

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

A629 Wakefield Road Cycling & Walking Improvements



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Submission on the A629 Wakefield Road Walking & Cycling proposals

Introduction

1. Kirklees Cycling Campaign is a membership organisation that promotes everyday cycling. See www.cyclekirklees.org.uk for more information.
2. We support the A629 Wakefield Road Walking & Cycling proposals as a serious attempt to provide the infrastructure for active travel. We strongly favour the one-way and two-way options designed as part of reallocation of road space.
3. This is an important addition to strategic cycling routes and would make a significant contribution to reducing pollution from motor vehicles. It has more potential for uplift of cycling activity than any of the other strategic routes into the town. As a major route into Huddersfield links many residential neighbourhoods in Kirklees there is additional planned housing that is likely to add to traffic flows in future years.
4. Clarifying the objectives of the purpose of investment in active travel is essential because it will inform who and what the routes need to serve. Used for commuting, education, shopping, leisure, parcel and goods delivery and other functions like take away foods, it is capable of use for many local, shorter car journeys as well as longer journeys.
5. The primary objective of these walking and cycling improvements needs to be modal shift for shorter neighbourhood journeys. Families need to be able to cycle together – these routes are not just about lone cyclists.
6. It provides a direct and relatively easy-gradient route for cyclists traveling between Fenay Bridge, Waterloo and Huddersfield town centre. Later, we discuss some of the benefits of the two options that would improve facilities for cycling and walking on the existing route. The proposed ‘alternative’ routes, through the residential areas, cannot be viewed as a substitute for good cycle facilities on the A629. However, they will provide useful routes for local journeys.

Two-way

7. Adoption of the 2-way lanes has some advantages over single dedicated lanes, but we will support either option, depending on connectivity at each end of this route.
8. A regular everyday cyclist who has commuted daily on this route for over a year said: “They (two-way cycle routes) are, in my long experience of cycling around the Netherlands, always more difficult to use in practice, even for seasoned users of infrastructure, and always involve less direct access and crossings of busy roads, which is never a preferred option.”
9. Firstly, people accessing or leaving the route from various intermediate points will need to use a crossing and sometimes will need to double back to a linking route.
10. Secondly, by creating a continuous route on one side of A629, it would enhance awareness of local residents and of pedestrians using an adjacent dedicated footway. Cyclists using a two-way route that is busy in one direction will be able to use the contraflow route for overtaking slower moving cyclists.

One Way

11. The most efficient and quickest option for a cyclist with minimal disruption to progress is the one-way dedicated route. However, currently the plan does not achieve continuous unbroken lanes. By stopping cyclists at all major junctions and side street entrances detracts from the utility of the routes.
12. If lanes are designed to be continuous across all junctions it will emphasise the priority of the cycle lane over motor traffic. Continuous lanes are instrumental, both in improving driver awareness of cyclists and their rights of way at side junctions. It is also important in increasing the confidence of new cyclists using the facility by adopting markings and colour that is unbroken from end to end. It is possible to avoid confusion in the mind of motorists by establishing a protocol of priority for cyclists as we already have on well-designed pedestrian crossings.
13. Some junction closures on the north side could be considered to concentrate traffic at fewer junctions and provide more opportunities for quiet ways.

Quiet Streets

14. The quiet streets option is indirect and hilly compared with the A629 route. Quiet streets that join up residential and employment areas and schools to the main routes will be an important part of making safer cycling more popular but are no substitute for a direct route that has a gentle gradient.
15. In contrast the quiet route it has a steep ascent up Almondbury Bank (at an average gradient of 6.6% and including sections of 11.8%) to Mitchell Avenue.

This route is only possible for fit cyclists on light bicycles or on an e-bike. Many people commuting on standard cycles, especially with additional weight (files, laptops or shopping), would be deterred.

Connectivity Issues: Waterloo and beyond

16. The routes (one-way or two-way) need be joined up to the town centre and to areas beyond Waterloo or they will have reduced effectiveness. At Waterloo, we understand Kirklees Council is also developing plans for improvements to the junction with Penistone Road to allow the route to continue to Fenay Bridge on the eastern periphery of this scheme.
17. We support the implementation of the Fenay Greenway, both south to Kirkburton and north to Dalton and Deighton and believe it would add much to the A629 scheme. Using this route would, once developed, offer cyclists an attractive alternative to the increasingly busy and hazardous Penistone Road.
18. We believe it is important to demonstrate the future viability of the Fenay Greenway as a route. It is a former railway route that has been the subject of extensive consultancy work in the past. Today there is considerable planned housing development close to this proposed greenway.

Connectivity Issues: Shorehead roundabout and beyond

19. Eastbound routes should start along Southgate and link to the town centre. A segregated lane constructed using part of the footways along the southbound portion of Southgate to the entrance to Sainsbury's car park would avoid disruption to the flow rather than forcing cyclists to wait for a gap in traffic entering or leaving the retail car park.
20. A link is also needed around the university side of Queensgate to create a route to Queen St South and onwards to Newsome and Lockwood.
21. **Conclusion**
22. In order to achieve a considerable uplift in cycling it is essential to make it easier than driving. Infrastructure that does that - and connects to local amenities and employment - will always be used. Cycle parking should be improved at key locations.
23. The route has considerable scope for modal shift for employment journeys as the biggest employment locations in Huddersfield are in the town centre, including the University of Huddersfield.
24. Finally, we support the planned improvements to this route as they will contribute to reducing pollution. Air quality is at its worst (in all of Huddersfield) at

Shorehead, and as traffic is expected to increase further unless bold steps are taken, it is clear active travel must have a significant boost.