



## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Report of the

**ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION  
SCRUTINY PANEL**

on

**CYCLEWAYS - USING THE SPEN VALLEY  
GREENWAY AS A MODEL**

## **ENVIRONMENT TRANSPORTATION SCRUTINY PANEL - CYCLEWAYS SUB-GROUP**

**MEMBERS:** Councillor M Bower (**Chair**)  
Councillor K Hussain  
Councillor T Karran

### **SUPPORTING**

**HEAD OF SERVICE:** Richard Brooker  
(Head of Leisure and Recreation Services)

**LEAD OFFICER:** Tom Ghee  
(Group Engineer Design and Construction)

**COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATOR:** Penny Bunker  
(Tel. 01484 221708)

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 About The Review**

During Summer 2000, a number of comments and requests, concerning Spen Valley Greenway and the policy regarding cycleways in the Kirklees District were received by the Scrutiny Office. The Scrutiny Executive agreed that it would be appropriate for the issue to be investigated by a Scrutiny Panel and the matter was referred to the Environment and Transportation Scrutiny Panel.

The Environment and Transportation Scrutiny Panel agreed in November 2000 to form a Sub-Group comprising three Elected Members, together with appropriate Officer support, to look at the issue of cycleways in the Kirklees District, using the Spen Valley Greenway as a model.

### **1.2 Terms of Reference**

The brief of the Sub-Group was to review the process and action which had resulted in the construction of the Spen Valley Greenway, together with assessing the success of the scheme and reviewing the strategy for schemes of a similar nature in other parts of the Kirklees District. The Sub-Group could also, if appropriate, comment on the proposals for other Cycleways planned for the foreseeable future.

## **2. THE WORK OF THE PANEL**

2.1 The Cycleways Sub-Group met on five occasions, as set out below:-

- **19 December 2000**

The Panel considered preliminary information relating to cycling provision in Kirklees and background to the establishment of the Spen Valley Greenway. The Panel also received information on the Kirklees Cycle Network and details extracted from the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2001/2006, which included objectives relating to a cycling strategy in the district.

- **1 February 2001**

The Panel met with representatives of Sustrans, namely David Hall, Manager of Sustrans and Samantha Foster, Ranger for the Spenn Valley Greenway, who had originated the request for scrutiny. Councillor Martyn Bolt also attended in his capacity as Chair of the Environment and Transportation Management Board. The Panel discussed the progress made by Sustrans in relation to cycleway development in the Kirklees District and discussed potentially problematic issues regarding planning protection and structures, for example railway bridges on former railway lines.

Samantha Foster gave the Panel a perspective of the Greenway from both a user and Ranger point of view. Her main concern was the litter that continued to accumulate in certain areas of the Cycleway.

- **8 February 2001**

The Panel discussed Cycleways issues with representatives of the Cycling Fraternity across Kirklees. David Whiting, Melvin Gibson and Pete Crossley attended the meeting. Once again the views received by the Panel were generally positive and it was felt any difficulties in the usage of the Greenway could be addressed by showing consideration to other User Groups. It was suggested that linkage signing on the Greenway could be improved, but it was noted that the Highways Service had already given an undertaking to install a comprehensive signing scheme as soon as possible.

The representatives present at this meeting agreed that there was great potential to expand the Greenway Model into other areas of Kirklees and that every effort should be made to maximise the Off Highway Cycle Network .

- **20 February 2001**

The Panel met with representatives of other Local Authorities to discuss the linkage of the Spenn Greenway to other Local Authority Areas.

- **2 March 2001**

The Panel met with a representative of West Yorkshire Police and representatives of Public Rights of Way Issues and the Horse Riding Fraternity.

PC Paul Walton from West Yorkshire Police Traffic Unit informed the Panel that many of the "teething problems" experienced on the Greenway, such as inappropriate use by motorcyclists, had been effectively dealt with.

Representatives of Kirklees Bridal Ways Group, the British Horse Society, and Rural Rights of Way raised a number of new issues for consideration, including the construction of the track and its suitability for horse riders.

Copies of the Minutes of these meetings are attached as appendices to this report.

2.2 In addition to receiving detailed submissions from Sustrans representatives, the Cycling Fraternity, West Yorkshire Police, Officers of adjacent Local Authorities, Public Rights of Way Groups, Bridleway/Horse Society Groups, the Panel also consulted in writing with the Local Member of Parliament and with the Chief Planning Officer in relation to the issue of Green Corridors in the Unitary Development Plan. Copies of the responses are appended to this report.

### 3. **FINDINGS OF THE PANEL**

3.1 Almost without exception, the development and use of the Greenway was commended and welcomed by all parties.

3.2 The opening up of an informal recreational facility of this nature has enhanced the quality of life, health and well being of the community. In addition it has reduced crime and the perception of the threat of crime. The introduction of the Cycleway has also supported the economy in the local sales of cycles and the increased use of Hostelrys near to the route. The Cycleway has also provided a safe route to schools in the area, reduced child accident statistics and provided a wildlife corridor through the Spen Valley.

3.3 Where reservations were expressed they related to the following issues;

(a) The Horse Riding Fraternity would have preferred a more generous width to the soft margin areas for horses, and they also criticised the tarmac on the main surfaced route as "slippery".

(b) The Spen Valley Greenway Rangers were delighted with the scheme and were pleased to be associated with the Routeways. However, notwithstanding the fact that the Council funds a programme of major cleanup operations during the year, the Rangers preferred not to undertake litter collection on an intermediate day-to-day basis, even though the Panel were led to understand that such a requirement is incorporated into their designated responsibilities.

### 4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion, the Scrutiny Panel agreed to recommend the following:-

4.1 To commend the Spen Greenway Project to the Council, its partners and the public.

4.2 To support the extension of and further development of the Greenway and other similar schemes throughout the district wherever resources allow.

4.3 When any future schemes are designed they should give detailed consideration to a suitable soft margin for horses wherever possible, and that the number and quality of access ramps and dropped curbs should be increased to meet the requirements of wheelchair users.

4.4 To suggest that the Spen Valley Greenway Rangers undertake interim litter collection in a similar manner to that carried out by Countryside Volunteers and Friends of Parks Groups, to compliment the litter collection and other clearance work funded and undertaken by the Council.

## 5. **SIGNED**

Councillor Mike Bower  
Chair of Cycleways Sub-Group -  
Environment and Transportation Scrutiny Panel

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## 6. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

### 6.1 **Appendix 1 - Summary**

- Cycling Provision in Kirklees
- Spen Valley Greenway
- Issues Relating to:-

Value for Money  
Sustainability  
Funding  
Future Developments

### 6.2 **Appendix 2**

- Cycling Provision in Kirklees
- Spen Valley Greenway
- Issues to Consider:-

Kirklees Cycling Network  
West Yorkshire Transport Van

### 6.3 **Appendix 3**

- Cycleways Sub-Group Minutes - 1 February 2001

### 6.4 **Appendix 4**

- Work Programme for the Sub-Group

### 6.5 **Appendix 5**

- Interviews with Cycling Representatives

6.6 **Appendix 6**

- Interviews with Local Authority Officers from Bradford MC and Wakefield MC

6.7 **Appendix 7**

- Interviews with representatives from the:-

Police  
Rural Rights of Way  
Kirklees Bridleways Group  
British Horse Society

6.8 **Appendix 8**

- Memo from Policy Manager - Planning Services

6.9 **Appendix 9**

- Letter from Mike Wood MP

6.10 **Appendix 10**

- Before and After Usage Figures on the Greenway

PB/SMB  
25 June 2001