



COUNCIL: 19 July 2023

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Rob Molloy

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SUBJECT: LINEAR PARKS UPDATE

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update in relation to progress of the proposed linear parks between Ormskirk – Burscough and Tarleton - Hesketh Bank.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the update be noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Following consideration of a Motion included on the agenda for the meeting held on 5 April 2023, Council resolved:

"A. That it be noted that further progress has been made on the Ormskirk-Burscough linear park with the completion of the new High Grove Park housing estate

B. That the linear park will ultimately provide a positive benefit encouraging walking and cycling in a safer environment while providing a wildlife corridor. However, Council acknowledges the delay in delivery by the developer of its section of the Ormskirk - Burscough linear park between

Abbey Lane in Burscough and Ormskirk, meaning the whole route remains incomplete, and looks forward to its completion.

- C. That Cabinet bring a report to the July 2023 council meeting updating councillors on:
- (i) the Ormskirk – Burscough Linear Park, both the whole project and, in particular at this stage of the project, the steps taken to complete the section between Ormskirk and Abbey Lane in Burscough.
 - (ii) the progress made so far on the Tarleton – Hesketh Bank Linear Park and an updated action plan to complete the whole project."

3.2 The Linear Park projects were identified in the West Lancashire Borough Council Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy 2017. The linear park projects were approved by Cabinet on 12th September 2017. The work is currently assigned to the Economic Development and Regeneration Team.

3.3 The Ormskirk to Burscough linear park is an area of land which runs alongside the railway line between Ormskirk and Burscough. This 'strip' connects neighbourhoods and creates green space for activities such as walking and cycling. The area will also add to biodiversity by creating a wildlife corridor.

The remaining area outstanding for completion is approximately three hundred and fifty metres in length and connects from the existing pathway (recently created by the developer) in Ormskirk to Abbey Lane in Burscough.

3.4 The Tarleton to Hesketh Bank linear park project includes an area of land running parallel with the River Douglas. This project delivers additional provision of a network of multi functional green space. This network will facilitate active lifestyles by providing the leisure space necessary within walking distance of peoples homes, schools and work.

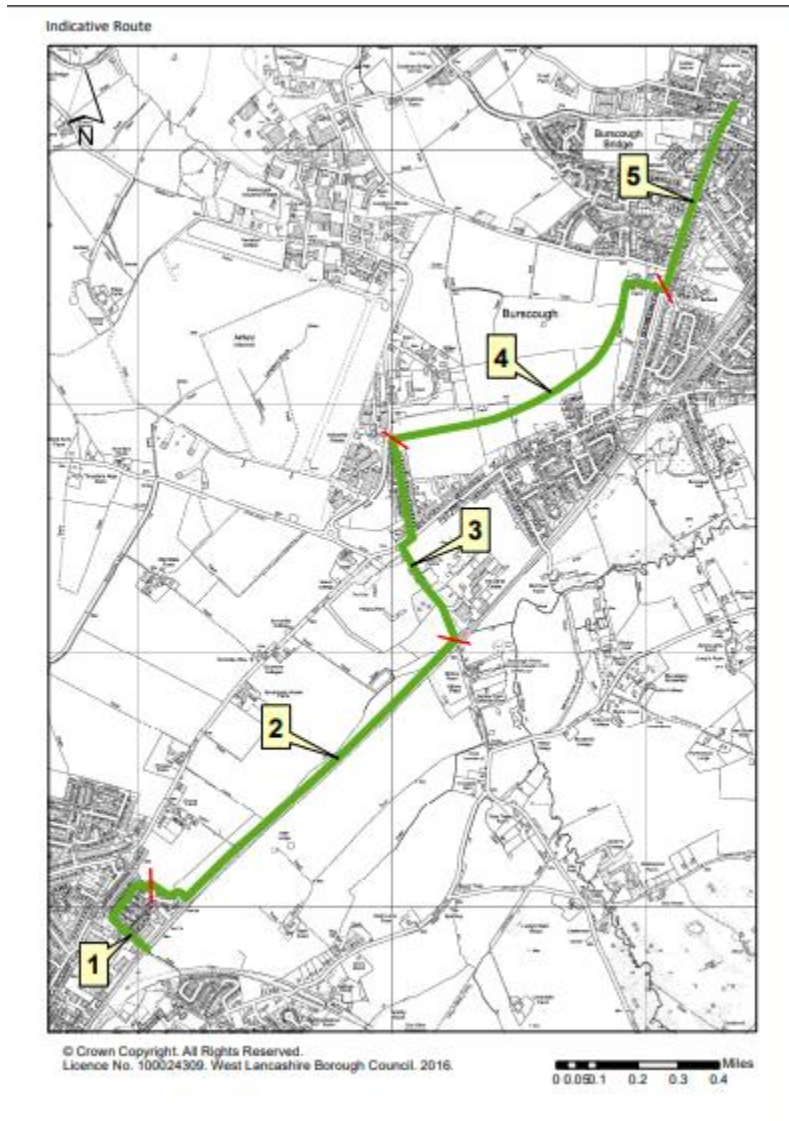
3.5 The Green infrastructure and Cycling Strategy 2017 (as previously commissioned by the Council) raised a number of issues with regard to a shortage of cycling provision in West Lancashire which offer safe, attractive cycle routes offering seamless connectivity. The work to both linear parks attempts to address this issue.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 A section of the linear park route from Ormskirk to Burscough was completed by Taylor Wimpey in 2022. This has provided a cycling and walking route in a green space area. Officers estimate that walking at a reasonable pace, this route would allow for approximately a twenty-minute walk – in a safe environment. This route is of hard standing finish and is suitable for use by cyclists.

4.2 A feasibility study was undertaken, and budget costs prepared for the work. As costs have increased since the project was originally scoped, an application for CIL funding of £104k has been submitted to meet the shortfall with decision expected September- November 2023.

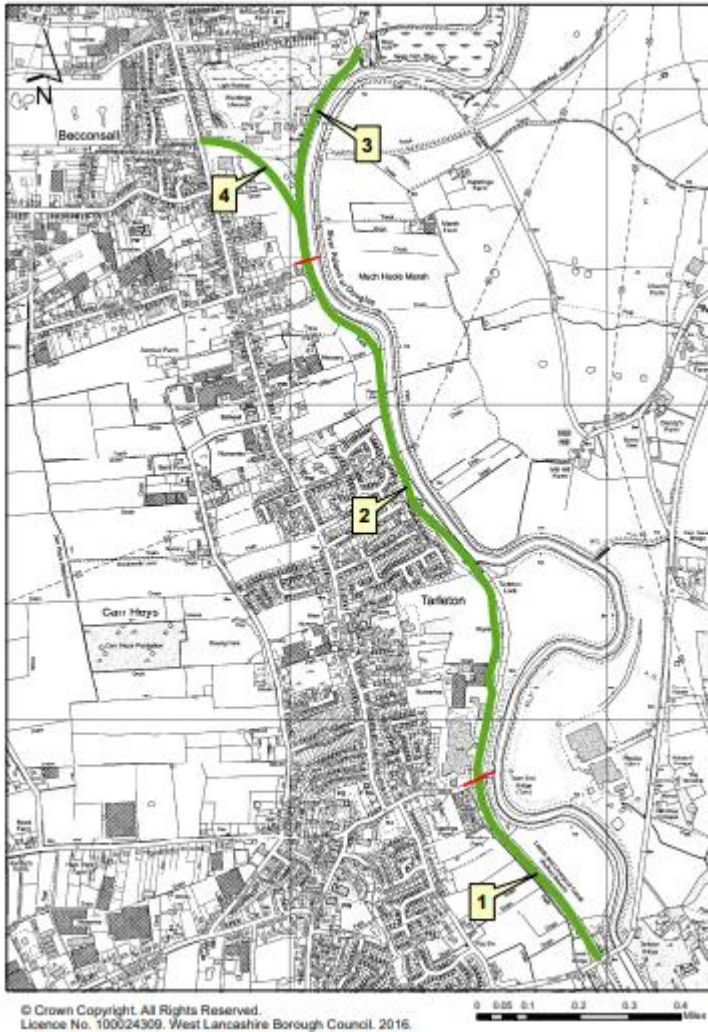
Officers are currently working on the next stage of developing the Ormskirk to Burscough route from Grove Farm to Abbey Lane (half of section 3 in map below) and with County Council to complete the link to Lordsgate Drive (remainder of section 3).



- 4.3 The first phase of the Tarleton to Hesketh Bank linear park route has been delivered by Hesketh with Beconsall Parish Council. Stretches associated with this route are – Bank Bridge to Plox Brow, Plox Brow to Fulwood Avenue, Fulwood Avenue to Beconsall Lane and Alty's Brickworks Site. The plan below indicates the route.

The work to extend the linear park pathway has some limitations which may impact on its delivery such as the need to cross the River Douglas. Officers are working with partner agencies and the Parish Council to explore solutions to these issues.

Indicative Route



5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 **ORMSKIRK – BURSCOUGH** Officers are contacting landowners to confirm the position in relation to permissions and access that had previously been agreed in principle. Correspondence indicates that landowners are willing to co-operate and is happy with the proposal. The council will need to enter into legal agreements with the landowners to protect the path in perpetuity and maintain access for the farmer.
- 5.2 **TARLETON – HESKETH BANK** Officers have arranged a meeting, to be held on 14th July 2023 with representatives attending from Lancashire County Council, West Lancashire Borough Council, Sustrans, Natural England, Chorley and South Ribble Councils, as all partners aspire to provide this active travel link. Officers will take the work forward as a priority and will work closely with Parish Councils and Members.
- 5.3 Officers have ambitions to ensure work associated with the Ormskirk to Burscough project will be completed by end of March 2024. Work to the Tarleton to Hesketh Bank project will become clearer following the 14 July meeting with partners. The role of partners is still to be clarified and as such officers are keen to explore opportunities to maximise their input.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This project links to the council's ambitions to improve access to active travel and open spaces. It also assists to fulfil the council's ambition to increase biodiversity and respond to the climate crisis.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Officers have made an application for CIL funding for £104,483.00 with outcome of decision expected September – November this year. This funding is in addition to the S106 money (£259k) that has already been allocated to the Ormskirk – Burscough project and £170k for Tarleton to Hesketh Bank.

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The risk associated with this work relates to CIL funding applications being unsuccessful. Should CIL funding be approved, the associated risks include potential to return CIL funding in the event of works not being completed.

9.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposal will promote health and wellbeing by providing an opportunity to increase active travel, which is proven to improve mental and physical health. The new linear park routes would allow safe alternatives of walking/cycling within the borough. It will increase the diversity of participants choosing active travel as hostile traffic routes currently act as a barrier to disadvantaged users. Environmental improvements such as tree planting could include fruit trees to address food insecurity as well as increasing biodiversity and would provide shade for users during hot weather.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

None