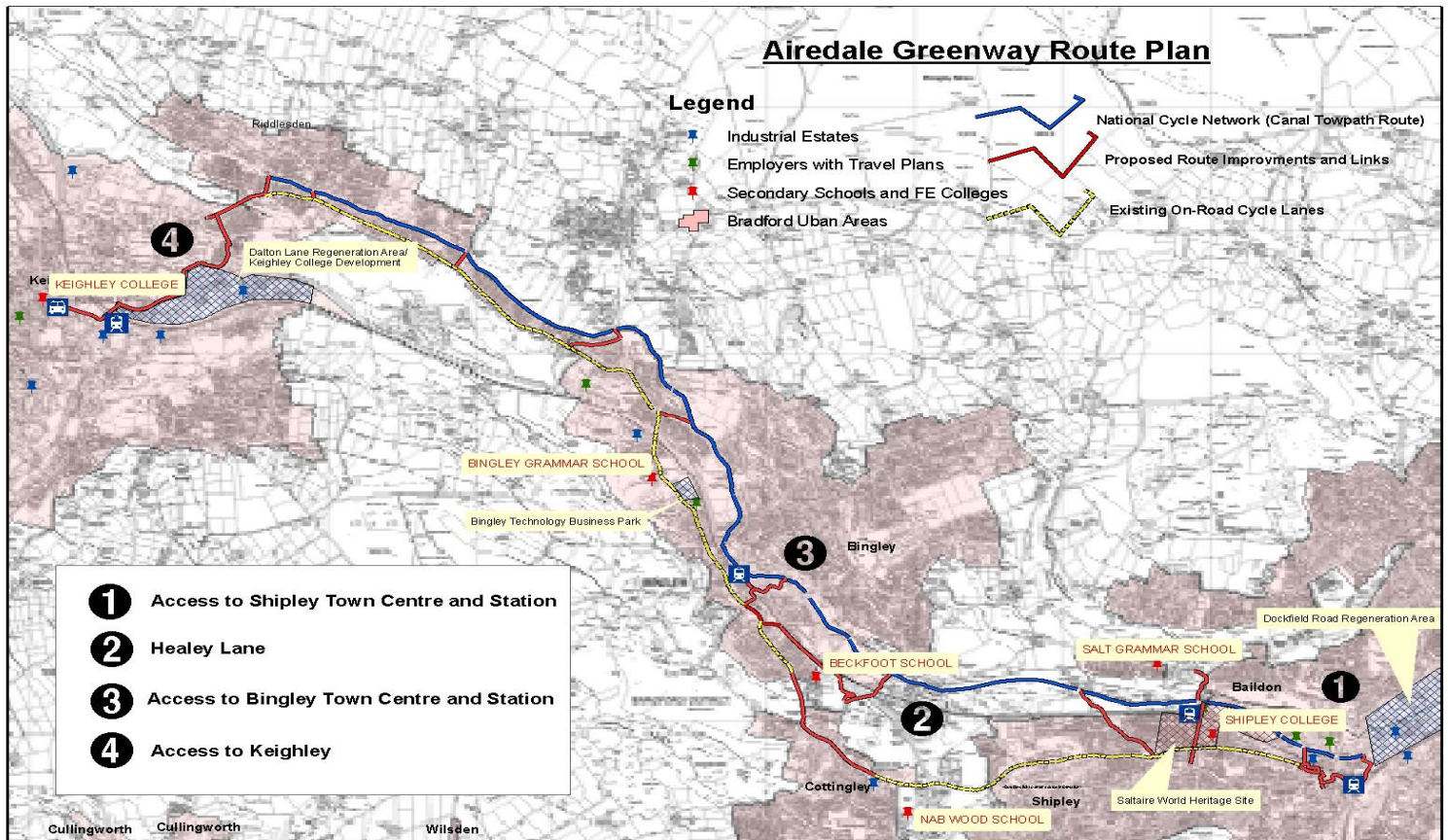


# THE AIREDALE GREENWAY

## A REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTE IN AIREDALE

OCTOBER 2007



# Part 1

## Introduction and Background

<u>Contents:</u>		<b>Page</b>
1.0	Background - How the project idea was developed	3
2.0	Strategic Importance- This sets the project in context locally	3
3.0	Strategic Fit - The importance of the provision of walking and cycling route strategically	4
4.0	Vision for the project- Describes the vision for the Airedale Greenway	4

## **1.0 Background:**

The Airedale Masterplan – Airedale Corridors – was launched in March 2005 in it the ‘rural backdrop’ was identified as a key to the economic regeneration of the area. The masterplan as part of its vision also sees the area as a ‘connected corridor’ a model of integrated transport and good communications for road, rail, air and broadband that supports the new and existing world-class companies within Airedale. The connected corridor also provides the opportunity to access the landscape through a network of footpaths and cycleways that link the town centres and transport interchanges and to develop more sustainable travel options.

Following the launch of the masterplan a partnership event was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2005 at the Bradford & Bingley Sports Club to look at what could be done to begin to develop the rural backdrop. The event was attended by around 25 different public, private and voluntary organisations. There was much discussion and many ideas put forward but the idea of a key strategic cycling and walking route in Airedale was identified that would contribute to developing the rural backdrop and sustainable travel in the area particularly between the three main towns.

## **2.0 Strategic importance:**

The Aire valley known as Airedale extends through the Bradford District from the boundary with Leeds at Apperley Bridge to the North Yorkshire boundary at Silsden. Airedale is important locally as well as in the sub-region and regionally in Yorkshire and the Humber. It has been identified within the Leeds City Region Strategy as a key renaissance area and transport corridor with the A650 trunk road, the Airedale Railway line, the Leeds Liverpool Canal as well as many footpaths crossing the valley.

The new draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) specifically stresses the importance of new and improved walking and cycling facilities, networks and corridors under its policies of Climate Change, Transport, Improving the Regions and Sub-regions Cities and Towns and Environment

In the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) the importance of walking and cycling as alternatives to car travel feature strongly in areas such as:- *Sustainable Growth and Productivity, Transport Infrastructure, Public and Private Investment, the RES Vision, Sustainable Development, Stronger cities, towns and rural communities and the Environment.*

For example from the RES

*‘Evidence shows that ‘soft measures’ such as work place and school travel plans, travel awareness campaigns to promote alternatives to the car, car sharing and tele-working can have a notable impact. Small reductions or increases in car journeys can have a disproportionately great impact in adding or reducing congestion. It is suggested that these soft measures could reduce peak period urban traffic by 21%, if introduced ‘intensively’ or by 5% if introduced on a more modest scale...*

*'The whole renaissance approach is about what the Government describes as 'sustainable communities'. This idea runs right through the strategy. It is about making places and neighbourhoods that have good quality of life – encompassing access to jobs and opportunities, housing and the physical environment, facilities, transport, green spaces and play and a sense of security and community'*

The importance of travel alternatives are reflected locally in, Bradford's 20:20 Vision, the emerging Local Development Framework, the Local Transport Plan, the Countryside Rights of Way Strategy, School and Business Travel Plans and the Local Tourism Strategy and the emerging sustainable communities strategy. The project will also have a positive impact on local health and improvement plans as well as the District's walking and cycling strategies and it will link directly to **Ki (Keighley Integrated)** a local masterplan for the development of cycleways and footpaths in Keighley

Other important publications are:

The Value of Public Space (Cabe Space), The City Region Green Infrastructure Planning (ECOTEC), The Countryside in and Around Towns (The Countryside Agency (now Natural England) and Groundwork UK), Delivering a New Urban Fringe (The Countryside Agency, now Natural England).

### **3.0 Strategic fit**

Within the valley there are the major settlements of Keighley, Shipley and Bingley these form the key economic regeneration areas in the masterplan. As mentioned previously the masterplan has at its heart the 'rural backdrop', much of this rural landscape is formally recognised and designated for its quality and nature conservation value, as well as for its contribution to public amenity.

Much of the area is designated as green belt, public open space, sites of special scientific interest (SSSI's), sites of ecological and geological interest (SEGI's) and conservation areas. They include:- the Leeds Liverpool Canal, Saltaire World Heritage Site, Bingley North and South Bogs, Rye Loaf and Trench Meadows, Shipley Glen, Hirst Woods, St Ives Estate and East Riddlesden Hall.

It is against this strategic and local significance that the Airedale Greenway is being proposed and developed.

### **4.0 Vision for the Airedale Greenway**

The vision for the Airedale Greenway is to provide a key strategic cycling and walking route right in the heart of Airedale that links the three main towns of Keighley, Bingley and Shipley building on the existing infrastructure of the Sustrans National Cycle Network route on the Leeds Liverpool Canal tow path that will:

- Link the tow path to the key bus/train transport interchanges of Shipley, Bingley and Keighley
- Better link the three main towns of Keighley, Bingley and Shipley to the towpath
- Give the opportunity for people to make more utility journeys to work and leisure
- Provide opportunities for more sustainable travel for schools and businesses in the area
- Contribute to the improving health agenda
- Improve the connectivity of the district
- Secure funding through partnership working and contribute to the wider regeneration of the area
- Link many of the key heritage and environmental features within an inspiring landscape
- Encourage the use of shared space between cyclists, pedestrians and motorists
- Contribute to the sustainability of the District
- In the long term provide a cycling and walking link through to Bradford City Centre and beyond to link with the Spen Valley Greenway