

SAFEGUARDING ROUTES FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

15.7. As part of the drive towards sustainable transport, the Cheltenham Plan has considered the need to protect certain infrastructure where it has the potential to help deliver tangible benefits in future, be they social, environmental or economic. In this respect, the Plan will protect the route of the former Honeybourne rail line where it falls within the Borough boundary.

15.8. It has long been recognised that the route has potential for future use as a continuous sustainable transport corridor, linking the population centres of Bishop's Cleeve, Cheltenham, Gloucester, and Quedgley. The aim of the following policy will therefore be to safeguard that part of the route that lies within the Cheltenham Borough boundary from development which might prejudice this potential.

POLICY TN1: PROTECTING THE ROUTE OF THE FORMER HONEYBOURNE RAIL LINE

The route of the former Honeybourne Rail Line is delineated on the Cheltenham Plan Proposals Map. Development proposals which would prejudice the future use of the route as continuous sustainable transport corridor will not be permitted. **Any future development proposals along this corridor should positively contribute to sustainable transport and not impair reinstatement, improvement or reconstruction and must retain existing embankments, cuttings, bridges and other associated features from its former rail use. Developer contributions will be sought to facilitate the railway extension or enhancements of the cycle route as appropriate.** Development proposals on the Honeybourne Line will also be subject to policy GI1. This policy contributes towards achieving the Cheltenham Plan Vision: Theme A - objectives f and j; Theme B – objective d; Theme C – objectives a and e.

15.9. Sections of the redundant rail line have already been brought back into beneficial use as a footpath and cycleway, and some of the route is operated as a heritage attraction by the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway. **The railway is a significant regional tourist destination and a contributor to the local economy, carrying over 144,000 passengers' pa and has potential to extend and connect into the national rail network, to the north and south of the existing operations and is of strategic importance.** The safeguarding TRANSPORT NETWORK 108 designation as shown on the Proposals Map includes these sections as well as those sections where proposals have yet to be implemented.

15.10. It is anticipated that in the interests of long-term, coherent planning, neighbouring councils will include similar safeguarding proposals for the route in their local plans. The result will be to provide a fully coordinated approach to strategic land management in order to secure economic and other benefits through improved access to key settlements.