

Forest of Dean Gateway Parkend to Lydney

Appendix 5 - Economic Benefits



View of The Cut by Light Fantastic in Lydney

Forest of Dean Gateway Forecast Economic benefits

New walking and cycling routes lead to an increase in economic activity. The Forest of Dean Gateway will bring economic benefits to an area that is a target for levelling-up funding.

It is anticipated that usage of the route will reach 50,000 trips per annum within a relatively short time. This is a conservative estimate based on experience of other routes.

This increased footfall will bring more customers and considerably more demand for local businesses – the shops and cafes in Lydney, Whitecroft and Parkend and the accommodation providers – holiday cottages and campsites, bed and breakfasts and hotels (Their letters of support are in Appendix 7.)

The route will increase the attractiveness of existing and planned tourist destinations such as the Dean Forest Railway and the Lydney Harbour development. An additional attraction will encourage visitors to remain longer, to reduce the proportion of their time in cars and increase the time they spend walking, cycling, eating and drinking

Dean Forest Railway, which is the largest local attraction, has demonstrated its support by offering land for the route. There railway will give local bike hire firms the opportunity to provide integrated packages.

The project will use local firms with local workers on all its construction projects. Volunteering offers a chance for local people to develop their construction skills.

The route precisely fits the priorities identified for development by the Local Enterprise Partnership:

'Create(sic) infrastructure to develop outdoor activities particularly walking and cycling for ... the Forest of Dean ...'

The Forest of Dean Gateway will be a completely new, all weather, level, family-friendly walking and cycling route, linking Lydney, its harbour and stations, schools and shops with Parkend, and the onward cycling connections in the heart of the Forest of Dean.

It contributes to:

'Create(sic) new attractions – particularly Outdoor activities, Arts and Crafts, Local History and Heritage, Local food and drink tourism'

The Gateway will create a completely new route for walkers, cyclists and mobility scooter users to explore the previously inaccessible Lyd Valley, and provide a link to mountain biking and walking routes in the adjacent Forest England land. It passes through a landscape of ecological and archaeological interest.

Walkers and Cyclists carry little with them and eat and drink a lot, so tend to buy local food and drink more than people who arrive by car.

In the longer term it will contribute to:

'Extend(sic) the tourism season for both the applicant business and the wider destination, particularly for the tourism sectors'

The Forest of Dean Gateway will provide an all-weather attraction, making previously impossible journeys possible, and other journeys that were constrained by poor surfaces in wet weather possible in all weather conditions.

The following outputs are assumed, and the calculations underlying these assumption are given below:

Forecast item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Visitors using the path	10,000	25,000	50,000
Benefits to Local population	21,325	21,325	21,325
Additional overnight visitors	500	1,250	2,500
Number of FTE jobs created	0	3	7
Increase in wage bill	£0	£36,000*	£94,000*

* based on living wage 2024

Visitors using the path – direct output

The output table shows some a total of some 85,000 visitors in the first three years, rising to 50,000 per annum using the Forest of Dean Gateway by September 2028. This number is deliberately conservative.

This estimate is based on Greenways and Cycleroutes experience on routes it has opened since 2017.

The Brean Down Way, connecting Weston-super-Mare with Brean Down, which opened in July 2017, attracted 100,000 visitors in fourteen months – substantially exceeding forecasts based on equivalent assumptions to those below. The numbers have been sustained with over 100,000 users between October 2020 and September 2021 (Source North Somerset Council counter)

The Waddesdon Greenway, linking Aylesbury Vale Parkway station to Waddesdon Manor, which opened in September 2018, attracted 70,000 users in its first year, and 120,000 between August 2020 and 2021. (Source Bucks Council counter) Usage of the Wye Valley Path is estimated at over 70,000 trips in the six months since it opened in April 2021. (Source Greenways and Cycleroutes manual count data)

The Forest of Dean Gateway represents a similar joining of two places that were previously unconnected as far as cyclists and walkers are concerned. We believe that it will attract a comparable if not higher number of visitors in the medium term. It will provide a similar length route, it offers equally spectacular views, it is also essentially flat and off road, and in an area currently popular with tourists. It is close to population centres, has a direct link to the National Rail Network, and is within tourist travelling distance of the M5, M4 corridors. Over 600,000 people live within 30 miles of the route (Bristol 535,000, Newport 145,000).

According to <https://wyedeantourism.biz/home/facts-and-figures/> there are 805,800 visitor stays, and 6,312,000 day trips, to the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean. If we assume that one in 70 of these visitors uses the route that would be 100,000 people using the Wye Valley Greenway each year, without making allowance for any increase in numbers as a result of the attraction, or the huge interest already shown by local people.

Local Population Benefiting

The route will also benefit from the interest in cycling amongst locals and visitors that has been generated by the existing routes in the central Forest of Dean. It will provide a new local facility for the people of the Forest of Dean. It is assumed that the local population benefiting is one 21,325, one quarter of the population of the Forest of Dean District.

INDIRECT OUTPUTS

Additional Night Visitors – indirect output

These are estimated at 3,500 per annum reflecting an additional 70,000 day visitors per annum shown above, and assuming assuming that approximately one in twenty will stay at least one extra night.

Increase in jobs – indirect output

This is assumed at 10 FTE equivalent posts over the first three years from opening. No new jobs will be created directly by the construction of the route. However experience on similar routes has demonstrated that significant local employment is created.

Our assumption on jobs created in the medium term, indirectly as a result of the additional visitors and additional local usage of the route is:

- 1.0 FTE managerial roles – running new cycle hire businesses
- 1.0 FTE clerical roles in existing caravan sites supporting bike hire
- 2.0 FTE technical roles in existing caravan sites supporting bike hire
- 3.0 FTE technical roles in new bike hire businesses
- 1.5 FTE catering support roles in new or existing cafes
- 1.5 FTE shop assistant roles in new or existing shops

Our assumptions about jobs are based on three equivalent routes. Within three years of opening the Brean Down Way led to the creation of a new cycle hire business, and two new cafes were opened. The two existing cafes have seen a very substantial increase in business and have installed substantial additional cycle parking. On the Waddesdon Greenway a bike hire firm has been established and a new café opened. On the Wye Valley Greenway a new bike hire operation opened with the route.

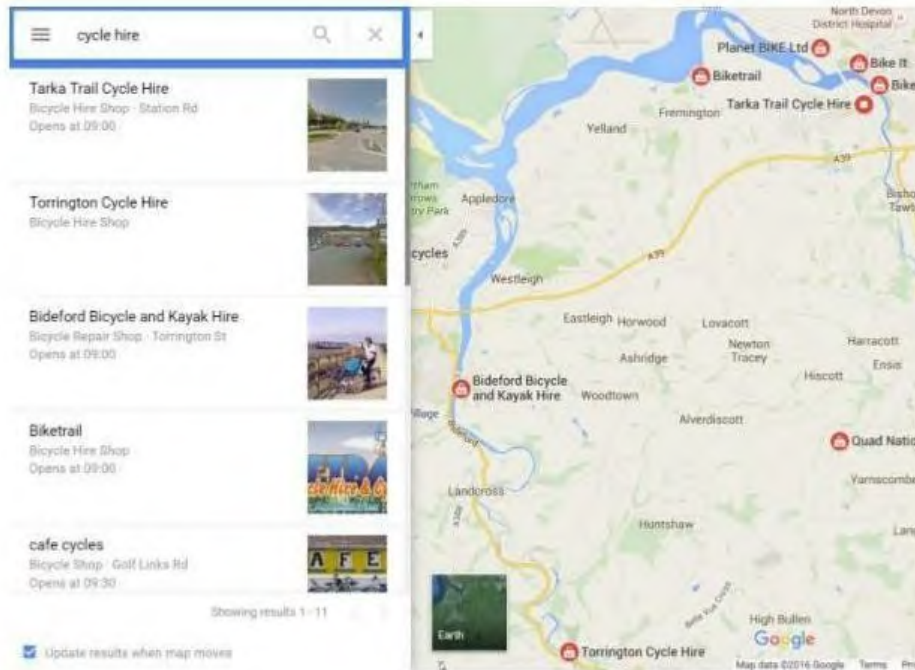
Increase in wage costs – indirect output

This is assumed to be £10,000. We have then assumed an average salary of £10,000 per annum, with the managerial job balancing a significant number of posts at the minimum wage.

TOTAL TOURISM SUPPORTED BUSINESS TURNOVER Forest of Dean

2015	£162,355,000
2016	£160,026,000
2017	£157,134,000
2018	£166,392,000
2019	£169,762,000

The maps below show the scale of businesses that have been generated by the Camel Trail in Cornwall and the Tarka Trail in Devon.



Cycle hire companies on the Camel Trail in Wadebridge and Padstow

