

Planning, Design & Access Statement

Spen Valley Greenway – Kirklees



06 July 2023

To find out more, please contact: Rachel Broadbent

Redacted

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Join us on our journey.

www.sustrans.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland).

Cover photo credit: Rachel Broadbent

Contents

1.	Introduction	4
	About Sustrans	4
	Our vision	4
	Our mission	4
	Who we are	5
2.	Site Context	6
	Site Location	6
	The Site & Surroundings	7
	Details of the Existing Path	8
	Path	8
	Bridges	9
	Barriers	9
	Path users	11
3.	The Proposed Development	13
4.	Planning Policy Context	15
	Planning Designations	15
	Relevant National Planning Policy	15
	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	15
	Relevant Local Planning Policy	16
	Kirklees Local Plan (2019)	16
	Kirklees Walking and Cycling Strategic Framework 2018 – 2030	17
	Kirklees Highway Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2019)	17
	Key Planning Issues	18
	Pre-app Advice	18
5.	Planning History	19
6.	Engagement	21
	Public Consultation	21
	Community events	21
	Social media and written communications	21

Stakeholder Engagement	22
Local Authority	22
Community safety	22
Elected politicians	23
Schools	23
Affected businesses	23
Local interest groups	24
7. Key Considerations	25
Design	25
Surfacing	25
Drainage	26
Access	27
User access	27
Construction access and compound	27
Access over bridges	27
PRoW	27
Barriers	29
Ecology & Trees	30
Ecology	30
Trees	32
Landscape & Visual Impact	32
Flood Risk	32
8. Planning Assessment	33
9. Conclusions	34
Appendix - site photographs	35

Document control

Category	Details
Document number:	14048-N-RE-4-0002
Version:	1
Purpose of issue:	Planning
Date issued:	06/07/2023
Originator:	Rachel Broadbent
Checked:	Naomi Lawes
Approved:	Mike Babbitt

Version	Date	Purpose	Originator	Checked	Approved

1. Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the upgrade of a traffic-free shared use cycle and pedestrian path between Oakenshaw and Cleckheaton, known as the Spen Valley Greenway.

The proposal involves widening the existing path from 2.5m (varies) to 3m and resurfacing. Where there are existing issues with foundation caused by tree roots and rabbits, these will be addressed. Other improvements include lifting a short section of path out of a wet area south of Oakenshaw tunnel and modification of two barrier accesses.

The proposals have been developed to provide improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity, safety and accessibility.

The proposals are within two Local Authority boundaries – Kirklees and Bradford. Identical planning applications have been submitted to both Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and should be considered simultaneously. Separate Planning, Design and Access Statements have been produced to assess the proposals against each LPA's planning policies – this document relates to Kirklees.

About Sustrans

Our vision

Our vision is a society where the way we travel creates healthier places and happier lives for everyone.

Our mission

We make it easier for people to walk and cycle.

Who we are

We are engineers and educators, experts and advocates. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Sustrans works in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions. We make the case for walking and cycling by using robust evidence and showing what can be done.

We are grounded in communities and believe that grassroots support combined with political leadership drives real change, fast.

2.Site Context

Site Location

The site is located between Oakenshaw and Cleckheaton, the location is shown in Figure 1. The District Unitary Authority boundary has been included on the map to show which section lies within Kirklees and how it relates to the section in Bradford.

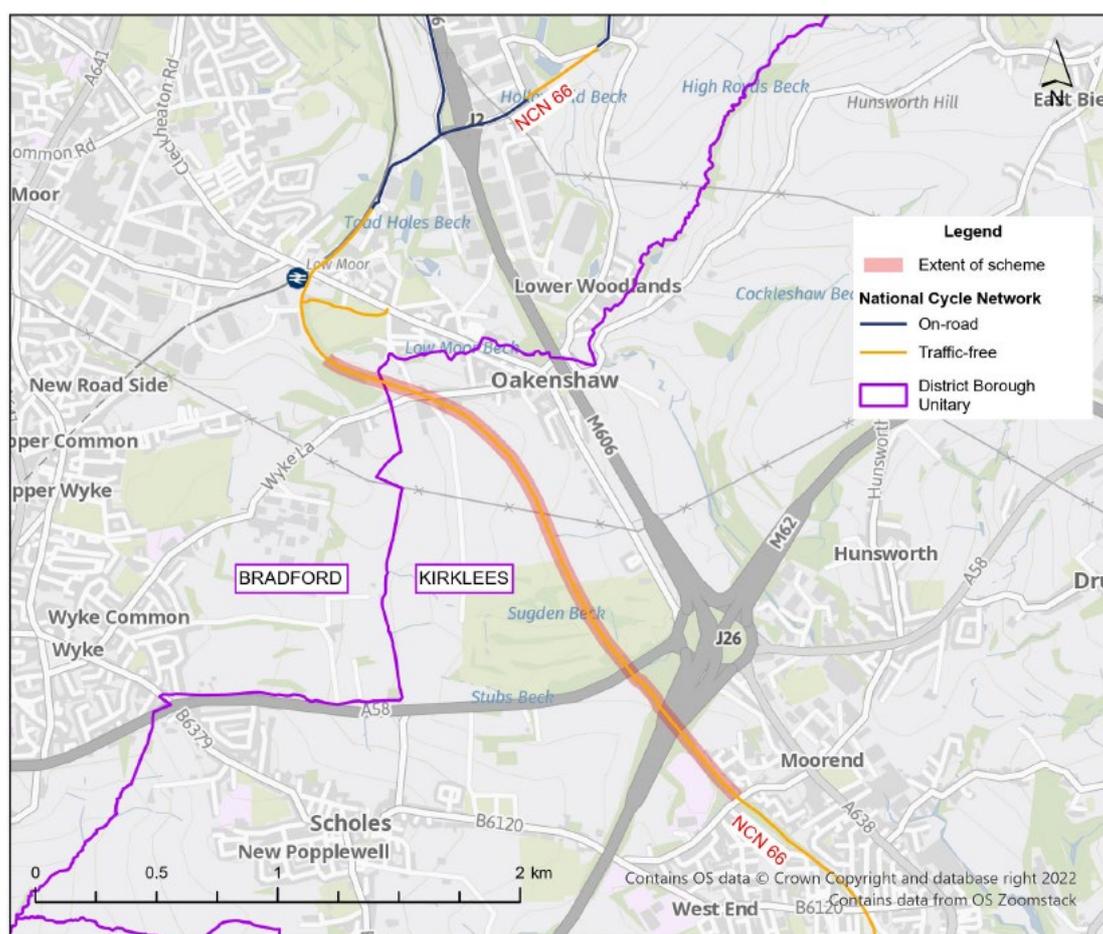


Figure 1: Plan showing extents of the proposed scheme

The Site & Surroundings

The linear application site is 2.575km in length. The red line boundary is 2.09 hectares. It follows the alignment of the existing shared use path, National Cycle Network Route 66, between Oakenshaw and Cleckheaton.

This section of path is owned and maintained by Sustrans. The majority of the scheme is within Kirklees Metropolitan Council local authority boundary and consists of a 2.335km section of path. 240m at the northern end of the scheme is within the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. The boundary lies just north of Oakenshaw Tunnel at the access point with Green Lane.

The existing surface is asphalt, and it is proposed that it will be replaced with a smooth, sealed asphalt layer. Only 0.723ha of the site will be resurfaced.

At the northern end the site starts where Sustrans land ownership originates. The first 240m is in Bradford and is a tree-lined bridleway. The route then enters Kirklees. Between the boundary between the two Local Authorities and Oakenshaw tunnel there is an access, with vehicle gate, onto Green Lane. This is an unadopted track which to the north becomes Cross Road and eventually links to Cleckheaton Road. Green Lane to the east provides a link to Wyke Lane. This section of path heading north is designated as a Public Right of Way (PRoW) bridleway (SPE/175/10). South of the access with Green Lane is a permissive path.

Oakenshaw tunnel is a brick arch tunnel approximately 60m long. On the south side of the tunnel there is a steep embankment with a farm located at the top, and a ditch which runs down the side of the path for approximately 150m.

South of this point there is agricultural land on both sides of the path for 700m, after which it is surrounded by land owned by Cleckheaton Golf Club. Two of the overbridges carry PRoW footpaths (SPE/24/20 and SPE/25/10)

The path then travels over two bridges owned by National Highways, over the A58 and M62/M606 interchange. The last 360m is tree-lined with a residential area to the east. An overbridge carries PRoW footpath (SPE/42/10) including access to the greenway. There is a pedestrian/cycle access on to Laithe Hall Avenue on the east side and on the west a ramp which provides access onto Whitechapel Road.

Details of the Existing Path

The Spen Valley Line (also known as the Mirfield and Low Moor railway) was opened as a railway in 1848. It was closed to passengers in 1965 but continued to operate as a freight line until 1981. There was a closure of the line between 1970 and 1974 for the construction of the M62 motorway.

Sustrans acquired the trackbed in 1998 and created the Spen Valley Greenway which was opened on 4th May 2001.

Path

The existing path has a sealed asphalt surface which varies between 2.2m and 2.6m in width. In some areas tree roots have caused the path to crack creating ridges.



Figure 2: Photograph showing damage from tree roots

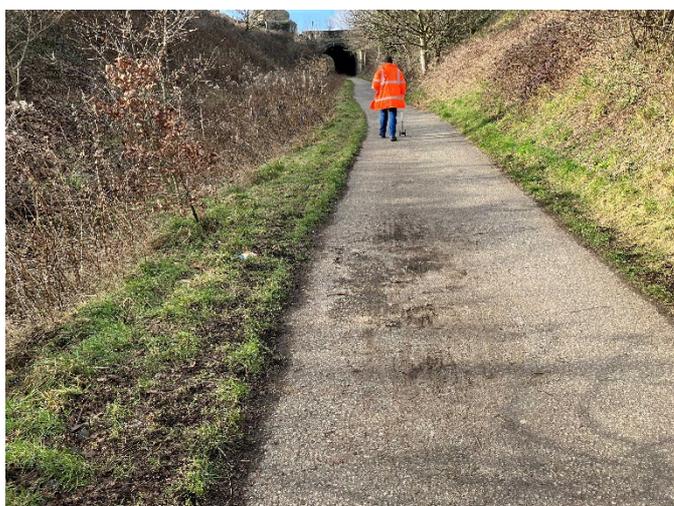
On a section adjacent to the Cleckheaton Golf Course there is evidence of rabbit burrows which have penetrated the embankment potentially undermining the foundations of the path.



Figure 3: Photograph showing the location of rabbit burrows

A section of the path, approximately 10m in length, immediately south of Oakenshaw Tunnel is known wet area which results in water pooling on a short section.

Figure 4: Photograph showing evidence of water pooling



Bridges

Within the site area there are eight bridges, three culverts and one tunnel (Oakenshaw).

Two of the bridges are owned by National Highways and provide access over the M62 and A58. One of the culverts is owned and maintained by the Local Authority. All the other bridges, culverts and the tunnel are owned and maintained by Sustrans.

Barriers

As the custodian of the National Cycle Network, Sustrans believe that cycling and walking routes should be accessible to anyone who wants to use them and strives to remove barriers from across its Network. Many barriers across the Network are ineffective and they prevent full and fair access to our neighbourhoods and green spaces. One of our strategic priorities is:

“Make it accessible for everyone” Paths for Everyone Report, 2019

This includes improving path surfaces to ensure that they are suitable for all types of users, and removing barriers that prevent people who use adapted bikes, wheelchairs, mobility scooters, tandems, cargo bikes, or pushing a pram from accessing the traffic free sections.

The issue of antisocial behaviour and the use of off-road motorcycles is one which is not foreign to Sustrans. In our experience of constructing routes of a similar nature to this, natural surveillance and a sealed surface have been shown to be effective in reducing motorcyclist activity as it has the effect of ‘pushing’ motorcyclists onto other routes which may still be quieter and ‘unsealed.’

There are two access points on this section of the NCN which have been identified as being non-compliant:

- Green Lane: existing gap 1.4m
- Laithe Hall Avenue: existing gap 0.8m and 1.0m



Green Lane



Laithe Hall Avenue

Figure 5: Photographs showing access barriers

Path users

Manual count surveys were carried out north of Oakenshaw Tunnel where Green Lane provides access to the greenway. The dates surveyed were:

- 27/08/2022 – School holiday weekend day (weather = dry and clear)
- 30/08/2022 – School holiday weekday (weather = dry and clear)
- 08/09/2022 – Term time weekday (weather = AM - cloudy and wet, PM - dry and partly cloudy)
- 10/09/2022 – Term time weekend day (weather = mostly dry and cloudy)

The survey showed that users of the path comprise of the following user types:

User type	Percentage
Bicycle (non electric)	38%
Electric bicycle	4%
Other cycle	0%
Walking	47%
Walking with aid	0%
Jogging	8%
Wheelchair	0%
Pushchair	1%
Other wheeled	1%
Other	1%

3. The Proposed Development

In Kirklees Sustrans are proposing to resurface and widen the Spen Valley Greenway path to 3m on a 2.335km section south of Oakenshaw tunnel. The proposal follows the Government's Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) guidance, which provides best practice standards for high quality cycle infrastructure.

The proposed improvement works will consist of:

- Widening the existing shared use path from approximately 2.5m (varies) to 3m where possible and resurfacing the full width;
- Lifting short section of path above existing wet area south of Oakenshaw tunnel;
- Addressing areas where tree roots have damaged the path surface and rabbits could potentially undermine the path foundations;
- Redesign two barrier accesses.

The details of the proposed scheme are shown on the following drawings which accompany this application:

- 14048-N-DR-04-1000 Location Plan Overview
- 14048-N-DR-04-1001 Location Plan 1 of 3
- 14048-N-DR-04-1002 Location Plan 2 of 3
- 14048-N-DR-04-1003 Location Plan 3 of 3
- 14048-N-DR-04-1004 Existing Site Plan Overview
- 14048-N-DR-04-1005 Existing Site Plan 1 of 4
- 14048-N-DR-04-1006 Existing Site Plan 2 of 4
- 14048-N-DR-04-1007 Existing Site Plan 3 of 4
- 14048-N-DR-04-1008 Existing Site Plan 4 of 4
- 14048-N-DR-04-2000 Proposed Site Plan Overview

- 14048-N-DR-04-2000 Proposed Site Plan 1 of 4
- 14048-N-DR-04-2000 Proposed Site Plan 2 of 4
- 14048-N-DR-04-2000 Proposed Site Plan 3 of 4
- 14048-N-DR-04-2000 Proposed Site Plan 4 of 4
- 14048-N-DR-04-501 Green Lane: Access Control Improvements
- 14048-N-DR-04-502 Laithe Hall Avenue: Access Control Improvements

4. Planning Policy Context

Planning Designations

The following planning designations have been identified for the site, which have been taken into consideration in the design of the proposals and preparation of this planning application. The site is within:

- The Strategic Green Infrastructure Network (Spen Valley Corridor)
 - The Green Belt
 - A Biodiversity Opportunity Zone owing to it being in the Pennine Foothills
 - The land adjacent to the path is within a Wildlife Habitat Network (woodland)
 - The site is designated as an Existing Core Walking and Cycling Route
-

Relevant National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 9 of the NPPF (revised 2021) focuses on promoting sustainable transport. Paragraph 104 requires “opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use [to be] identified and pursued”. Paragraph 112 states that applications for development should:

- “give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements...”
 - “address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport”
-

c) “create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards”

Chapter 12 explains that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Chapter 15 highlights the importance of protecting and enhancing habitats and biodiversity.

Relevant Local Planning Policy

Kirklees Local Plan (2019)

Kirklees Local Plan (adopted 2019) sets out the policies to shape new development in the district up to 2031. The policies relevant to this proposal can be summarised as follows:

- **Strategic objective 3** seeks for improved transport links within and between Kirklees towns and with neighbouring towns and cities, giving priority to public transport, and to cycling and walking, providing an efficient highway network which supports the district's economy.
- **Strategic objective 6** seek to protect and improve green infrastructure to support health and well-being, giving residents access to good quality open spaces, sport and recreation opportunities, and to support habitats, allowing wildlife to flourish.
- **Policy LP20 Sustainable travel** places pedestrians and cyclists at the top of the user hierarchy for new development
- **Policy LP23 Core walking and cycling network** states that the network will be safeguarded and extended to provide opportunities to reduce the number of car journeys and to link settlements, employment sites and transport hubs. It aims to provide further opportunities for leisure uses, cycling, walking and riding in the countryside.
- **Policy LP24 Design** requires proposals to promote good design by ensuring the form, scale, layout and details of development respect and enhance the existing character; and by ensuring high levels of sustainability including through design that promotes behavioural change, promoting walkable neighbourhoods and making walking and cycling more attractive.

- **Policy LP30 Biodiversity & geodiversity** – this policy seeks for biodiversity and geodiversity to be protected and enhanced. Development is required to result in no net loss or harm to biodiversity and to provide net gains through good design where opportunities exist.
- **Policy LP31 Strategic Green Infrastructure Network** gives priority to safeguarding and enhancing the Green Infrastructure Network, and requires new development to integrate into existing and proposed cycling, bridleway and walking routes, particularly the Core Walking and Cycling Network, by providing new connecting links where opportunities exist. It states that the council will support proposals for the creation of new or enhanced green infrastructure provided these do not conflict with other Local Plan policies.
- **Policy LP33 Trees** – this policy seeks to protect trees and woodland. Any tree loss will require a mitigation scheme.
- **Policy LP46 Healthy, active and safe lifestyles** states that opportunities for walking, cycling and encouraging more sustainable travel choices should be increased. It seeks for the creation of high-quality and inclusive environments incorporating active design and the creation of safe, accessible and green environments.
- **Policy LP56 Facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries** explains that proposals for appropriate facilities associated with outdoor sport or recreation will normally be accepted provided they protect the openness of the Green Belt, are of a reasonable scale, and do not introduce a prominent urban element into a countryside location.

Kirklees Walking and Cycling Strategic Framework 2018 – 2030

Proposed works align with Kirklees Council's objectives for increasing walking and cycling in the region, to create *More and better places to walk and cycle* (B) and *More walking and cycling opportunities* (D).

Kirklees Highway Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2019)

The Sustrans Design Manual (2014): Handbook for cycle friendly design is listed as best practice design for cycling infrastructure, along with Local Transport Note (LTN) 2/08, which has now been replaced by LTN 1/20.

Key Planning Issues

The key planning issues arising from the proposals are considered to be:

- Principle of development
- Design
- Impact on biodiversity and trees
- Impact on the Green Belt
- Impact on the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network and Core Walking and Cycling Network
- Impact on landscape character

Pre-app Advice

A request for pre-application advice was submitted to Kirklees Council on the 16th March and an acknowledgement letter was received on the 17th April. As of 27th June pre-app advice has not been received. Due to funding timeline constraints for the delivery of this project it was decided that a full planning application needed to be submitted prior to receipt of pre-application advice.

5.Planning History

The original planning application for the construction of the existing route was submitted to Kirklees Council and approved on 30th July 1999.

- Reference number: 99/62/91558/E5¹
- Location: Various locations along former Spen Valley railway track, Oakenshaw to Ravensthorpe
- Proposal: 2nd June 1999
- Approved: 30th July 1999

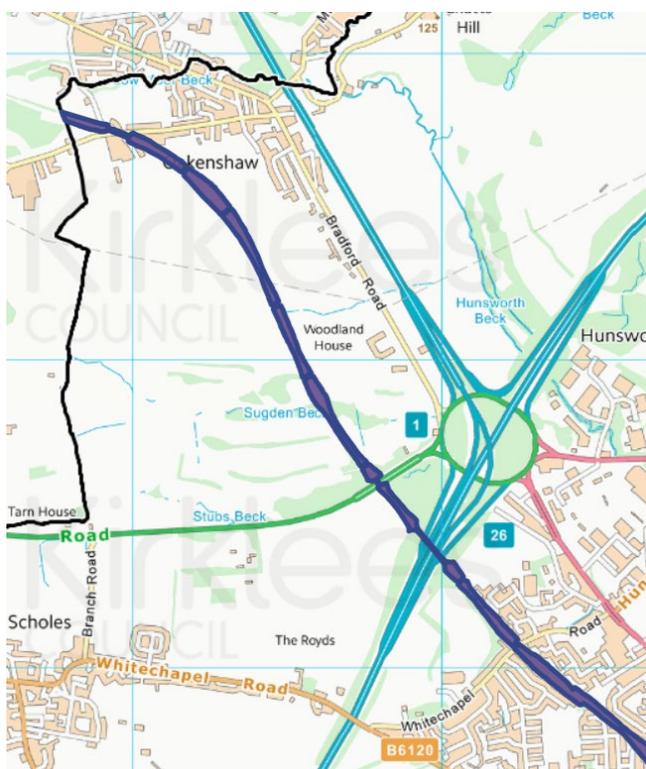


Figure 6: Span Valley 1999 planning application

[Source: Kirklees Council Planning Portal]

A subsequent application was submitted to Bradford Council for the continuation of construction of the existing route north of Oakenshaw.

¹ <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/planning-applications/search-for-planning-applications/detail.aspx?id=99/91558>

- Reference number: 01/01752/REG²
- Location: Land At Transperience Way Low Moor Bradford West Yorkshire
- Proposal: 25th May 2001
- Approved: 18th July 2001

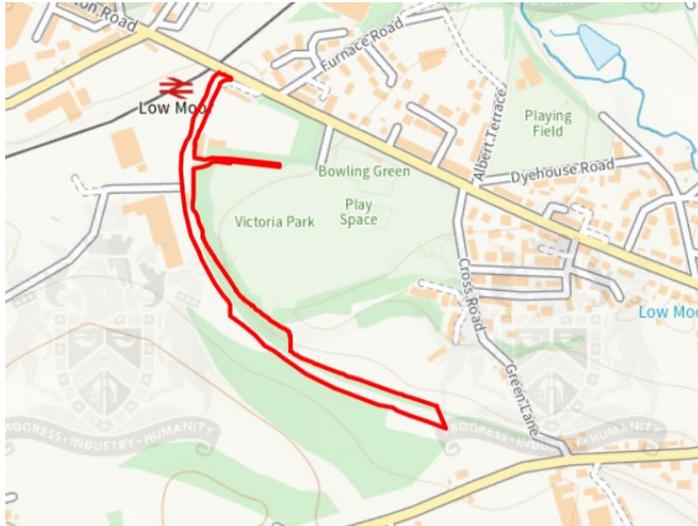


Figure 7: Span Valley 2001 planning application

[Source: Bradford Council Planning Portal]

For information, another planning applications in the site area was submitted by Yorkshire Water Services Ltd in 2010 for the construction of a sewage pipeline along the Spen Valley Greenway

- Reference number: 2009/62/90945/E1³
- Location: On and North-West of Flatt Lane Bridge, Spen Valley Greenway, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire
- Proposal: 25th March 2009
- Approved: 2nd September 2009

² <https://planning.bradford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=0101752REG>

³ <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/planning-applications/search-for-planning-applications/detail.aspx?id=2009/90945>

6. Engagement

Public Consultation

Sustrans have developed an engagement plan for how the local community can be kept informed and have their say on the planned improvements. This will be through a combination of in-person events, social media and written communications.

Community events

To date, Sustrans has undertaken 2 litter picking events on Spen Valley Greenway, attended by residents, as a means of engaging the community in person. These events were advertised on the route itself via noticeboards, as well as through social media, and directly to Sustrans' network local to the area. We received positive feedback in discussion of the works from those who attended.

Our engagement team plans to hold further events on the route. Confirmed events include:

- volunteer workdays on the greenway to plant wildflowers, paint waymarkers, prune vegetation and pick up litter, as a way of talking to local people about Sustrans' work on the greenway
- partner event to the Jo Cox Way ride, 26 July 2023, where Sustrans will have an information stall

Social media and written communications

Sustrans have developed a communications plan for engaging the local community.

Residents that live directly by the greenway have been notified of the planned works and Sustrans' intention to apply for planning permission via a flyer, delivered through the post to each dwelling on the Laithe Hall development, and by the route access on Green Lane.

We have also contacted Oakenshaw Residents Association as another way in which to reach the local community.

All residents contacted have been invited to ask any questions or raise any concerns. We have received no concerns or objections to the works.

As the project progresses, we will continue to inform and engage residents about the project. We will work with them to understand how we can minimise disruption the work might cause. We will promote healthy, happy lifestyles and reducing carbon emissions, through active travel and access to greenspaces.

Stakeholder Engagement

Sustrans have undertaken stakeholder mapping to establish all parties which need to be engaged as part of the project, and to what degree. This information informed our communications plan, which covers stakeholder engagement alongside community engagement.

Local Authority

Ongoing conversations have occurred between Sustrans and Kirklees Council and Bradford Council to ensure agreement with what we are proposing.

Officers from Kirklees Council that have been involved are:

- Rachel Seymour, Active Travel Officer
- Esther Barnes, Project Manager Transport Strategy & Policy
- Giles Cheatham, Public Rights of Way Officer

Officers from Bradford Council that have been involved are:

- Emma Young, Active Travel Officer
- Kavin Stoddart, Senior Engineer Highway Services
- Fiona Plane, PRoW Officer
- Mick Priestley, Principal Parks and Greenspaces Development Manager

Community safety

Representatives from the Safer Kirklees team at Kirklees Council attended one of our community engagement events. We are collaborating with them to make users of the Spenn Valley Greenway feel safe, and to inform path users on how best to report illegitimate users

of the route. We will continue to keep informed and collaborate with Safer Kirklees as the project progresses.

Elected politicians

In anticipation of applying for planning permission, Sustrans has written to the local MPs and all councilors for the constituencies and wards that the greenway covers. All have been given the opportunity to discuss the proposed improvements.

Sustrans are proud to have a particularly positive relationship with Kim Leadbeater, MP for Batley and Spen, whose office are very supportive of our work.

We will continue to notify elected politicians of project progress.

Schools

We identified four local schools whose pupils could be affected by the route closure. We have contacted both schools to inform them of our intention to submit a planning application for the route improvements. We will continue to keep the schools informed on the project progress and engage with them for community events. The schools are:

- Whitecliffe Mount School
- Woodlands C of E Primary School
- Whitechapel Church of England Primary School
- Scholes Village Primary School

Affected businesses

Sustrans have contacted two businesses adjacent to the Spen Valley Greenway that may be affected by closure of the route at the time of construction, to notify them of the improvement plans. We will consult with them to establish how best to reduce any disruption caused, and make sure to give them fair notice of when the route will be closed.

Businesses contacted:

- Cleckheaton Golf Club
- Bridgefield Stables

Local interest groups

Sustrans have notified several local interest groups in the area that use the Spen Valley Greenway and so might be affected by the route closure. In the case of CycleKirklees, we have also consulted them with regards to any possible diversions, in an attempt to utilize their local expertise.

A representative from Tandem Trekkers attended one of our engagement events on the greenway.

We will continue to engage with these groups as a means to inform local community members likely to have an interest in the proposed improvements, and also to potentially collaborate when promoting the improved access to greenspace and opportunities for active travel they will bring about.

Groups contacted:

- CycleKirklees
- Tandem Trekkers
- Streetbikes

7. Key Considerations

Design

Surfacing

It is proposed to widen the existing shared use path from approximately 2.5m (varies) to 3m where possible. This is to comply with LTN 1/20 which states that for shared use routes which carry up to 300 pedestrians and up to 300 cyclists a minimum width of 3m is recommended (LTN 1/20 para. 6.5.7). The whole width of the path will be resurfaced with a smooth, sealed, black asphalt layer. Figure 8 shows a typical construction cross section.

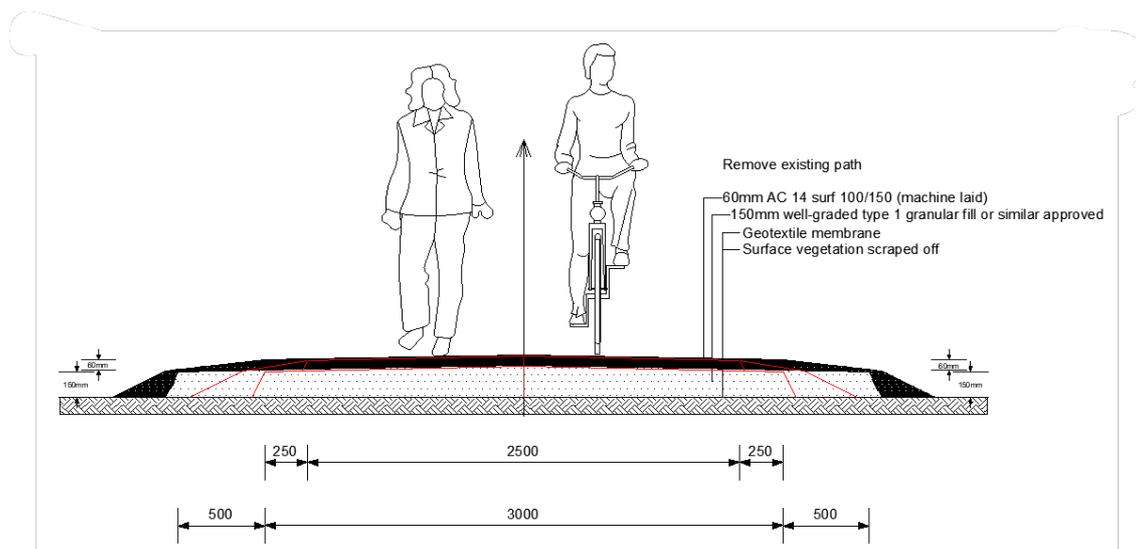


Figure 8: Typical standard construction detail (outer dimensions indicate typical widening approach)

A high-level tree survey has been carried out to determine where trees are to be removed to help protect the path surface. This has been kept to a minimum. For more information please refer to the following 'Ecology & Trees' section. Where possible trees will be retained,

and the path will be designed to employ a 'no-dig' construction method (see Figure 9). This is where the formal path will be constructed over root protection zones.

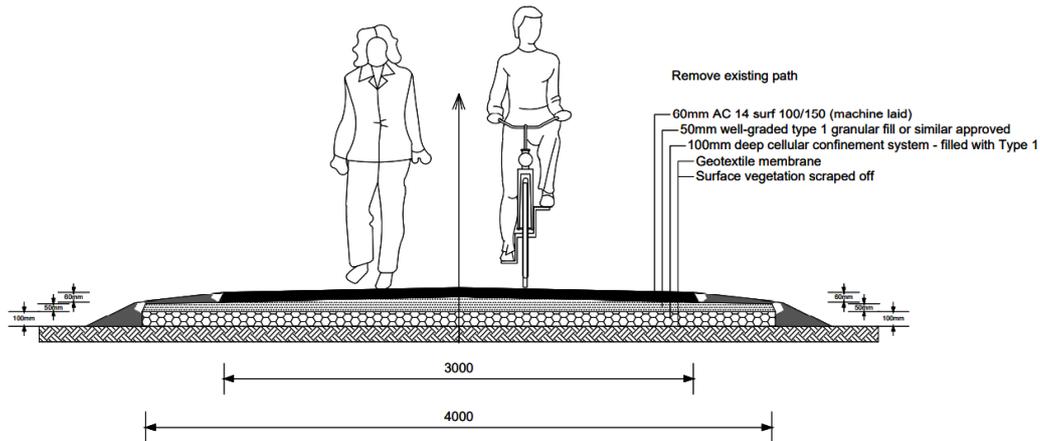


Figure 9: Typical no-dig construction cross section

The location of these two path construction types can be found on drawings 14048-N-DR-04-2000 to 2004.

To prevent rabbits from undermining the path the area will be cleared of rabbits and mesh laid to prevent future damage. It should be noted that there is no evidence that damage to the path has occurred, this is a preventative measure.

Drainage

Drainage for the path is for surface water to runoff on to the verge and infiltrate. This is exactly replicating the existing acceptable situation and the relatively minor increase in surfaced area of the path will not increase the overall land's capacity to attenuate the drainage.

Approximately a 150m section of path immediately south of Oakenshaw Tunnel will be lifted slightly to address a known localised wet area which results in water pooling on a short section. Details of this can be found on drawing 14048-N-DR-04-2001.

Access

User access

Path users can currently access the path from Green Lane, footpath SPE/24/20, footpath SPE/25/10, footpath SPE/42/10, Laithe Hall Avenue and Whitechapel Road. The location of these access points will not be changed. No new accesses will be created.

Construction access and compound

The preferred construction access is via Laithe Hall Avenue. Landowner permission is being sought to get agreement to access Sustrans' land via the existing access point. It is proposed that the site compound will be located within Sustrans' land at this location (see drawing 14048-N-DR-04-2004).

The second choice would be access via Green Lane, which is just north of Oakenshaw Tunnel (see drawing 14048-N-DR-04-2001). There is an existing vehicle gated access at this location which is used by Sustrans for maintenance access. The road leading up to the gate (via Cross Road) is narrow and steep therefore a judgement needs to be made whether construction vehicles can physically access it and have sufficient area to turn round.

In the event that both these accesses become unviable the backup option is via Vine Street which is 400m south of the southern extents of the scheme. Using this access would be possible but would add cost and time to the works.

Access over bridges

Within the section to be improved are two bridges owned by National Highways; Chain Bar Viaduct Bridge (over the M62) and the A58 bridge. National Highways have been contacted and have agreed that Sustrans can move construction equipment across both bridges. Dialogue is ongoing to agree the protection works required. All other bridges within the site are owned by Sustrans.

PRoW

The majority of the scheme is on a permissive path, however there is a section of bridleway at the northern end of the site as far as Green Lane.

Bradford Council PRow map

Bridleway shown in dark green



Kirklees Council PRow map

Bridleway shown in bright green



Figure 10: Excerpts of PRow maps from Bradford Council and Kirklees Council

Sustrans has engaged with PRow Officers at Bradford Council and Kirklees Council to discuss impact on the PRow during the works.

It is proposed that Sustrans will apply for a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) in order to temporarily close the path during the works.

The initial proposed diversion can be found below. This is yet to be agreed with the PRoW Officers.

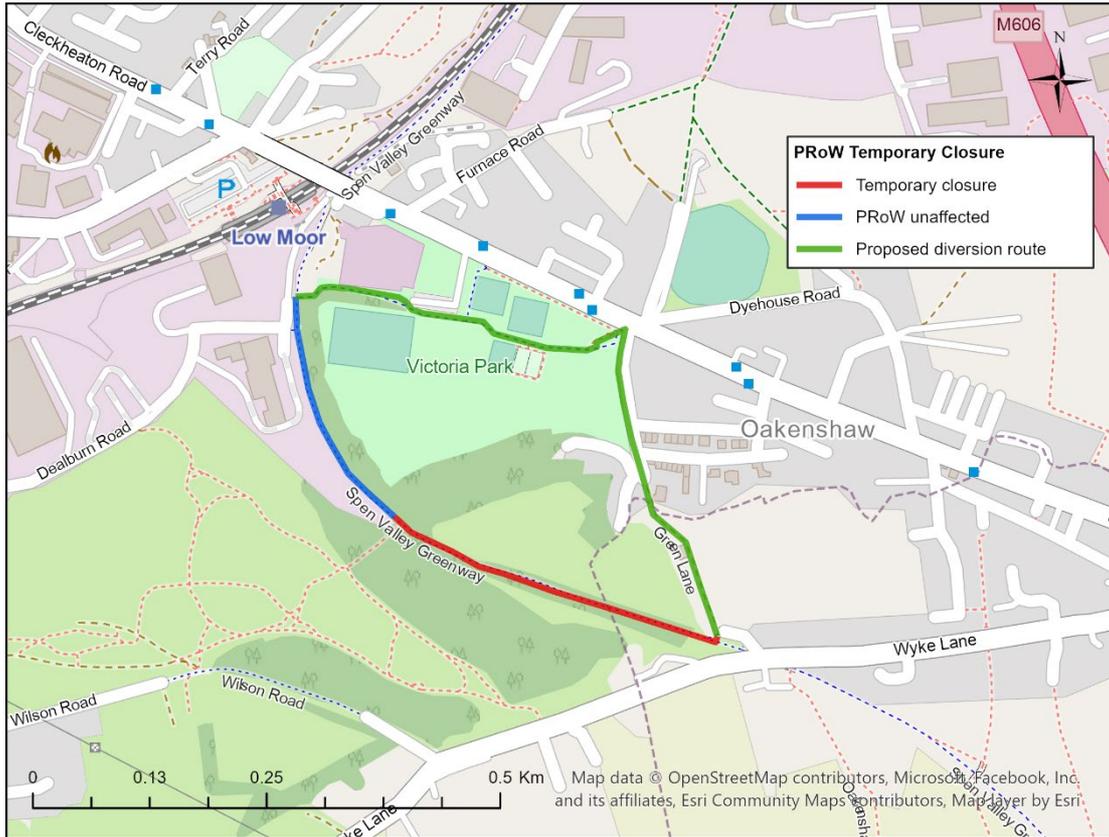


Figure 11: Map showing existing PRoW and potential diversion

There will be no long-term effect on the PRoW.

Barriers

It is proposed to remove the existing non-compliant barriers, to ensure that those on adapted cycles, with disabilities, or with pushchairs can access the route in the same way as those unimpaired cyclists and walkers.

At Green Lane one of the metal rails will be removed from the western pedestrian access point to allow a 1.5m gap. The vehicle access will be unaffected. At Laithe Hall Avenue the two existing bollards will be removed and replaced with one bollard in the centre of the path. This will provide a 1.5m gap on each side of the bollard.

See drawings numbers 14048-N-DR-04-501 and 14048-N-DR-04-502 for more detail.

Ecology & Trees

The Arboricultural and Ecological aim of this project is to develop a walking, cycling and wheeling route which protects and enhances the integrity of the existing green corridor.

The following ecological documents have been submitted as part of the planning application and cover the whole length of the works:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEA), February 2023
- Ecology Update, March 2023 – details results from a bat roost and hibernation risk assessment at Oakenshaw Tunnel, and survey of badger activity
- Arboricultural Planning Statement, June 2023
- Ecology Method Statement, July 2023
- Ecology - Construction Environmental Management Plan, July 2023

An arboricultural method statement will also be submitted and added to the application.

Ecology

The following table summarises the key mitigation measures from the ecological report, provides an update since the report was written and states future intentions.

Feature	Mitigation	Update	Future intentions
Bluebells	Avoidance of disturbance if English bluebells are encountered.	Survey undertaken on 23 rd May 2023 by Sustrans ecologist found no English Bluebells present within the proposed development corridor.	No further action required
Amphibians	Avoidance by timing; targeted vegetation clearance outside hibernation period and under a working method statement.		Method statement to be submitted as part of planning application.
Nesting Birds	Timing of works to avoid nesting season (Mar to Aug inclusive)		Method Statement and checking survey by suitably qualified ecologist if works are required during nesting season.

Feature	Mitigation	Update	Future intentions
Bats - trees	Arboricultural work required on any of the mature trees within the development's footprint should be preceded by an inspection of any potential bat roosting features (prf).	Prf of trees within the development zone was undertaken on 23 rd May 2023. This found no evidence of bats roosting in trees along the route.	Method statement and report to be submitted as part of planning application. Prf to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to commencement of works on trees identified for removal.
Bats - structures	Re-surfacing works unlikely to cause disturbance if works carried out to a method statement.	Survey undertaken by ecologist in March 2023 showed that Oakenshaw tunnel has potential for summer roosting bats and some limited potential for hibernating bats.	Checking survey to be implemented prior to works. All works to follow method statement.
Badgers	Redacted		
Hedgehogs	Avoidance by timing of works to ensure vegetation clearance is outside hibernation period. Works to be undertaken to a method statement.		Method statement to be submitted as part of planning application
Rabbits	Removal of rabbits prior to installation of mesh.		Removal of rabbits prior to installation of mesh.
Invasive non-native species (INNS)	Avoidance. t Works to be implement to a method statement.	Survey undertaken by Sustrans ecologist on 23 rd May 2023 found no evidence of Himalayan Balsam	Method statement to be submitted as part of planning application.

Trees

As the works involve widening of the existing route surface by 0.5m, impacts to trees are proposed to be relatively minor, as such it is not considered proportionate to undertake a full tree survey. A high-level survey was undertaken identifying only trees to be removed, and areas where “no dig” construction methods are to be undertaken.

The specific development proposals do not require total loss of any of the primary arboricultural features. Tree losses required are limited either to low quality individuals or low impact losses of trees within groups. The proposals are compatible with the retention of remaining trees.

The impacts to trees can be mitigated with appropriate protective measures, and sensitive work methods. The residual impact is likely to be insignificant/minor in terms of harm, but the benefits of the proposal outweigh this.

For more information please refer to the Arboricultural Planning Statement.

Landscape & Visual Impact

As there is already a path in this location, the proposed upgrades will not be a significant change to the existing landscape setting which is rural but close to built-up areas. The scale, materials and colour of the improved path are considered to have no detrimental visual impact on the landscape or its character, which remains rural.

A Green Belt Statement will be submitted and added to the application.

Flood Risk

The proposed scheme is in Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency’s Flood Map. As the red line boundary of the site is more than 1 hectare the Environment Agency state that a Flood Risk Assessment is required. This has been submitted as part of the planning application. It concludes that the impact of the scheme on flooding is negligible.

8. Planning Assessment

When assessing the proposals against planning policy, it is evident that both national and local policy promotes sustainable transport options such as walking and cycling. Given that there is an existing – yet poor quality – walking and cycling path in this location, the principle of upgrading the path is acceptable in policy terms.

Upgrading the Spen Valley Greenway directly aligns with Kirklees Walking and Cycling Strategic Framework, by creating a better place to walk and cycle and increasing opportunities for people to walk and cycle. The proposals also help meet strategic objectives 3 and 6 of the Kirklees Local Plan, by improving walking and cycling links between two Kirklees Towns, and at the same time improving green infrastructure and giving residents access to a high-quality open space for recreation. This is in accordance with policies LP31 and LP23 which seek to safeguard and enhance the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network and Core Walking and Cycling Network, and also policy LP46 which promotes the creation of safe, accessible environments for active travel. By improving the quality of the existing active travel route, it will become a safer and more attractive option for local people to walk, wheel or cycle between Oakenshaw and Cleckheaton, including disabled users with wheelchairs, pushchairs and mobility scooters.

As described above, the ecology and arboricultural context have been assessed and the proposals designed to limit impact and/or mitigate against biodiversity loss and tree loss. This has been balanced with the desire to bring the path up to LTN 1/20 standards and increase accessibility. The creation of a sensitively designed route which integrates with its surroundings and the character of the area is in line with Local Plan policies LP30, LP33 and LP24. The form, scale and material choice does not differ greatly from the existing path, and will be very similar in appearance and character. As detailed in section 7, the design of the path upgrades is based on Government Design Guidance LTN 1/20, which is in line with guidance in Kirklees Highway Design Guide SPD.

The proposals are within the Green Belt, therefore the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is an important consideration. A Green Belt Statement accompanies this application – please refer to this for a full assessment of how policy LP56 will be met.

9. Conclusions

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the upgrade of a traffic-free shared use cycle and pedestrian path between Oakenshaw and Cleckheaton, known as the Spen Valley Greenway.

The proposal involves widening the existing path from 2.5m (varies) to 3m and resurfacing. Where there are existing issues with foundation caused by tree roots and rabbits, these will be addressed. Other improvements includes lifting a short section of path out of a wet area south of Oakenshaw tunnel and modification of two barrier accesses.

The proposals have been developed to provide improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity, safety and accessibility. It also results in this section of the Spen Valley Greenway complying with LTN 1/20 by providing a 3m wide path. We believe the upgrades will provide a marked improvement for all local people and visitors seeking to travel along the Greenway.

Given that there is an existing shared use path in this location, which planning permission was granted for, the principle of development is deemed to be acceptable. We have demonstrated that the proposed development is in accordance with national and local policy.

Appendix - site photographs

This is a selection of photographs of the route starting at the north end.



Greenway north of Oakenshaw Tunnel



Green Lane access



Inside Oakenshaw Tunnel



Looking north to Oakenshaw Tunnel



Greenway south of Oakenshaw Tunnel



Typical greenway north of golf course



Typical greenway north of golf course



Typical greenway adjacent to golf course



Typical greenway between A58 and M62



Greenway adjacent to Laithe Hall Avenue access



Access ramp to Whitechapel Road