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Calderdale Council LDF Workshop Report 4
Northowram, Hipperholme and Shelf
April 2011

1 Context

The Development Strategy Team for Planning at Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council has commissioned this report to capture the fourth of ten creative consultations in Calderdale designed to explore the needs, aspirations and concerns of residents in relation to planning.

This report concerns the existing and desired quality of life of residents in Northowram, Hipperholme and Shelf

The written results from this consultation are thematic¹ and indicative of resident's experiences and aspirations in this area relating to planning. The report constitutes one element of a broad evidence base with which to inform the LDF Core Strategy.

2 Methodology

The workshop drew on Creative Problem Solving and Productive Thinking frameworks to promote active involvement and group decision-making from participants.

The workshop was framed within a 'quality of life' paradigm to encourage participants to reflect not just on planning issues but also on the real impacts of these issues on their lives and communities. The aim in doing so was to produce insights that have genuine relevance to both participants and the Planning Team.

The workshop was divided into four key areas of investigation:

- resident's current life/work context and impact on quality of life,
- aspirations for 20 years hence moving into their next life stage,
- what that imagined future would look and feel like to live in,
- specific positive actions the Planning Department could take to realise these aspirations.

The workshop concluded with a group discussion to further explore the themes and issues raised.

3 Participation

A total of 14 residents took part in the workshop. Not all participants completed the equalities sheet therefore totals below do not add up.

10 described themselves as 'White'.

The age breakdown was: <25 = 1; 25 to 39 = 1; 40 to 59 = 6; 60+ = 3.

There were 8 males and 3 females.

None described themselves as having a disability.

¹ Some highly specific suggestions were made during the workshop and are outlined in detail in the appendix of this report.

4 Overview

Preservation of village identity, local community spirit and access to the surrounding countryside are the key concerns of residents in this area.

Well-being is strongly associated with the palpable sense of community and enjoyment of the local countryside. Residents are proud of the character, heritage and friendly population of the three villages from which they derive a real sense of attachment, belonging, safety and security.



They perceive their greatest threat as development – both in terms of unsympathetic new builds encroaching on the surrounding green belt and increased infill developments creating a feeling of being ‘hemmed in’. Residents are fearful of the impact of development on the look and feel of their villages, as well as the negative impact of the associated increased population on local services and sense of community.

Whilst proximity to Halifax is a benefit of living in the area, this benefit is undermined by traffic and public transport issues. Traffic congestion is a huge concern for many residents who believe it poses a threat to pedestrians and commuters. Bus services are considered largely inadequate and expensive.



Local amenities, whilst considered good, could be enhanced in their view by increasing provision for teenagers, improving street cleansing and addressing fly tipping. Ensuring future local provision that supports community engagement is also important. Residents also wish for allotments to grow their own produce and access to renewable energy sources.

In the future, residents want to enjoy excellent and affordable bus links to other towns and villages, reap the benefits of a thriving local economy and for young people to look forward to good local employment prospects.

5 Key Findings

5:1 Positive quality of life

Residents in this area enjoy the surrounding countryside and proximity to other towns. They feel well served in relation to local amenities and experience a strong sense of community.

- **Community**

Residents believe their area offers a good 'village experience' which in turn supports a strong community spirit. Each of the three villages have their own identity, all of them are welcoming and friendly. This brings to their lives a sense of belonging, safety and security, contentedness and feeling part of something special.

- **History**

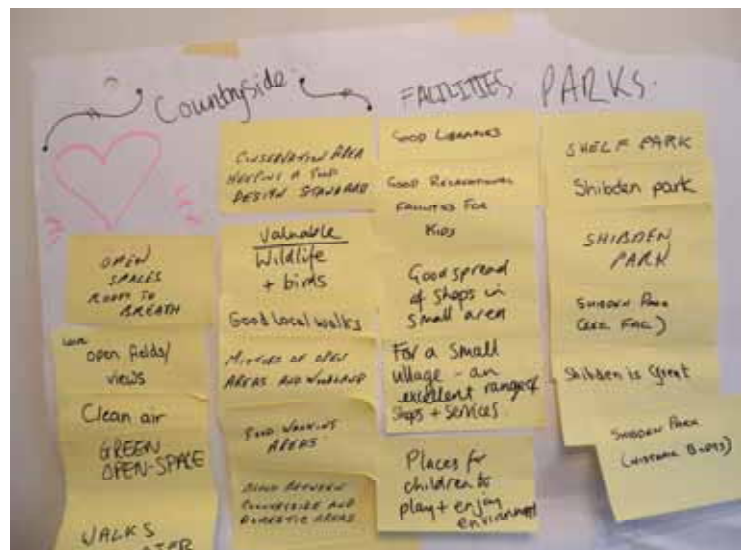
Residents are proud of the local heritage and history of the area which they want preserved.

- **Countryside**

This area offers close proximity and easy access to surrounding woodlands and open countryside which residents value highly. It contributes to a feeling of health and well-being by creating opportunities for peace, calm, relaxation, enjoyment of the fresh clean air and walking.

- **Facilities and local amenities**

Residents believe they are well served in terms of local amenities such as libraries, recreation facilities for children (Shibden Park was a particular favourite), and the range of shops available locally.



5:2 Quality of life concerns

Residents are primarily concerned with issues around congestion, over-development and the impact of over-development on the green spaces and community spirit they prize.

- **Roads and traffic**

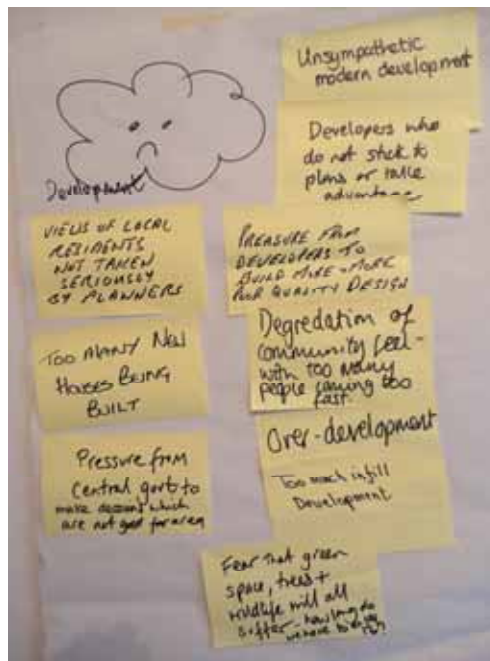
Congestion is a big concern of local residents – specifically around Stump Cross and Hipperholme crossroads. They think the speed and volume of traffic poses a serious hazard for pedestrians and drivers, particularly in Northowram. In their view the crossing there at Bradford Road is dangerous, as are the crossroads where Bradford Road meets Westcroft

Lane. Heavy loads and rat-run traffic through residential areas are also concerns. In addition, residents think that the roads in their area are not sufficiently well maintained. The impacts on their quality of life are feelings of frustration, anger and the real threat of danger to life.

“They could improve the traffic lights all they like, but it’s the sheer volume of traffic ... that is the problem. There’s no easy way around it.”

- **Development**

Residents are concerned about the volume of unsympathetic new builds and infill development in the area which threatens the village feel, the separateness of each village and the surrounding open spaces. Residents feel their views about planning are not being taken seriously by the council and are extremely concerned about the ‘degradation of the community feel with too many people coming in too fast’. The impact on their quality of life is an increasing sense of feeling ‘hemmed in’, loss of pride in the specialness and character of the area, stress when planning applications go against their wishes, and the constant fear that they will lose everything they value about the area.



“We like to feel that two minutes from our door we are effectively in the countryside. It’s this feeling of being hemmed in, filling all the empty spaces with homes ... and it’s almost Calderdale Council policy to ‘build as many as we can’ with not enough jobs for people.”

“Any little open patch, they’ll whack a house on it. It’s disregarding the need for open spaces.”

“It’s got a lot more developed housing-wise. I see development as a positive word, but in this way development is bad because it’s sort of ebbing away at the community spirit, ebbing away at the green space, ebbing away at the service provision because it’s over-running the doctors and the schools ... I think that’s wrong.”

“I feel that I don’t really understand the pressures on councils to build more and more and more houses ... and why it is that we’re all in this situation where we have to be looking with great fear at the prospect of losing what’s so precious to us all.”

- **Upkeep and amenities**

Dog fouling, fly tipping and poor street cleansing are a source of constant irritation to residents. They also believe there are poor quality facilities for teenagers leaving them to hang around in the streets – through no fault of their own – which can feel intimidating. The influx of development and subsequent incomers has, in their view, put a strain on schools and doctor’s surgeries.

“Young people, when seen to be hanging around on street corners, are perceived to be intimidating people. That’s partly because of a lack of facilities and the facilities they’ve got are inadequate.”

- **Paths and rights of way**

There seems to be an issue in this area around rights of way. Participants worry that they will lose access to some of their walking routes because landowners block footpaths. They are also concerned about the apparent neglect of snickets and paths. Access to countryside is a major benefit of living in the area therefore a reduction or deterioration in their access to footpaths will negatively impact on quality of life.

- **Transport**

Whilst there is a good bus route into Halifax town, residents are frustrated about the restricted service on offer, the lack of fast routes to other towns and cities and the difficulty of accessing neighbouring villages by bus. There was also mention of the need for a train station in Hipperholme. The subsequent discussion brought up the potential negative impact such a station might have on incoming traffic to the area.

“When it’s good it’s very good but in other areas (Lightcliffe) you’ve a half mile walk to the bus stop and it’s every hour. There needs to be much wider coverage.”

“I live in Northowram and I think the public transport is appalling ... we have a local bus but it’s only once an hour ... the only other two services that run through Northowram are long distance ... so really you’re relying on that one bus an hour which, for an area the size of Northowram, is pathetic.”

“You’re paying nearly £2 to go from Northowram into Halifax which, when you’re working, it’s £15 - £16 a week out of your wages.”

“Isn’t it silly that it costs more to go to town in a bus than to go in a car ... it doesn’t make sense.”

“Since the 509 got taken away First Line has had no competition and they don’t care ... The second the 509 stopped, First Line just turned up when they wanted and raised their prices by 50p which was like a 30% increase.”

“The only way you can get a bus from Hipperholme to Northowram is get a bus up to Shelf or walk up to Shelf and get a bus there ... there is no direct link.”

5:3 Community Aspirations

Residents themed their key aspirations into seven core headings. When invited to vote on which they believed were the most important to their quality of life the results, in descending order, were:

- Open spaces,
- Local identity,
- Environmental and local facilities,
- Power and energy,
- Transport,
- Food production, employment and skills,
- Development.

All the findings are in the appendix. This section only includes areas that relate to planning.

- **Open spaces**

Residents want to preserve the green belt and nurture the trees and wildlife that inhabit it.

- **Local identity**

Residents want the villages to remain separate, small and unique in character in order to preserve local identity, pride and community spirit.

- **Environment**

Residents want fly tipping and dog fouling to be stopped, cleaner streets, less traffic congestion and cleaner air.

- **Local facilities**

Residents want improved facilities for teenagers, more local shops in general, improved local policing and safer pedestrian crossings.

- **Power and energy**

A move towards renewable energy and local power generation is important here.

- **Transport**

Residents want decreased congestion, safer roads and an improved public transport system.

- **Food production**

There is a demand for local produce and an increase in provision of allotments.

- **Employment and skills**

Residents want an increase in locally available, high quality employment.

- **Development**

Residents want less development and fewer housing developments in particular, whether that is new build estates or infill development.

- **Endgame**

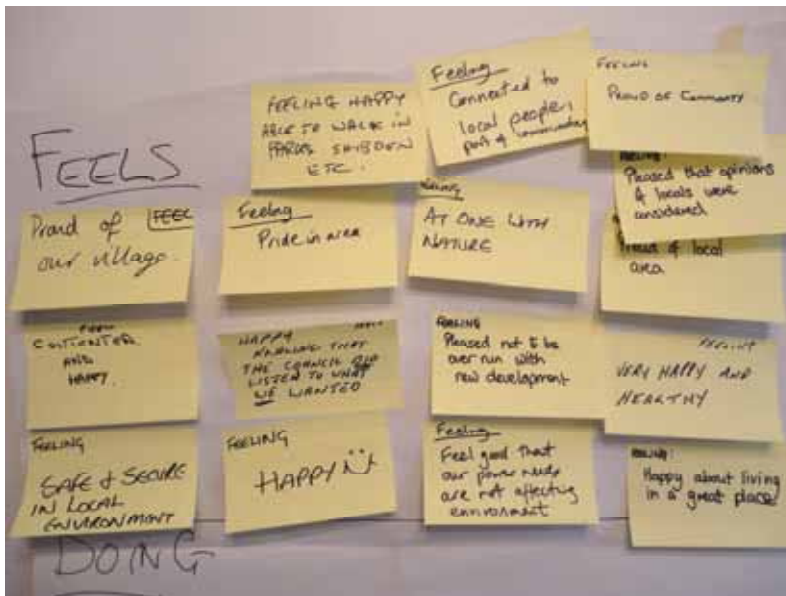
It is extremely important to residents that their area, in 2031, retains its sense of local pride, community spirit and connection with local people. They want the character of each village to be preserved to enable them to continue to enjoy village life. Residents want to



be able to work locally, support a healthy local economy, take advantage of good community facilities and amenities, and for the youth of the area to be engaged.

Residents also want a greater sense of freedom: freedom to enjoy the local parks, access to the surrounding countryside, grow their own food and travel with ease to neighbouring towns and villages using an excellent public transport system.

Safer roads for pedestrians, residents and commuters are also a priority - addressed primarily through traffic reduction.



5:4 Suggested Positive Actions

What follows are specific steps or action points suggested by workshop participants that they believe Calderdale Council needs to implement in order to realise their aspirations. They are not weighted in any way and have been grouped for ease of use - a full detailed outline is available in the appendix.



- Development**

KEEP	ADD
Keep historic buildings Keep separateness of villages Green belt boundaries	Planning laws to endorse local resident's views Local building in local stone Extra protection to stop development in Shibden Valley
LOSE/STOP	CHANGE
Housing development in Northowram Large-scale building development New big estates which will need loads more cars Building on green spaces Poor quality development Building large new developments with little or no parking with overspill onto other roads	Put houses by schools instead of buses taking kids from Northowram/Shelf to Hipperholme and Lightcliffe Listening and more consultation and better publicised consultation with respect to development in specific areas If houses need to be developed – encourage high quality, low volume sustainable and eco-friendly builds on brown field sites

- Amenities**

KEEP	ADD
Parks and open spaces Well stocked and frequently open library Playing fields for sports	Clean streets and paths Visible community policing presence More parking for local amenities Facilities for teenagers Smaller local schools More litter bins More parks and open public spaces Ways of getting food grown locally More concern for teenage activities – improve facilities Modern, worthwhile community facilities; well suited, targeted, periodically reviewed Plant more trees
LOSE/STOP	CHANGE
Stop building so many new homes without an increase in service provision	Encourage more households to save energy or use renewable energy Enforce fines for dog fouling

- Roads and transport**

KEEP	ADD
	Park and ride for big events 1 st class transport system to reduce numbers of cars Train station for Hipperholme More grit boxes so the village doesn't have to come to standstill after a light snow Improve Hipperholme crossroads Cycle lanes throughout area
LOSE/STOP	CHANGE
	Stump Cross lights Regular reviews of public transport facilities Improve infrastructure e.g. Hipperholme traffic lights Regular review of traffic congestion areas Reduce traffic congestion by better public transport, more local jobs, more smaller schools

APPENDIX: RAW DATA

1 What residents love about their area

Community	History	Countryside	Facilities	Parks	Transport
Excellent community spirit	Local history	Walks	Good libraries	Shelf park	Good public transport
Local, welcoming feel	Sense of heritage	Open spaces	Good recreational facilities for kids	Shibden park	A good village to town bus route
Community feel	Historic buildings	Room to breathe	Recycling	Shibden park (rec facilities)	Good bus transport
Knowing the neighbours	History of area	Clean air	For a small village – an excellent range of shops and services	Shibden is great	Nice mix of country and easy access to town
Small is beautiful	Conservation area	Green open space	Good mix of shops	Shibden park (historic buildings)	
People living well together		Mixtures of open areas and woodland	Good local amenities		
People who care about our area		Love open fields / views	Places for children to play and enjoy the environment		
Friendliness of people who live here		Conservation area keeping a good design standard	Good spread of shops in small area		
Community spirit		Valuable wildlife and birds			
Village experience		Good local walks			
Local identity between areas		Love green space			
Thriving local economy		Good walking areas			
		Blend between countryside and domestic areas			
		Green, free spaces			
		Proximity to open countryside within walking distance			
		Countryside access excellent			
		Proximity to open countryside			

2 Associated positive impacts

Community	Health and Wellbeing	Crime and safety	Transport
Relief to get home!	Space gives feeling of freedom	Safe and secure	Well connected to town centres
Feeling of belonging	Calm – when away from ‘hustle and bustle’	Feeling home	Easy access to other areas
Proud to live somewhere clean and well maintained	Fresh air – feeling healthy		Happy to get access to other areas through transport
Better than down south!	Relaxing to look at green space and trees		
Content and able to relax	Healthy through breathing clean air		
Integrated locals who know one another – in shops / neighbours / walking the dog	Protective of area, want to maintain it, preserve what’s good		
Safe – a feeling of community	Restful place to be		
Feel safe in community	Can feel relaxed when walking in countryside		
Part of something special through community	Wellness through countryside		
Safe in local environment	Contented		
	Connecting with something beautiful		
	Not feeling hemmed in		

3 Resident’s concerns about their area

Congestion	Traffic hazards	Paths & rights of way	Environment
Hipperholme crossroads – congestion and dangerous crossings	Speed of traffic	Loss of some open spaces	Dog fouling
Too many cars on the road in general	No crossing on busy roads	Landowners blocking footpaths	Not enough poo bins in Shelf park
Hipperholme crossroads – congestion needs sorting out	Dangerous crossings across Bradford Rd (Northowram)	Rights of way in danger	Streets not cleaned or swept
Congestion	Dangerous parking – narrow roads	Snickets and paths neglected and not cleaned	Fly tipping wants stopping
Stump Cross traffic lights	Northowram crossroads (Bradford Rd / Westcroft Lane) busy and dangerous (traffic and pedestrians)		Fly tipping on open fields
Bad traffic management, lights etc			Need local recycling facilities
Sitting in traffic queues	Speed limits not observed		
Stump Cross – congestion at junction and poor air quality	Large wagons in essentially residential areas		
Heavy traffic from quarry	Residential roads used as rat runs		
Big wagons on country roads	Traffic trying to beat system by using side roads		
	Road traffic calming in Northowram – bad design		

Development	Local amenities	Transport	Highway maintenance
Views of local residents not taken seriously by planning	Lack of parking for residents	Lack of a railway station	Roads not repaired
Too many new houses being built	Poor quality local facilities for young people	Bad transport links	Poor quality of roads
Pressure from central gov. to make decisions which are not good for area	Not enough activities for teenagers	Public transport rubbish	
Fears that green space, trees and wildlife will all suffer – how long will we have to enjoy it?	Need more for teenagers to do		
Unsympathetic modern development	Lack of good local jobs		
Pressure from developers to build more and more poor quality design	Too few local shops		
Degradation of community feel with too many people coming too fast	No shops		
Too much infill development	Hipperholme centre – empty shops		
Developers who do not stick to plans or take advantage	Pressure on schools and doctors surgery from new developments		
Over-development			

4 Associated negative impacts

Traffic congestion	Bad planning decisions	People and personal relationships
Frustration – sat in traffic congestion	Hemmed in	Fear the loss of what I really appreciate here
Bad traffic management makes people cross and less attentive to their driving	Lack of consideration for existing residents	Lots of things that go wrong are about individual's behaviour
Angry when local business can dictate parking regulations	Infill worse since I came to this area	Intimidated by groups of teenagers hanging around
Angry when I have to risk my life by walking in the road because motorists have parked on the pavement	Land is purely seen as £ signs in developer's eyes	What is the point of trying to keep a good standard
Frustrated every time I am stuck in traffic	Who does the planning ...? Some things are just plain silly.	Reduction of the community spirit is disappointing
	Loss of pride in area – poor development	Missed opportunities to close generational apartheid
	Decisions made by people or inspectors from other areas	Will the village be worth coming back to?
	High level of stress when planning decisions go against what local residents want	
	Some disillusion that we are powerless to protect what we value	
	Worry – loss of reasons why moved to area:	
	- loss of green space	
	- loss of character	
	- loss of local identity	
	- and merging of villages	

5 Wishes for the future

Local identity	<p>Preservation of local identity and special buildings</p> <p>Maintain a sense of pride in local communities</p> <p>Northowram to still be a village</p> <p>A village identity distinct from elsewhere</p> <p>Maintain villages rather than an indistinct suburbia</p> <p>Maintain local character/history</p> <p>That the village still looks and feels like a village</p>
Local facilities	<p>Deliver on promises for better local facilities</p> <p>An adequate youth centre</p> <p>Better health care</p> <p>Good sports and leisure activities</p> <p>Retention of local shops and not 'become another British high street'</p> <p>More local shops</p> <p>Places for people to meet - young / old</p> <p>More but smaller schools</p> <p>More small local shops</p> <p>School runs are now on foot!</p> <p>Local police officer</p> <p>Crossing facilities on Bradford Rd</p> <p>Appropriate targeting when providing facilities</p> <p>Pavements repaired so it's safe to walk on them</p> <p>Wish for a new railway station to cars off the road</p>
Environment	<p>No fly tipping</p> <p>Car pollution was no more</p> <p>Roads free of traffic</p> <p>All dog fouling and fly tipping stopped</p> <p>Reduced congestion</p> <p>People use waste bins and not pavements</p> <p>Walks with wildlife</p> <p>Clean air</p> <p>Dog walkers cleaned up after their pooches</p> <p>Less large vehicles in village</p> <p>Wish Hipperholme traffic lights easier to negotiate</p> <p>We all create a lot less rubbish</p>
Power and energy	<p>No wind power - it does not work and is unsightly</p> <p>Local power generation (district heating)</p> <p>Our homes and cars are powered by renewable energy</p> <p>Cheaper electrical power so we can have clean cars</p>
Open space	<p>Plenty green spaces</p> <p>No loss of green spaces</p> <p>The green belt is as it was in 2011 if not even bigger</p> <p>Lots of good quality open spaces</p> <p>Green space, trees and wildlife are protected and nurtured</p>
Development	<p>Less development</p> <p>Less development (housing) in Northowram</p> <p>Less infill development - small is beautiful</p> <p>New buildings on brown sites not in countryside</p>
Food production	<p>More food to be produced locally and nationally</p> <p>Space for local allotments</p>

	Local people start to make or grow the things they need Allotments Local sourcing of produce Grow your own food more
Employment and skills	Integrate schools and industry to give kids a chance Workforce including young people have skills to make things again More good quality local jobs More hi tech well paid jobs
Miscellaneous	Win the lottery

6 Perceived impacts on wishes on quality of life

Feeling	Proud of our village Contented and happy Safe and secure in a local environment Feeling happy able to walk in parks, Shibden etc Pride in the area Happy knowing that the council did listen to what we wanted Happy Feeling connected to local people and part of community At one with nature Pleased not to be overrun with new development Feel good that our power needs are not affecting environment Feeling proud of community Pleased that opinions of locals were considered Proud of local area Very happy and healthy Happy about living in a great place
Thinking/Saying	Ain't life grand Ride my electric car Having a local connection with decisions that affect us Enjoy more time with my friends in this new world What a great place to live About growing some of my own food This is the way we can live for a long time Recommending Northowram as a good place to live
Doing	Walking and enjoying open spaces Using good quality transport Spending less time in traffic Walking in the local nature reserve Supporting local economy = using local shops and businesses Young/old working and playing together Enjoying village life Having an allotment and growing produce Using public transport for local and further afield trips and days out Working locally on what people need locally Going to the local community centre for group activities and meetings Walking in countryside Shopping and buying locally Pottering about in my allotment Smiling more

Seeing	<p>People smiling more</p> <p>Fewer cars more public transport and trains</p> <p>Young and old involved in activities together</p> <p>Friends, families and neighbours</p> <p>Local activities and groups creating a sense of community</p> <p>Community centres being used by the communities</p> <p>People of all ages enjoying the park, Shelf park</p> <p>Reduced pressure on our roads and schools</p> <p>Young people in sporting activities</p> <p>Fewer cars</p> <p>Views over Shibden Valley as they are with no new houses</p> <p>Brown field sites used effectively and not left derelict</p> <p>Green fields, wildlife</p> <p>Good local health centres</p> <p>Seeing my grandchildren happy</p> <p>Seeing an area very similar to now</p> <p>Good balance of shops and houses and valued green space and wildlife</p> <p>Better bus services</p>
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7 Suggested positive actions

KEEP	<p>Local villages as they are – Shelf, Northowram, Hipperholme – not merging into one</p> <p>Greenbelt boundaries as they are – no loss of green spaces</p> <p>Keep involving the community in decision making</p> <p>Historic buildings – sense of locality and Shibden and Shelf parks</p> <p>Keep all green field sites</p> <p>All green belt as green belt</p> <p>A well stocked and frequently open library</p> <p>Keep parks and open spaces</p> <p>Libraries</p> <p>Northowram and Shelf as villages</p> <p>Keep playing fields for sports</p>
Stop	<p>Stop housing development in Northowram</p> <p>Large-scale building development</p> <p>The rise of buy-to-let properties</p> <p>New, big estates which will mean loads more cars</p> <p>Any building on green spaces</p> <p>Building large new developments with little/no parking with overspill onto other roads</p> <p>Poor quality development</p> <p>Building so many homes without an increase in service provision</p>
CHANGE	<p>Regular reviews of public transport facilities</p> <p>Improve built environment by reducing inappropriate signage on streets/buildings</p> <p>Improvements to infrastructure e.g. Hipperholme crossroads</p> <p>If houses need to be developed – encourage high quality, low volume, sustainable and eco friendly builds on brown field sites</p> <p>Regular review of transport congestion areas</p> <p>Listening and more consultation and better publicised consultation with respect to development in specific areas</p> <p>Make it easier/encourage more households to save energy or use renewable energy</p>

	<p>Get rid of useless signage (5 minutes to town centre)</p> <p>Enforce fines for dog fouling</p> <p>Put houses by schools instead of buses taking kids from Northowram/Shelf to Hipperholme/Lightcliffe</p> <p>Change Stump Cross lights</p> <p>Change planning laws to endorse local resident's views</p> <p>Reduce traffic congestion by better public transport, more local jobs, more smaller schools</p>
ADD	<p>If there has to be a local building it must be done in local stone</p> <p>Cleaner streets and paths</p> <p>Visible community policing presence</p> <p>Park and ride for big events/Christmas etc</p> <p>More parking for local amenities</p> <p>Facilities for teenagers</p> <p>Add new railway station</p> <p>Measures to make sustainable living easier</p> <p>Add smaller local schools</p> <p>First class transport system to reduce number of cars</p> <p>More rigorous controls of private rented properties</p> <p>More litter bins</p> <p>Train station for Hipperholme</p> <p>More grit boxes so the village doesn't have to come to a standstill after a light snow!!</p> <p>Improve Hipperholme crossroads</p> <p>More parks and open public spaces</p> <p>Extra protection to stop development in Shibden Valley</p> <p>Ways of getting more food grown locally</p> <p>Cycle lanes throughout area</p> <p>More concern for teenage activities - improve facilities</p> <p>Plant more trees</p> <p>Modern, worthwhile community facilities, well suited, targeted and periodically reviewed</p>