

MELTHAM GREENWAY PHASE 3

Proposed Public Multi-User Path on Former Railway Corridor

Project: Creation of a Public Path on a Disused Railway Line

Applicant: Kirklees Council

Site: Former Meltham Railway Branch from Netherton to South Crossland

Planning Authority: Kirklees Council

Date: 08/07/2026

CLIMATE CHANGE STATEMENT

1. Introduction

This Climate Change Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the creation of a public multi-user path along a disused railway corridor. The statement demonstrates how the proposed development contributes towards climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives through the promotion of sustainable transport, enhancement of green infrastructure, biodiversity improvements and resilient design measures. The proposal involves the sustainable reuse of an existing transport corridor and directly supports local and national objectives relating to climate change, decarbonisation and sustainable development.

2. Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to ensure that the planning system supports the transition to a low-carbon future and helps improve resilience to climate change.

The proposal supports these objectives through:

- Promotion of active travel.
- Reduction in private vehicle dependency.
- Enhancement of ecological networks.
- Sustainable drainage provision.
- Climate-resilient landscape design.

The development also contributes to the environmental objective of sustainable development through protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

3. Climate Change Mitigation

3.1 Promotion of Active Travel

The principal climate change benefit of the scheme is the creation of a safe and attractive route for walking, wheeling and cycling.

The route will:

- Encourage modal shift from private car use.
- Support sustainable travel choices.
- Improve access to key destinations.
- Promote walking and cycling for short local journeys.
- Integrate with existing active travel networks by providing a traffic-free route on a former railway alignment, the scheme will help reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions over the lifetime of the development.

3.2 Reuse of Existing Infrastructure

The proposal represents the reuse of an existing transport corridor rather than development on greenfield land.

Benefits include:

- Reduced need for major earthworks.
- Reduced requirements for new infrastructure.
- Retention of existing landscape structure.
- Lower embodied carbon compared with the creation of an entirely new transport corridor.

The retention and adaptation of the former railway alignment contributes to resource efficiency and supports circular economy principles.

3.3 Low Carbon Construction

The project will seek to minimise construction-related carbon emissions through:

- Reuse of existing materials where practicable.
- Retention of existing landform.
- Retention of existing vegetation.
- Minimisation of imported construction materials.
- Efficient construction programming.
- Responsible waste management practices.

Where feasible, locally sourced materials will be specified to reduce transportation impacts.

4. Climate Change Adaptation

4.1 Green Infrastructure

Disused railway corridors frequently function as important green infrastructure assets.

The proposal will maintain and strengthen this role through:

- Retention of existing tree cover.
- Protection of established habitat corridors.
- Habitat enhancement measures.
- Native planting.
- Species-rich grassland creation where appropriate.

These measures improve resilience to climate change by supporting ecological connectivity and reducing habitat fragmentation.

4.2 Urban Cooling and Carbon Storage

Existing and proposed vegetation will contribute towards:

- Carbon sequestration.
- Reduction of urban heat island effects.
- Improved microclimate conditions.
- Increased shade provision for users.

Tree and shrub retention will therefore contribute to both climate mitigation and adaptation objectives.

5. Sustainable Drainage and Flood Risk

5.1 Surface Water Management

The three metre wide path of tarmac will be of a camber and drain into the existing embankment. Consultation with Paul Farndale the Lead Local Flood Authority has confirmed that this will not be expected to cause any localised issues. The drainage is therefore dealt with within the site

5.2 Flood Resilience

The proposed path has been designed using an existing railway formation that has historically functioned as a robust transport corridor.

The route will be designed to:

- Maintain natural drainage pathways.
- Avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- Provide resilient surfacing suitable for future climate conditions.
- Minimise erosion risks.

6. Biodiversity and Climate Resilience

Biodiversity enhancement forms a key component of the proposed development. The site includes

- Native woodland enhancement.
- Long-term habitat management.

These enhancements improve ecosystem resilience and help species adapt to changing climatic conditions.

7. Health and Wellbeing Benefits

Climate change mitigation is closely linked to healthier lifestyles and reduced reliance on motor vehicles.

The proposed route will encourage:

- Walking.
- Cycling.
- Wheeling.
- Outdoor recreation.
- Active travel commuting.

The resulting health benefits may contribute to wider sustainability objectives through reduced transport emissions and increased community resilience.

8. Long-Term Sustainability

The proposal has been designed to deliver long-term environmental benefits through:

Climate Objective	Project Contribution
Carbon Reduction	Increased walking and cycling opportunities
Climate Adaptation	Resilient landscape and drainage design
Biodiversity Recovery	Habitat retention and enhancement
Sustainable Land Use	Reuse of existing railway corridor
Health and Wellbeing	Active recreation and sustainable travel

9. Conclusion

The proposed public path on the disused railway corridor represents a positive response to the challenges of climate change.

The development will:

- Encourage low-carbon travel.
- Reduce dependency on private vehicles.
- Reuse existing infrastructure.
- Enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- Improve resilience to extreme weather events.
- Promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles.
- Support local and national climate change objectives.

Overall, the proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development that will provide long-term climate, environmental, social and health benefits and is fully aligned with the principles of sustainable development and climate resilience.

10. Policy Alignment and Climate Change Assessment

10.1 Kirklees Climate Change Action Plan

Kirklees Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and subsequently adopted the **Kirklees Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP)**. The Action Plan establishes a district-wide ambition for Kirklees to become “**Net Zero and Climate Ready by 2038**” and recognises the need for both carbon reduction and climate adaptation measures. The Plan specifically identifies the promotion of active travel, increased access to green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement and climate resilience as key mechanisms for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving environmental outcomes. [\[kirklees.gov.uk\]](https://www.kirklees.gov.uk), [\[kirkleesto...ther.co.uk\]](https://www.kirkleestogether.co.uk)

The proposed public path directly supports the objectives of the CCAP by:

- Encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling in place of private car journeys.
- Reusing an existing transport corridor rather than requiring new transport infrastructure.
- Increasing access to greenspace and recreational opportunities.
- Enhancing habitat connectivity along a strategic green corridor.
- Improving local climate resilience through landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures.

The proposal therefore represents a practical local contribution towards Kirklees' ambition to become both **Net Zero and Climate Ready by 2038**. [\[kirklees.gov.uk\]](https://www.kirklees.gov.uk), [\[kirkleesto...ther.co.uk\]](https://www.kirkleestogether.co.uk)

10.2 Kirklees Local Plan

The adopted **Kirklees Local Plan (2019)** recognises that addressing climate change is central to sustainable development and that planning decisions should actively contribute towards mitigation and adaptation measures. The Local Plan notes that planning can influence greenhouse gas emissions through the delivery of green infrastructure, sustainable design and the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport. [\[consult.kirklees.gov.uk\]](https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/consult), [\[kirklees.gov.uk\]](https://www.kirklees.gov.uk)

The proposal is considered to align particularly with the following Local Plan themes:

Climate Change

The Local Plan identifies the need to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Increase resilience to climate change.
- Deliver sustainable forms of development.
- Support green infrastructure provision.

The proposed route contributes to all of these objectives through active travel infrastructure, sustainable drainage measures and habitat enhancement.

[\[consult.kirklees.gov.uk\]](#)

Transport

The Local Plan seeks an integrated transport network and increased uptake of sustainable modes of travel. The proposed traffic-free route provides infrastructure that supports walking and cycling and contributes towards reducing reliance on private vehicles. [\[kirklees-council.co.uk\]](#)

Strategic Green Infrastructure

Disused railway corridors typically function as strategic green infrastructure assets and ecological corridors. The retention and enhancement of the railway corridor will support landscape connectivity and public access objectives consistent with Local Plan policies relating to green infrastructure. The Local Plan identifies a Strategic Green Infrastructure Network and Wildlife Habitat Network as important environmental assets. [\[kirklees.gov.uk\]](#), [\[kirklees-council.co.uk\]](#)

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The Local Plan seeks protection and enhancement of biodiversity assets and ecological connectivity. The proposal presents opportunities to strengthen existing habitat links and improve biodiversity value through habitat management and ecological enhancement works. [\[kirklees-council.co.uk\]](#), [\[kirklees.gov.uk\]](#)

10.3 West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan

The Mayor's **West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (LTP)** seeks to deliver an integrated transport system that prioritises public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling through the development of the **Weaver Network**. The LTP identifies transport decarbonisation as a key requirement in achieving West Yorkshire's ambition to become a net-zero carbon region by 2038. [\[westyorks-ca.gov.uk\]](#), [\[westyorkshire.gov.co.uk\]](#)

The LTP emphasises:

- Increased walking and cycling.
- Reduced private car dependency.
- Improved health and wellbeing.
- Enhanced connectivity between communities.
- Reduced transport-related carbon emissions.

The proposed railway-path scheme directly contributes towards these objectives through the provision of a safe, attractive and accessible active-travel corridor. As a former transport corridor with low gradients and direct connections between settlements, the route represents an ideal opportunity to encourage modal shift and increase sustainable travel. [\[westyorks-ca.gov.uk\]](#), [\[westyorkshire.gov.co.uk\]](#)

The scheme is therefore fully aligned with the objectives of the emerging Weaver Network and wider regional transport decarbonisation strategies. [\[westyorks-ca.gov.uk\]](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk), [\[westyorks-ca.gov.uk\]](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk)

Planning Conclusion

The proposed public path strongly aligns with the objectives of the Kirklees Climate Change Action Plan, the Kirklees Local Plan and the Mayor's West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan by promoting active travel, reducing transport-related carbon emissions, enhancing green infrastructure and delivering opportunities for biodiversity net gain. The development therefore makes a positive and measurable contribution towards local and regional climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives and should attract significant weight in favour of the proposal within the planning balance. [\[kirklees.gov.uk\]](https://www.kirklees.gov.uk), [\[consult.kirklees.gov.uk\]](https://www.consult.kirklees.gov.uk), [\[westyorks-ca.gov.uk\]](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk)

References; Kirklees Local Plan policies such as **LP30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity**, **LP31 Strategic Green Infrastructure Network**, **LP24 Design**, **LP25 Landscape**, **LP51 Sustainable Travel**, and **LP52 Parking**,