



Calderdale
Council

Shibden Estate Access Plan

August 2005

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1. Executive Summary

Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council intends to deliver equality in all of its functions, directed through information and awareness, accountability and inspection. This is being developed through various policies including the Equality Policy, the Race Equality Scheme, the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and the adoption of building regulations, planning policies and other regulations to improve access. Shibden Estate has a significant contribution to make in making the Council’s services more accessible to the people of Calderdale and the wider audience.

Following consultation with various organisations, community groups and advisers in assessing the current accessibility of Shibden Estate, a draft Access Plan was drawn up in 2003 in order to put in place improvements to access at Shibden. This was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the application for a grant to restore the estate and improve facilities under the Public Parks Initiative. The plan has been reviewed and now sets out a detailed action plan incorporating the proposed restoration and improvement work in the estate.

The Calderdale Council Equality Policy Statement is *“The Council aims to make Calderdale a place where people want to live, work and visit. We will pursue this aim by ensuring that resources at our disposal are used to support the best possible service provision. We will also achieve this aim by promoting social equality and economic and environmental well-being throughout the borough.”*

The Plan is informed by the corporate priorities adopted by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and other statutory and voluntary regulations aimed at improving access for all. This Access Plan addresses all these requirements and aims positively to welcome all visitors to Shibden by ensuring the widest possible access provision. This includes the removal of physical access barriers, but also sensory, intellectual, organisational, social and financial barriers.

The Disabilities Discrimination Act was introduced to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities. The Council is committed to a programme of continual improvement to access to buildings open to the public, improving access to leisure and community facilities and ensuring that pedestrian environments and transport facilities are designed to meet the needs of all members of the community.

The Race Relations Act 1976 (and The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000) makes it illegal to treat a person less favourably than others on racial grounds. These cover grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), and national or ethnic origin. Calderdale MBC positively promotes and delivers race equality in all its functions.

The Action Plan outlines the proposals for improving access to Shibden and includes targets for physical improvements, improvements in how we manage the site, and sensory improvements to ensure that interpretation is available to all. The Plan also investigates access to the park from surrounding areas. By addressing the needs of target audiences outlined in the Audience Development Plan, social and intellectual needs can also be served.

The proposed actions are summarised below:

Barrier	Actions
Organisational:	Provide a comprehensive interpretation and sign system
	Address training needs of front line staff in providing for people's needs
	Remove obstacles to employment and career development for people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic people
	Improvements to street furniture and “named” bus stops to improve bus services
	Consider bus link between the park and town centre
	Improve availability of information on transport
	Support the Council's feasibility study for a cable car facility to Beacon Hill (approx. 400 m from park boundary)
Physical:	Improve vehicle entrance from A58
	Improve vehicle entrance from Shibden Hall Road
	Improve coach parking
	Provide sense of arrival to entrances
	Improve road signs and brown tourism signs
	Improve surfaces and gradients to provide reasonable access for all
	Improve links with lower and upper park
	Investigate alternatives to walking
	Provide access to Cunnery Wood
	Provide access to Lister's Road Lodge
	Improve access to Woodland
	Provide accessible footpaths to play area, inclusive play and accessible equipment
	Provide access for all to services and facilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drop kerbs• Tactile warnings• Disabled parking close by• Surfaces suitable for people with a disability• Emergency assistance in accessible toilets
	Investigate improvements that can be made to concession facilities

Sensory	Improved interpretation to include materials for visually and hearing impaired
	Incorporate appropriate surfacing and aids in proposed works
Intellectual	Improve interpretation and events programmes
Social & Cultural	Provide interpretation in appropriate formats and languages
	Use consultation as a service improvement tool for facilities provided
	Target audiences using actions set out in Audience Development Plan.
	Improve safety and security in more isolated areas of park
	Improve signs and information about the park
Economic	Evaluate unfulfilled needs of visitors
	Review charges
	Investigate free bus service or ticketing arrangements

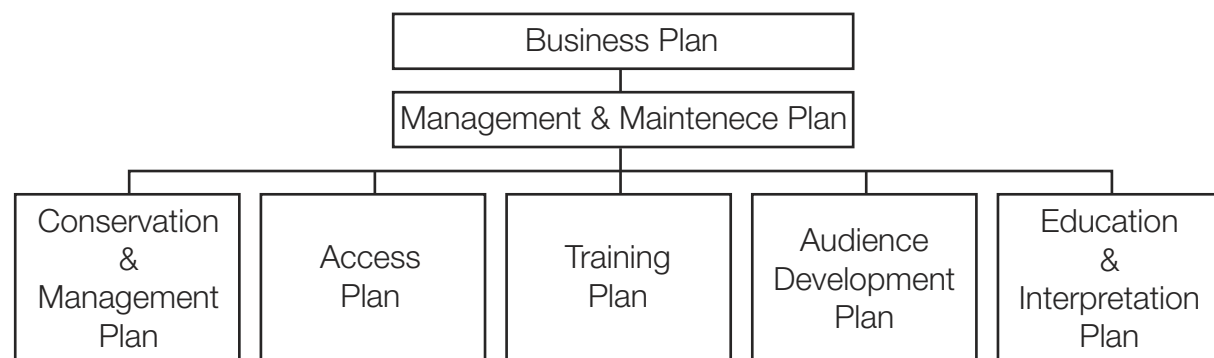
The outcome of the Plan will be to improve the quality of a visit to Shibden, whether it is a local frequent visitor, or a regional tourist. The proposed restoration of the estate provides a unique opportunity to build in accessibility that is often “tagged on” or adapted. Major elements of the restoration project that will improve access are:

- > The entrances to the estate will be improved, including new signs, arrival and interpretation at relevant points (set out in Interpretation Plan). There are two main vehicular entrances, from the A58 and from Shibden Hall Road, and these will be improved to cater for the increased visitor numbers.
- > The new café and interpretation centre in the park. Situated close to the entrance to the lower car park, the siting of the building was the first major step to improving access. Current facilities are situated close to vehicular routes and away from the heart of the park. The proposed new site allows visitors to enter the park from the new access road directly into the car park, with level access to the park and building situated away from arriving vehicles. Level access will be provided to the café, toilets and interpretation centre.
- > Following a detailed feasibility study on the use of the buildings surrounding the hall and barn, a plan of proposed development to the arrival at the Museum has been agreed. This includes the re-orientation of the entrance from the proposed disabled car park, and will provide level access and improved interpretation and signage.
- > Following consultation with children and the Parents & Carers Council (a user group for parents of children with special needs), the play area design incorporates access for all equipment and includes paths to allow disabled access.
- > Pedestrian routes around the park will be improved, particularly access to the play area. The new path through the tunnel to Cunnery Wood will be accessible to all and

will provide a new sensory experience.

- > Enhanced maintenance and management, including more on site gardeners and rangers, will improve access to information and a safer environment.

The Plan is costed, and will be monitored as the restoration project progresses. It forms part of a collection of documents relating to the proposed improvements to take place within the estate, as follows:



This document was circulated to stakeholders for their comments and input, including the following Calderdale services:

- > Community Cohesion
- > Race Equality
- > Disabilities Liaison
- > Fire & Safety
- > Planning
- > Transport

This review has raised a diverse range of issues relating to access, defined in the Barriers to Access section of this document, both physical and non-physical. Although the concerns highlighted cannot always be completely removed due to the topography of the site and the historic significance of the landscape, it is recognised that where there is an opportunity to make improvements in the future, these are included in the plan.

2. Introduction

Calderdale Council is committed to the restoration and improvement of Shibden Park and aims to improve access as part of this commitment. Following the successful completion of repairs to Shibden Hall, CMBC applied for a grant within the Heritage Lottery Fund's Public Parks Programme. A Stage I Pass was granted in 2004 and detailed designs for the restoration of the estate have been developed, together with detailed documentation to support the application. The proposed work includes restoration of historic features, landscape and facilities within the park which will help achieve the vision and corporate priorities of the Council. The priorities of the Heritage Lottery Fund are integral to the scheme. These are:

- > Conservation and enhancement of the park's heritage
- > Encouraging more people to be involved in, and make decisions about, the park's heritage.

In order to ensure that the broadest range of people can become involved or simply enjoy the benefits that the park provides, it is the aim of this plan to address physical, sensory, intellectual, social and cultural barriers to using and benefiting from the heritage and landscape. The plan will address the Corporate priorities of the Council in ensuring that access for all is achieved where possible throughout Shibden. Improving access will therefore be planned and integral to the management of the estate, covering services, facilities and events, in addition to the physical barriers that are to be overcome that will create access to areas, views and features of interest within the park.

In respect of physical and sensory access, the Access Plan follows the guidelines set out in the document "Accessibility Standards: A Good Practice Guide to Disabled People's Access in the Countryside" (BT Countryside for All). This is the standard adopted by Calderdale Council, whereby landscape character assessment is carried out to apply the appropriate level of accessibility. Shibden Park is regarded as an urban park within Calderdale's Green Spaces Audit, and character areas within the park can be described as "urban and formal landscapes" and "urban fringe and managed landscapes" in accordance with the Countryside settings tabled in the above Standard. Further work is being carried out for the Open Spaces Strategy which is currently being prepared by the Council (due for completion in September 2005).

The Countryside Standard for different areas and paths within the estate are shown on the plan in Appendix 10. The actions and work required to achieve these standards are set out in the Action Plan.

Social, cultural and intellectual access will be addressed through the implementation of Calderdale Council's Equality Policy, Cultural Policy and Community Strategy, which have guided the actions set out in this Plan and the Audience Development Plan and Training Plan. This includes equality impact assessment on all Council policies.

3. Objectives

This Access Plan aims to ensure that Shibden Estate is accessible to all and fulfils the priorities and objectives of Calderdale Council, The Heritage Lottery Fund and all potential visitors. Calderdale Council's vision is

"To make Calderdale a clean, safe, attractive and thriving area for individuals and families to enjoy as residents, workers or visitors"

The vision for the park is

"To restore the historic park, upgrade the facilities and manage the park to ensure the it is a clean, safe and attractive environment for individuals and families to enjoy."

The objectives of the Restoration Project are:

- > To restore the outstanding historic character of the park;
- > To provide access for all to facilities and features within the park;
- > To provide upgraded facilities for visitors, including café, toilets, landscape and play;
- > To provide a more expansive and inclusive programme of events for visitors, including historical and environmental education, increasing intellectual access and links to the whole estate;
- > To improve park cleanliness and safety through the provision of health and safety measures for all activities and areas of the park;
- > To ensure that visitor security is enhanced by increased Ranger provision;
- > To develop and enhance community involvement in the park.

To achieve these objectives, the following issues will be addressed in the Access Plan:

3.1. Access

As part of the documentation supporting the Restoration Project, the Plan sets out in detail all the ways in which we intend to provide and improve access to Shibden. This includes people with a disability, black and minority ethnic people, hard to reach and socially excluded people, and people from disadvantaged areas. There is a need to respect Shibden's historic integrity, and where physical access remains difficult or impossible, alternative forms of interpretation will be introduced in order to extend access as far as is practicable. Interpretative resources will also be used to meet the needs of people with cognitive and sensory impairments.

3.2. Services

All new services and resources, including information services, education facilities, visitor receptions, meeting and lecture facilities, catering provision and retail outlets, will

be designed to accommodate the needs of all. Wherever possible, existing services will be upgraded to the same standards as part of planned maintenance and refurbishment regimes.

3.3. Training

There is a need to ensure that staff are aware of the needs of all visitors and colleagues, and can provide support and assistance where appropriate. Disability awareness, race awareness and equality training are actions identified in the Council's Service Improvement Plan (Appendix 1) and specialist training for staff and the appropriate allocation of resources are included in Directorate budgets. The proposed programme of training is set out in Shibden's Training Plan and within the PAS (Personal Appraisal Scheme) process.

3.4. Employment

Staff are employed on the basis that they meet the agreed acceptable criteria for the post. CMBC follows its Equality Policy that disablement is no bar to recruitment or advancement and where possible reasonable adjustments will be made both as part of the recruitment process and whilst in employment. Actions set out in the Equality Policy also address race and diversity issues within the workforce and are an integral element of employment within Shibden Estate.

3.5. Consultation

Consultation will involve members of the public and community groups at key stages in the restoration of Shibden Park. This has already taken place in the development of the restoration proposals and will continue throughout the construction phase and management of the estate. Advice will be sought from specialist access consultants, relevant agencies, and Calderdale Council's officers responsible for access issues.

4.6. Review

As a working document, the Access Plan will be reviewed and amended in relation to evolving best practice. As Calderdale Council develop actions and measures to improve equality, these will be incorporated into the Access Plan. It is proposed that this document is reviewed on completion of the restoration project, along with other supporting documents. Upon the completion of the restoration work, the Plan will be reviewed by the Restoration Project Steering Group to ensure that access issues are adequately encompassed. A change control procedure will manage evolving changes to the Plan, with a detailed review taking place every three years. Performance

indicators will be analysed, including feedback on visitor surveys, and it is proposed that there will be an external scrutiny procedure.

The review will take the following format:

- > Survey of staff/services on the relevance of the Plan's contents
- > Individual services/staff will be asked to check that what is contained in the Plan is what happens in practice
- > Analysis of performance indicators
- > The Steering Group will manage the review process, with the option of including external scrutiny
- > The Estate Manager will record changes to Plan and a change control procedure will record the reasons for the changes
- > It is envisaged that there will be a short annual review period, with the amendments circulated swiftly to ensure that the Plan is kept up to date.
- > The Plan will be printed in a format that allows insertion or replacement of relevant sections. There will be controlled circulation of hard copies of the Access Plan, in order to ensure versions are up to date.
- > Relevant information from the Plan will be provided on the Calderdale website.

4. Policies and Strategies

A number of policies and strategies impact on the planning and development of services at Shibden and their context is set out below:

- > **Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener** - a government report issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister that sets out the vision for public space, in particular the needs in disadvantaged areas.
- > **CABE Space Policy and Research** demonstrates the wider benefits of high quality parks and urban spaces. This includes research publications and policy statements that provide evidence that underpins the case for greater and longer term investment in our urban parks and spaces. This evidence base includes research into the following priority issues:
 - > The economic, environmental and social value of urban public space
 - > international good practice in the management and maintenance of parks and urban green spaces
 - > the current state of the relevant professions, including the extent and coverage of under- resourcing, skills deficits, and issues of morale.
 - > the economic value of urban green space, in particular economic effects of urban green space on the surrounding area.
 - > exploring links between local authority expenditure on urban green space services and quality of service and individual green spaces
- > **Open Spaces Strategy** - Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 "Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation" requires Councils to –
 - (i) undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreational facilities;
 - (ii) undertake audits of existing open space, sports and recreational facilities, including qualitative as well as quantitative elements;
 - (iii) develop local standards of provision to be used in highlighting surpluses or deficiencies in provision;
 - (iv) develop effective strategies, leading to effective planning through the development of appropriate policies and plans.

CMBC has carried out a survey of green space across the whole of the Borough using the typology set out in PPG17. Calderdale's Open Spaces Strategy is currently being prepared and will be available in September 2005. Consultation has been carried out as part of this process and Shibden Estate will have a significant contribution to the Strategy.

- > *The Unitary Development Plan ("UDP") - The appropriate use of land plays a key role in the attainment of the Council vision and Corporate priorities. The relevant*

UDP Policies that may affect access at Shibden are summarised in the following extracts from the UDP:-

Transport

POLICY GT1: PROVISION OF A SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORT SYSTEM

IN ORDER TO ALLEVIATE PROBLEMS OF CONGESTION, POLLUTION, ENVIRONMENTAL INTRUSION, UNCONSTRAINED TRAFFIC GROWTH AND THOSE CAUSED BY UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, THE PROVISION OF AN EFFICIENT, SAFE AND INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM WILL BE SOUGHT WHICH, IN CONJUNCTION WITH LAND USE PLANNING POLICY:-

- I. ENSURES EQUALITY OF ACCESSIBILITY INCLUDING THAT OF THE DISABLED;
- II. ENCOURAGES THE USE AND PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND MULTI-OCCUPANCY OF VEHICLES;
- III. IMPROVES CONDITIONS FOR CYCLING, WALKING AND NON-CAR BORNE MOBILITY;
- IV. REDUCES THE OVERALL NEED TO TRAVEL WHILST ALSO ALLOWING FOR NECESSARY NEW HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES;
- V. ASSISTS IN SECURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

POLICY GT2: PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORT INVESTMENT

TO ENSURE THAT TRANSPORT INVESTMENT IS DIRECTED TOWARDS PROPOSALS THAT SATISFY SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL NEEDS (INCLUDING THOSE OF THE DISADVANTAGED AND PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES), PARTICULAR EMPHASIS WILL BE PLACED ON INVESTMENT THAT:-

- i) IMPROVES CONDITIONS FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND NON CAR BORNE MOBILITY, PARTICULARLY WITHIN THE TOWN AND SHOPPING CENTRES AND THOSE AREAS OF HIGH OR POTENTIALLY HIGH USE;
 - ii) IMPROVES TRAFFIC AND TRAVEL CONDITIONS, GIVING PRIORITY TO THE NEEDS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY IN BOTH URBAN AND RURAL AREAS;
 - iii) IMPROVES ROAD SAFETY WITH AN EMPHASIS ON ACHIEVING THE MAXIMUM REDUCTION IN NUMBER AND SEVERITY OF ACCIDENTS;
 - iv) ASSISTS IN URBAN REGENERATION OR RURAL DIVERSIFICATION;
 - v) ACHIEVES GOOD ACCESSIBILITY TO JOBS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE CALDERDALE;
 - vi) IMPROVES POOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS RESULTING FROM TRAFFIC CONGESTION, NOISE, POLLUTION AND OTHER PROBLEMS;
- INVESTMENT WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY CATER FOR PEAK PRIVATE VEHICLE DEMANDS, NOR PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ROAD SPACE EXCEPT WHERE IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE DISTRICT.

The Local Transport Plan is a 5-Year strategy for the development of local, integrated transport, prepared by Metro and Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield District Councils. This aims to provide a high quality local transport system that:-

- > is efficient, reliable, affordable and safe;
- > meets the travel needs of all the people and businesses of West Yorkshire;

- > secures a high quality environment, with the environmental impacts of traffic carefully managed in order to improve road safety and avoid compromising standards relating to noise, air quality and severance;
- > provides access to a wide range of goods and services without the need for private motorised transport; thus ensuring that car use is seen as a choice rather than a necessity;
- > does not have unacceptable effects on the local or global environment.

The mobility of all within the community is essential if sustainable development is to be achieved in social and economic terms. Fully accessible buses, trains and taxis have a role to play in achieving these aims, as does the provision for access and parking for drivers displaying disabled badges. The Council supports METRO in the provision of "Access Bus" and the full range of issues relating to social inclusion. The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 supports the rights of disabled people to access employment and other goods, facilities, services and premises that are available to the general population. The West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan "Social Inclusion Strategy" includes:-

- > ensuring access to public transport through the use of wheelchair accessible vehicle and bus stops;
- > provision of lifts at railway stations;
- > information provision in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act Part III;
- > removing obstructions within foot ways and providing accessible crossing points;
- > ensuring good penetration of services into residential, and commercial areas;
- > and supporting Shop-mobility schemes within central areas.

Footpaths, Bridleways and public Rights of Way

POLICY T8: SAFEGUARDING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Footpaths, bridleways, other public rights of way and canal towpaths will be safeguarded to ensure their retention or development as part of the public right of way network and to allow their promotion and development as leisure/recreational resources or as part of the tourist attractions of the District.

POLICY T9: PROTECTION OF THE SITES OF FORMER RAILWAY LINES

DEVELOPMENT ON THE SITES OF FORMER RAILWAY LINES SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL NOT BE PERMITTED IF IT WOULD:-

- I) PREJUDICE THE CREATION OF A FOOTPATH, CYCLEWAY, BRIDLEWAY OR OTHER ROAD OR HIGHWAY;
- II) PREJUDICE THE ABILITY TO KEEP THE INTEGRITY OF A LINEAR ROUTE;
- III) HARM THE FUNCTIONING OF THE LAND AS A WILDLIFE CORRIDOR OR LINEAR OPEN SPACE.

POLICY T11: CYCLEWAYS

DESIGNATED CYCLE ROUTES WILL BE KEPT CLEAR OF DEVELOPMENT TO ENSURE THAT A CONTINUOUS LINEAR ROUTE IS AVAILABLE FREE OF OBSTRUCTION OR OTHER IMPEDIMENTS. ALONG THE “CORRIDORS OF INTEREST”, THE EXISTENCE OF THE PROPOSALS FOR A CYCLEWAY WILL BE A MATERIAL CONSIDERATION IN THE DETERMINATION OF ANY PLANNING APPLICATION, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE OVERALL CONNECTIVITY OF THE CYCLEWAY IS ASSURED.

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that footpaths, bridleways and other public rights of way remain open for public use as part of the highway network of the District. There is a total length of about 1,800kms (1,125 miles) of public footpaths, bridleways and other rights of way within the District and increased leisure time is being used to undertake recreational activities on these highways. The tourism potential associated with the District’s footpath network should not be underestimated. The network of paths also provides corridors for wildlife and habitats for flora and fauna, packhorse trails and other ancient highways and walled lanes of historic importance, some of which will improve access to Shibden from the surrounding countryside.

Urban Regeneration & “Urban Renaissance”

POLICY GCF2: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

THE PROVISION AND IMPROVEMENT OF A WIDE RANGE OF SOCIAL, COMMUNITY, EDUCATION, SPORTS, ARTS, HEALTH AND OTHER FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL CALDERDALE’S RESIDENTS WILL BE SUPPORTED. SUCH FACILITIES SHALL:-

- i) BE IN LOCATIONS WELL RELATED TO THE COMMUNITY AND USERS THEY ARE INTENDED TO SERVE;
- ii) BE ACCESSIBLE BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRANSPORT, INCLUDING WALKING AND CYCLING;
- iii) CREATE NO UNACCEPTABLE ENVIRONMENTAL, AMENITY, TRAFFIC, SAFETY OR OTHER PROBLEMS.

The Urban Renaissance Strategy has resulted in seven themes that guide development in Halifax, recognising the unique landscape setting and making it accessible to all. This is directed at the preservation or enhancement of what exists now and making the ‘doorstep’ landscape of Halifax more accessible. The aims of the regeneration and renaissance agenda will improve the town by:-

- > maintaining and building healthy communities;
- > eradicating social exclusion;
- > protecting and creating biodiversity, open spaces, leisure areas and sports and recreation facilities;
- > promoting safety and crime prevention measures in development;
- > encouraging the provision and use of sustainable modes of transport;

- > protecting areas of environmental importance from inappropriate development;
- > developing tourism; and
- > encouraging the diversification of the rural economy.

Access

POLICY BE10: ACCESS FOR ALL

ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH PROVIDE GOODS, FACILITIES OR SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC SHOULD INCORPORATE DESIGN FEATURES THAT FACILITATE EASY ACCESS FOR ALL INCLUDING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES.

POLICY BE11: THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND BABY FACILITIES

PUBLICLY AVAILABLE TOILET AND BABY CHANGING FACILITIES SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN ALL DEVELOPMENTS TO WHICH LARGE NUMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HAVE ACCESS. IN PARTICULAR ANY RETAIL, LEISURE OR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT WITH OVER 1,500SQ.M GROSS FLOORSPACE, SHOULD PROVIDE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE FACILITIES.

The Council is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all including securing a more accessible environment for everyone including people with disabilities. The Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 requires those providing goods, facilities, or services to the public to provide access and facilities for people with disabilities of the same standard as those provided for able-bodied persons. Many issues concerning access are covered by Building Regulations legislation, notably the construction of new buildings and the needs of disabled people and those with special needs will be considered at an early stage in the design process. The Council will also encourage appropriate access and provision for people with disabilities within existing buildings, in areas of informal open space and recreational areas, on public rights-of-way and in the open countryside.

The Council’s planning framework comprises the following strategic plans and operational plans:-

- > **Calderdale Futures Plan** – the Community Strategy – a vision for Calderdale shared by all partner organisations involved in Calderdale Forward, the local strategic partnership. **Building a Better Calderdale** brings together the major issues affecting Calderdale for sustainable development in the Borough, ensuring that local people are involved in the decisions that affect their quality of life and working to achieve shared goals and targets for the benefit of local communities. The six priorities of the Plan are shown below.

Priority themes from the Futures Plan

- > Lifelong Learning
- > Healthy Communities
- > Safe Communities
- > Sustainable Economy
- > Good Environment
- > Community Engagement

In consultation for the Plan, a clear message from local people is their pride in the area's unique heritage. Calderdale Forward regards the safeguarding and promotion of this heritage as an important task, and the Shibden project fulfils this priority. This includes many of the following access issues:

Sustainable Development ensures that a balance is struck between environmental, social and economic issues.

Young People. The key issue for children and young people is improved life chances across all of the priority areas.

Equal Opportunities. Ensuring that opportunities are available and accessible for all sections of society.

Communications for access to key information and awareness of information and communications technology.

Community Engagement and Regeneration will increase the capacity of communities to be fully engaged in the issues affecting their quality of life.

Social and Economic Exclusion. Tackling the causes and symptoms of exclusion of individuals, families and communities.

- > **Corporate Plan** – sets out the Council's vision, priorities, key actions and targets. The vision and priorities are shown below.

Calderdale Council's Vision and Corporate Priorities

Calderdale Council's Vision

To make Calderdale a clean, safe, attractive and thriving area for individuals and families to enjoy as residents, workers or visitors

Corporate Priorities

To improve the educational achievement of all young people and promote widespread participation in learning
To support and protect vulnerable children, young people and adults and promote independent and healthy living
To create safer communities with lower crime levels, less fear of crime and safer roads
To promote sustainable economic growth, respect local heritage and improve our towns, villages and neighbourhoods
To secure a clean and attractive built and natural environment
To continually improve customer service
To support our diverse communities, building dialogue, understanding and a capacity to live and work together

Access is addressed in the following issues for which targets have been set:

- > Improving the local environment and develop confidence in the district for new investment
- > Improving the provision and quality of car parking
- > Achieving a balanced transport provision through the implementation of the Local Transport Plan
- > Improving understanding of customers' needs and perceptions of the Council and its services
- > Improving access for disabled people to public buildings
- > Increasing the capacity of local people, particularly those experiencing disadvantage, to be involved in and influence community life
- > Developing ways of ensuring greater community cohesion and understanding
- > Strengthening our commitment to equality as a Council

- > **Performance Plan** – sets out the Council's commitment to improving performance and future targets for national best value performance indicators and local performance indicators.

- > **Community Service Plan** – records the Directorate's objectives, issues challenging the Directorate together with the actions needed to address these issues. The Shibden project touches on many of the actions and performance indicators, including increasing educational opportunities, promoting heritage, supporting regeneration, improving access to services, encouraging people to take part in healthy lifestyle activities and protecting Calderdale's natural environment. In particular, the following service improvement objectives specifically refer to the Shibden Estate:

- > Develop integrated management of the Shibden Estate, Hall and Museum and progress phased programme of facilities and environmental improvements
- > Develop user or Friends groups for key facilities [including Shibden Estate]
- > Develop Management Plans for Parks with staff presence [including Shibden Estate]

Detailed priorities and targets are set out within each Service's Plan, to ensure the Corporate priorities are achieved.

The Recreation Service Plan includes:-

- > Providing the best facilities possible in parks and open spaces
- > Promoting healthier lifestyles
- > Encouraging participation in sport and recreation
- > Providing "access for all"
- > Improving quality of life by providing and maintaining facilities for passive and active recreation
- > Ensuring a safe environment for users of parks and open spaces

- > Encouraging minorities and socially excluded to use these resources
- > **Equality Policy** – aims to ensure all sections of the community have fair and equal access to Council services and employment opportunities. The Calderdale Council Equality Policy Statement states
“The Council aims to make Calderdale a place where people want to live, work and visit. We will pursue this aim by ensuring that resources at our disposal are used to support the best possible service provision. We will also achieve this aim by promoting social equality and economic and environmental well-being throughout the borough.”
The aims of the Equality Policy are:
 - > To assist the Council in achieving its stated Corporate purpose, vision, core values and priorities
 - > To promote social inclusion
 - > To ensure that the services we provide are accessible, appropriate and meet the needs of all local people
 - > To achieve a workforce which is representative of the local population, and to recognise potential within all sections of the community
 - > To assist the Council in ensuring compliance with all anti-discrimination legislation
 - > To achieve compliance with government agendas and initiatives such as Best Value
 - > To comply with new legislative requirements of the Audit Commission whereby the Council will be monitored in its performance on equal opportunities through a range of new national performance indicators
 - > To enhance the Council’s reputation, locally and nationallyThe Plan is informed by the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and other statutory and voluntary regulations aimed at improving access for all.

In relation to equality, the following actions are included in Personnel Services 2005-2008 Improvement Plan:
 - > Ensure that future workforce planning takes full account of ethnic minority and disability staff composition targets and develop positive action plans to support the appointment of more ethnic minority and disabled employees
 - > Produce guidance on wider equality issues to support all staff to understand the implications of the revised Equality Policy
 - > Develop and implement an impact assessment framework
 - > Develop portfolios to evidence achievement of Level 2 of the Equality Standard
 - > Take explicit account of need of community including vulnerable minority and other marginalized or hard to reach groups
 - > Council has a strategic and integrated approach to diversity, human rights and user focus issues which is fully demonstrated in its policy development,

- employment practices and service delivery, and champions and promotes these issues both to its staff, partners and community.
- > **Sustainability principles** - enshrined in the Council’s local Agenda 21 strategy (21 for 21) and the Community Strategy. Calderdale has a diverse array of habitats and species which inhabit them. These habitats are subject to increasing pressures from growing populations, industry and fragmentation. Within the Shibden Estate, the Priority Habitats can be identified and protected, including mixed deciduous woodland, ponds and lakes, rivers and unimproved grasslands. The Biodiversity Action Plan aims to contribute towards national targets and protect species that are locally important and distinctive. Improving the ecological value of the park will have a direct impact on the biodiversity of Calderdale, particularly its designation as a Local Nature Reserve.
 - > **Cultural Policy** – sets out a vision and objectives for culture in Calderdale, from which a cultural strategy will be developed, as follows:

Cultural Policy - Vision and Objectives

Vision

To ensure that cultural resources and activities make a significant contribution to economic and community regeneration across Calderdale, enhancing the quality of life of all residents, and the experience of visitors

Objectives

To develop and strengthen the cultural economy, helping creative businesses to flourish and maximising the role of cultural tourism
To ensure sustainable investment in cultural facilities and activities in order to provide high quality, modern and accessible settings for all kinds of cultural activity
To increase access to, and widen participation and enjoyment in, cultural activity
To develop more opportunities for contact between different Calderdale communities through cultural activity, including the celebration of diverse cultural heritage and traditions
To help remove barriers to cultural activity through negotiation with transport and community safety providers
To target cultural activity and resources to help tackle the problems of ‘excluded’ communities – including drug users and offenders, people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and those suffering ill-health

- > **Licensing Policy** – guides the Licensing Committee when considering applications for regulated entertainment and other licensable activities.
- > **The Calderdale Economic Development Strategy** sets out the framework for sustainable economic growth and employment in Calderdale.
- > **The Calderdale Learning Plan** sets out the local Learning Partnership’s plans for supporting achievement of local and regional learning priorities.

- > **Fit for the Future - Calderdale's sports strategy.** The vision is to provide “an active, vibrant community where people of all ages and backgrounds will have the opportunity to access a high quality sports experience at all levels leading to improvements in health and quality of life.”
- > **Museums and Galleries Service Direction of Travel** – sets out the identity, values and service delivery framework for the Museums and Galleries Service, including the role of Shibden Hall within this.
- > **Museums and Arts Learning and Access Policy** – outlines the learning and access issues for the museums and galleries service with schools, further/higher education, lifelong learners, community/specialist groups and general visitors.
- > **Community Services Marketing Strategy** – sets out objectives and action plans for driving up the standards of marketing and communications in Community Services. The remit of Community Services' Marketing Unit is promoting quality and co-ordination in marketing activities across the Directorate and supporting income generation schemes. This Unit provides a Marketing Toolkit to guide/help staff and systems for better co-ordination between service areas. Four marketing objectives have been identified that focus on the issues identified: -
 - > To improve the capacity of Services to deliver effective marketing activity.
 - > To increase efficiency and effectiveness of marketing activity by improving co-ordination between service areas.
 - > To develop the website as an effective marketing channel for Services and the Directorate.
 - > To develop a robust approach to increasing income generation across the Directorate.
- > **Community Cohesion Action Plan** - sets out a number of measures for tackling divisions in society and developing the type of stable and tolerant society that will bring economic and social benefits to the district.
- > **Children and Young People Action Plan** – focuses on nationally recommended actions for Calderdale's children and young people.

A number of key themes emerge from these policies and strategies:

- > Education and lifelong learning;
- > Access and inclusion;
- > Community cohesion and engagement;
- > Conserving and enhancing our historic heritage
- > Improving the local environment and developing sustainable business;
- > Encouraging and supporting partnership working.

5. Research and Consultation

5.1. Research

The following documentation, articles and guidance have been consulted:

The Heritage Lottery Fund	Access Plans: a guide
English Heritage	Access policy, social inclusion goals
The Sensory Trust	Various
Calderdale MBC	Unitary Development Plan
Calderdale MBC	Access Design Standards
BT Countryside for All	Accessibility Standards
Fieldfare Trust Ltd	Various
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport	Local Transport Plan
Approved Document M2004	Building Regulations
www.opengovernment.com	Government guidelines and information
Disability Rights Commission	Responsibilities of Service Providers Provision of good services or facilities
Centre for Accessible Environments	Access Audits: a guide and checklists for appraising the accessibility of buildings

5.2. Consultation

5.2.1. Shibden Usage Surveys

Calderdale Council has conducted a series of surveys ranging from questionnaires on satisfaction with services, postcode surveys and traffic count surveys, which outline current usage of the park.

The most recent research comprises survey information and feedback from Calderdale Council's focus group “Talkback” survey, which took place in May 2005 (Appendix 4). The report displays respondents' responses to their use of Shibden Park, including frequency of visit, maintenance standards, prioritised importance of improvements, access issues and interest in events and activities.

Individual comments entered by respondents highlight these issues, and major themes were identified as follows:

- > Path surfacing
- > Vehicular access into the park

- > Topography of site
- > Distances between features in the park
- > Signage
- > Vehicles in the park
- > Access to buildings for people with a disability

Improvements include the following suggestions that relate to access:

- > Quality of concession management
- > Access and egress into and out of the park
- > New/improved play equipment
- > Range of events and publicity
- > Quality and range of food available
- > Car parking facilities
- > Self guided walks/free activities
- > Standard of toilet facilities
- > Interest for older children
- > Standards of cleanliness and maintenance
- > Cycle path
- > More seating and shelter
- > Improved ranger presence
- > Shuttle bus and scooters for people with a disability

Previous surveys have provided background information relating to visitors, frequency of visits, park usage, visitor satisfaction and importance of features and facilities and provide an insight into the issues and problems encountered by park users. Access into the park, internal circulation, toilet facilities, car parking and safety are frequent items commented upon.

Date	Title	Description
1998	Dept. of Highways Traffic Count	Count of vehicles visiting the lower park
1999	Green Space Benchmarking Survey	User satisfaction indicators for access, horticulture, sports, recreation, play, information, toilets, catering, litter, safety and environment Importance indicators for each of the above
2000	Green Space Benchmarking Survey	User satisfaction indicators for access, horticulture, sports, recreation, play, information, toilets, catering, litter, safety and environment Importance indicators for each of the above
2001	Green Space Benchmarking Survey	User satisfaction indicators for access, horticulture, sports, recreation, play, information, toilets, catering, litter, safety and environment Importance indicators for each of the above

	Postcode survey	Postcode mapping of visitors interviewed on above green space benchmarking survey
2002	Restoration Consultation	Views of general public visiting the park and at libraries on draft proposals for park restoration, importance indicators for facilities, statistical information on gender, postcode, ethnicity
2002	Museum Visitor Survey	

5.2.2. Restoration Consultation

There has been an ongoing consultation process during the development of the submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration of Shibden Park, which began in 2002, either through contact with specific groups and organisations, or through public exhibitions of the draft proposals. A survey of the views of the public was carried out by questionnaire in the submission for development funding, (Appendix 5). As part of the development of the detailed designs, there have been two public exhibition and consultation periods, following RIBA Work Stage C and D reports. This comprised displays of the restoration proposals at Shibden Hall and guided tours of the park explaining the proposals. There were approximately 50 visitors on the first consultation day, with slightly less on the second day.

In addition, the proposals have been on permanent exhibition on park noticeboards and in Shibden Hall. Following the consultation days, the displays were transferred to the Central Library and to the Town Hall. Comments cards have been available and there has been a favourable response to the proposals. Access issues have formed a major part of the comments and suggestions received:

- > Difficult with a pushchair and toddler due to cobbled paths etc.
- > I find getting into the Park difficult. I really have to carefully swing the car to get into the main driveway. This makes matters worse if there are cars coming out of the park.
- > Steep paths prohibit the use by people with mobility problems
- > I am disabled and so it is not easy to get from the top to the bottom of the park or vice versa. BUT having said that it is not an easy thing to overcome!!
- > Long walk down from top car park. Bottom car park not easy to get in or out of. Think it would all be hard for wheelchair users
- > The path behind the lake is difficult particularly for push chairs
- > The hall is not accessible from the main park area because it is quite a distance away.

- > As the site is quite sloping just walking requires a lot of effort!....how disabled users manage I don't know!
- > Not so easy to push a person in a wheelchair right round the lake as a bit too bumpy which is a shame as it would be a nice walk
- > Lake and hall are separate (fact) and no parking near play area
- > It is difficult if you have a wheelchair. More helpful staff would be an advantage.
- > Due to the lie of the land it is very difficult to get up the hill with toddlers, push chairs and wheelchairs when the noddy train isn't running.
- > It is better that some areas ARE less easy to access to give variety. Car park closing times should be better related to dusk - rather than arranged in arbitrary time blocks
- > Just have to keep in mind wheelchairs and pushchairs, people with walking sticks etc, on the whole it is very good. Maybe more seating around would be good.
- > Some of the paths aren't suitable for pushchairs.
- > If you park at the top it is steep to walk down and quite tiring to walk back up again. I enjoy the exercise but someone older or indeed smaller children may find it a bit too difficult.
- > I took a heavy person in a manual wheel chair and it was hard work on the hills, up and down and over the gravel when parking.
- > Main problem area is turning in or out of main road at T Lights.
- > I am able bodied but can imagine some of the areas would be difficult to access for disabled/ wheelchair users. Some of paths round the lake narrows. Difficult access to children's play area.
- > Driving into the park is a bad bend onto main road
- > Some woodland paths are muddy
- > If you park in the top car park by the Hall, it is difficult to walk up the steep hill from the lake back to the car, especially with a pram or if you're elderly etc
- > Getting in and out of park can be difficult (lights would be a good idea). The car park is an ideal spot but the road could be slightly wider.
- > Getting into and out of Shibden Park in a car.

- > Some of the ground is very steep- but why change that?!
- > As a senior citizen reliant on buses, I find the steep slopes to get from one place to another rather difficult.
- > Getting into main road due to amount of traffic.
- > Never had a problem till recently, husband now has a disability and no longer easy to walk on certain surfaces.
- > The steep paths in parts of the parks. More handrails needed.
- > Uphill struggle for elderly people, they are limited to the flat areas and find uphill walks difficult.
- > Difficult to use main road if in car. 2) Car parks need modernising so wheelchair users can freely move. 3) Children's play area moved away from road.
- > The entrance on the main road is particularly hard to get out off, if you are turning right.
- > Mobility difficulties from top to bottom of park.
- > Crossing to get in at top gate
- > If using a pram the path areas that come from Leeds Road and bring you out by the railway track in the bottom corner
- > Too steep to climb up to museum from bottom of park
- > With young children/buggies some areas are difficult and potentially dangerous
- > Steep hill to top car park hard for people with disabilities/elderly
- > Poor paths, steep inclines
- > Very steep which I know is out of your control - maybe zig zag paths would help
- > Steep paths- no easy access from bottom to top
- > Poor signposts in park
- > General access is very good. Although as Shibden is based on a hill the slopes can be challenging for young and old
- > Slopes etc for people with walking problems. Limited parking near House.
- > Main areas easy access. Woodland for the more able but this is a good balance

- > As a disabled person I would have great difficulty taking my great grandchildren from the park to the house and also from the car park
- > We find that there are not enough clear sign posts
- > Very hilly and if you park at one end the other facilities are a long way away.
- > Long walk from top car park
- > The tractor/train helped with access from the bottom car park to the museum and vice versa
- > When accessing the car park near the pitch and putt I don't feel there is enough room for cars and pedestrians with pushchairs, maybe a small path could be added for pedestrians with pushchairs to make them feel safer.
- > Obviously the main entrance via the main road is difficult, also the same exit. I don't know the answer to this.
- > Very hilly but unavoidable
- > Steep access to Shibden hall from the park
- > Getting in is easy at 80yrs old getting out is hard.
- > The more wooded and pasture areas can be difficult underfoot.
- > Entrance from road difficult
- > Walking down from top car park with traffic coming past.
- > Sometimes difficult to walk behind train track with a buggy.
- > Some areas are difficult to access unless young and athletic
- > Somewhat difficult with wheelchairs
- > Not personally but would imagine anyone with mobility issues or pushing pram would struggle to access park/walk around owing to steepness in the park in most areas.
- > Getting prams and buggies into the playground up the path.
- > Due to traffic volume on holidays, getting into car park not easy
- > Walking around the lake with young children. Getting to the top of the park with a pushchair

- > Wider walkways
- > There should be a better path top to bottom for prams and wheelchairs
- > Too hilly
- > Last time the park was visited walking area around back of lake not suitable for all disabled people
- > Some sort of cable car or shuttle even. Just a bigger kids train ride from bottom of the park to the museum would be an attraction.
- > Difficult for older people to get around due to the incline
- > Steepness of the slope on some paths.
- > Top car park.
- > At far end of park and from play area to hall, paths are uneven and slippery.
- > Some areas are very steep, but can be accessed with car
- > If the car is parked near the lake it is extremely tiring to walk up to the hall and the exit onto the main road is almost impossible.
- > Some awkward paths and steep rises
- > Road access to Shibden park/Hall is ok
- > Vehicular encumbrance- parks are for people
- > If in park hard to get up grassy steep hill
- > I often think of visiting either the park or the hall, but rarely think of visiting both, as the trek is arduous. I think a land train has operated at times and this is a good idea
- > Being elderly (one of us is 77) getting to the hall is quite hard, we miss the tractor train
- > Just the hill from the lake to the house, but please don't consider moving either
- > Getting to play area. Getting to hall.
- > Gaining access to and exiting park is ludicrous!! (i.e. for road into Halifax)
- > Flights of steps without hand rails

- > Steep paths - hard to push prams and for elderly people to walk up/down.
- > Main road access is very bad
- > Buggy in some areas. Some paths in the lovely garden near the hall were overgrown when I visited once last summer
- > Wheelchair or pram have difficulties in some areas
- > Why is the upper car park shut on an evening?
- > Hilly
- > It's the slopes! But you cant do without them
- > I haven't visited the park for a long time but as I remember there were quite a few steep paths that may be awkward for the infirm or very young
- > Vehicle access and egress
- > Some woodland areas more difficult
- > Arrival to Shibden Hall sometimes very difficult. Exit from park often difficult
- > Getting elderly people into hall and cafe
- > Because the play area is up the 'cat steps' a buggy or wheelchair is prevented from getting up there, plus walking up hill/buggy to Shibden hall is very tiring and the tractor service is inaccessible so we end up not going there
- > From bottom car park up to the Hall a little difficult due to my age
- > Difficulties at the entrance travelling from Halifax by car. Difficulties from the lower car park to the Hall and gardens at the top of the park. Path from children's play area to shop dangerous when wet!
- > Difficulty when pregnant (heavily) getting up to the house from the bottom car park, this is just distance. At the time the top car park was full
- > Because the park is hilly, the climb from the bottom car park to the house can cause problems.
- > Very muddy, slippery paths at times
- > Walking on wet grass on slopes around play area
- > Because of a walking problem I do find areas quite steep, but as this is the nature of the park, I cannot see a solution

- > Providing better access to Southowram from/to top car park should be improved
- > Not easy to get to the park in the 1st place
- > Access from Hall/cafe to play area not that straightforward
- > Some areas need handrails
- > The main road access can take several minutes and can cause traffic hold-ups to other road users
- > Traffic is worst problem
- > Uneven surfaces using prams difficult round lake
- > Play area not easy to access by pushchair/pram
- > Some of the park where I wanted to go was not open due to maintenance or other restrictions
- > Some areas quite steep and the route to the children's play area can be very muddy in winter
- > Not well signposted off one exit. The main one very hard to get out of
- > Poorly maintained paths
- > The non-tarmac paths are too difficult with a pushchair (particularly a double pushchair)
- > Vehicle access is poor so disabled people find walking distances excessive
- > The cobbled pathway to the swings makes it hard to push a double buggy up
- > Car parking could be made easier with better signposting
- > Coming from the top end and having a pushchair causes great difficulty e.g. lack of paths, steps etc. Then pushing back up even worse (impossible with a wheelchair)
- > Quite a distance to some areas- its not always obvious where they are
- > When park is busy the car park gets very full and when parking in lower car park pushing wheelchairs or prams up the hills is very difficult

- > If you are disabled you would have some problems walking into the woods. Plus toilets perhaps
- > Difficulty walking from museum to lake with push chair because the site is quite hilly
- > Have not been able to easily access some areas with a pram
- > Steep hills
- > Rather steep in places needs a funicular or cable car

5.2.3. Access Audits

The access audit carried out in October 2000 identified the following issues and recommendations:

Upper Car Park	Poor surface, signage
Link between Upper Car Park and Museum	Step nosings, handrails, signage, tactile paving, seating
Museum Car Park	Poor surface, signage, 3 dedicated disabled spaces
Toilets	disabled/men and women's improvements
Lower Car Park	Poor surface
Pedestrian routes around the estate	Surfaces smooth and even, change in colour and texture in the surface at important junctions or near facilities, handrails and highlight nosings of all external steps, provide smooth route alongside cobbled sections, provide gently sloping route between Hall and lower areas, sign-posting
Seating	Provide every 50 m
Refreshment Kiosk	Provide ramps, raise or lower the counter
Unisex Accessible Toilet at Café	Signage, handrails on the approach, provide assistant call or leave unlocked, widen to 1500mm, internal alterations to light pull, entrance door, colour contrast.
M & F Toilets at Café	Ramp to Men's Toilet Block
Café	Levels, highlight nosings, handrails, café furniture in contrasting colour

These recommendations were incorporated into the restoration proposals where appropriate. The Access Audit by Wheels R Us in 2003 is shown in Appendix 2, and complements the above recommendations.

5.2.4. Equality and Diversity

Calderdale's diverse communities contain extremes of affluence and poverty. The index of multiple deprivation (2000) shows that Calderdale ranks between 63rd and 97th out

of 354 districts on the 6 indices of deprivation. Park Ward (approximately 1.5 miles from Shibden Park) is within the 4% most deprived in the country and the adjacent Mixenden and Ovenden wards are within the most deprived 10%. In these areas, particularly outside Halifax, difficulties with transport and access are compounded with other aspects of social exclusion. Census (2001) shows that car ownership continues to be lower than the national average, whilst 21% of all households received Council Tax Benefit (April 2003). Altogether, 43% of all people claiming benefits administered by the Council are pensioners. Calderdale Council has employed a range of methods to consult with black and minority ethnic communities, including:

- > Corporate ad hoc consultation
- > Regular consultation through established forum groups such as Talkback, Employees Forum, Teachers' and Youth Workers Employees Forum, Employees (Disabilities) Forum, Youth Parliament, People's Forum and Young People's Police Forum
- > Service specific consultation has included an audit of community cohesion activities in Calderdale and the Calderdale Community Cohesion Research Project, which explored the views of young adults in Calderdale on issues relating to community cohesion.
- > Audiences Yorkshire has consulted with stakeholders to inform the drafting of a Cultural Strategy.

Issues identified in the above consultation processes include:

Transport - Issues around transport were raised by all groups. There was a perception that travel around Calderdale was difficult due to poor public transport. Bus and train stations were felt to be in undesirable areas leading to a reluctance to use them. There were also comments about timings of public transport, particularly in key leisure time periods at evenings and weekends. Disabled people had encountered particular problems in using public transport, again leading to a reluctance to use them. There was also a perception of poor road maintenance and traffic congestion in some areas.

Marketing - All of the groups talked about the difficulty in finding out what facilities and cultural opportunities were available in Calderdale because of poor marketing, with much of the criticism directed at Council-run facilities. Many people didn't know what was on or available and didn't know where to go for the information. Many people hadn't even heard of a number of cultural facilities in Calderdale. There were specific criticisms of the Council website and the information provided for disabled people.

Opportunities - Families and young people in particular felt there was a lack of facilities and things to do. Some young people said they went to Leeds and Bradford for their leisure activity; partly because it was easier to travel there, but also because the types of facilities they were looking for, such as cinemas and good shopping, were not available locally.

Cost - Cost was a barrier for a number of people, particularly families, young people and older people - not only admission costs, but also the cost of transport and other

‘add-ons’. However, it also emerged that some participants were more inclined to pay more to go to theme parks rather than visiting a museum, which were perceived as being higher risk and not offering as good value for money, although they were cheaper.

Maintenance - Most of the groups felt that facilities are poorly maintained. This included specific comments about play equipment, paddling pools, and the ‘broken glass, dirt and dog muck’ found in parks.

Divided communities - One of the key weaknesses to emerge was the lack of integration between different ethnic communities. There were comments that Calderdale was divided and unwelcoming to new people. It was also felt that there was a lack of multi-cultural events or opportunities for different communities in Calderdale to mix.

Other issues – Other issues to emerge were fears over safety, even in the countryside, particularly from older and disabled people; and disabled people also talked about poor physical access, both at and to cultural facilities, and the need for staff training in disability awareness.

These issues are reflected in the barriers to access applicable to Shibden Estate, and the resultant actions.

6. Development of Public Transport links to Shibden Hall and Park

Engineering Services are currently developing action plans to provide a network of sustainable strategic and local routes for cycling and walking as part of a Transport Strategy for Calderdale. In association with any major restoration of Shibden Park, it would be appropriate to consider access to the Park from Halifax town centre, including the bus and rail stations, and an improvement of highway facilities at and near the bus stops on the A58 Godley Lane – Leeds Road corridor.

Following consultation with Engineering Services and the local public transport provider, Metro Bus Company, several proposals have been suggested to improve access to Shibden.

6.1. Cycling and Walking links to Shibden Hall and Park

CMBC have been building a strategic walking and cycling network for several years as outlined in the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, the Calderdale Cycling Action Plan and the Calderdale Walking Action Plan. All of the routes are built to provide access for all users including those with reduced mobility.

A 25 km western section of the Calder Valley Cycleway and Hebble Trail is now completed and opened linking Walsden to Halifax Town Centre passing close to the main conurbations of Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd and Sowerby Bridge, including the train stations.

Calderdale Council intends to continue the route east via Elland and Brighouse to Kirklees and are also developing a Northern route to Illingworth. In addition to this network, there is a proposal to link Halifax Town Centre to the eastern, out-of-town developments including Shibden Park and onwards to Hove Edge.

Integral to the success of these schemes are adequate pedestrian and cycling signage, information and promotional literature including maps, interpretation boards, and web pages.

In addition, CMBC are working with the Primary Care Trust to promote walking and cycling routes into the Town Centre. A series of maps are being produced illustrating safe routes from the outlying conurbations into Halifax. It is proposed to include a map to and from Shibden Park.

6.2. Access from the A58

The A58 is well served by bus services. However, the existing access for pedestrians from the bus stop is substandard. There is scope for a safety improvement scheme, which would mitigate this situation.

There are cycle lanes both west and east bound. There are pavements and crossing facilities on the adopted highway. The road however is heavily trafficked and unpleasant as a walking/ cycling route.

It is proposed that the promotional literature should encourage walkers and cyclists to use the quieter, Shibden Hall Road route and bus users to use the A58.

Further information relating to walking and cycling routes in Calderdale is shown in Appendix 6

7. Heritage Significance & Value

The recommendations shown in the Access Audits detail the barriers to access, with recommendations for the removal or reduction of these barriers. All reasonable adjustments and improvements will be carried out in accordance with the Action Plan, having regard to the historic structures, designed landscape and the heritage value of the park. This section outlines the importance of elements of the park.

Shibden Estate comprises hall, historic parkland, woodland, designed landscape, public park facilities and museum. Shibden Hall and barn are designated Grade II*, and English Heritage's "Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest in England" designated the park a Grade II listing. The estate comprises several areas of distinct and varied character:

1. Shibden Hall Terraces and Formal Gardens
2. The Wilderness Gardens
3. Cunnery Wood and the Old Kitchen Gardens
4. The Valley Floor – the Red Beck, The Meer and Lower Cascade
5. Museum Fields and Wood
6. Open Parkland
7. Troughabolland Wood and Main Park Entrance

The historic interest of the park is summarised in the English Heritage Register thus:

"A landscape park with formal and informal gardens and pleasure grounds, surrounding a 15th century and later manor house. The grounds were laid out for the owner in the 1830s by a Mr. Gray of York incorporating structures designed by the architect John Harper. Joshua Major and Son designed the layout for the main terrace in 1855, which was laid out by William Berry of Halifax, who also laid out a lake in the park."

English Heritage registers only those sites which it considers to be sufficiently special and important to merit national recognition.

Features within the park of particular importance include the Meer, the gardens surrounding the hall and barn, the wilderness and cascades, and the open parkland vista from the terrace.

Today the estate embodies numerous interventions, alterations and modifications. Remnants of medieval settlements and eighteenth century field boundaries have been superseded by picturesque parkland and subsequent public park design. The conservation and restoration of the historic landscape is integral to the vision for Shibden. As such, any physical changes recommended within this Plan or the Access Audit must have regard to the effect upon this landscape. Proposals will be assessed by officers, landscape architects and heritage advisers. The restoration philosophy for

the estate is to restore the 1830s/50s picturesque landscape features that exist around the hall and gardens, and to restore the 1926 layer of changes that occurred mainly to the lower park as part of the opening of the estate to the public. Where new facilities are to be added, or features upgraded, access issues will be considered and included as part of the proposed works.

8. Barriers to Access and their Resolution – The Action Plan

Access Audits have been carried out in respect of the hall and park describing the barriers to access and recommended actions (Appendix 2 - Access All Areas, October 2001; Wheels R Us, May 2003). Further research has been carried out (2005) in a survey of Calderdale Council's focus group, Talkback, signifying access issues. Proposed improvements were suggested and prioritised in respect of services, facilities, activities and events.

The following barriers have been identified and action plan has been drawn up from the research.

The actions are set out alongside each barrier, together with priority, timescale and resources.

THE ACTION PLAN:						
Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
Organisational	Opening hours of the park, the hall, catering and other concessions	Improve signs showing opening hours	1. Chart improvements in Interpretation Plan 2. Commission Interpretation specialist for artwork 3. Construct interpretation boards and signs 4. Include opening times	1	July 2005 April 2006	Project Co-ordinator time Restoration Project capital funding £20,000 £42,750
		Ensure gate security is managed as per MMP	1. Review roles of staff	2	2006	Project Co-ordinator time -
	Availability of concession facilities	Ensure concession licences stipulate appropriate opening hours	1. Review existing licences/ agreements to ensure adequate opening of facility for public use – Business Plan 2. Negotiate new terms of agreement	2	2005 Dec. 2005	Project Co-ordinator time -
		Consider alternative forms of provision	1. Business Plan to evaluate in-house options 2. Evaluate volunteer input	2	July 2005	Project Co-ordinator time -
		Consider cultural and social barriers to using facilities	1. Review Menu options, cooking methods and concessionaire awareness	1	October 2005	Project Co-ordinator time -

Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
Organisational	Unavailability of information / interpretation	Provide a comprehensive interpretation and sign system	1. Commission Interpretation specialist for artwork 2. Construct interpretation boards and signs	1	April 2006	Restoration Project capital funding Included above
		Address training needs of front line staff in providing for people's needs	1. Customer First training for front line staff in Training Plan 2. Disability Awareness Training (Youreable website on line training – see Appendix 3) 3. Equality and diversity training	2	2006	CMBC Customer First Within CMBC Directorate budget
	Lack of understanding to address access needs	Remove obstacles to employment and career development for people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic people	1. As above 2. As part of recruitment and selection process for posts at Shibden, ensure there is appropriate support for people's needs	2	2005	CMBC Directorate Within CMBC Directorate budget
		Improvements to street furniture and “named” bus stops to improve bus services	1. Consult with CMBC transport officers and Metro Bus Service	2	2005	West Yorkshire Transport, CMBC and bus companies To be agreed
		Consider bus link between the park and town centre	1. Consult with CMBC transport officers and Metro Bus Service	2	2005	CMBC revenue, bus companies/ sponsorship £10,000 pa
	Availability of public transport	Support the Council's feasibility study for a cable car facility to Beacon Hill (approx. 400 m from park boundary)	1. Provide supporting information to the team	3	Ongoing	
		Improve availability of information on transport	2. New leaflets (what attractions you can get to by bus) 3. Ensure public transport info is on existing leaflets	2	2005	CMBC revenue Project Co-ordinator time £500

Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
Physical		Improve vehicle entrance from A58	1. Consult with CMBC Highways and draft plans for improvements including separation of pedestrians and cyclists from vehicles.	1	2006	Highways (West Yorkshire Transport Plan) To be agreed
		Improve vehicle entrance from Shibden Hall Road	1. Consult with CMBC Highways and draft plans for improvements including entrance and exit, separation of pedestrians and cyclists from vehicles.	1	July 2005	Restoration Project capital £74,500
		Improve coach parking	1. Provide coach parking, drop off and turning	1	July 2005	Restoration Project capital £68,900
		Provide sense of arrival to entrances	1. Construct gated entrances 2. Appropriate signage landscaping of arrival points	1	July 2005	Restoration Project capital £29,670
	Directions and signage	Improve road signs and brown tourism signs	1. Update brown tourism sign system	2	2006	CMBC revenue (Highways) £3,000 (to be confirmed)

Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
	Quality of ground surfaces for disabled and ambulant disabled	Improve surfaces and gradients to provide reasonable access for all	1. Assess character of areas within the park, and needs of visitors 2. Improve surfaces of paths in accordance with agreed access routes for disabled and ambulant disabled	1	July 2005	Project Co-ordinator time Restoration Project capital £184,350
Physical		Improve links with lower and upper park	1. Provide new footpath between Lodge and A58 entrance 2. Provide separation of pedestrians and vehicles on main routes into park 3. Provide resting places and seating 4. Provide handrails and fencing to improve safety	1 2 2 1		Restoration Project capital Funding to be identified Restoration Project capital “
	Topography of site, steepness of landscape, levels and steps within the historic landscape	Investigate alternatives to walking	1. Purchase lease vehicle for internal circulation of visitors 2. Arrange loan of electric buggies and wheelchairs through Shopmobility 3. Use website to create “walking history tour” of the park and for use at the interpretation centre 4. Improve cycle connections to the park: • Provide link to transport websites • Provide cycle stands	2 2 2 2 2 2	2006 2005 2006 2006 2006 2006	CMBC revenue or sponsorship/franchise CMBC revenue CMBC revenue Project co-ordinator time Restoration project capital £15,000 to be identified - -

Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
Physical		Provide access to Cunnery Wood	1. Improve entrance to Cunnery Wood from Shibden Hall Road 2. Open up tunnel under Shibden Hall Road 3. Provide disabled access route	1 1 1		Restoration project capital £142,950
	Areas closed to the public	Lister's Road Lodge	1. Include access to Lodge as part of guided tour events programme (on completion of restoration)	2	2008	Project co-ordinator time CMBC revenue (events programme)
		Woodland	1. Improve footpaths to Museum Fields Wood, Troughabolland Wood and North Wood 2. Improve vistas to Lodge through Troughabolland Wood	1 1	2006/ 2007 2006/ 2007	Forestry Commission grant Restoration Project capital £15,000 (estimated) £43,800
	Access to play area and equipment	Provide accessible footpaths to play area, inclusive play and accessible equipment	1. Consultation with Parents & Carers Council, YDPF, schools and children 2. Include accessible equipment in play area design	1 1	May 2005 July 2005	Project co-ordinator time Restoration project capital CMBC revenue cont. - £226,780

Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
Physical			1. New build interpretation centre, café and rangers office to incorporate all requirements under DDA 2. Inaccessible tithe barn removed from project – facilities included in new interpretation centre 3. Provide level access, disabled and ambulant disabled toilets and baby changing to play area toilets 4. Incorporate all requirements under DDA for new boathouse 5. Provide level access to the Lodge 6. Provide level access to the Museum arrival facilities and incorporate all requirements under DDA to new facilities to be constructed within existing buildings.	1 1 1 1 1		Restoration Project capital - Restoration Project capital Restoration Project capital Restoration Project capital £1,178,290 £63,940 £45,310 £3,100 (paving) £65,210
	Access to buildings within the estate	Provide access for all to services and facilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drop kerbs• Tactile warnings• Disabled parking close by• Surfaces suitable for people with a disability• Emergency assistance in accessible toilets				
	Boating and miniature golf facility inaccessible for disabled	Investigate improvements that can be made to concession facilities	1. Liaise with franchisees to investigate changes and improvements to use of facilities 2. Investigate alternative equipment	2 2	2006 2007	Project Co-ordinator time -

Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
Sensory	Inaccessible publicity and interpretation	Improved interpretation to include materials for visually and hearing impaired	1. Commission interpretation specialist to investigate appropriate forms of interpretation including language, large print, audio, braille	1		Restoration Project capital
			2. Interpretation boards to DDA standards	1		CMBC revenue
			3. Address training needs of front line staff – see Training Plan	1		
	Lack of sensory paving and warning aids	Incorporate appropriate surfacing and aids in proposed works	1. Include sensory paving where appropriate within car parking works.	1		Restoration Project capital
			2. Provide information on accessible path networks in leaflet/audio format	2		CMBC revenue
						included above
Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
Intellectual	Lack of diverse range of events, activities and interpretation to attract wider audience	Improve interpretation and events programmes	1. Commission interpretation specialist	1	2006	Restoration Project capital
			2. Widen offer to reach target audiences set out in Audience Development Plan.	1	2006/7	CMBC revenue
						Included already
						See Audience Dev. Plan

Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
Social & Cultural	Availability of promotional material in appropriate formats and languages (Currently a request can be made for translation/transfer)	Provide interpretation in appropriate formats and languages	1. Commission Interpretation specialist	1	2006	Restoration Project capital
			2. Consult with Community Cohesion Unit of CMBC	1	2005	Officer time
			3. Translate information	2	2006	CMBC revenue
	Low use by minority ethnic communities and people living in disadvantaged areas	Use consultation as a service improvement tool for facilities provided	1. Consult on suitability of service, - eg. Provide catering to suit dietary and cultural needs	2	2006	Project Co-ordinator time
			2. Provide equality and diversity training	1	2005	Community Services Training
			3. Carry out equality impact assessment	2	2006	Community Cohesion
	Isolated areas of the park	Target audiences using actions set out in Audience Development Plan.	1. Refer to Audience Development Plan actions	1	2006 to 2009	Various – costed in Audience Development Plan
			1. Provide on site rangers and gardening staff to increase presence	1	2006/7 onwards	CMBC revenue
			2. Provide emergency information on appropriate signs throughout park	1		Restoration Project capital
			3. Leaflets to include emergency telephone no.	1		included in previous

Access	Barriers to Access	Solutions	Actions	Priority	When?	Resource
Economic	Market evaluation – current offer may not fully exploit target audiences	Evaluate unmet needs of visitors	1. Maintain database of local community groups 2. Involve local community in management of estate through Friends Group (see Man. & Maintenance Plan). 3. Achieve actions in the Audience Development Plan	1 1 1	2005 2006 see ADP	Project co-ordinator time Various
	Cost of museum and concessions	Review charges	4. Compare with other venues – see Audience Development Plan 5. Consider special offers and other promotions - see Audience Development Plan 6. Review quality of services provided by concessions and investigate operational options – see Business Plan			Project Co-ordinator time
	Travel costs	Investigate free bus service or ticketing arrangements	1. Consult with CMBC transport officers and local bus companies			Costed in Audience Development Plan



9. Accessible Routes

The plans on the following pages set out the accessible public vehicle, wheelchair users and routes for people who are ambulant disabled, see figures 2, 3 and 4.

Figure 1: Plan of Vehicular Routes

Figure 2: Plan of wheelchair accessible and routes for ambulant disabled

Figure 3: Plan of accessible facilities – current and proposed

Appendix 1: Excerpts from Service Improvement Plans

Appendix 2: Access All Areas, October 2001; Wheels R Us, May 2003

Appendix 3: Youreable Disability Awareness Programme

Appendix 4: “Talkback” survey, May 2005

Appendix 5: Restoration Project Survey September 2002

Appendix 6: Information relating to walking and cycling routes in Calderdale

Appendix 7: Race Equality Scheme Disability Awareness Programme

Appendix 8: The Council's Vision and Strategic Objectives for Race Equality

Appendix 9: About Calderdale Council's Disabled Employees Group