

SE-105 Brynmawr High Level Feasibility Study



Revised May 2018





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Ymunwch â ni ar ein siwrne. www.sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We are engineers and educators, experts and advocates. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Sustrans works in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions. We make the case for walking and cycling by using robust evidence and showing what can be done. We are grounded in communities and believe that grassroots support combined with political leadership drives real change, fast.

Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

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Executive Summary

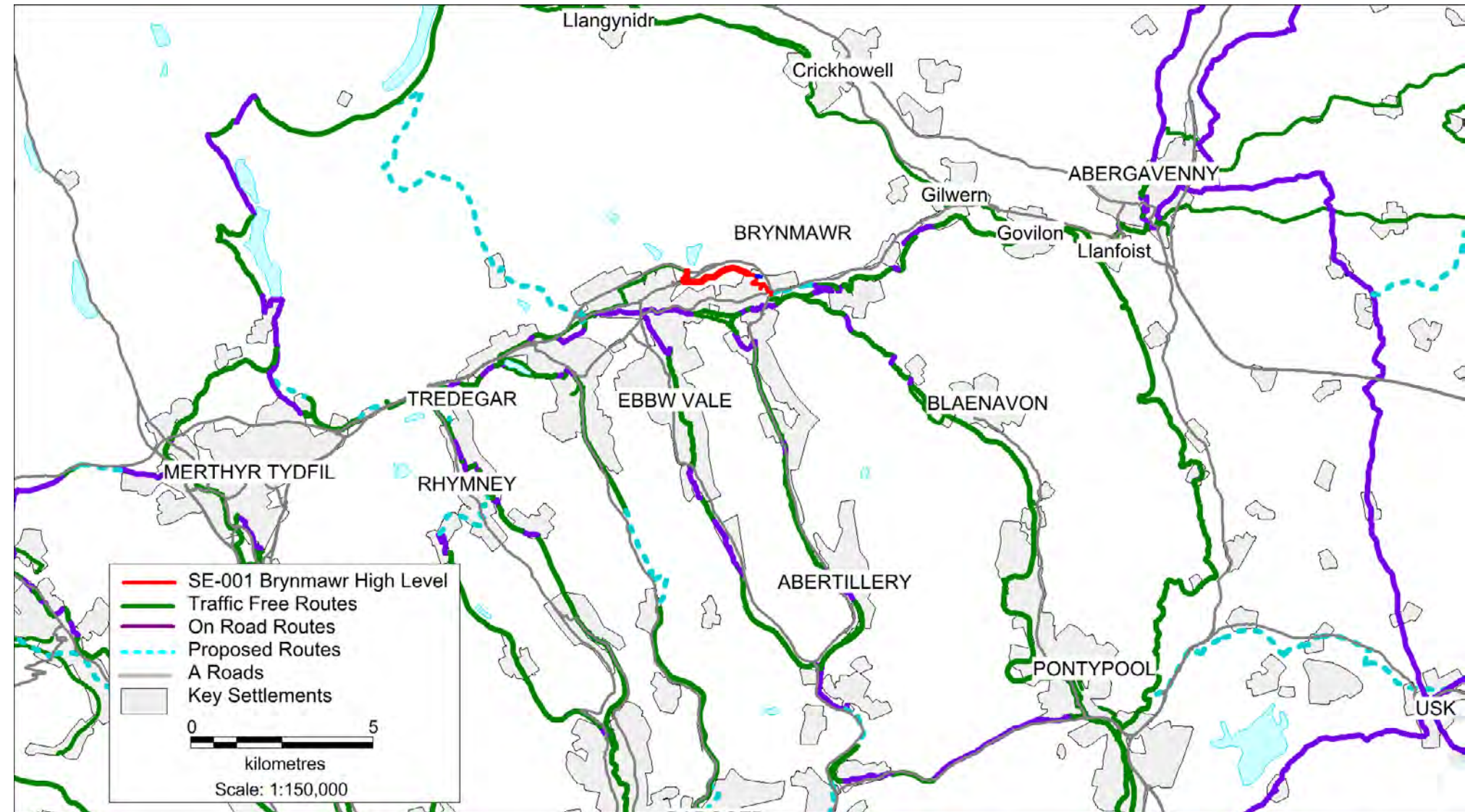
I. General information about the scheme

a. Context

Sustrans has supported Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) in conducting this feasibility study on a new link that will connect Garnlydan and Brynmawr using a traffic free route. The work is part of the Rural Development Programme implementation and relates to the wider context set by the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act (2015). The development of the route is linked to the major infrastructure works on the dualling of the A456 Heads of the Valleys (Section 2 and Section 3) and will link walking and cycling infrastructure between the two sections. The route will be developed according to the Design Guidance set out in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 standards. The route will follow existing tracks in the area, partly positioned on common land. Permission to conduct works on the land will therefore be needed according to Section 38 of the Commons Act (2006).

b. The route

The new route will contribute to complete National Cycle Network (NCN) route 46, which will run from Neath, across the Heads of the Valleys and then, via Abergavenny and Hereford, to Birmingham. The missing link will also connect NCN routes 465 and 466. The route will also improve the links to the Brecon Beacons National park and to existing walking trails in the area. The route will provide encourage walking and cycling in the area for the daily commute as well as for tourism and leisure purposes.



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II. Detailed proposal

a. Suggested alignment

b. Land ownership

Much of the land required is common land in Blaenau Gwent's ownership and managed by the Duke of Beaufort's Breconshire Estate Commoner's Association. In partnership with the Council and the Commoner's Association, an application under Section 38 will be submitted and the proposal approved before any construction will commence. At the eastern end of the route there are two options, one of which may involve private land.



c. Engineering (design solution proposed + major new structures needed)

The engineering inputs needed for this scheme will relate to the gradient and to the surface of the route.

d. Ecology

The route will be constructed over an existing track, with no major impact on the ecology of the area. Sustrans will conduct a desk research to identify whether detailed studies on ecology are needed.

e. Cost

These cost estimates are subject to detailed design and safety audit considerations. The costs are for construction only and an allowance will need to be made for design, project management, and contingency. They are exclusive of VAT where applicable.

f. Signing

The proposed route needs to be sufficiently well signed so that it is easy to follow in both directions. A balance should be struck between providing clear and reliable information, avoiding visual clutter (especially on the wide open spaces of the common) and unnecessary maintenance liability that excessive signing can cause. Care is needed when considering their design and placement. Cyclists Dismount or End of Route signs are not appropriate and will not be necessary on this route. Cycle specific route signing also raises awareness of cyclists amongst other road users and helps to promote the route. It is estimated that 25 signs will need to be required to effectively provide good directional signing. At each end of the route destination signage will be provided on conventional metal sign posts. Signs on the common needs to be in keeping with the area and short robust posts with minimal signing are recommended.



Examples of directional signs and short robust posts

Route section	Description of route	Section Distance (m)	Option 2 Walk & Cycle £170/lm	Spot Infrastructure	Section total	Notes
1	From HOV path to exit on to Aneurin Crescent	2500	£170	£5,610	£430,610	Path 3.5m wide. Between existing kerbs in some areas. Stock proof access area (A frames and cattle grids) @£4,610. Nominal sum for drainage works £1000
2	Additional cost for route from Anerin Crescent to Garage	325	£120	£8,310	£47,310	Can reduce path to 2.5m therefore because of no vehicle access. Nominal sum of £5,000 for additional drainage. Stock proof access area (A frames and cattle grids) @ £3,310
3	signing			£3,000	£3,000	25 signs @120
	Total				£480,920	

g. Future Maintenance

A route that is kept in good condition will be more useful, attractive and popular than one allowed to deteriorate. It will promote walking and cycling. Maintenance can sometimes seem like an afterthought compared to the exciting world of designing and building new routes, but having invested time and money by building the route, it is important that it remains attractive to users.

Maintenance should be considered as part of the route development process long before construction starts. A thoughtful design will mean less maintenance in the future. For example a path surfaced with tarmac will have a long life needing little maintenance other than litter picking and keeping it clear of vegetation, whereas a stone dust path will quickly become worn and rutted if left uncared for on a busy route.

Think about who will use the route – will horses ride along it, will tractors cross it, how will maintenance vehicles access the path (and turn)? Pedestrians and cyclists don't normally cause a great deal of wear and tear. It is often other users and the weather that have more of an impact on the condition of the path.

Designing with maintenance in mind is good design!

A question often asked by funders is how will you maintain the investment they are making? Sometimes money can be put aside from the capital source into a separate fund for future maintenance. Irrespective of what the ultimate arrangement will be, it is essential that the project team has agreed the future maintenance arrangements early in the project's development.

More details on maintenance can be found here.

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-services/what-we-do/route-design-and-construction/route-design-resources/maintenance-walking-and>

Proper maintenance is essential if a cycle route is to remain attractive to users, and help to promote cycling more generally.

A high standard of design for its construction, drainage and landscaping will mean less maintenance liabilities in the future, and whole life cost needs to be considered.

Sustrans Volunteers recruited from local communities will be able to help with some aspects of maintenance including checking signing, and collecting litter and cutting back vegetation on traffic-free sections.

III. Engagement

Local stakeholders have been engaged fully in the design process to make sure the route is suitable to local needs and will be used in the future. The BRO Partnership has supported Sustrans in this activity. An Online survey was conducted in July and August 2017 to obtain initial feedback from local key stakeholders about the perceived impacts of the routes on daily commute and tourism activities. A Stakeholder Group has been formed with the participation of BGCBC, Duke of Beaufort's Breconshire Estate Commoner's Association, Brynmawr Town Council, Friends of Beaufort Hill Woodlands, Brynmawr Museum, Brecon Beacons NPA and Costain. Frequent stakeholder meetings have been held to discuss the alignment, the issues and opportunities of the route, the links to the town of Brynmawr and the opportunities for local businesses to benefit from the route.

IV. Marketing

In addition to signage that helps raise awareness of the new route, information about it should be added to relevant websites such those managed by Sustrans, and BGCBC.

This will allow a wider audience to find out about the new route, and the production of a simple and informative map of it will help with content provision for both online and printed material opportunities, and be something to circulate to local residents and businesses.

Publicity through press coverage and social media around an official launch will also help generate local, regional and possibly national awareness.

Activities such as guided rides for some or the entire new route would help local residents understand the new cycling opportunities it creates.

V. Monitoring and reporting / Making the case for a new link

It is very important to have programme of monitoring walking and cycling so that a baseline can be established. This baseline will used to measure progress and is very important to funders. It is the foundation on which forecasting of future use is based and justification for constructing a route.

As part of the development of individual improvement schemes, monitoring should be from the outset and should be built into all phases of this project. How the success of any improvements will be monitored will need to be considered prior to commencing work.

More detailed information on monitoring can be found here.

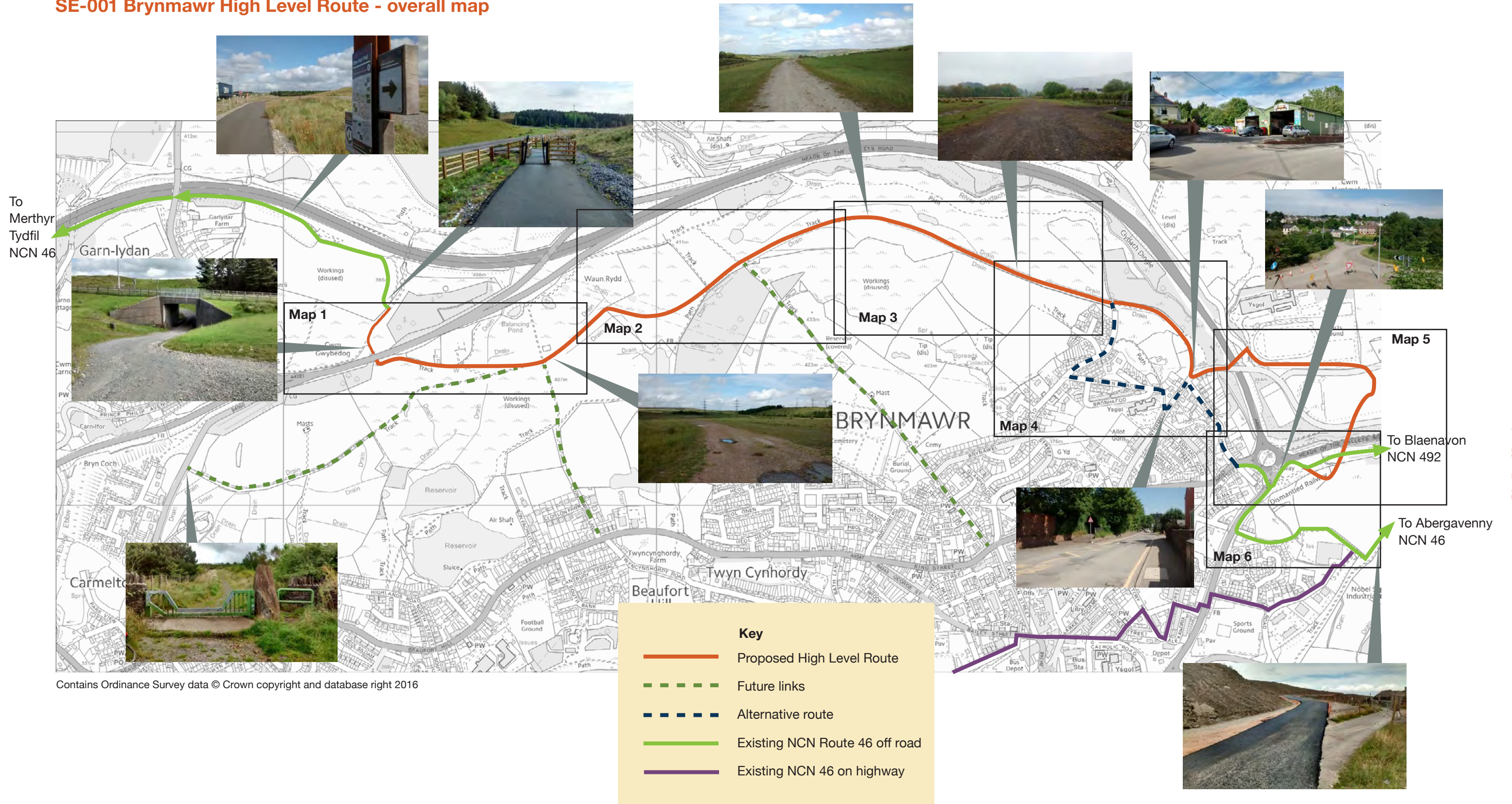
<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/files/Route-Design-Resources/Monitoring-31-10-14.pdf>

Ideally cycle flows should be measured before the new route is completed as well as afterwards, and at least one automatic counter installed on a traffic-free sections of the route.

VI. Funding

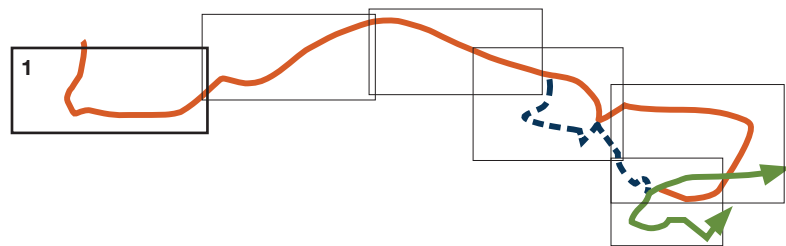
The possible sources of funding will be explored, in order to deliver the route. Funding streams coming from the National Grid programme, Welsh Government funding (related to the delivery of the Active Travel Act) and Visit Wales Funding should be considered.

SE-001 Brynmawr High Level Route - overall map



MAP 1 SE - 105 Brynmawr

— Proposed High Level Route
- - - Future links



100m
scale 1:2,500 at A3 size



Improve stock proof access to match example hear



Track surface to be upgraded to a tarmac surface between



Route to connect with existing path constructed as part of the A465 dualling program



Existing farm buildings that will require vehicle access

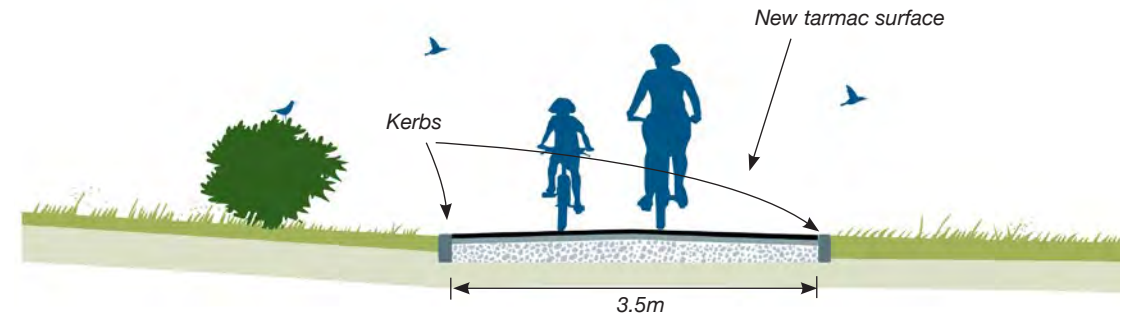


Short steep section to be graded out to improve gradient during surface upgrade

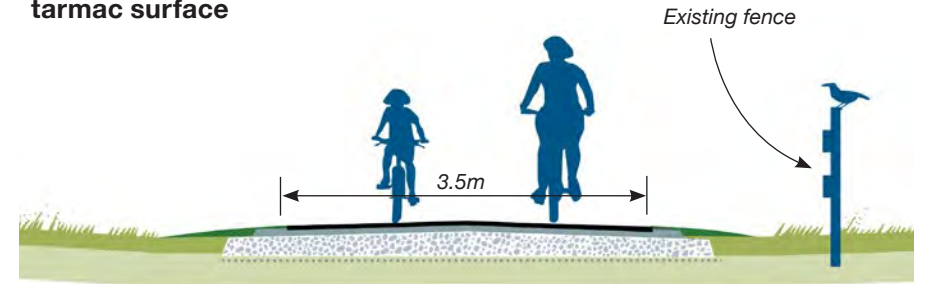


Route passes through existing underpass underneath A465 slip road

Section A - showing upgrading of track surface



Section B - showing path with 3.5m tarmac surface



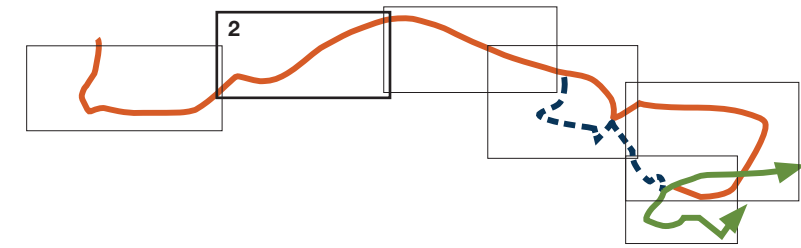
Contains Ordnance Survey data
Link to Llangynidr Road (Construct at later date?)

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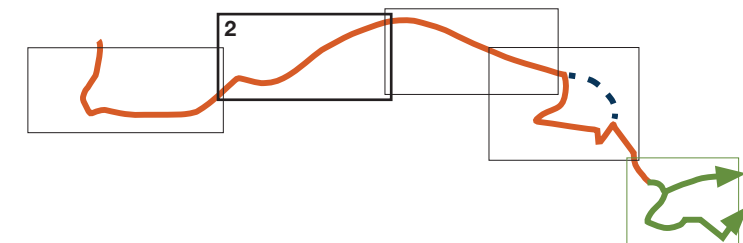
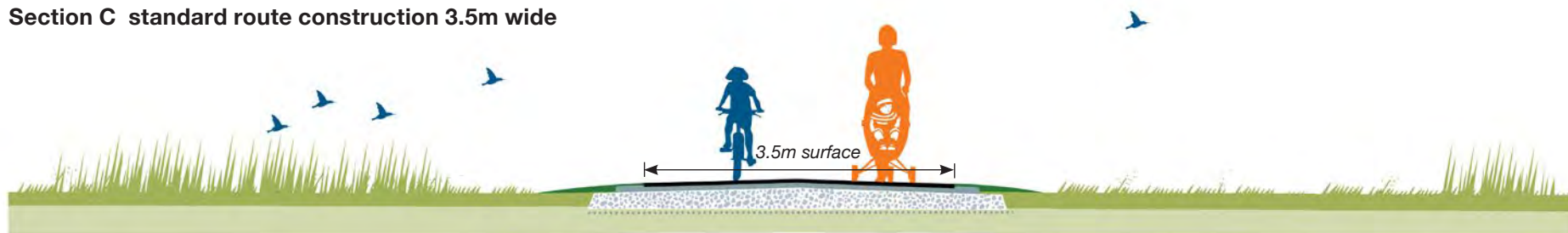
Link to Beaufort Hill Ponds and Woodland

- Binding Margin -

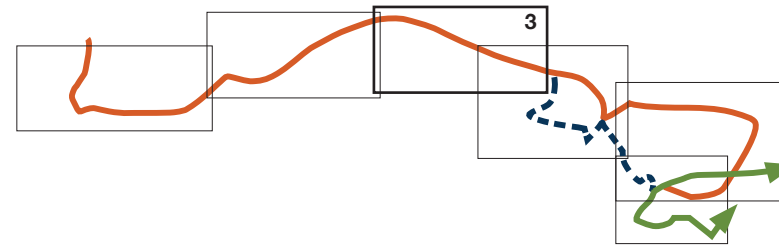
MAP 2 SE - 105 Brynmawr



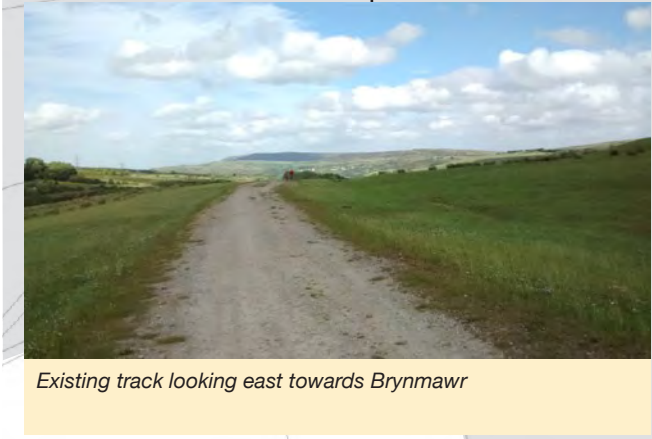
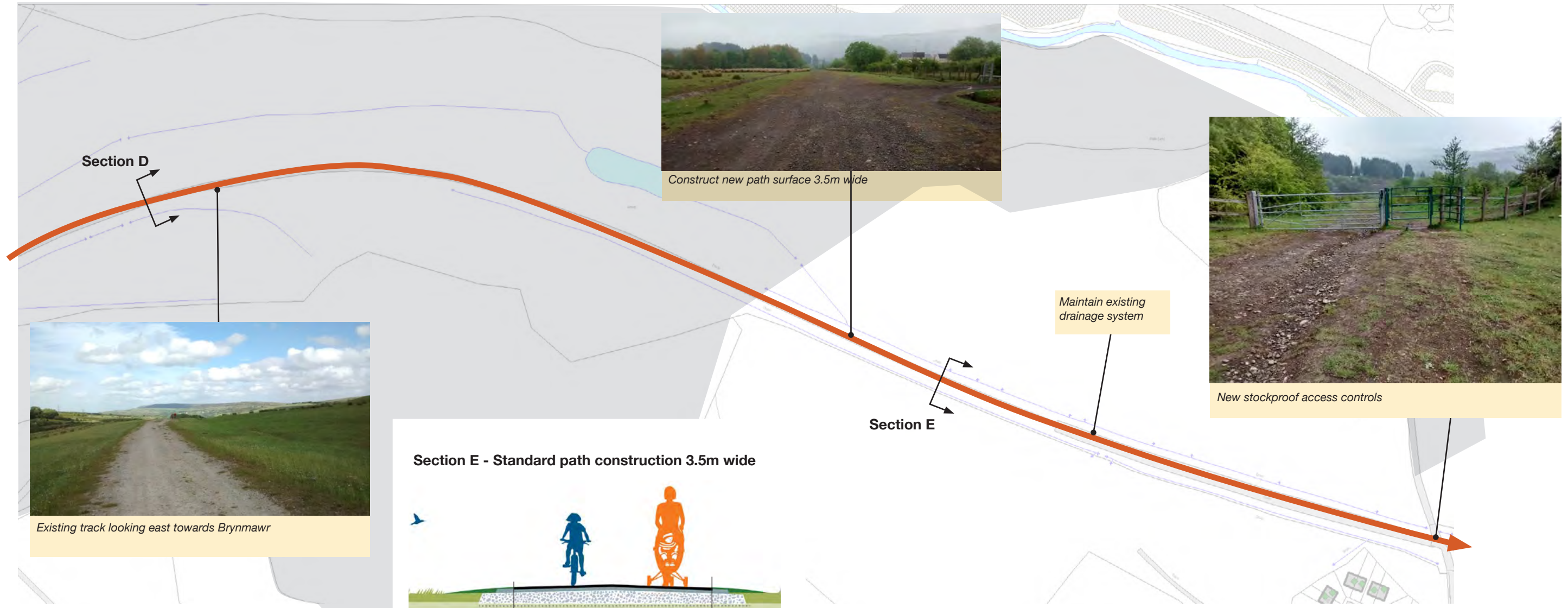
Section C standard route construction 3.5m wide



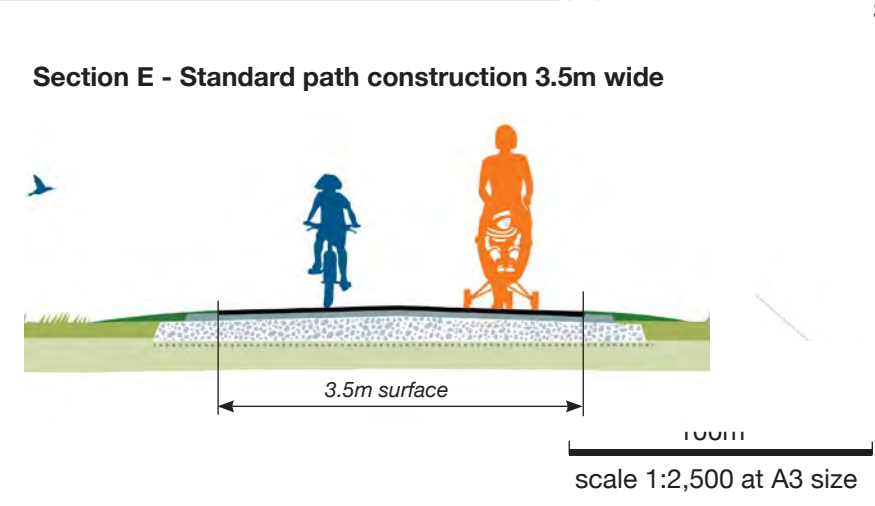
MAP 3 SE - 105 Brynmawr



Proposed High Level Route

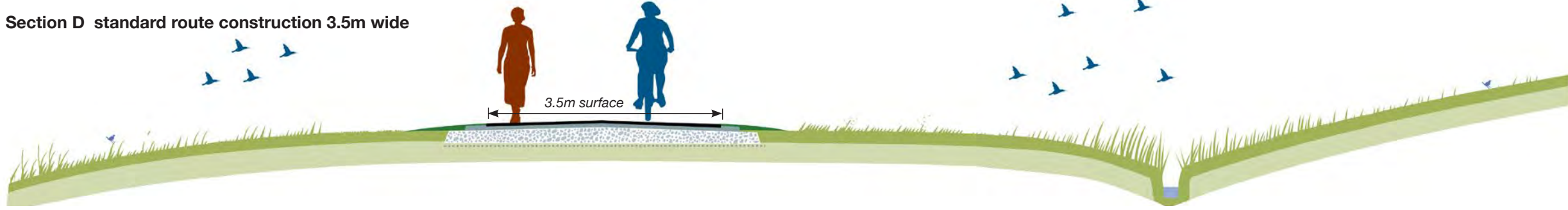


Existing track looking east towards Brynmawr



Section E - Standard path construction 3.5m wide

scale 1:2,500 at A3 size

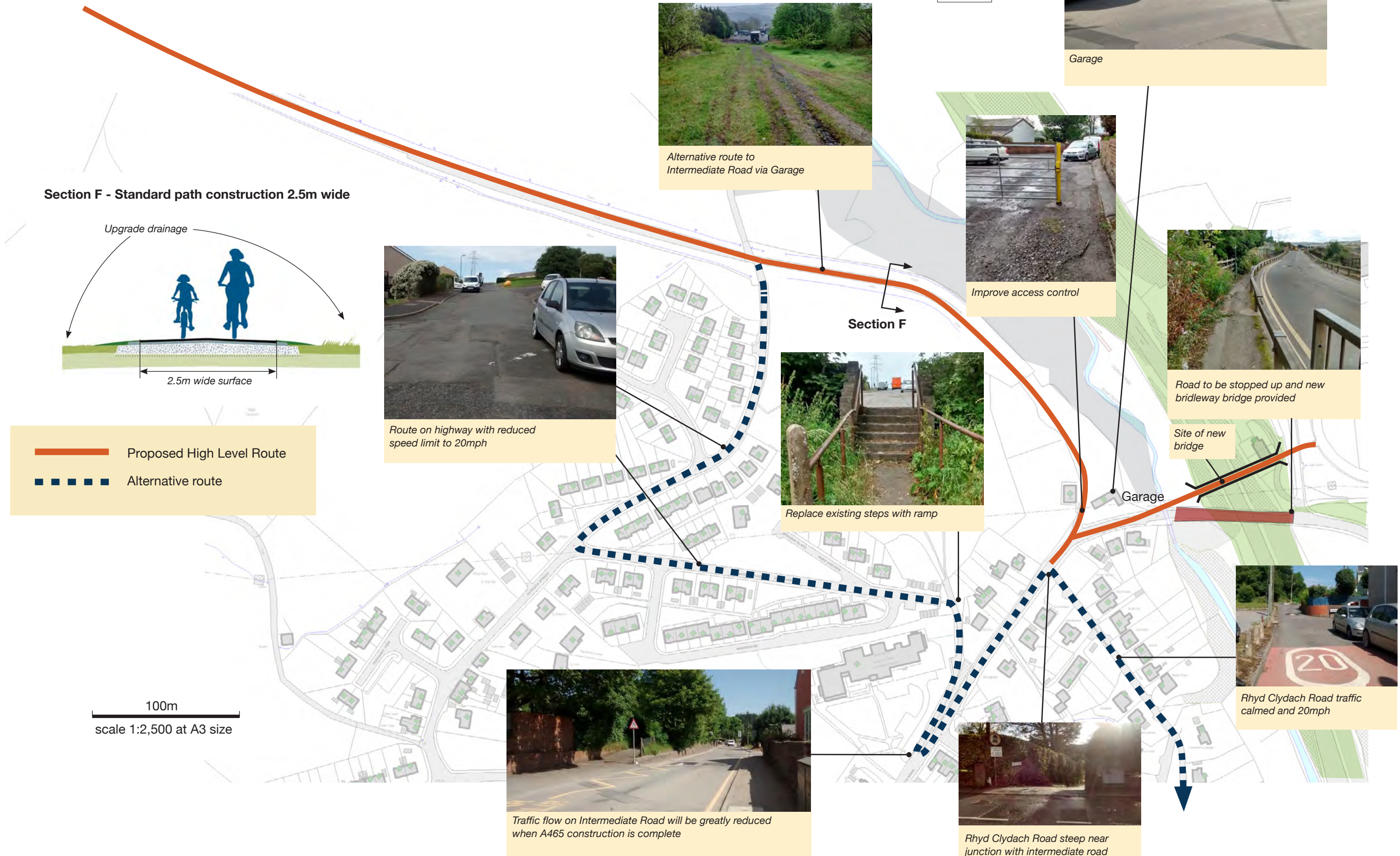


Section D standard route construction 3.5m wide

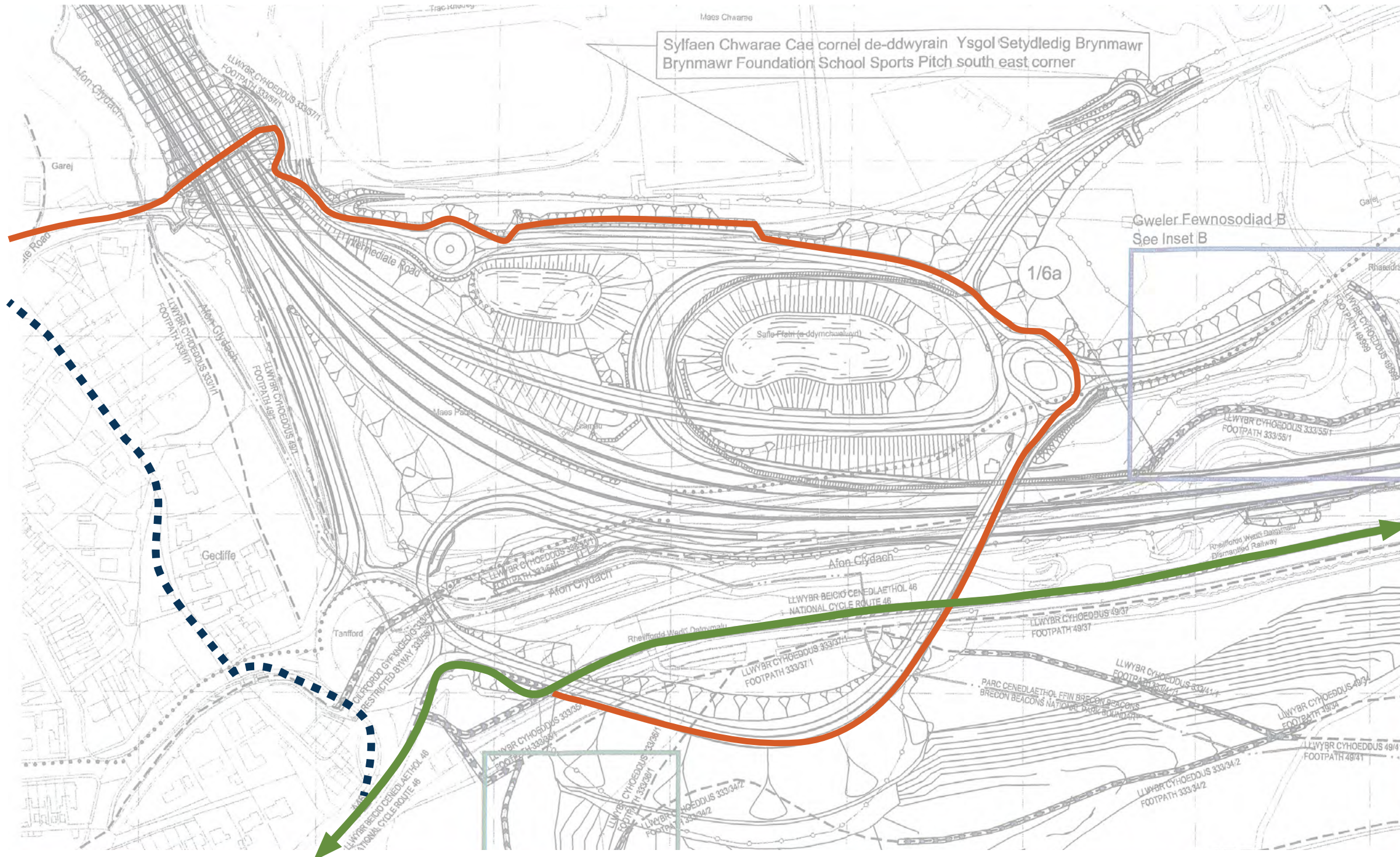
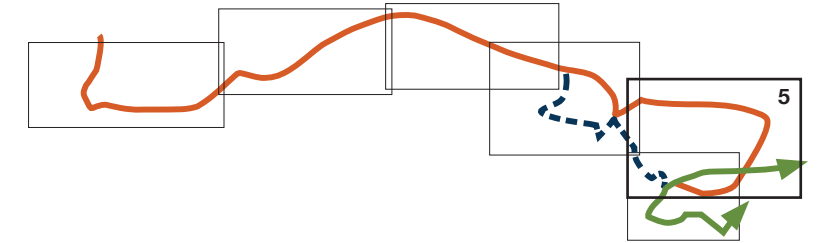
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- Binding Margin -



MAP 4 SE - 105 Brynmawr



MAP 5 SE - 105 Brynmawr



- Binding Margin -

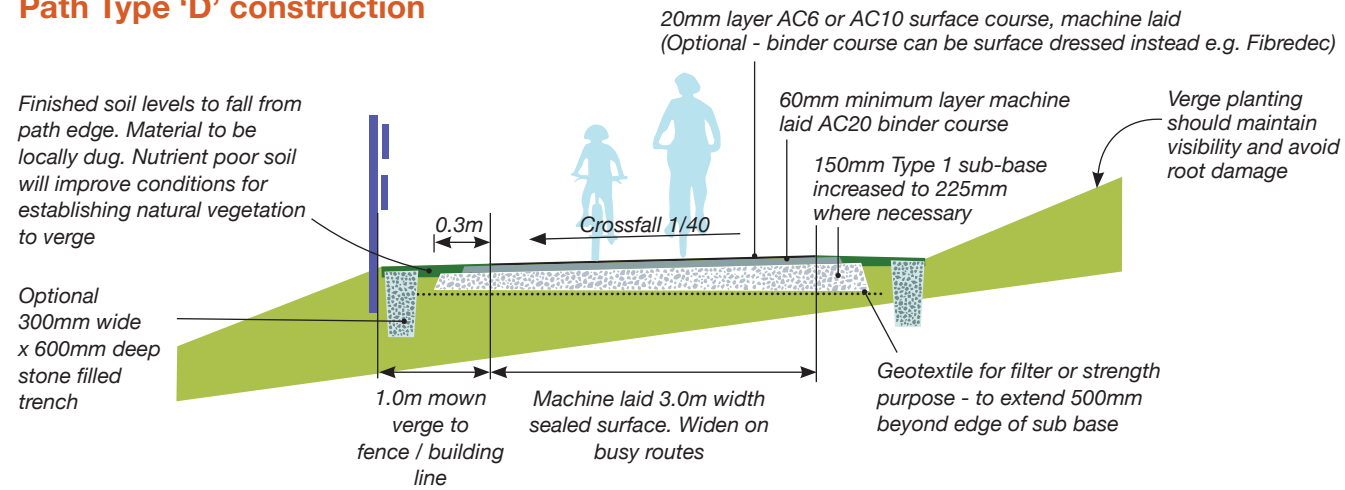
	Proposed Route
	Existing and propped NCN Route 46

100m
scale 1:2,500 at A3 size

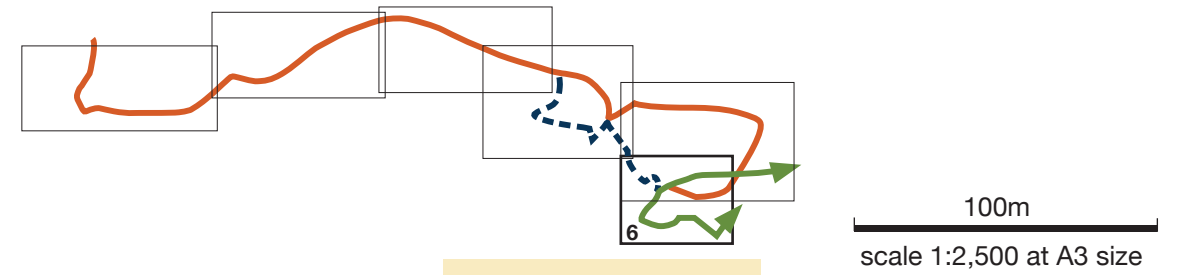
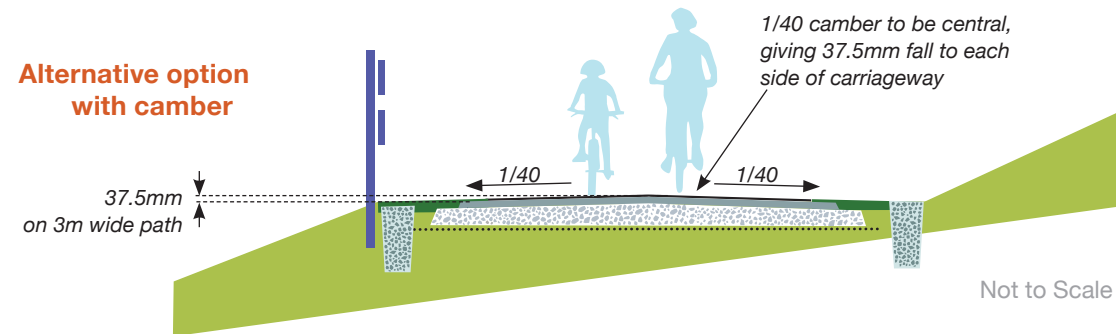
MAP 6 SE - 105 Brynmawr

— Alternative Route
— Existing NCN Route 46
- - - Future link

Path Type 'D' construction



Alternative option with camber



- Binding Margin -