

Establishment of Park & Ride Schemes in Kirklees

The establishment of Park and Ride schemes is regularly reviewed around Huddersfield and at rail stations in Kirklees District.

Possibilities for rail based park and ride schemes were reviewed in 2009 and three possible sites identified for further analysis. Ownership of possible sites and outline costs have been estimated; further progressing of these sites is contingent on developments on the railways and the estimation of benefits.

Possible bus based park and ride sites along arterial roads around Huddersfield were identified in February 2007 and again in May 2009. Very few suitable sites emerged from these reviews owing to the lack of sufficiently large expanses of suitable land at appropriate locations being available, alternative more valuable developments being possible on the land that has become available, and the traffic flows along all but two arterial roads being too low to support a frequent bus operation. Of the two arterial roads with sufficient traffic to yield enough diverted drivers, one is far too close to central Huddersfield to offer any benefit to the user; sites on the other arterial road have proved to be too expensive and to have alternative more valuable uses like housing or employment regeneration.

The costs and benefits of developing three theoretically possible sites were analysed from a user and Council perspective using Department for Transport parameters. These analyses took account of values of travel time in cars and buses, long-stay parking charges at central Huddersfield and at possible park and ride locations, values of waiting time, and vehicle operating cost. The analysis looked at the total costs of various options: using a dedicated shuttle bus service, using an upgraded passing service bus service, and using the sites as car sharing sites. Sensitivity analysis was performed on many of the key parameters and breakeven levels analysed to see when it would pay to switch between one option and another with variation in such parameters as distance from Huddersfield, parking charges, and fuel prices. At all three sites there were small marginal net benefits to the user from a shuttle bus based park and ride provision (but not from a service bus based park and ride): these net benefits were judged to be insufficiently large to induce behavioural change. Where bus based park and ride is successful elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the cost differential is at least £8-10 per round trip. At all three sites car sharing was the cheapest option. From a Council perspective there were net losses such that the Council would need to find over £1m per site per annum in perpetuity to provide each shuttle bus based park and ride facility. A car share site would cost the Council around £0.5m per annum in perpetuity to provide and operate. Losses arise through funding the shuttle buses and lost net parking revenue. Providing bus based park and ride facilities would involve substantial increases in the Council Tax precept paid by all house owners throughout the District being transferred to the benefit of car drivers entering just Huddersfield. Bus based park and ride facilities are considered to offer poor value for money. For them to become an attractive option for all members of the community, the long-stay car parking charges in central Huddersfield would need to almost double, and that would affect all users many of whom would not have the option of using a park and ride facility.

In times of public sector funding constraints, and owing to the lack of sufficient traffic passing potential sites, and the low long-stay parking charges in central Huddersfield, the development of bus based park and ride facilities is not considered prudent use of public money at present.