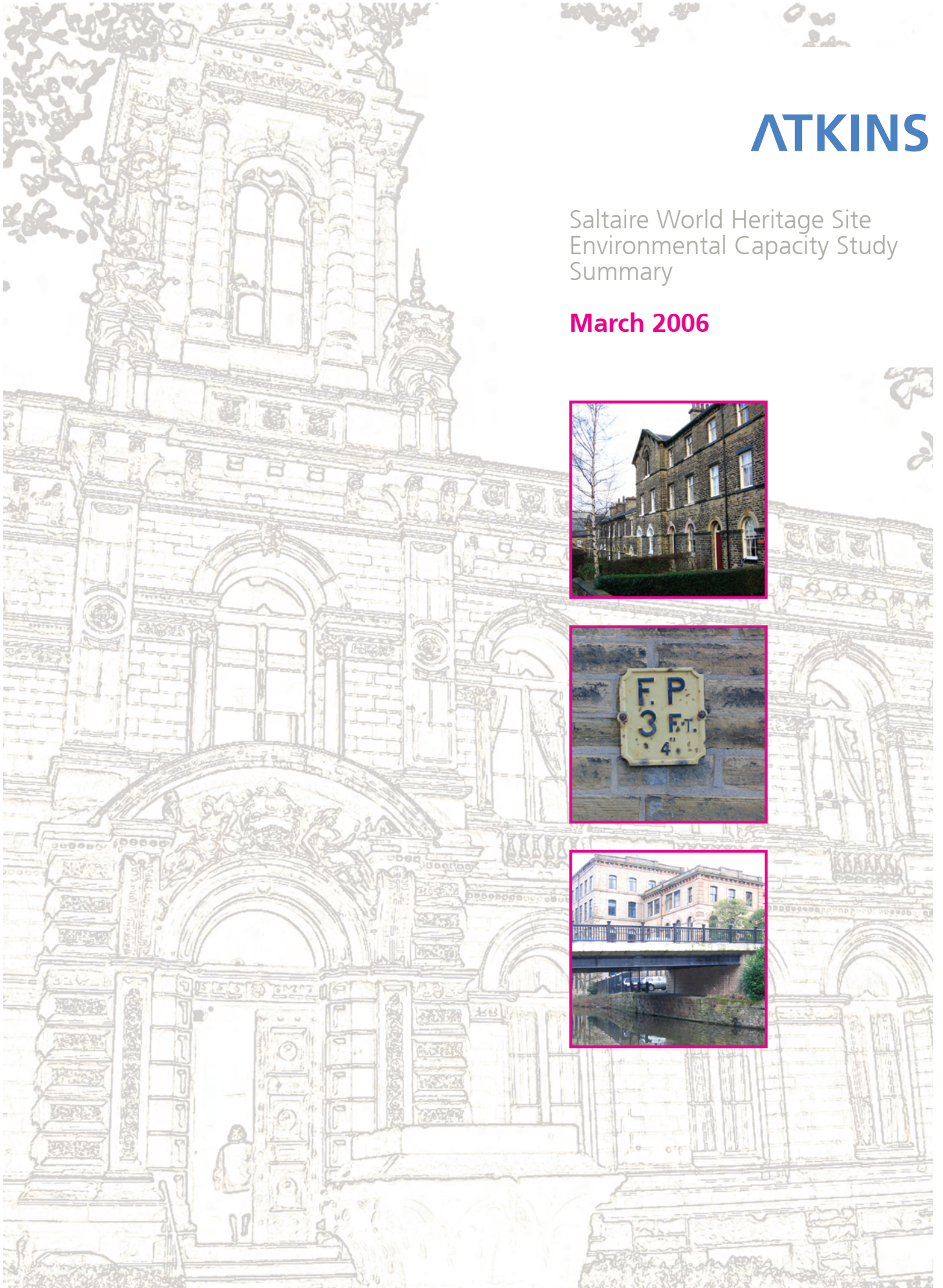


# ATKINS

## Saltire World Heritage Site Environmental Capacity Study Summary

March 2006



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

Saltaire was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001. This inscription recognises Saltaire's Outstanding Universal Value and places a duty of care on the UK Government to ensure that it is protected, conserved and presented for the benefit of current and future generations. The government achieves this in partnership with local authorities, English Heritage and other stakeholders through the implementation of local and national planning policy and World Heritage Site (WHS) Management Plans. Saltaire's first Management Plan was completed in 2001 and this and the adopted development plan have supported the management of the Site over the last 5 years.

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (CBMDC) identified the need for the Environmental Capacity Study (ECS) in the Management Plan and commissioned Atkins Heritage in 2005 to prepare the study. The ECS was conceived as a tool to help guide the management of the Site and address a range of pressures and demands facing the Site due its location in a strategic corridor. These pressures include traffic and transport issues, the need for economic and social regeneration and the maintenance of a high quality of life for residents.

The ECS will play a significant role in the development of a revised WHS Management Plan for the Site. It will also inform a number of other emerging strategies including a tourism strategy and planning documentation within the Local Development Framework (LDF). The indicators identified by the ECS may be used as part of the annual monitoring report on the LDF and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal.

This study is the first of its kind for a World Heritage Site and as such it provides an innovative approach to assisting the long-term management of complex cultural heritage assets such as World Heritage Sites and it is hoped that it will provide a model for use at other historic areas.

## Aim and Scope of Study

The overall purpose of the ECS was to gain an appreciation of the level and type of change that can be accommodated within the World Heritage Site and its setting and to provide a mechanism to allow for positive change to take place, whilst putting management arrangements in place to monitor the impact of change and prevent change that exceeds the environmental capacity of the Site. This included gathering data to allow long-term monitoring of issues and to inform decisions regarding the management and development of the Site.

Based on an analysis of other studies and current approaches to conservation planning the following definition of Environmental Capacity has been used by the ECS:

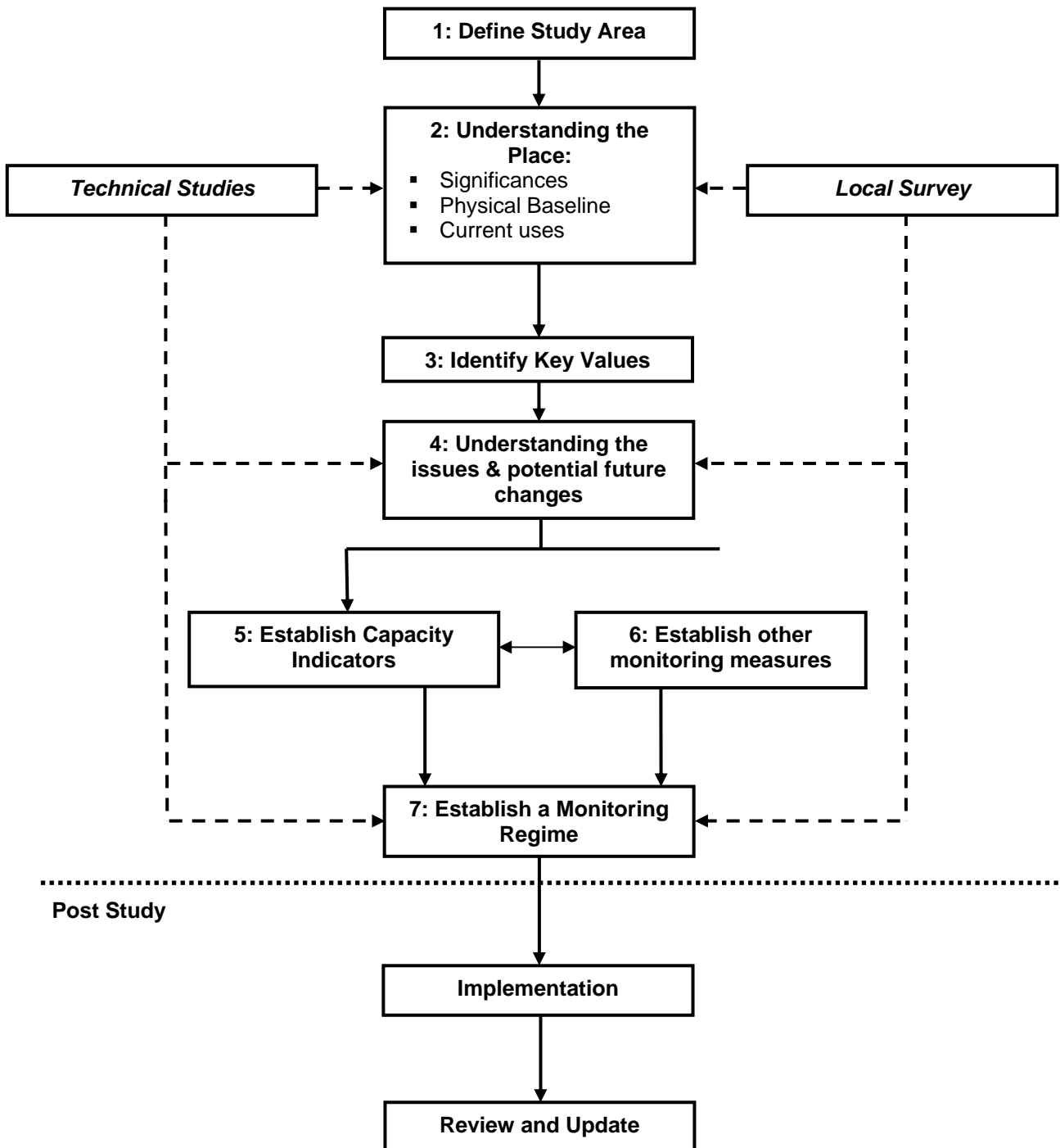
**Environmental Capacity:** *The ability of the environment of a place to accommodate specific types of change or development without degrading its special interest, character, fabric or setting.*

*This should reflect the physical nature of the place, the significances of the place, the inherent sensitivity of the place (based on an understanding of its nature and associated values) and its sensitivity to the particular types of change or development.*

The study area for the ECS encompassed the extent of the Saltaire WHS and its setting (see Figures 2 and 3 in main report). The Site's setting had previously been assessed at the time of its World Heritage Site nomination and a Buffer Zone has been established to reflect this. The ECS took the opportunity to re-evaluate the Site's setting, in terms of its extent and character, and review the existing Buffer Zone. This broadly confirmed the accuracy of the earlier analysis and supported the defined extent of the Buffer Zone.

## Methodology

Development of the study involved a staged process of survey, analysis and assessment (see below) which included public consultation. Approaches taken by earlier studies formed the starting point for the methodology which then evolved over the course of the project as a result of discussions with all members of the project team, including members and officers of the Council and English Heritage.



## Capacity Issues and Key Values

The Study focussed on identifying the capacity issues facing the Site and assessing the threat posed by these issues (now or in the future) to the Site's Key Values.

The Key Values were identified through an analysis of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Site and then graded as to whether they were critical, important or contributory in terms of their importance to the Site.

### Key Values:

**The fabric of the Site** – The fabric i.e. the buildings, streets, open spaces and designed landscapes, embodies the Site's Outstanding Universal Value and is a direct reflection of the historical, social and economic environment in which it was developed. This value is considered to be **critical** as without the survival of its fabric the Site could not be a WHS.

**The character of the Site** – The Site's character as established by its layout, location and architectural form is key to understanding the Site and the motivations behind its creation. The authenticity of the Site's character and form was also a key reason for its inscription. The character of the Site is therefore is considered to be a **critical** value.

**The setting of the Site** – The setting contributes to the Site's character and sense of place and also enables us to understand some of the motivations for why the mill and village were here. As such it is considered to be an **important** value.

**The quality of life of the residents** - The residential use of the Site is both an authentic expression of its original function and a key mechanism through which its fabric and character are conserved. The fact that the Site is a desirable location to live is an important aspect of its significance. This is therefore considered to be an **important** value.

**The use of the Site** - The mix of business, educational and other uses on the Site are a key mechanism through which its fabric and character are conserved. These elements are also an important aspect of the Site's wider economic and social significance. Overall, this is considered to be an **important** value.

**The natural environment** – The natural environment of the Site was not part of the reason for its nomination. It does make some contribution to the character of the Site and the quality of life of the residents. In addition, elements of the natural environment have significance in their own right. It is considered that this is a **contributory** value.

The study identified 8 key capacity issues which could affect the Site's Key Values now or in the future, these are outlined below.

### ***What is the capacity of the Site to accommodate visitors?***

Visitors have formed part of Saltaire's character for much of its history and currently make a key contribution to its economy. Due to its robust physical form, the Site is able to accommodate more visitor numbers than at present without threatening its Outstanding Universal Value. The key limiting factors are the impact of the visitors on the local population of the village and the ability of the Site (its fabric and character) to assimilate any additional facilities this change may bring.

***What is the capacity of the Site to accommodate traffic?***

The Site has a very limited capacity to accommodate traffic. This is due to its historic form and character, the fact that it is a residential area and the fact that the principal roads through the Site (Saltaire Road and Bingley Road) are already nearing their physical capacity to accommodate peak-time traffic. The majority of traffic related issues e.g. congestion, rat-running and speeding are a result of the Site's location on a strategic road corridor. Consequently, the capacity issues are primarily due to external and largely uncontrollable factors.

***What is the capacity of the Site to accommodate car parking?***

Car parking is a sensitive issue. The provision of parking spaces in the immediate proximity of the home, workplace, shop or visitor destination is a key factor in making those facilities attractive to residents, business and visitors. Car parking therefore plays a significant role in the continued viability of the Site. The Site has the physical space to accommodate more on-street parking but not in the central streets of terraced housing. There is no capacity within the Site to develop more off-street parking. Some capacity may exist outside of the Site for this but any such development would need to be carefully sited to avoid adverse effects. Car parking is also having an impact on the fabric and character of the Site through damage to pavements and the cluttering the street scene.

***What is the capacity of the Site to accommodate different uses?***

The majority of the Site is currently used for residential purposes. There are also a number of other uses on the Site including commercial, retail, tourism and educational establishments. This mix provides for a high quality of life for residents, ensures that the principal buildings are conserved and helps maintain the Site's strong historic character. The mix of uses does however generate other issues such as traffic pressures, conservation issues, parking problems and the need to cater for visitors. The Site has the physical capacity to accommodate this range of different uses. Its larger buildings could be, and have been, converted to accommodate new uses but there is very limited capacity for changes of use for smaller residential and non-residential properties. Any future changes would only be acceptable where they would not cause other capacity issues or harm the Key Values of the Site.

***What is the capacity of the Site to accommodate changes to its fabric?***

The fabric of the Site is highly sensitive to change and has a very limited capacity to accommodate physical changes. It is a unique and authentic record of the Site's development and loss has the potential to degrade the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site. There are two key types of changes that could affect the fabric: alteration and degradation through lack of maintenance. Alterations to buildings have historically occurred across the Site but the current planning and listed building regime has largely bought these under control and it is unlikely that this will be a

critical future issue. Maintenance regimes are a key issue, particularly given the fact that the Site is in multiple private ownership. The responsibility for conserving much of the Site's fabric therefore lies in the hands of the owners and occupiers of the buildings.

***What is the capacity of the Site to accommodate changes to its character?***

The Site has a distinctive and authentic character that reflects its historic origins. This character is derived from three underlying factors: Its strongly geometric form and layout; the architectural style employed on all its buildings and the areas of public realm and open spaces. Current planning regimes mean that the geometric form and layout of the Site is unlikely to ever change therefore the focus must be on the architectural form of the buildings and the areas of public realm and open spaces. Key issues here relate to alteration and maintenance of private and public spaces and buildings. Given the importance of the Site's character there is little capacity for inappropriate change. There is however capacity for positive change to reverse past inappropriate alterations, improve the condition of spaces and buildings and to encourage best-practice in the future and this should form a focus for action over the coming decades.

***What is the capacity of the Site to accommodate new development?***

There is little available land that could accommodate new built development on the Site. There are a limited number of areas where historic buildings have been removed and there may be some scope for new built development in these locations. These include the site of the former washhouses on Caroline Street, the car park on Caroline Street, the site of the former station buildings, the creation of a new bridge over the River Aire at the bottom of Victoria Road and any future redevelopment of the existing chapel off Harold Place. There may also be very limited opportunities to accommodate other small-scale new development within the Site e.g. extensions to retail and commercial properties. The acceptability of any such proposals would be judged on a case-by-case basis and any new developments would need to meet rigorous design standards.

***What is the capacity of the Site to accommodate changes to its setting?***

The issues facing the setting of the Site relate to two key factors, potential development which could impact on key elements of the Site's setting and gradual change in the quality of the Site's immediate setting and the rural backdrops. Given the size of the Buffer Zone and the nature of the Site's setting there is capacity for new development within the Buffer Zone where its location, scale, mass and height is appropriate in terms of the Site's setting. However, the issue of new tall buildings / structures presents particular challenges. This type of development could occur in urban and rural areas e.g. wind turbines and either could have a visual impact on the

Site's setting. Current evidence indicates that there is very limited capacity to accommodate new tall buildings / structures in the setting of the Site.

Other changes, such as alterations to land management regimes in the rural areas around the Site and physical alterations to the townscape of its immediate setting, could also impact on the Site's setting. There is capacity to enhance the immediate townscape setting of the Site, but there is very limited capacity to significantly alter the land-use regimes in the key rural backdrops around the Site.

### Indicators and Thresholds

One of the key conclusions of the study has been that it is not possible to establish fixed numerical capacity levels. For example, it is not possible to say that "Saltaire can accommodate 100,000 visitors a year" as the issues associated with visitors relate not to numbers but to where they go, how they get there and what they do. Consequently, the study has employed a "monitor and manage" approach founded on a series of Capacity Indicators. These were developed to address those issues that were considered to pose a significant threat to the Key Values of the Site. The indicators measure changes in data through time and trigger action when thresholds are exceeded. The thresholds have been established at levels which, based on current information, will potentially represent situations where action may be required to prevent the environmental capacity of the Site being exceeded. These thresholds will however evolve through time as the study is implemented.

<b>Capacity of the Site to accommodate :</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Visitors</b>	Indicator 1: Impact of visitors on residents and other users
<b>Traffic</b>	Indicator 2A: Traffic Congestion on Saltaire Road and Bingley Road Indicator 2B: Residents' view on traffic congestion Indicator 2C: Other users' view on traffic congestion Indicator 3A: Through traffic on site away from Saltaire and Bingley Rd Indicator 3B: Traffic speeds
<b>Car parking</b>	Indicator 4A: Level of resident satisfaction with car parking availability Indicator 4B: Level of other user satisfaction with car parking availability
<b>Different uses</b>	Indicator 5A: Provision of local retail and service facilities Indicator 5B: Active frontages on Victoria Road Indicator 5C: Active frontages on Bingley Road Indicator 6: Vacant Premises
<b>Changes in its fabric</b>	Indicator 7A: Overall condition of properties Indicator 7B: Condition of Outbuildings Indicator 8: Condition of major industrial and civic buildings Indicator 9: Alterations to residential and other properties Indicator 10: Appropriateness of Shop frontages
<b>Changes to its character</b>	Indicator 11: Condition of Character Areas
<b>New development</b>	No indicator developed – guidance contained in report



<b>Capacity of the Site to accommodate :</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Changes to its setting</b>	Indicator 12: Changes to key views into, across and out of the Site Indicator 13: The quality of the Immediate Setting and Approaches & Gateways Indicator 14: The impact of development on the Setting of the Site

For each indicator information is provided on the baseline data, trends in that data and the level of the threshold. A series of actions are then identified should a threshold be exceeded. These range from the need for further analysis and monitoring through to possible physical actions such as the provision of more car parking spaces.

The monitoring of trends within this data will also enable the Council and its partners to identify areas where issues may be emerging before thresholds are exceeded. This will allow them to develop preventative measures before issues become a significant threat.

**Monitoring Measures**

In addition to the indicators, the study has outlined a series of other areas where monitoring is required to support the analysis of the indicators should thresholds be exceeded. These monitoring measures cover a range of aspects including resident satisfaction, visitor numbers and the quality of public transport. The long-term analysis of trends in these measures will also supply important information to support the management of the Site.

**Implementation and Review**

The ECS also includes a timetable for the ongoing monitoring of the Site. This has been established over a rolling 6-yearly programme to tie-in with the UNESCO periodic review process. Key to this process is a regular programme of surveys to inform the indicators and monitoring measures:

Survey	Frequency
Fabric Survey	6-yearly
Character Survey	6-yearly
Use Class Survey	Yearly
Resident Questionnaire	3-yearly
Other Users Questionnaire	3-yearly
Visitor Questionnaire	3-yearly
Visitor Count	Yearly
Peak hour stress flow measure	3-yearly
Car parking utilisation	3-yearly
Setting survey	6-yearly

The ECS is not however a static document. It will continue to be reviewed and developed over the coming years as new challenges and issues emerge at the Site. This review and development is a critical part of the rolling timetable.



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