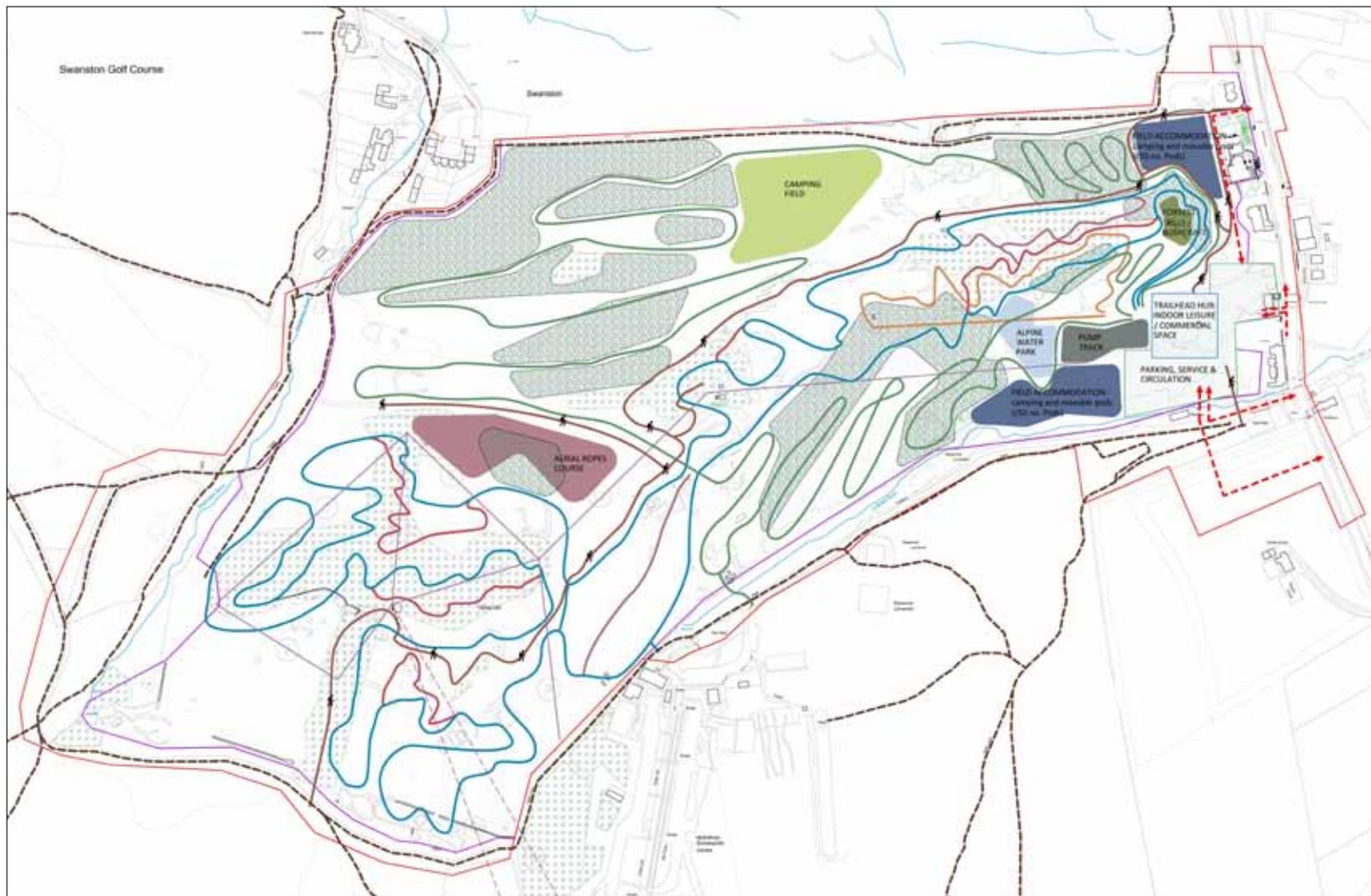


6.5-mile track, cafe and accommodation at old Lothianburn Golf Course



ANDY SHIPLEY

BUSINESSMEN behind plans for a new mountain bike track and leisure complex in the Pentlands believe it could become the future of Edinburgh cycling.

Plans are being drawn up for the new Pentland Trail Centre to help revolutionise cycling ahead of Scotland hosting the 2023 World Championships.

READ MORE: Drink and drug-fuelled yobs smash up football club's dugout

Blueprints for the 6.5-mile track, cafe and sleeping accommodation at the former Lothianburn Golf Course are the second major leisure plans to be unveiled for the Pentlands in

"It's the ideal use of the old golf course site and is a perfect gateway to the rest of the Pentland Hills" ALASTAIR MCCLUNG

as many months.

Landowner Alastair McClung said: "Our passion is to introduce mountain biking to a much wider audience, on the perfect site, right next to the city. It's the ideal use of the old golf course site and is a perfect gateway to the rest of the Pentland Hills.

"By introducing a commercial element the project can move from a vision to reality."

The project is separate to plans reported last month in the Evening News for a 50mph zipline and alpine rollercoaster at Hillend - and marks

major leisure ambitions for the Pentlands.

Mr McClung, of Swanston Farms, has teamed up with Stuart Wright, of Advie Properties and formerly responsible for Dobbies' development activities, on the project.

The pair, both keen mountain bikers themselves, have set up new firm Hillend Leisure Ltd to deliver the scheme.

Sitting inside both the city boundary and the Pentland Hills Regional Park, the site is seen as ideal to attract the Lothians estimated 260,000 cyclists.

The route will be designed to provide an introduction to traffic-free cycling for kids and their families - as well as more challenging cross-country trails for the more experienced.

Routes will be ranked from green for beginners to red for the more experienced.

Other outdoor activities also in the pipeline include a high ropes course, zipline and an alpine roller luge.

Also included in plans are a café, changing facilities, shops, office space and accommodation "pods".

The site is located in the valley to the rear of the Steading Inn and between the northern slopes of the Pentland Regional

NEW PLANS OUTLINED FOR PENTLANDS CYCLING TRAIL



IDEA: A map of the various trails, top; artists' impressions of the trail cafe, above, and the new Hillend project, right

Park and the central ridge.

Plans were developed from a 2014 feasibility study and subsequent supportive public consultation.

Sport governing body Scottish Cycling has backed the plans to improve cycling participation, with easily accessible traffic-free trails.

Graeme McLean, project manager for Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland

at Scottish Cycling, said: "We look forward to being involved in the consultation process for the new Pentland Trail Centre development.

"And to understand further how it is going to increase participation in mountain biking in Edinburgh and the surrounding area."

Plans will be presented at an open public consultation on Tuesday, March 5 at Swanston

