

Improving Holmfirth town centre scheme

You said, we did

Contents

1. What has changed since the last exhibition?
 2. How we have changed the plans
 3. Timescales for delivery
 4. The funding and decision making process
 5. The impact on those living nearby
 6. Noise and air quality
 7. Planning permission
 8. Bus stops, pedestrians and cyclists
 9. Have your say – public engagement March 2019
 10. Holmfirth Market
 11. Future updates
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1. What has changed since the last exhibition?

Following the series of exhibitions held earlier this year, with an overwhelming majority against the proposals, the decision was made to revisit the original scheme.

You said you wanted:

- to encourage cycling and walking
- to retain the original character of Holmfirth,
- to improve traffic flow
- to see more parking
- an area to hold “pop up” markets
- more public realm
- better links to the river
- to encourage tourism

You agreed that at times there were issues with vehicles and wanted HGVs removing from the town centre, but didn't want the link road through Hollowgate.

We are aware of the proposals for the area to have a Neighbourhood Plan, which has specific transport policies so with this, and your comments in mind, we have revisited the scheme.

2. How we have changed the plans

- The market hall will still be demolished but instead of a link road, we have created a pedestrian / cycle link into Hollowgate
- Reconfigured the signals on Woodhead Road, amended the stop line, widened footways and will install signal timing software to better manage the junction; thus improving traffic flow
- Provided additional car parking on the market hall site, which will include electricity points for Pop-Up markets / festivals and charging points for vehicles
- This area will also include public realm areas, including seating, landscaping and opens up the view to the river
- Created a new car park off Woodhead Road near “Bloc” specifically for Electric Vehicle (including bikes) rapid charging points
- Widened footways on Victoria Street, with a loading layby, this will allow a “café culture” with outdoor seating
- Upgraded the pedestrian facilities on Victoria Street and Towngate; this will better control the flow of traffic
- Relocated the pedestrian crossing on Towngate
- Installed a plateau at the end of Rotcher Road at its junction with Hollowgate
- Introduced a 20mph speed limit in areas of the town centre

In addition, we are undertaking a study into the introduction of a weight restriction, which should prevent the large articulated lorries from using the local network. This is in its early stages and will require the introduction of Traffic Regulation Orders which are subject to challenge.

We have also approached the SatNav provider TomTom and Ordnance Survey to see if they will amend the SatNav routes through Holmfirth, especially along Hollowgate.

We have been in discussions with River Holme Connections to determine how we can work with them and what we could do, to enhance this stretch of the River Holme.

This is a much reduced scheme from what was originally proposed but still delivers the journey time savings and the Value for Money benefits.

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

In order for us to receive funding from the Combined Authority, we have to demonstrate that the scheme will:

- Reduce congestion
- Improve journey times by 8%
- Improve journey times for buses, cyclists and pedestrians by 12%
- Reduce the potential for accidents
- Improve access for local residents and businesses
- Enable access to employment and residential sites along the corridor
- Increase the Gross Value Added to the Economy

Q. Why can't we have the Major Highway link road scheme?

The Corridor Improvement Programme budget for the Holmfirth scheme is only £4.9m. We cannot deliver a major scheme for this budget. We will, however seek to include the major scheme into the next round of funding for major schemes.

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 2021 and be completed the following year, 2022.

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 November 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).

The online engagement and exhibition seeks 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 the full business case.

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 be removed in order to widen the footway and improve the public realm in front of the buildings, loading bays will be provided instead. We are increasing the size of the car park at Poppa Piccolinos and at the side of the Bloc.

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, and as part of the planning application, 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; we will require planning consent to demolish the market building and extend the car park.

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 September 2019

Q. How are you engaging with the public?

Following the series of exhibitions we had in March of this year, we have revisited the scheme and are now at a critical stage where we must progress a scheme quickly in order to meet the very challenging timescales.

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 online at kirklees.gov.uk/majorschemes or at our staffed exhibition.

Q. Will my comments be considered, or have decisions already been made?
Your comments have already helped inform the current proposals and hopefully we have incorporated as much as we can. This exhibition gives you another chance to have your say

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 our drop in exhibition. 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.

The market will still be demolished to make way for the proposals. The extended car park at the side of Piccolinos could be used for pop-up markets / festivals etc

11. 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.