

### 4 Central Elland - Issues and Analysis

#### Central Elland: Issues

- 4.1 Whilst Central Elland has a range of positive attributes, including some excellent historic architecture and intimate street scapes, the area is in need of regeneration if it is to have a sustainable future. The Town Centre in particular is a critical area of Central Elland that can drive its regeneration. The Town Centre currently lacks the facilities and vibrancy to attract all members of the local community, in addition to the workforce at Lowfields and visitors from outside of Elland. These observations are confirmed by early community engagement exercises.
- 4.2 The Town Centre therefore fails to meet its potential and is a barrier to the sustainable regeneration of Central Elland as a whole. This area will better serve the local community if its services, facilities, built environment, and sustainable transport links are enhanced. A vibrant Town Centre could generate a virtuous circle, attracting in visitors and investors from outside of Elland. Areas peripheral to the Town Centre also have an important role to play in the sustainable development and regeneration of Central Elland, and for the town as a whole.
- 4.3 This section of the SPD will outline some of the issues in Central Elland that are detrimental to its regeneration along with guidance intended to remedy these. This section will be followed by sections outlining proposals for the improvement of infrastructure and seven key areas.
- 4.4 Development briefs for these seven key areas are provided in Chapter 6. These development briefs contain useful diagrams and site analyses that elaborate on the issues discussed below, and also provide suggested development proposals. Given that these seven key areas cover a significant proportion of Central Elland, it would be useful if readers considered this section and Chapter 6 in conjunction with one another.
- 4.5 A range of factors act as barriers to regeneration in Central Elland and need to be addressed. These barriers fall under the following categories:- urban design, property market issues, highways issues, segmentation and connectivity.

#### Issue 1

#### Urban Design

- 4.6 There are parts of Central Elland that retain their original, mostly Victorian, charm and elegance. Other parts have been transformed through recent changes of use, economic decline, demolitions or insensitive building design. This has led to the disjointed development of the settlement's central area. The result is a place that has a few attractive streets, buildings and spaces but is interspersed with sites and structures that have fallen into neglect or not been developed to their full potential.
- 4.7 The following areas of Central Elland are depicted on the plan referenced "Seven Key Areas" in Chapter 6.

#### Dewsbury Road Area

- This area is improving with recent developments.
- The area is characterised by relatively large former mill buildings, most of which are being redeveloped for residential purposes.

- A supermarket has been proposed for this area. A new development, combining uses in accordance with the RCUDP, would replace numerous unattractive, low rent developments.
- The public realm in this area is currently very poor, as are connections between this area and the Town Centre.

**Picture 21 Low quality development off Dewsbury Road**



### Elland – Riorges Link

- This roadway divides the town and reduces linkages into the Town Centre from the Dewsbury Road area; it is difficult to cross and encourages traffic speed.
- The area lacks street frontages and is wide and bleak.
- There is little sense of an entrance to Elland, which creates confusion for the visitor.

**Picture 22 View of Elland Riorges Link roundabout**



### Town Hall Junction and Triangle

- A traffic-dominated and pedestrian un-friendly junction.
- An incomplete and unenclosed space. Potential is unrealised as a key urban space and gateway to the town centre.
- The Town Hall does not relate sufficiently strongly to the space.
- Existing high quality buildings are not recognised in the design of the junction.
- The block known as 'Town Hall Triangle' has many vacant units – the potential of this key site is unrecognised.

Picture 23 View northwards over Elland Riorges Link roundabout.



Picture 24 View southwards towards Elland Riorges Link roundabout.



Picture 25 View of Town Hall



Picture 26 View of Town Hall rear elevation



### Southgate

- The elongated nature of Southgate's retail pitch gives a lack of focus, as does the absence of quality public spaces.
- There is a variable quality of retail offer along Southgate, with few national retailers present.
- Vacant units on Southgate detract from the visual environment and create a dead space in the retail pitch.
- Inactive frontages exist along Southgate occupied by car parking, Calder House Square and office premises.
- Security facilities detract from visual amenity at 19 to 27 Southgate.
- The cluster of historic buildings/streets gives constrained retail space unsuitable for many retailers.
- The roundabout at the foot of Southgate creates barriers to pedestrians and a poor quality environment.

Picture 27 View of Calder House and Square from Southgate



Picture 28 Approach to 'The Cross' from Southgate



### 'The Cross'

- Potential not realised around 'The Cross' (upper Southgate).
- Too much traffic.
- Potential to increase interest for all ages and pedestrian access in this area.
- A key link to the riverside is not utilised.

Picture 29 View North to the Cross



### Green Spaces: The Elland Bridge Riverside Park

- The riverside park is underused; accesses and signage are poor.
- Lacks facilities and high quality environment.
- Feels unsafe.

#### Issue 2

#### Public Realm

- 4.8 The public realm in Elland, particularly along Southgate, is generally very poor. The paving on footpaths and roadways is dated, dirty and scruffy. There is an absence of public art for the enjoyment of the local community and visitors. There is a lack of high quality street furniture, such as benches. Lamposts tend to be generic-looking and detract from the fine Georgian and Victorian architecture that the town does have. Parts of Elland are overwhelmed by ugly and obstructive signage, much of which is unnecessary.

Picture 30 View of signage at the southern end of Southgate



Picture 31 View of signage at Southgate.



Picture 32 View of Calder House and Square from Southgate



4.9 The following suggestions could be implemented:

- Road and other signs should be rationalised to as great a degree as possible, with new signs only being employed if absolutely necessary.
- Signs and street lamps could be attached to buildings rather than using posts in the public highway, except where there are compelling reasons for not doing so.
- CCTV cameras could be placed in hidden locations that reduce their impact on visual amenity.
- The style and colour of the above-mentioned items could be common throughout Central Elland, creating a more tidy environment, and a theme unique to Elland, creating a greater sense of place.

This advice supplements Policies GBE1 and BE7 of the RCUDP, which can be read at Appendix 2.

### Issue 3

#### Shop Fronts

4.10 Numerous shop fronts in Central Elland are unattractive and this is detrimental to the general street scene. Shop fronts might be improved through the use of heritage-related grant funding. Conservation staff at the Council can advise about the availability and use of such funding.

### Issue 4

#### Some Property Market Issues

4.11 Knight Frank LLP were commissioned to undertake a property market analysis providing a detailed assessment of a range of issues including employment land, housing and retail. The key issues emerging from this analysis were discussed in the Issues and Options phase of the draft SPD.

4.12 The Knight Frank report drew various conclusions relating to the property market in Central Elland. These conclusions confirm the observations made by members of the local community; that the existing retail core in Central Elland lacks facilities and a sense of place, and fails to appeal to people within and outside of the town, contributing to a lack of vibrancy. There are also issues relating to employment land and residential development.

### Employment Land

**4.13** The industrial base of Elland (like the rest of the District) is progressively shifting from traditional large scale manufacturing towards more specialised companies and a public service base. An analysis of employment land in Elland reveals the following characteristics:

- There is a very limited office market in Elland apart from at Lowfields Business Park where demand is strong although industrial demand still predominates.
- Many of today's industrial occupiers in Elland are housed in buildings that are a legacy of the town's industrial past, such as old mills and factory buildings. These do not meet the requirements of today's modern occupiers.

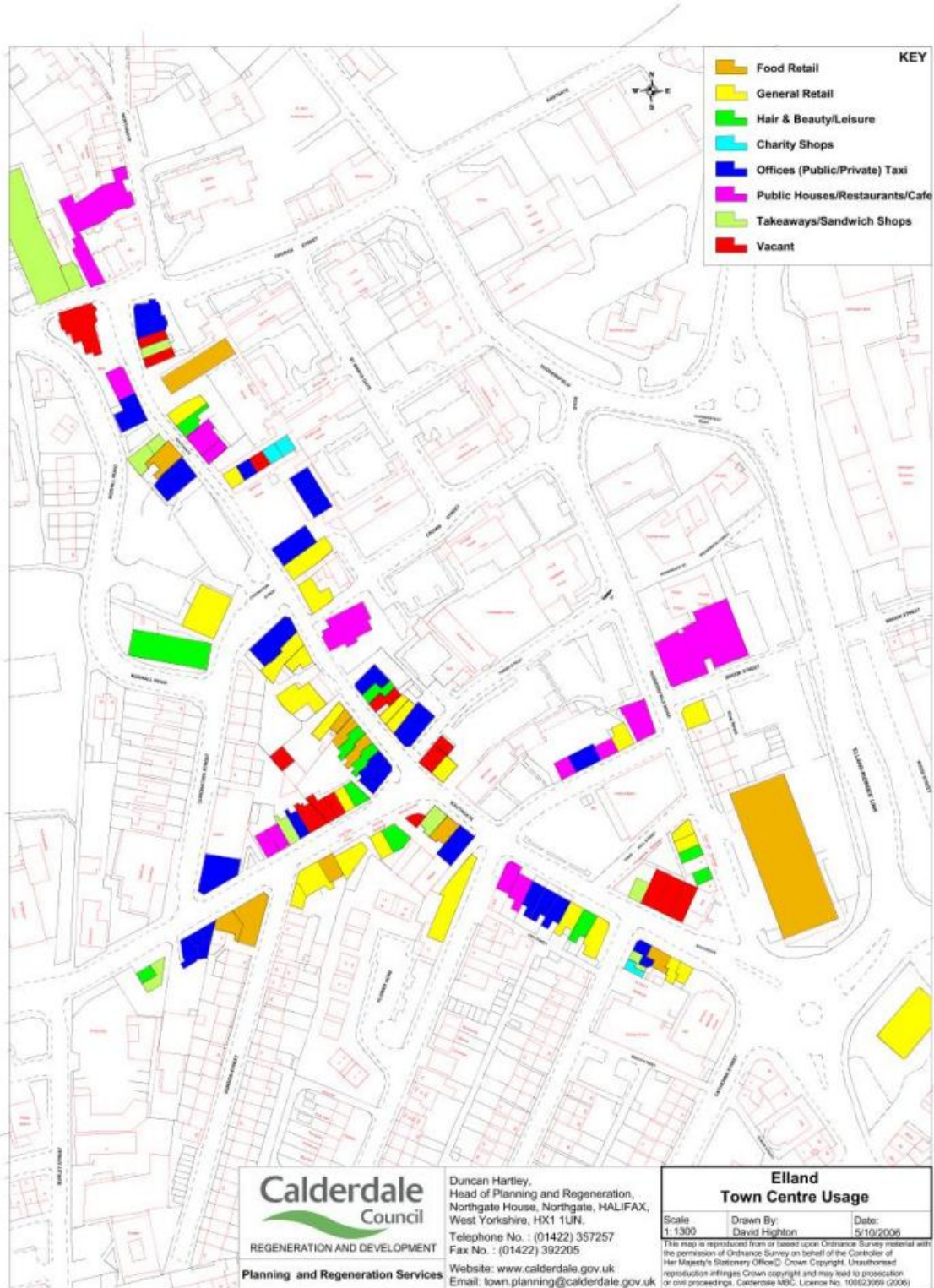
### Residential Development

**4.14** Unmet demand for more affordable housing is evident within the area. Residential conversions and apartment schemes are considered a high value opportunity by investors and developers.

### Retail Development

**4.15** There is a variable quality of retail offer along Southgate. Few national retailers are present in the town. The cluster of historic buildings and streets gives constrained retail space unsuitable for many retailers. Figure 3 provides an illustration of the retail businesses within the Town Centre.

Figure 3 Elland Town Centre Property Usage (mid 2006)

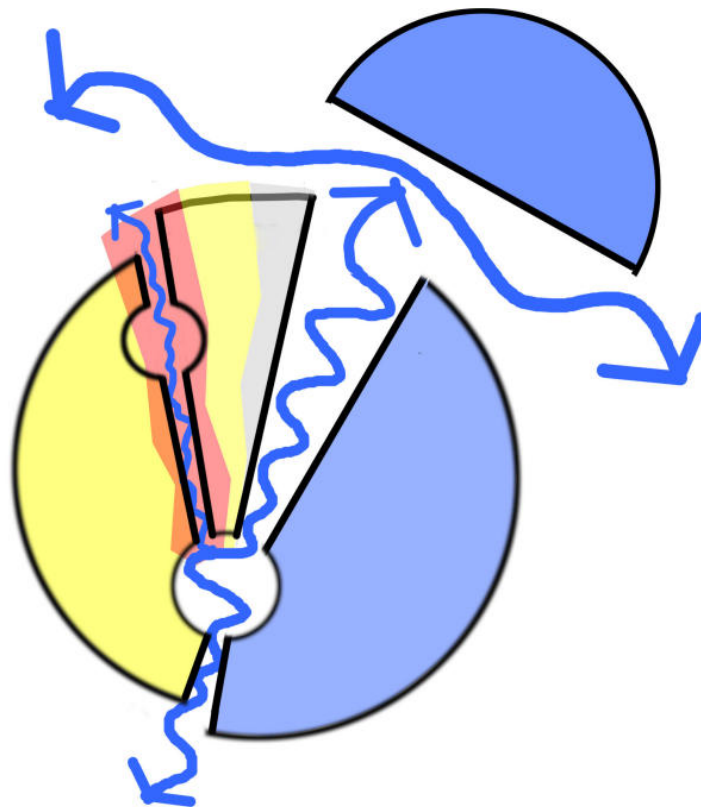


## Issue 5

### Segmentation, Connectivity, Cohesion

4.16 Central Elland today is an area of separate parts, segmented and disconnected. This is illustrated in Figure 4. An ideal goal will be to provide a new heart for the town with strong linkages between the various areas and activities. These issues of connectivity and cohesion are addressed in Chapter 5.

Figure 4 Elland Town Centre Today - Diagram Illustrating Segmentation



SEGMENTED

DISCONNECTED

A TOWN CENTRE OF SEPARATE PARTS

**ELLAND TOWN CENTRE TODAY**