

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Report of:	Director of Environment & Community Services
Relevant Executive Member:	Executive Member for Environment
Submitted to:	Individual Executive Member Decision-Making: Executive Member for Environment
Date:	31 October 2024
Title:	Bracken Grange Footpath Connection
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Safe and resilient communities
Key decision:	No
Why:	Not applicable
Subject to call in?:	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report

Proposed decision(s)

The Executive approves the proposed scheme and progresses to implementation during the 2024/25 financial year.

Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to detail the results of the public consultation exercise carried out for the proposed scheme and to seek Executive Member approval for the scheme to proceed to the implementation stage. There are currently no direct pedestrian / cycle routes connecting the growing residential area of wider Brackenhoe housing estate with the adjacent amenities.

The existing pedestrian route is circuitous and involves negotiating the footpath adjacent to the James Cook Hospital, which has numerous reports of anti-social behaviour from students and parents walking to and from school. The alternative option is to do nothing. This is not recommended, as it will not provide a safe and direct route that allows residents of the Bracken Grange estate to access the employment, education, retail and leisure opportunities in the local area by more sustainable alternatives to the private car. The

implications of the recommendations have been considered by the appropriate officers of the Council and are set out in the main body of the report.

1. Purpose

1. Middlesbrough Council is proposing to connect Scholars Rise to Schofield Way, improving the existing pedestrian and cycle network serving the Marton East Ward with a new footpath/cycleway, allowing journeys between the two communities for retail, leisure and education to be made safely on foot and by cycle. The purpose of this report is to detail the results of the public consultation exercise carried out for the proposed scheme and to seek Executive approval for the scheme to proceed to the implementation stage.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Executive Member for Environment

- Notes objections to the proposed scheme and are considered with proposed mitigations.
- Approves the proposed scheme and progresses to implementation during the 2024/25 financial year.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 There are currently no direct pedestrian / cycle routes connecting the growing residential area of wider Brackenhoe housing estate with the adjacent amenities.

3.2 The existing pedestrian route is circuitous and involves negotiating the footpath adjacent to the James Cook Hospital, which has numerous reports of anti-social behaviour from students and parents walking to and from school.

3.3 The proposed footpath/cycleway will address both issues and, by doing so, allow the residents of Bracken Grange direct and safe access to local retail, leisure and educational facilities by more sustainable alternatives to the private car, in line with the policies set out in the adopted Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 As set out in the Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy; Middlesbrough Council is committed to increasing the number of local journeys made on foot and by cycle. Reducing the current dependence on the private car for such journeys will reduce congestion, improve air quality and contribute towards the social and economic regeneration of the Borough.

4.2 To achieve this objective, the Council is investing in new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure designed to provide safe and convenient routes between residential areas and local facilities such as shops and schools.

4.3 The proposed scheme is to connect the two developments via a footpath, creating a more cohesive area for pedestrians and cyclists. The Council aims to improve the

utilisation of the current footpaths already in situ while maintaining privacy and security for residents. By doing this the Council can create a safer and more efficient route of travel for all residents living in the area.

- 4.4 In addition to including physical deterrents to anti-social behaviour into the design, the Council proposes to work with developers in order to refurbish current infrastructure as well as increasing usable green space.
- 4.5 The proposed scheme comprises footpath / cycleway with adjacent knee rail, running beside the grass verge. The proposed alignment of the new footpath / cycleway is shown in **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 4.6 The proposed footpath / cycleway link will run across an area of Council-owned land, between the two developments and will be designed and maintained to full adoptable standard.
- 4.7 The proposed alignment has been carefully chosen in order to minimise the impact of the new link on nearby residential properties. The fence line currently in situ will remain, to protect residents' privacy and land; as well as the integration of knee rail at the Scholars Rise side of the footpath, mitigating any risks of anti-social behaviour.
- 4.8 As with all proposed highway improvement schemes, public consultation was carried out in order to seek the views of key stakeholders. The public consultation exercise was carried out over the four-week period between 12th January 2024 and 9th February 2024, and sought the views of the following parties:
 - a) Occupiers of residential properties on Scholars Rise and Schofield Way in the vicinity of the proposed scheme
 - b) Local Ward Councillors

A total of 36 responses were received, with one in favour of the proposed scheme and 35 against.

The main grounds for objection to the scheme are set out in the table below, together with the response from Council officers in each case:

Reason for Objection	Response from Council Officers
There are already routes available	The proposed route alignment is a direct and attractive one, both for pedestrians and cyclists. Creating the proposed route would result in a significant decrease in journey times for parents and students travelling from the growing Bracken Grange development to education and leisure facilities.
Potential for crime and antisocial behaviour.	The footpath/cycleway will be designed to minimise the potential for such activity. The fence that was initially noted for removal is now set to remain as well as a section of knee rail being introduced to inhibit unauthorised vehicles.

4.9 Following resident and councillor feedback, the council has made significant design changes in accordance with advice from the Cleveland Police, Designing Out Crime officer. Street column positioning, low level planting and coordination with the immediate residents are now offered as part of the scheme, further mitigating any anti-social/ crime concerns.

5. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

5.1 Do nothing. This is not recommended, as it will not provide a safe and direct pedestrian and cycle route that allows residents of the Bracken Grange estate to access the employment, education, retail and leisure opportunities in the local area by more sustainable alternatives to the private car.

6. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

6.1 Financial (including procurement and Social Value)

The proposed scheme has been designed and fully costed by the Council's Civil Engineering team, which has extensive experience of designing and delivering similar schemes. Based on the preliminary design work carried out to date, the cost of the scheme has been estimated at £11,000, inclusive of fees, prelims and contingencies.

All costs associated with the scheme will be met from the Council's approved 2024/25 Local Transport Capital Programme.

6.2 Legal

The new footpath / cycleway link will be built on Council-owned land. The area of land required for the new link will be dedicated for highway purposes to which there is no right of objection.

Any legal issues associated with the delivery of the scheme will be managed through the Council's established procedures.

6.3 Risk

This is a 'business as usual' scheme which, if approved, will be delivered in line with the Council's established risk management protocols. Appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure that all risks associated with the scheme are minimised.

6.4 Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion

It is not anticipated that any protected groups will be impacted upon negatively as a result of implementing the proposed scheme. No concerns were raised during the consultation process either that the proposal could impact differently on individuals or groups because they held one or more protected characteristics.

6.5 Climate Change / Environmental

This scheme would contribute to Middlesbrough's long term goals of:

- To ensure Middlesbrough as a town is net carbon neutral by 2039
- To make Middlesbrough a lead authority on environmental issues

6.6 Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers

Not applicable

6.7 Data Protection

Not applicable

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Council officers will commence the implementation of the proposed scheme upon approval.	Jack Lowery	01/10/24

Appendices

1	Detailed Scheme Plan
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
N/A	N/A	N/A

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