

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

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Dewsbury Town Centre Walking & Cycling Improvements



Introduction

1. Cycling Kirklees (the Kirklees Cycling Campaign) supports changes to our towns and roads that improve the safety and attractiveness for people on bicycles. The documents available in consultation for Dewsbury Town Centre (DTC) improvements show changes to junctions around the town and a short linear route between Halifax Road and Dewsbury Railway Station.

Core Design Principles

2. Section 1.5 of LTN 1/20 sets out that cycle infrastructure should be Coherent; Direct; Safe; Comfortable and Attractive.

Coherent

3. This scheme is coherent in the way it creates links between Dewsbury Railway Station, Dewsbury Town Centre, Halifax Road, and Bradford Road as well as others, however the majority of crossings around Bradford Road have multiple stages which add complexity to a journey and there remain questions about accessing the town centre from Leeds Road, Wakefield Road, and the crossing at Mill Lane.

Direct

4. The junctions around Halifax and Bradford Roads avoid the need for circuitous routes. Routes between Dewsbury Rail Station and Halifax Road are favourable.
5. However, there are several limitations to the designs proposed:
 - a. the toucan crossings on Dewsbury Ring Road and at Vicarage Road require multiple stages of crossings with dog legs that increase the journey time compared to traffic remaining on the road.
 - b. multi-stage crossings with islands can be problematic for longer and larger cycles, such as tandems, standard bicycles with child trailers, and e-cargo bikes which will surely increase as more couriers and local business switch from van deliveries, especially where islands have limited capacity. There are risks of bicycles being forced to stop in the roadway. Careful consideration should be given to traffic signals to ensure this does not happen.

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- c. removal of slip lanes and cycle reservations would allow more space for dedicated cycle infrastructure, slower turning traffic through busy junctions, and more direct crossings for pedestrians.
- d. the Link Road parallel crossings work for foot and cycle traffic coming from the east but are removed from the desire line of north to south traffic.
- e. the Link Road/Longcauseway junction would benefit from a change of priority direction.

Safe

- 6. This scheme promotes safety of people on bicycles by separating them from motor vehicles on busy roads and junctions. The only time bicyclists are expected to mix with drivers are on quieter back streets or within the ring road.
- 7. Where this scheme really falls down is the use of shared footways and the conflict this generates between bicycle riders and pedestrians in an area of high pedestrian activity. This conflict, along with the need of bicycles to deviate and delay on toucan crossings, will likely encourage more bicycle riders to remain on the road through busy junctions with a greater risk of accidents. Shared use footways should not be used in urban areas and where they are used, they should be wider than the 3m minimum. The negative consequences of conflict on shared footways will only intensify as more people make the switch from motor transport to cycling and walking short journeys. As a reminder, the government has set targets for 50% of journeys to be made by walking and cycling by 2030. We are concerned that these plans do not factor in the true potential for change in volumes of cycling and walking in the area, and the schemes may even limit the potential for modal shift in Dewsbury as these are key routes into the centre.
- 8. Junctions of Dewsbury Ring Road with Branch Road and Croft Street would also benefit from elevation changes to slow turning traffic down and promote safety of people on bicycles or foot crossing these side roads. To further promote safety within the town centre we would suggest changes to reduce the use of cars within the town centre and a reduction of the speed limit.

Comfortable

- 9. The amount of shared footway space, number of toucan crossings, and the required tactile paving to facilitate the prior two points conspire to reduce how comfortable this will be for people on bicycles. Sharing footway space, though often better than sharing the road in high traffic areas, creates conflict with pedestrians and bicycle riders may be required to stop or drop off kerbs back onto the road to negotiate around pedestrians.
- 10. Toucan crossings make routes for bicycles very stop-start and the amount of energy required to get a bicycle up to cruising speed is the same as riding for 70metres. These becomes more of a problem when dealing with larger bicycles like cargo bikes, or those

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that are carrying additional weight, like shopping or business equipment (tools etc.) when the slow speed and stop/start make these bicycles much harder to manoeuvre particularly around right angles like dog legs on crossings.

Attractive

11. The separation from motor vehicles adds to the attractiveness of these gateways into Dewsbury. Improvements could be made to the number of street trees particularly between roads and cycle infrastructure so that protection is offered from the sun on hot days and to make the area more green. Whilst there remains 8 lanes of motor traffic between Webster Hill and Leeds Road considering 2 directions of travel around a small town centre, cycling across these junctions or along these roads will not be as attractive as it could be if work was done to reduce traffic numbers and remove lanes. We would like to see Dewsbury opened up more to Dewsbury College and Dewsbury Sports centre so that both these locations can be included in the town centre without the hard border of a hostile ring road.

Accessibility

12. LTN 1/20 is clear that an overarching principle of the above five principles is inclusive and accessible design. A route should be accessible for all types of cyclists and cycles. A design bike 2.75m long and 1.2m wide is suggested in LTN 1/20 to cover the range of cycles that will use a route and inform the design of lane and crossings. This size of bike would have trouble navigating the staggered signalled crossings at the Aldams Road, Vicarage Road, Halifax Road, and Bradford Road junctions.
13. Additionally, this scheme shows nothing of access to Dewsbury from Wakefield Road or the Calder Valley Greenway though we understand they may be covered on other schemes currently being designed.

Assessment Tools

14. LTN 1/20 has two tools to review existing schemes and new proposals against the principles of LTN 1/20. It is not apparent from the consultation documents if these have been undertaken for the proposals, as no scores for the scheme have been provided or referred to. In lieu of such information, York Cycle Campaign has undertaken a review of the proposals using the information available.
15. Cycling Level of Service Tool (CLoS)

Reviews the whole route and uses the 5 core principles above to score a route on 25 indicators. Each indicator is scored from 0 to 2 where 0 means only experienced cyclists could use the facility e.g., an advisory cycle lane, while a score of 2 means anyone wishing to cycle could use it e.g. a protected bike lane of adequate width.

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CycleKirklees has scored the Dewsbury Cycling and Walking Improvements using CLoS and it scores 27 out of 42 points so 64%. The threshold for a route to receive funding from the DfT is 70%. A completed copy of the CLoS is attached in Appendix A.

16. Junction Assessment Tool (JAT)

We did not complete the Junction Assessment Tool on this scheme as all the cycling movements have the option of being made separated from motor vehicles by using toucan crossings, priority crossings, and shared footways.

Comments on Plans

Plan 1a: Halifax Road and Bradford Road junctions

17. This is the most challenging section to design as it intersects Dewsbury Ring Road with two major A roads. Where there is a pinch point on Bradford Road underneath the viaduct which reduces the chance of fitting in dedicated cycle infrastructure, the rest of the area is wide enough to fit in fully separated cycle tracks and full cycle junctions. Sadly there isn't enough appetite from Kirklees to reduce traffic lanes for fear of causing traffic congestion. The consequence of this is that Dewsbury Ring Road remains at points 6 lanes wide with slip roads on and off junctions and only enough room remaining for cyclists to share footways and use toucan crossings.
18. Bradford Road is already one of the heaviest use cycle routes in Dewsbury, along with the Calder Greenway and Leeds Road and has a high potential for cycling as it is a flat route towards the close neighbouring town of Batley. This junction should be a priority for high quality cycling infrastructure and to reduce car travel.
19. Though the safety for inexperienced bicycle riders is improved by the addition of toucan crossings we do not think this design goes far enough to provide for cycling in this area.
20. We are pleased that the designers of this scheme have included some of our suggestions if it is to go ahead as shared space and crossings. The extension of the shared space between Bradford Road and Cliffe Street allows people on bicycles access to Crackenedge Lane and then the town centre via the underpass or onto Leeds Road via Batty Street.
21. As the design stage goes into design stage, we hope that Kirklees will be open to work with us on tweaking the access on and off the shared footways.

Plan 1b: Halifax Road and Bradford Road junctions

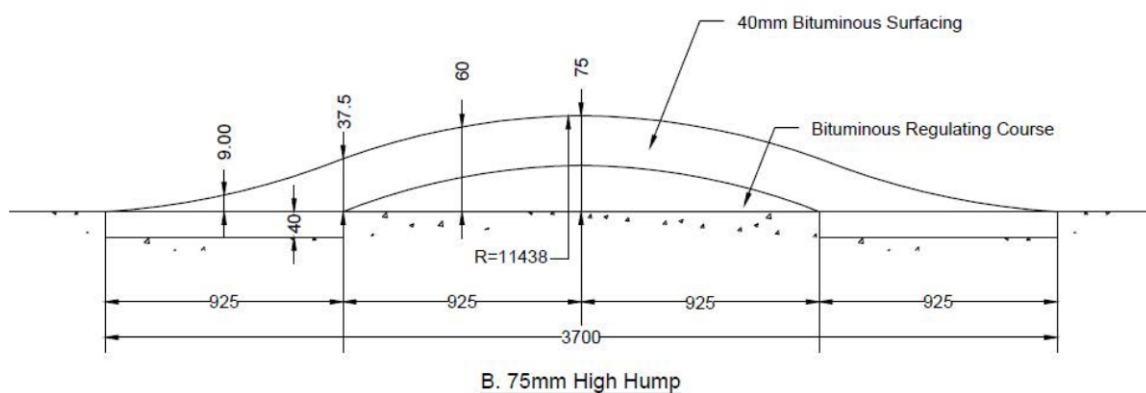
22. Improvements have been made to the plans between Dewsbury Rail Station and Halifax Road. The pair of one-way cycle tracks as now both sides of the road lead all the way along this section.

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23. There does not appear to be any plan for ending the southbound lane as it joins the shared space at Bond Street junction. Pedestrian crossing points at Croft Street and Branch Road should be moved onto the desire lines at the junctions and join the cycle track on a raised table, or a continuous footway as shown in the Design Priority examples of figure 10.13 in LTN 1/20, so that turning cars are slowed down and give less chance of cyclists being involved in 'left hook' collisions.

Plan 2a & b: Battye Street/Rockley Street

24. There is not any dedicated cycling infrastructure on these streets but there is opportunity for this route to be used by cyclists avoiding the Ring Road so we would expect this to be constructed in a cycle friendly manner. We approve of the use of traffic calming features like speed bumps and plateaus but for this to be cycle friendly and to meet with LTN 1/20 design details the ramps should either be very shallow (reducing the effectiveness) or sinusoidal as recommended in LTN 1/20 7.6.5.



LTN 1/20 Figure 7.8: Sinusoidal Ramps (Hump may be round or flat-top)

25. We would like to see an attempt to further reduce traffic on Battye Street by either permanently filtering traffic or by setting up a 'School Street.'

Plan 3a: Aldams Road

26. Like Dewsbury Ring Road, Aldams Road and Vicarage Road have enough space to be able to provide full bicycle infrastructure along with space for cars and buses. Again, traffic has been set with high priority which means that even with the removal of the turning lanes there are still two lanes of motor traffic in either direction and people on bicycles are being forced to share space with pedestrians.
27. Toucan crossings are once again done in multiple stages in dog-legs which can be difficult to manoeuvre larger bikes through especially when shared with pedestrians crossing. The crossing point of Wilton Street to continue between the greenways is unintuitive and most people would more naturally choose the shorter route and cross

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Wilton Street at the Link Road junction.

Plan 3b: Aldams Road

28. We would like to see more width along Aldams Road dedicated to cycling to greater improve the link between the Calder Valley Greenway at Mill Street West and Wilton Street along Aldams Road as part of the link between the greenways to replace the current narrow route from Asda footbridge along the back of Farmfoods and Screwfix.
29. Where the shared-use path crosses across the entrance to Farmfoods the pedestrian and cycle priority should be made clear with changes to lining and by building in a continuous footway.
30. There is no plan shown to cross Mill Street West onto the Greenway, or by crossing to Old Westgate. It is important that this is developed as a priority to increase the use of the greenway and provide better access to the rail station and town centre.

Plan 4a: Wilton Street/Link Road/Longcauseway South

31. There does not appear to be much change on Wilton Street and Link Road to allow for cycling. The cover at the junction of the two streets is very tight on the inside and would need widening to allow comfortable passage for bicycles. The traffic lights at this junction would also need moving off the footway so that the correct width can be maintained throughout.

Plan 4b: Wilton Street/Link Road/Longcauseway South

32. We are supportive of using parallel crossings in general and the build out to reduce the radii of corners on junctions. Our only recommendation for the Link Road/Longcauseway junction is that the direction of priority is changed from east-west to north-south to give more priority to people walking and wheeling on NCN 69 to Dewsbury town centre from the Ossett Greenway and to help slow down cars going in and out of the car park outside Mecca Bingo. The parallel crossings can be kept as proposed to facilitate walking and wheeling to and from the Calder Valley Greenway.

33. Conclusion

- a. By utilising the design concept of using shared-use footways and toucan crossings as the primary infrastructure instead of dedicated cycle tracks - which Active Travel England may not look kindly on – this scheme is flawed.
- b. However, with this in mind and where political support is required to reallocate the necessary road space to allow for dedicated cycle infrastructure, the current plans do create a safer environment by removing people on bicycles from the heavy traffic of the A-Road junctions with the Dewsbury Ring Road.
- c. By making a few of the adjustments we recommend, we believe these proposals will

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prove functional but does not create a desirable environment. If our aim is to provide for a small increase from the current levels of cycling, then this design may have been acceptable, but we as a community are looking to increase cycling levels across the district by 2000% and reduce car journeys by 25%. For this to succeed, more needs to be done to make cycling coherent, safe, comfortable, direct, and attractive. In this context, Cycle Kirklees will commit to working with Kirklees Council to make the most out of the current proposals to make them work for people walking and wheeling.