

SWW - 049 Narberth to Canaston Bridge



Discussion document V4

Produced as part of Sustrans' Linking Up Project

December 2018





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Executive Summary

This report summarises the results of the feasibility study Sustrans has conducted for the development of the traffic free walking and cycling route between Narberth and Canaston Bridge. The report is addressed to local authorities and community groups and is aimed at supporting funding applications for the delivery of the route.

Between 2016 and 2019, through RDP funding awarded by the Welsh Government, Sustrans has worked with local partners to identify preferred options for the development of a route between Narberth and Canaston Bridge. Moreover, with the contribution of the BRO Partnership and Gwyrdd, local stakeholders and businesses have been engaged and training has been delivered.

As a result of this work, the report presents the preferred alignment, provides information about the cost of the route and highlights the benefits the route can have on the local economy, health and the environment.

I. General information about the scheme

a. Context

Sustrans has supported Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) in conducting this feasibility study on the development of a new path between Narberth and Canaston Bridge using a traffic free route and some sections of very quiet highway. The work is part of the Rural Development Programme implementation and relates to the wider context set by the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act (2015). The route will be developed according to the Design Guidance set out in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 standards.

b. The route

The proposed route will follow existing highways and tracks and wherever possible will be multiuser (walkers, cyclists, disabled and equestrians). Future aspirations will be to complete the route going to Haverfordwest again via quiet roads and traffic free sections. There, the route will link to the National Cycle Network (NCN) route 4, the "Celtic Trail". At the eastern side, the route will link to Whitland and Carmarthen via quiet highways.

II. Detailed proposal

a. Suggested alignment

Going from east to west the route will leave Narberth (near the car park) and follow the existing track along Carding Mill Lane before joining the highway on Valley Road. After 1¼ km the route turns south along, at first, a narrow bridleway, which then opens out to a climb into Canaston Wood. At the top, the route again turns west along the Knights Way, crossing the A4075 near Eagle Lodge before arriving at Blackpool. The route then crosses the Eastern Cleddau via the existing bridge and then climbs north east through the forestry to end at the car park at Canaston Bridge.

b. Engineering

Engineering solutions have been suggested in order to provide a path suitable for cycling, walking and horse riding, with acceptable gradients in specific sections. These will include providing passing spaces, suitable width and surface for multiple type of users along Carding Mill Lane, considering usage figures and future maintenance, improving the gradient into Canaston Wood. These solutions take into account the ecological elements along the path and provide, when necessary, mitigations measures.

c. Ecology

An initial habitat survey (slow walkover survey - Phase 1 Habitat Survey technique) was undertaken in April 2018 by Sustrans Ecologist. Habitats were recorded in and adjacent to the proposed works area. Further surveys with a particular focus on badgers, bats, otters and dormouse were conducted in Summer 2018. Finally, a eDNA survey was completed but no signs of Great Crested Newts were found. The outputs of these preliminary assessments have been reported and shared with Pembrokeshire CC's planning ecologist.

d. Cost

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



Examples of directional signs and short robust posts

e. Signing

The proposed route needs to be sufficiently well signed so that it is easy to follow in both directions. A balance should be struck between providing clear and reliable information, avoiding visual clutter and unnecessary maintenance liability that excessive signing can cause.

Care is needed when considering their design and placement. Cyclists Dismount or End of Route signs are not appropriate and will not be necessary on this route. Cycle specific route signing also raises awareness of cyclists amongst other road users and helps to promote the route. Signs encouraging shared use and mutual respect within users will be particularly useful on this route.

It is estimated that 38 signs will be needed to effectively provide good directional signing.

f. Future maintenance

A route that is kept in good condition will be more useful, attractive and popular than one allowed to deteriorate. It will promote walking cycling and equestrian use. Maintenance can sometimes seem like an afterthought compared to the exciting world of designing and building new routes, but having invested time and money by building the route, it is important that it remains attractive to users. Thinking about who will use the route – will horses ride along it, will tractors cross it, how will maintenance vehicles access the path (and turn)? Pedestrians and cyclists don't normally cause a great deal of wear and tear. It is often other vehicles and the weather that have more of an impact on the condition of the path.

For this route number of different surfaces may be required to cater for the various users and options like Flexipav or Nutflex have been considered.

Nevertheless, decisions will be subject to feedback by the Rights of Way Management department at PCC to make sure that a thoughtful design allows less maintenance in the future. Sometimes money can be put aside from the capital source into a separate fund for future maintenance. Irrespective of what the ultimate arrangement will be, it is essential that the project team has agreed the future maintenance arrangements early in the project's development. Sustrans Volunteers recruited from local communities will be able to help with some aspects of maintenance including checking signing, and collecting litter and cutting back vegetation on some traffic-free sections.

iii. Stakeholder Engagement

Local stakeholders have been engaged in the design process to make sure the route suitable to local needs and will be used in the future. The BRO Partnership has supported Sustrans in this activity. An Online survey was conducted in July and August 2017 to obtain initial feedback from local key stakeholders about the perceived impacts of the route on daily commute and tourism activities. A Stakeholder Group has been formed with the participation of Pembrokeshire County Council (Transport, Active travel, Countryside, Tourism officers), Pembrokeshire Coastal Park, PLANED, Bluestone Resort, Narberth town councillors, Narberth Chamber of Trade, local accessibility groups, and BHR. Five stakeholder meetings have been held to discuss the alignment, the issues and opportunities of the path, focusing in particular on encouraging different users to coexist on it. Community consultations and engagement events have been organised during summer 2018, to raise awareness about the project and collect feedback from the residents. More than 160 residents have been engaged in total.

iv. Marketing

Marketing and training activities will be developed and delivered in 2018 with the support of the BRO Partnership and Gwyrdd.

A toolkit will be developed containing top tips about how community groups can start planning a new walking and cycling path in their area. The toolkit will also contain hints about promoting existing paths and information about economic benefits of walking and cycling infrastructure.

A website will also be available, useful for sharing information about the progress on the construction of the path and about its promotion.

Locally, signing will also help to raise awareness about the existence of the route. Information about the route will be added to relevant websites such those managed by Sustrans, Pembrokeshire CC, etc. This will allow a wider audience to find out about the new route. The production of a simple and informative map will help with content provision for both online and printed material opportunities, and can also be distributed to local residents and businesses. Publicity through press coverage and social media around an official launch will also help generate local, regional and possibly national awareness. Activities such as guided walks and rides for some or the entire new route would help local residents understand the new cycling opportunities it creates.

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

Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit (RMU) is contributing to provide evidence that will support future funding application bids. A literature review was produced to provide case studies related to the positive impacts of walking and cycling routes on wellbeing, local economy and ecology. Counter data have been provided by the local authority and will constitute baseline data. A Route Users' Intercept Survey has been conducted during the spring of 2017. The Infrastructure Impact Tool has then been used to get an estimate of the increased usage generated by the new infrastructure and these have then allowed to generate figures on the economic impacts of the path over 20 years. Under the middle scenario, where the shared use path sees 16,944 cycling trips and 13,082 walking trips per year (respectively +173% and +161% above current usage), the benefits are:

- Total economic benefits of £ 907,471
- Health benefits of £ 532,789
- Overall economic benefits £253,472

Also, the direct and indirect employment supported by this leisure usage is estimated to be 2.2 FTE jobs per annum.

In order to provide additional monitoring data, it is recommended to install at least one automatic counter on a traffic-free sections of the route.

VI. Funding

Initial funding has been secured by Pembrokeshire CC through the Local Transport Fund (Welsh Government) and this will allow construction of one section of the path before the end of the current financial year (2018/2019). We recommend to consider the following funding sources for the construction and promotion of the path:

- a. **Transport Grants** managed by the Welsh Government, namely Local Transport Fund, Active travel Fund and Safe Routes in Communities fund. These funds can be pivotal to allow construction
- b. **Tourism Grants** managed by Visit Wales, mainly for small scale infrastructure, signing and promotion, in particular:
 - Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF - revenue)
 - Tourism Product Innovation Fund (TPIF - revenue)
 - Tourism Amenity Investment Support (TAIS - capital)

Narberth to Canaston Bridge - overview of the route



Blackpool Mill



Canaston Bridge Car Park



A40 Underpass



Span Arts, Narberth



- Binding Margin -



Knights Way

Cyfoeth Naturol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales

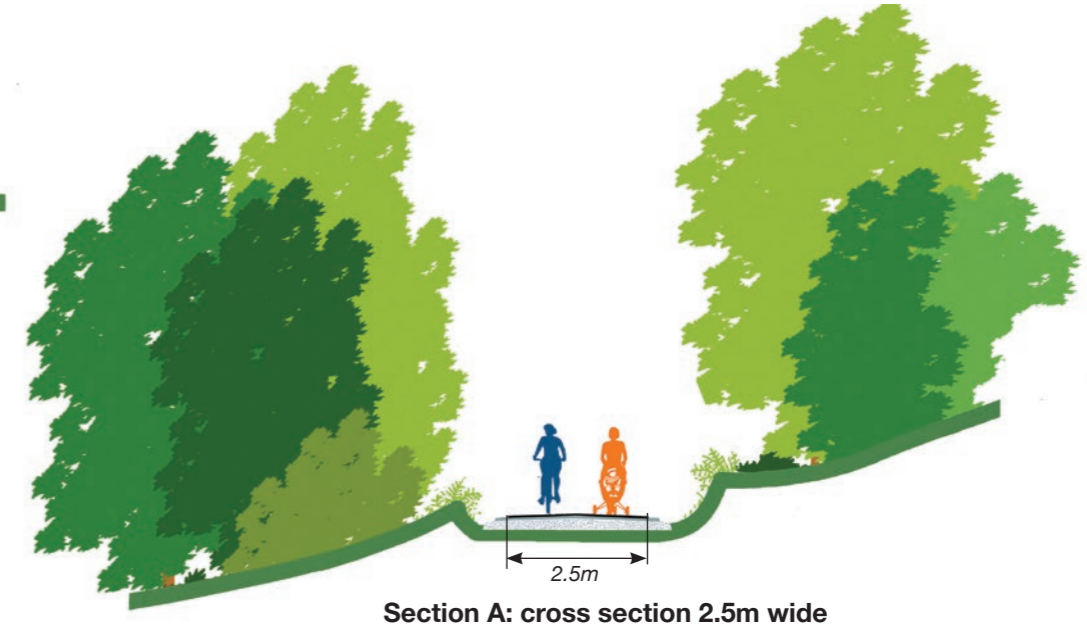
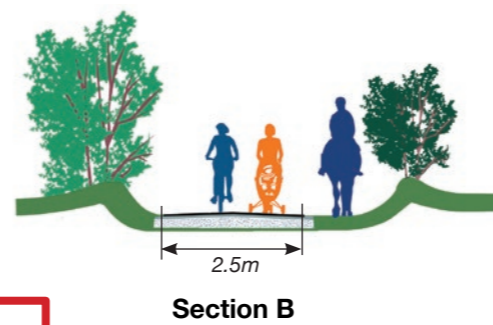
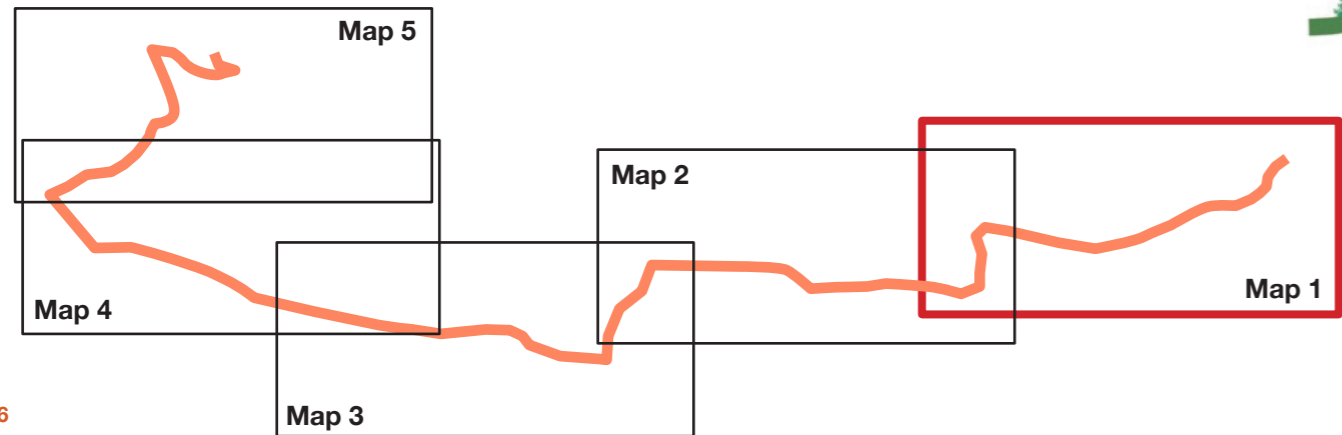
Coed Canaston
Wood

Moddur gan Lywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by Welsh Government

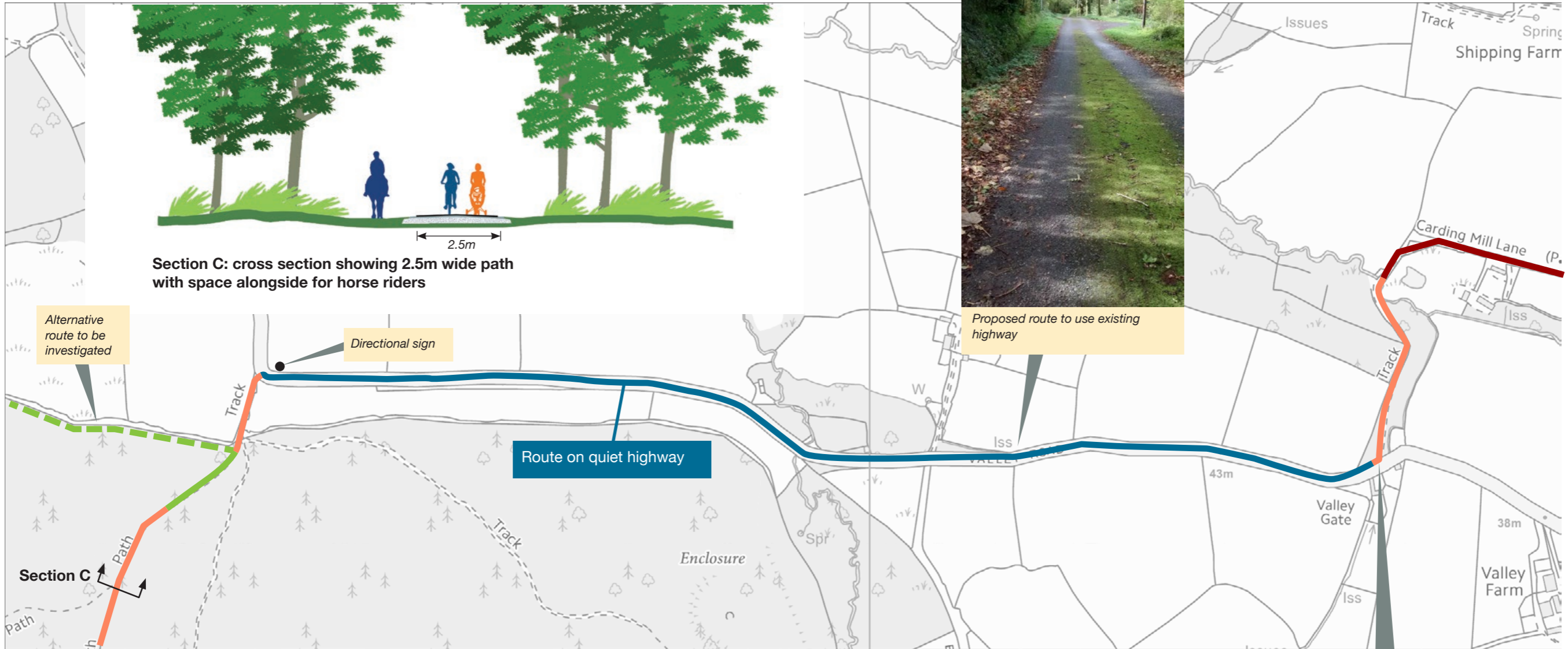


Carding Mill Lane

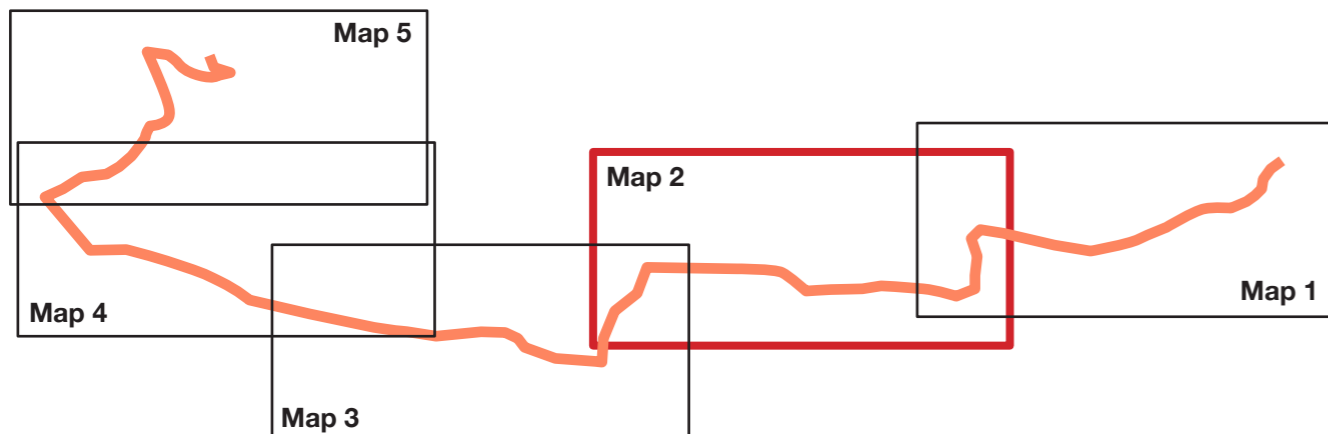
SWW-049 Narberth to Canaston Bridge - Map 1



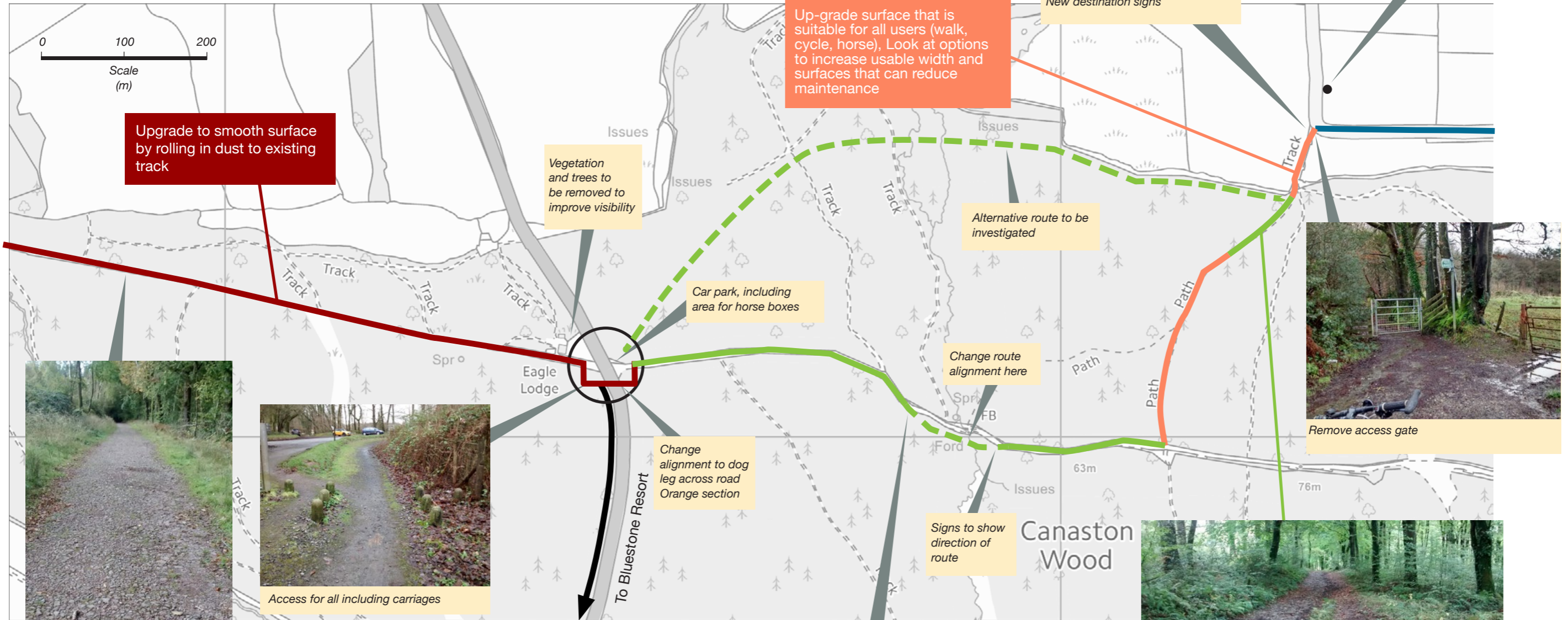
SWW-049 Narberth to Canaston Bridge - Map 2



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SWW-049 Narberth to Canaston Bridge - Map 3



Up-grade surface that is suitable for all users (walk, cycle, horse), Look at options to increase usable width and surfaces that can reduce maintenance



New destination signs

Add pedestrian/cyclist/horse warning signs on highway

Upgrade to smooth surface by rolling in dust to existing track

Vegetation and trees to be removed to improve visibility

Car park, including area for horse boxes

Alternative route to be investigated

Change route alignment here

Change alignment to dog leg across road Orange section

Signs to show direction of route



Remove access gate



Upgrade to smoother surface



Access for all including carriages

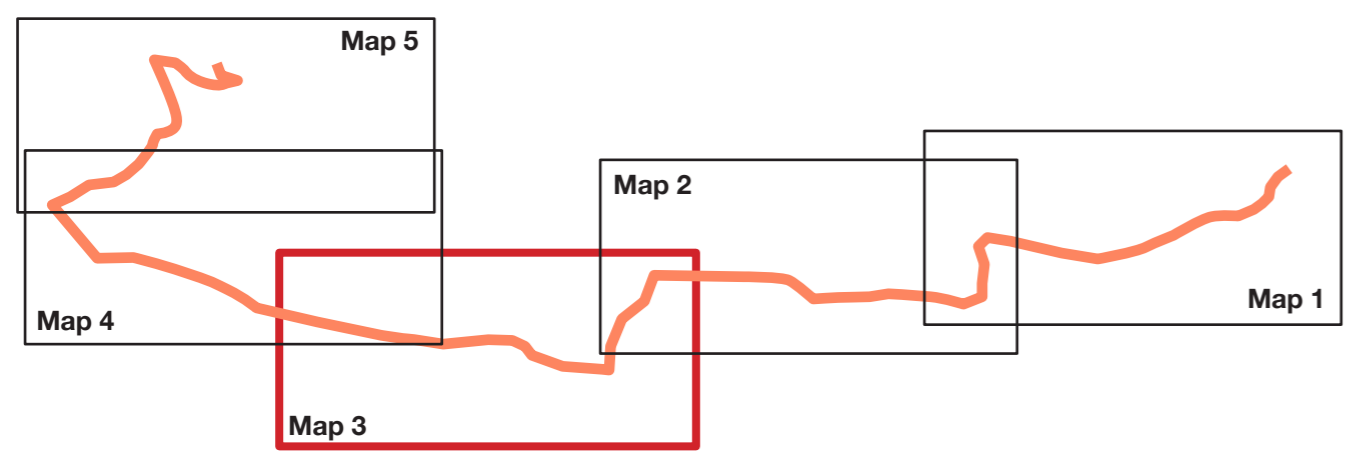
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Route to be surveyed here to determine if path gradient can be reduced



Proposed route to use existing forestry track



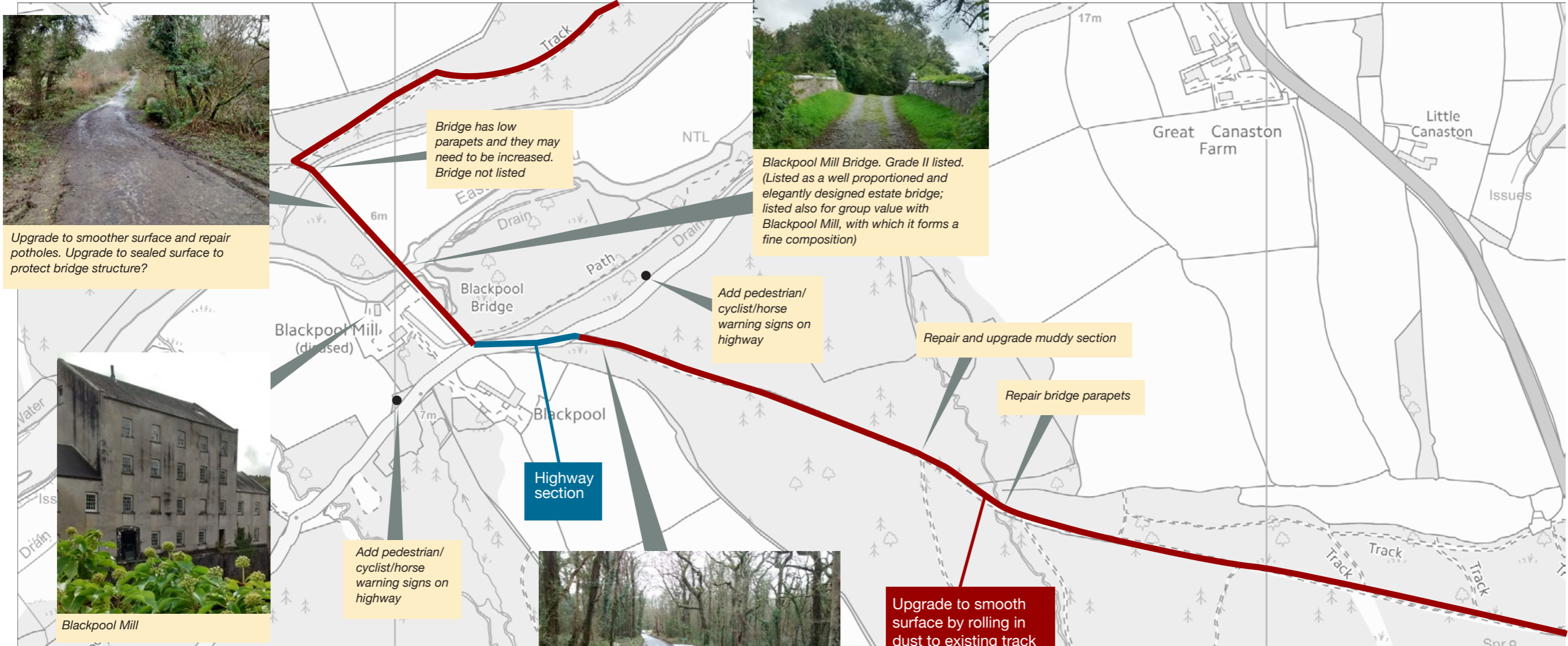
SWW-049 Narberth to Canaston Bridge - Map 4



Upgrade to smoother surface and repair potholes. Upgrade to sealed surface to protect bridge structure?



Blackpool Mill Bridge. Grade II listed. (Listed as a well proportioned and elegantly designed estate bridge; listed also for group value with Blackpool Mill, with which it forms a fine composition)

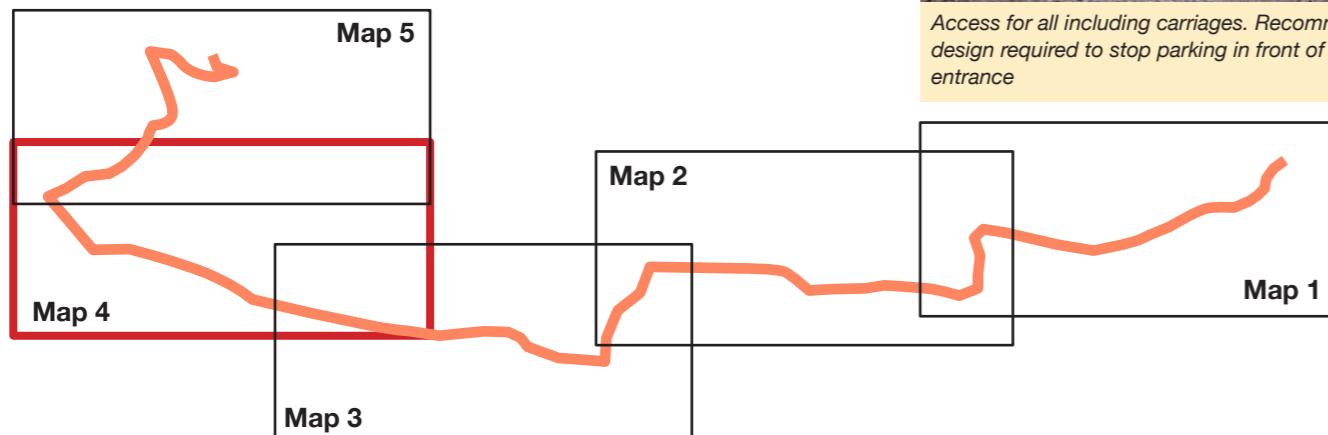
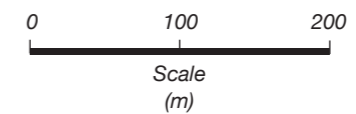


Blackpool Mill



Access for all including carriages. Recommended design required to stop parking in front of entrance

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SWW-049 Narberth to Canaston Bridge - Map 5

