

MOTION: Martholme Greenway

To Ribble Valley Borough Council | 28 September 2023

Proposer Councillor Peplow, Seconder Councillor McCrum

BACKGROUND

The Martholme Greenway runs along the track-bed of a former railway line to the south of the villages of Read and Simonstone and has the potential to connect to the existing Padiham Greenway that continues to Burnley to the East and to cross the Martholme Viaduct and continue all the way to Great Harwood to the Southwest.

Ribble Valley residents view access to nature as one of the most important issues of making somewhere a good place to live and the level of traffic as one of the issues that most needs improving (source - Ribble Valley Citizens' Panel and 2018 Perception Survey).

A future active travel route along the Martholme Greenway would meet four out five of this Council's Ambitions set out in its Corporate Strategy 2019-23. How many other projects reach this many Ambitions on our Strategy?

1 – efficient services based on identified customers needs. How much more efficient can we be than to enable the future possibility of an active travel route that would encourage people to leave their cars at home, reduce traffic on our roads and create a wildlife corridor that is safe for everyone to access without the Council having to spend a penny of our Council Taxpayers' money? All this Council needs to do is to keep the possibility of this Greenway open for future generations to enjoy.

2 – to sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley. An active travel route that passes over the iconic landmark of Martholme Viaduct and through our beautiful countryside will bring more people into our Borough and increase its prosperity.

3 – to help make people’s lives safer and healthier. Ribble Valley Residents will be able to travel safely at extremely low cost to Padiham or Burnley to the East or Great Harwood to the West while exercising and maintaining good health.

4 – to protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area. Martholme Greenway would enable residents to travel carbon-free and emission-free, giving us cleaner air and adding to our other efforts to reduce climate change. Former railway lines provide excellent wildlife corridors and help nature to thrive.

RESOLVED:

- (a) this Council recognises and applauds the work of the Martholme Greenway group and its volunteers for the work they undertake in maintaining and improving the footpath on both sides of the Martholme Viaduct and over the Viaduct itself.

- (b) to support route of the Martholme Greenway and the aspiration for the former railway line to be reopened as an active travel corridor to connect Great Harwood and Padiham.

- (c) to publicise on Ribble Valley Borough Council’s website, Lancashire County Council’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans Engagement Stage 2 consultation which is open to public comments until 24 October 2023.

(d) that the Chief Executive writes to Lancashire County Council before the LCWIP consultation process closes on 24 October 2023 to confirm Ribble Valley Borough Council's support for the re-opening of the Martholme Viaduct and completion of the Martholme Greenway (subject to the availability of future external funding and the reasonable accommodation of affected land owners' concerns) to connect with Sustrans Route 685 (part of the National Cycling Network known as The Padiham Greenway) to the East and Great Harwood to the Southwest.