

3.0 Places For Change

3.1 Principles for Change

Strategic

Airedale urgently needs strategic intervention on a significant scale if it is to connect Bradford District to the Leeds City Region. There are many existing initiatives working through the voluntary sector and community groups at a local level. This masterplan is deliberately focused on strategic issues and the future economy of Airedale in its broadest sense.

Environment

It is vital that Airedale protects and improves its greatest asset. The rural backdrop must be a focus for 'early win' interventions. Significant environmental improvements to green spaces in the centre and on the edge of towns can be achieved rapidly and reinforce the sense of local pride in the area.

Quality

The underlying theme for all interventions should be the emphasis on 'high-quality'. For instance public realm should be simple, easy to maintain and of the highest quality. People see it every day and is often a visible sign of neglect.

Location

Interventions should be concentrated in the three principal towns of Airedale and along the transport corridors at the bottom of the valley. These are the places which govern the perception of Airedale and are used by the greatest proportion of the population as urban and rural service centres.

Employment

The emphasis should be on the creation of local employment opportunities within the towns whilst accepting that there is a growing demand for people to live in Airedale and commute to Leeds or Bradford. It should build on its diverse economy as a special feature that facilitates growth of commercial research and development. Airedale has to achieve a greater balance between manufacturing and service employment and become more specialised and versatile.

Transport

Airedale is physically constrained and the public transport system must be optimised by concentrating employment around bus and rail interchanges. Whilst there should be some allowance for the development of park-and-ride facilities the emphasis should be on improving the pedestrian access through the towns to the transport interchanges. Transport also allows people to access employment opportunities outside Airedale.

Property

Currently the market is not sufficiently strong to be able to deliver high-quality office premises. There must be an acceptance of mixed use schemes for brownfield sites where residential value supports commercial development. The exception to this is in Bingley where property values are sufficiently high and there is evidence of market supply and take-up of office premises. As the masterplan matures there will be opportunities for office development throughout Airedale.



Derelict Environments, Buildings & Watercourses - Ready for Change

The Rural Landscape

Easy access to the rural landscape that surrounds the towns and villages of Airedale is a key selling point of the area. The dispersed rural towns and villages of Airedale with their local textile and manufacturing industries created a network of paths and tracks for trade between each other. These routes now provide walkers, runners and cyclists with access to this beautiful and sometimes outstanding landscape.



View over Keighley from Rough Holden

3.2 Preparing the Rural Backdrop

Enhancing the landscape involves taking areas of land that have been neglected, or are under threat and making greater use of them by creating better, accessible green space, replacing the woodland lost to agriculture and industry, and making habitats for species. These are some of our ideas as to where this could happen, to create a seamless country park between the towns and the rural landscape.

Formal Parks

The formal gardens of Devonshire Park and Cliffe Castle in Keighley should be restored to the standard of award winning Lister Park in Mannigham. This will link with the regeneration of Greenhead School and support the destination development in Keighley. The restoration of Roberts Park in Saltaire is an essential part of improving the product of the World Heritage Site. This significant heritage asset should be a strategic project for the City Region and be an attractor of international visitors. Experience gained can be rolled out in Oakworth and Haworth parks.

Country Parks

At Dowley Gap a country park should be created using the former landfill and land beneath the viaduct to create a woodland park that joins up with Hirst Wood, Shipley Glen, South Bog and Cottingley. Access can be developed through Healey Lane and concentrated at the Bradford and Bingley Sports Club where parking is available and circular walking trips can be made via the banks of the river and canal.

At Bolton Woods there is extensive land surrounding the stone quarry. This strip is a remaining piece of green land between Shipley and Bradford which, if coupled with the green space of Bradford Grammar and Lister Park, can make a sizeable recreation area incorporating paths and cycleways that join one side of the valley to



Baildon Moor

the other. This area should be preserved for woodland planting, where the changing autumn colours can be viewed from Lister Mills, and the creation of a country park or botanical gardens destination midway between Bradford city centre and Saltaire.

Nature Reserves

At Marley on the outskirts of Bingley, there are former sewage sludge beds that straddle the A650. These should be developed and enhanced for a nature reserve, creating habitats and building on the existing otter and kingfisher populations. These areas should be connected by riverside footpaths through to the meadows and woodland plantations of East Riddlesden Hall and Marley sports ground car parks.

Watercourses

The regeneration of many northern cities and towns has started with the cleaning of watercourses and creation of waterside attractions and linear green parks. This should be the case for the River Worth and North Beck. The North Beck nature reserve should be extended down into Keighley, opening up extensive culverts and be joined to a newly designated nature reserve along the River Worth valley. The Worth Valley Way quality walk and cycleway would connect to a new formal park at the Low Mill area, allowing an attractive pedestrian walk to the railway station. These new green areas also create space for water at times of flood, taking into account the greater frequency of flooding with climate change.

Woodland Parks

At Park Wood above Keighley, the former mining areas, rifle range and quarries should be reinforced with further woodland planting and pathways to create accessible space and an improved green backdrop for Keighley.

At Rough Holden, extensive appropriate woodland planting should take place on the former coal mining areas to join the Rivock Edge Plantation with Spring Cragg Wood and Alder Carr Wood. This would allow the future creation of an orienteering and mountain-biking centre, connected into the National Cycle Network along the canal towpath.

At Windhill and Wrose there are remaining areas of open land where woodland planting can prevent further erosion of the landscape through infill development. This woodland area should extend down to Shipley through the housing developments, to create a stronger woodland backdrop to the town.