lanhydrock, and including expanded cycle hire on the Cornwall side of the Cremyll Ferry for day visitors from Plymouth and beyond. We commend the entrepreneurial spirit of Country Park managers who are keen to embrace these opportunities.

- 7.9 There is extensive provision of holiday accommodation across the area, particularly in the coastal section from Looe to Rame. Self-catering, bed and breakfast and camping sites could all expect increased occupancy based on the estimated numbers.
- 7.10 We estimate that the impact of this is most likely to be on the increased profitability of existing tourist accommodation, cycle hire and food and drink sector businesses in the area rather than on new business creation. In an area highly dependent on the seasonal tourism market, capacity exists at all but the peak summer weeks to absorb new visitor numbers within existing infrastructure. The impact on jobs is hard to assess given that much of this will be in the form of additional hours for part time and seasonal staff, but in a low-wage economy where underemployment due to seasonality is a significant challenge, this marginal increase is to be welcomed.
- 7.11 The first report identified that the project could generate £2,500,000 of net additional spend per year after an initial 3 year start up period. On this basis, and using the estimated £16,332,188 million for the total capital cost across the whole network of trails and the recommended discount rate of 3.5%, the project achieves a projected positive NPV of £2.3 million after the first 10 years, with additional heritage, environmental and public health benefits not quantified. This rises to £21.7 million after 24 years at which point some additional capital maintenance becomes required. At this level we assess that the project represents very good value for money as an economic development investment.

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8. Recommendations and next steps

- 8.1 Our recommended routes for the Glynn Valley, West Looe Valley and Looe to Plymouth sections of the Trail area set out in this report. In each case we believe these represent good, attractive trail routes which meet national cycling standards, avoid significant ecological damage (where appropriate after mitigation), and offer good heritage and business development opportunities to complement the wider economic and social impact of the trails. As a bonus, in several places the proposed trails will provide safer cycling routes for commuting. In a part of the County which has been neglected in terms of development investment for some years, we hope that local and national funding bodies will get behind this project as a strategically significant and deliverable investment priority.
- 8.2 In several places we have been unable to fully resolve issues of land ownership on the preferred route within the scope of this study, and negotiating these should be considered early priorities for the next phase. These are: on the Glynn Valley route between Trago and Doublebois; in the West Looe between Muchlarnick and Sowden's Bridge; between East Looe and Millandreath at Plaidy; and between Craffhole and Military Road round the boundary of Tregantle Fort. Where alternative routes exist, they are not good quality and involve sections of busy road which do not meet Sustrans standards, or require significant engineering and gradients. So although it would still be possible to create the Trail network using on-road alternatives, this would negatively affect the attractiveness and therefore visitor numbers and economic impact of the proposals.
- 8.3 In terms of ecology, the impacts of the proposed route are for the most part not significant, and detailed mitigation is set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. The identified opportunities for ecological interpretation and for community engagement should be pursued as soon as sections of the route are finalised.
- 8.4 We recommend that the main focus for heritage investment should be in the Liskeard to Looe section, where Moorswater and the Shallowpool limekiln represent excellent opportunities to develop and interpret the theme of how the valley has changed as it has gone through industrialisation and post-industrialisation. A clear interpretation strategy and action plan is required here, based on the recommendations in the first report. Innovative interpretation, for example by partnering with the visual and creative arts, and significant community engagement including with hard-to-reach groups should be the ambition. Elsewhere, interesting interpretation can be achieved at relatively low cost through web and app based platforms and modest local interpretation boards at key locations. A further heritage project at Mount Edgecumbe would complement the Trail activity and could be taken forward separately by the Country Park.
- 8.5 Community ownership of the project as it develops and is implemented is crucial and can be achieved through the establishment of a new Friends of the Trail organisation. The Steering Group which has overseen these two studies is keen to support Looe Development Trust in establishing such a body. External facilitation and advice will be required. The Friends could then be responsible for the proposed community engagement activity undertaking environmental and local heritage projects related to the Trail.
- 8.6 The future development and delivery of a capital project of this scale is beyond the capacity of a small community organisation like Looe Development Trust. We hope that Cornwall Council and Sustrans, who have been part of the project team so far, might be willing to continue to take on responsibility for delivery of the trails' physical infrastructure from here, accessing national transport and economic development funding to support this. We recommend that the local Steering Group continue to be involved as an advisory body to the project.
- 8.7 To progress this agenda, the immediate next steps recommended are:

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- Clarify with Cornwall Council and Sustrans their willingness to lead the development phase, working with a local Advisory Group. If yes, the priority is to de-risk the project by resolving the remaining route uncertainties and landowner issues, undertaking further design investigations to achieve greater cost certainty, and developing a funding strategy for the construction phase
- Looe Development Trust to seek funds for professional input to the development of HLF and match funding bids to enable the heritage and environmental projects to go ahead, including establishing the Friends organisation.