

Combined Planning Statements

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

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1. Executive Summary

This statement supports a planning application for creation of a public path along a disused railway corridor. The proposal promotes active travel, biodiversity enhancement, healthy lifestyles and sustainable connectivity.

2. Site Description

The application site comprises the plateau on top of an embankment along a former railway corridor extending between South Crosland picnic area on Crosland factory Lane and Fold Farm Lane at Netherton. The route contains former railway infrastructure, and is mainly flat scrub and grassland in a linear form between wooded embankments.

3. The principal aim of the project is to create a suitable, surfaced route for walkers and cyclists along the old railway track which will form part of the strategic routeway the Meltham Greenway. The surface should be useable year round and suitable for safe access. The track must be durable and take account of leaf litter and must be designed to drain easily by using cambers and crossfalls. The railway embankment now has significant tree cover which is protected by a group TPO. The project seeks to celebrate the landscape and give more people access to the woodland parcel and the wider landscape by creating an accessible, sustainable transport link.

4. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The proposal supports sustainable development objectives, healthy communities, sustainable transport and environmental enhancement.

The Programme objectives related to this are as follows:

ATF4		HBC_BIC	HBC_BIC
Programme Objectives		Spending Objectives	Spending Objectives
To increase regional and local levels of walking, both for leisure and for commuting purposes.	SO1	SO1: To upgrade towpath on the Huddersfield Broad Canal to a high-quality cycle route connecting people to urban centres, key employment sites and economic opportunities by delivering 5.8km of towpath and 9 access points through the length of the scheme by 2025.	SO1: To upgrade towpath on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal to a high-quality cycle route connecting people to urban centres, key employment sites and economic opportunities by delivering 4.4km of towpath by 2025.
To work towards addressing the climate emergency and the net zero by 2038 goal.	SO4	SO2: To increase the numbers of walking trips on the route by 23% and cycling trips on the route by 77% by 2030.	SO2: To increase the numbers of walking trips on the route by 23% and cycling trips on the route by 20% by 2030 as calculated through ATFs scheme uplift tool used in the appraisal of the scheme.
Contribute to an increase in cycling and the use of the active travel network.	SO2	SO3: Enhance and complement other planned transport projects and programmes to deliver a comprehensive network of cycling and walking infrastructure across the region through, in combination with existing and proposed schemes on the HNC, completing an almost continuous high quality towpath route from Marsden to Cooper Bridge.	SO3: Link to, enhance and complement other planned transport projects and programmes to deliver a comprehensive network of cycling and walking infrastructure across the region through completing the full 12.1 km Huddersfield Narrow Canal upgrade from Huddersfield to Marsden.
To improve the safety of travel for women and girls.	SO5	SO4: Contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions, through modal shift from car travel with 5% of users on the canal towpath between Colne Bridge and Huddersfield being commuter users transferring from highway by 2030.	SO4: Contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions, through modal shift from car travel with 5% of users on the canal towpath between Marsden and Slaithwaite being commuter users transferring from highway by 2030.
To align with existing WYCA, national, and local goals and improve sustainability across the region.		SO5: Create a safe and attractive environment for active travel modes for all users through providing a facility that is compliant with prevailing design standards that people want to use with at least 75% of users considering the scheme to be safe and attractive to use by 2030.	SO5: Create a safe and attractive environment for active travel modes for all users through providing a facility that is compliant with prevailing design standards that people want to use with at least 75% of users considering the scheme to be safe and attractive to use by 2030.

4.1.

5. Planning Application Context

No planning application history to the majority of the site except the areas associated to the housing development.

6. Planning History

- 6.1. Application site
- 6.2. Surrounding area
- 6.3. Applications at Former railway station and goods yard, Fold Farm, Netherton Fold, Netherton, HD4 7HB
- 6.4. 2016/90647 – Outline for residential development – Section 106 outline permission
- 6.5. Note – Outline permission granted for residential development to the east of the site subject to a Section 106 agreement to secure various obligations including £58,000 towards the cost of implementing pedestrian/cycleway along redundant railtrack.
- 6.6. 2019/92361 – Erection of 19 dwellings – Section 106 full permission
- 6.7. Note – Section 106 agreement includes financial obligation of £58,000 towards provision of an extension to Meltham Greenway
- 6.8. 2020/93669 – Discharge of conditions 5-9 and 13-16 on previous permission
- 6.9. 2019/92361 – Split decision
- 6.10. 2021/94065 – Variation condition 2 (plans) on previous permission
2019/92361 –
- 6.11. Section 106 removal/modification of condition
- 6.12. 2021/94576 – Discharge of condition 11 (validation report) on previous permission
- 6.13. 2019/92361 – Approved
- 6.14. 2021/94606 – Variation of condition 2 (plans) on previous permission
2019/92361 –
- 6.15. Section 106 removal/modification of condition
- 6.16. 2022/92365 - Variation of condition 2 (plans) on previous permission
2019/92361 –
- 6.17. Section 106 removal/modification of condition
- 6.18. 2023/91243 – Discharge of conditions 10, 12 – 14 on previous permission

- 6.19. 2022/92365 – split decision
- 6.20. Enforcement
- 6.21. No enforcement history

7. Access Considerations for all Users

7.1. The route is to be suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and accessible for wheelchair and mobility scooter users. There is demand for horse riding but the current width is not conducive to provision for horse riding as currently proposed. The 3m of width of proposed surfacing will enable passing between cyclists and pedestrians as per guidelines in LTN -120 - see especially table 6-3 for sites with up to 300 cyclists per hour. Access controls will barrier access to cars: This is currently in existence at the picnic site entrance on Crosland Factory Lane and access restriction barriers to deter motorbikes are proposed at the other end at Fold Farm Lane.

Table 6-3: Recommended minimum widths for shared use routes carrying up to 300 pedestrians per hour

Cycle flows	Minimum width
Up to 300 cyclists per hour	3.0m
Over 300 cyclists per hour	4.5m

7.1.1.

7.2. Details of the layout

The solution used across the district for this type of path is to use a hardcore base with a macadam base and surface course. The existing track bed along much of the route will provide a stable surface on which to build this construction which will minimise the need for excavation of soft spots. The construction will use a geotextile to spread the load and reduce emergence of vegetation through the surface.

7.3. The fencing of the woodland is proposed to be stock proof fencing enhanced with timber post and rail fence for better longevity. Access over this fence line will be provided though a very limited number of gates where required for maintenance. This fence type is in line with that expected in the rural environment.

7.4. Scale/Appearance of the development

The site includes a group TPO. This group of trees is a feature in the wider landscape and can be seen from various receptors such as Woodbottom Road, Healey Houses and from the pavement of Huddersfield Road where the site is below the pavement level. The proposal seeks to preserve and celebrate the unique character of the group of trees on the embankment without harming the

environment, and protect it in perpetuity by establishing a use in addition to the environmental benefits.



Photo: From Woodbottom Road looking towards the site indicated with a red line.

Healey Houses

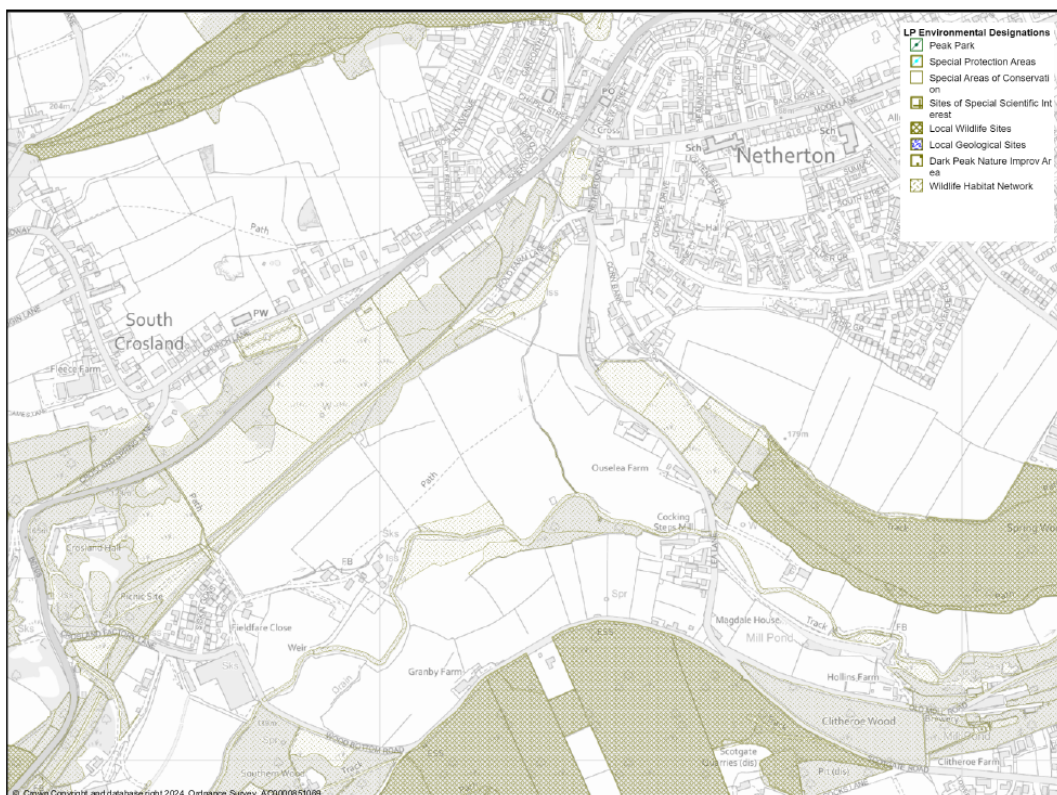


Photo: Healey Houses looking towards the site

8. The path alignment is hidden by the trees.

9. Habitats and Protected species

9.1. The site is within an area designated as a Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network. The functional role of the habitat network is not expected to be affected by the surfacing of the top of the embankment as the vegetation is almost completely on the bank sides not the top and the top is already disturbed ground that has been regularly traversed. Figure 3 of the report ER-7872 shows all other designations in the vicinity none of which should be directly effected by the works. Ecological surveys have been done and indicate further consideration of protected species are required as the project progresses.



9.2. © Crown Copyright and database right 2024. Ordnance Survey 100008510/99

9.3. Ecological Reports carried out to date:

- 9.3.1. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal ER-7872-01
- 9.3.2. CEMP – Construction Ecological Management Plan
- 9.3.3. Badger Assessment and Report ER-7872-02
- 9.3.4. Invasive non-native species survey ER-7872-04
- 9.3.5. Priority Roost Assessment of Tree BRSA SI 7872-01

9.4. Main Findings – Habitat and Protected Species:

- 9.4.1. Much of the site is of high ecological value consisting mostly of lowland mixed deciduous woodland in poor condition. There is also a small section of scrub at the edge of the residential development.
- 9.4.2. Some of the trees proposed for removal have been identified as potential bat roosts. A bat emergence survey is indicated prior to tree removal. In addition, the structures on site may also present further roosting sites so if they are to be disturbed an assessment of bat roosts and works to mitigate will be needed.
 - 9.4.2.1. Bat Inspection – would need to be done peak Bat season May-August.
 - 9.4.2.2. Bat hibernation survey (regards to structure) Dec-Feb
 - 9.4.2.3. Mitigation is likely to involve habitat creation/bat boxes.

- 9.4.2.4. If works need to be done that will disturb a bat roost the works will need a licence issued by Natural England. Licence process reported as likely 6-10 weeks but may vary.

9.4.3. The site has been identified as having badgers in the vicinity though no **main sets** on site or within a sensitive distance currently discovered. Pre commencement checks required to mitigate the impacts of construction. Require a badger method statement by an ecologist showing the detailed arrangements. An application for a license to work next to badgers is expected to be required but will be defined in that method statement. Information control required as badger set locations is sensitive information. Expected that the method statement may also require that works do not take place during the period December to end of June.

9.5. **Great crested newts** – suggest as limited risk of GCN a method statement will be produced setting out reasonable Avoidance Measures to minimise the risk of works impacting on this species.

10. Further ecologist works proposed:

- 10.1. Ecological management Plan
- 10.2. Update Badger survey prior to start of works to area identified in CEMP (30m from site boundary).
- 10.3. A badger method statement showing the detailed arrangements based on directions in the CEMP and the above for areas of potential disturbance. If risks identified that are liable to disturb a set then a license to work next to badgers will be needed.
- 10.4. Great Crested Newt method statement.
- 10.5. Preworks Destructive search and refuge creation for hedgehogs and amphibians and reptiles.
- 10.6. Bat emergence survey May-Aug. Survey of the bridge – depending on works (and timing) required. Bat hibernation survey Dec- Feb.
- 10.7. Climbed inspection of the 2 trees to be removed with known potential bat roost to check regards having potential roost for bats. (or other equivalent methodology). If bats found works under license may be required.
- 10.8. A nesting bird survey immediately prior to tree removal if works not within Sept – Feb.
- 10.9. Ecological clerk of works - ecological toolbox talks, destructive survey, amphibian/hedgehog refuge making if required, monitoring, reporting and suitable site visits during.

11. Risks to Project Progression

- 11.1. Badger sets may move during the lead up to the works. If a main set moves into the locality, then such works at worst might include badger set relocation with cost and time delays.

- 11.2. The extent of bats in the trees and structures (bridge and old machinery) to be disturbed is unknown and could change in the lead up to the works. Once surveyed a method statement will be updated to achieve the works. The timing of the works may be affected by the necessary timings of these operations in relation to the calendar year. The inspections to date have identified that of the known trees for removal 2 trees will require pre works inspection as they have potential for multiple bats or a maternity roost. Bat hibernation survey will be done Dec-Feb if works affect structures on site.

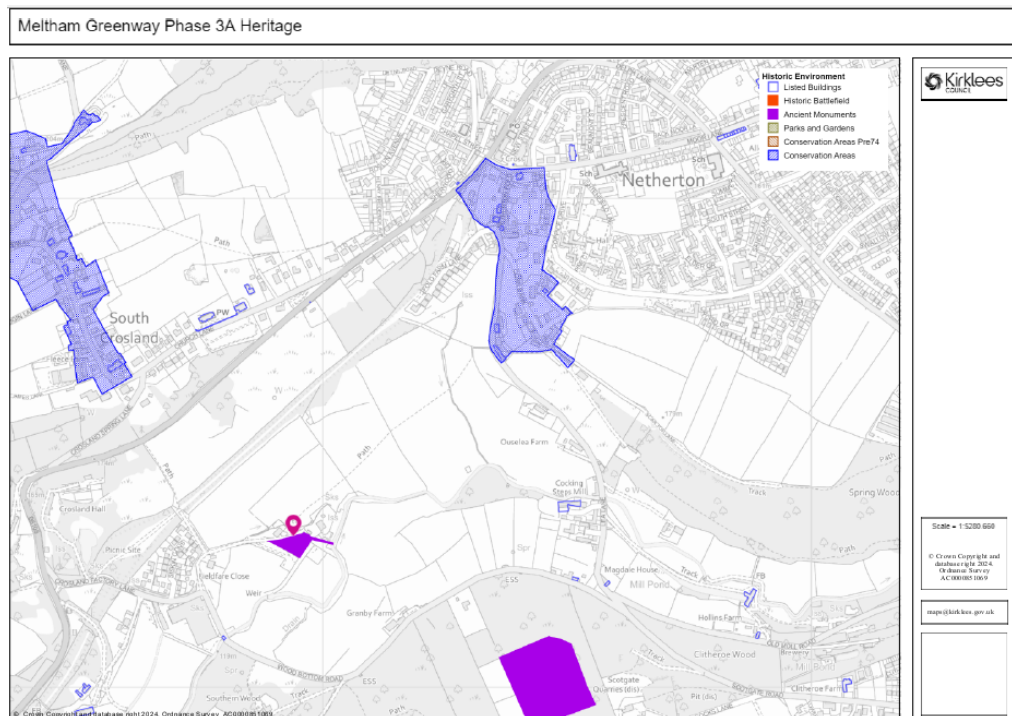
12. Non Native Invasive Weeds:

- 12.1. Currently no non-native invasive weeds have been identified but the survey will be revisited before the start of works. Further checks May to September would give greater assurance. If found would need dealing with as per the legislation. Early checks May to June are also proposed to enable treatment and start in current year.

13. Heritage assets

- 13.1 The site has no heritage features with a designation although the disused railway is of heritage interest. The proposal will in effect safeguard this route into the future. Near to the site are two conservation areas and two ancient monuments. The works will not diminish the setting of these designations.

13.1.1



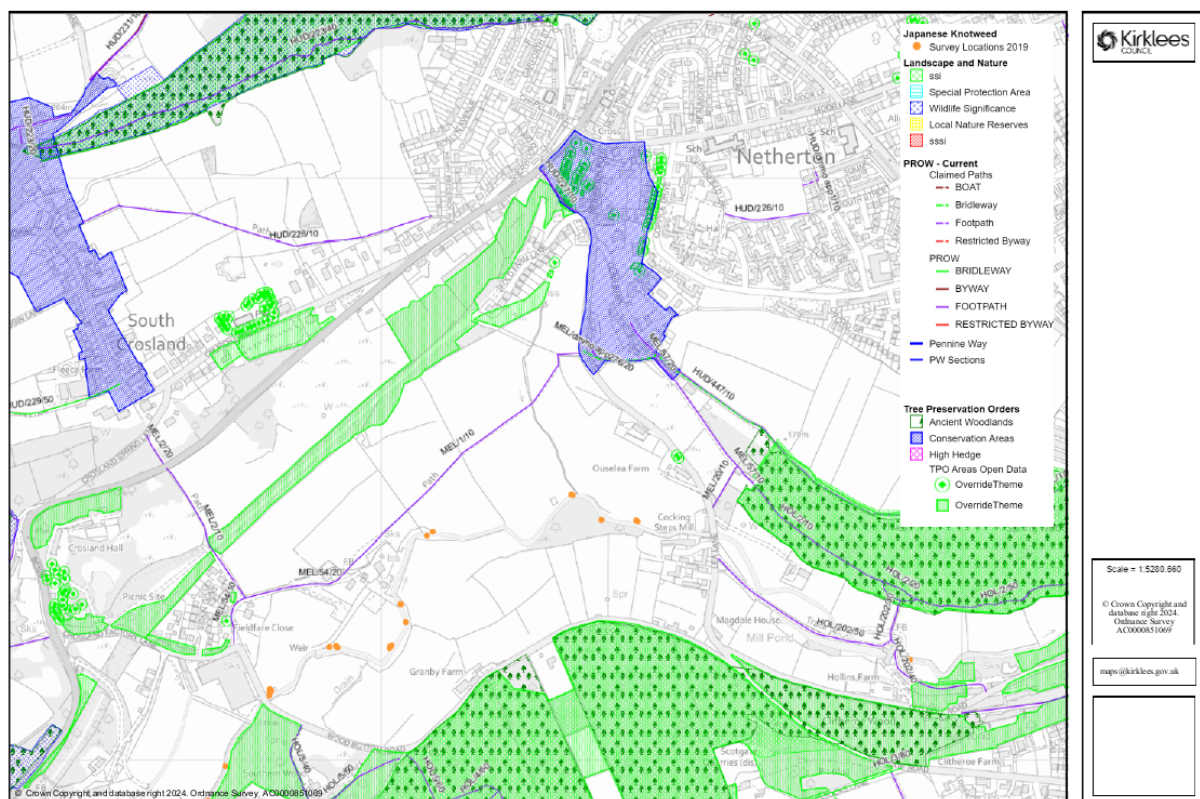
14. Landscaping of the development

14.1. TPO Tree Groups

The project will require some very limited removal of trees that are in the footpath zone. These trees need to be removed as they have been found to be in conflict with the construction of the project, and some dead/diseased/dying trees would present a hazard to users of the path. Minimising the number of trees effected has influenced the precise location of the proposed track. These trees are shown on the tree clearance drawings. The loss of these trees will not effect the overall impact of the TPO group's visible presence in the landscape as they are at the centre of the group away from the edge. The loss of the trees in the canopy in time will be made up by adjacent trees.

14.2

Meltham Greenway Phase 3A, Land Designations records, PROW, Knotweed 2019, TPO, Conservation Areas.



15. Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

15.1 The site has been assessed by an ecologist and assessed de-minimus therefore not required to provide the necessary net gain. The following reports support this.

- 15.1. Statutory Metric Calculation Tool
- 15.2. Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment ER-7872-06 (superseded)
- 15.3. Biodiversity Net Gain assessment with agreed enhancements ER-7872-06A BNG part 2 (28/02/25)

15.4. Summary of BNG

The site is not required to demonstrate BNG

16. Rights of Way

- 16.1. A right of way crosses the site under the bridge. Some works to the bridge will be necessary, but it is not anticipated that a closure or diversion would be required. Protection of the users through site security and traffic management should be sufficient
- 16.2. The proposal enhances access, improves connectivity and supports Rights of Way Improvement Plan objectives. It links directly to the existing PRow network by connecting with MEL/2/10, which then links to numerous PRow's in the locality