

MATTER 6B – SUB AREA POLICIES- AIREDALE

6.4 Strategic pattern of Development

Qn a:- There is sufficient justification and evidence to support the broad distribution of development to Airedale and its constituent settlements. However we conclude that the higher levels of housing provision contained in our March 2014 submission and in the Further Engagement Draft CS are still fully justified by the evidence we and others have presented in relation to the scale of the overall housing requirement and its distribution. In addition land will be required for a minimum of 30 hectares of employment provision plus essential supporting infrastructure.

The strategic evidence supporting this higher level of growth is strongly grounded and can be summarised as follows:-

1. Airedale was identified as a strategic growth corridor in the RSS. While the RSS has been revoked the evidence base leading to the identification of Airedale as a key regional growth area remains of relevance and has supported a number of initiatives which have already realised some growth and improved the potential for future growth. The RSS policy for the Leeds City Region LCR1 E – Strategic patterns of development states “Encourage regeneration and growth in the following broad locations (supported by the investment priorities set out in LCR2):- Airedale (Bradford City Centre to Skipton) – increasing employment opportunities and focussing development in Keighley and Skipton.” Policy LCR2C stated: - “To provide infrastructure to support site assembly, manage flood risk and improve access to town centres and public transport interchanges in Airedale.”
2. The LCR LEP continues to advocate growth in the Airedale corridor.
3. “Airedale Corridors – A Master Plan and Strategy for Airedale “was produced by Arup and a supporting team of consultants on behalf of the Airedale Partnership which comprised Bradford City Council and Yorkshire Forward (the former regional economic development agency). The principle aim of this master plan was to “identify the key interventions that would assist in the regeneration of Airedale in a sustainable and integrated way.” The brief was to advise on what needed to be done to deliver the aspirational Bradford 2020 Vision for Airedale. The master plan was focussed on the economy and was about “raising the bar for Airedale so that its economy continues to deliver benefits to local people, Bradford and the region.” The greatest challenge for Airedale was stated as being to arrive “at a balance between the needs of local employment and commuters and local people and visitors.” Airedale was stated as being “an attractive place in which to live and the demand for residential property is rising. This rising tide should not be resisted but harnessed and channelled to deliver economic change in Airedale.” We completely endorse the strategic aim stated in the preceding sentence. Realising this aim will focus around the strategically placed main settlements located within the valley (i.e Keighley, Bingley and Shipley/Baildon) and the local growth centres of Steeton with Eastburn and Silsden.

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4. The Airedale Corridor already has excellent communications benefitting from major investments in the electrification of the Airedale railway line and the construction of improved sections of the main A650 route, notably in the form of the Bingley by-pass. Further transport improvements are planned including in particular improved access to and around Keighley town centre.
5. The Airedale corridor possesses one of the main resources of relatively flat land where new employment sites can be sited close to the main settlements subject to appropriate flood avoidance measures in selecting and mitigating the development of sites.
6. Airedale already has a strong sub economy with a wide range of manufacturing and service sector companies. The work of the Arup team identifies a main characteristic of this economy as being “the high quality of the business services and products and the high number of internationally recognised firms.” Significant levels of commercial research and development were identified. It is important to build on these strengths and to enhance local housing and employment provision to increase the propensity for reductions in the length of commuter journeys and where possible to achieve modal transfer from private car trips. This can be enhanced by the strategic location of new homes relatively near to concentrations of existing and future employment.

b) We conclude that the proposed strategic pattern of development in Airedale is an effective policy which has been positively prepared and is deliverable. The rate at which new housing and employment land is delivered needs to be accelerated compared with past performance. Under-delivery in the past is not simply a result of recessionary influences. The requirement to provide for reserve land, given the agreed need for a review of Green Belt boundaries should be planned alongside allocations. It is essential that delays in the delivery of phase 2 UDP housing allocations are resolved as a matter of some urgency as further delay will simply add to the backlog to be met and will inhibit the early realisation of the important additional growth potential which needs to be realised in Airedale. We and others have challenged the use of the policy SC8 Habitat protection zones as a key constraining factor on the level of housing and other development which should be permitted within 400m and 400m to 2.5 km zones from the SPA boundary. This approach is not consistent with national policy nor is it consistent with the cohesive vision for growth in Bradford and Airedale specifically.

6.5 URBAN REGENERATION AND RENEWAL

a). **KEIGHLEY:-** In our main submissions of March 2014 we support the strong growth role for this principal town. The town is the largest of the Principal Town designations and has the socio-economic infrastructure on which to base future growth, though this requires additional investment (e.g the proposed A650 Keighley town centre access improvement scheme contained in the West Yorkshire plus transport fund programme). We conclude that Keighley is capable of accommodating a higher level of housing growth in accordance with the distribution we propose for the enhanced housing requirement.

b). **BINGLEY:-** We conclude that there is specific and sufficient evidence to support the growth of Bingley and we advocate a higher housing requirement figure of 1,600. We support the upgrade of the settlement to principal town status which is strongly based on the current retail and service provision within the town centre, the character and heritage qualities of the built environment and its surrounding countryside environment. Bingley and its environs are a main centre of existing employment and further employment land provision needs to be made on smaller sites within the urban fabric and on larger well planned employment parks in the wider locality at the heart of Airedale. Housing development is needed as essential infrastructure to support economic growth and to provide funding contributions for new and enhanced social and environmental infrastructure. The early delivery of the main remaining phase 2 UDP housing allocation (capacity circa 440 dwellings) to the west of the town, which is well integrated with the urban form and well placed for key transport connections is essential in the very short term to reduce the backlog in housing provision and to enhance housing supply in the context of a five year deliverable supply of less than 2.5 years.

The spatial vision and outcomes (App 10 of the Submission draft CS) expect that the towns of Airedale are “transformed and are attractive, cohesive and safe places where people want to live, work, invest and spend time in.” Bingley has all the main attributes to achieve the planned outcome for its growth contribution and indeed some of the attributes including essential infrastructure are already in place as a result of previous strategic initiatives. In our evidence on Matters 2, 3 and 4 we have summarised our response on the case for growth and we have emphasised the continuing very important role of Airedale in the LCR and Bradford District contexts. Bingley is in a focal position in the Aire Valley corridor and is very well placed in terms of all development potential factors to play an enhanced key role in the City Region and District wide strategies and to deliver 1,600 additional dwellings and additional land for employment and supporting infrastructure. This position is reinforced by the strong housing need and demand in the sub market area. In 2011 we carried out a sustainability review of all SHLAA sites in the Bingley, Shipley and Baildon area to assess the capacity to achieve the much needed housing growth. We will shortly be reviewing and updating this work and will include additional SHLAA sites identified as well as broad locations identified in the Broadway Malayan report.

The future planning of the town and its environs would benefit from the production of a neighbourhood or area plan. We understand that the Bingley Community Council are seeking to establish a Town Council potentially with the aim of preparing a neighbourhood plan.

6.5 d) **STEETON WITH EASTBURN**

This Local Growth Centre is located in a strong position in the Airedale Corridor and benefits from excellent communications. It also has significant potential to contribute to economic growth in the form of new housing and employment developments. In our main submissions we have advocated a housing contribution of 1,150 dwellings within the plan period. The relatively high level of local job provision presents a key opportunity to reduce journey to work lengths and support other key policy objectives by providing the level of supporting housing infrastructure we propose.

6.5 e) **BAILDON:-**

In our main submission we have proposed a total of 600 dwellings for development within the plan period. We have identified a SHLAA brownfield site capacity of sub 200 dwellings and therefore sustainable Green Belt land release at the urban edge will be required. While Baildon is identified as a local service centre in the settlement hierarchy and we agree with this designation in terms of its supply of local facilities it does have a very strong connection with the main urban area of Bradford/Shipley in terms of overall urbanisation and road and rail proximity and connectivity. There is a strong local concentration of employment along the valley bottom A6038 corridor which is within a 2.5km radius of the majority of the existing residential community. Green Belt releases at the urban edge will be in a similarly sustainable location.

6.6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

a) In our evidence in this and other statements we have made a strong case in support of the economic role of Airedale and in particular the key settlements of Keighley and Bingley. The identified sites and other allocations will be required to meet the policies and vision for Airedale.

6.7 ENVIRONMENT

a). In our Wharfedale (Matter 6C) and policy SC8 responses we have strongly advocated a case for a much more positive and holistic policy approach to the provision and enhancement of green infrastructure and connected habitats. We advocate the same positively planned approach for the Airedale settlements which we conclude is a more balanced and sustainable approach. Such an approach will better enable the realisation and delivery of all 7 sub aspects of this policy. The fact that there are seven sub delivery policies and they all have inter-relationships enhances the case for a positively planned approach rather than the highly restrictive constrained approach contained in policy SC8 and in a wider sense in the Growth Study approach which does not place much emphasis on realising the positive environmental potential of locations alongside the achievement of development.