



Draft Green
Infrastructure and
Cycling Strategy

November 2016

John Harrison DipEnvP, MRTPI
Director of Development and
Regeneration

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	General Context	3
3.	Policy context	8
4.	Vision	12
5.	Objectives	13
6.	West Lancashire – Current Green Infrastructure and Cycling Resource	14
7.	West Lancashire – Future Green Infrastructure and Cycling Resource	23
8.	Delivery and Funding	38
	Appendix 1: Biodiversity Sites in West Lancashire	43

1. Introduction

Green Infrastructure – a network of high quality green spaces and other natural environmental features - is vital to the quality of life and business in West Lancashire and elsewhere. Cycling is an increasingly popular activity that is intrinsically linked to Green Infrastructure and that has the potential to play an important role in contributing towards improved health and general environmental quality. Recognising the importance of Green Infrastructure and cycling in the area, West Lancashire Borough Council has prepared this strategy to retain and enhance Green Infrastructure and to facilitate increased levels of cycling. The strategy identifies the opportunities for planning and implementing Green Infrastructure and cycling provision in the Borough, where investment will support the growth of West Lancashire and deliver the widest public benefits, environmental improvements, and the enhancement of the Borough's economy.

The strategy sits alongside the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027, the Borough's 15 year planning framework, and its Infrastructure Delivery Plan, both of which are available on the Council's website: www.westlancs.gov.uk/planningpolicy. It updates and supersedes the 2006 West Lancashire Cycling Strategy.

Structure of this document

Chapters 2 and 3 of this document set out the general and policy context respectively for Green Infrastructure and cycling. Chapter 4 sets out a vision for Green Infrastructure and cycling in West Lancashire, and Chapter 5 lists a set of objectives through which the vision can be realised. Chapter 6 describes existing Green Infrastructure assets and cycling infrastructure within the Borough; Chapter 7 sets out future plans for improving Green Infrastructure and cycling facilities in West Lancashire. Chapter 8 looks briefly at how the strategy can be delivered and funded. There is also an accompanying 'Key Diagram' showing the main Green Infrastructure assets and proposed / existing cycle routes between these assets.

Links to other strategies and documents

Document	Link
Lancashire Cycling and Walking Strategy	Still at the evidence gathering stage at the time of preparing this Strategy.
National Coastal Trail	http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/england-coast-path
WLBC Leisure Strategy (draft)	http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/news/february-news-2016/the-council-has-adopted-a-new-leisure-strategy-and-playing-pitch-strategy.aspx
Government Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (draft at present)	https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy
West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan	http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/roads-parking-and-travel/highways-and-transport-masterplans/west-lancashire-highways-and-transport-masterplan.aspx

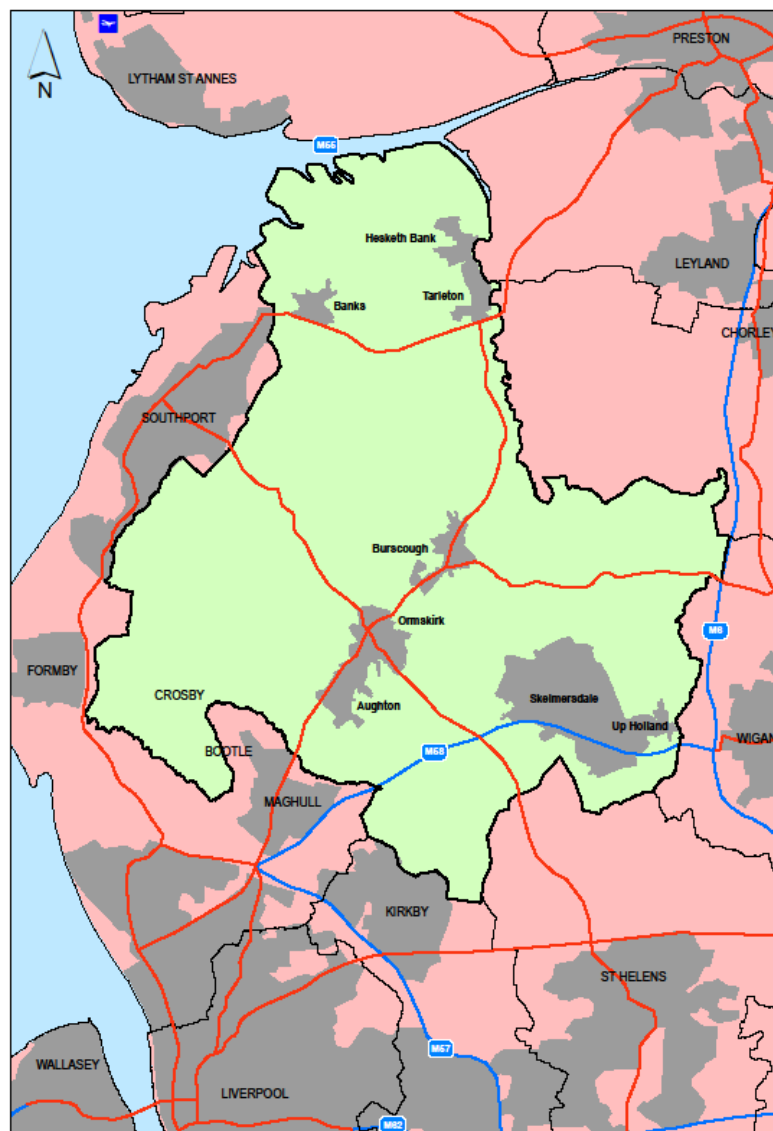
West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy	http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/media/212212/WL-EDStrategyFinalDoc-v4-lo15Apr.pdf
---	---

2. General context

West Lancashire

West Lancashire is a predominantly rural area located in the North West of England. The Borough comprises a mix of vibrant towns and villages sitting alongside tranquil countryside and covers an area of 380 square kilometres (147 square miles); it has one of the greatest amount of Green Belt land of any authority in England.

West Lancashire is bordered by the Ribble Estuary to the north and the borough of Sefton to the west and south-west. The boroughs of Knowsley and St Helens lie to the south and south east, with Wigan, Chorley and South Ribble lying to the east and north east. Whilst West Lancashire forms the southernmost district of the county of Lancashire, it has a 'dual identity', being part of the Liverpool City Region on account of its strong economic, social, cultural and transport links to this area, particularly with Southport and Liverpool. The Borough is also influenced by, and has links to, the Central Lancashire and Manchester City Regions, most notably with Wigan.



‘Definition’ of Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure (Green Infrastructure) is a term used to summarise the variety of types of open spaces and natural environment around us and includes parks, sports facilities, play areas, natural and semi-natural open spaces, footpaths, green corridors, allotments, and the inland waterways and canal network¹. It acts as an interconnected network of features and the natural systems that these support. National planning practice guidance defines Green Infrastructure as a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities

Green Infrastructure can be a combination of one or several of the following:

- Amenity space
- Green corridor
- Historic parks / gardens
- Public / private gardens
- Natural / semi-natural habitats
- Rivers / streams / other water bodies
- Children’s play areas
- Allotments / Community gardens
- Farmland
- Cycleways / footpaths / bridleways
- Urban parks
- Regional parks
- Village greens
- Nature reserves
- Trees / woodlands
- Sports pitches / playing fields
- Cemeteries / churchyards
- Orchards
- Green roofs / walls
- Civic spaces / public realm



¹ Water-based features are sometimes referred to as ‘blue infrastructure’. This Strategy will incorporate ‘blue infrastructure’ within its general definition of ‘green infrastructure’.

Good quality Green Infrastructure can help improve the places where people live and work, can mitigate and help adapt to climate change, and can assist in regeneration as well as helping to attract visitors and improve the visitor economy. In order for it to best perform in a variety of different roles and deliver multiple benefits, Green Infrastructure requires planning and needs to be managed in a strategic way at different spatial scales.

Natural England adopts the following definition of Green Infrastructure:

Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multi-functional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types.

Green Infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites and should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to the wider rural hinterland. Consequently, it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales – regional, sub regional, local and neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.

Natural England (2009) Green Infrastructure Guidance

Green Infrastructure can have many functions, including:

- Formal and informal recreation
- Routes for sustainable travel
- Social venues / meeting places
- Venues for sport, culture and other events
- Outdoor environments for education and training
- Heritage conservation
- Wildlife conservation
- Improving air quality
- Sustainable water management and flood alleviation
- Settings for new development
- Renewable energy production
- Green produce and food production
- A focus for community involvement and engagement

Cycling

Cycling is an activity that has over recent years enjoyed a significant increase in popularity in the United Kingdom. The reasons for this are varied, and include inspiration from national sporting success (for example, British cyclists winning Olympic gold and the prestigious Tour de France), recognition of health and financial advantages compared with other forms of transport, and increased funding and provision of infrastructure.

Various studies and websites set out a range of benefits associated with cycling. In simplest terms, cycling is an enjoyable activity, a cheap, convenient, sustainable and emission-free form of transport, and it provides various health benefits, such as, for example, those listed on the British Cycling website:

- **Ten Years Younger** - Studies have shown that regular cyclists enjoy the general health of someone approximately 10 years younger
- **Low Impact** - Cycling is a low impact exercise - kinder on your joints than running and other high impact aerobic activities
- **No Stress** - Many cyclists report that cycling regularly reduces their perceived levels of stress and promotes relaxation
- **Tune In** - In cycling, levels of exertion can be much more finely tuned than any other form of exercise. Using speed, wind resistance, gearing, gradient or 'hyper gravity training' (i.e. carrying extra weight), levels of exertion can be tuned to suit current fitness levels or goals.
- **All Body Exercise** - Mountain Biking or 'out of the saddle' riding (e.g. climbing) is an excellent full body exercise. When mountain biking, you're constantly shifting your weight, sometimes carrying your bike, working your arms, chest, abdominals and improving your core stability.
- **Balance** - Regular cycling improves balance and co-ordination
- **Employer benefits** Studies have shown that those who cycle to work suffer less absenteeism than non-cycling employees; workers arrive fresh, relaxed and motivated
- **An Exercise for Every Body** - Cycling has possibly the broadest appeal of all forms of exercise, From toddler to pensioner, able bodied or disabled, practically everyone can enjoy the health benefits of cycling with the right equipment.
- **Calories** - Brisk cycling burns around 500 calories per hour, helping to control weight.
- **Get Fit, Get to Work** - Cycling is one of the easiest ways to fit exercise into your daily routine because it doubles as transport.

(<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/recreation/article/ww-Wise-Words---Cycling-and-Health-0>)

Cycling is intrinsically linked to Green Infrastructure, as one of the principal forms of Green Infrastructure is cycle routes and / or networks, and as cycling is an activity that often takes place “on” or “through” Green Infrastructure, as the definition of a “cycle network” below demonstrates:

Traffic-free routes which are attractive, generally well separated from traffic and continuous over obstacles and through road junctions. Quite typically [they] may run along old railways, canal towpaths, riverbanks, forest roads and tongues of open space leading into urban areas. Although [cycle networks] are often rural, many of the most popular and important ones thread their way through the urban fabric.

Benefits of Co-ordinating Green Infrastructure and Cycling

There are a large number of benefits to having a well-designed Green Infrastructure and cycle network, some of them being identified below:



The vision for West Lancashire is to create a well-designed Green Infrastructure network that incorporates spaces that will perform at least one if not all of these functions. For example, an area of amenity space can be a popular space for recreation, can provide green produce and food, as well as being a focus for community involvement and engagement.

3. Policy context

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 sets out government policy on planning. The NPPF recognises the importance of planning for Green Infrastructure in mitigating and adapting to the expected impacts of climate change. It states that local authorities should plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and Green Infrastructure and should work with Local Nature Partnerships where appropriate. It also sets out a number of other matters, including planning for biodiversity, landscape enhancements and mitigating adverse environmental impacts.

"*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*" is one of the core planning principles set out in the NPPF.



Under the Localism Act 2011, public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly on those issues identified as strategic priorities, such as the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. This requirement is reinforced in the NPPF and has implications for the implementation of Green Infrastructure proposals identified within this Strategy, in terms of ensuring collaboration takes place with external partners to deliver the options identified. There is also a duty to co-operate with Local Nature Partnerships². These organisations are designated by the Secretary of State and established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

The NPPF promotes cycling through encouraging sustainable transport, stating that all opportunities should be explored and priority should be given to pedestrians and cycle movements.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), first introduced in March 2014, expands on NPPF policy. NPPG defines Green Infrastructure as a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. NPPG goes on to state:

Green Infrastructure is not simply an alternative description for conventional open space. As a network it includes parks, open space, playing fields, woodlands but also street trees, allotments and private gardens. It can also include streams, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and walls.

Green Infrastructure is important in the delivery of high quality sustainable development, alongside other forms of infrastructure such as transport, energy, waste and water. Green Infrastructure provides multiple benefits, notably ecosystem services, at a range of scales,

² [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2012 \(SI 2613\)](#)

derived from natural systems and processes for the individual, for society, the economy and the environment. To ensure that these benefits are delivered, Green Infrastructure must be well planned, designed and maintained. Green Infrastructure should, therefore, be a key consideration in both local plans and planning decisions where relevant..

National Planning Practice Guidance, paragraphs 8-028/029-20160211

As well as promoting healthy communities through providing opportunities for recreation and exercise, Green Infrastructure can also assist in reducing air pollution, noise and the impacts of extreme heat and rainfall events.

The Government published a Draft Cycling Delivery Plan in October 2014, the Plan summarises the government's vision for cycling and walking and the role everyone - government, the wider public sector, stakeholders, business, and individuals - has to play in achieving this vision. The government is committed to giving people a realistic choice to cycle so that anyone, of any age, gender, fitness level and income can make the choice to get on a bike.

Local Policy

The West Lancs Council Plan 2015-2018 contains three priorities for the Borough, including being Ambitious for our Environment and Ambitious for Health and Wellbeing. The former includes enhancing the built and physical environment by working with the community and partners and the latter includes improving the health and wellbeing of local communities by encouraging opportunities for leisure.

The West Lancashire Local Plan was adopted in October 2013. The policies of greatest relevance to the Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy are policy EN3: Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space, and policy IF2: Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice.

Extracts from the two policies are provided below:

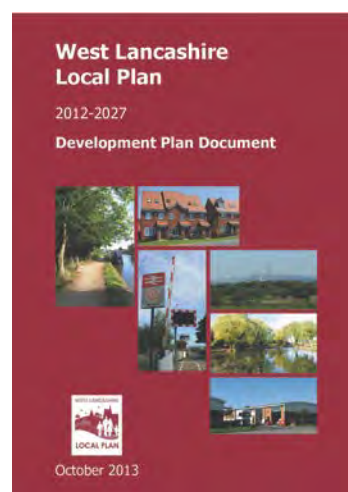
Policy EN3

Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space

Green Infrastructure

The Council will provide a Green Infrastructure strategy which supports the provision of a network of multi-functional green space including open space, sports facilities, recreational and play opportunities, allotments, flood storage, habitat creation, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, food growing and climate change mitigation. The network will facilitate active lifestyles by providing leisure spaces within walking distance of people's homes, schools and work.

In order to support this Green Infrastructure strategy, all development, where appropriate, should:



- Contribute to the Green Infrastructure strategy by enhancing and safeguarding the existing network of green links, open spaces and sports facilities, and securing additional areas where deficiencies are identified - this will be achieved through contributions to open space as outlined within Policy IF4;
- Provide open space and sports facilities in line with an appraisal of local context and community need, with particular regard to the impact of site development on biodiversity;
- Seek to deliver new recreational opportunities, including the proposed linear parks between Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, between Ormskirk and Burscough, along the River Douglas at Tarleton and Hesketh Bank and along the former railway line in Banks;
- Support the development of new allotments and protect existing allotments from development; and
- Support the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park and associated infrastructure.

Policy IF2

Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choices

The Council will support the delivery of, and not allow development which could prejudice the delivery of, the following schemes:

- The provision of 4 linear parks between Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough, Tarleton and Hesketh Bank and along the former railway line at Banks;
- A comprehensive cycle network for commuter and leisure journeys providing links across the Borough and linking in with cross boundary cycle networks;
- Any potential green travel improvements associated with access to the Edge Hill University campus on St Helens Road, Ormskirk.

Other policy considerations

West Lancashire borders with seven other local authorities (Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens, Wigan, Chorley, South Ribble, and Fylde) and it is important to bear in mind that Green Infrastructure networks take no account of administrative boundaries. The cross-boundary characteristics vary according to each local authority; opportunities may be available to use funds arising from development and infrastructure projects to repair and rebuild connective habitat networks.

The Mersey Forest covers the Liverpool City Region and Warrington. The Mersey Forest Green Infrastructure Action Plan identifies a number of priorities, including:

- Plan and deliver Green Infrastructure to help overcome ‘pinch points’ that undermine investment potential.
- Use Green Infrastructure to help adapt our areas to projected climate change and assist in the creation of a low carbon economy.
- Deliver The Mersey Forest Plan, increasing woodland cover in areas of greatest need, delivering ‘more from trees’ and achieving a ‘woodland culture’.
- Use Green Infrastructure planning, delivery and management to reduce health inequalities, promote positive wellbeing and reduce the prevalence of poor mental and physical health.
- Build the Green Infrastructure Framework into cross boundary plans and strategies.

Although West Lancashire is not part of the Mersey Forest area, it is located adjacent to Knowlsey, Sefton and St Helens, and can build upon cross boundary plans and strategies.

Within West Lancashire the Council seek to facilitate on-going connectivity for wildlife to move around the borough; this is also emphasised within the Lancashire Ecological Network which seeks to identify linkages between known wildlife sites.

4. Vision

The vision for the future of Green Infrastructure and Cycling within the Borough is set out below:

The identity and distinctive landscape of West Lancashire will be valued, sustained and enhanced, enabling people to access and enjoy all that it offers whilst protecting the assets that make the landscape and environment so valuable.

This will incorporate Green Infrastructure such as:

- **Wildlife, habitats, and sites of biodiversity value.**
- **Agriculture.**
- **Green Spaces and waterways.**
- **Attractive countryside, including the “Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park” and other Linear Parks.**

The identification of new and existing Green Infrastructure will require actions in order to assist in delivering its full potential such as:

- **Reductions in the effects of climate change.**
- **The widespread use of sustainable modes of transport, in particular cycling, and a corresponding reduction in the use of private vehicles.**
- **Maintained and improved safe pedestrian and cycle routes to provide easier access to education, employment and other key services, as well as providing a leisure and tourism offer, and offering opportunity for exercise as part of a healthier lifestyle.**
- **Maintenance of the Borough’s recreational features and extensive areas of green open space, in order to increase access to, and enjoyment of, Green Infrastructure and cycling by residents of the Borough and visitors. Stewardship of the distinctive landscape and varied biodiversity of rural West Lancashire for its natural environment and as a recreational resource.**
- **Sustainable tourism, which will be based on the attractive countryside and local heritage including the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park.**

5. Objectives

In order to achieve the Vision set out in Chapter 4, a number of objectives have been identified:

General Green Infrastructure-related Objectives

1. Protect and enhance the unique character, heritage, function, quality and sense of place of West Lancashire's Green Infrastructure network.
2. Provide a network of interconnected Green Infrastructure and spaces rich in habitat and home to a diverse range of wildlife.
3. Improve the health of residents through providing attractive opportunities for recreation and sustainable travel.
4. Promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and where possible linking habitats together in West Lancashire.
5. Ensure ancient woodland and trees and hedgerows which are of local amenity and ecological value are protected wherever possible.
6. Integrate planting schemes within all new developments and, on larger housing schemes, encourage the creation of new areas of woodland.
7. Involve users, including "friends of" groups, and neighbours of Green Infrastructure in its design, ensuring usability and helping to create a sense of stewardship, ownership and pride.
8. Support economic growth, attract inward investment and support redevelopment of brownfield land by improving the setting of industrial and commercial areas through the delivery and enhancement of quality, distinctive and attractive Green Infrastructure.
9. Create a quality, distinctive and productive Green Infrastructure network to support rural diversification and tourism.
10. Protect and enhance a wide range of high quality opportunities for safe and accessible formal and informal sport, recreation and leisure facilities, to encourage the community and visitors to undertake a variety of healthy exercise within attractive settings.

Cycling-specific objectives

11. Capitalise on any opportunities to provide or enhance provision for cycling, whether through planning obligations, or specific funded projects.
12. Ensure key green hubs, such as parks, play spaces and woodlands, are linked by means of safe and easily accessible green networks and cycle paths and footpaths that together form a high quality Green Infrastructure grid across the whole of the Borough.

6. West Lancashire – Current Green Infrastructure and Cycling Resource

This chapter sets out ‘what we currently have’ in terms of Green Infrastructure and cycling provision in the Borough – effectively the ‘baseline’ for this Strategy.

As explained in chapter 2, types of Green Infrastructure are wide ranging. West Lancashire’s most significant Green Infrastructure assets include

- Nature conservation sites;
- Open / recreational space, both formal and informal;
- Accessible waterways and other ‘blue infrastructure’;
- Linear parks – cycle routes, footpaths and bridleways;

Nature Conservation Sites

West Lancashire has a range of nature conservation sites, covering all levels of the hierarchy from local through to international importance: local nature reserves, local nature conservation sites, County Biological Heritage Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, and Ramsar Sites.

The locations of the principal nature conservation sites in West Lancashire are shown on the following page.

Ramsar sites / Special Protection Areas / National Nature Reserves

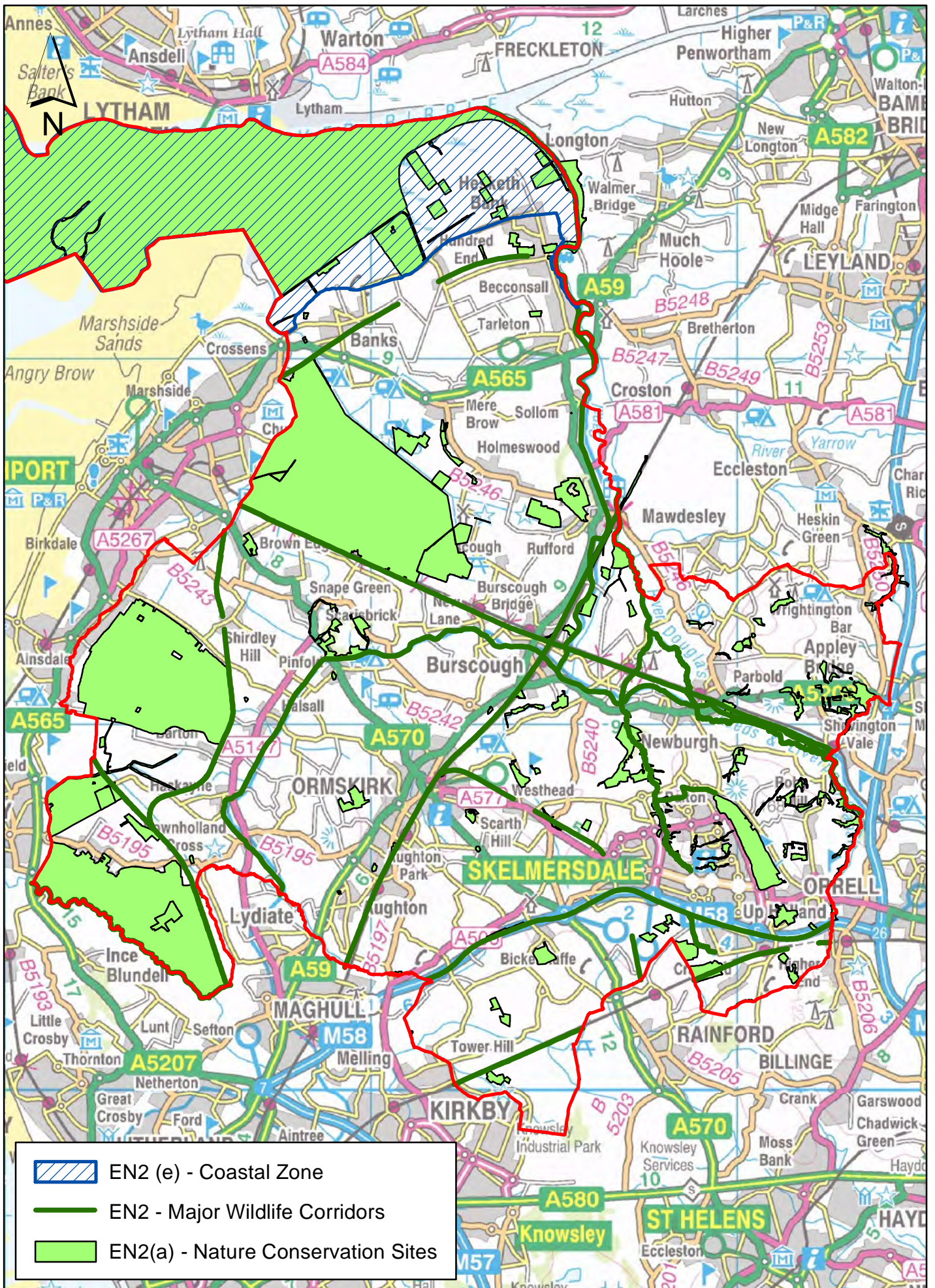
West Lancashire has two Special Protection Areas (SPAs) / Ramsar Sites. These are home to some of the country’s most valuable wildlife and are of international significance, in particular on account of migratory birds.

Ribble Estuary

The Ribble Estuary SPA / Ramsar Site (also a National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest) combined covers approximately 12,360ha, consisting of extensive sand and mud flats, and areas of coastal grazing marsh. The Estuary supports high densities of grazing wildfowl, and provides high tide roosts. Important populations of water birds are present in particular over winter time.

Martin Mere

Martin Mere SPA / Ramsar Site (also a Site of Special Scientific Interest), is located north west of Burscough, and covers approximately 120ha. It is important on account of its large and diverse wintering passage and breeding bird community. It contains ponds / lakes, marshland, reed beds, rough damp pasture, and wet woodlands.



Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSI)

There are six SSSIs within West Lancashire:

- *Ribble Marshes*

The Ribble Marshes SSSI (also containing a National Nature Reserve) comprises mudflats, saltmarsh and sandbanks, providing feeding ground and roosting sites for a variety of wading birds and wildfowl.

- *Martin Mere*

As mentioned above, Martin Mere supports nationally important numbers of a variety of migratory and wintering birds, as well as two locally important plant species.



- *Mere Sands Wood*

Mere Sands Wood is situated approximately 1 km west of the village of Rufford and is a planted oak wood, now substantially modified by sand extraction. Sand extraction has created several large pools which attract a number of bird species. This is a nature reserve, and is managed by The Wildlife Trust.

- *Wrightington Bar Pasture*

Wrightington Bar Pasture lies to the south-west of Chorley and is important as one of the few remaining species-rich unimproved grasslands in Lancashire.

- *Downholland Moss*

Downholland Moss is situated approximately 2 km east of Formby, and consists of an arable field and small birch woodland. It is a key reference site for establishing relative sea level changes in north-west England over the past few thousand years.

- *Ravenhead Brickworks*

Ravenhead Brickworks, south of Up Holland, forms part of the active Ravenhead Quarry and is of importance for the understanding of the environment and the deposition of the Productive Coal Formation.

Lancashire County Biological Heritage Sites

Biological Heritage Sites are the most important non-statutory wildlife sites in Lancashire. Biological Heritage Sites contain valuable habitats such as ancient woodland, species-rich grassland, and bogs. Many provide a refuge for rare and threatened plants and animals. Biological Heritage Sites form an irreplaceable part of West Lancashire's environment and play an important part in the strategy to conserve the biological richness of Lancashire. In West Lancashire there are 81 Biological Heritage Sites; these are listed in Appendix I of this Strategy.

Haskayne Cutting, a Biological Heritage Site close to Halsall, is also a nature reserve managed by The Wildlife Trust.

Local Nature Conservation Sites

There are 32 Local Nature Conservation Sites in West Lancashire that, apart from the Ribble Estuary, take up a relatively small part of the Borough's land area. These 32 sites are listed in Appendix 1 of this Strategy.

Work is currently being undertaken by Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Wildlife Trust to map the County's Ecological Network. This will incorporate local and county nature conservation sites and wildlife corridors.

Open Space / Playing Fields / Sports Provision

Existing open spaces have been assessed as part of the work for the Council's 2016 Leisure Strategy. Types of open space have been broken down into the following categories:

- Built Sports Provision
- Playing Pitches
- Play Provision
- Countryside Sites, Parks, Green Spaces and Allotments

The Local Plan and Open Space Assessment / Playing Pitch Strategy identify the existing provision and provide a forecast of under- /over-supply of each of the above categories of open space.

The Strategy identifies that football is overwhelmingly the most popular sport with 163 teams using 87 pitches within the Borough. Just over 90% of grass football pitches are available at some level for community use. Half of these are good quality, a further third are considered to be standard and one in six is classed as poor quality. There are also 12 cricket clubs using 13 squares, 2 rugby union clubs playing on 9 pitches, 1 rugby league club with access to 2 pitches and 30 crown green bowling clubs occupying 25 greens. The vast majority of pitches and greens are located at the Borough's main settlements of Skelmersdale and Up Holland, Ormskirk and Aughton, Burscough, Tarleton and Hesketh Bank.

Play provision within West Lancashire is generally only catered for within the main settlements of Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and Burscough, with gaps in provision especially to the north of Appley Bridge, and for older age ranges between Aughton Park and Ormskirk. Two notable areas of open recreational space in West Lancashire are

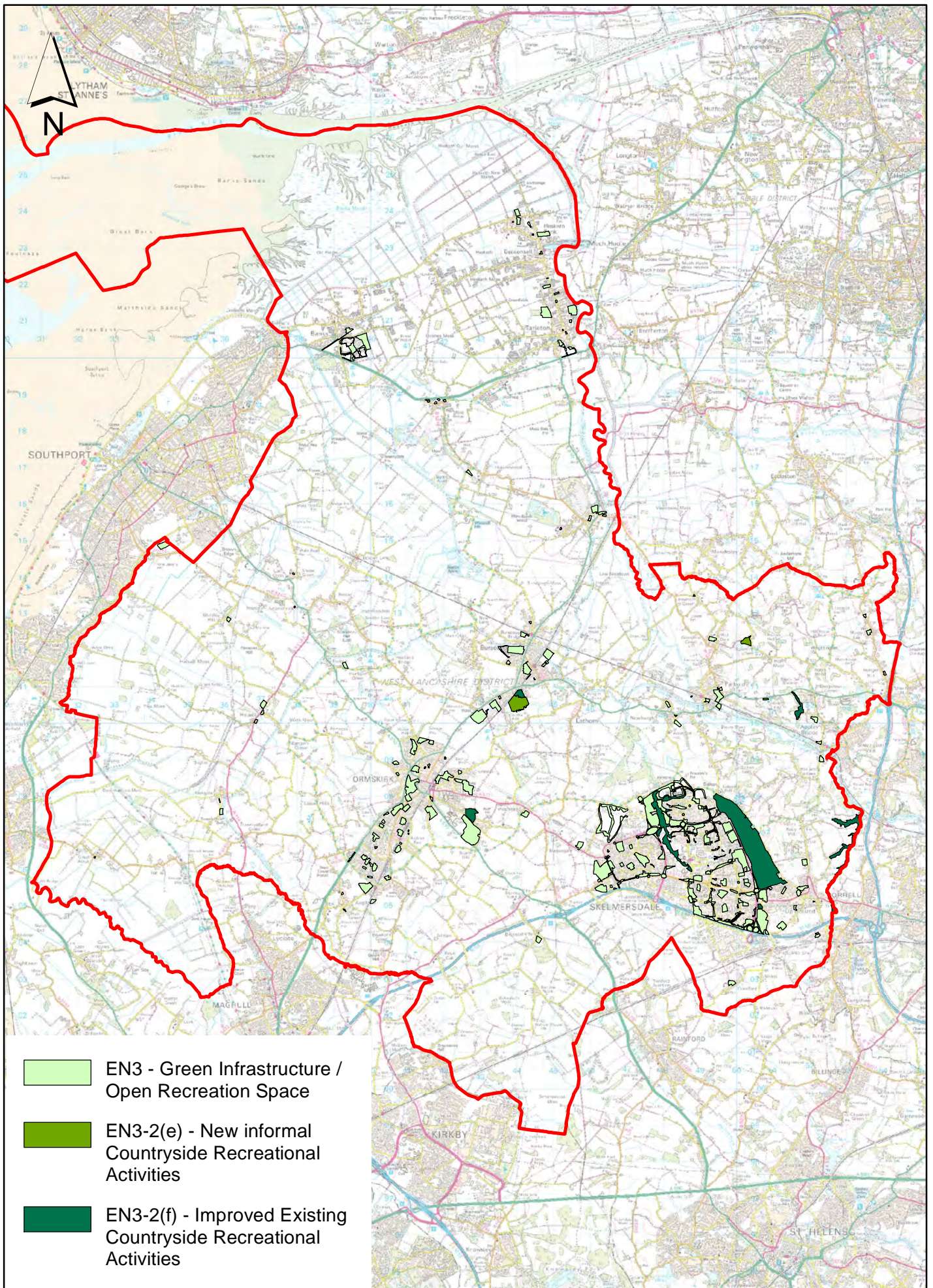
- Beacon Country Park, situated on the eastern edge of Skelmersdale. This country park contains *inter alia* play areas, woodland, picnic areas, a network of paths, and a golf course / driving range.
- Coronation Park, Ormskirk, situated adjacent to Ormskirk Town Centre. This park contains sports pitches, playgrounds, a skate park, duck pond, natural / wooded area, and bandstand / grassed area often used for community events.



Coronation Park, Ormskirk (www.visitlancashire.com)

Both these parks enjoy the prestigious ‘Green Flag’ status, and serve the residents of the two largest settlements of the Borough, as well as visitors from further afield.

- Tawd Valley Park is a hidden jewel in the heart of Skelmersdale. The site surrounds the River Tawd as it meanders its way from Yewdale across a large section of the historic town of Skelmersdale through to Cobbs Clough Brow.



Waterways / 'Blue Infrastructure'

Leeds – Liverpool Canal

The Leeds Liverpool Canal runs from the south-west of the Borough at Lydiate, northwards towards Scarisbrick Hall, then eastwards to Burscough. The Rufford Branch runs northwards from the Burscough Top Locks junction past Rufford, Tarleton and Hesketh Bank towards the Ribble Estuary. The main canal continues eastwards from Burscough past Parbold and Appley Bridge towards Wigan. The canal provides an important wildlife corridor and significant leisure resource, for boaters, anglers, walkers and cyclists. The towpath along the Leeds – Liverpool Canal has already seen significant upgrading at various points, improving access for cyclists and wheelchairs. Sections of the towpath comprise part of the Pier to Pier cycle route (see below).



River Douglas

The River Douglas flows westwards from the M6 at Shevington / Gathurst (at which point it comprises the Borough boundary), following the line of the Leeds Liverpool Canal to Parbold, before heading north towards Rufford, Tarleton and the Ribble Estuary. Whilst the river does not have a public footpath alongside it, the Douglas Valley south of Parbold and Appley Bridge is a very attractive landscape criss-crossed by public footpaths.

River Tawd

The River Tawd runs northwards through Skelmersdale, providing an important green corridor through the town, continuing through Lathom, joining the River Douglas near Hoscarr.

There are various other minor watercourses throughout the Borough, of varying amenity and biodiversity value. One significant Green Infrastructure asset is Fairy Glen, a very attractive wooded area west of Appley Bridge flanking Sproddley Brook, which is a Biological Heritage Site.

There are a limited number of small lakes in the Borough, including Leisure Lakes, a privately-run commercial facility near Mere Brow; Mere Sands Wood, and Martin Mere, both nature conservation sites (see above section).

Cycling Infrastructure

Much of West Lancashire has a mostly flat or gently undulating topography, as well as an extensive network of attractive and generally quiet lanes, several railway stations, and easy access to facilities such as cafes, public houses, and small scale tourist attractions. As such, the Borough is very well suited to cycling.

Currently West Lancashire has around 25 km of designated cycle routes, the majority of which are off-road. Part of the Trans-Pennine Trail runs through the south west of the Borough between Southport (Woodvale) and Maghull, following an off-road path along the line of the former Cheshire Lines railway. At present, this is the only complete “linear park” in the Borough (see next chapter). The Trans-Pennine Trail as a whole runs from Southport to Hornsea on the east coast and is part of European Long Distance Route 8 which runs all the way to Istanbul in Turkey. This route also forms part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network (NCN) (Route 62).

In addition there is a section of the Lancashire Cycle Way (NCN Regional Route 91) which is a signed on-road route for leisure cycling which meanders through the Borough. The route as a whole is a 130 mile (220km) figure of eight route extending into much of Lancashire. There are also some segregated cycle lanes adjacent to some of the major roads in the Borough (A59 Aughton, A565 Banks – Mere Brow), and cycling is permitted on certain stretches of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal towpath.

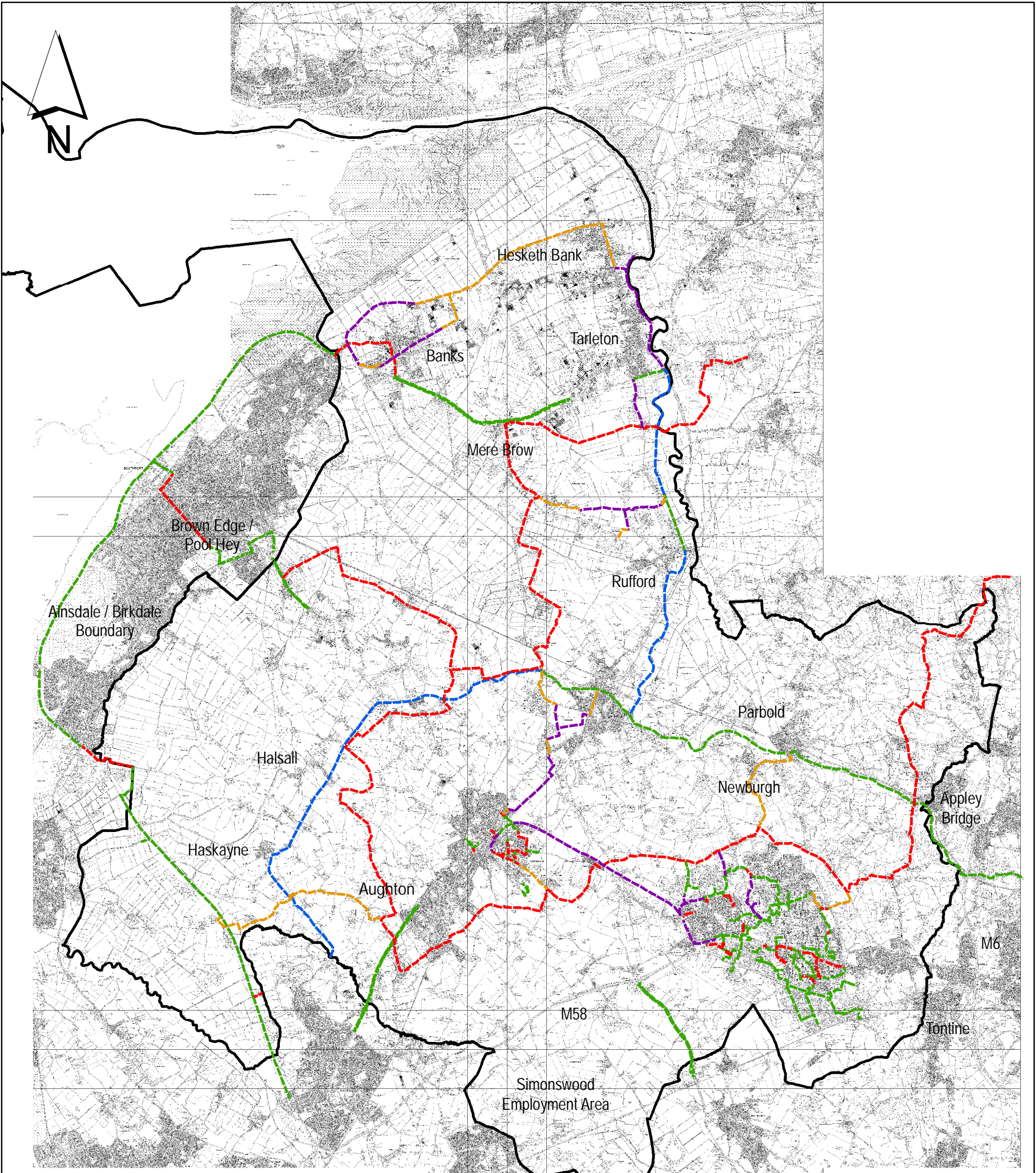
However, there is at present limited co-ordination between all the various existing routes in the Borough and therefore one of the main aims of this Strategy will be to develop a comprehensive cycle network for the Borough, based around a circular cycle route referred to as the West Lancs Wheel.

The West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan (October 2014) identifies that links in between settlements and further strategic connections are lacking. If these are implemented they would facilitate travel to work and education by cheap and sustainable means. The links would also attract visitors and leisure use, and offer health benefits to all users.

VISIT (Visitors In Sustainable Integrated Transport) Sefton and West Lancs is a partnership between Sefton and West Lancashire Councils covering the area across both authorities. Over the last few years VISIT has been involved with a number of “themed” cycling and walking routes (including the Hesketh Bank Trail, the War Horse Walk, the Moorhen and Lapwing cycle routes), various cycle hire points over the Borough and bike service checks. Although this funding stopped in 2015, the facilities created by this project are still currently available and form an important piece of the Green Infrastructure and Cycling network.

One of the most successful VISIT projects is the Pier to Pier route, a medium distance route which extends from Southport to Wigan, passing through Burscough and covering some 34km (21 miles), utilising quiet lanes and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal towpath.

Cycle storage facilities have been installed or improved at various locations in West Lancashire (including railway stations), and cycle hire is available at Ormskirk station via the national “Bike and Go” scheme. The diagram overleaf shows the different cycle routes across the Borough.



- - - - - Proposed/potential new on-road cycle paths
- - - - - Proposed/potential new off-road cycle paths
- - - - - Existing off-road cycle paths
- - - - - Existing on-road cycle paths
- - - - - Canal towpath improvements

7. West Lancashire - Future Green Infrastructure and Cycling Resource

West Lancashire aspires to create a comprehensive and wide-ranging Green Infrastructure and cycling network offering safe and convenient access around the Borough for people, as well as for wildlife. In order to achieve this there are a number of actions and measures that need to be undertaken in order to link together the existing quality green assets in West Lancashire, and to fill in any 'gaps'.

Linear Parks and 'The West Lancashire Wheel'

One significant 'gap' in cycling provision in West Lancashire is a high quality, attractive and safe cycle route offering 'seamless' connectivity between the main settlements of the Borough. The idea of creating a looped cycle network around the Borough is promoted within the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan and is a priority in the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025. This cycle network would be made up of a combination of existing and proposed cycle links:

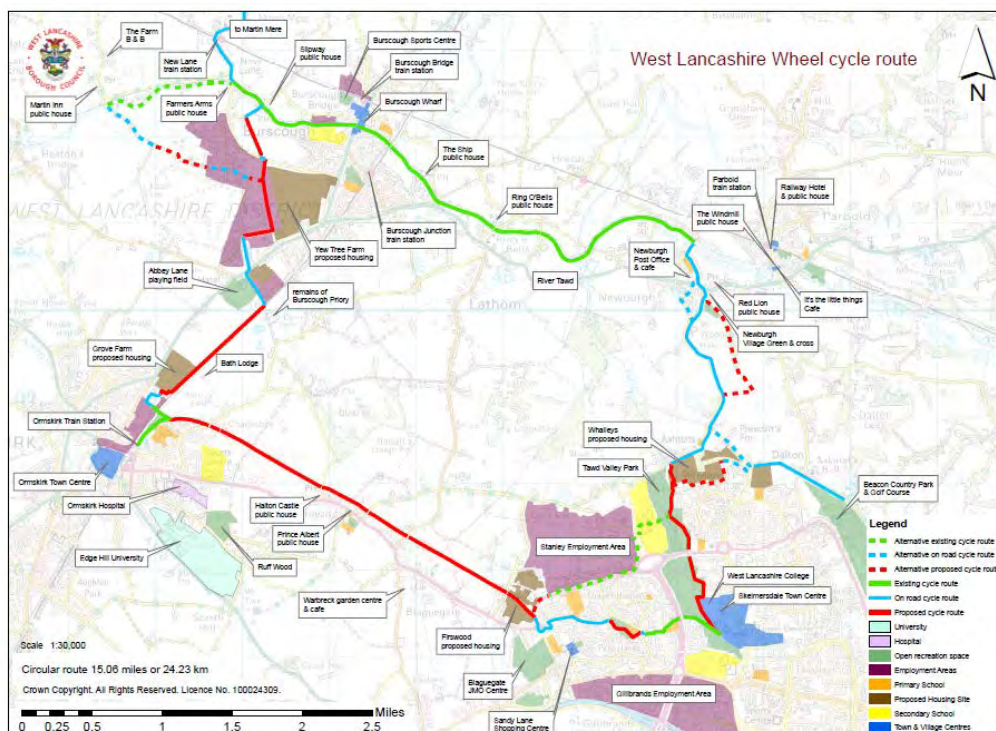
Theme 5 – A Better Connected West Lancashire

Key Ask

Delivery of a circular cycling and walking route connecting major settlement, employment areas, visitor destinations, transport modes and educational establishments in the Borough. Entry points accessible by rail from Preston, Southport, Wigan / Manchester and Liverpool. This could be a major visitor draw to the Borough whilst helping to support and grow businesses along its route.

West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-25, p56

Indicative West Lancashire Wheel



The 'West Lancashire Wheel' (inspired by Preston's 'Guild Wheel'³) will form approximately 15 miles (24km) of cycle routes. A significant part of the Wheel will be made up of two proposed 'Linear Parks' (see below). The largest new addition to the "West Lancashire Wheel" will be the proposed Ormskirk to Skelmersdale Linear Park; this will then join existing cycling routes into Skelmersdale Town Centre, then onto the Tawd Valley Cycle Route (Barry Nolan Way) northwards towards Whalleys where the Wheel will join the existing on-road cycle route to Newburgh. From Newburgh the "Wheel" will follow the "Pier to Pier" route along the canal towpath through to Burscough. The Burscough to Ormskirk Linear Park which will pass through the Yew Tree Farm and Grove Farm development sites will meet existing on- and off-road routes to complete the "Wheel" in Ormskirk Town Centre.

The Council envisage four Linear Parks as set out in policy EN3 of the 2012 Local Plan: Ormskirk – Burscough, Ormskirk – Skelmersdale, River Douglas (Tarleton and Hesketh Bank), and Banks. It is intended that the proposed linear parks provide a variety of off-road transport corridors (footpaths, cycle routes, bridleways), as well as forming important wildlife corridors and providing opportunities for informal recreation. These proposals have been supported in the Lancashire Local Transport Plan 2011-2021 ('LTP3') and the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan.

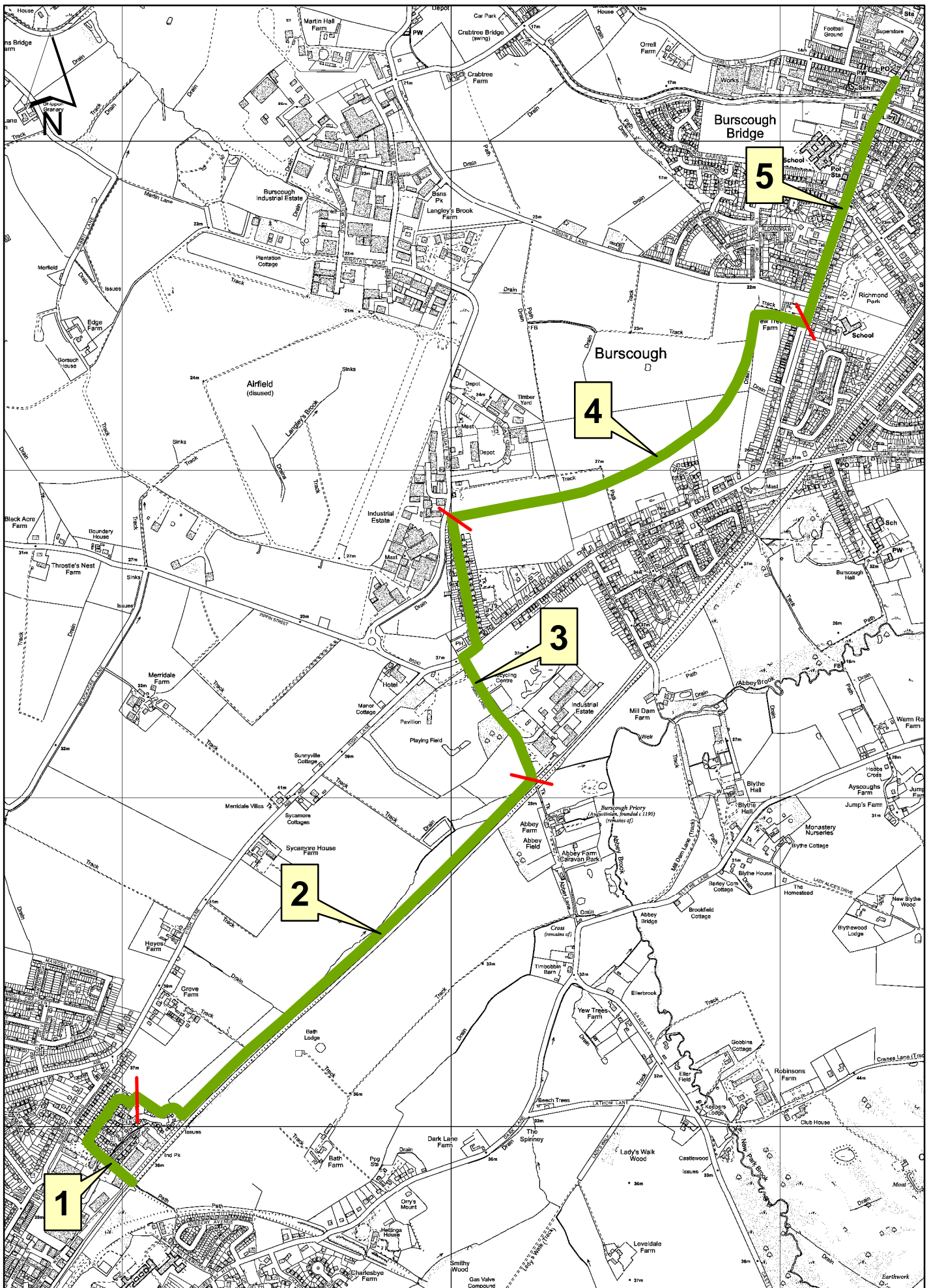
Benefits of the Linear Parks would include:

- Providing connected, alternative off-road routes and safer options for sustainable travel, particularly for non-car owners.
- Together with other cycle routes, creating a connected 'West Lancashire Wheel', making a significant contribution towards a network reaching the main population centres of the Borough.
- Capitalising on existing features in the Borough, for example the proposed River Douglas Linear Park from Tarleton to Hesketh Bank.
- Provision or enhancement of wildlife corridors
- Encouraging access to, and appreciation of, the countryside.
- Opportunities for links to public transport, particularly to rail stations, including the proposed new Skelmersdale station, and Burscough Interchange.

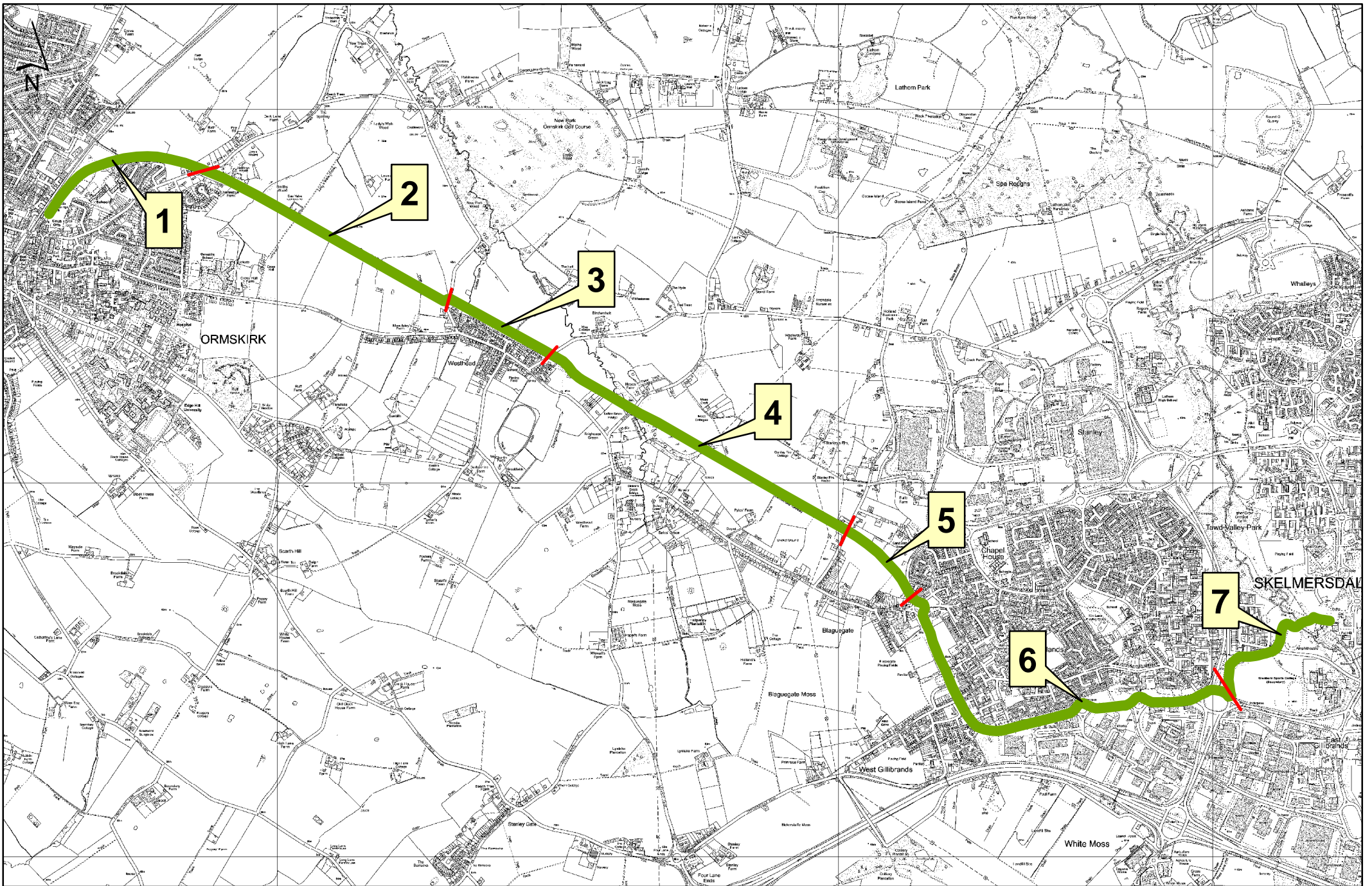
Details of the four proposed Linear Parks which will form the major elements of the West Lancashire Wheel, connecting settlements together are set out in the tables and maps below. **Please note that costs are indicative.** Timescales are: short term = up to 10 years, longer term = greater than 10 years.

³ <http://www3.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=5989&pageid=34335>

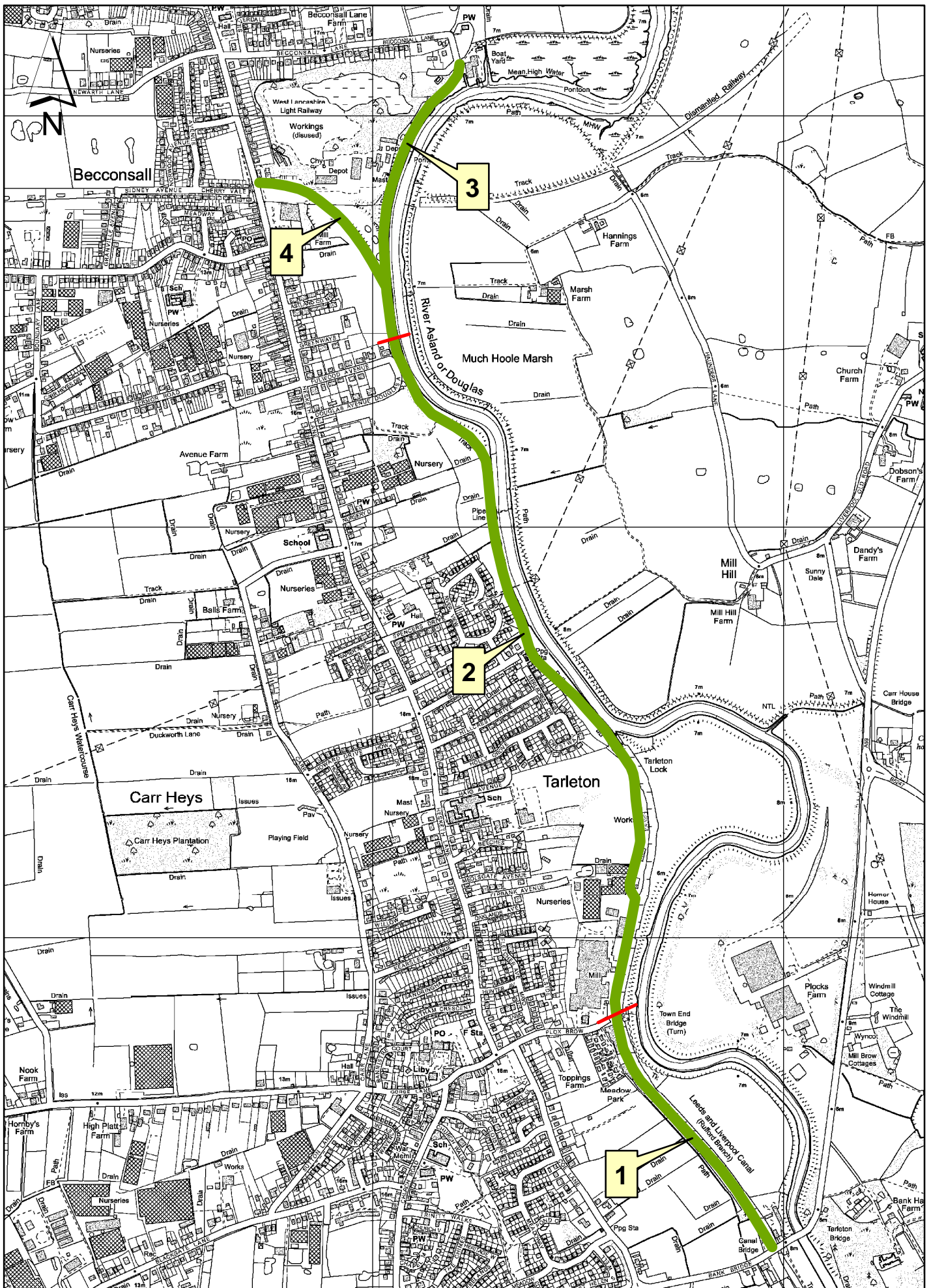
A. Ormskirk – Burscough Linear Park				
Project / Section	Description	Delivery Partner	Priority	Indicative Cost
1. Pine Avenue/ Pine Grove Cycle Route Designation	On-road Cycle route designation and signage to link existing cycle routes to Linear Park.	LCC, WLBC	Short term	£10,000
2. Grove Farm section	Delivery of section of Linear Park on-site within Grove Farm housing development.	Developers	Short term	£186,000
3. Abbey Lane / Lordsgate Drive Link section	Creation of link section to Linear Park from Grove Farm site to Yew Tree Farm site, mixture of off-road and on-road.	LCC, WLBC	Short term	£400,000
4. Yew Tree Farm section	Delivery of section of Linear Park on-site within Yew Tree Farm development.	Developers	Short term	£981,000
5. Yew Tree Farm to Burscough Town Centre access improvements	Provide widened footway to cater for cyclists on the west side of Liverpool Road between the new access junction (south of Higgins Lane) to Smithy Walk / Victoria Street to connect with Canal Towpath and to include pedestrian improvements at the Trevor Road traffic signals.	LCC	Longer term	£192,000



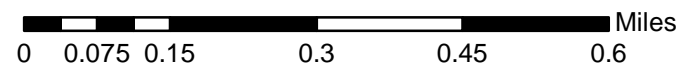
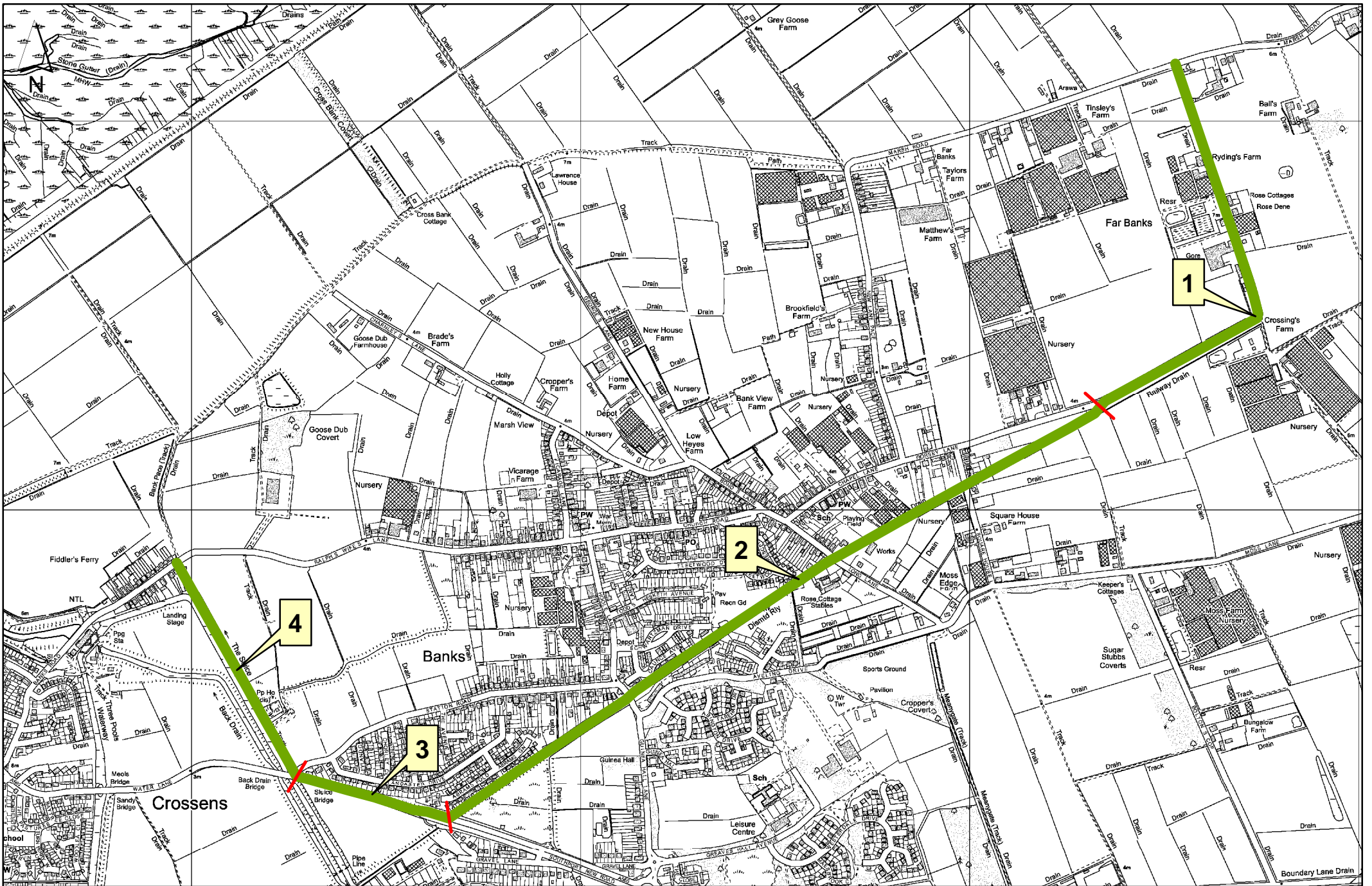
B. Ormskirk – Skelmersdale Linear Park				
Project / Section	Description	Delivery Partner	Priority	Indicative Cost
1. Station Approach to Dark Lane	Creation of a green link with off-road cycle path on the old railway line in Ormskirk, between Station Approach open space and Greetby Hill / Nursery Avenue open space and to Dark Lane.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£40,000
2. Dark Lane to Castle Lane section	Creation of Linear Park, including off-road cycle route, along former railway line.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£477,000
3. Castle Lane to Dicks Lane	Creation of Linear Park, including off-road cycle route, to the north of Westhead.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£208,000
4. Dicks Lane to Firswood Road	Creation of Linear Park, including off-road cycle route and crossing of Plough Lane, along former railway line.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£791,000
5. Firswood Road to Neverstitch Road	Delivery of section of Linear Park on-site within Firswood Road housing development	Developers	Longer term	£145,000
6. Neverstitch Road to Glenburn Road	Completion of off-road cycle path along Railway Road and through to Glenburn Road.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£452,000
7. Glenburn Road to Skelmersdale Town Centre	Glenburn Road through to the southern end of Tawd Valley to Skelmersdale Town Centre.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£162,000



C. River Douglas Linear Park				
Project / Section	Description	Delivery Partner	Priority	Indicative Cost
1. Bank Bridge to Plox Brow	Creation of Linear park, including off-road cycle route, alongside Canal / River Douglas, and providing a connection into Tarleton High School.	LCC, WLBC and Canal and River Trust	Long term	£141,000
2. Plox Brow to Fulwood Avenue	Creation of Linear Park, including off-road cycle route, alongside River Douglas	LCC, WLBC, and Canal and River Trust	Short term	£352,000
3. Fulwood Avenue to Beconsall Lane	Delivery of section of Linear Park on-site within Alty's Brickworks housing development, providing connection into Hesketh Bank Village centre. Creation of Linear Park through the Boatyard to Beconsall Lane, including off-road cycle route, alongside River Douglas.	Developers, Boatyard, LCC, WLBC and Canal and River Trust	Short term	£240,000
4. Alty's Brickworks Site	Delivery of section of Linear Park on-site within Alty's Brickworks housing development.	Developers	Short term	£91,000



D. Banks Linear Park				
Project / Section	Description	Delivery Partner	Priority	Indicative Cost
1. Ryding's Lane / Gorsey Lane Cycle Route Designation	On-road Cycle Route designation to link Marsh Road to Linear Park	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£11,000
2. Old railway line section	Creation of Linear Park, including off-road cycle route, along former railway line from Gorsey Lane to Lancaster Drive, with three road crossings and link into Schwartzman Drive open space.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£830,000
3. Lancaster Drive / Station Road Cycle route Designation	On-road Cycle Route designation to linear park to the Sluice.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£12,000
4. The Sluice Section	Creation of Linear Park, including off-road cycle route, along eastern side of the Sluice and across field to Banks Road	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£209,000



Strategic Projects for the Borough

In addition to the creation of Linear Parks there are a number of strategic projects that could assist with the delivery of an enhanced cycle network and Green Infrastructure throughout the Borough. These are set out below by geographical area:

Skelmersdale

Strategic Projects for Skelmersdale				
Project	Description	Delivery Partner	Priority	Indicative Cost
Tawd Valley Park Improvements	Improvements to enhance the environment and facilities in the Tawd Valley Park.	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services	Short term	£300,000
Tawd Valley Cycle Link	Improvement of footpaths in Tawd Valley to provide off-road cycle and footpath link from Ashurst to West Lancashire College and Skelmersdale Town Centre	LCC, WLBC	Short term	£472,000
New Visitor Centre at Beacon Country Park	New Visitor Centre at Beacon Country Park.	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services	Longer term	£750,000
Off road Glenburn Road to Southern Loop cycle route	Completion of off-road cycle route to enable alternative cycle link for West Lancs Wheel between Ormskirk – Skelmersdale Linear Park and The North of the Tawd Valley Route.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£627,000
Completion of off-road cycle route on Neverstitch Road	Complete off-road cycle route to enable alternative cycle link for West Lancs Wheel between Ormskirk- Skelmersdale Linear Park and southern Skelmersdale.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£449,000
Elmers Green Lane Cycle Route Designation	Extension of on-road Cycle Route designation on Elmers Green Lane in Tanhouse to provide complete cycle route connection from Skelmersdale Town Centre to Beacon Country Park and on to join with Southern Loop Cycle Route on Beacon Lane.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£387,000

Ormskirk

Strategic Projects for Ormskirk				
Project	Description	Delivery Partner	Priority	Indicative Cost
Station Approach Open Space	Improvement works to open space and car parking facilities.	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services	Short term	£60,000
Edge Hill Cycle Link	Provision of cycle link between Ormskirk rail and bus stations and Edge Hill University, mixture of off- and on-road.	LCC,WLBC	Short term	£705,000
Ruff Lane Cycle route Designation	Extension of on-road Cycle Route designation on Ruff Lane to connect Edge Hill Cycle Link with Southern Loop Cycle Route to the east of Ormskirk.	LCC, WLBC	Short term	£10,000

Eastern Parishes

Strategic Projects for Eastern Parishes				
Project	Description	Delivery Partner	Priority	Indicative Cost
Hunters Hill Country Park, Hilldale	Improvements to enhance the environment and facilities of the Country Park.	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services	Short term	£60,000
Chequer Lane Lake Improvements, Up Holland	Environmental improvements and new recreational facilities including play area, seating and picnic tables, and new fishing platforms.	WLBC Leisure & cultural Services	Short term	£62,000
Glover's Swing Bridge, Lathom – Windmill Bridge, Parbold canal towpath improvements	Improvement works to the Leeds – Liverpool Canal towpath between Burscough and Parbold , in particular the sections between Ring O'Bells Lane and Spencer's Bridge and between Newburgh and Parbold (Pier-to-Pier route), to facilitate cycling as well as walking and so form a section of the West Lancs Wheel.	Canal & River Trust	Short term	£768,000
Cobbs Brow Lane / Ash Brow/ Alder Lane Cycle Route Designation	Designation of on-road Cycle route on Cobbs Brow Lane/ Ash Brow/ Alder Lane (Newburgh) to form section of West Lancs Wheel between Skelmersdale and Parbold.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£109,000

Burscough and Western Parishes

Strategic Projects for Burscough and Western Parishes				
Project	Description	Delivery Partner	Priority	Indicative Cost
Burscough Wharf – Glover’s Swing Bridge	Canal towpath improvements to facilitate cycling as well as walking.	Canal and River Trust	Short term	£180,000
Haskayne Cutting Nature Reserve	Installing a boardwalk to allow people to access the wet woodland, creating and installing on site and internet interpretation.	Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission	Short term	£12,000
Cheshire Lines Path	Improvements to access, signage, surfacing and interpretation in Great Altcar/ Downholland area.	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services	Short term	£40,000
Higgins Lane / New Lane Cycle Route Designation, Burscough	Designation of on-road Cycle Route on Higgins Lane / New Lane, Burscough to connect Yew Tree Farm development site with Southern Loop Cycle route to the west of Burscough, the Pier-to-Pier Cycle Route and the Leeds – Liverpool Canal.	LCC, WLBC	Short term	£10,000
B5195 Cycle Route Designation	Designation of on-road Cycle route on B5195 in Aughton/Downholland/Great Altcar to connect Southern Loop Cycle Route to the south –west of Aughton to the Leeds-Liverpool Canal at Downholland Cross, the Cheshire Lines Path (Trans-Pennine Trail) and Formby (Sefton)	LCC, Sefton MBC, WLBC	Longer term	£288,000
Burscough – Rufford Canal Towpath Improvements	Improvement works to the towpath on the Rufford Branch Canal between Junction Bridge, Burscough and Station Road, Rufford to provide off- road cycle path.	Canal & River Trust, WLBC	Longer term	£896,000
Burscough – Lydiate Canal Towpath Improvements	Improvement works to the towpath on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal between New Lane Bridge, Burscough and Lydiate (Sefton) to provide off-road cycle path.	Canal & River Trust, Sefton MBC, WLBC	Longer term	£2,688,000

Northern Parishes

Strategic Projects for Northern Parishes				
Project	Description	Delivery Partner	Priority	Indicative Cost
Mere Sands Wood Visitor Centre.	Extension and refurbishment of Mere Sands Wood Visitor Centre to improve public facilities and financial sustainability of the attraction.	Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Short term	£400,000
Station Road/ Shore Road/ Marsh Road Cycle Route Designation	Designation of on-road cycle route on Station road, Shore Road and Marsh Road to connect Hesketh Bank Village Centre with Banks.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£201,000
Bridleway Upgrade, Rufford	Upgrade of Bridleways 28, 29, 31 and 33 in Rufford and improvements to Spark Lane to provide off-road cycle path between Rufford Branch Canal and Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£1,346,000
Holmeswood Road Cycle Route Designation	Extension of on-road Cycle Route designation on Holmeswood Road to connect Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve with Southern Loop Cycle Route to the west of Holmeswood.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£101,000
Bridleway Upgrade, North Meols	Upgrade of Bridleways 47,48 and 49 in North Meols to provide off-road cycle path between Marsh Road and Banks Road.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£763,000
Liverpool Road Cycle Link, Tarleton	Creation of off-road cycle path alongside A59 Liverpool Road between Windgate and Green Lane, Sollom to provide link between cycle routes in Tarleton and Southern Loop Cycle Route (and Canal Towpath at Lock Lane) at Sollom.	LCC, WLBC	Longer term	£531,000
Sollom – Town Meadow Swing Bridge Canal Towpath Improvements	Improvement works to the towpath on the Rufford Branch Canal between Sollom and Rufford to provide off-road cycle path.	LCC, Canal & River Trust	Longer term	£463,000

Other Cycle Links

West Lancashire Borough Council, working with Lancashire County Council and other partners such as the Canal and River Trust, will seek to progress a strategic network of multi user paths (comprising the projects listed above, plus other, smaller-scale and / or site-specific schemes) to facilitate travel by bicycle and on foot around the Borough. Important considerations will include safety, convenience, and year-round usefulness, as well as the extent to which the network will be maintained.

It is important that all new developments plan from the outset to accommodate cycle infrastructure to create sustainable development.

Section 106 Agreements (Town and Country Planning Act) and conditions will be used, where justified, for site-specific works or projects. Larger items of infrastructure are likely to be funded through CIL.

Section 38 Agreements (Highways Act) will continue to be used to ensure quality cycle infrastructure is provided within the development.

Other Green Infrastructure

Green Space and Sports Facilities

With regards to projects not listed above, the Council will also actively encourage the safeguarding and enhancement of the existing network of green space and sports facilities, including providing open space and sports facilities in line with an appraisal of local context and community need, with particular regard to the impact of site development on biodiversity.

Allotments

The Council will support the development of new allotments and protect existing allotments from development, encouraging sustainable food production and healthy lifestyles. 34 new allotments have recently been provided in Skelmersdale, and more are planned.

Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park

The Council will support the Regional Park in achieving its vision to be an internationally recognised destination based on its environmental significance.

8. Delivery and Funding

West Lancashire's ambitious vision, set out in general terms in Chapter 4 and itemised in Chapter 7, requires a coordinated approach to ensuring its delivery.

This can be through one or more of the following means:

- Partnerships between public, private and third sector parties;
- Delivery through new development, facilitated by the Local Plan and the Open Space SPD;
- Parish Councils;
- Local resident and community groups; and
- Utilisation of funding opportunities and other delivery mechanisms.

However, it is recognised that this Strategy does involve some significant long-term aspirations for projects which are very costly and for which, at this stage no funding can be identified and no timescales can be committed to by delivery partners. Therefore, the detail provided below in relation to delivery and funding is focused on the short-term projects (delivery within 10 years) and this Strategy will be reviewed periodically going forward to update timescales and details on delivery and funding for the projects within it.

Funding Mechanisms

A wide range of funding sources and delivery mechanisms may be used to deliver new and improved Green Infrastructure and support its sustainable long-term management, including:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Planning obligations – developer contributions (site-specific);
- Public and private sector funding for regeneration projects;
- Programmes funded by central government;
- Lottery funding;
- Local authority funds;
- Government agencies

Wherever possible, the use of CIL and Developer Contributions (be they financial or actual delivery of the infrastructure) will be used to lever in other sources of funding and part of the purpose of this Strategy is to have a clear plan with indicative costs against projects to enable the Council and Partners to bid for external funding when opportunities arise.

The Council will also need to balance its priorities carefully with regard the spending of CIL given the competing projects of a wide variety of infrastructure types in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Schedule, of which Green Infrastructure and Cycling projects are only a part.

In addition to the above, a number of alternative funding and management models may be explored in the future:

- Establishment of new Charitable Trusts – to manage individual projects or a range of facilities. They can be funded through a variety of sources, e.g. Section 106 monies, bequests or charitable giving.

- Endowments – provision of an income generating fund or asset to assist with on-going operating costs.
- Service charges – where a charge is levied on a property owner and paid to a private management company to meet the costs of Green Infrastructure maintenance.
- Asset transfer – where appropriate consideration might be given to transferring ownership and management of an asset to voluntary organisations, social enterprises or other organisations. There are several potential benefits to this approach. For example, third sector organisations may be able to access funding streams not available to public or private sector landowners, and they can also be very effective at generating other types of income, through sponsorship, private donations and other fundraising activities.

However, this Green Infrastructure & Cycling Strategy in and of itself does not commit the Council (or any other partner) to funding any of the projects itemised in the Strategy at this time. Each Council and infrastructure funding stream has its own approval mechanisms and so, as and when a suitable opportunity arises to deliver a project in this Strategy, the most appropriate funding will be identified and approval sought through those mechanisms.

Summary of Short-term Projects

The following draws out the short-term projects from the lists in Section 7 of this Strategy and provides more detail on Funding and Delivery, based on information available at the time of writing the Strategy.

Project	Delivery & Funding	Indicative Cost
Ormskirk – Burscough Linear Park		
1. Pine Avenue / Pine Grove Cycle Route Designation	Once Sections 2 and 3 are complete, WLBC will work with LCC to designate an on-road cycle route from the southern edge of the Grove Farm site through Pine Avenue / Pine Grove to link with the existing cycle network on Old Boundary Way. A small amount of funding would be required for signage which could, potentially, be funded through CIL.	£10,000
2. Grove Farm section	This section through the Grove Farm housing development site will be delivered and funded entirely by the Developers of the site.	£186,000
3. Abbey Lane / Lordsgate Drive Link section	Section 3, providing the Linear Park link between two development sites and crossing the A59 will be delivered in partnership between LCC and WLBC, funded through Developer Contributions (£106 monies).	£400,000
4. Yew Tree Farm section	This section through the Yew Tree Farm development site will be delivered and funded entirely by the Developers of the site.	£981,000

Project	Delivery & Funding	Indicative Cost
River Douglas Linear Park		
2. Plox Brow to Fulwood Avenue	WLBC will work with the Canal & River Trust to create a shared cycleway/footway along the existing track from Town End Bridge to Tarleton Lock (known as Canal Bank) and the existing public footpath by the River Douglas from Tarleton Lock to the southern tip of the Alty's Brickworks development site, utilising a combination of Developer Contributions (£106 monies) and, if necessary, CIL monies.	£352,000
3. Fulwood Avenue to Beconsall Lane	WLBC will work with the Developers of the Alty's Brickworks site, the Boatyard and the Parish Councils to upgrade the existing public footpath by the River Douglas to a shared cycleway / footway from the southern tip of the Alty's Brickworks site to Beconsall Lane. Funding is to be determined but potentially utilising CIL funding to lever in external sources of funding.	£240,000
4. Alty's Brickworks section	This section of the Linear Park through the Alty's Brickworks development site will link the River Douglas path with Station Road (and the Village Centre) and will be delivered and funded entirely by the Developers of the site.	£91,000
Other Strategic Projects		
Tawd Valley Park Improvements	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services are preparing plans to enhance the environment and facilities in the Tawd Valley Park. Funding is to be determined but could potentially utilise CIL monies and/or WLBC funding to lever in external funding.	£300,000
Tawd Valley Cycle Link	WLBC are working with LCC to upgrade footpaths in the Tawd Valley to provide a shared cycle and footpath linking Ashurst to West Lancashire College and the Town Centre. Funding has been provided through Developer Contributions (£106 monies) and LCC funding.	£472,000
Station Approach Open Space	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services have recently completed improvement works to create a public open space and car parking facilities utilising a combination of Developer Contributions (£106 monies) and CIL monies allocated for spend in 2016/17.	£60,000
Edge Hill Cycle Link	WLBC are working with LCC to provide a cycle link between Ormskirk rail and bus stations and Edge Hill University, through a mixture of off- and on-road cycle paths. Funding is provided through Developer Contributions (£106 monies) and LCC funding.	£705,000

Project	Delivery & Funding	Indicative Cost
Ruff Lane Cycle route Designation	Once the Edge Hill Cycle Link is created, WLBC would liaise with LCC to designate an on-road cycle route on Ruff Lane to connect the Edge Hill Cycle Link with existing Cycle Routes to the east or Ormskirk. A small amount of funding would be required for signage which could, potentially, be funded through CIL.	£10,000
Mere Sands Wood Visitor Centre.	Lancashire Wildlife Trust proposes to extend and refurbish the Visitor Centre at Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve to improve the public facilities and financial sustainability of the attraction. Funding is to be determined but could potentially utilise CIL monies to lever in external funding.	£400,000
Hunters Hill Country Park, Hilldale	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services to undertake improvements to enhance the environment and facilities of the Country Park utilising Developer Contributions (S106 monies).	£60,000
Chequer Lane Lake Improvements, Up Holland	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services to undertake Environmental improvements and new recreational facilities including play area, seating and picnic tables, and new fishing platforms utilising Developer Contributions (S106 monies).	£62,000
Glover's Swing Bridge, Lathom – Windmill Bridge, Parbold canal towpath improvements	WLBC would work with the Canal & River Trust to make improvement works to the Leeds – Liverpool Canal towpath between Lathom and Parbold to facilitate use for cycling and walking and to form a section of the West Lancs Wheel. Funding is to be determined but could potentially utilise CIL monies and/or WLBC funding to lever in external funding.	£436,000
Burscough Wharf – Glover's Swing Bridge	Canal & River Trust propose to upgrade the canal towpath to facilitate cycling and walking, potentially utilising CIL monies and CRT funding.	£180,000
Higgins Lane / New Lane Cycle Route Designation, Burscough	Once the Yew Tree Farm section of the Ormskirk-Burscough Linear Park is created, WLBC would liaise with LCC to designate an on-road cycle route on Higgins Lane / New Lane in Burscough to connect the Yew Tree Farm development site with existing cycle routes to the west of Burscough, including the Pier-to-Pier Cycle Route, and to the Leeds – Liverpool Canal. A small amount of funding would be required for signage which could, potentially, be funded through CIL.	£10,000
Haskayne Cutting Nature Reserve	Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the Forestry Commission are installing a boardwalk to allow people to access the wet woodland, as well as creating and installing on site and internet interpretation, utilising CIL monies allocated for spend in 2016/17 together with funding from the Parish Council.	£12,000

Project	Delivery & Funding	Indicative Cost
Cheshire Lines Path	WLBC Leisure & Cultural Services propose to make improvements to access, signage, surfacing and interpretation in Great Altcar / Downholland area to facilitate access to, and improve the use of, the Cheshire Lines Path for cycling. Funding would potentially be provided through CIL monies.	£40,000

Appendix 1

Nature Conservation Sites in West Lancashire

Ramsar sites / Special Protection Areas / National Nature Reserves

West Lancashire has two SPA / Ramsar sites. These are home to some of the country's most exquisite wildlife and geological features:

Ribble Estuary

The Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA / Ramsar site (also a National Nature Reserve) combined is approximately 12,360ha, consisting of extensive sand and mud flats, particularly in the Ribble Estuary. Areas of coastal grazing marsh are located behind the sea embankments. The saltmarshes, coastal grazing marshes and intertidal sand and mud flats all support high densities of grazing wildfowl and are used as high – tide roosts. Important populations of water birds occur in winter, including swans, geese, cuckus and waders. The highest densities of feeding birds are located on the muddier substrates of the Ribble.

Martin Mere

Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site consists of approximately 120 of land, located north west of Burscough. Martin Mere is an area of outstanding importance for its large and diverse wintering passage and breeding bird community.

The site occupies part of a former lake and mine that extended over some 1,300ha of the Lancashire Coastal Plain during the 17th century. In 1972 the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust purchased 147 ha of the former Holcrofts Farm, consisting mainly of rough damp pasture, with the primary aim of providing grazing and roosting opportunities for wildfowl. Since the acquisition, the rough grazed pastures have been transformed by means of positive management into a wildfowl refuge of international importance. Areas of open water within associated muddy margins have been created, whilst maintaining seasonally flooded marsh and reed swamp habitats via water level control. The size of Martin Mere increased by 63ha in 2002 as additional land was purchased in the southernmost part of the refuge at Woodend Farm, with assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to restore arable land to a variety of wetland habitats including seasonally flooded grassland, reed bed, wet woodland and open water habitats.

Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSI)

SSSIs are internationally important for their wildlife, and. Many SSSIs are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites, National Nature Reserves (NNRs) or Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).

SSSIs are the country's very best wildlife and geological sites. They include some of our most spectacular and beautiful habitats and are important as they support plants and animals that find it more difficult to survive in the wider countryside. The unique and varied habitats of SSSIs have developed over hundreds of years through management practices such as grazing and forestry, and

need active management to maintain their conservation interest. Protecting and managing SSSIs is a shared responsibility, and an investment for the benefit of future generations.

Within West Lancashire, there are six SSSIs:

- *Ribble Marshes*

The estuary is of international importance for the passage and wintering waterfowl it supports, being a major link in the chain of estuaries down the west coast of Britain used by birds on migration between the breeding grounds in the far north and their wintering grounds further south. The Ribble Marshes National Nature Reserve is located in the centre of the SSSI and most of the foreshore in Sefton outside the NNR is covered by the Southport Sanctuary which provides a protected low tide roost for pink footed geese.

The mudflats are rich in invertebrates on which the waders and many of the wildfowl, especially shelduck, feed and the sandbanks also provide low tide roosting sites for pink footed geese. The saltmarshes consist mainly of saltmarsh grass/red fescue sward with a belt of cordgrass (*Spartina*) at the seaward edge. They provide roosting sites for the waders at high tide and support large numbers of wildfowl such as mallard, teal, wigeon and pink-footed geese.

- *Martin Mere*

Martin Mere supports nationally important numbers of Bewick's swan, whooper swan and shoveler with numbers regularly in excess of 1% of the total British wintering population. Nationally exceptional numbers of snipe, lapwing and black-tailed godwit have been recorded, and the wintering flock of ruff (350 on average) is believed to be the largest in Britain. The breeding community is diverse, totalling over 35 species, and includes important breeding populations of greylag goose (representing over 1% of the British breeding population), gadwall, mallard and snipe.

In total, over 150 species of birds have been recorded at the site and this includes several unusual species, such as avocet, lesser yellowlegs, pratincole, marsh sandpiper and white-winged black tern which have been recorded on passage. Martin Mere is, thus, of exceptional value for the wealth and diversity of its avifauna.

Additional scientific interest is provided by the presence of two locally important plant species: water dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa* which is regionally scarce and whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum* found here in abundance in its only Lancashire locality, and one of very few sites in the north of England.

- *Mere Sands Wood*

Mere Sands Wood is situated approximately 1 km west of the village of Rufford and is a planted oak wood now substantially modified by sand extraction. Sand extraction has created several large pools which attract a number of bird species. The site is a nature reserve run by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

- *Wrightington Bar Pasture*

Wrightington Bar Pasture lies in the valley of Syd Brook, which flows between the villages of Wrightington Bar and Eccleston to the south-west of Chorley. It is important as one of the few remaining species-rich unimproved grasslands in Lancashire and represents the largest flushed example of this community type in the county. This vulnerable habitat is becoming increasingly rare both nationally and in Lancashire due primarily to agricultural intensification.

The pasture is situated on the south-facing slope and flood plain of a small valley. Soils vary from free-draining sands at the top of the valley slopes to alluvium in the valley floor. Numerous flushes exist throughout the site and a high water table in the vicinity of the brook results in a small permanently wet area.

- *Downholland Moss*

Downholland Moss is situated approximately 2 km east of Formby, and consists of an arable field and small birch woodland. It is a key reference site for establishing relative sea level changes in north-west England during the period from about 6000 - 4000 BC.

Alternating organic and inorganic deposits represent a sequence of changing tidal flat, lagoonal and perimarine palaeoenvironments. These have been the subject of detailed stratigraphic, micro- and macro-palaeontological analyses supported by radiocarbon dating. The results have provided a detailed record of transgressive and regressive overlaps in northern England, a partial chronology of tendencies of sea-level movement in north-west England and sea-level index points. Downholland Moss is also noted for its surface microtopography which demonstrates roddons, sandbanks and tidal creek features.

- *Ravenhead Brickworks*

Ravenhead Brickworks is located immediately south of Up Holland, near Wigan and forms part of the active Ravenhead Quarry.

The successions at Ravenhead Brickworks are of vital importance for the understanding of the environment and the deposition of the Productive Coal Formation, not only within the Pennine Basin, but also within the UK as a whole.

Lancashire County Nature Sites: Biological Heritage Sites

Biological Heritage Sites are the most important non-statutory wildlife sites in Lancashire. Biological Heritage Sites contain valuable habitats such as ancient woodland, species-rich grassland and bogs. Many provide a refuge for rare and threatened plants and animals. Biological Heritage Sites form an irreplaceable part of our environment and are a major part of the strategy to conserve the biological richness of Lancashire. In West Lancashire there are 81 Biological Heritage Sites; these are listed in Appendix I of the Local Plan 2012-2027.

Site Name	Parish	Grid Ref
Haskayne Cutting	Downholland /Halsall	SD 357 089
Downholland and Associated Brooks	Downholland /Great Altcar	SD 326 086
Formby Moss	Downholland	SD 326 095
Moss Heath and Wood	Great Altcar	SD 336 072
Cheshire Lines & Moss Lane Ditches	Downholland	SD 331 082
White Grass and Barton Gorse	Downholland	SD 331 096
Orritt's Wood	Downholland	SD 343 078
Little Wood	Downholland	SD 341 091
*Downholland Moss	Downholland	SD 320 080
*Altcar Withins	Great Altcar	SD 340 050
Carr Wood and Carr Wood Rushes	Great Altcar	SD 345 047
Brook Farm Bridge Drains	North Meols	SD 371 168
The Sluice	North Meols	SD 386 196
Halsall Marsh	Halsall	SD 366 107
Scarisbrick Hall Woods & Dam Wood	Scarisbrick	SD 395 120
High Brows Covert	Scarisbrick	SD 367 149
Plex Moss Covert	Halsall	SD 336 104
King's Covert	Halsall	SD 337 129
Twig Beds, Halsall Moss	Halsall	SD 347 119
*Halsall and Plex Mosses	Halsall	SD 340 110
Banks Marsh Embankments	North Meols	SD 376 217
Dicket's Brook Wood	Skelmersdale	SD 450 073
Stanley's Firs	Skelmersdale	SD 459 073 149
Tawd Valley Woods	Lathom /Newburgh	SD 470 090
Tawd Valley Park	Skelmersdale	SD 481 069
Westheads Clough	Skelmersdale	SD 488 067
Delph Clough	Skelmersdale	SD 493 062
Elmer's Green Common and Clough	Skelmersdale	SD 497 065
Ram's Close Wood	Dalton	SD 499 088
Ruff Wood	Ormskirk	SD 427 075

New Park Wood	Lathom	SD 440 086
Copy Wood	Lathom	SD 446 087
Ferny Knoll Bog	Bickerstaffe	SD 476 042
Nipe Lane	Skelmersdale	SD 479 044
Holland Moss	Up Holland	SD 487 037
Cunscough Brook Grassland	Aughton	SD 407 032
Bickerstaffe Moss	Bickerstaffe	SD 437 020
Rufford Park	Rufford	SD 456 162
Rufford Railway Hollows	Rufford	SD 464 150
Mere Brow (Leisure Lakes)	Tarleton	SD 408 178
Nuck's Wood	Tarleton	SD 416 166
Holmeswood Woodlands	Rufford /Tarleton	SD 420 178
Mere Sands Wood	Rufford	SD 447 157
Windmill Farm Drain	Burscough	SD 429 156
*Martin Mere Mosslands	Burscough /North Meols /Scarisbrick	SD 400 160
Windmill Fields	Burscough	SD 425 154
Leeds-Liverpool Canal, Rufford Branch	Burscough /Rufford /Tarleton	SD 456 13
Rufford Boundary Sluice	Rufford	SD 464 148
Low Meadows, North and Wham Ditch	Lathom	SD 468 146
Wood Lane Pasture	Parbold	SD 498 105
Eller Brook and Hoscar Moss Fields	Burscough /Lathom	SD 459 131
Abbey Lane Brick Pits	Burscough	SD 433 104
Burscough North West Curve	Burscough	SD 448 124
Platts Lane Pits	Burscough	SD 441 107
River Douglas Estuary	Hesketh-with-Becconsall /Tarleton	SD 456 245
River Douglas Embankment	Hesketh-with-Becconsall	SD 452 249
Hesketh Old Marsh Embankment	Hesketh-with-Becconsall	SD 422 236
Camp Fields	Hesketh-with-Becconsall	SD 441 230
Hesketh Bank Brickworks South	Hesketh-with-Becconsall /Tarleton	SD 449 227
Hesketh Bank Brickworks North (Alty's)	Hesketh-with-Becconsall	SD 448 230
Marsh Farm Fields	North Meols	SD 408 232
Hesketh Old and New Marsh Fields	Hesketh-with-Becconsall	SD 415 248
Rough Park and College Woods	Up Holland	SD 513 065
Lees Wood	Up Holland	SD 517 077

Lees Brook Pasture	Up Holland	SD 518 077
Dingle Quarry and Dalton Quarry	Dalton	SD 516 085
Holland Lees Wood	Dalton /Up Holland	SD 517 084
Green Alley Wood	Up Holland	SD 529 079
Haldren Wood	Up Holland	SD 523 081
Coppice Bank Wood	Up Holland	SD 526 082
Dean Wood	Up Holland	SD 534 073
Black Brook Woodland	Up Holland	SD 502 024
Pimbo Lane Pit	Up Holland	SD 515 046
Alder Lane Brook	Parbold	SD 502 108
Bramble Way	Parbold	SD 497 103
Hunter's Hill Delf and Hawett Hill Delf	Wrightington	SD 503 122
Fairy Glen and Delf House Wood	Parbold /Wrightington	SD 517 106
Harrock Hill	Wrightington	SD 513 133
Big Wood and Wrightington Ponds	Wrightington	SD 534 106
Syd Brook Valley	Wrightington	SD 544 140
Counce's Road Ditch	Scarisbrick	SD 401 160

Local Nature Conservation Sites

There are 32 local nature conservation sites in West Lancashire that, apart from the Ribble Estuary, take up a relatively small part of the Borough's land area; these are listed below:

Site Name	Parish	Grid Ref
Rabbit Hill	Great Altcar	SD 351 063
Acre Lane Fields Ponds	Great Altcar	SD 355 052
Scarisbrick Park	Scarisbrick	SD 387 130
Goose Dub Covert, Banks	North Meols	SD 383 212
Banks Sewage Works	North Meols	SD 381 205
Woodland in Simonswood	Bickerstaffe	SD 412 015
Ox Hey Plantation	Bickerstaffe	SD 437 044
Bickerstaffe Wood	Bickerstaffe	SD 447 037
Woodwards Plantation, Simonswood	Bickerstaffe	SD 435 003
Prescot Road Quarry	Aughton	SD 407 066
Greetby Hill Railway Cuttings	Ormskirk	SD 427 086
Ormskirk Sidings	Ormskirk	SD 420 087
Manor Farm, Hesketh Bank	Hesketh-with-Beaconsall	SD 430 231
Carr Heys Plantation, Hesketh Bank	Hesketh-with-Beaconsall	SD 445 212
Skellow Clough	Bispham	SD 488 128
Dock Brook	Parbold	SD 492 106

Tontine Road Pit	Up Holland	SD 521 045
Abbey Lakes	Up Holland	SD 527 048
Dennet's House, Lower Pimbo	Skelmersdale	SD 512 036
Appley Lock Pasture	Parbold	SD 517 096
Old Varnish Works, Appley Bridge	Parbold	SD 519 094
North Hawsclough Quarry	Dalton	SD 500 090
Beacon Park	Up Holland	SD 500 100
Smith Croft Delph	Parbold	SD 504 124
Wrightington Hall and Park	Wrightington	SD 528 112
Abbey Lane Brick Pits	Burscough	SD 433 104
Platts Lane Pits	Burscough	SD 442 108
Pimbo Bushes, Pimbo	Skelmersdale	SD 516 032
Gaw Hill /Gorse Hill	Aughton	SD 396 079
Eller Brook /Sutches Woods	Lathom	SD 452 106
Moss Delf	Aughton	SD 401 061
Pinfold Quarry	Scarisbrick	SD 390 114