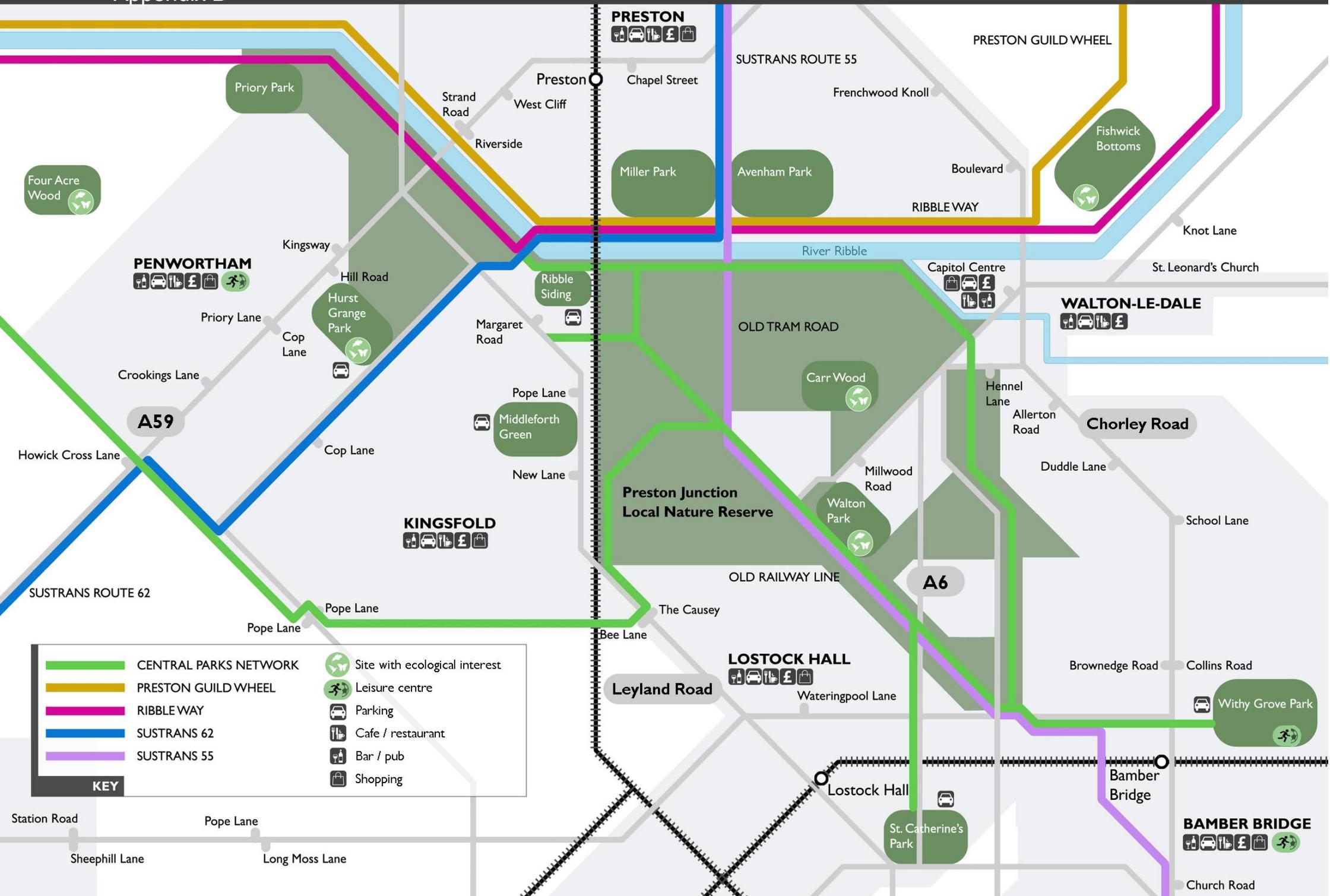


Our Green Links

LOCAL AREA

Appendix B



	CENTRAL PARKS NETWORK		Site with ecological interest
	PRESTON GUILD WHEEL		Leisure centre
	RIBBLEWAY		Parking
	SUSTRANS 62		Cafe / restaurant
	SUSTRANS 55		Bar / pub
KEY			Shopping

Our Green Links is vital to maintaining South Ribble's reputation as a great place to live. It aims to join our places together with green links while encouraging people to use sustainable forms of transport, walking, cycling and running. This will encourage a healthier active lifestyle while improving the environment of our borough.



To support its growth, South Ribble has a vision 'South Ribble is an continues to be recognised nationally as the best place in the UK'. In order to achieve this the Council is developing a plan to create a series of health, leisure and wellbeing campus across South Ribble.

The aim is to promote our health and wellbeing objectives by developing high quality community open spaces, connected across the borough which supports residents in adopting healthier and more active lifestyles. Green links will connect a network of community open spaces developed in partnership with local neighbourhoods across the borough offering opportunities for sustainable travel, leisure activities, sustainable living and a sense of connecting people to places.

These places will be linked together by green links connecting our parks, open spaces and central parks. To achieve this we will be working with partners and communities to deliver our vision.

The concept of delivering green links across the borough is part of our Health, Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy, which has evolved over several years. It has been influenced by City Deal and our need to balance local growth with a greener more pleasant place to live. City Deal supports these ambitions and can help to deliver them. Behind it all is the health

and wellbeing of existing and potential residents being a key driver.

Many assets that support the Health and Wellbeing agenda in the Borough are in the ownership of the Council. These range from leisure centres to Greenways and outstanding parks to sports pitches. Significant work has been done examining the current leisure provision and the future requirements of a growing Borough. Specific work has examined the leisure centre provision, future need and the state of existing facilities. Work has also been commissioned to look at access to sports and physical activity across the Borough. This report captures the key elements of that work.

Detailed data has been established for leisure centres. The Council, as part of its requirements under the Planning Policy Framework, are currently reviewing the Playing Pitch and Open Space Strategy. This will effectively carry out a strategic review of all the Council held land that will examine the merits of why the land is held, existing provision, opportunities to improve certain areas and other potential sites for development. Some high level assessment has been included in this report for balance.

Our open spaces and the green links are vital to improving, not only the ‘green’ of the borough, but the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Strategic Context

South Ribble was declared 'the best place to live in Britain.' It is an accolade worth preserving, but there are still challenges to be met beyond the criteria of house prices, green space and access to motorway networks.

Our Corporate plan says 'Our definition of the best place to live is a place where people can afford to live, that has access to high quality schools, colleges and employment opportunities for everyone and a place where people choose to live because it is safe and has lots of high-quality clean, green space for people to enjoy in their leisure time.

We also want South Ribble to be a place where businesses choose to invest because they have access to a highly skilled and motivated population seeking high quality employment opportunities.

The key outcomes that underpin our vision are set out below:

- Healthy life expectancy rate is above the national average
- Above national average for access to affordable homes

- High employment rate
- School attainment and adult skills are above the national averages
- People feel safe in South Ribble
- Resident satisfaction is above national average
- Desire to be a dementia friendly borough

The Green links are central to our Corporate Plan connecting open spaces to allow social use, as well as for 'local transport' helping to integrate and mobilise our local communities. Further synergies with our campus program are demonstrated by make better use of resources, improving the environment and increasing quality of life.

This means there is a strong connection to City Deal and local transport strategies. Our Green Links strategy reinforces the ambitions of City Deal by supporting local economy and attractiveness of house building in the region. But clearly the area of greatest synergy is with emerging health and preventive healthcare agendas. Our Green Links strategy is about more day-to-day exercise and activity for our residents, which supports national health and activity targets collectively promoted by the health sector and Sport England. Equally important is promoting sustainable transport choices for short journeys and greenways as a leisure activity or link to local amenities.

The Council is committed to working in partnership both at an operational and strategic level. A large number of partnership arrangements are already in place and examples of these are highlighted throughout this strategy. The Council will seek to develop and grow these partnership arrangements in order to improve outcomes for our residents, who are partners in their own right.

A different way of thinking about delivery

To meet the changing needs and ambitions of our residents and businesses, we will need to think differently about how we can achieve the outcomes that matter most to them. In considering each of the Council ambitions, we will need to thoroughly investigate our evidence base and needs assessment. We need to think deeply about what our residents and businesses tell us as we set priorities.

The most recent South Ribble Partnership Survey with residents identified that parks/open spaces, more facilities for young people and good leisure, recreation and other entertainment facilities within the Borough were important aspects to the people of South Ribble (amongst other).

Aims

- I. Link amenities with high quality, legible routes
- II. Promote the boroughs health and wellbeing agenda
- III. Provide access to leisure time and opportunities
- IV. Enhance community green space
- V. Offer 'access for all' / multiuse

It is important way to achieve these conditions is through the inclusion of sustainability in the planning, development and design process, not only in the construction of buildings, but the spaces and networks that link them together.

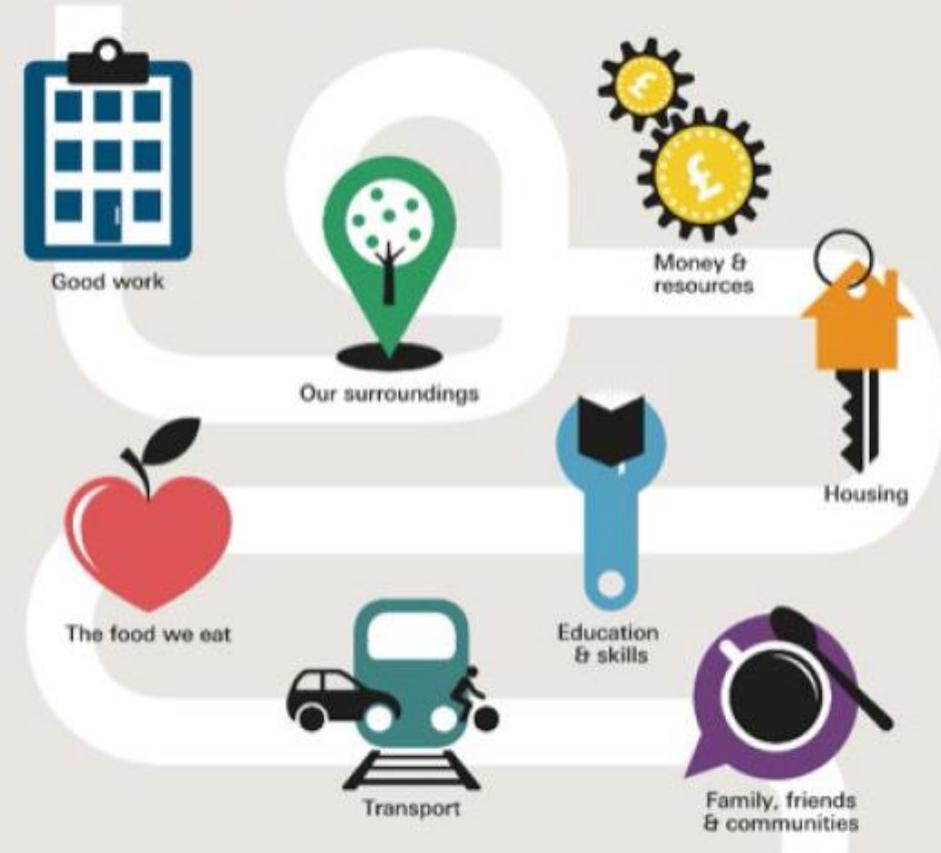


What makes us healthy?

AS LITTLE AS

10% of a population's health and wellbeing is linked to access to health care.

We need to look at the bigger picture:



Our Green Links strategy is about connecting **our surroundings** and is part of a **bigger plan** for South Ribble.

Green Link Hierarchy

Our ambition is to create the best green link network in the U.K. Allowing access to employment, education, leisure and healthier lifestyle. This is a long term ambition.

In order to manage and direct resources, set priorities and maintain progress we must create a flexible programme of works.

We must also do what we can when we can.

In order to create this flexibility we have created a hierarchy for our green link network. To the user, the green network is a single entity. However for management purposes we must use a hierarchy of green links according to their functions and capacities. For example busy routes need better links and higher quality pathways. We recognise not all links can be provided for using the highest quality materials, neither is it necessary to make provision in this way. Our resources must be used appropriately. The hierarchy helps us organise our entire network. It also allows progress to be made by initially providing basic links and then upgrading over time as usage increases.

An analysis of existing conditions and routes has grouped green links into one of five categories:

- 1) DESIRE LINE
- 2) UNMAINTAINED TRACKS
- 3) SURFACED/MAINTAINED PATHS
- 4) HARD SURFACED PATHS
- 5) COMPREHENSIVE PATHS

Categories 3 to 5 will form the backbone of the South Ribble Green Links Network. Categories 1 and 2 are too informal and or low quality to be part of the South Ribble network, but may be improved and brought up to a higher standard as part of the work programme.

The Green links will also provide leisure amenity, heritage and conservation amenity to improve the overall quality of life within our borough.

LINK CATEGORY	Description	Example	Part of Green Link Network ?
1	<p>DESIRE LINE</p> <p>Unmarked, unsurfaced, informal route, no signage, no furniture, no controlled access points.</p>		<p>No. Not part of the promoted green link network.</p>
2	<p>UNMAINTAINED TRACKS</p> <p>Rights of way along damaged paths, unsurfaced, frequently flooded or difficult conditions, impassable to some users.</p> <p>Some damaged or intact signage, controlled access points.</p>		<p>Not part of the promoted green link network. Categories 2 will either be eliminated from the network or may brought up to a minimum category 3 standard.</p>
3	<p>SURFACED PATHS</p> <p>Surfaced/maintained paths, cycle routes and bridleways.</p> <p>Some signage and controlled access points.</p> <p>Meets our 'Access for All' standard.</p>		<p>Yes - This category of paths will initially form the majority of the green link network.</p>

4	HARD SURFACED PATHS	<p>Porous and/or non-porous surfaces, consistent widths with edgings, signage, controlled access points.</p> <p>Surpasses 'Access for all' standard</p>		<p>Yes. This standard will form the majority of urban and rural routes.</p>
5*	COMPREHENSIVE PATHS	<p>Multi-use, undamaged, porous and/or non-porous surfaces, possible demarcated lanes in busy locations, 2-3 metres width, signage and controlled access points.</p>		<p>Yes. This is the highest quality path. Generally reserved for urban areas with high 'traffic' volumes.</p>

Elements of the Green Link Network

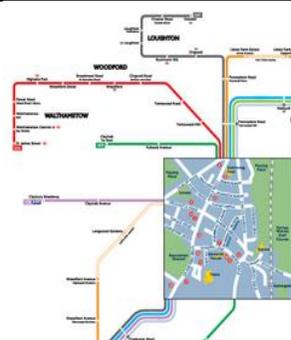
Clearly an essential element of the green link network is the surface type. High quality surfacing is expensive, but has benefits for high usage areas, safety and longer term maintenance. A balanced approach is required. In order to evaluate initial feasibility of the network and costs, options for different surface types were considered. Referring to both national best practice and local knowledge, the following combination of surfaces will be used in appropriate built locations across the network:

LINK/PATH CATEGORIES	SURFACE	DESCRIPTION	SURFACE PHOTO	COST / sq. m (£)
4, 5	Flexipave	50% recycled car tyres, 50% stone aggregate in a polymer binding		70 - 75
4, 5	Bitmac	Stone aggregate in a bituminous binding		35 - 40
3, 4, 5	Bound aggregate	Gravel aggregate in a resin binding – Crossing points		60 - 90
3, 4	Compacted stone	Variable hardcore with fines surface dressing		40 - 45

Design note - Colours should be lighter tones where possible to alleviate dementia symptoms, surfaces smooth except where textured surfaces aid blind and partially sighted users.

Signage is an essential element to maintaining a coherent network, especially in urban areas. This must be coupled with consistent signing linked to existing networks, such as the Guild Wheel or Sustrans National Cycle Route. Route identity will be badged, colour coded or form part of a branded route eg Ribble Rivers Trust's Rivers and Bridges Walk. Signage will encourage the use and awareness of local amenities including shopping areas, major employment sites, educational establishment and health facilities.

<p>Traffic signs</p>			
<p>Information</p>			
<p>Directions</p>			
	<p>National network fingerposts</p>	<p>High quality Local amenity signage</p>	<p>Waymarkers - reinforcing high quality legible brand</p>
<p>Surface markings</p>			
	<p>Contrasting crossing points</p>	<p>Usage</p>	<p>Safety</p>

<p>Urban waymarkers</p>			
	<p>Colour coded infrastructure</p>	<p>Mapping</p>	<p>Easy to use (dementia friendly)</p>

Access for All

Our green links strategy will adopt an 'Access for all' approach wherever possible. We have learnt lessons from the 'Loop demonstrator' route that was recently implemented. We will build from there.

This will remove existing access restrictions which can discriminate against other users (eg. mobility impaired users or families using prams.)

- No path should be less than 1.5 metres wide, with a desirable width being 3 metres to allow passing without leaving the path.
- Newly created slopes should not exceed 8%. Level resting points should be provided where this is unavoidable.
- Where routes are promoted, alternative level routes should be proposed where existing slopes are greater than 8% gradient.
- Anti-motorcycle/horse furniture at access points should be avoided unless there is a proven record of ongoing anti-social behaviour. This also acts against wheelchairs, prams and other mobility impaired users. Where furniture is necessary it must be DDA compliant and avoid blocking access to any user.
- Design of information should be high quality, distinctive and inclusive, supported where possible by digital content to ensure accessibility to as many users as possible.



Access for All - MULTI-USE

Each category of path must be designed to be accessible to **ALL** users wherever possible.

- No one design can accommodate everybody.
- No one user group has priority. All uses are equal.
- Compromise is required between pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers etc.
- Our motto is 'Share with Care' so that as many people as possible can enjoy the Green Link Network.

USER	ACCESS POINTS	SURFACE CHOICE	SIGNAGE	CONSIDERATIONS
PEDESTRIANS	Legible access	All surfaces	information, interpretation and directional signage	steps and slopes acceptable
				
MOBILITY IMPAIRED	Legible access, no physical barriers, (RADAR Scheme) no width restrictions, large turning circles for scooter manoeuvres	Smooth surfaces, light coloured (dementia)	Clear text, (size and colour contrast), talking info signs	8% max slopes, handrails, level rest areas on longer slopes
				
CYCLISTS	Legible access, no barriers	Bound surfacing	Cycle routes, surface demarcation on highway.	Avoid steps, cycle repair points, cycle hubs

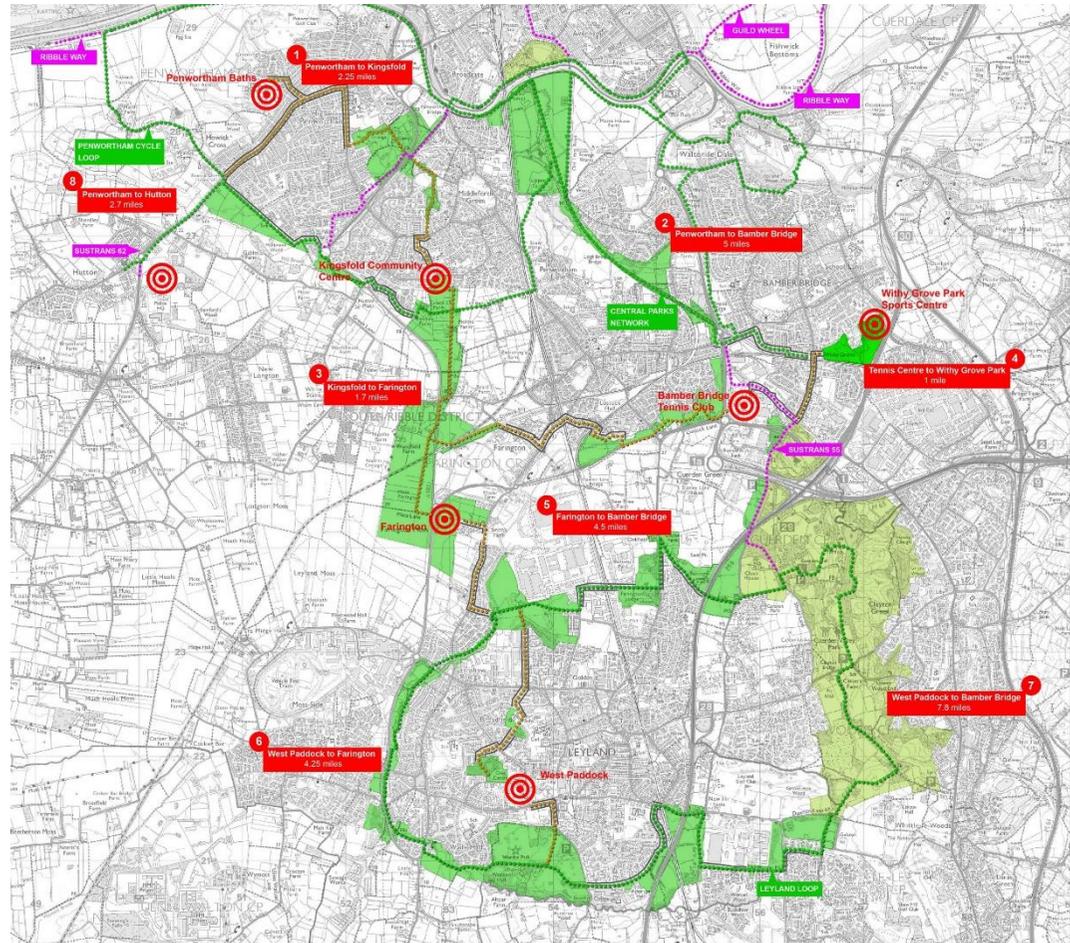
				
<p>HORSE RIDERS</p>	<p>Legible access, gates easy to open without dismounting, pegasus crossings where feasible</p>	<p>Impact absorbing surface</p>	<p>Bridleways, directional signage</p>	<p>No steep gradients or steps</p>
				

Creating the Green Link Network

Our ambition is to create a radically different network within 10 years that will be recognised as the best in the U.K.

This is not a council network. It is the boroughs network. The hierarchy framework provides a basis for the creation of the Green Link Network. We realise South Ribble has many external links that will need to be fully incorporated.

To create a borough network engineers have mapped current provision. Many parts of a network already exist in South Ribble.



Initial Priorities

We have created an initial 3 year work programme for the areas identified that have a long standing need for improvement, but we wish to work with our local communities and partners to develop the network in the long term 10 year plan.

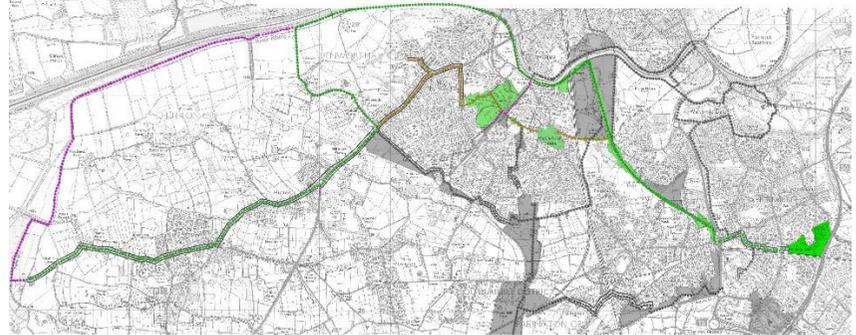
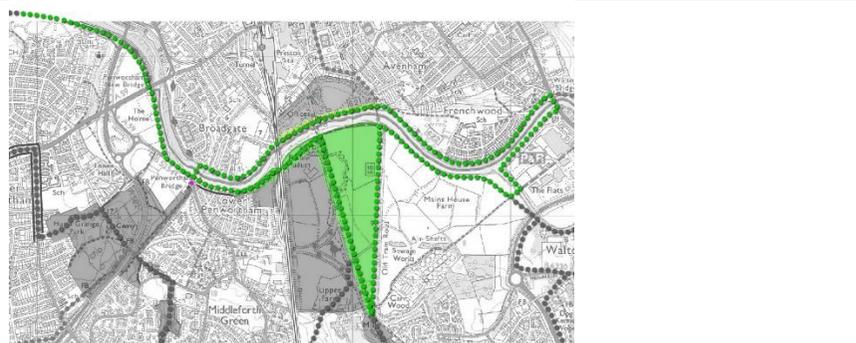
Our engineers have identified key routes that need completing. Some of these links have been known about for years, but as South Ribble develops, we must also link our new communities and employment areas. The emerging network is under constant review. One of the first pieces of work will be to complete a route demonstrating all the components of the Green Links Strategy.

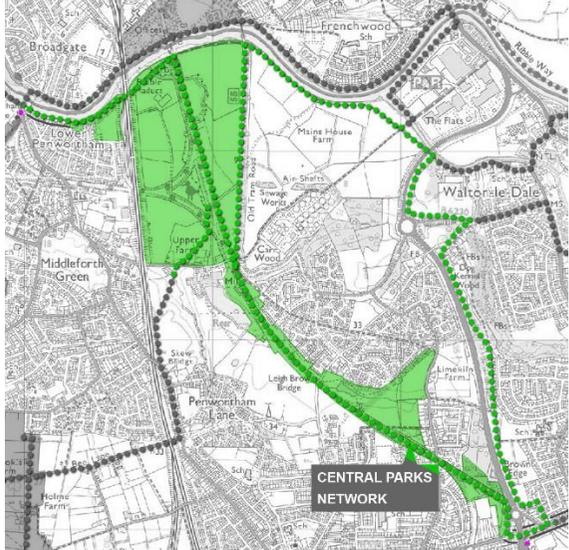
Initial Priorities

- Reinforce Central Parks
- Links to the River Ribble and its frontage
- Connecting our towns and major amenities
- Routes to employment

On a route by route basis these areas affected overlap, but the priorities translate to the following links:

Initial Work Programme (Y1)

YEAR	ROUTE	MAP SEGMENT
1	Penwortham to Bamber Bridge, including Longton and Middleforth	
1	Bamber Bridge Leisure centre Via Withy Grove Park to Tennis Centre using Meanygate	
1	Ribble links and connections to Central Parks	

1	Central Parks	
1	Community Groups	Friends of, conservation and sports groups
1	Consultation and forward plan	User groups, clubs, schools, project partners

YEAR 2 CORRIDOR BREAKDOWNS

- 1 Farington to Bamber Bridge**
- 2 Farington to West Paddock**
- 3 West Paddock to Bamber Bridge**
- 4 Leyland Loop to West Paddock**
- 5 Shruggs wood**
 - Woodland management works
 - New Redwood Avenue link
 - Landscaping improvements

YEAR 3 CORRIDOR BREAKDOWNS

- 1 Penwortham to Farington**
 - path improvements
 - signage and surface markings
 - A582 furniture