

## **@Cycle Kirklees: Dewsbury – Batley – Chidswell Walking & Cycling Consultation**

### **Submission to Your Voice WYCA by Kirklees Cycling Campaign (@CycleKirklees)20211102**

#### **Dewsbury – Batley – Chidswell: Sustainable Travel Corridor**

##### **introduction**

1. Kirklees Cycling Campaign is supportive of changes to streets that promote active travel and help to improve road safety. We would however like to comment on some of the proposals at this early stage in the design concept of this corridor.

##### **Overview**

2. The A652, Bradford Road, has good potential to be an attractive route for cycling between the towns of Dewsbury and Birstall due to the low gradient along the whole corridor.
3. Batley Rail Station and Batley town centre are both priority trip generators and should therefore have good access for people walking and cycling.
4. Grange Road has been previously indicated by Kirklees Cycling Campaign as an 'easy win' to develop a safe route between Batley and Ossett and could provide an important link from the new developments at Chidswell to Batley and the rail station
5. Soothill Lane includes a 1km hill with gradients over 14% which may be avoided by people on bicycles due to the effort of riding this terrain.
6. We are sympathetic with the difficulties of retrofitting high quality walking and cycling infrastructure on a busy and, at times, narrow local network.
7. We support plans to remove as much parking as possible from these busy routes to allow space for cycle infrastructure, decrease street 'clutter,' and improve the walking environment.
8. In the absence of detailed plans, our comments are based on the LTN 1/20 core design principles of *Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable, and Attractive*.

##### **Zone 1**

9. KCC is fully supportive of the addition of a new 2-way cycle track on Branch Road to link the town centre of Batley, with the main routes on Bradford Road.
10. Where changes are made to the crossings at the Branch Road/Bradford Road junction we would like to see a direct cycle crossing that runs diagonally from Branch Road to the start of the Batley to Birstall greenway route. With the current junction layout this is currently difficult to gain access to and from.
11. The Batley to Birstall greenway (Wilton Greenway) is impeded by 3 barriers. These barriers make this safe and pleasant alternative to Bradford Road impassable to many bicycle users including those transporting children in trailers, with cargo or non-standard bikes, and those without the agility to lift and manoeuvre a bicycle within a confined space. KCC is seeking the removal of these barriers to allow more bicycle usage at the northern end of this scheme.

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12. Commercial Street is the main shopping area in Batley but currently suffers from through traffic and anti-social parking on pedestrian areas. Closing Commercial Street to motor vehicles between Market Place and Wards Hill, with an exception for buses, would allow more space to be converted to footways and help to alleviate the parking issues which would make the area more attractive for shoppers.
13. New secure cycle parking on Commercial Street would be beneficial for longer stops in the town, for example those who work in the shops, but there is still space for easy access bicycle parking, such as Sheffield Stands, at more frequent intervals for shorter stays.
14. There are 8 carparks within 1 minute walk of Commercial Street and many of these remain underutilised whilst vehicle movements and parking cause issues for those wishing to shop in Batley. Loading on Commercial Street could be restricted to certain areas outside of peak times. Enforcement would still be required.
15. To enable easier egress of bicycles from Batley town centre we support the alternative route proposed because it would be preferable to the busy and narrow Hick Lane. However, it would require the junction of Well Lane and Bradford Road to be upgraded.
16. Well Lane causes issues when viewing this route from a cycling network perspective for through-traffic. A person riding a bicycle north through this zone towards Birstall would be removed from the *direct* route and up an *uncomfortable* 10% gradient into the town centre.

### Zone 2

17. As with zone 1, zone 2 shows the cycle route leaving the most *direct* route and detouring along Station Road, Rouse Mill Lane, and Alexandra Road. Whereas this option has the benefit of linking with Grange Road, the proposed new greenway, and Batley rail station, it adds additional elevation changes that would otherwise not be necessary. This would be particularly frustrating to people on bicycles heading north who would have to make multiple right turns across busy traffic, adding to both the time and effort of the journey.
18. The pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Soothill Lane is some way off the desire line for those walking to Batley Rail Station as most cross at the junction of Rouse Mill Lane and use Station Road. Crossing at this location is directly related to the speed of vehicles turning onto Soothill Lane. We would recommend improvements to the pedestrian facilities here.
19. The junction of Soothill Lane is also difficult for people on bicycles given the high risk of left hooks at an uphill section of road (where impatient drivers rush past onto Soothill Lane). With bicycles being on a shared path and re-joining the main carriageway at this junction, this would be a worsening of facilities unless cyclists are given priority. This could be a good location for a parallel crossing.
20. The bicycle route from Batley to the rail station is considerably circuitous when compared with Station Road and would require a bicycle to be ridden up a steeper incline. Because of this we would prefer to see a cycle route developed along Station Road to the rail station.
21. Station Road is often used by drivers trying to avoid queues on both the lower slopes of Soothill and on Rouse Mill Lane heading towards the junction of Bradford Road. Adding a

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modal filter near the junction of Soothill Lane or making this road one-way towards Batley rail station would allow for a smoother flow of vehicular traffic down Soothill Lane.

22. We approve of the proposed parking restrictions on Rouse Mill Lane. However, we have concerns about those who park in this area leaving vehicles further on Rouse Mill Lane towards Back Station Road. A widened shared use path may inadvertently lead to increased pavement parking here.

### Zone 3

23. A new, primarily, off-road cycle route from Saville Street to Mill Lane could be an attractive route to cyclists who wish to avoid the traffic on Bradford Road. On the other hand, the lack of natural surveillance would be a deterrent to many, particularly women, even with the addition of CCTV and lighting.
24. However, at times where the off-road route would get higher use, such as weekend leisure trips, it would be a positive addition to the cycle network. We would advise against constructing this *instead* of improvements to Bradford Road due to the lack of trip generators along its route.
25. The proposed greenway could be linked directly with JD Gyms and Starbucks using the car-park bridge link for JD Gyms.
26. We would encourage that the Saville Street greenway be constructed as first phase, prior to changes on Bradford Road, to allow pedestrians and cyclists an alternative to negotiating the disruption of the Bradford Road reconstruction.
27. In locations where pedestrian islands are to be removed to allow for cycle tracks to be installed, we think there should be an alternative, controlled or priority, crossing created so as not to create a worse environment for people walking.
28. There are many residential side streets off Bradford Road such as Howard Street, Rink Street, Mount Street, and Grafton Street where we feel that access restrictions would be desirable (for example, making these one-way in alternative directions or adding modal filters) and would allow for safer junction crossings and continuous footways. There are examples of similar interventions at Thornville Street/Walk/Mount, Scout Hill (and between Argie Road and Haddon Road off Kirkstall Road, Leeds).
29. Once parking is removed from Commercial Road, Dewsbury and a one-way restriction put in place, we would be hesitant about the benefits of mandatory cycle lanes, particularly in a downhill direction. However, limited separation for uphill cyclists would be beneficial if Commercial Road is to be used more by people on bicycles. The use of planters to provide protection to those riding uphill may also help to keep motor vehicle speeds low.
30. Commercial Road is also very steep towards the top and although it may be a route some people choose to take to arrive at their destination, we would not recommend this as part of a (limited) cycle network.
31. Just as with the proposals on the A638 Halifax Road Sustainable corridor, all cycle provision ends before arriving at Dewsbury Ring Road. Unfortunately, the Dewsbury Walking and

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Cycling Improvements also fail to link the schemes together. Cycle provision should be included at least past Lidl, which is still a generator of cycle journeys, and preferably into Dewsbury Town Centre to link the network together.

### Zone 4

32. Along with a new pedestrian bridge on the southern side of the Soothill Lane, an access ramp could be constructed leading directly onto the southbound platform of the railway station. A ramp direct from Grange Road would also be beneficial.
33. We approve of the intention to add traffic calming measure on to Soothill Lane. This section of road's design makes possible excessive speed – which is a frequent occurrence. We would recommend big changes to the street environment including vertical and horizontal deflection, narrowing the carriageway, and more greening or trees.
34. Although Soothill Lane is not an ideal route for riding a bicycle due to the gradient there is the opportunity to create 'quiet routes' traversing the hill to link between Leeds Road and Upper Batley. These quiet routes should also join up with the proposed new development between Soothill Lane and Mill Forest Way.
35. The route would take in the bridleway of Sykes Lane, Fort Ann Road and cross Soothill Lane at Bridle Street/Grace Leather Lane and Oaks Road (or France Street)/Lady Ann Road (or Broomsdale Road) before using the pedestrian crossing of the railway at Howley Street.

### Zone 5

36. The new crossing on Grange Road near to Batley Business Park would be a welcome addition as a link between the two PROWs on opposite sides of the road.
37. The shared path crosses Grange Road twice. It does so to avoid relocating the car parking outside residential properties and because of trees. This is not ideal. If there is no alternative, then those crossings must be of high quality and prioritise human powered travel, whilst considering the natural path of a bicycle at cruising speed.
38. We recognise the value of upgrading the existing Grange Road byway from Challenge Way and it will be a useful link. It is one of our suggested routes providing a link to Ossett and the new Chidswell development.
39. Where Grange Road meets Leeds Road there is no need for a segregated cycle lane in either direction as it is a very small street with limited vehicle use.
40. With new housing proposed at the top of Challenge Way there is a need to link this development with Batley and the rail station. We suggest there is a need for a new route downhill from Challenge Way to bring cyclists from Shaw Cross and Owls Way.

### General Comments: shared use paths

41. *Shared use paths* are used extensively in these consultation documents. KCC contends that shared use paths should only be used where cycle speeds are expected to be very low. For example, where cycle access through a wide, yet busy shopping street closed to motor vehicles, or in more rural situations like on Challenge Way. Where pedestrian traffic is likely

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to be high, even for short periods, for example as occurs outside a railway station after a train has arrived, then shared used paths should be avoided as much as possible, due to the conflicts that this would cause.

42. Sections of paths with steeper gradients can be particularly dangerous for shared use due to the potential speeds of a bicycle.
43. Where street width means that a shared path is required because there is no possibility of separated cycle tracks, it may be appropriate to increase the width of the shared path as much as possible. In this situation the use of a flush channel kerb to delimitate cycle and pedestrian areas is desirable. This would keep faster moving bicycles away from the access points to property. It limits the possibility of a collision from a person leaving a building or garden but still allow for people walking or on bicycles to negotiate around others travelling in opposite directions or at different speeds.

### **General Comments: Low Traffic Neighbourhoods**

44. A *Low Traffic Neighbourhood* should be implemented within the residential areas adjoining Bradford Road and Soothill Lane - particularly in those streets used to avoid queuing traffic, such as Grace Leather Lane and Broomdale Road. Securing public support requires clearly presenting the benefits and responding to residents' suggestions and ideas.