

**AIREDALE PARTNERSHIP**

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**QUARTERLY REPORT JANUARY TO MARCH 2004**



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# AIREDALE PARTNERSHIP

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Airedale had been identified in a strategic context through the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Economic Strategy, The West Yorkshire Action Plan and Bradford Metropolitan District Council's Regeneration Strategy, as a location for key companies and clusters, for investment opportunities and employments sites as well as having an attractive environment with urban centres and recent road and public transport investment.

At the time of the establishment of the Urban Regeneration Company, the Council Executive asked for proposals that met the needs of the wider district to include urban centres, areas of brownfield and industrial development.

After major consultation between June and November 2002 the Partnership was established with a shadow board being formed December 2002. The Board has 8 members 50% of which are private sector representatives and 50% representing Bradford Vision, The Learning Partnership and Bradford Council.

The Partnership aims to bring about the economic regeneration of Airedale by:

- Bringing key employment sites into use
- Stimulate the growth and development of key clusters such as Advanced Manufacturing and Digital
- Promote connectivity
- Support the renaissance of the urban centres
- Ensure appropriate skill development and connect local people to economic opportunities
- Develop initiatives for the rural economy
- Develop cross boundary initiatives with Leeds and Craven as a corridor for investment

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

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Bradford 2020 Vision identifies Airedale as one of the keys to economic regeneration of the district. The Airedale Partnership has been established to act as a catalyst for the development of key employment sites, lead the renaissance of the town centres, co-ordinate business support, training and jobs match and develop cross boundary initiatives with Leeds and Craven in the joint promotion and development of the Aire corridor as a focus for the growth of knowledge rich industries, particularly in the digital and advanced manufacturing clusters.

The project has been developed in response to the recommendations of the Employment, Skills and Training Surveys undertaken by Evaluation Research and Strategies (ERS) and funded through Sub Regional Action Plan 1 funding.

The project aims undertake a range of actions to address the skills and training needs of businesses identified by the research and connect local communities to economic and employment opportunities.

## **SUMMARY**

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Following several months of detailed discussion and planning between the Airedale Partnership, Yorkshire Forward, The Local Learning and Skills Council, Keighley College, Shipley College and Bingley Voluntary Action the projects aims, funding, milestones, outputs and outcomes had been agreed.

Approximately 10% of the funding has been spent in the 2003 – 04 financial year to support the early work of the Connectivity Study, the Bingley Learning Node, Brokerage Management and Childcare provision with 90% of the funding being moved back into the next financial year 2004 – 05 to support the majority of project activity.

The project aims will be supported by effective management information systems to help monitor progress and achievement of its milestones, outputs and outcomes.

# **PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS**

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Brokerage Co-ordinator – to help facilitate links between businesses in Airedale and Yorkshire Forwards cluster and sector training brokers, review and monitor local delivery of cluster broker initiative and to produce case studies to inform future investments.

Business Network – to develop an Airedale Business Network with a web portal to support local businesses, linking them to services across the district.

Connectivity Feasibility Study – to undertake an ICT feasibility study to map the geographical spread of broadband connectivity in Airedale and to identify viable solutions to connect those businesses and communities not able to take up broadband.

Construction Network – working within the construction industry to connect communities to economic activity, to develop better connections to local construction companies, to improve education, learning and skills acquisition. Improve the skills of existing employees and encourage new business start-ups.

Childcare Provision – provide childcare support to learners.

Learning Node – to support the establishment of a learning node of Shipley College in Bingley.

Wheels 2 Work – to provide mopeds to help young people from rural areas access jobs and training.

Community based ICT Broadband connection – to connect 3 community centres to broadband.

ICT Apprentices – to help build capacity of community organisations through the recruitment of 10 ICT apprentices to work in the community centres.

New Business Start-Ups – funding to Keighley Local Enterprise Agency to support 30 new business start-ups.

## **PROGRESS TO DATE**

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All project managers, funding, milestones, outputs and outcomes for all the individual projects have been negotiated and agreed between Bradford Council (as the Accountable Body for Airedale Partnership) and the Learning and Skills Council and its sub contractors.

Four projects commenced in March and they have progressed as follows:

### **Connectivity Feasibility Study**

The project brief was to commission a consultancy based connectivity feasibility study that would:

- Identify the current state and availability of broadband in Airedale
- Provide a physical map plotting connected sites relating to major providers such as schools, colleges, libraries, UK Online Centres and identifying gaps
- Identify relevant target groups for accessing e-learning opportunities e.g. rural businesses in agriculture and tourism, disadvantaged communities in urban areas such as Keighley and Shipley East, other small and large businesses in a range of sectors
- Identify access to ICT and where possible and appropriate the training needs of these groups
- Identify and analyse appropriate, sustainable connectivity solutions, considering all reasonable options such as fixed connections wireless and satellite
- Develop a series of cost benefit models based on a range of current supplier prices
- Make recommendations as to a solution or series of options for connectivity that would contribute to a wider master plan for Airedale
- Examine how current government initiatives and funding streams could assist the recommended infrastructure developments

To achieve this the following work has been carried out:

- The contract was advertised through the Bmedi@ network with four companies tendering
- Shortlisting took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March with final selection being made on 11<sup>th</sup> March
- Palmedia (UK) Ltd, working with Reid IT Services was the successful company. Palmedia (UK) Ltd was founded by Matt Palmer to provide IT and networking solutions and consultancy services to businesses and the public sector. Reid IT Services was founded by Kevin Reid after 30 years experience in the IT industry working in a variety of roles and across many industries

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- A contract briefing session was held on 16<sup>th</sup> March with Palmedia to agree study process and principles
  - On March 26<sup>th</sup> the first phase of the study was agreed

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

#### MILESTONES

Tenders issued and consultants appointed



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## **Business Network/Brokerage Management**

Exploratory discussions have been held with the Airedale and Bradford Manufacturing Alliance, Keighley Economy Group and Keighley and District Regeneration Alliance on the remit of the Airedale Partnership in relation to their activities. Initial contacts have been made with the Digital and Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Industry Clusters through Yorkshire Forward and the New Technology Institute.

Detailed discussion has also taken place with a company on the creation of the Airedale Partnership web portal to support the establishment of a business network in Airedale.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **OUTPUTS**

Production of quarterly progress and management report March 2004



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## **Learning Node**

Work has begun on the development of a Shipley College Learning Node in Bingley Town Centre:

- Premises have been selected and negotiations over the lease commenced
- A full design scheme has been developed and costed
- Building and refurbishment work has been put out to tender, contractors have been selected and are in final negotiation on the price
- The signing of the lease is imminent
- Considerable cross sector/service consultation has been carried out within the College

### ACHIEVEMENTS

#### MILESTONES

Establishment of Shipley Learning Node in Bingley, premises secured



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## **Childcare**

Funding for childcare is being managed by Shipley College and will provide high quality childcare support to local residents who access training and employment through the ICT programmes provided through this package.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **MILESTONES**

Establishment of Childcare provision to support learners



# **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

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Over the next quarter April to June we look forward to:

- Receiving the interim report from the connectivity feasibility study
- Appointment of staff at Keighley College to establish the construction network
- The launch of Wheels2Work project in rural Airedale
- Further developments of the web portal
- The establishment of the Business Network
- The refurbishment of the Bingley Learning Node
- Further support to business start up

Report submitted by Airedale Partnership  
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