

REPORT TO: Cabinet Member Leisure and Tourism

DATE: 23rd February 2011

SUBJECT: Ainsdale Link Path, Project 3.1 of the Sefton Coast
Landscape Partnership Scheme

**WARDS
AFFECTED:** Ainsdale

REPORT OF: Graham Bayliss, Leisure and Tourism Director

**CONTACT
OFFICER:** Will Moody 0151 934 2968

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To update Members and to seek approval to progress the project.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

To allow officers to progress the scheme.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- i) That subject to Planning permission being received, officers progress the project for completion.

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: No

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Following the expiry of the call in period for the minutes of this meeting

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

There are no alternative options.

IMPLICATIONS:**Budget/Policy Framework:****Financial:**

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £	2013/ 2014 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by: Heritage Lottery Fund				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N				
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: Not applicable

Risk Assessment: Not applicable

Asset Management: Not applicable

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

Consultation has taken place with members of and groups within the local community and various organisations. The project is being submitted to Southport Area Committee on 16th February for its views which will be reported to the Cabinet Member.

FD 661 - The Finance and Information Services Director has been consulted and has no comments on this report.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	x		
2	Creating Safe Communities	x		
3	Jobs and Prosperity		x	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	x		
5	Environmental Sustainability	x		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	x		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		x	
8	Children and Young People	x		

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Cabinet 20th May 2010 – Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme

Cabinet Member for Leisure 21st April 2010 – Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme

Southport Area Committee 28th July 2010 – Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme Project 1.1 Reconnecting Marshside with its Coastal Heritage

Southport Area Committee 16th February 2011 – Ainsdale Link Path

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A report to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism on 16th April 2010 detailed the overall Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme and its constituent programme of 19 individual projects; it requested approval to progress the scheme. A report to Cabinet on the 20th May 2010 accepted the recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism and approved the Heritage Lottery Funded Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme for inclusion in the capital/revenue budget.
- 1.2 The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme has £1,200,000 of Heritage Lottery Fund for projects improving access to the coast, improving understanding of the coast and strengthening the character of the landscape.
- 1.3 The Scheme was developed by the Sefton Coast Partnership which is made up of organisations who manage Sefton's natural coast. Sefton Council, one of the partners, facilitated and managed the funding application and are now legally responsible for the scheme's delivery.
- 1.4 The Landscape Partnership Scheme is aimed mainly at local communities within Sefton and existing users of the coast.
- 1.5 The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme, and the projects within it, were developed from a series of public workshops. These identified improved access as one of the priority areas for the coast.
- 1.6 The Cabinet report of 20th May identified Ainsdale Link Path as a key project within the Landscape Partnership Scheme and that Heritage Lottery Funding would be made available for it.
- 1.7 Plans of the proposed path were on public display at the Ainsdale Discovery Centre for one month in 2010. The project was explained and displayed at the 2008 and 2009 Sefton Coast Forums and featured in widely circulated newsletters. The path is described on the Landscape Partnership's Facebook group page. This has over one hundred members. A leaflet aimed at raising awareness of the proposal among current users of the existing path has recently been prepared.
- 1.8 As part of the Landscape Partnership Scheme it is also proposed to provide a small information centre and a new all abilities path around ponds within the National Nature Reserve. This area currently has no public access. The new path will lead to this area. The projects are highly complementary.
- 1.9 Natural England owns a section of the land the path passes over, are key partners in the project and are fully supportive. They have been involved in the proposal from the outset

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is to provide an improved path from the Harbury Avenue and Easedale Drive area of Ainsdale and from the Coastal Road cycle path to the Ainsdale NNR. The idea for the project originally came from discussions with the Ainsdale Civic Society and officers presented the final detail of the project

at a meeting of the Civic Society on the 26th January 2011. At the meeting the Society confirmed its full and continued support for the project.

- 2.2 The project will upgrade an existing unsurfaced, well trodden, waymarked route. It will pass under the Coastal Road.
- 2.3 North of the Coastal Road the path will be crushed sandstone with timber edgings. This type of surface has been used extensively along the coast and is economic, fits well with the landscape and is reasonably robust.
- 2.4 South of the Coastal Road it is proposed to lay a proprietary path system, such as Netpave. These consist of a plastic mesh which can be filled with existing sand and grass. These systems are largely untried on the coast, but should offer a more accessible surface than the current route, minimal visual impact and easy removal.
- 2.5 There are two key benefits of the path. First, access to the National Nature reserve will be improved for people with disabilities. Second, cyclists and others using the Coastal Road cycle path will have a safe alternative to crossing the Coast Road to reach the National Nature Reserve. This may be of particular benefit to people approaching from the Kendal Way/Pinfold Lane area whether they are cycling or walking.
- 2.6 The path is through an environmentally sensitive area. The site is a known sand lizard habitat. An Appropriate Assessment and an Environmental Impact Assessment are required. These will ensure that environmental issues are fully considered and, in the case of the appropriate assessment, determine the effects on the conservation objectives of the site.
- 2.7 Cyclists currently use the existing route, but the level of usage is not known. More cyclists are likely to use the new path particularly between the Coastal Road and the National Nature Reserve. In the main, the width of the path should be sufficient to accommodate this safely, however there is a pinch point where the route passes under the Coastal Road and consideration will be given to controlling speed or encouraging cyclists to walk at this point.
- 2.8 A high level of consultation took place over the proposed Birkdale to Ainsdale Cycle track. This route proved controversial. The issues that are relevant to this project are set out below:
 - i. Environmental issues – in terms of habitat, flora and fauna, the studies underway will determine if the path will have any effects
 - ii. Conflict between users – see paragraph 2.7
 - iii. Future maintenance issues – the path should need little maintenance. Natural England will maintain the section across their land. Sefton will continue to maintain North of the Coastal Road.
 - iv. Alternative routes available – we do not believe there is a suitable alternative route
 - v. Would not be used by people with disabilities – Sefton has a high number of people with disabilities that do not use the coast; it also has a high proportion of people over age 65. The research we considered and undertook as part of the application to the HLF suggests that improved paths should increase use by people with disabilities if it is

complemented by information and other initiatives. Such work is included in the Landscape Partnership Scheme.

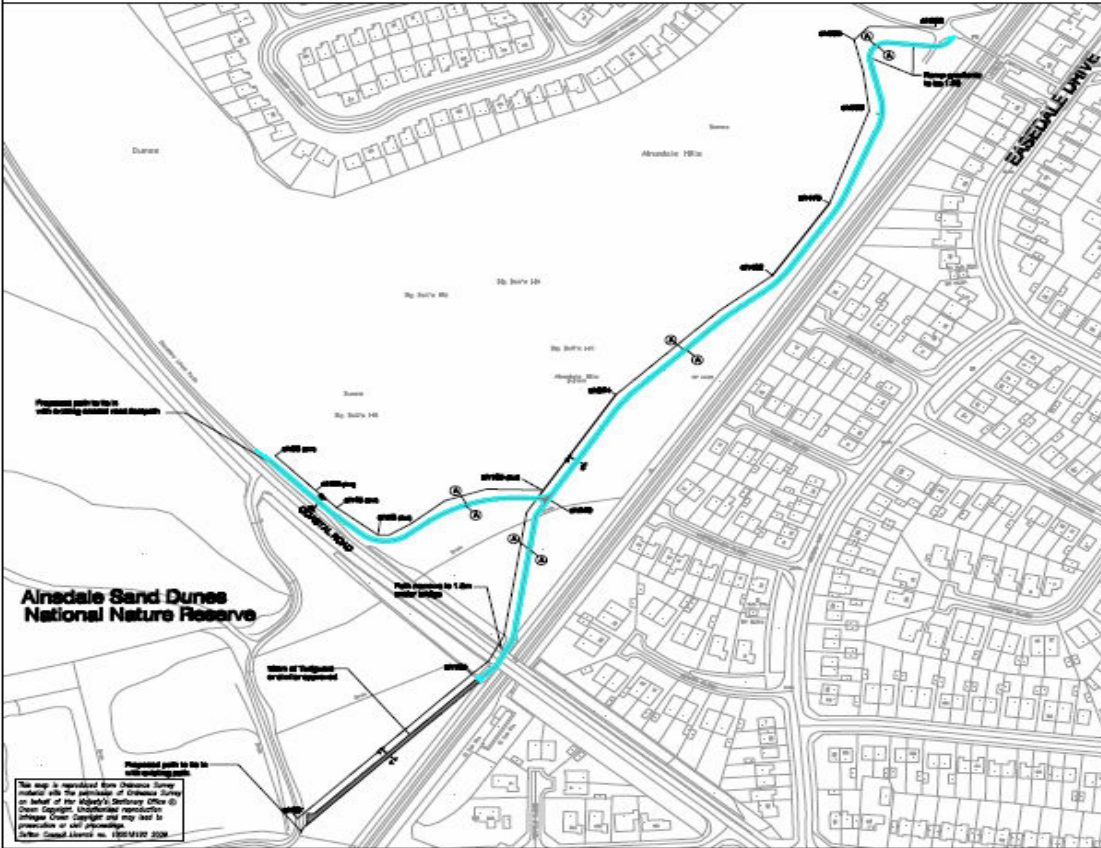
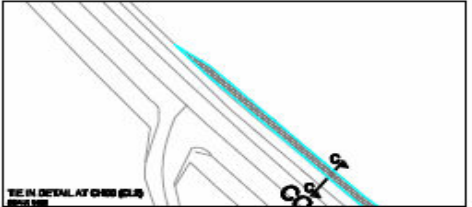
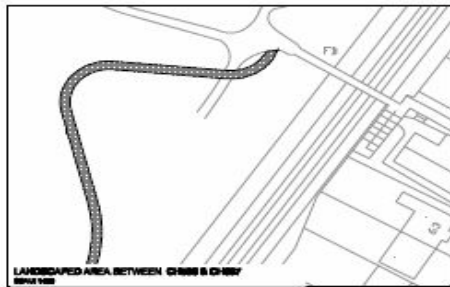
- vi. Inappropriate materials – we believe visually the materials are environmentally, visually and practicably as suitable as possible.

3.0 WAY FORWARD

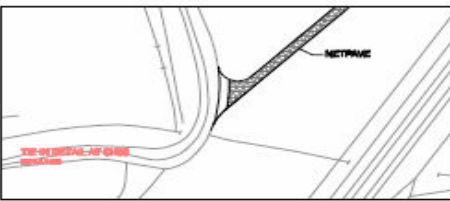
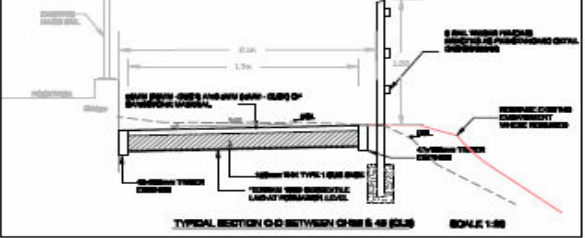
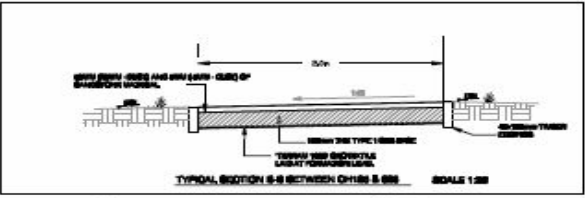
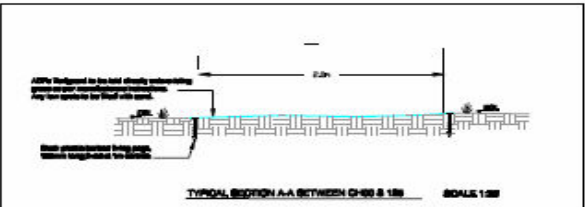
- 3.1 The environmental studies and associated consultations with statutory organisations and interest groups are noted.
- 3.2 The results and outcomes from the leaflets made available to existing users are considered. The views of Southport Area Committee are considered.
- 3.3 If neither of the above raises any significant issues, the planning application is endorsed.
- 3.4 If the planning application is approved the path is constructed.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- i) That subject to Planning permission being received, officers progress the project for completion.



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- Notes
- Proposed path alignment is indicative only and is to be agreed on site with capital symonds engineer prior to commencement of works.
 - All works to be completed to be depicted on site.

DRAFT

<p>Sefton Council CAPITA SYMONDS "Working in Partnership With Sefton Council"</p>			
<p>PROJECT NO: CS/045748-03</p>			
<p>AINSDALE LINK PATH</p>			
<p>CONSTRUCTION</p>			
<p>Rev: RFG</p>	<p>Rev: RFG</p>	<p>Rev: JW</p>	<p>Rev: NOV 10</p>
<p>Drawing No: CS/045748-03</p>			<p>Scale: 1:250</p>

