

Churnet Valley Accessibility and Connectivity Study



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Churnet Valley Accessibility and Connectivity Study

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Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

This report comprises the Churnet Valley Accessibility and Connectivity Study which has been commissioned by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to form part of the evidence base for the Churnet Valley Masterplan, which is being prepared to inform the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) for the area. The purpose of the Accessibility and Connectivity Study is to assess the potential for improving the accessibility of the area, promoting sustainable forms of transport, and to identify opportunities for improving linkages between visitor attractions and settlements. The study examines the current transport situation in the Churnet Valley, establishing a baseline position with regards to access and movement and includes a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the area and the potential for improving accessibility and promoting sustainable travel. The Study identifies specific measures to improve accessibility and connectivity, with the potential measures being assessed in terms of implementation and delivery. The key issues for the Churnet Valley are then presented as part of the Study conclusions for further consideration as part of the Churnet Valley Masterplan.

Based upon work undertaken as part of this study, the key strategic issues for the Churnet Valley are considered to be:

- 1) A need to increase the role of existing settlements, opportunity sites and larger attractions as destinations from which to access and explore the Churnet Valley via walking, cycling, rail and water.
- 2) Provide new and improved visitor attractions and facilities at key locations which enhance and protect the attractiveness of the area whilst also improving the transport infrastructure in a sustainable way.
- 3) Develop and market an integrated, corridor-wide approach to access and movement within the Churnet Valley through a variety of means including maximising the opportunities for providing information

In terms of the key local issues for the Churnet Valley, these have been identified as being the need to:

- 1) Manage access to the area in an integrated manner that responds to the needs of visitors, supports the attractiveness of the area, and enhances key local attractors, whilst safeguarding the local environment.

- 2) Increase the permeability of the area by non-car modes introducing new walking and cycling links and enhancing existing routes (such as the canal towpath and the Staffordshire Way).
- 3) Improve the availability and quality of visitor information and introduce a coherent and consistent signage strategy
- 4) Enhance the integration of attractions, through physical measures and also via the use of information and marketing

The measures that have been presented within the report have focused on addressing these issues in a focused and deliverable way. Whilst the details of the technical issues have not been fully addressed it is anticipated that the full range of options available can feed in to the Churnet Valley Masterplan Vision. As the Masterplanning process evolves it is anticipated that the strategy for the corridor will evolve and the appropriate transport and access measures can be used to compliment and build towards the vision for the corridor.

Introduction

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council are preparing the Churnet Valley Masterplan, which will become an overarching Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This masterplanning exercise for the Churnet Valley will inform the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) through the identification of opportunities and measures to help regenerate this rural area based upon sustainable tourism. This will require the production of a robust evidence base upon which decisions can be made and a vision for the area defined. This will be achieved through a number of studies including an Accessibility and Connectivity Study, Tourism Study and a Landscape Character Assessment.

This report focuses on the development of the Accessibility and Connectivity Study, focussing upon the existing situation in the Churnet Valley and considering the opportunities for developing sustainable tourism going forward.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

The overall purpose of the Accessibility and Connectivity Study is to:

- Assess the potential for improving the accessibility of the area and promote sustainable forms of transport and;
- Identify opportunities for improving linkages between visitor attractions/facilities and settlements including provision for pedestrians and cyclists.

Allied to the above, there are a number of specific aims of the study which will need to be addressed, including:

- Investigate how the area is currently serviced by transport provision locally and strategically. This work will include the key opportunity sites identified in masterplan, key attractions in the area and the villages of Alton, Cheddleton, Ipstones, Kingsley, Kingsley Holt, Oakamoor, Whiston, Froghall, Foxt, Consall and Rudyard;
- Investigate current and planned transport schemes and initiatives which could have an impact on the Churnet Valley;
- Identify measures to improve connections and accessibility between tourist attractions, opportunity sites and villages within, or in close proximity to, the Churnet Valley. This also includes towns in the District, Peak District National Park and Stoke-on-Trent as part of the wider strategic transport network. Particularly important is the identification of

opportunities to improve linkages between tourist attractions/ facilities;

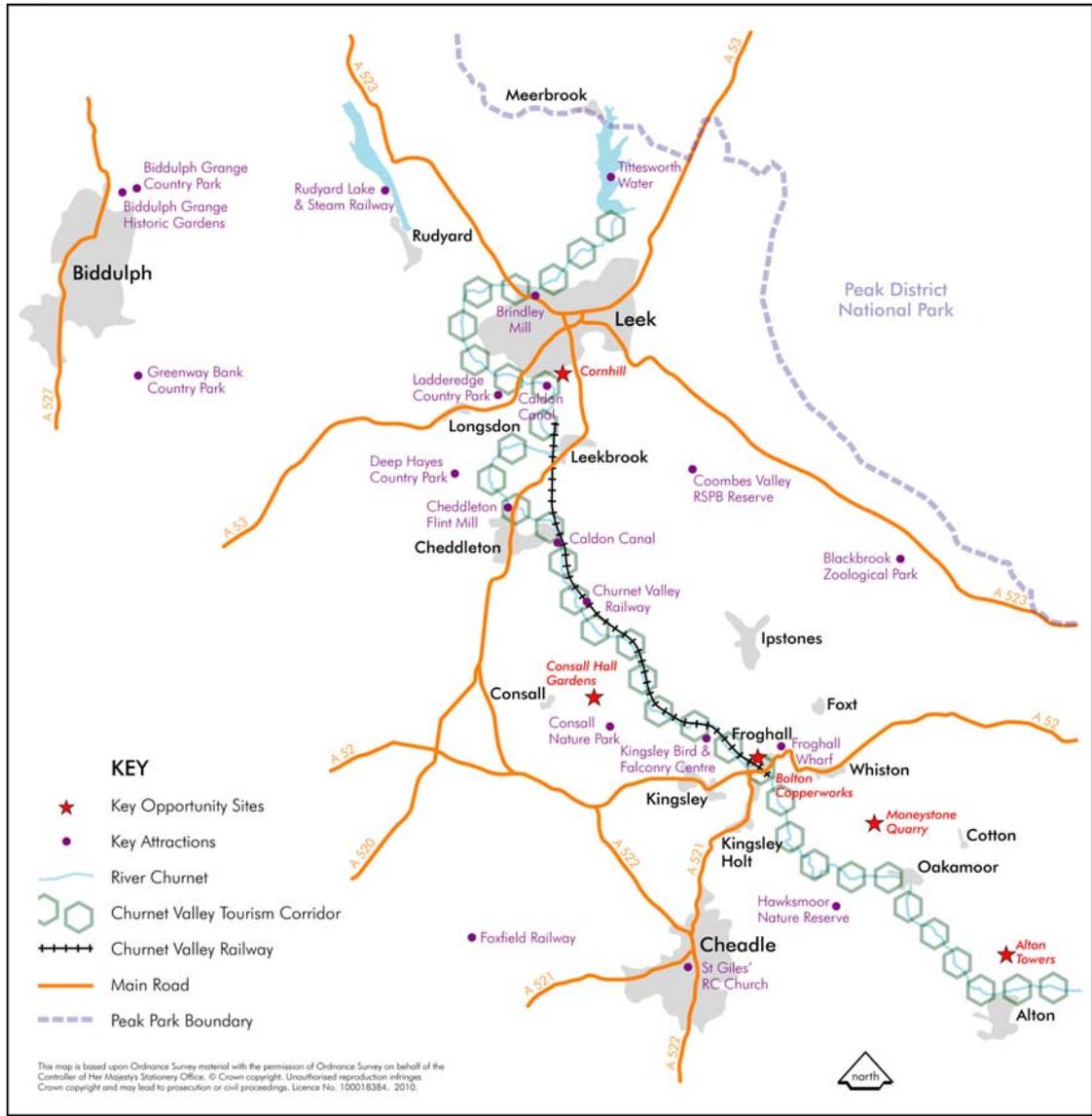
- Investigate the scope for promoting more sustainable forms of transport and;
- Investigate and make recommendations on how proposals to extend the Churnet Valley Railway (CVR) and the Uttoxeter Canal might be accommodated.

1.3 Scope

The geographical scope of this study relates primarily to the Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor, which is defined as running from Tittesworth Reservoir and Rudyard Lake in the north west of the District, following the route of the River Churnet through Leek, Cheddleton and Froghall, to Alton in the south east of the District and linking to Cheadle (**Figure 1.1**). Although this sets a broad geographical boundary for the study, it is intended that connections to and from the wider area are also considered and explored when determining the outcomes of the study.

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Figure 1.1 – Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor Study Area.



The study scope covers the issues associated with the connectivity and accessibility of the Churnet Valley. Whilst the study considers the likely implications that other factors will have on the current and future needs of travel to and from, as well as within the corridor, this study will not explore these in any detail. The focus of the study will be around the current situation in relation to accessibility and connectivity and what the future needs may be based on any constraints that exist,

but also consider the opportunities that may arise through development of a sustainable tourism offer within the corridor.

1.4 Policy Drivers

Whilst the Churnet Valley is a very geographically specific area, assessment of the corridor must be framed by the wider policy context which will guide any future development and

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growth. **Figure 1.2** summarises the policy context at the various levels of influence.

At the national policy level, the transport context for this study will be considered in terms of *Delivering a Sustainable Transport System* (DaSTS) published by the Department for Transport in November 2008. This sets out the key goals for transport, including the delivery of reliable and efficient transport networks which also address the issues of climate change and promoting a healthy natural environment.

Focussing at a more geographically specific level, the Local Development Framework will provide the overarching policy context for the development of the Churnet Valley Masterplan and, in turn, the Accessibility and Connectivity Study.

The emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Core strategy will guide the development of the District to 2026, replacing the existing Local Plan. Policy SS7 of the Core Strategy identifies the Churnet Valley as a major sustainable tourism corridor within which various forms of development and measures will be supported, provided they demonstrate strong sustainable development principles and are sensitive to the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. It is from this policy that the requirement to produce a Masterplan for the Churnet Valley corridor stems.

The policies contained within the emerging Core Strategy represent key drivers for the current study work and provide the guidance and support for any potential development or transport measures proposed. For instance, Policy E3 of the emerging Core Strategy expresses support for clusters of attractions within the Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor. Other policies in the document pertain to the redevelopment of key opportunity sites such as the Bolton Copperworks and Cornhill in Leek; sites which are considered in more detail through this study.

In addition to the Development Plan Documents (DPD's) of the LDF, there are also a number of other strategies and plans which relate to the Churnet Valley and will have a bearing upon its development as a sustainable tourism corridor. These include the Staffordshire Moorlands Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment, the Development Capacity Study, the Caldron Canal - Leek Arm Canal Corridor Study and Uttoxeter Canal Feasibility Study.

Other policies for consideration include the adopted Local Plan, which identifies the whole of the Churnet Valley corridor as falling within a Special Landscape Area and also identifies the protection of the railway line as being of key importance. An

adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Alton Towers is also in the process of being updated.

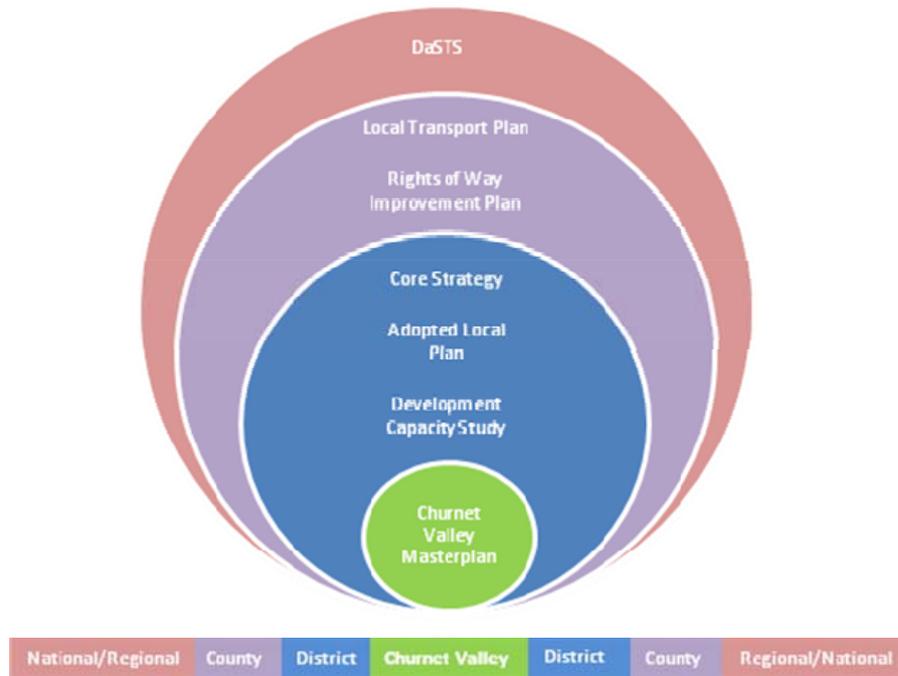
It is important that the Churnet Valley Masterplan responds to this policy context and enables any future development of the sustainable tourism corridor to be delivered in accordance with, and complementary towards, the policy framework.

1.5 Synergy with Masterplan Areas of Work

It is intended to develop the Accessibility and Connectivity study as a stand alone piece of work which will inform the overall masterplanning exercise. However, the development and potential outputs of the Tourism Study and Landscape Assessment being prepared as part of Stage 1 of the masterplanning process will also be considered. This report will be highly complementary to the wider Masterplan areas of work, as the movement of people to, from and within the Churnet Valley underpins the future development of the area as a sustainable tourism destination.

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Figure 1.2 – Illustrative Policy Context



Evidence Base Review

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2 Evidence Base Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the report provides the evidence base for the current situation regarding transport and accessibility in the Churnet Valley. **Figure 2.1** and **Figure 2.2** show the existing movements and linkages within the study area by mode, highlighting the predominance of car travel into the Churnet Valley from the neighbouring settlements.

2.2 Make-up of the area

Analysis of the 2001 Census data shows that the resident population for the Churnet Valley (which consists of the wards of Alton; Cheadle North East; Cheddleton; and Churnet) stands at 12,671.

Analysis has been carried out using 'journey to work' data to evaluate the travel patterns exhibited for trips travelling to, from and within the study area. Journey to work data shows the mode of travel which employees use to travel to their workplace. For analysis purposes the data has been broken down to give mode share splits for the following trip types:

1. Trips travelling from within the study area to destinations which are also within the study area (internal to internal trips)
2. Trips travelling from within the study area to destinations outside of it (internal to external trips)
3. Trips with a destination within the study area but an origin outside of it (external to internal trips)

Table 2.1 – Mode split within the study area

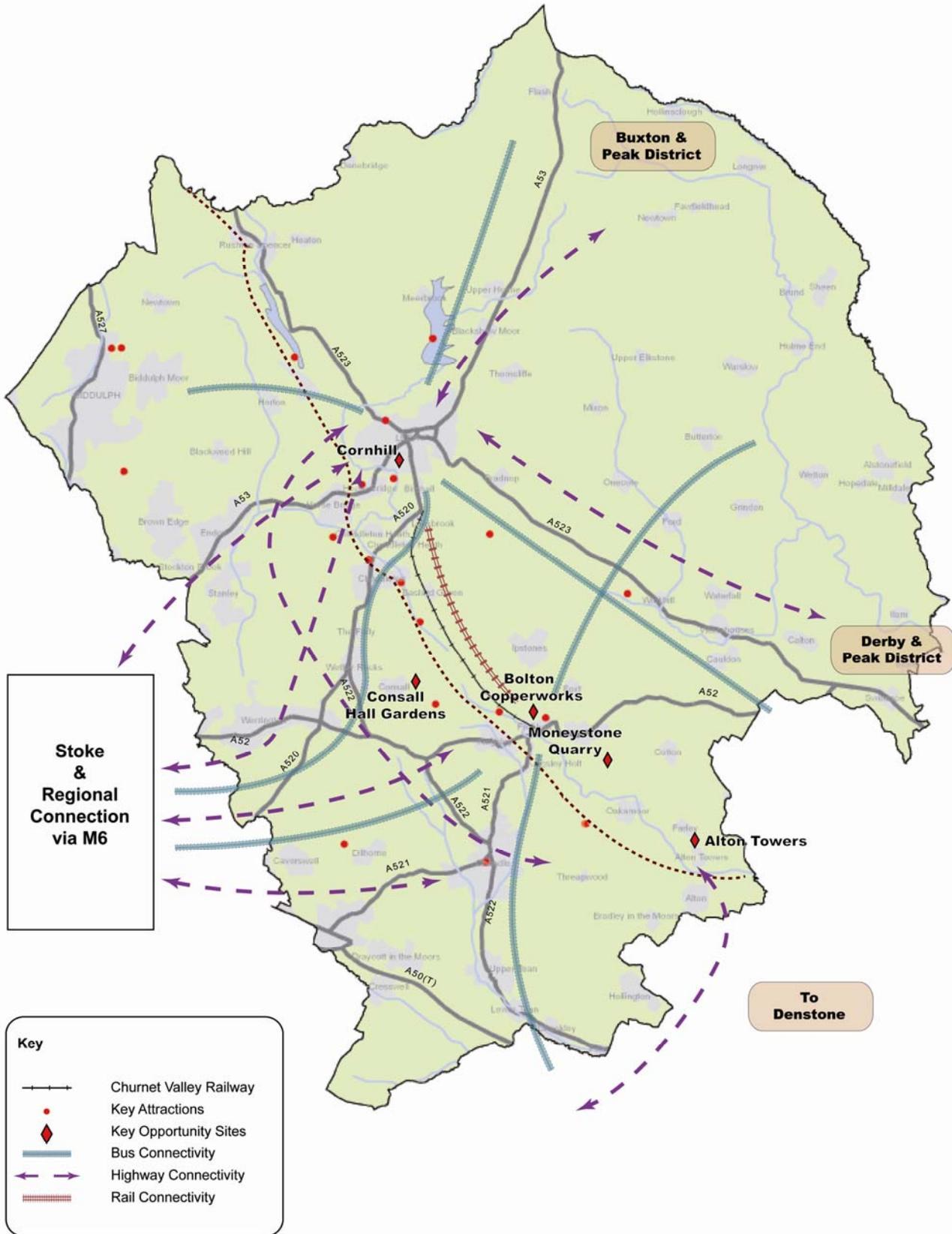
Trip Type	Internal to Internal Trips	Internal to External Trips	External to Internal Trips
Work / study at home	36%	0%	5%
Train	0%	0%	0%
Bus	4%	5%	10%
Taxi	0%	0%	0%
Car driver	42%	76%	67%
Car passenger	8%	8%	12%
M-cycle	1%	1%	1%
Bicycle	2%	3%	1%
Walk	8%	6%	3%

As can be seen, for all types of trip, car transport is the predominant mode of travel. It is clear that for people accessing the Churnet Valley area to work, or indeed leaving the area to work, car use makes up around 80% of all trips. This clearly demonstrates that connectivity to area by modes other than car is limited. For people living and working within the corridor there appears to be a large proportion which chooses to work or study at home, and a greater emphasis on people walking to work. In addition to trips generated by those living and working in the area, there are also a large number of through trips with people travelling between neighbouring settlements such as Ashbourne, the Peak District and Stoke, again via car.

Unfortunately, the availability of information regarding the mode of travel used by people visiting the area is limited. It is however clear that giving the predominance of car travel for people travelling to work it is expected, at the very least that visitors would reflect a similar mode split.

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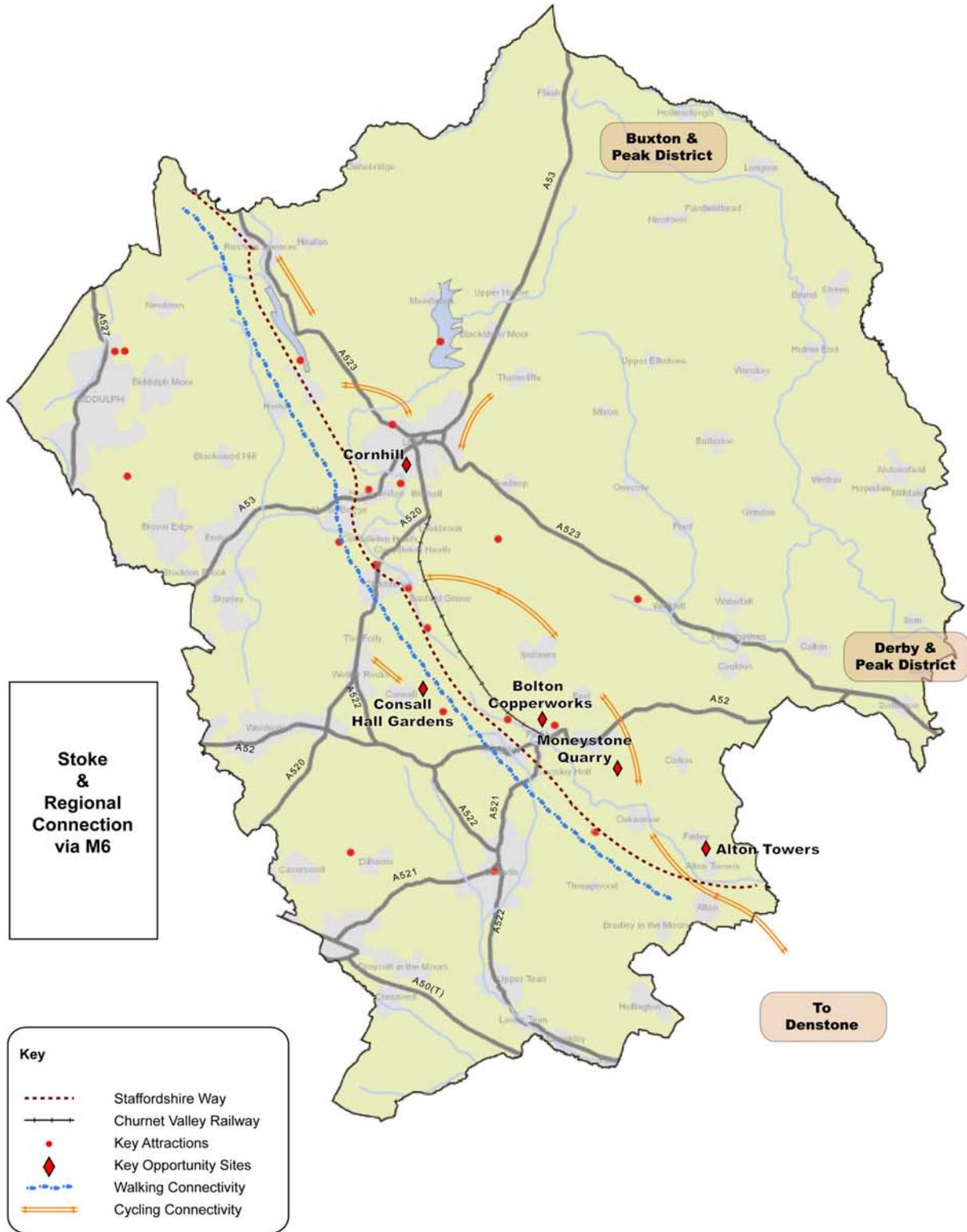
Figure 2.1 – Highway, Bus and Rail



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Figure 2.2 – Walking and Cycling



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2.3 Current Situation

The vast majority of visitors to the Churnet Valley invariably arrive by car, travelling via the primary road network serving the area, namely the A50, A53, A523, A52 and A520. The towns of Cheadle and Leek are often the first point of entry for people visiting the area and these settlements represent and provide a point of reference or source of information from which the next part of a journey towards one of the many attractions nearby is made.

Figure 2.3 - Road signing along the A50



For the first-time visitor, using the road network, it can sometimes be confusing to navigate towards, and between, the various destinations such as Tittesworth Water, Consall Hall Gardens or Froghall Wharf. The signing is at best sporadic and at times non-existent, with many of the narrow roads and lanes being of a poor standard with limited capacity and lacking any kind of provision for pedestrians or cyclists. Upon arrival at many of the Valley's attractions, there is more than sufficient provision for car parking, with charges in operation at some locations whilst at others parking is free. The availability of parking at the majority of key destinations (**Figure 2.4**) reinforces the prominent position of car travel with the travel hierarchy of the area.

Figure 2.4 – Availability of parking at key attractions



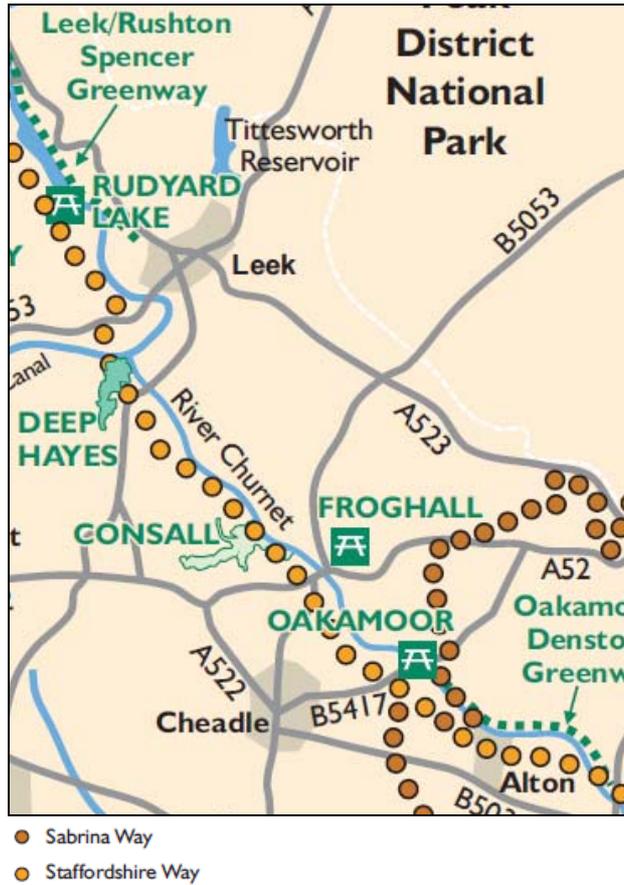
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Walking routes in the Churnet Valley primarily focus upon, and provide access to, the key attractions, such as Tittesworth Water and Deep Hayes Country Park, enabling visitors to drive to the destination and follow designated walks or routes. The standard of these routes can vary in quality from hard surfaced footpaths to less formal bridleways and byways. Whilst many visitors choose to focus upon a specific attraction, the walking links within the Churnet Valley and between attractions are underdeveloped, limiting the permeability and accessibility of the area for recreational and leisure use. The canal, railway and indeed the topography of the area can also present barriers to the movement of visitors.

The Staffordshire Way represents the most established multi-user route in the area, running parallel to the River Churnet from Rudyard Lake in the north-west to Alton in the south-east, connecting to the Leek-Rushton Spencer Greenway and the Oakamoor to Denstone Greenway (**Figure 2.5**).

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Figure 2.5 – Walking routes in the plan area



(Source: Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Staffordshire)

Whilst these routes are popular for more serious walkers such as members of the Ramblers Association, their length and condition make them less suitable for recreational walking by families wishing to visit attractions or walk through sections of the valley.

Figure 2.6 – Deep Hayes circular walk



The current opportunities for leisure cycling within the Churnet Valley are severely limited due to the lack of high quality designated routes and associated infrastructure. The permeability of the area for cyclists is constrained by physical barriers such as the canal and railway, as well as being affected in places by the challenging topography. Advisory cycle-routes along the road network are not ideal and would discourage many families and leisure cyclists from using them owing to conflicts with traffic and perceived safety issues. Similarly, the canal towpath and other bridleways and byways are not currently suitable for heavy use by cyclists. A lack of cycle-specific information in the Churnet Valley, including effective directional signage, further detracts from the ease with which cyclists can navigate and utilise the area.

Public Transport access to the key attractions within the Churnet Valley is limited by the fact that bus services are constrained to the main highway network, with many of the roads in the area simply being unsuitable for buses or coaches. The access to bus provision within the area is shown in **Figure 2.12**, at the end of the Chapter. This shows amount of time it takes to access bus services, including an allowance for the frequency within the Churnet Valley area. Bus stops are often a significant distance from popular attractions and, combined with limited services and frequencies, this detracts from the viability of public transport as a travel option for visitors. The Churnet Valley Railway is not currently served by external rail services.

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The CVR, during its times of operation, provides a good connection through the spine of the Valley, linking the settlements of Cheddleton, Consall and Froghall. It is important to note that whilst this railway link currently provides access between these towns, the railway itself is the attraction, so the cost of travel and frequency does not necessarily represent a viable alternative for travel within the area.

In summary, the key issues for the Churnet Valley in relation to specific modes of travel are summarised below;

Highways

- Relatively poor access and signage (with exception of Alton Towers) from the Strategic Road Network (M6 and A50).
- Good external road links to access the Churnet Valley from the North Staffordshire conurbation
- Roads within the Churnet Valley have limited capacity and are of a poor standard in places (road surface, visibility etc)
- Little or no provision for pedestrians and cyclists along the network
- Road network within the Churnet Valley presents a significant constraint for bus and coach use
- Signing of routes and attractions is sporadic and can cause confusion for motorists
- Road access and availability of parking reinforces reliance on the car for access and movement

Walking

- Staffordshire Way runs parallel to the River Churnet
- Designated walking routes for specific attractions are present, with most being served by car parks
- Lack of coherent, high quality routes permeating the valley and linking key attractions
- Little integration between walking and other sustainable modes of travel (bus and cycle)
- Many routes need to be upgraded to a higher standard or formalised for pedestrian use, particularly for those with impaired mobility

The canal, river and railway all present barriers to pedestrian movement

- Linkages from existing settlements (Leek, Cheddleton, Cheadle etc) into the Churnet Valley are underdeveloped

Cycling

- Little or no designated cycle network in the Churnet Valley
- The canal towpath is not currently suitable for cycle use along its full length
- Lack of infrastructure and facilities (i.e. cycle hire, cycle parking, signing)
- The road network is not suitable for use by the majority of leisure cyclists
- Information for cyclists (signage, maps etc) is very limited
- Topography and permeability of network is a constraint to cycling in parts of the area

Figure 2.7 – Existing bus stop



Public Transport

- No rail access to the Churnet Valley
- Public transport access to key attractions is limited to main bus routes

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- Buses are constrained to the main highway network
- Limited services and frequencies represent a barrier to increasing bus modal share
- Bus infrastructure (shelters etc) could be upgraded on parts of the network
- Availability of bus information for the Churnet Valley as a whole could be improved

Heritage Railway

- Only operates at certain days and times of the year
- Parts of the line are not used
- Railway can act as a barrier to movement in the area
- Railway does not connect to all attractions in the area

Waterways

- Caldon Canal enables access through the Valley for leisure users
- The canal is underdeveloped as a visitor destination in its own right
- Signage and visitor information along the canal is limited to a small number of locations
- Canal towpath needs to be upgraded to make it more suitable for walkers and cyclists

Figure 2.8 – Caldon Canal



In addition to the transport-specific issues listed above, the baseline assessment has revealed a number of other factors which have a bearing upon access and connectivity in the Churnet Valley. These are detailed below.

Visitor Information

- Visitor centres are present at a number of attractions such as Tittesworth Water and Froghall Wharf
- Visitor information focuses on attractions in isolation instead of adopting a corridor-wide approach
- Availability of information throughout the Churnet Valley, particularly along key routes, is inconsistent
- Lack of official website/journey planning information to consolidate the transport offer within the area.

Figure 2.9 – Example of visitor information



Directional Signage

Directional signage and way-point information for walkers and cyclists is poor

Lack of effective signing has a detrimental impact on the navigability and coherence of routes in the Valley

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Figure 2.10 – Example of signing



2.3 SWOT analysis

When considering accessibility and connectivity issues for a specific area, it is first necessary to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses inherent to that area and, in turn, identify the opportunities that may exist to capitalise upon the positives and overcome the negatives. In the case of the Churnet Valley, the evidence base review has identified a clear number of strengths and weaknesses which are specific to the area. Building upon these internal considerations, it has then been possible to identify potential opportunities, some of which are external to the area itself. This analysis is tempered by the inclusion of threats to the future development of the Churnet Valley as a sustainable tourism corridor. The SWOT analysis is displayed in **Table 2.2**

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Table 2.2 – SWOT analysis

Positive	Negative
<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive and varied landscape, water features and woodlands. • A large number of diverse and popular visitor attractions. • Good road links to the area from neighbouring conurbations. • Variety of travel options within the Churnet Valley, including the heritage railway and the waterways. • A number of attractions are within close proximity of one another, offering scope for better integration and connectivity. • Key opportunity sites offer the potential to create new and enhanced attractions and access facilities. • Network of routes in the Valley (canal towpath, byways and bridleways) which could be formalised. • Staffordshire Way and Sabrina Way run through the Valley. • The Caldon Canal is a designated conservation area. 	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural nature of attractions results in a reliance on the private car for access. • Visitor traffic can cause congestion at peak times of the year. • The highway network has limited capacity and is of a poor standard in places. • Roads to many of the attractions are unsuitable for buses or coaches. • Lack of coherent walking routes between attractions and throughout the Valley. • Poor permeability for cyclists. • Access within the Churnet Valley by bus is limited. • Directional signage for all modes is disparate. • The Churnet Valley is not marketed as a coherent 'tourism corridor'. • The topography of the area can be restrictive as can physical barriers such as the canal and railway.
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffordshire attracts over 20m visitors per year • Churnet Valley identified in the emerging Core Strategy as a major sustainable tourism corridor • Scope to restore and develop the canal in Leek • Aspirations for the Moorlands and City railway to reopen passenger services to Stoke • The visitor economy can positively benefit the local community, including services and facilities • Scope to introduce more bus services and increase frequencies • Opportunity to develop a marketing strategy for the whole of the Churnet Valley, including a website • Alton Towers is a significant attraction, drawing large numbers of visitors to the area, which may be interested in other attractions or staying in the area 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of car ownership and car use in Staffordshire, which is set to increase • Increasing visitor numbers can have a detrimental impact on the social and natural environment of the area • Potential cuts to rural bus services • Seasonality of tourism in the area can have negative effects on attractions and local businesses • Potential issues for securing funding for necessary transport maintenance/improvements • Key opportunity sites may not be developed

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2.4 SWOT Issues

The SWOT analysis has identified a number of important issues which will need to be considered in relation to the aims of the study. These include the following;

- The accessibility of the Churnet Valley by road from neighbouring settlements is a key enabler for attracting visitors, but this may reinforce the reliance on the private car at the expense of more sustainable modes of travel.
- The rural nature of the area is a key character strength, contributing to its appeal for visitors, however, this limits the opportunities for physical transport improvements and reduces the viability for new services.
- A number of attractions are within relatively close proximity of one another, yet deficiencies in visitor information, signing and linkages between these sites prevents closer integration and opportunities for linked visits.
- The Churnet Valley has great potential as a location to promote and encourage leisure cycling, but it does not currently possess the infrastructure or facilities to do so.
- Key opportunity sites such as Bolton Copperworks offer the potential to introduce new and complementary development to the area, however, such growth will need to be supported by a range of sustainable travel options.
- The canal represents a key transport link through the Churnet Valley, and an attraction in its own right, but it is in need of upgrading to become more of an asset to the tourism corridor.
- The attractions, and associated transport offer, within the Churnet Valley are marketed in isolation when the area would benefit far more from a 'corridor wide' approach.

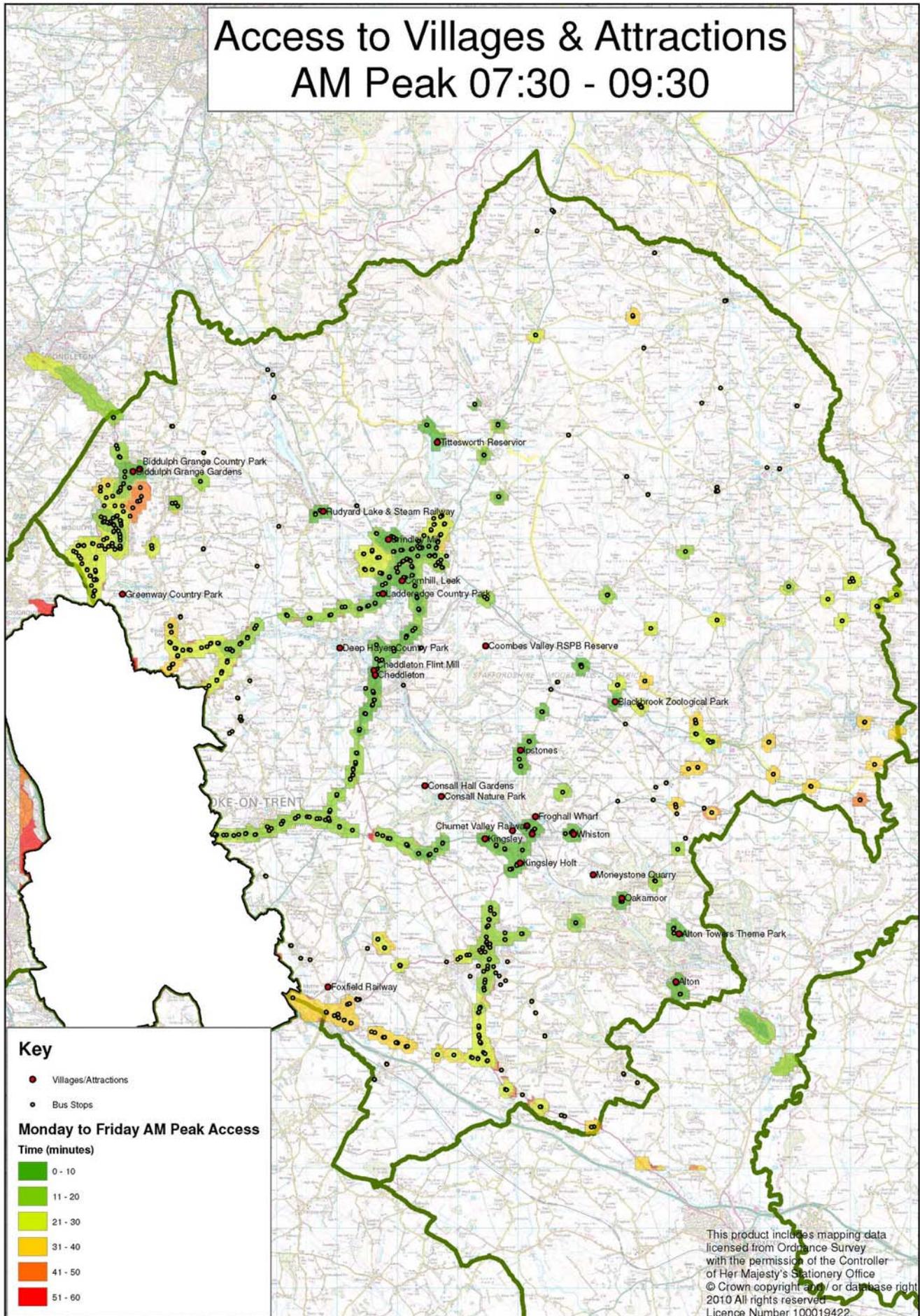
Figure 2.11 – Example of the rural road network



Section 3 of the report examines further the key local and strategic issues for the Churnet Valley and explores the opportunities for improving the accessibility of the area and promoting sustainable travel

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Figure 2.12 – Bus Access to Villages and Attractions in the Churnet Valley – AM Peak (07:30 – 09:30)



Opportunities for the Churnet Valley

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3 Opportunities for the Churnet Valley

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the local and strategic issues which are considered key in relation to accessibility and connectivity in the study area. The following sections also assess the potential opportunities for improving the transport offer in the area whilst simultaneously considering the challenges which may need to be overcome.

Improving accessibility for the Churnet Valley is about understanding and addressing a range of factors and how these change over time, including:

- The nature of the attractions the area has to offer;
- Why people visit the area;
- When people visit and for how long;
- Where visitors come from;
- How visitors access the area and facilities within it.

Below these strategic factors are local factors around the nature and locations of the attractions in the area and the nature of the linkages between them.

The car is clearly currently the main means of accessing the area and this is likely to be the case in the future. However the way in which access by car is managed in the future will be a key consideration.

3.2 Key Local Issues

There are a range of issues which are specific to the social, natural and built environment of the Churnet Valley and have an important bearing upon the accessibility and connectivity of the area. Based upon the initial work undertaken as part of this study, a set of targeted local issues have been identified for the Churnet Valley. These are to;

- 1) Manage access to the area in an integrated manner that responds to the needs of visitors, supports the attractiveness of the area, and enhances key local attractors, whilst safeguarding the local environment.
- 2) Increase the permeability of the area by non-car modes introducing new walking and cycling links and enhancing existing routes (such as the canal towpath and the Staffordshire Way).
- 3) Improve the availability and quality of visitor information and introduce a coherent and consistent signage strategy

4) Enhance the integration of attractions, through physical measures and also via the use of information and marketing

3.3 Key Strategic Issues

Improving the accessibility and connectivity of the Churnet Valley cannot be viewed in isolation as there are a great many issues which have an influence upon the area but are driven by factors beyond its geographical boundaries. Key amongst these are the people who travel to the Churnet Valley; why they choose to visit the area, how long they plan to stay, which attractions they wish to visit and how they choose to travel to, and within, the area. Taking the above points into consideration the following strategic issues have been identified:

- 1) Increase the role of existing settlements, opportunity sites and larger attractions as destinations from which to access and explore the Churnet Valley via walking, cycling, rail and water.
- 2) Provide new and improved visitor attractions and facilities at key locations which enhance and protect the attractiveness of the area whilst also improving the transport infrastructure in a sustainable way.
- 3) Develop and market an integrated, corridor-wide approach to access and movement within the Churnet Valley through a variety of means including maximising the opportunities for providing information

3.4 Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the evidence base for examining accessibility and connectivity in the Churnet Valley, 30 key stakeholders were contacted to try and gain additional information and insight regarding the opportunities and constraints facing the area, with particular emphasis upon the attractions and opportunity sites in the Valley. This process informed the SWOT analysis and helped to crystallise the key issues for the area, including the identification of potential improvements to the transport network.

3.5 Opportunities

The overall aims of this study are to assess the potential for improving the accessibility of the area via sustainable modes and to identify opportunities for improving linkages between attractions within the Churnet Valley, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. To help assist with this process,

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Table 3.1 assesses the potential of a range of modes of travel and associated measures to improve accessibility in the study area.

Table 3.1 – Potential to Improve Accessibility across the Churnet Valley

Mode of Travel/Method		Limited Potential	Some Potential	Good Potential	Very Good Potential
Walking	Existing routes			✓	
	Staffordshire Way and Greenways				✓
	Canal towpath				✓
	Road network		✓		
	New routes			✓	
Cycling	Existing routes		✓		
	Staffordshire Way and Greenways				✓
	Canal towpath				✓
	Road network	✓			
	New routes			✓	
	Cycle hire schemes				✓
Bus	Existing services		✓		
	New Services				✓
	Demand responsive transport			✓	
	Coach		✓		
Rail	Heritage Railway- future expansion			✓	
	New rail infrastructure		✓		
Water	Existing waterways			✓	
	Extension of canal		✓		
	Canal towpath				✓
Information	Enhanced visitor information				✓
	Signing strategy				✓
	Journey planning		✓		
	Travel marketing		✓		
	Website			✓	
Car	Traffic management		✓		
	Signage				✓
	Car Parking provision			✓	

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

The following sections focus upon those transport modes which offer good, or very good, potential to improve the accessibility of the area via sustainable forms of transport.

Walking

The Churnet Valley is a very attractive destination for visitors keen on walking, although this is often centred upon one destination alone. Given the numerous attractions within the study area and the attractiveness of the surroundings, there is clearly scope to increase the number of people walking within the Valley.

The Staffordshire Way is a key walking route through the area, following the profile of the River Churnet through much of the Valley, passing through areas of woodland and a number of villages. This route connects to a wider network of pathways, bridleways and designated walks and provides a good basis upon which to improve access to visitor attractions, as well as being a scenic attraction in its own right.

Figure 3.1 – Walkers on the Staffordshire Way



There are two Greenways in the study area, one running from Leek to Rushton Spencer and the other from Oakamoor to Denstone which build upon the Staffordshire Way. Both of these routes run along the track beds of old railway lines and provide a good way of accessing the valley for pedestrians and cyclists alike. The Greenways provide coherent links, with good surfaces, between Leek and Rudyard Lake, and between Oakamoor and Alton. Continuing this type of route through the central section of the Churnet Valley, possibly utilising the Staffordshire Way, the CVR alignment and the course of the

River Churnet/Caldon Canal would help to increase the coherence of walking routes within the area.

The canal towpath offers another opportunity to increase the accessibility and connectivity of the Churnet Valley, particularly along a north-south axis between Leek and Froghall. The function of the canal and towpath could be altered to serve as more of a spine route through the area, along which walkers and cyclists can easily travel, accessing visitor attractions. This will require sections of the canal towpath to be upgraded to a higher standard, able to safely accommodate multiple users.

The canal network in Staffordshire is administered by British Waterways. Pedestrian access is permitted on the canal towpaths and informal access on bicycles is permitted where appropriate. Where hard surfaced, these routes offer a relatively flat, easily navigable facility for leisure cycling. The scenic attraction of these towpaths is also a major strength, with the **Caldon Canal** being a designated conservation area

The availability and quality of information and signage along all of the walking routes discussed above will play an important role in shaping these facilities as primary walking routes which will improve the accessibility and permeability of the area. It will also be important to improve signage to walking routes from car parks, bus stops, attractions and settlements.

Cycling

Cycling represents a key component of any package of measures intended to encourage sustainable travel to, from or within a designated area; helping to reduce the reliance on the private car. A coherent and connected cycle network can greatly improve permeability and accessibility whilst also increasing the connectivity between key nodes or attractions.

The promotion of leisure cycling is particularly important within a popular tourist area, and this can be achieved in a number of ways including;

- Providing a leisure cycling network which focuses on key attractions
- Providing high quality, cycle specific directional signage along the network and at key origins and destinations.
- Providing suitable facilities and infrastructure, such as cycle hire, cycle parking, toilets and refreshment areas.

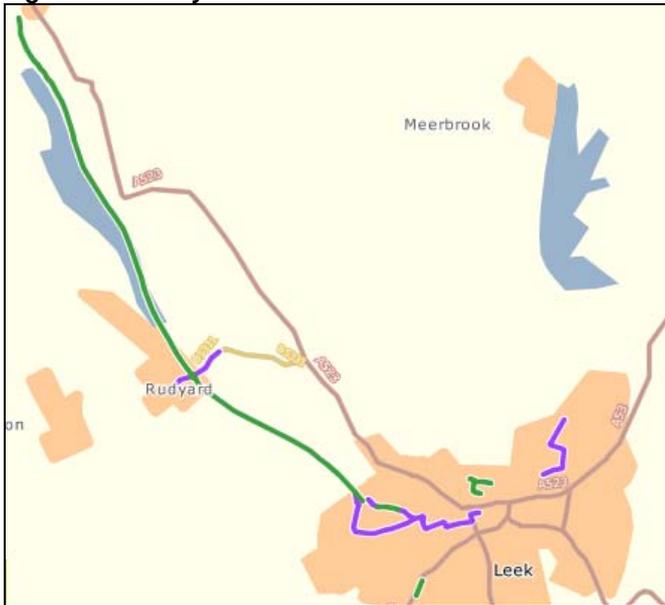
Capabilities on project:
Transportation

- Promoting leisure cycling in a comprehensive manner, including leaflets, maps and websites

With regards to encouraging cycling in the Churnet Valley, the provision of a suitable network is of key importance. This can be achieved through the introduction of new linkages and also by upgrading and enhancing existing routes. In terms of the latter, there are a number of routes in the area which can cater for leisure cycling and offer the potential to be developed further.

The Rudyard Lake trail (**Figure 3.2**) connects the town of Leek with the key attraction of Rudyard Lake and utilises the Leek to Rushton Spencer greenway. This route is suitable for both pedestrians and cyclists and forms a coherent and easily navigable link.

Figure 3.2 – Rudyard Lake Trail



(Source: www.sustrans.co.uk)

In the south of the Churnet Valley, National Cycle Route 54 (**Figure 3.3**) runs between Denstone and Oakamoor along the old railway line. This forms part of the existing greenway and provides a good quality route for non-motorised users

Figure 3.3 – National Cycle Route 54



(Source: www.sustrans.co.uk)

Both of the aforementioned routes provide good examples of the kind of linkages which would help to facilitate an increase in the number of people cycling within the Churnet Valley. There is clearly scope to introduce similar routes within the area to build upon what is, at present, a limited and disparate network, and provide a more comprehensive cycling offer for visitors. It is envisaged that existing settlements and key attractions could provide hubs from which leisure cyclists can access necessary equipment and facilities and explore out into the surrounding area.

As well as the opportunities for physical improvements, there is also scope to increase the marketing of cycling as a travel choice for visitors to the area. This could include cycle hire schemes (such as Manifold Cycle Hire and Brown End Farm Cycle Hire which are currently in operation) for the entire Churnet Valley, enabling visitors to utilise routes within the area to reach several attractions, increasing connectivity.

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The **Peak District National Park Authority** plans to promote cycling as part of its drive to encourage more sustainable travel by visitors and residents within the park. This is understood to involve extending the network of off-road, leisure cycling routes linking Buxton town and station to Bakewell as well as the existing High Peak Trails. The 'Pedal Peak District' project will also aim to improve existing cycle hire facilities and market a package of leisure cycling activities and initiatives



Figure 3.4 – Cyclist in Oakamoor



Information

A key opportunity area for increasing the accessibility of the Churnet Valley in relation to all travel modes is through the introduction and proliferation of high quality and easily accessible information. This could include marketing the Churnet Valley in a more comprehensive way, via the use of a website and other marketing material, as well as introducing a consistent signing strategy throughout the area. These measures will help to inform visitors to the Valley and play a key part in influencing their travel behaviour, which is particularly important in the context of increasing the modal share of sustainable transport.

As a locally relevant example of maximising the use of information to benefit the Churnet Valley, the **Peak District Sustainable Tourism Strategy**, contains specific objectives to improve the marketing and promotion of the area and also the provision and use of information for visitors. These objectives include the following actions:

- Developing a Peak District brand and market-led marketing campaign to help promote the area
- Working with the Heart of England Tourist Board and relevant local authorities, to fulfil the potential of the area
- Develop a network of electronic information sites to enable visitors to learn about public transport, events and attractions
- Developing a Peak District Tourist Information website
- Working to improve appropriate tourism signing

The **Wye Valley** is another example of a popular tourist area which is marketed and promoted in an effective way. A designated website contains information on travel, accommodation as well as a range of downloadable walking routes and maps.

Walks suitable for:

- ✓ Older Walkers
- ✓ The Less Able
- ✓ Young Families
- ✓ Pushchairs
- ✓ Inexperienced Walkers

Wye Valley & Forest of Dean
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

12 EASY WALKS

Get Moving!

www.wyedeantourism.co.uk

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Transportation

Bus

Whilst there are a number of limitations with the current public transport offer in the Churnet Valley (as identified in Chapter 2), new services with increased frequencies would provide a good opportunity for improving accessibility and connectivity. Specialist services could be introduced to serve key attractions/destinations, catering for visitors to the area. The concept of a shuttle bus or land train linking a range of attractions or park and ride sites in strategic locations would also greatly enhance the attractiveness of this mode of travel. Such opportunities must however take into account the increasing pressure being placed upon funding rural bus services and the fact that decisions by bus operators regarding new services are invariably commercially driven.

Managing Car Access

The car is currently the main means of accessing the area. However, access for first time visitors can be confusing. In addition, in many cases individual attractions often have limited car access and are poorly signed. There is a need for both small scale parking facilities to provide better access to attractions and also for larger scale parking provision strategically. This could be located in relation to key attractors, providing linked services such as eating facilities, toilets and gift shops.

Access to Tittesworth Reservoir has been greatly enhanced by the provision of well laid out car parking facilities and provision of services on the site. This is a model that could be pursued elsewhere.

Car access needs to be treated carefully as car traffic and parking can be visually detrimental in the landscape. In addition, many roads through the Churnet Valley are very narrow and unsuitable for accommodating more traffic, especially where they are used by walkers and cyclists.

The location and signage for any new parking facilities therefore needs to minimise the potential for increased traffic on unsuitable roads or through sensitive areas. Ideal locations will be close to both classified roads and significant attractors such as scenic walks and cycle routes,

Opportunity Sites

As part of this study, further consideration needs to be given to the key opportunity sites within the Churnet Valley. These locations, namely Cornhill, Consall Hall Gardens, Bolton Copperworks, Moneystone Quarry and Alton Towers, have

been identified as sites for complementary redevelopment through the Churnet Valley Masterplan. These sites are very important within the transport context as their redevelopment may offer the catalyst for introducing new infrastructure and services to the area. **Table 3.2** focuses upon the five opportunity sites and details the respective opportunities and constraints specific to each site.

In addition to the opportunities for improving specific modes of travel within the Churnet Valley, a broader view of the area enables the identification of wider opportunity areas, whose accessibility could be improved through the co-ordinated improvement to transport linkages in the area. These opportunity areas focus upon specific attractions or clusters of attractions and also the key transport linkages which could facilitate the development of a particular corridor within the study area. These opportunity areas include;

- Leek and the Cornhill site, also encompassing Leekbrook Junction and the Caldron Canal
- Froghall and Bolton Copperworks towards Oakamoor, encompassing Moneystone Quarry site and the disused section of the CVR
- Alton and Alton Towers

Figure 3.5 Illustrates these broad opportunity areas which are considered to be of key importance for the Churnet Valley masterplanning process.

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

Table 3.2 – Key Opportunity Sites

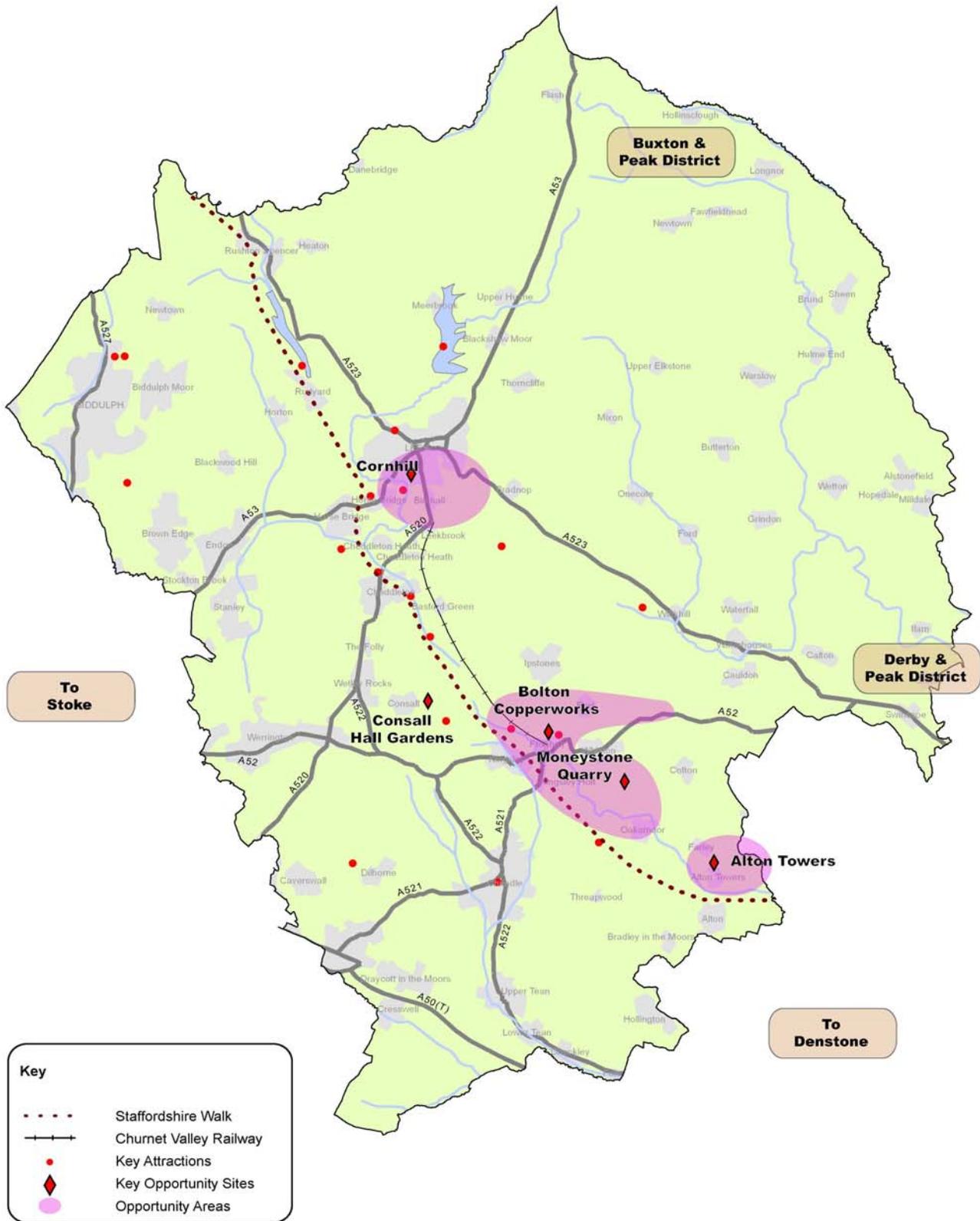
Key Opportunity Site	Opportunities	Constraints
<p>Cornhill, Leek</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leek is a popular destination for visitors to the area • Potential option to extend the railway track to Leek • Potential option to build a southern link road from Newcastle Road to Cheddleton Road • Site identified in the Core Strategy as having potential for employment, tourism and leisure uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the site is problematic • Much of the area requires regeneration • Significant investment in transport infrastructure required to deliver the site
<p>Consall Hall Gardens</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular visitor destination with attractive surroundings • Consall Station is nearby • Staffordshire Way offers potential to improve walking links to the site • Signage to the site could be improved • Site identified in the Core Strategy as having potential for employment, residential, tourist and leisure uses • Served by A52 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main access is for cars only • Standard of access to Consall Hall is poor • Access by bus is currently non-existent • Issues of controlling public access for management reasons
<p>Bolton Copperworks</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant area of land potentially available for redevelopment • Close proximity to both the Caldon Canal and the heritage railway • Close proximity to Froghall Wharf • Potential to integrate the site with the Caldon canal, River Churnet and new access links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topography of the area is challenging • Part of the site lies within a protected floodplain • The canal, railway and A52 represent barriers to development • The retained industrial buildings are visually unattractive • The adjacent section of the canal is in need of upgrading for all users • Poor pedestrian and cyclist links to and from the site

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

Key Opportunity Site	Opportunities	Constraints
<p>Moneystone Quarry</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large site potentially available for redevelopment • Close proximity to the disused section of the railway line • Potential to provide tourist accommodation and related facilities • Redevelopment could secure funding for transport improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road links to the site are very constrained • Current site access is problematic • Topography of the area is challenging for development
<p>Alton Towers</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant attraction, drawing large numbers of people to the area • Scope to enhance the linkages between Alton Towers and the rest of the Churnet Valley • Aspiration of Moorland and City Railway to reopen the line to Alton • Subject to SPG which is currently being updated based on Alton Towers Resort Long Term Plan • Opportunity to improve public transport access to the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road links to the site are substandard in places • Issues with congestion during certain times of the year- particularly through Alton Village • Visitor numbers can have a detrimental impact on the local area • Very seasonal in terms of visitor numbers

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Figure 3.5 – Opportunity Areas



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3.6 Churnet Valley Railway

One of the aims of the Accessibility and Connectivity Study is to examine the proposals to extend the Churnet Valley Railway (CVR) and consider how this potential scheme sits within the wider transport opportunities for the area.

The CVR currently runs over ten miles through the area, connecting four stations along its route; Leekbrook Junction (which has no public access), Cheddleton Station (accessed from the A520 south of Leek), Consall Station (no road access) and Kingsley & Froghall Station (off of the A52). The railway has a heritage status and operates a range of passenger services timetabled during ten months of the year. The CVR is a major attraction for the area and as well as drawing in large numbers of visitors (around 70,000 per year), it also represents a key transport link enabling people to explore more of the Churnet Valley.

Figure 3.6 – Cheddleton Station



From Kingsley & Froghall Station there is the opportunity to extend the railway to Oakamoor utilising a section of track which is currently disused (**Figure 3.7**). This extension would potentially enable visitors to access more of the Churnet Valley and bring the railway closer to Alton Towers; however, a station and associated facilities would need to be provided. There is also a dismantled section of railway which runs onwards from Oakamoor towards Denstone. This forms part of the greenway network and is currently utilised by walkers and cyclists, which would present a barrier to expanding the CVR beyond Oakamoor. This section of the former line is double track, so provision could potentially be made to retain the walking and cycling facility as well as introducing the rail line.

Figure 3.7 – Railway between Froghall and Oakamoor



In terms of extending the CVR to Oakamoor, this proposal clearly benefits from the fact that there is a suitable section of track which could be utilised. There is scope to provide associated facilities in Oakamoor and enhance the connectivity of the Valley as a whole. The advantage of Oakamoor as a potential station on the CVR is that it is accessible via walking, cycling, bus and car.

Figure 3.8 – Former rail infrastructure in Oakamoor



Options to extend the CVR also include an extension from Leekbrook Junction into Leek itself. This proposal would enable visitors to Leek to access the CVR without having to

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

rely on the car to reach Cheddleton or Kingsley and Froghall stations, helping to increase integration between modes and encourage sustainable travel. Consideration would also need to be given to maintaining the current recreational use of the sections of disused railway line in the area; enabling walkers/cyclists to continue utilising these routes in the future.

When considering the opportunities for extending and enhancing the CVR, the recent opening of the Caldon Lowe branch by Moorlands and City Railway (MCR) offers further potential for enhancing the rail offer in the Churnet Valley. MCR have expressed aspirations to re-open lines to Leek, Alton and Stoke on Trent in the next five years. Whilst the primary focus of the Moorlands and City Railway is the transportation of commercial freight, the ability to introduce passenger services from Stoke into the Churnet Valley would be highly beneficial in developing the area as a sustainable tourism corridor.

Figure 3.9 – Railway line towards Consall Station



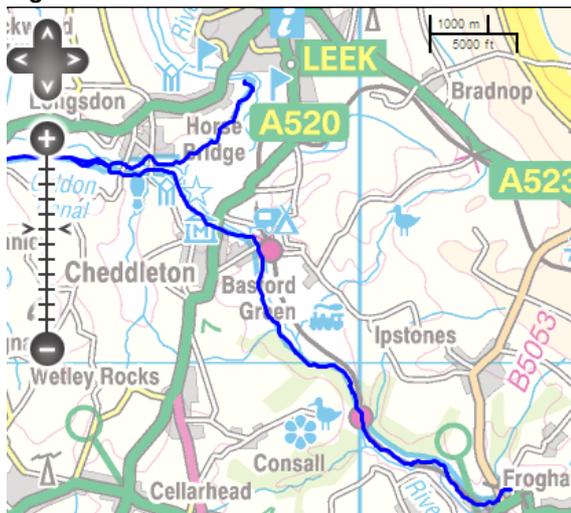
Overall, the proposals to extend the CVR would greatly add to the functionality of the railway, enhancing the visitor experience and also improving the accessibility and connectivity of the area. Any future extensions would be highly complementary to the future aims of the Churnet Valley Masterplan and could be closely aligned with improvements to the walking, cycling and public transport offer. Clearly, there would be engineering issues to be overcome and potential funding constraints with any works associated with extending the railway, but such proposals nevertheless present good opportunities for the

development of the Churnet Valley as a sustainable tourism corridor.

3.7 Caldon and Uttoxeter Canals

The canal network in the Churnet Valley is a key asset for the area and provides a number of opportunities for the future development of a sustainable tourism corridor. The Caldon Canal (**Figure 3.10**) is an attraction within its own right, popular with recreational users, but also representing a strategic transport link for users of the waterways and also walkers and cyclists using the towpath.

Figure 3.10 – Caldon Canal



(Source: www.waterscape.com)

Whilst the Caldon Canal has been identified as part of the SWOT analysis and considered as part of the opportunities and constraints exercise, this study must also assess the proposal to restore and extend the Uttoxeter Canal.

The Uttoxeter Canal was originally built in 1811 and ran for 13 miles from a junction with the Caldon Canal at Froghall through the Churnet Valley to Uttoxeter. The canal was subsequently closed and much of the network reverted to its original state. However, the aspiration to restore part of the original canal has been brought forward in recent times and a feasibility study was carried out in 2009 on behalf of Staffordshire County Council and the Caldon and Uttoxeter Canals Trust on the potential restoration of the Uttoxeter Canal from Froghall to a quarry site to the north east of Uttoxeter (**Figure 3.11 on p33**).

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

This study concluded that whilst the restoration of the canal was feasible, there were a number of significant issues with such a project, including challenging topography, construction access, floodplain constraints and interactions with the highway network. In addition, the study highlighted the significant levels of funding which would be required to develop these proposals further, and indeed deliver the final scheme.

Taking the outcomes of the feasibility study under advisement, it is considered that, whilst the restoration of the canal would present an opportunity for enhancing the Churnet Valley, further study work and technical assessments would be required to develop this proposal further. It is recommended that the restoration of the canal remains an aspiration for the area, but that in the context of developing the Churnet Valley as a sustainable tourism corridor this scheme has a number of significant constraints which would reduce its deliverability when compared to other measures proposed for consideration in the Churnet Valley Masterplan. There may, however, be interim options to provide walking and cycling links along the line of the former canal, such as a walking route from Froghall Basin to Oakamoor.

Figure 3.12 – Line of the Uttoxeter Canal



(Source: © Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust, courtesy of Waterway Images)

3.8 Cheadle and Leek Town Centre Masterplans

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council have commissioned Town Centre Masterplans for both Cheadle and Leek which, once complete, will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents as part of the LDF. Each Masterplan aims to identify employment opportunities through the redevelopment of vacant and underused land; identify the potential to increase

resident and visitor expenditure and; to strengthen the role of the town as a service and retail hub.

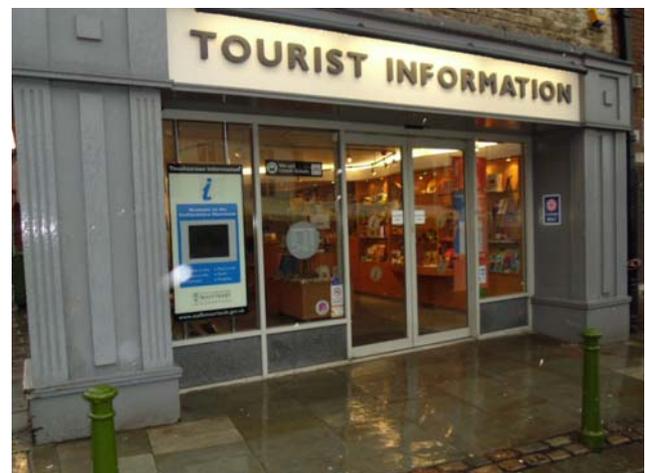
As part of the masterplanning process, the transport and access situation for each town was examined, along with the wider interactions with the public realm. This work identified a number of issues common to both town centres including;

- Problems with severance for pedestrians and cyclists
- Limited frequency of some bus services
- A lack of rail connectivity
- Problems with traffic access and congestion
- Deficiencies with signage and car parking

To address these issues, each Masterplan contains a framework for providing transport and access improvements. These include enhancing the pedestrian and cyclist environment along key desire lines, providing high quality bus infrastructure and facilities, improving key junctions, managing traffic and car parking more appropriately and introducing better signage and information across all modes.

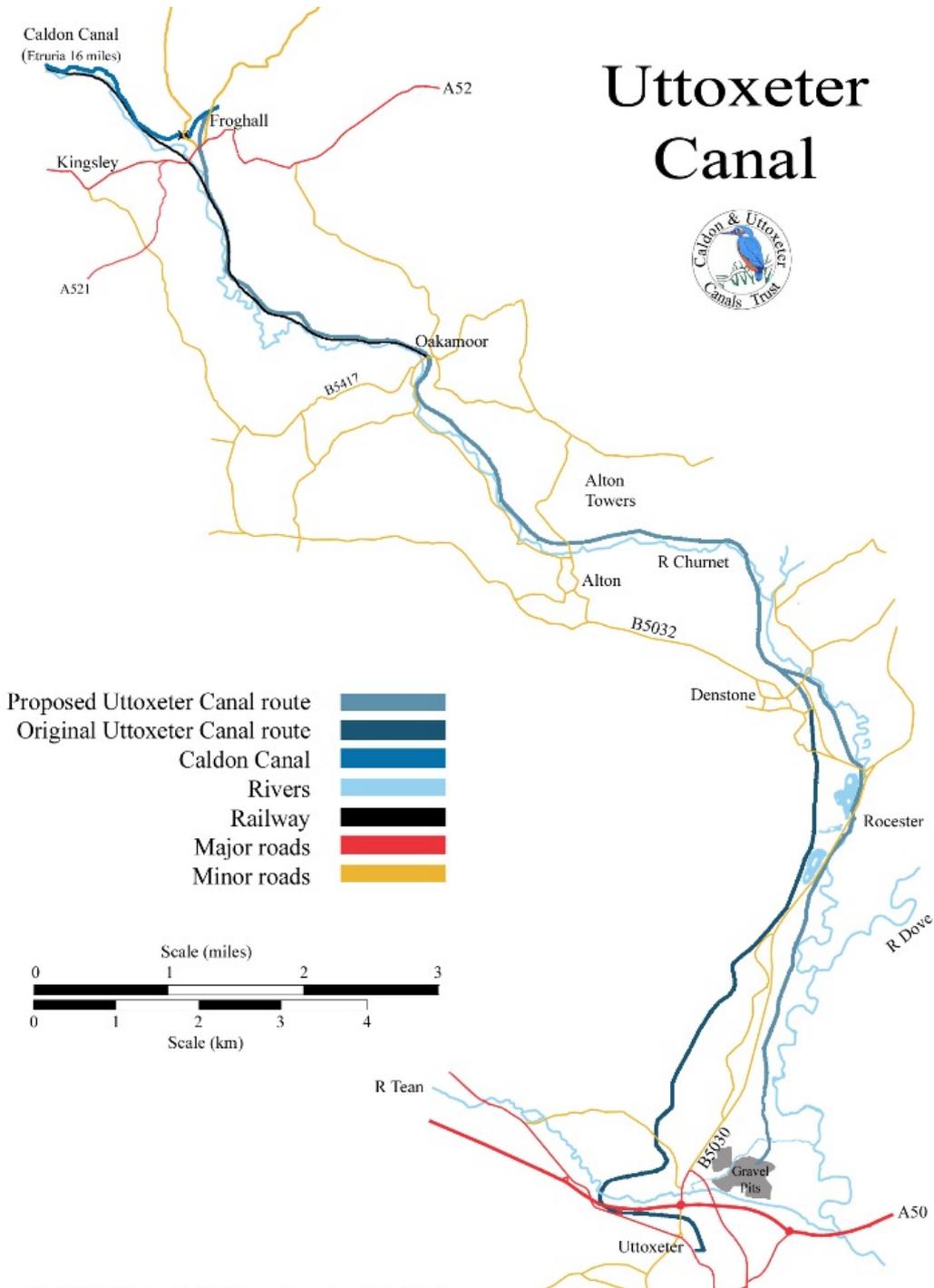
The development of the town centres of Cheadle and Leek represent key opportunities for the Churnet Valley as a whole; as these towns play an important part in the way in which people choose to travel to, from and within the area. The measures proposed through the Churnet Valley Accessibility and Connectivity study will be highly complementary towards the transport improvements identified for Cheadle and Leek, sharing a common theme of maximising transport and access opportunities in the most sustainable manner.

Figure 3.13 – Tourist Information in Leek



Capabilities on project:
Transportation

Figure 3.11 – Uttoxeter Canal



Capabilities on project:
Transportation

3.9 Constraints

When considering the opportunities for improving the accessibility and connectivity of the Churnet Valley via individual or collective modes of travel, there must also be an examination of the constraints to any such improvements. These constraints could be inherent to the area (such as topography or availability of land), specific to the transport network (such as limited highway capacity or lack of rail access) or related to the social environment (seasonality of tourism etc). Many of these constraints have been identified as part of the evidence base review and SWOT analysis; however for ease of reference **Table 3.3** lists the key constraints in relation to their impact upon the primary modes of travel within the study area. **Figure 3.15** shows the main constraints to access and movement within the Churnet Valley.

The **standard of routes in the Churnet Valley** is a major factor when considering options to encourage **walking and cycling** through the area. Key links such as the Staffordshire Way and the canal towpaths can vary in quality which would constrain their ability to accommodate multiple users.



Narrow widths, overgrown vegetation and unsuitable surfaces all reduce the ability of these routes to be used safely by walkers and cyclists. It would therefore be necessary to upgrade large sections of the network throughout the Churnet Valley so as to provide the best possible means of increasing accessibility and connectivity for non-motorised users.

Figure 3.14 – Cyclist in the Churnet Valley



(Source: © Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust, courtesy of Waterway Images)

3.10 Challenges

When focussing upon the transport context for the Churnet Valley, in terms of improving accessibility and connectivity, it is also necessary to consider the wider challenges which will need to be overcome to develop the Valley as a sustainable tourism corridor. These challenges are much broader than some of the specific constraints discussed above, and relate more to the way that people choose to interact with their surroundings. The key challenges for the Churnet Valley Masterplan are therefore considered to include the following:

- Reduce the reliance on the car for those visiting the area;
- Encourage visitors to stay longer within the area and visit several attractions in one trip;
- Influence visitor travel behaviour towards using more sustainable modes of travel within the Churnet Valley;
- Encourage people to visit the area throughout the year;
- Make the most effective use of the existing infrastructure;
- Maximise the efficiency with which people can move around the Churnet Valley
- Secure development which enhances the attractiveness of the area to visitors and facilitates more sustainable forms of travel whilst also conserving its natural environment

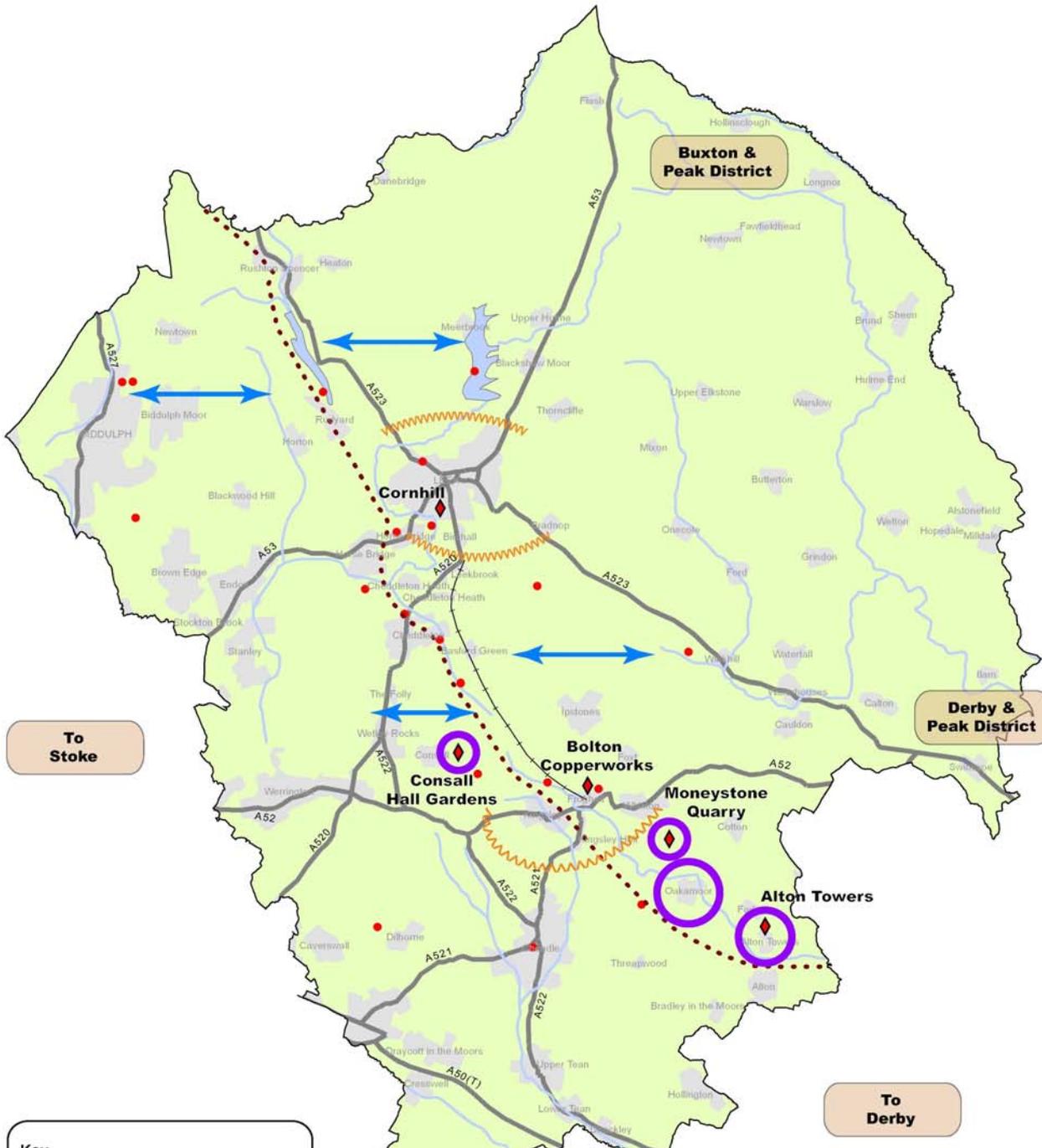
Capabilities on project:
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Table 3.3 – Constraints upon Modes of Travel in the Churnet Valley

Constraint	Mode of Travel					
						
Rural nature of the area	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Limited capacity of the road network			✓	✓		
Topography of the area	✓	✓				
Varying standards of existing routes	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lack of coherent routes	✓	✓				
Lack of integration between attractions	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Lack of specific infrastructure and facilities		✓	✓		✓	
Gaps in provision of visitor information	✓	✓	✓			✓
Lack of consistent signing strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Availability of car parking		✓	✓		✓	
Physical barriers (canal, railway etc)	✓	✓				
Seasonality of tourism in the area	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

Figure 3.15 – Constraints to Access and Movement



Key

- Staffordshire Way
- Churnet Valley Railway
- Key Attractions
- Key Opportunity Sites
- Limited east / west Connectivity
- Limited Accessibility by non car modes
- Breaks in the Network

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Capabilities on project:
Transportation

3.11 Measures to Improve Accessibility and Connectivity

This section builds upon the previous work regarding the opportunities and constraints inherent to the transport network in the Churnet Valley and identifies a range of potential measures for improving connections and accessibility locally and to the wider strategic network. These improvements include physical measures, such as pedestrian and cycle links, and also the introduction and proliferation of high quality information to help facilitate the efficient and effective movement of people within the area.

The process for identifying potential measures for the study area begins by collating a long list of measures which respond to the current and future situation in the Churnet Valley. These measures have evolved from the evidence base review, site visit assessments, consideration of the opportunities and constraints and through stakeholder engagement.

Table 3.4 contains all of the potential measures, within reason, which could be implemented to improve the transport offer in the Churnet Valley. Each measure has been assessed in terms of its potential to improve accessibility and connectivity within the area, particularly between attractions, and also to and from the area, to the wider network. This assessment also includes the potential of each measure to promote the Churnet Valley as a sustainable tourism corridor; a key aim of the study. Finally, consideration is given to the deliverability of each measure, an important factor in any optioneering exercise.

These high level assessments enable a wide-ranging list of potential options to be reduced to a more targeted and specific set of measures. This refinement of options will continue as the masterplanning process evolves and the vision and aspirations for the Churnet Valley Masterplan are crystallised.

A consideration of the factors which may affect the delivery and implementation of the potential measures is given in **Chapter 4**.

Figure 3.16 – Tourist accommodation at Froghall Wharf



Figure 3.17 – 32 /32A bus service



Capabilities on project:
Transportation

Table 3.4 – Potential Measures

Mode	Measure	Potential to Improve Accessibility & Connectivity		Contribution towards Sustainable Tourism
		Within Churnet Valley	To and From Churnet Valley	
	Provide a designated walking route between Froghall and Leek	Very good	Limited	High
	Provide a designated walking route between Froghall Basin and Oakamoor	Very good	Limited	High
	Extend the Staffordshire Way east and west to access attractions and settlements	Very good	Limited	High
	Provide cycle parking at all attractions	Good	Limited	High
	Provide a cycle route between Tittesworth Water and Rudyard Lake	Very good	Limited	High
	Upgrade the Staffordshire Way to accommodate cyclists along its length	Very good	Good	High
	Introduce cycle lanes on the road network	Good	Very good	High
	Provide a cycle hire scheme for the area, utilising key attractions	Very Good	Limited	High
	Connect all attractions via a designated cycle route	Very Good	Limited	High
	Provide a cycle route along the River Churnet between Oakamoor and Leek	Good	Limited	High
	Introduce Park & Ride sites	Good	Very good	High
	Provide bus access to all attractions	Very good	Good	High
	Provide bus access to key opportunity sites	Good	Very good	High
	Introduce a shuttle bus between key attractions	Good	Limited	High
	Upgrade bus stop facilities in the area	Limited	Limited	Medium
	Introduce real time information across the bus network	Limited	Limited	Medium
	Restore and extend the Uttoxeter Canal	Good	Good	Medium
	Upgrade the Caldon Canal towpath to accommodate cyclists	Good	Limited	High
	Introduce a waterbus	Good	Limited	High
	Provide more crossing points over the canal for non-car modes	Very good	Good	High

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

Mode	Measure	Potential to Improve Accessibility & Connectivity		Contribution towards Sustainable Tourism
		Within Churnet Valley	To and From Churnet Valley	
	Introduce better signing along the Caldon Canal	Good	Limited	Medium
	Better integrate the Caldon Canal with Cornhill and Bolton Copperworks sites	Very good	Limited	Medium
	Extend the CVR into Leek and on to Stoke	Very good	Very good	High
	Extend the CVR to Alton via Oakamoor	Very good	Good	High
	Increase the opening times of the Churnet Valley Railway throughout the year	Some	Limited	Medium
	Provide more crossing points over the rail lines for non-car modes	Very good	Good	High
	Provide strategic parking locations around the Churnet Valley	Good	Good	Medium
	Increase capacity of road network in the Churnet Valley	Some	Limited	Low
	Increase the amount of car parking at all attractions	Some	Limited	Low
	Develop an access management strategy for visitors by car	Good	Good	Medium
	Develop a Churnet Valley website	Good	Good	Medium
	Identify champions (individuals and/or organisations) to promote key projects and measures	Very good	Very good	High
	Introduce a consistent signing strategy in the area	Very good	Limited	Medium
	Increase the quality and availability of visitor information (i.e. sustainable travel options)	Very good	Some	High
	Develop an area-wide Travel Plan for the Churnet Valley corridor	Good	Good	High

Delivery and Implementation

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4 Delivery and Implementation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter progresses the work which has been undertaken to identify potential measures for improving accessibility and connectivity within the Churnet Valley, and considers issues associated with delivery and implementation. The key factors which have a bearing upon delivery and implementation are outlined below, along with an explanation of the methodology which has been used to assess the potential measures identified in **Chapter 3**.

The goal of this process is to provide a high level assessment of the potential accessibility measures for the Churnet Valley, based upon their deliverability and contribution towards improving sustainable tourism within the study area. This assessment will provide a key output for the Accessibility and Connectivity Study and help to inform the development of the Churnet Valley Masterplan.

4.2 Delivery and Implementation Factors

There are a number of factors which have a bearing upon delivery and implementation, which are described in detail below.

4.2.1 Feasibility

The first consideration for any potential measure is whether or not it is feasible to deliver from technical point of view. Determining if it is possible to provide a particular improvement may involve a simple assessment (such as selecting a suitable location for a new sign), a more detailed investigation (such as examining the best alignment for a cycle route) or a comprehensive feasibility study (i.e. restoring and extending a canal). Understanding the level of technical work associated with any potential measure is therefore a key component of assessing deliverability.

4.2.2 Availability of Funding

The ability to secure funding is paramount to delivering measures on the ground, particularly given the current economic downturn. The mechanisms for obtaining funding are as varied as the sources of funding themselves (**Section 4.3**). Given the fact that the potential measures identified for the Churnet Valley encompass all modes and methods, there will need to be a consideration of the relevant and available sources of funding, including the constraints which may be present upon them.

Based upon the above considerations, three criteria have been devised for assessing the deliverability of potential measures and these are shown in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1 – Deliverability Criteria

Simple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant feasibility issues • Minimal barriers to funding
Challenging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technically feasible but requirement for further detailed assessment. • Funding source uncertain
Complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility unknown, further work required. • Significant barriers to funding

4.2.3 Timescales

The anticipated timescales for delivering a particular measure is another important consideration when assessing a broad range of options. The ability to implement a measure by a certain time can have important implications for funding and delivery. For the purposes of this study, a broad timescale encompassing the short term, medium term and long term has been adopted to enable potential measures to be easily grouped. This timescale is shown in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2 – Outline Timescales

Short term	0-3 years
Medium term	3-10 years
Long term	10+ years

The above outline timescales are considered to be particularly relevant to the Churnet Valley Masterplanning process as it will enable the delivery of potential measures to be integrated and aligned with the wider policy context. In addition, the identification of short term schemes, or 'quick wins', will be beneficial to the development of the Masterplan.

4.2.4 Promotion

A key factor in the successful delivery of any scheme or project is the support and promotion that is afforded to it. When individuals, organisations, partnerships or any other interested party's take responsibility for promoting or delivering specific measures this can provide the necessary impetus to ensure a

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successful outcome. Given the amount of work that is associated with publicising, funding, promoting and co-ordinating the delivery of a scheme or measure, the level of support available is of key importance. The Churnet Valley benefits from a large number of committed and dedicated individuals and organisations that support the preservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment, and also champion particular projects. An example of this would include the work of the Caldon and Uttoxeter Canal Trust, the Churnet Valley Railway and the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership. Support and promotion can greatly assist in securing funding to help delivery of measures on the ground.

4.3 Potential Sources of Funding

The potential measures for improving accessibility and connectivity in the Churnet Valley will need to be delivered through a variety of funding mechanisms. Any considerations regarding funding inevitably need to be framed by the October 2010 spending review and associated plans to cut the UK budget deficit over the next four year period. It is clear that going forward the same level of funding for transport and associated services will not be available as has been the case in the past and that significant pressure will be placed upon existing budgets. The barriers to securing funding must therefore be acknowledged when assessing the deliverability of potential improvements for the Churnet Valley.

With this in mind, there are a number of potential funding mechanisms which could be utilised for the delivery of identified measures. These include the following broad areas:

- **Local Authority funding**
Local Authority budgets have been one of the areas hardest hit by the spending review with a significant reduction in revenue support from central government. This revenue will now be paid to local authorities via the DCLG's Formula Grant regime. As well as the change in revenue support to Local Authorities, the Department for Transport (DfT) is reducing the number of grants available for local transport schemes from 26 down to just four. The available sources of funding include a Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Major Scheme funding, block funding for Highways maintenance and block funding for Small Transport Improvement Schemes.

The constraints upon Local Authority budgets will have a significant effect upon the funding and delivery of any

potential measures in the Churnet Valley and therefore represent a major factor for consideration during the development of the Masterplan.

- **Regional Growth Fund**
The Regional Growth Fund has been established by the Government in an effort to stimulate enterprise by providing support for projects and programmes with significant potential for creating long term private sector led economic growth and employment. £1.4billion will be available through the fund over a three year period with funding being targeted at those areas currently dependent on the public sector for employment. The intention of this fund is to concentrate investment in projects which are going to bring about real transformation to the local economy. With this in mind, there is a general consensus that bids to the Regional Growth Fund should be for a minimum of £1 million.
- **European Commission funding**
A number of sources of funding are available through the European Commission for a wide range of projects provided that the project relates to European Union policies. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is one such source and provides match funding for schemes that encourage economic development in member states. The restoration of Froghall Wharf was funded in part by contributions from the ERDF as was the Consall Station project.

Figure 4.1 – The restored Froghall Basin



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- **Local Sustainable Transport Fund**
In September 2010 the Government announced plans to establish a Local Sustainable Transport Fund. The fund will be available for small scale sustainable transport initiatives from a £560 million competitive fund open to English local authorities from 2011 to 2014. The schemes which are likely to be supported by the Sustainable Transport Fund include encouraging walking and cycling, initiatives to improve integration between travel modes and end-to-end journey experience, better public transport and improved traffic management schemes.
- **Developer contributions**
These relate to funds collected through Section 106 Agreements for schemes which are specific and related to the development concerned. There are a number of potential development sites in the Churnet Valley, such as Bolton Copperworks and Moneystone Quarry, which could provide the opportunity to secure funds for associated transport and infrastructure improvements such as new walking, cycling and public transport links. A key element of the Churnet Valley Masterplan is determining what developer contributions will be collected and what they will be used for.
- **Heritage Lottery Fund**
The Heritage Lottery Fund uses money raised through the National Lottery to provide grants to sustain and transform heritage sites including museums, parks, historic places and the natural environment. The Churnet Valley Living Landscape (CVLL) Partnership is one example of a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- **Other funding sources**
The barriers to securing funding from the more traditional sources requires a more nuanced and informed approach towards utilising the more varied and complex funding mechanisms which exist. Negotiating and accessing the current and future funding streams will be a key task for the Churnet Valley Masterplan and the delivery of potential measures in the area.

4.4 Deliverability of Measures

All of the potential measures identified in **Table 3.4** have undergone a deliverability assessment based upon the following key areas:

- **Deliverability** – using the classification of Simple, Challenging and Complex outlined in **Table 4.1**, and;
- **Contribution towards Sustainable Tourism** – assessed on a three point scale determining whether a measure has a High, Medium or Low contribution to the overall objective of the Churnet Valley Masterplan.

Each potential measure is then classified using these two key areas and positioned in the Delivery Matrix shown at **Figure 4.2**. This represents a subjective view at this stage, but enables the reader to quickly identify the measures which are considered to be more, or less, deliverable than others, and where they may fit within the requirements of the Masterplan Vision.

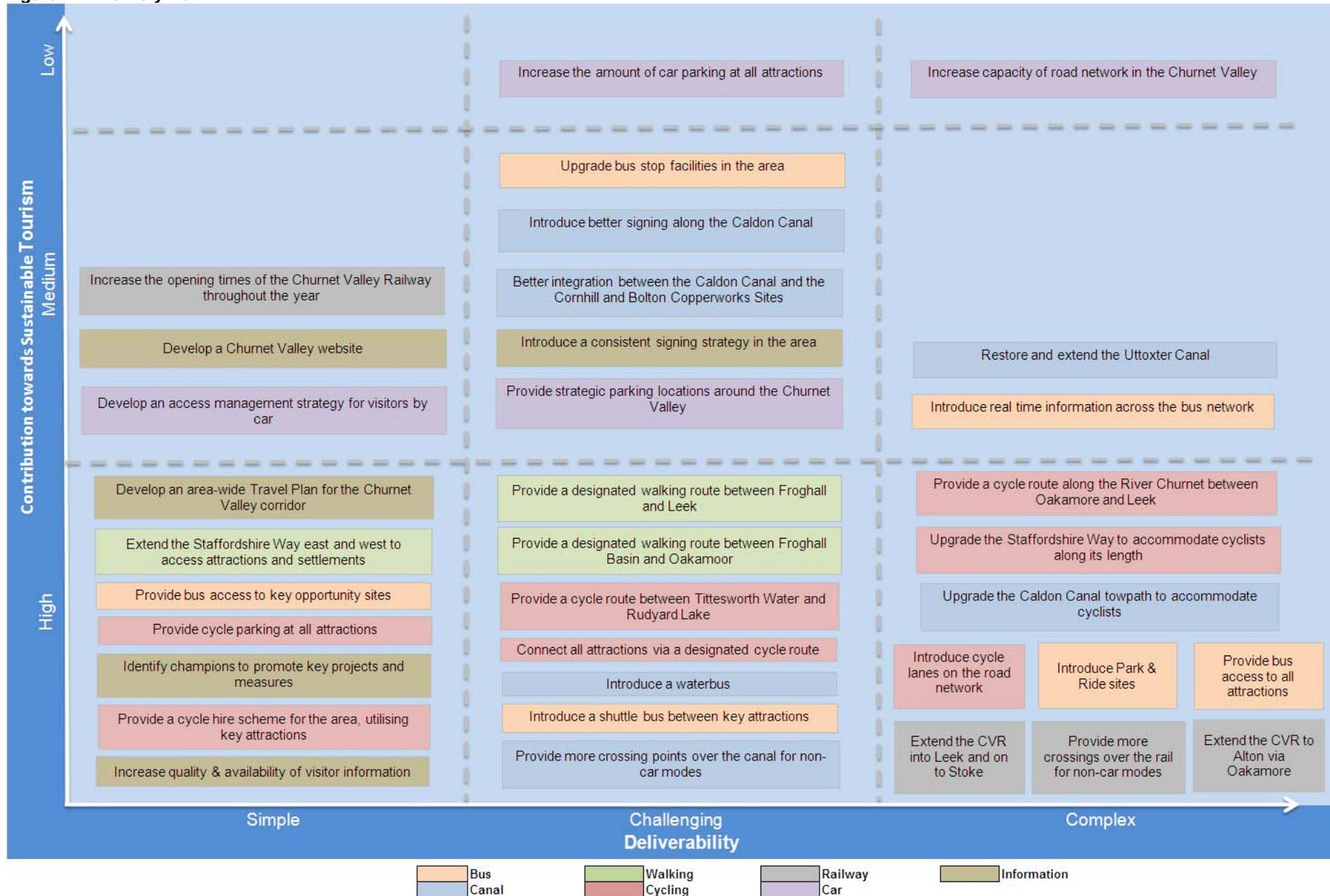
4.5 Costs of Delivery

As outlined above, securing funding is a critical element of delivering identified measures. Clearly, a key factor in this process is the cost of the measure itself and how this may fit with the requirements of any given funding mechanism. This Study has sought to identify a range of options which could be utilised to assist in meeting the overall objective of the Masterplan. With any costing exercise it is important to underpin the assumptions with as much detail as possible regarding the technical requirements and potential risks to delivery.

The appropriate level of assessment has not yet been completed to inform the development of detailed scheme costs, as this will evolve from the masterplanning process. However, it is possible to identify a broad range of indicative costs which may be applicable to some of the schemes, based on evidence of other similar schemes and using professional judgement. This information is contained within **Table 4.3**. It is important, however, to treat these costs as a broad estimate at this stage.

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Figure 4.2 –Delivery Matrix



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Table 4.3 – Indicative Costs

Measure	Outline Timescale*	Indicative Cost	Funding Sources	Comments
Provide a designated walking route between Froghall and Leek	Medium	£100-300k	Local Authority Funding, Sustainable Transport Fund	Approx 7 miles. Utilising the Caldon Canal towpath. Scope to incorporate provision for cyclists as well
Provide a designated walking route between Froghall Basin and Oakamoor	Medium	£75-100k	Local Authority Funding, Sustainable Transport Fund	Approx 3 miles. Utilising former line of Uttoxeter Canal
Extend the Staffordshire Way east and west to access attractions and settlements	Short	£1 million	Sustainable Transport Fund	5-10 new links from the Staffordshire Way connecting to attractions/settlements
Provide cycle parking at all attractions	Short	£8,100	Local Authority Funding, Sustainable Transport Fund	£54 per 'Sheffield Stand', assuming 10 stands (20 bikes) at the 15 primary attractions
Provide a cycle route between Tittesworth Water and Rudyard Lake	Medium	£250-500k	Sustainable Transport Fund	Approx 3.5 miles of high quality cycling route
Upgrade the Staffordshire Way to accommodate cyclists along its length	Medium	£1.5 million	EU Funding	15+ miles through the Churnet Valley. Upgrading the link between the two sections of Greenway
Introduce cycle lanes on the road network	Medium	Unknown	Local Authority Funding	Would require feasibility work to determine which roads could accommodate cycling facilities
Provide a cycle hire scheme for the area, utilising key attractions	Short	£250k	Heritage Lottery Fund	Initial start up costs and promotion for year 1
Connect all attractions via a designated cycle route	Medium	£1-2 million	Heritage Lottery Fund	15+ attractions across the area
Provide a cycle route along the River Churnet between Oakamoor and Leek	Medium	£1-2 million	EU Funding	Approx 5 miles. Significant issues with providing a new route along the alignment of the river
Introduce Park & Ride Sites	Long	£50-100k for feasibility study		Study work would be required to determine feasibility and potential locations for P&R
Provide bus access to all attractions	Medium	Unknown	Local Authority Funding, Sustainable Transport Fund	Would require discussions with bus operators regarding new/re-routed services. Issues with accessibility of some attractions
Provide bus access to key opportunity sites	Short	Unknown	Developer Contributions	Bus access to Moneystone Quarry would be particularly problematic due to the constrained highway links (i.e. Eaves Lane)
Introduce a shuttle bus between key attractions	Short	£50 - £100k	Sustainable Transport Fund	Per annum charge
Upgrade bus stop facilities in the area	Short	Average of £15k per stop	Local Authority Funding	Not all bus stops require upgrading, rough costs may include: Kassel kerbing and a shelter - £14,000 Timetable frames - £100 Bus cages - £600

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Measure	Outline Timescale*	Indicative Cost	Funding Sources	Comments
				Level boarding - £6,500 per stop
Introduce real time information across the bus network	Medium	Electronic bus shelter displays approx £10,000 each	Local Authority Funding	Need for wider infrastructure costs along with individual site costs.
Restore and extend the Uttoxeter Canal	Long	£90 Million	EU Funding	Cost from 'Uttoxeter Canal Restoration Outline Feasibility Study'
Upgrade the Caldon Canal towpath to accommodate cyclists	Medium	£500k	Local Authority Funding, Heritage Lottery Fund	Approx 7 miles to be upgraded to a standard suitable for cyclists. This would also incorporate facilities for walkers
Introduce a waterbus	Short	£50 - £100k	Heritage Lottery Fund, grants etc	
Provide more crossing points over the canal for non-car modes	Medium	£200k per location		Dependent upon the number of crossing points. Assumed to require pedestrian footbridges
Introduce better signing along the Caldon Canal	Short	£10-15k	Local Authority Funding	Consistent and high quality signing required along the length of the canal, including waypoint information
Improve the integration between the Caldon Canal and Cornhill and Bolton Copperworks sites	Medium	Unknown	Developer Contributions	This would be accommodated within any development proposals for the sites
Extend the CVR into Leek and on to Stoke	Medium	Unknown	CVR, Heritage Lottery Fund, Regional Growth Fund	Detailed discussions would be required with the CVR to determine the amount of work required to provide the link
Extend the CVR to Alton via Oakamoor	Long	Unknown	CVR, Heritage Lottery Fund	Detailed discussions would be required with the CVR to determine the amount of work required to provide the link
Increase the opening times of the Churnet Valley Railway throughout the year	Short	Unknown	CVR, Heritage Lottery Fund	Additional costs associated with increased operation
Provide more crossing points over the rail lines for non-car modes	Medium	Unknown		Dependent upon the number and type of crossing facility (i.e. footbridges or level crossings)
Provide strategic parking locations around the Churnet Valley	Medium	£50k per location	Local Authority Funding	Construction costs for providing parking spaces plus maintenance and operation. Links to/from parking locations would also need to be provided
Increase capacity of road network in the Churnet Valley	Long	£300k for study work	Local Authority Funding, Developer Contributions	Would require modelling and study work prior to any physical works
Increase the amount of car parking at all attractions	Medium	Unknown		Would need to be calculated upon a per-space basis at each location dependent upon available land, requirements of each attraction
Develop an access management strategy for visitors by car	Short	£50-100k	Local Authority Funding	Would require external expertise
Develop a Churnet Valley website	Short	£5k	Heritage Lottery Fund, grants etc	Dependent on content, management etc
Identify champions (individuals and/or	Short	Little to no cost	Heritage Lottery Fund, grants etc	Can maximise the use of volunteer organisations

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Measure	Outline Timescale*	Indicative Cost	Funding Sources	Comments
organisations) to promote key projects and measures				
Introduce a consistent signing strategy in the area	Short	£10-15k	Local Authority Funding	Assumed cost for developing initial strategy. Could be developed in-house or in partnership with relevant organisations
Increase the quality and availability of visitor information (i.e. sustainable options)	Short	£50k	Local Authority Funding	Would require an integrated marketing campaign using a range of measures. Would need to be maintained
Develop an area-wide Travel Plan for the Churnet Valley corridor	Short	£50-100k	Local Authority Funding	Would require external expertise

* Timescale – see **Table 4.2**

Conclusions

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5 Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This study has examined the current transport situation in the Churnet Valley, establishing a baseline position with regards to access and movement, or the ways in which people choose to travel to, from and within the area.

The evidence base review presented in the study includes a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the Churnet Valley and the ***potential for improving accessibility and promoting sustainable travel***. This assessment has taken place at the strategic level, viewing the Churnet Valley in relation to its geographical position, encompassing key settlements and opportunity sites, and from a very specific viewpoint, examining individual links between key nodes and attractions.

This study has also considered the proposals to extend the Churnet Valley Railway and the Uttoxeter Canal, as part of the process of ***identifying opportunities for improving linkages*** between visitor attractions and settlements.

A key output of the study has then involved the identification of ***specific measures*** to improve accessibility and connectivity, with the potential measures being assessed in terms of implementation and delivery, for further consideration as part of the ***Churnet Valley Masterplan***.

Figure 5.1 – Caldon Canal in winter



(Source: © Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust, courtesy of Waterway Images)

5.2 Key Issues for the Churnet Valley

Based upon work undertaken as part of this study, the key strategic issues for the Churnet Valley are considered to be:

- 1) A need to increase the role of existing settlements, opportunity sites and larger attractions as destinations from which to access and explore the Churnet Valley via walking, cycling, rail and water.
- 2) Provide new and improved visitor attractions and facilities at key locations which enhance and protect the attractiveness of the area whilst also improving the transport infrastructure in a sustainable way.
- 3) Develop and market an integrated, corridor-wide approach to access and movement within the Churnet Valley through a variety of means including maximising the opportunities for providing information

In terms of the key local issues for the Churnet Valley, these have been identified as being the need to:

- 1) Manage access to the area in an integrated manner that responds to the needs of visitors, supports the attractiveness of the area, and enhances key local attractors, whilst safeguarding the local environment.
- 2) Increase the permeability of the area by non-car modes introducing new walking and cycling links and enhancing existing routes (such as the canal towpath and the Staffordshire Way).
- 3) Improve the availability and quality of visitor information and introduce a coherent and consistent signage strategy
- 4) Enhance the integration of attractions, through physical measures and also via the use of information and marketing

5.3 Improving Accessibility and Connectivity

Overall, there are considered to be a number of ways in which the accessibility and connectivity of the area can be improved to help deliver the goal of developing the Churnet Valley as a major sustainable tourism corridor.

The current transport network in the Churnet Valley has been demonstrated as having a range of weaknesses and limitations, some inherent to the nature of the area and others as a result of deficiencies in planning and provision. The

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predominance of the car for visitors travelling to the area presents the biggest challenge for influencing peoples travel behaviour towards more sustainable modes. Allied to this, is the need to provide an enhanced network for non-car modes which presents visitors with an efficient and closely integrated range of travel options through which to access and enjoy the Churnet Valley.

the waterways of the Churnet Valley, in particular the Caldon Canal, offer further multi-user facilities which can be enhanced to provide key linkages through the area, making maximum use of existing facilities.

Figure 5.2 – August bank holiday visitors



(Source: © Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust, courtesy of Waterway Images)

The Churnet Valley's strengths lie within its attractive and varied landscape and numerous popular attractions all within relatively short distances of major conurbations. However, these advantages are undermined by a lack of coherent marketing of the Churnet Valley and the disparities in the availability and quality of visitor information and signage. Breaks in the existing network of routes and the substandard nature of others, further add to a lack of integration between visitor attractions. This lack of integration is considered to be a major inhibitor in terms of linking visitor trips within the area; a key method for promoting sustainable travel in the context of the Churnet Valley.

The aspiration to enhance the rail accessibility of the Churnet Valley by reconnecting Leek to the national rail network, and thus realising the full potential of the CVR, must be viewed as a key component of developing the connectivity of the area. The key opportunity sites of Cornhill, Bolton Copperworks, Moneystone Quarry and Alton Towers also offer the potential to secure and provide high quality transport infrastructure, particularly for walking and cycling and public transport. Finally,