

Planning Application 2020/92307 – Proposed Residential Development at Rowley Lane/Penistone Road, Lepton

Introduction

comment on the Outline
Planning Application 2020/92307 as we have serious concerns about the lack of recognition of the importance of active travel – walking and cycling.

We wish to see the former Kirkburton branch railway is protected from development so that it can provide much needed cycling and walking infrastructure.

We recognise that the current application represents Phase 1 of a much larger development proposal for the whole of Local Plan sites HS2 and 3, with an estimated combined total of 598 dwellings. Whilst these comments are made with reference to the current application, the prospect of larger residential developments will inevitably have a greater adverse impact on Penistone Road and the local road network. Our comments reflect the need for a master plan that recognises the impact of traffic and residential expansion on the wider area.

Active travel and the disused Kirkburton branch railway

Penistone Road does not provide a safe or attractive opportunity for active travel. It carries heavy traffic; it lacks continuous footways and has a record of accidents, including cyclists. It is particularly unsuitable for cycling; only cyclists experienced in traffic will use it. Novice cyclists and others who in an ideal world would like to cycle are deterred by prevailing road and traffic conditions on Penistone Road.

KCC's principal concern is that the documentation accompanying the application pays only lip service to active travel and in particular makes no reference to the disused Kirkburton branch railway adjacent to the eastern site boundary, and shown on the Local Plan as part of the core walking and cycling network.

In keeping with the Local Plan it is clear the former railway line offers an

opportunity for a phased development of a traffic free pedestrian and cycle route directly serving both the proposed development and future phases. It will also provide much needed facilities for cycling and walking for established local residents and will connect with a proposed cycling route from Waterloo to Huddersfield town centre.

contends that Kirklees Council should use every opportunity, including S.106 conditions to promote active travel and develop a comprehensive network. This must include working with developers and using the planning process to secure new and improved active travel infrastructure to create genuine alternatives to car travel. Such alternatives do not currently exist within the Penistone Road corridor.

Cycling Campaign Proposals

In relation to the proposed development site(s), proposes that

1. The former Kirkburton branch railway is protected from development.
2. Any road crossing of the line, which is necessary to access land to the east of the line, should not sever the line and should therefore be grade separated.
3. The Council takes the necessary steps to acquire all parts of the line between Rowley Lane and Far Dene which are not in the ownership of the developer
4. The Council negotiates a section 106 agreement with the developer to secure the construction and cost sharing of a shared footpath/cycle path on the line of the railway, between Rowley Lane and Far Dene, with appropriate links to the development.
5. The construction of the shared path on that part of the line, which is adjacent to the proposed development, is undertaken and completed no later than the completion of the first dwelling.

the current planning application and the anticipated full development of sites HS2 and 3 should be seen in the wider context of our advocacy to create the Fenay Greenway on the entire length of the disused railway between Wakefield Road Waterloo and Kirkburton, as shown on the Local Plan.

This is a logical extension of the proposed LCWIP works to Wakefield Road between the town centre and Waterloo. The two combined projects will create a safe and attractive cycle route from Kirkburton and intervening settlements to Huddersfield.

Conclusion

We have witnessed recent increase in leisure cycling and cycling to work arising from the pandemic. The development of a “Fenay Greenway” on the former railway line, providing a new amenity for existing and future residents, is likely to command widespread support. There is also increasing community awareness and understanding of climate issues. Taken together with Kirklees Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency, and West Yorkshire Combined Authority's recognition of the need for a 2000% increase by 2038 in cycling miles travelled in West Yorkshire to achieve Net Zero Carbon, this infrastructure would be well used.