

Comments by Cycle Kirklees

Consultation on Station to Stadium Enterprise Corridor



1. Introduction

The proposed Station to Stadium Enterprise Corridor sits alongside the Kirklees Cultural Heart proposals and together form a key part of the Huddersfield Blueprint. We welcome the commitment to creating a “Connected and integrated” development, which will “build on and develop opportunities for residents, workers, students, and visitors to use active travel routes”.

As we have indicated in previous consultations, we generally welcome and support a transformational change to an underused and in part rundown area of the town centre. In time, the regeneration programme will generate significant numbers of trips by employees, students, customers and visitors - many more than the present numbers.

This requires a focus on the travel and access issues to - and through - the town centre. There is a need to ensure the walking and cycling routes that already exist are developed and improved where possible. By basing the infrastructure from the beginning on enhancing routes already in existence and improving key links for new destinations, the aim should be to enable habits to form around active travel rather than reinforce car dependency. The transition stages through redevelopment are important to embedding long term success of modal shift.

To successfully establish a pattern of multi-modal journeys requires improved opportunities at first mile and last mile, which contribute to increased patronage of bus and rail routes. To facilitate behavioural change, these low impact forms of travel must be made more accessible and their use incentivised.

2. Station to Stadium Corridor

The enterprise corridor does not sit in isolation from the town. It will require modifications to the road network within the town centre to make it more cycle, pedestrian and wheelchair friendly.

In each development, including expansion of University of Huddersfield, the Station to Stadium corridor will need to complement other walking and cycling routes that provide access to both ends of the corridor.

We agree that the important link from the stadium to the university needs to factor in improvements to the Huddersfield Broad Canal towpath and the closure to traffic of Quay St and the Turnbridge. We would support a review of facilities for cycling in St Andrews Road, given its strategic position and the increased levels of peak traffic now using it.

This consultation is innovative – it introduces the first substantive pedestrianised streets outside the ring road, which we welcome after the failure to maintain most innovations that were experimental during Covid 19 restrictions.

On the other hand, it fails to address some critical issues. Planned new or extended active travel routes primarily radiate from the station end of the town centre. It also lacks recognition of the importance of onward connections to routes that reach the boundary of the area.

As we said in the planning consultation for the new university health campus development, there are important and growing active travel demands that need routes across parts of the town centre, particularly to and from (and in future within) the university campus.

In principle we support plans to narrow and introduce traffic calming in Southgate as they would appear to improve opportunities to a) create a cycle route on the footway from Leeds Road to Sainsbury's on Southgate and b) ensure improved crossings from the Beast Market to Quay Street and from Leeds Road to Northumberland Street. However, the crossing of Wakefield Road at Shorehead is as yet unplanned.

Secure Cycling Parking

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The lack of secure cycle parking acts as a barrier to use of bikes, pedal assist electric cycles and e-cargo bikes in the centre. An audit of current provision would demonstrate limited visitor provision, apart from at the railway station, available to rail users. Although secure facilities that at the university, Kirklees College and the Glass Box they are only available to designated users. Secure facilities at the John Smith Stadium and the Media Centre are poor or non-existent.

Secure cycle parking should be provided adjacent to or within key employment, cultural or educational buildings, and in a quantity which anticipates a significant increase in cycling above present-day levels.

Conclusions

Given the urgency of responding to climate change, it is already Kirklees Council and WYCA policy to adopt measures that contribute to reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality. Planning future accessibility to the corridor and the whole town centre will need to encourage travel by bike and on foot and facilitate ease of access from the corridor to bus routes and the railway station. Without this people working or visiting the corridor will be more tempted to drive the whole way.

Plans to improve the walking routes from the John Smith's Stadium to the town centre and railway station opens up the potential of greater use of peripheral car parking. Use of parking technology can facilitate a sharing of spaces at different times of day/week between employment, sporting and cultural use.

Access paths to the key venues and destinations need to be made more attractive to use and offer a safe and step free accessible way to reach these destinations. The alternative, of town centre land being used for parking is largely unnecessary and would generate traffic.

Effective parking strategies can help to reduce traffic levels, but the plan also needs to ensure easy access to bus routes. For many, destinations here would involve a long walk from the station. Buses need priority if they are to offer a competitive alternative to car use.

Finally, we propose that the entire town centre within the ring road, should be

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the subject of a maximum 20mph speed limit. This should also apply to other busy roads with high footfall like Firth Street which cuts through the university campus, which has dangers for cyclists in the road designs.