

## **Proof of Evidence: the Network Rail (Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) Improvements) Order**

Chas Ball will appear for Kirklees Cycling Campaign. He is also a member of the Huddersfield Civic Society executive and a volunteer director of Environment Kirklees Ltd, which delivers cycling and walking projects.

### 1. Summary

I am here on behalf of Kirklees Cycling Campaign, an organisation that promotes improvements to the cycling infrastructure and encourages everyday cycling.

My evidence today will concentrate on the main points of concern for the Cycle Campaign in relation to The Network Rail (Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) Improvements) Order, which I will refer to from now as the Order.

I will show why limiting access to the station to one side of the tracks – the west side adjacent to eastbound tracks - reduces its connectivity and the value for money for passengers.

Our argument is that, if the Inspector were to allow the Order to proceed as presented by Network Rail, some important connectivity benefits that this investment is intended to bring to residents and businesses in West Yorkshire, will not be delivered.

The principal limitation is the absence of plans to allow customers access to from the west side of the station, thereby concentrating all access to the station from St George's Square.

Huddersfield is the fourth busiest station in Yorkshire after Leeds, York and Sheffield. We are making this case for all those people who would opt to cycle or walk to Huddersfield station if access was improved.

I will seek to show that this is in contradiction to the Secretary of State for Transport's recent publication "*Gear Change – a bold vision for cycling and walking*" (Department for Transport, 2020) to improve integration between active travel (walking and cycling) and rail, bus and ferry (public transport).

*Gear Change* said: "We will make sure the railways work better with cyclists. Cycling can make public transport journeys door-to-door, matching the convenience of the car." I will return to this important publication by the Secretary of State later.

(*Gear Change*, DfT, 2020; page 25)

## 2. Introduction

The Cycle Campaign supports the plans for electrification and upgrading of the Trans Pennine route (TRU) to improve our east west links.

We asked to appear at this public enquiry to express our concern at the limitations in the provision made in these plans for walking and cycling, despite recent guidance from the Secretary of State for Transport about the importance of improving access at stations for cyclists and pedestrians.

The case for improving accessibility is a strong one. We want to see train operators prepared to cater for an anticipated increased demand for rail travel. As we transform into a low carbon economy, we contend it is essential that we future-proof this station by making improvements fit for the 2030s.

## 3. The Case for Including Station Access from the West

Our case is that the lack of effective access to the station for rail passengers from the west side of Huddersfield Station reduces opportunities to facilitate multi-modal travel and connectivity.

We have been advised by Network Rail that this aspect of the upgrade of the station cannot be included at this time. Indeed it appears its inclusion will be dependent on third parties securing finance and planning permission to improve this essential access at a later date. We find this in contradiction to the vision published by the Secretary of State.

We believe that as part of a multi-million pound upgrade, the plans for Huddersfield Station should include pedestrian and cycling access on the west side - to and from the area of land adjacent to the St George's Warehouse and linked to Fitzwilliam Street - allowing better connectivity for passengers.

## 4. Easily accessible cycle parking at Huddersfield Station

Whilst modern two-tier cycle parking facilities are currently provided on platform 1, beyond the ticket barriers, by the Train Operating Company, we suggest that the growth of cycling will be assisted if cyclists feel able to cycle directly to both sides of Huddersfield Station. On arrival from Fitzwilliam Street and St George's Square they should be able to find easy access to secure cycle parking. We want to see the provision of a relatively seamless interchange for all rail users; particularly those arriving by bike.

There are significant commitments to the approach we are advocating in *Gear Change* (DfT, 2020, P12) where the Department for Transport states:

“Better cycling and walking infrastructure has allowed more efficient use of road space, to the benefit of all road users; cycling and walking

routes are well connected with wider public transport services; cycling and walking measures are no longer seen as an afterthought but have moved to the very heart of considerations for all transport policy and planning, at all levels of leadership”.

This is a description we should see reflected in this Order.

### 5. Station Gateway

Kirklees Council has prepared *The Huddersfield Blueprint*, which is a ten-year vision to create a thriving, modern-day Town Centre. The plan focuses on six key areas, one of which is the Station Gateway.

The aspirations of Kirklees Council for the Station Gateway include plans for St George’s Warehouse and the provision of a new Station Square on the existing privately owned car park, accessed from Fitzwilliam Street. With enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities, there is a real opportunity to link this side of the station with the rest of the town.

### 6. Conclusion

What will future generations conclude if Network Rail proposals for Huddersfield station remain unchanged? Whilst the current proposals offer potential for *future* cross-station passage by pedestrians, we are asking on behalf of customers who will walk or cycle to the station for a station accessible from both sides of the track for pedestrians and cyclists.

I would conclude by quoting again from *Gear Change* (issued by The Secretary of State in 2020) on multi-modal transport.

“We will make sure the railways work better with cyclists: cycles and trains should be ideal partners, complementing each other and extending the range of both. Cycling can make public transport journeys door-to-door, matching the convenience of the car.” (*Gear Change p.25*)

“Cycle infrastructure must join together, or join other facilities together by taking a holistic, connected network approach, which recognises the importance of nodes, links and areas that are good for cycling.” (*Gear Change p.43*)

This, after all, will be a railway station with next to no car parking in the immediate vicinity of the platforms. This is a town that boasts the most iconic railway station in Britain at its heart. It deserves an upgrade that reflects its needs and its stature. At a time when we all need to review our carbon

footprint, we simply want to see changes to the Order so that it facilitates the seamless journey experience for pedestrians and cyclists.

References Attached

(1) Dept. for Transport's Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling (2020)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf)

(2) Kirklees Council's 'The Huddersfield Blueprint' (2020)

[See Document NR15A: Huddersfield Station, Design and Access Statement and to NR13: Planning Drawing, Huddersfield Station – Existing and Proposed Platforms – Plan and Section.]