

Holmfirth Town Centre Access Plan

Frequently asked questions

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1. Introduction to the plans

Q. What / where is the improving Holmfirth town centre scheme?

The scheme is a package of measures, which seeks to address the causes of vehicle-based congestion along the A6024 / A635 and Holmfirth town centre, thus reducing and making journey times more reliable. At the same time, the scheme will also look to improve highway facilities for residents, businesses, and users whilst also improving the town centre and public environment.

Q. What will the plan involve?

To better understand the situation, we have undertaken a traffic modelling exercise, which has shown where the issues are and what the journey time delay is. Using this information we have developed a series of options and tested them until we have a preferred option, which gives us the best results for improving journey times and reducing congestion.

Q. Which other options have you looked at?

We start with the base of a “Do Nothing” – what would the traffic look like in 2037 (which is the end of the Local Plan period) if we did nothing? In order to comply with the Department for Transport’s guidelines we have to include a Low Cost intervention (this is what the Council could do with its own money), a High Cost (a scheme if money / land take were no problem) which has been discounted and then a number of tests to derive a Medium Cost option – which is the preferred option, the one that delivers the most benefits in terms of improving journey times, reducing congestion and comes within budget.

2. The reason for the plan

Q. Why do we need to do something?

The council has a statutory duty under the Traffic Management Act to consider options that improve traffic flow. The A6024 / A635 are some of the key routes into Huddersfield, Manchester and Sheffield and is a busy corridor for all users in Holmfirth with little spare capacity. Much of the existing road was not designed to cope with the volume of traffic at peak times, which is leading to significant delays and congestion. Compound the current issues with the projected natural growth and future development needs and it becomes evident that interventions are necessary to help existing traffic and allow for future growth.

Q. What do you hope to achieve by making the improvements?

The main aims of the scheme will be to:

- Reduce congestion
- Improve journey times
- Improve conditions for buses, cyclists and pedestrians
- Reduce the potential for accidents
- Improve access for local residents and businesses
- Enable access to employment and residential sites along the corridor

3. Timescales for delivery

Q. When will work start on site?

There is still a lot of work to do before you see anything out on site; we have to do the detailed design, get planning consent, go out to tender and then award the contract. We are hoping to start the road works (subject to approvals) in March 2020 and be completed the following year 2021. If there is a delay to this (or if we could make an early start) we will let residents and businesses know. Any changes to the planned start and end dates will also be provided on the Council's Major Transport web page: kirklees.gov.uk/majorschemes

4. The funding and decision making process

Q. Who is paying for the improvements? Where is the money coming from?

The project is to be funded by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority through the West Yorkshire plus Transport Fund (WY+TF). The Council has to submit a business case to the Combined Authority for their approval for the scheme to proceed. If successful, we will receive the funding allocated to the scheme. We WILL NOT be using Council tax or other Council money. The funding of this scheme will not impact on other Council services

Q. Can the money be spent on other projects?

The Holmfirth Town Centre Access Plan scheme has funding provisionally allocated from the WY+TF specifically for this scheme and therefore cannot be spent on any other proposals or schemes. If the West Yorkshire Combined Authority do not accept the Business Case, then the scheme cannot go ahead and the money earmarked for this project will be allocated elsewhere in the region; not necessarily in Kirklees.

Q. What is the West Yorkshire Combined Authority?

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority was formed in April 2014 to be the driving force for economic growth across the Kirklees, Bradford, Leeds, Calderdale and Wakefield districts and the City of York Council area. The Combined Authority brings together key decision making powers into a single body. To find out more visit: westyorks-ca.gov.uk

Q. What is the decision making process?

An Expression of Interest for funding to develop highway improvements on this corridor was approved in 2017. This provided around £200,000 of funding to develop the project to the next stage – this is called the Outline Business Case (OBC). The OBC develops preliminary designs, undertakes traffic modelling work to determine a preferred option and estimates scheme costs, risks etc.

The OBC is anticipated to be submitted to the Combined Authority in March 2019, where approval to continue with the detailed design and apply for planning permission for the scheme should be granted.

Q. When will you have the detailed design?

Following this exhibition, feedback received will be considered and options for improvement will be appraised in accordance with guidelines approved by the Department for Transport (DfT). This exhibition is to seek further input into the preferred scheme and to illustrate the delay savings it will deliver, and give residents opportunity to comment on the design before it is finalised.

After the submission and approval of the Outline Business Case, we will start work on a detailed design and prepare the documents for a planning application. During this process, as part of the Statement of Community Involvement, we will need to have another exhibition.

5. The impact on those living nearby

Q. Will you be taking any land? Is my house at risk of demolition?

There are no proposals to demolish any houses.

Q. Will there be any changes to on-street parking?

Parking on Victoria Street will change in order to widen the footway and improve the public realm in front of the buildings, although this will be replaced.

Q. Will any roadworks be carried out at night and what will you do to minimise any impact on residents?

The phasing of roadworks still need to be planned. Nearer the time of construction local residents will be provided with more detail about what will happen and when. If night work is needed, we will talk to residents to see what can be done to minimise the impact.

Q. Will I be compensated if the road or improvements disturb my property or decrease its value?

In certain circumstances compensation can be paid for loss of amenity and value of property through Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973. Claims through Part 1 of this Act are valid after 12 months of the opening of the road.

Compensation is payable if it can be demonstrated that the road improvements have negatively affected the value of land and buildings. Land and property owners would need to submit a 'Blight Claim' to the Council if they consider that the improvements have negatively impacted on the value of land and buildings.

For more information on Blight please refer to Government website www.gov.uk/compensation-road-property-value

6. Noise and air quality

Q. Will I be compensated if the road improvements increase noise levels in my property?

If noise levels are likely to increase above certain thresholds within 15 years of the completion of the road improvements then the Highway Authority is obliged to provide noise insulation or provide a grant equal to the value of the noise insulation works.

Baseline noise levels will be recorded this year; these will be used to make an assessment of any noise level changes and whether noise insulation will be needed for any properties.

Where noise insulation is needed we will write to property owners to make an offer of noise insulation works or a grant. A map showing all eligible properties will be published within six months of scheme completion.

If you feel that you may be eligible for noise insulation and your property is not shown on the published map of eligible properties then a claim for noise insulation can be made within 12 months of scheme completion.

Q. Has any air quality monitoring been done?

Air quality monitoring has been carried out by Kirklees Council for several years; reports on air quality can be found at www.kirklees.gov.uk/pollution

Air quality measurements will also be undertaken at various locations along the corridor, to provide a baseline record of air quality conditions before any changes are made.

Q. Will air quality be measured after the alterations?

With regard to Kirklees Council obligations, air quality will continue to be measured on an ongoing basis.

Q. Will the alterations result in a reduction in pollutant levels?

The improvements will contribute towards reducing pollution levels. Holmfirth does not have a declared AQMA, although the alterations, together with improvements to vehicle emissions will, over time, result in lower levels of pollution.

7. Planning permission

Q. Do you need planning permission to do this work?

Whilst some of the work is within the public highway, and are classed as permitted development; in order to build the bridge and link road we will require planning consent.

8. Bus stops, pedestrians and cyclists

Q. How will people who don't own vehicles benefit?

Journey times and reliability should improve for all types of transport. For those on foot there will be widened footways and additional crossing facilities.

Q. Will existing bus stops be improved?

Yes, we will look at existing bus stops along the route and in the town centre to identify any improvements that could be made (new shelters, RealTime information etc)

Q. Will there be a new bus stop outside my house?

At this point in time there are no plans to move any bus stops. However, we would be happy to receive any comments which we can discuss with bus operators during the development process. Any changes to stop locations will be subject to separate communications and engagement with affected home and business owners.

Q. Will any bus stops be taken away?

No

9. Have your say – public engagement March 2019

Q. How are you engaging with the public?

We are at a stage in developing a scheme where residents and businesses are being given an opportunity to comment on these proposals. All of the proposals are being made public and everyone will have another opportunity to comment.

Q. Will my comments be considered, or have decisions already been made?

From 4 March 2019 to 5 April 2019 we are running a public engagement and inviting comments and questions from the public. Your comments will help inform the current proposals and provide an opportunity to identify any issues that we are not aware of.

Q. Who can take part?

We welcome opinions and feedback from anyone. Whether you travel by public transport, walk, drive, cycle, are a business owner or just travel through the area, your views and insight is valuable to us to shape our scheme.

Q. How can I take part?

You will be able to fill in an online survey or visit us at a drop in session. More information about this can be found on our website kirklees.gov.uk/majorschemes

Q. I work for a group/organisation and transport is important to the staff/business, can I take part in the consultation with shared views?

Yes. We would welcome the views this. Please make sure that you have permission to comment on behalf of your group/organisation.

Q. Can I tell other people to take part?

Yes. Please share the link kirklees.gov.uk/majorschemes with anyone you think would be interested in taking part. If you intend to submit a joint response on behalf of a group/organisation, please share the link so people have the opportunity to provide an individual response, should they wish to do so.

Q. Are there other ways to take part or have a say?

We encourage people to take part online either individually or with a group response. All responses to questionnaires will be collected and the data analysed. Other feedback and comments received during the engagement period will also be consolidated and considered alongside the questionnaires. You can submit additional information, comments or feedback to major.transport@kirklees.gov.uk or by writing to FREEPOST, Kirklees Council, Major Transport Scheme.

Q. What if I only want to comment on a specific area impacted by the proposed scheme?

If you want to comment on one specific part or area affected you are welcome to do so. None of the questions in the questionnaire are compulsory, so you can pick and choose where you provide a response. There also is opportunity to provide free text comments in the questionnaire.

Alternatively you can submit comments and feedback to major.transport@kirklees.gov.uk or by writing to FREEPOST, Kirklees Council, Major Transport Scheme.

Q. What difference will it make?

By having your say and sharing your views we will try to ensure that the priorities and thoughts you have on your area are reflected in the proposals.

10. Holmfirth Market

On 14th February 2018, the Council determined its Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2018-2020. One of the related issues concerned a recommendation to close Holmfirth Market as it was no longer financially viable in the market hall. The Council ratified the recommendation but has agreed that the market will continue to operate in the market hall whilst discussions are held with any community groups or businesses who are interested in taking over the market rights for Holmfirth to operate a market elsewhere in the town.

10. Future updates

Q. Will you keep me updated on progress?

We are not planning to keep individual contact details on file in order to provide updates on progress. Instead we will keep our web page kirklees.gov.uk/majorschemes updated and share updates elsewhere online and in the media.