

# Belle Isle & Middleton Neighbourhood Framework

DRAFT – September 2013



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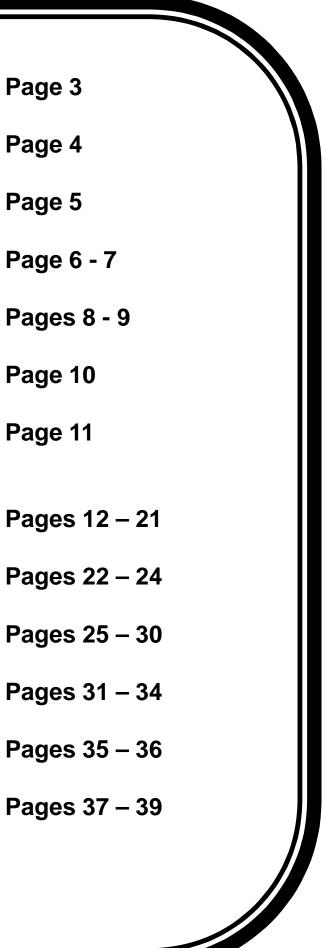
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**Neighbourhood Framework Attachments** 

- Middleton Masterplan 2009 •
- Engagement and Consultation Report



### Foreword

The Belle Isle and Middleton areas have a fascinating history and many residents look back fondly on the neighbourhoods where they grew up. In recent years, there has been a large amount of housing clearance and widespread new development on land surrounding the original estates. The area is a great place to live, but we want to take that extra step and make it an even better place with good facilities and jobs in accessible locations, and a range of housing options.

This Neighbourhood Framework has been prepared to set out the investment opportunities to help do this, building on the good work already done and complementing the strong local partnership working to improve all aspects of the area. It sets out where new houses could be built, improvements and changes to open space, and the potential for better local facilities. There has been a great deal of discussion with residents about the ideas included in this plan and we would like to thank everyone for their time.

Delivery of the proposals is key to the future success of Belle Isle and Middleton. The Council must now work hard with service partners and developers to release the area's potential and bring forward the ideas included in this framework.

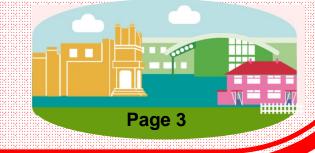
September 2013



**Cllr Peter Gruen Deputy Leader Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services** 



**Cllr Richard Lewis Executive Member for Development and the Economy** 



### **Executive Summary**

Belle Isle and Middleton are inter-war housing estates to the south of Leeds City Centre. Whilst there is a strong sense of community and passion for the area from local residents, there has been some housing clearance over the last 20 years, which has left a large amount of vacant land. This Neighbourhood Framework builds on the good work already achieved through the Middleton Regeneration Strategy, Middleton Masterplan and the Investment Strategy for South Leeds which was published in 2011. A proposals plan sets out where new development could take place and the wider improvements which are needed to ensure that the area continues to improve, becomes even more sustainable and ensures that existing residents see the benefit that development can bring.

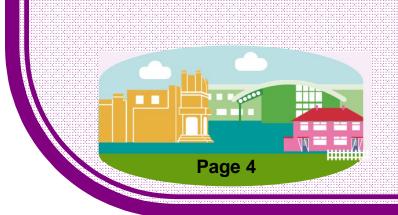
This framework identifies the following development opportunities:

- Total of 30 potential development sites across Belle Isle and Middleton;
- 27.84ha of land identified for possible new housing;
- 6.68ha of further development opportunities new/ improved leisure uses.

Other improvements include:

- The creation of a 'Green Loop' to improve pedestrian and cycle movement around the area and to jobs and attractions in nearby areas;
- Neighbourhood improvements which include the creation of community gardens or allotments;
- Improved bus services to surrounding areas and new services to White Rose Shopping Centre and office park to make it easier for residents to get to jobs and use these facilities in their spare time;
- Delivery of sustainability measures in new and existing homes to improve energy efficiency;
- The provision of better play areas which are in prominent and accessible locations that can be more easily maintained; ۲
- Improved access and usability of existing open space.

The Council and its partners will work hard to promote the ideas included in this Framework. The private sector will play a key role in delivery by bringing forward new development and contributing to the other improvements identified.





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**Belle Isle and Middleton Neighbourhood Framework Boundary** 

# Vision

By 2030 Belle Isle and Middleton will have a wide range of housing opportunities for existing and new residents accompanied by neighbourhood improvements that create a high quality green, accessible environment for leisure and commuting. There will be well located community facilities and good transport links to attractions and jobs in other areas. Belle Isle and Middleton will have a clear identity and will be a place that people aspire to live, drawn by the unique aspect and setting of Middleton Park.

The vision focuses the community's aspirations, building on what is already great about the area whilst addressing the issues that are important to local people. This framework aims to ensure that new development is linked with other investment to the benefit of the wider community and improve the area's livability. Continued partnership working between the council, community, investors and service providers means Belle Isle and Middleton are well placed to play a key role in contributing to the wider regeneration and growth of South Leeds.

ton Park Ward

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### **A Neighbourhood Framework for Belle Isle and Middleton**

### What is it and how has it been developed?

### What is a Neighbourhood Framework?

This Neighbourhood framework will set out a range of development and investment opportunities for Belle Isle and Middleton including land for new housing, community uses, improved greenspace and better links around the area and to nearby attractions. The document will be used to promote the area to developers, support community projects, help to decide planning applications and ensure that investment is prioritised.

This framework is prepared in the context of a range of other national and local policies and initiatives and seeks to contribute to Leeds becoming 'the best city in the UK'. Some of the ideas are contrary to current planning policy but will be tested as part of the preparation of the City's Site Allocation Plan as part of the Local Planning process.







**Middleton Regeneration Strategy** 

### Why Belle Isle and Middleton?

The Middleton Regeneration Strategy emerged in 2008 followed by the Middleton masterplan in 2009, which defined the design principles for new development, please see Appendix 1.

In 2011 an informal partnership of public and private organisations published the Investment Strategy for South Leeds setting out the high level development and investment opportunities across the wider South Leeds area and identifying more detailed opportunities for land around the White Rose shopping Centre and office park.

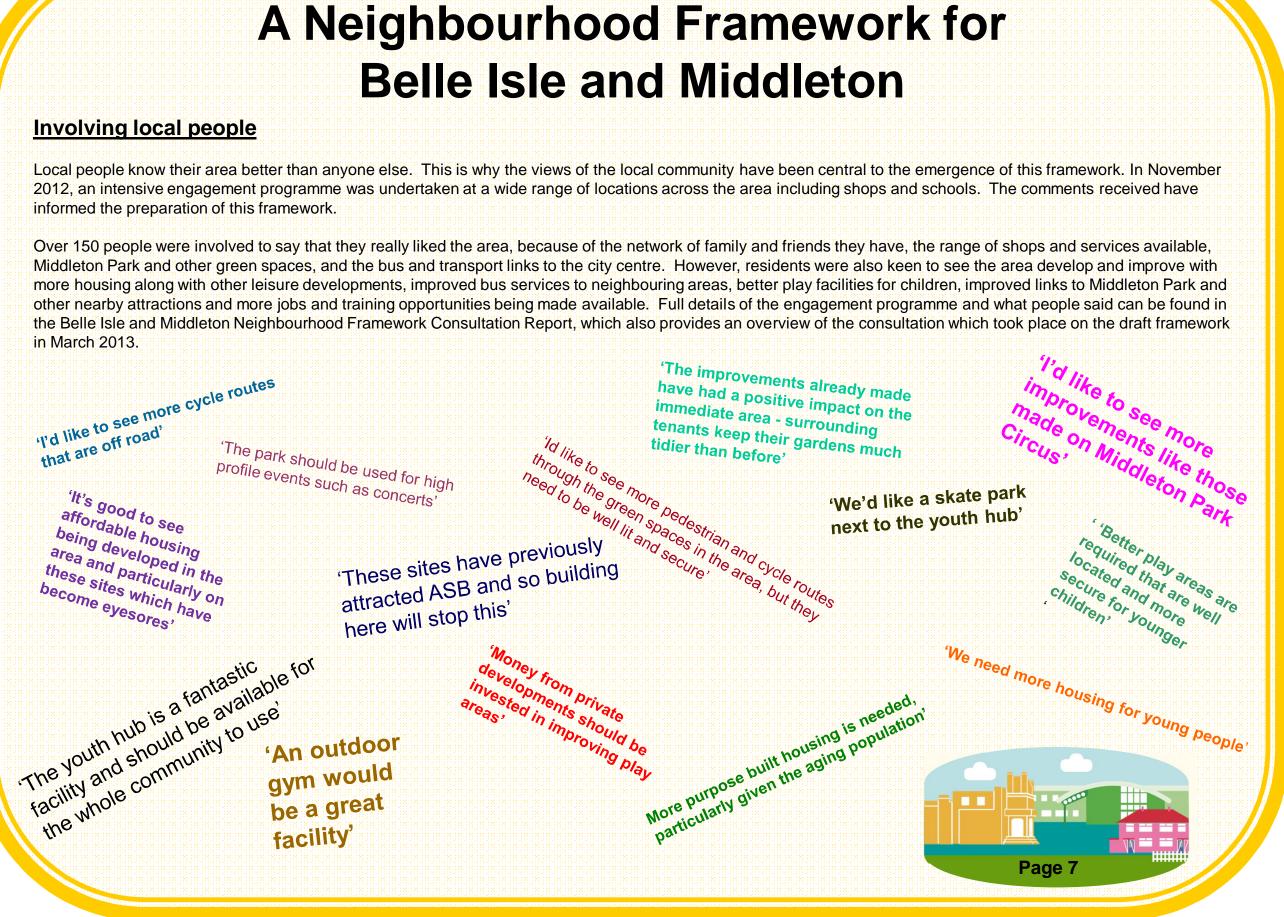
This framework draws on this earlier work to update and to provide greater detail about how the Belle Isle and Middleton areas might change.

The Council owns a number of sites available for development in Belle Isle and Middleton, these offer an opportunity to meet local housing needs. However, development must be in the right place and must not be in isolation. It should also contribute to wider improvements which benefit existing residents as much as new people attracted to the area.

This framework sets out how this could be achieved and includes a 'shopping list' of development and investment opportunities for delivery over the coming years.

Middleton Masterplan

# **Belle Isle and Middleton**



# **How might Belle Isle and Middleton Change?**



Continuing to provide good connections throughout the area



Improve the existing links to nearby employment opportunities



#### This Neighbourhood Framework aims to:

- identify a range of proposals which will help to meet future housing need;
- identify other investment and development opportunities to ensure that the area has a broad mix of sustainable uses;
- enhance the quality of greenspace provision and ensure that it is in accessible locations;
- ensure that the area is well connected;
- ensure that nearby employment and leisure facilities are easily accessed; and
- ensure that there are sufficient training and job opportunities for local residents.

The Neighbourhood Framework proposals plan sets out a range of development opportunities. Some of these are recognisable from earlier plans and strategies, but there are also a number of new ideas which are supported by local residents. Whilst a number of housing sites have been previously identified, the framework sets these in a wider context and includes new sites to make better use of and meet housing need on land in the urban area. This may include the reconfiguration of open space and some encroachment into the greenbelt.

These development opportunities sit alongside other investment ideas including:

- focused greenspace improvements:
- the promotion of Middleton Park as a focal point for local residents, community events and visitors from outside the area;
- improved pedestrian and cycle routes around the area and to neighbouring parts of the city; and
- opportunities for new leisure uses and more efficient use of community buildings.

All of the ideas included in this framework will need working up in more detail to establish whether there are any issues which may need resolving such as dealing with any ground conditions, or meeting technical requirements around road design and access.





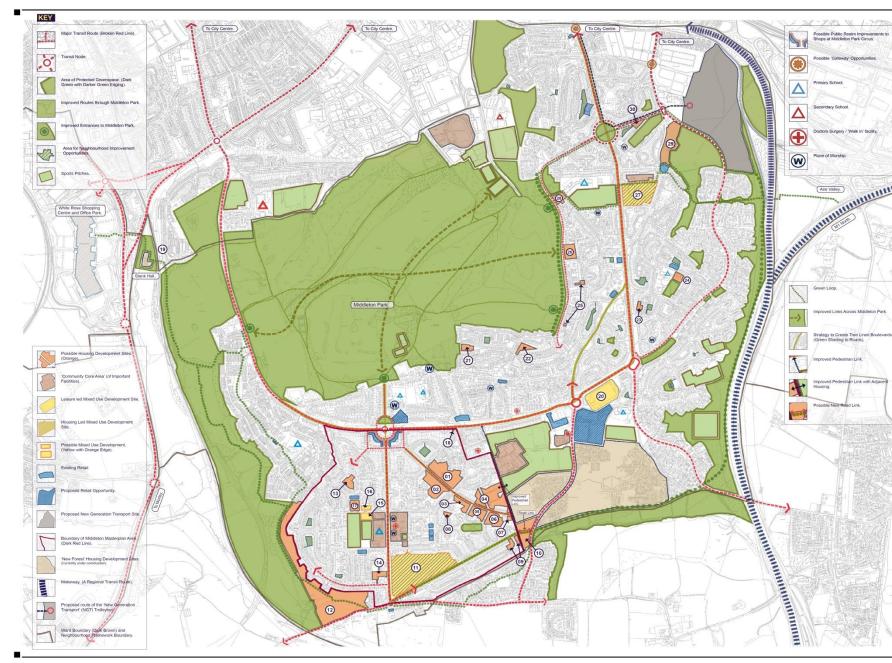


Continue with the good work already undertaken in Middleton Park

Focussed greenspace improvements

Build on the improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes

### How might Belle Isle and Middleton Change?



Belle Isle and Middleton Neighbourhood Framework Overall Concept Plan









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### **History of Belle Isle and Middleton**

### **Belle Isle**

The name Belle Isle means Beautiful Island in French. Some think this may be a pun on Bell Hill, which derives from the distinctive bell shaped early coal mining bell pits located across the area. Up until the First World War, Belle Isle was a small hamlet for mine workers who worked in one of the mines of the vast Middleton Colliery. It was in the 1920's when Belle Isle began being developed into the estate as it appears today, under the government's 'Homes for Heroes' housing programme, for soldiers returning from the First World War.

Construction of the estate continued into the 1950's, spurred on by the renowned Reverend Charles Jenkinson, an Anglican reformer and City Councillor who was dedicated to the city's slum clearance and delivery of quality council housing in the Belle Isle area.

There has been further residential development at Belle Isle through the 1990's and early 2000's with Stourton Grange, however the estate remains largely unchanged, in housing terms, to that of the mid 20th Century.

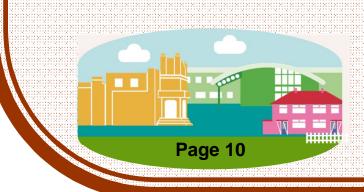
### Middleton

The name Middleton is derived from the Old English 'Middel-tun', which means middle settlement or farm on the road between Morley and Rothwell.

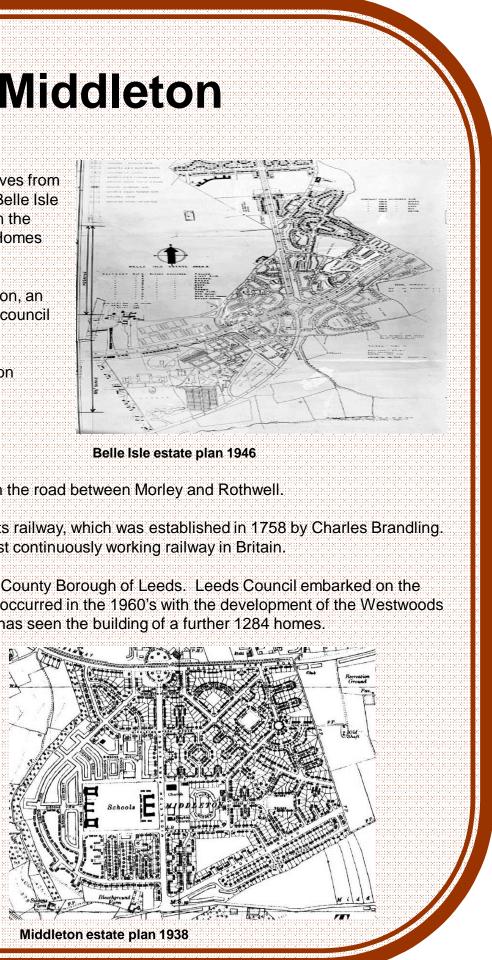
Middleton has a strong mining tradition which goes back to the middle ages. However, it is best known for its railway, which was established in 1758 by Charles Brandling. The railway was built to transport coal from the collieries at Middleton to the centre of Leeds and is the oldest continuously working railway in Britain.

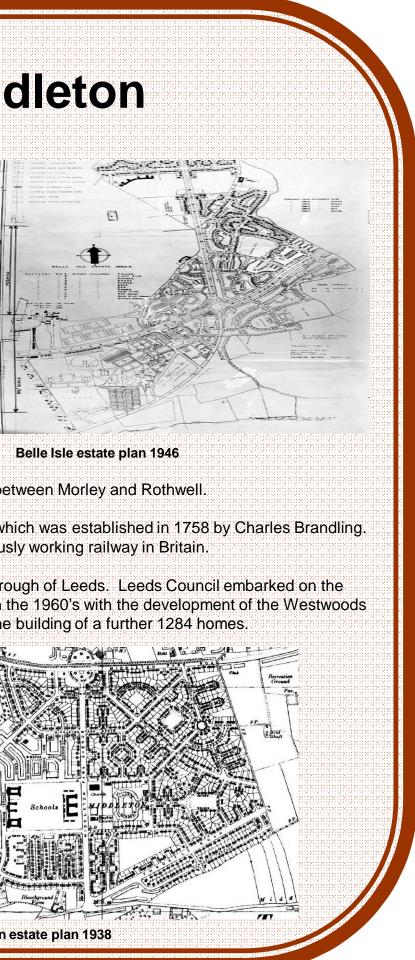
The rural nature of the area changed soon after 1st April 1920 when the township was incorporated into the County Borough of Leeds. Leeds Council embarked on the development of a 'garden suburb' which had delivered almost 2,400 houses by 1934. Further development occurred in the 1960's with the development of the Westwoods and Manor Farm estates. More recently, housing has been built at Sharp Lane and the New Forest Village has seen the building of a further 1284 homes.

Some of the original housing has been cleared through the 1990's and 2000's, leaving a number of sites available for redevelopment with some initial schemes coming forward from Housing Associations. These properties will adhere to the original design principles of the estate in order to maintain the aesthetics of the original estate, but will offer new housing for rent and part-ownership.



The area benefits from Middleton Park, which is a remnant of the historic manorial estate. The area also has a range of shops with Middleton Park Circus and Middleton Retail Park being the main retail areas. There are also advanced plans to develop a new supermarket and discount retail store within the area.





# The Way the Area Works

#### Population

In 2011 approximately 26,000 people lived in the Middleton Park Ward in approximately 11,400 households. This is a dramatic increase on the 15,000 residents recorded in 2001, in part due to the extensive developments at Stourton Grange, Sharp Lane and New Forest Village. 35% of residents are aged 45 or over with 13% being over 65. The population as a whole is expected to grow in the future meaning that more housing is required in sustainable well served locations, whilst also ensuring that an aging population is appropriately housed.

#### Employment

The unemployment rate in Belle Isle and Middleton is lower than the city average, although many of those in work are in low paid positions. 20% of the local population suffer a medical condition which limits their ability to undertake day to day activities. The number of people in the area who do not work is therefore much higher than the unemployment figures might suggest and increases the demand for local and easily accessible services.

#### **Housing Market**

Belle Isle and Middleton were predominantly developed for social housing and in the region of 60% of properties continue to be rented on this basis. In recent years there has been a substantial growth of the area with the development of new market housing to the east of the main Belle Isle and Middleton estates. However, provision of market housing should be balanced with the need for more affordable housing and ways of giving those on low incomes the opportunity to own their own home through low cost home ownership schemes.

#### Connections

At present few people walk or cycle from Belle Isle and Middleton to neighbouring areas such as Hunslet, White Rose Shopping Centre and Dewsbury Road. The area also has limited bus services with most operating along main routes to the city centre. This makes it difficult for people to travel outside of the area for both work and leisure purposes. The framework proposes to address this issue to ensure that the area is better connected for all residents.





Throstle Square development opportunity – cleared housing site

#### **Natural Resources**

The two areas present development opportunities mostly through existing brownfield sites, meaning that much needed new housing can be delivered on land where housing once stood. There is good access to Middleton Park, hard and soft play sports pitches and other small pieces of open space. Investment is needed to further improve these assets and create better links from within and outside the area so that the local community and visitors can enjoy their full leisure potential. Sustainability can play a key role in the future regeneration of the area through the incorporation of energy efficiency measures in new and existing homes such as solar panels and insulation. Measures such as these can help tackle fuel poverty and improve living conditions for all residents.

#### Community

The Belle Isle and Middleton areas have a very close knit community focused around strong friend and family networks. Through consultation on this framework and through ongoing partnership activities it is known that many people are proud of the area and are committed to seeing it improve further. It is important that the future development and regeneration of the area builds upon this strong sense of community feeling and that existing residents feel part of the changes that Belle Isle and Middleton will see.

#### Place

Both areas are distinctive in their own right, and any future development needs to complement and reflect the character of the area. The 2009 Middleton Masterplan that can be found at Appendix 1, includes a design code which future development within the area should follow to ensure integration with the surrounding built environment. Whilst there is nothing for the wider area, new development will be expected to be complementary with the context of the relevant site contributing positively to the surrounding area, improve livability and follow key design principles already established.



One of the main connection routes to the city centre

#### Housing

Local people are concerned about the shortage of good quality, affordable housing in the area. People want to stay in the area to be near friends and family but there is a view that housing options and choice are limited. One of the aims of the framework is to identify future housing development sites to meet this need, whilst also trying to sustain the area by attracting new people.

Local people want to see more family and older people's housing. This allows existing families to grow in the area and allows older people to downsize without moving away, continuing the strong sense of community that exists in the area. New housing is therefore much needed in order to sustain this community lifecycle.

Different types of housing tenure should be addressed, giving people affordable options for owning their own property, for example, through shared ownership. There should also be opportunities for people to buy houses on the open market, and rental properties will continue to play an important role in the area providing much needed affordable and flexible housing. Some sites lend themselves better than others to different housing tenures. Sites of varying sizes have been identified including a number of small infill sites have been identified for housing and may be attractive in particular to small developers or housing associations. Based on 30 units per hectare, there is the potential to construct up to approximately 830 homes across 30 development sites in Belle Isle and Middleton to meet local housing need in the area. It should be noted that some sites identified in this framework will have development constraints, such as topography and ground conditions, that means 30 units per hectare cannot be achieved. Development density will be determined through the planning process.

#### Character

**Page 12** 

Housing development proposals in Belle Isle and Middleton will need to reflect and complement the local identity of these areas, making a positive contribution to the distinctive character that has evolved in these two areas over the last 100 years. The 'character' of an area refers to the look and feel of the local neighbourhood which gives it an identity and a unique sense of place. As with all sites in the Middleton Masterplan boundary, future redevelopment should follow the accompanying design code to ensure that the new development reflects and complements the character of the Middleton area.

The character makes a place uniquely somewhere and not just anywhere, recognisable from the social, cultural, ecological, physical and economic factors that have shaped the area. The character for this area follows the 'garden suburb' ideal which aims for low housing density, wide streets lined with trees. This along with public access to the woods and open space will maintain local character. The design code to accompany this document should be followed when redeveloping sites identified through the Neighbourhood Framework as this will help maintain the 'garden suburb' ethos.



Footpath adjacent to Throstle Lane East development site

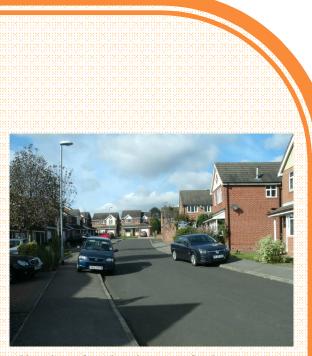
#### **Community Safety**

Development should meet 'secured by design' standards. Care should be taken to ensure that footpaths do not become overly enclosed to create a 'ginnel' effect. Footpaths should be as open as possible, well lit, and overlooked to minimise opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

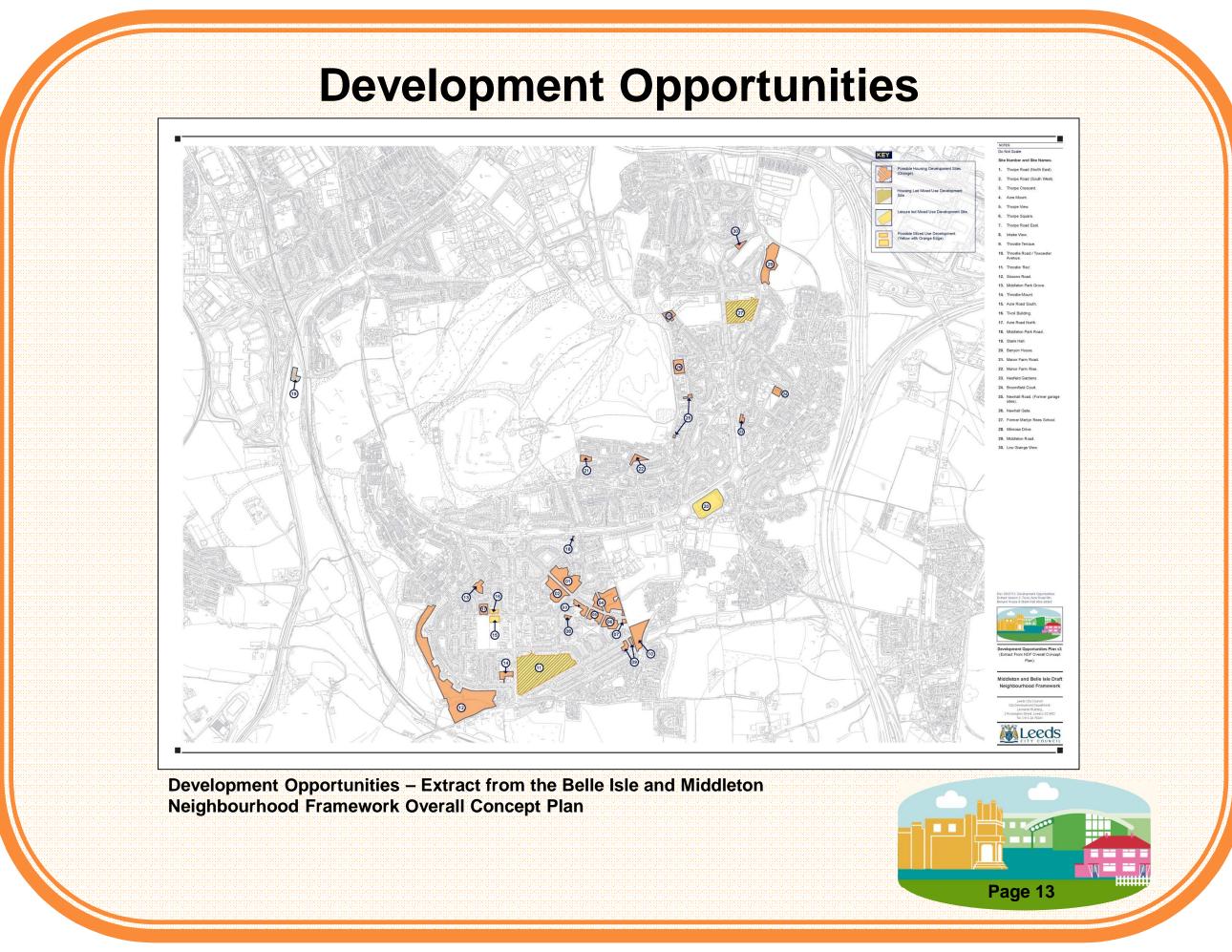
Good quality, affordable and varied housing options that are secured by design are very much needed in Belle Isle and Middleton, and the provision as identified in this framework will help to make Leeds the best city to live.

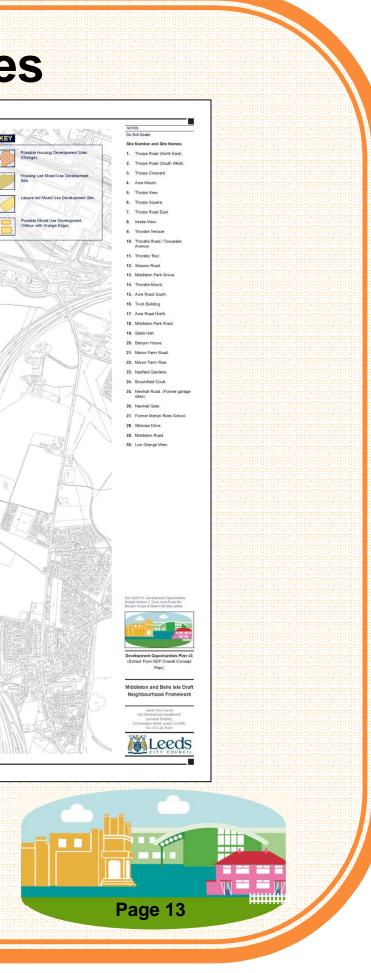
#### **Future Development**

Over time, additional development opportunities may emerge in Belle Isle and Middleton. These will need to be brought forward in line with the overarching principles of this framework and will be expected to contribute to the wider improvements identified to maximise the regenerative benefit for the area.



New housing development in the area





### **Middleton Development Opportunities**

The Middleton Masterplan identified a number of housing sites, some of which are currently being brought forward for affordable housing. This framework includes details of all the previously identified sites and introduces more sites for development.

The original Middleton estate is not well integrated with the New Forest Village development. There are a number of important housing sites on Throstle Road and Thorpe Road which can help to provide a better and more positive relationship between the original and new areas of Middleton whilst improving connectivity.





**Throstle Road looking towards New Forest Village** 

Site1 – Thorpe Road North East

application reference 12/02500/FU.

**Middleton Masterplan 2009** 



Site 1 – Thorpe Road North East



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Site 2 – Thorpe Road South West

This site was identified for housing in the 2009 Middleton Masterplan and at the time of publication was being developed by Sanctuary Housing for 128 affordable houses across Site 1, Site 2, Site 3, Site 8 and Site 18, and includes public open space. Planning application reference 12/02500/FU.



Site 2 – Thorpe Road South West







This site was identified for housing in the 2009 Middleton Masterplan and at the time of publication was being developed by Sanctuary Housing for 128 affordable houses across Site 1, Site 2, Site 3, Site 8 and Site 18, and includes public open space. Planning

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Site 3 – Thorpe Crescent



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#### Site 3 – Thorpe Crescent

This site was identified for housing in the 2009 Middleton Masterplan and at the time of publication was being developed by Sanctuary Housing for 128 affordable houses across Site 1, Site 2, Site 3, Site 8 and Site 18, and includes public open space. Planning application reference 12/02500/FU.

#### Site 4 - Acre Mount

This site was identified in the Middleton Masterplan and is a cleared housing site suitable for residential development. Careful design of the eastern boundary of the site is required so that it relates well with the adjoining New Forest Village development and enhances the public footpath.

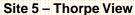


Site 4 – Acre Mount

suitable for residential development.

Site 5 – Thorpe View







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Site 6 – Thorpe Square



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Site 6 – Thorpe Square

This site was identified in the Middleton Masterplan and is a cleared housing site suitable for residential development.



#### Site 7 – Thorpe Road East

This site was identified in the Middleton Masterplan and is a cleared housing site suitable for residential development. Careful design of the eastern boundary of the site is required so that it relates well with the adjoining New Forest Village development and enhances the public footpath.



Site 7 – Thorpe Road East





Site 8 – Intake View



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#### Site 8 – Intake View

This site was identified for housing in the 2009 Middleton Masterplan and at the time of publication was being developed by Sanctuary Housing for 128 affordable houses across Site 1, Site 2, Site 3, Site 8 and Site 18, and includes public open space. Planning application reference 12/02500/FU.

#### Site 9 – Throstle Terrace

This site was identified in the Middleton Masterplan and is a cleared housing site suitable for residential development. Careful design of the eastern boundary of the site is required so that it relates well with the adjoining New Forest Village development and enhances the public footpath.

#### Site 10 – Throstle Road / Towcester Ave

The site is suitable for residential development. As a cleared housing site it was identified in the 2009 Middleton Masterplan.

There is an opportunity to create a new road and/or footpath link through the site to better connect and integrate the New Forest development with the original part of



Middleton. Careful consideration should be given to the highway design to prevent the road from being used as a 'rat run'.

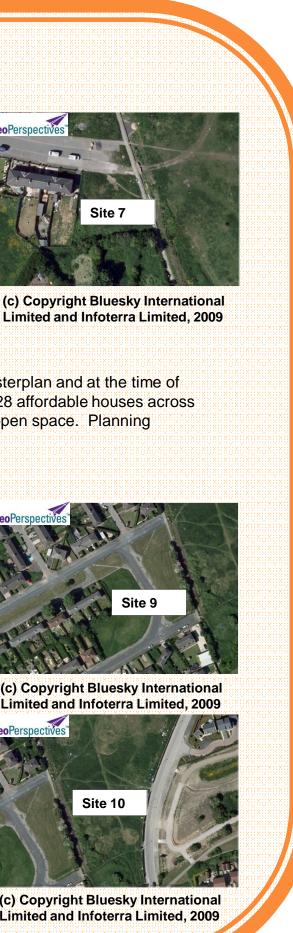


Site 9 – Throstle Terrace



Site 10 – Thorpe Crescent







Site 11 - Throstle Rec

# **Development Opportunities**



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#### Site 12 - Land to the rear of Sissons Road

### Site 11 - Throstle Rec

Throstle Rec, as it is locally known, was cleared of housing in the 1980's and the site has been identified for redevelopment for some time and was included in the Middleton Masterplan. A mix of housing and open space would be supported including an enhanced play area. The greenspace and play area should be well placed, overlooked and inviting for everyone on the surrounding estate to use.

This is a residential opportunity that is unlikely to come forward in the short-term. The public engagement events identified that the properties on Sissons Road backing onto this land were of poor quality and brought with them specific anti-social behaviour issues. The inclusion of the land to the rear of these properties could help to deliver wider improvements to this area but will also require a positive and sensitive relationship with the adjacent greenbelt. Improvements to the adjacent open space will need to be delivered as part of any housing scheme, incorporating the Green Loop as shown on the proposals plan.



Site 12 - Land to the rear of Sissons Road



Site 13 – Middleton Park Grove



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#### Site 13 – Middleton Park Grove

This site was identified in the Middleton Masterplan and is suitable for residential development.



Site 14 – Throstle Mount



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#### Site 14 - Throstle Mount

This is a cleared housing site which lends itself to redevelopment with an existing highway access off Sissons Road via Throstle Mount.





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#### Site 15 – Acre Road South

The site sits next to playing pitches and Middleton Community Centre. There is an opportunity to develop a leisure scheme or a community use which incorporates this building and the adjacent sports pitches given its central location and surrounding uses.





Site 15 – Acre Road South



Site 16 - Tivoli Building



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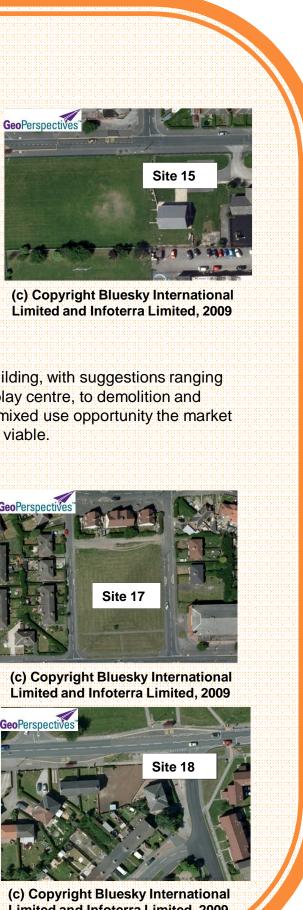
#### Site 16 - Tivoli Building, Acre Road

Residents are divided about the future use of the Tivoli building, with suggestions ranging from re-use as a leisure facility such as a cinema or soft play centre, to demolition and redevelopment for housing. By remaining identified as a mixed use opportunity the market will decide which development option and use is the most viable.

#### Site 17 - Acre Road North

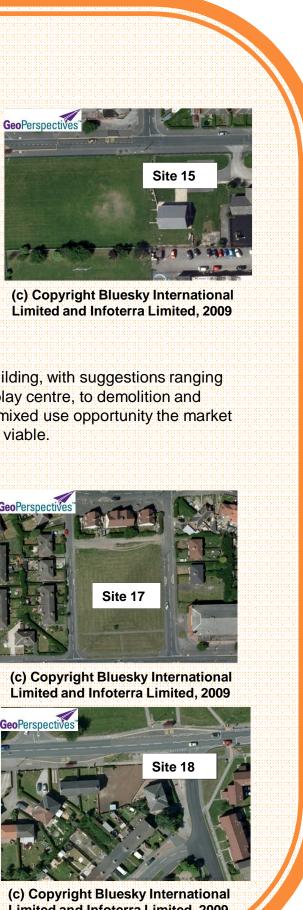
This is a cleared housing site to the west of the Tivoli building. This site could potentially be suited to older people, given the proximity to bus services, health and community facilities on Middleton Park Avenue and local shopping at Middleton Park Circus.

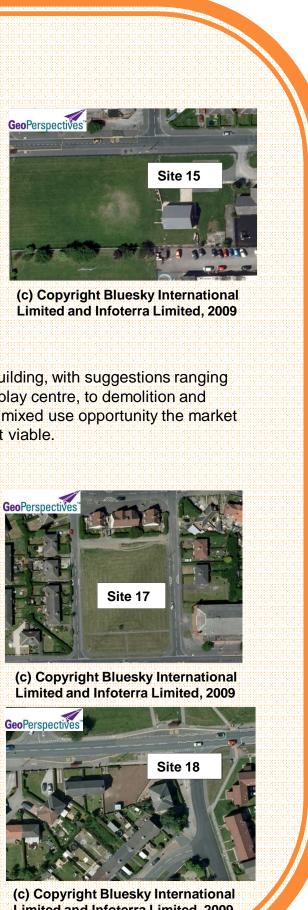




Site 17 – Acre Road North

Site 18 – Middleton Park Road





#### Site 18 – Middleton Park Road

This site was identified for housing in the 2009 Middleton Masterplan and at the time of publication was being developed by Sanctuary Housing for 128 affordable houses across Site 1, Site 2, Site 3, Site 8 and Site 18, and includes public open space. Planning application reference 12/02500/FU.





Site 19 - Stank Hall, New Hall and Stank Hall Barn

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Site 19 - Stank Hall, New Hall and Stank Hall Barn

Stank Hall Barn is a Grade II\* listed medieval barn while both Stank Hall and New Hall are Grade II Listed. The Council is committed to identifying a viable use for these buildings which may include conversion for residential and other uses. Enabling development may be supported in the vicinity of Listed Buildings where it is linked to the refurbishment or repair of heritage assets. This will be considered in the case of the Stank Hall Barn Complex and will secured by planning condition or planning obligation. The creation of green space around these buildings should also be explored.



Site 20 - Benyon House

#### Site 20 – Benyon House

Land adjacent to the proposed Asda store on Ring Road Middleton (formerly Benyon House) has been identified as a leisure led mixed use development opportunity which could include a family restaurant, new housing, and other complementary small scale leisure uses.



Site 21 – Manor Farm Road



Site 22 – Manor Farm Rise



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(c) Copyright Bluesky International Limited and Infoterra Limited, 2009

#### Site 21 - Manor Farm Road

A former garage site, this site is suitable for infill housing development. There is an opportunity to incorporate another entrance to Middleton Park as part of the site enabling easier access for Manor Farms residents. Developer contributions from housing development on this site could be used to pay for the new entrance.

#### Site 22 - Manor Farm Rise

A sloping former garage site, this could be a possible residential development opportunity, with contributions possibly funding environmental improvements as identified in the 2008 Manor Farms Masterplan prepared by Groundwork.





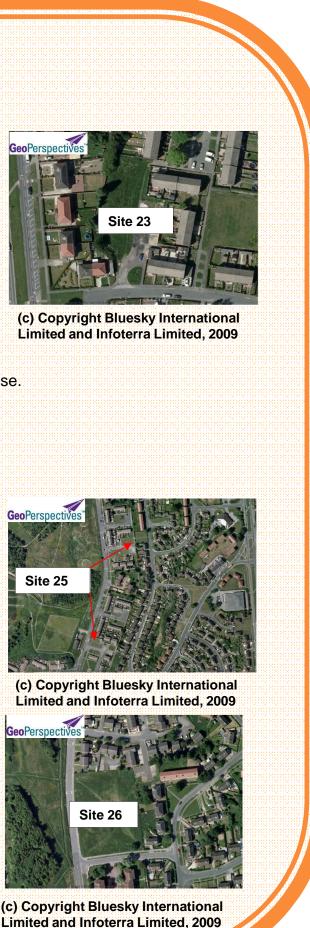
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### **Belle Isle Development Opportunities**

#### Site 23 – Nesfield Gardens

A former garage site which is suitable for small scale infill housing development. This site could potentially be suited to older people, given the proximity to bus services and neighbourhood shopping parades at Broom Place and Town Street.





Site 23 – Nesfield Gardens



Site 24 – Broom Court



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#### Site 25 – Newhall Road Former Garage Sites

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Former garage sites which are suitable for small scale infill housing development, in keeping with the surrounding built environment. Located close to bus routes and overlooking Middleton Park they present an attractive opportunity for complementary housing development.



This is a large site suitable for residential development that has an open aspect overlooking Middleton Park. This should provide a strong street frontage with contributions helping to improve access into Middleton Park and provide pedestrian connections to nearby facilities such as John Charles Centre for Sport.

#### Site 24 – Broom Court

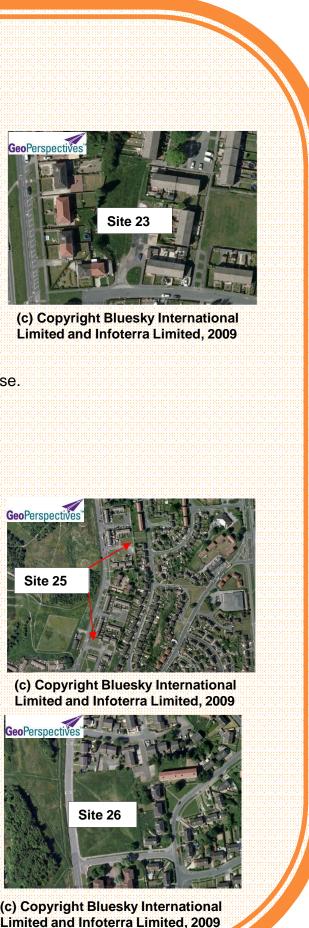
A former children's home, the site is suitable for residential use.

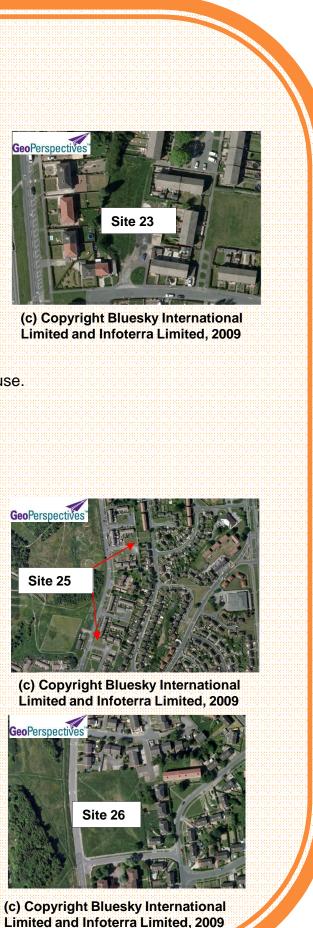


Site 25 – Newhall Road Former Garages



Site 26 - Newhall Gate







Site 27 – Former Merlyn Rees School



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#### Site 27 - Former Merlyn Rees School

Since the closure of the school, part of the site now accommodates the South Leeds Youth Hub. The designated sports pitches within the site are currently unusable and consideration needs to be given to address this issue. A multi-use games area has been created at the adjacent Youth Hub and a skate board park could also be developed at the facility. The site is suitable for mixed use development, that could include some residential.

#### Site 28 - Winrose Drive

This land sits to the south of the existing play area, and west of Windmill Primary School. The play area is not currently overlooked and suffers from vandalism so any new development should increase safety and surveillance of this facility. Development contributions could help fund better play equipment and contribute to the Green Loop which could be incorporated as part of the design solution for the site.



Site 28 – Winrose Drive



Site 29 – Middleton Road



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#### Site 29 - Middleton Road

This land is allocated for housing in the council's Unitary Development Plan. There may be an opportunity to develop further housing on the surrounding land, with this site likely to become increasingly attractive as New Generation Transport services begin to run.

#### Site 30 – Low Grange View

Highlighted as a long-standing issue by the local community due its dereliction, the site has been identified for infill housing development. This could be achieved through conversion of the existing building or demolition and redevelopment. Whichever option is progressed, careful consideration needs to given to the design and layout of the site given its gateway location.





Site 30 - Low Grange View



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### Economy

#### Economy

For an area to be sustainable it should be accessible, have a good range of shops and attractions which meet local needs and provide local employment opportunities. Given that Belle Isle and Middleton are suburbs set within the context of a larger city, some requirements will be met outside of the area but they must be effectively connected so that residents from the area have easy access.

#### Retail

Middleton has a vibrant commercial centre located at Middleton Park Circus, which was constructed at the time the original estate was built and continues to offer a wide range of outlets. More recently, Middleton District Centre located on Middleton Way has been developed providing larger purpose built units, many now being occupied by discount retailers. This facility is popular with residents in the area and from further afield including Wakefield, Tingley, and other parts of Leeds.

There is no single retail focus in Belle Isle although there are a number of smaller shopping parades scattered throughout the area. At present there are no supermarkets in Middleton or Belle Isle with the nearest being at the White Rose Shopping Centre and Hunslet.

Middleton Park Circus

#### New shops

Proposals have emerged from Aldi and Asda to develop new stores in accessible locations in the area. Aldi has secured planning permission on the former Middleton Arms Public House site and Asda is finalising proposals for a store on land adjacent to Middleton District Centre. Both stores will support and strengthen the existing centres.

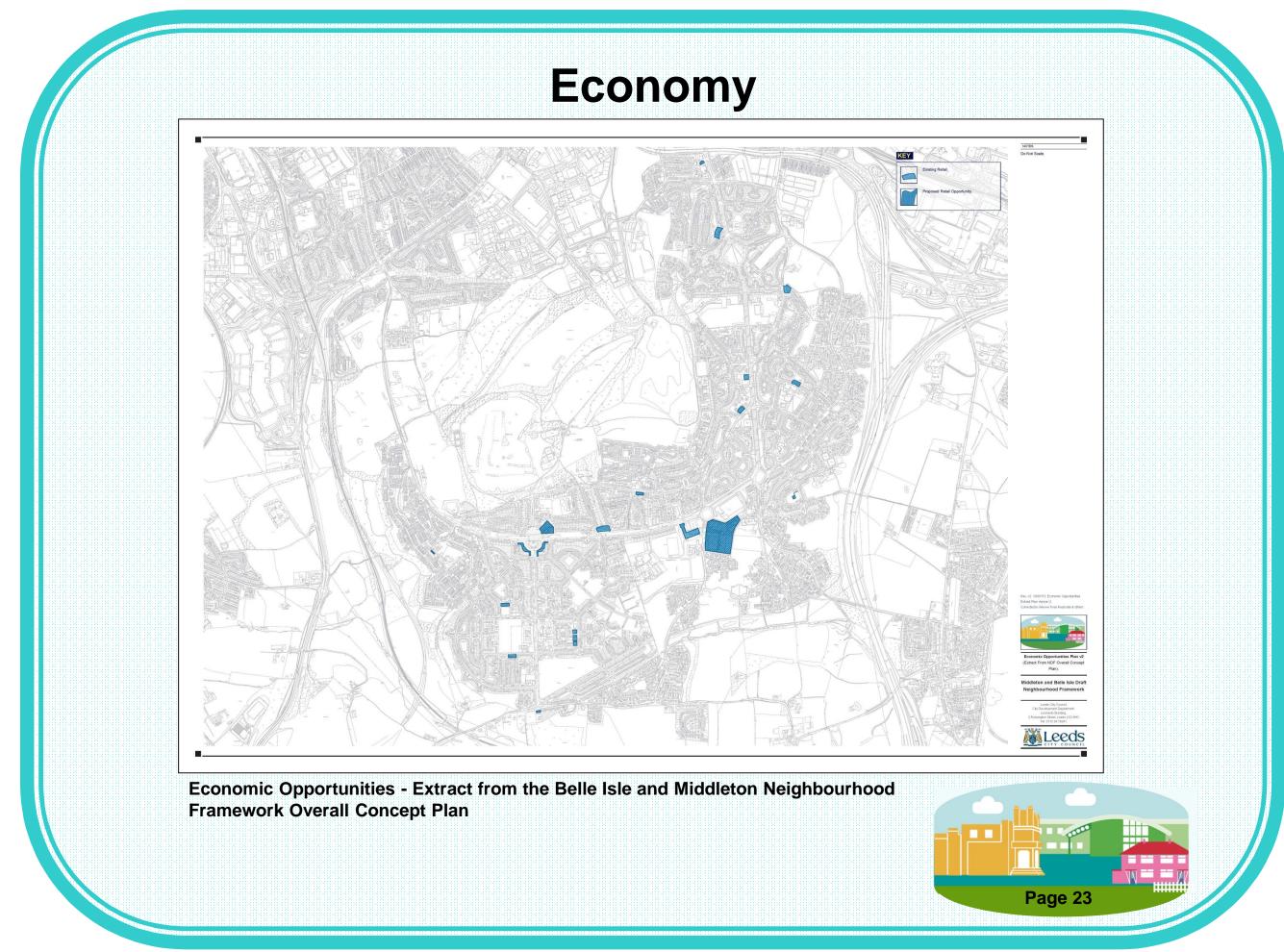
Asda has committed to funding wider improvements in the area including linkages and public realm around the existing district centre which could be re-branded. Links and access into St George's Centre could be improved which could be achieved by relocating the main entrance onto the eastern side of the building which will face towards Asda. Both retails will fill a gap in the retail sector in the area by offering a greater range of products including fresh fruit and vegetables.

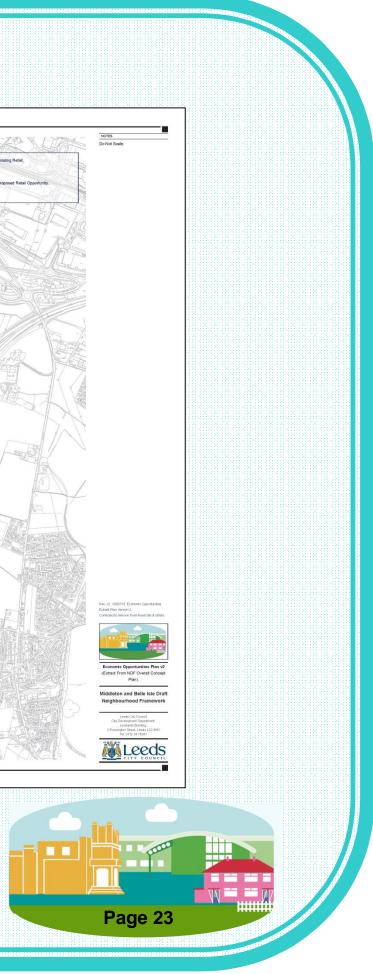
These stores also bring new jobs with both retailers agreeing to offer jobs to local people wherever possible. Support will need to be given to Middleton Park Circus to ensure that this retail area is sustained with the wide range of independent retailers remaining as the new national retailers open their doors. This could include shop front and public realm improvements to reinforce it as a primary location for shopping.





Artist's impression of the new proposed Asda





# **Economy**

#### Neighbourhood shops

There are a number of smaller parades of shops which are accessible throughout the area, although there is an over representation of fast food takeaways and premises licensed to sell alcohol, particularly in Middleton. Whilst these shops are not offering the healthiest of food and drink options and are blamed for some of the obesity and health issues, they are an important part of the area meeting a local demand.

The balance and nature of shops within these parades must be redressed and the council intends to undertake work to explore ways of restricting further A5 uses (Hot Food Takeaway) and alcohol licensed premises in the area. Some of the parades have a better mix than others with those at Belle Isle Parade and Throstle Lane being particularly varied and should look to be replicated at some of the other parades in other parts of the area. This could be supported by streetscape improvements to improve the appearance of these parades and introduction of trees or planting to break up the existing hard landscaped areas.





#### Leisure

Other than 'green' leisure, people have to travel out of the area for leisure purposes. Provided there are good connections to nearby facilities such as White Rose Shopping Centre, this is not a significant issue. However, there is a clear desire from local residents to have a family friendly restaurant in the area.

Given the wide range of visitors, central and accessible location, and forthcoming developments, land adjacent to the proposed Asda store on Ring Road Middleton (formerly Benyon House) has been identified as a possible location which could potentially sit alongside new housing or other complementary but small scale leisure uses.

**Benyon House** 

#### **Training and Employment**

Agencies already work hard to provide a range of training opportunities and support to residents in the area to get them ready for work. This must continue, and will be complemented by the range of proposals which aim to make it easier for people to commute to jobs. In particular, the process of up-skilling must be linked to emerging development proposals in the area as well as in the Aire Valley and around the White Rose Shopping Centre.





**Employment opportunities at the White Rose Shopping Centre** 

Example of a good Shopping Parade in Middleton

#### **Open Space, Public Realm and Play Areas**

Open Space, public realm and play facilities are important to ensuring the long term sustainability of an area. The preparation of this framework provides an opportunity to review the provision of these facilities so that they are more accessible and better quality.

Public open space that is well designed, well maintained, clean, safe and accessible can provide areas for appreciating wildlife as well as enjoying sport and recreation. The importance of providing good quality green space should not be underestimated as it can benefit people's physical and mental wellbeing. Good quality greenspace in Belle Isle and Middleton will make a key contribution towards Leeds being the best city for health and wellbeing.

A well connected network of good quality public green spaces can provide walking and cycling routes forming part of an environmentally friendly transport system as well as making a valuable contribution to the environmental biodiversity of the area. Private and semi-private garden space form part of the green space network in a locality adding further value to the biodiversity of the area. It also gives people a further option for enjoying recreation activities or relaxing. New housing development should consider a garden's orientation and design in order to maximise solar gain, encouraging people to make the most of their own private green space.

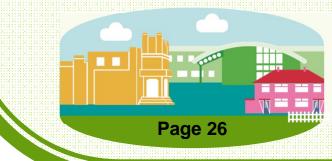


Add to the existing greenspace network in the area









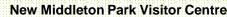
### **Framework Proposals**

#### **Middleton Park**

Middleton Park is one of Leeds' largest parks, although many residents in Belle Isle and Middleton do not see it as a facility for everyday use. Middleton Park should become the primary focus for open space within the area and should continue to be invested in to create not just a local attraction but one which attracts visitors from the surrounding area.

Friends of Middleton Park (FoMP) and the council have worked in partnership arranging and promoting events, and securing funding for improvements which include a new visitor centre. Funding contributions from nearby developments will help to deliver this ongoing programme of improvements and events that the council and FoMP are undertaking across the park. These include improving the entrance gateways around the park's boundary, connections through the park, and events arranged for park visitors. This will help Leeds to be the best city for health and wellbeing.







Green Loop opportunity in Belle Isle

#### Green Loop

The creation of a 'green loop' around Belle Isle and Middleton will help to improve movement around the area and make it easier for people to visit nearby facilities. Parts of this route are already in place such as the Sharp Lane Plantations, paths through Heritage Village and Stank Hall Barn and routes through Middleton Park. Other parts of the green loop are used informally, although there is scope to improve and raise awareness of the connections this could create. This will help to create a more accessible neighbourhood with spurs off to provide a valuable pedestrian and cycle connection to White Rose Shopping Centre and Office Park, the Aire Valley and John Charles Centre for Sport providing residents with better access to employment and leisure opportunities. The provision of seating along the green loop route will give people the opportunity to rest making it attractive to all users.

#### Gateways

'Gateways' help give a sense of arrival to somewhere and can take various forms from just a simple sign, to landscaping, to a sculpture that reflects an area's past. A number of gateway opportunities throughout Belle Isle and Middleton are identified which local community groups could take ownership of and develop into small projects potentially eligible for arts based grants. The gateways will help identify the distinctive areas of Belle Isle and Middleton and further promote the sense of community and pride that people take in the area in which they live.



**Gateway to Middleton** 



#### Child Friendly

Local young people have a strong desire for a permanent skateboard park to be located at the Youth Hub as it is accessible and could be better managed as part of this facility. Young people felt that they would have less of a concern about the fear of intimidation or bullying that an unsupervised park may bring. Parents may also prefer their children to use a more formally managed, and supervised facility.

Residents are also disappointed at the number of play areas across Belle Isle and Middleton which have fallen into disrepair and are supportive of less but better quality provision. There is an opportunity to turn redundant and rundown play areas into good quality greenspace. Continuing to involve the community in the type of play area provided and the location is key to ensure a sense of ownership and a reduction in vandalism that may have led to disrepair in the past. The creation of a large play facility in Middleton Park could be explored. This would not only be important for local residents but could increase the attractiveness of the park to visitors outside of the area. These proposals will improve the livability of the area and help Leeds to be the best city for children.



Page 28

Example of an existing play area that needs improvement



financial contributions





New playing pitches at Sharp Lane

#### **Playing pitches**

The framework has identified a number of hard and soft sports pitches that exist throughout the area, some of which are the new pitches which have been provided behind the leisure centre in Middleton. It is proposed that a review of the existing sports pitches be undertaken to better understand the usage of these facilities and identify which pitches would benefit from further investment to improve and promote them in a bid to get more people active and to not let such valuable assets go underused. This review may also identify previous pitches which may not now be required due to new provision, potentially freeing up this land for other uses.

Example of a new play area funded through

#### **Public Realm**

Public realm improvement opportunities have been identified at Middleton Park Circus. This could include a scheme to help pedestrians to move around the area, making it easier for people to cross from the parking area to the shopping parade.

There may be an opportunity to introduce a 'shared surface' which could help to slow traffic speed, and give the area more of a plaza type feel through the use of good quality surfacing materials, street furniture and shopfront improvements.

Streetscape improvements could also be made to some of the other neighbourhood shopping parades.



Public realm improvements at Middleton Park Circus



**Good Neighbourhood Improvement Opportunity - Manor Farms** 

#### Neighbourhood Openspace

A number of neighbourhood improvement opportunities have been identified for small pockets of open space across the neighbourhoods, some of which suffer from anti-social behaviour, fly tipping, and poor maintenance. These sites could become the focus for community based projects which could take the form of kickabout areas, allotments, garden extensions, community gardens or wildflower meadows. There are already good examples in the area following work that has been undertaken by Groundwork.

#### **Outdoor Gym and Trim Trail**

There is an opportunity to provide outdoor gym equipment as part of a play area. The benefit of an outdoor gym is that they are free to use and accessible for all, young and old alike. Installation of such a facility in Middleton Park along with a trim trail would further promote the use of the park and help people towards leading a healthier lifestyle.



#### **Tree Lined Streets**

Extending the use of street trees throughout Belle Isle and Middleton will help to develop the areas distinctiveness. This will extend the work already undertaken on Middleton Park Avenue to reinforce the link to Middleton Park. There is most scope for this intervention in areas that are seeing new development such as along Thorpe Road in Middleton, to help soften the appearance of new housing and retaining the area's green character. However, none of the primary routes across the area should be discounted from this treatment. As well as following the 'garden suburb' ethos for the area, there are numerous benefits to having trees lining our streets:

- Health help to reduce pollution in the air;
- Crime presence of greenery can reduce acts of anti-social behaviour;
- Climate shade and shelter from trees means that energy can be saved on heating and cooling buildings. Branches and leaves can slow the rate at which rainwater hits the ground preventing flash flooding;
- Economy people are attracted to live, work or invest in Belle Isle and Middleton because of the 'Garden City Suburb' feel;
- Housing house prices can increase where a property is associated with nearby mature trees;
- **Community** the presence of trees can help build on the pride for the area that already exists;
- Environment tree lined streets add to the green space network contributing to the wildlife and biodiversity of the area.

The species of street trees selected must have a root growth pattern which will not cause future damage to paved highway surfaces. Root protection may also be needed to prevent root ingress into services.

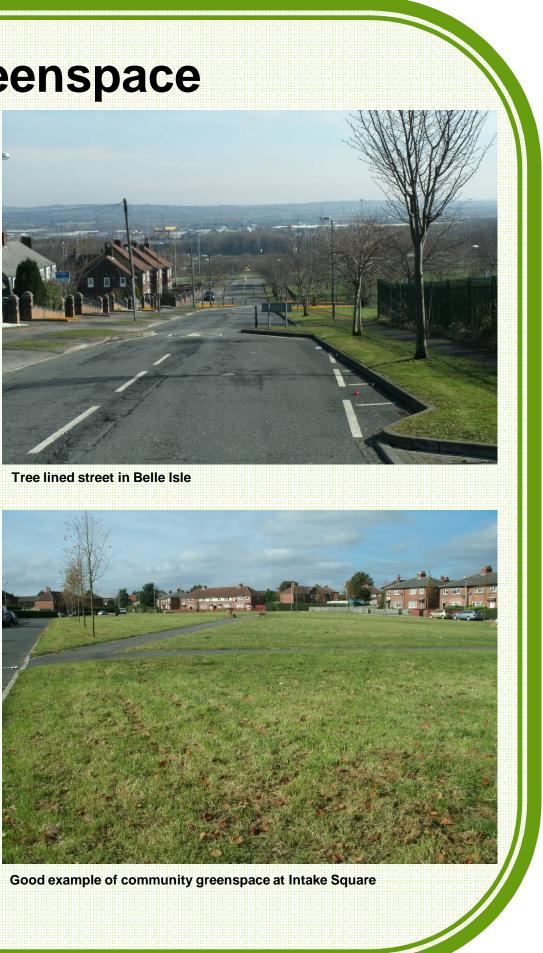
#### **Development and Greenspace**

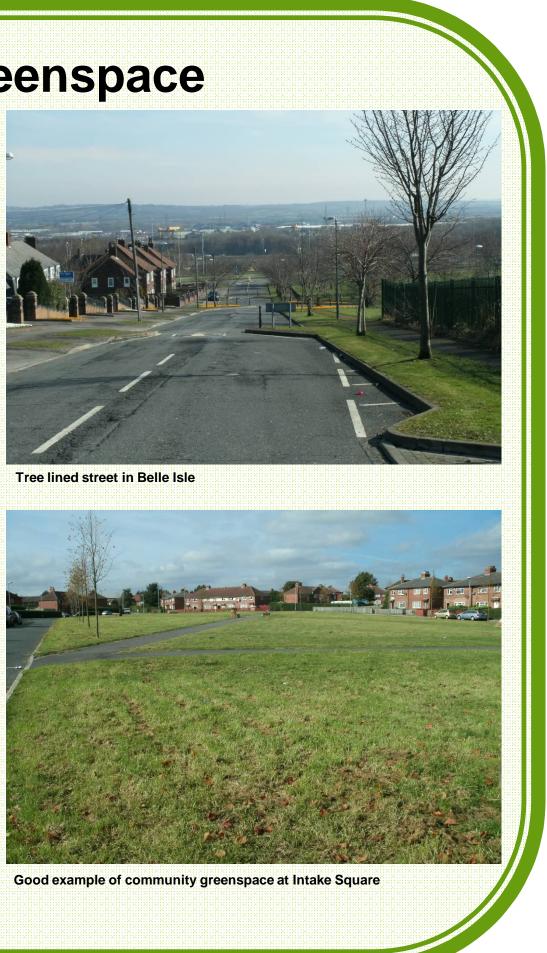
The numerous areas of greenspace throughout Belle Isle and Middleton means that the provision of additional green space as part of a development may not always be necessary, as this introduces small parcels of difficult to manage greenspace rather than complementing and enhancing to the network of existing provision.

As part of any future development in the two areas landscape and boundary treatments must be considered as these can act as a buffer, softening development and further helping it to integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood.



Through contributions from the redevelopment of the sites identified in this document, the Neighbourhood Framework should aim to provide good quality greenspace that is accessible by all. This approach complements the 'garden suburb' character of the area, and the framework should aim to enhance and maintain this ethos to maximise the regenerative benefits for Belle Isle and Middleton.





## **Connections**

#### Transport and connectivity

For Belle Isle and Middleton to grow and flourish, good connections need to be created across the area and beyond. It already benefits from regular bus services to the city centre, pedestrian and cycle routes across the area including paths through Middleton Park, and infrastructure to allow access to the White Rose area and Aire Valley. However, residents want to see improvements to help them get to nearby attractions and jobs.

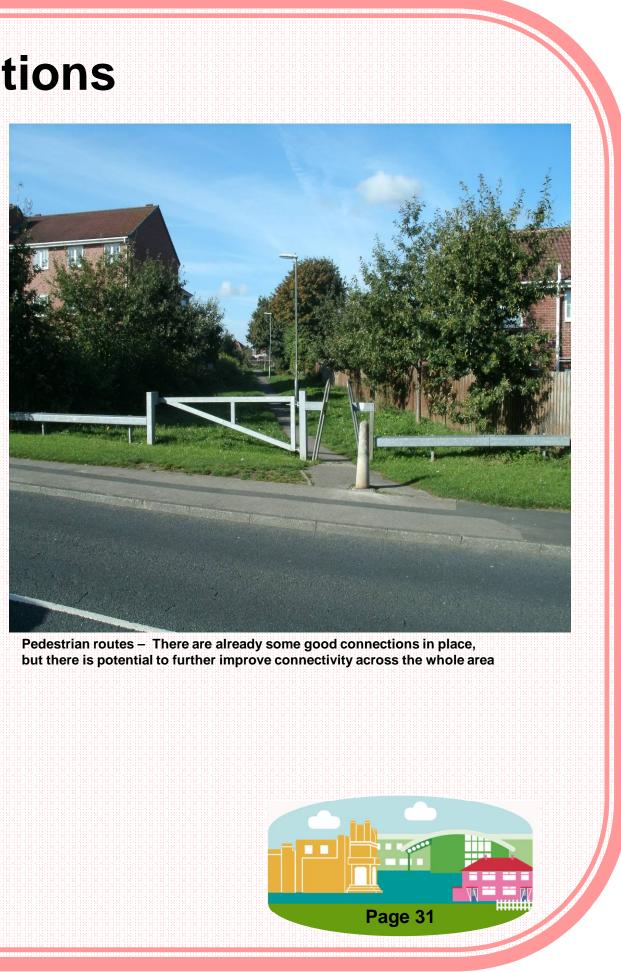
#### **Pedestrian and Cycle routes**

The easiest way to get around the local area should be as a pedestrian or cyclist. This is not always the case and some 'low cost' improvements can help to make this easier. There is already a network of paths across Belle Isle and Middleton and through Middleton, but many are not well signed or maintained and are not well used.

The 'Green Loop' will create a route around the area for people to walk and cycle on. Some of these paths already exist whilst others are used on an informal basis. The loop will make it easier for people to travel around the area whilst improving current journey times without having to use the main routes through the estates and will provide direct links into the Aire Valley and White Rose area. Spurs from the loop will improve connections to other areas which people find it difficult to access such as the John Charles Centre for Sport and the South Leeds Academy. This will make it easier for residents to get to nearby facilities and attractions as well as jobs.



There are already some cycle routes across the area, but there is the opportunity to increase this network







Continue to improve public transport services in the area

# Connections

#### **Public Transport**

Bus services from Belle Isle and Middleton into Leeds City Centre are frequent and generally reliable during the day. However, users express concerns about the reliability and timing of evening services. Work must be undertaken with transport providers to address these issues to ensure that residents have a service which they can rely on.

The area is not served by any direct services to White Rose Shopping Centre and office park which has an interchange allowing opportunities for longer distance travel to surrounding towns and cities. This is frequently raised as a concern by residents who would like to see the introduction of such services which would allow access to a greater number of job opportunities for those without access to a car.

The re-tasking of services to provide such a link is critical to the success of the area, by broadening training and employment opportunities for local residents. Similarly, the introduction of services to the Aire Valley as developments come forward is also essential to help local people back into work.

A 'South Leeds circular' service has been considered in the past. The opportunity for such a service or changes to existing services should be re-examined to serve other areas and facilities in south Leeds including White Rose, John Charles Centre for Sport, Holbeck and Beeston as well as key destinations in Belle Isle and Middleton including the South Leeds Youth Hub, St George's Centre, Middleton Park and Middleton Circus. The development of new housing close to some of these locations will help to improve the viability of any service changes and must be considered alongside new development proposals. The opportunity for community transport provision should be explored for such routes or as a 'dial up' service at a lower cost than taxi fares.

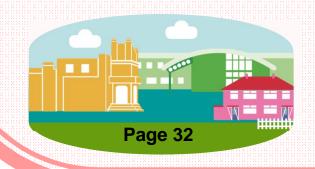
#### **New Generation Transport**

The New Generation Transport (NGT) scheme aims to provide a high quality, fast frequent service using state of the art electric trolley buses. The route is proposed to bring services into the heart of Belle Isle via Winrose Grove and Belle Isle Circus running along Belle Isle Road into Hunslet, into the city centre and onto Headingley and Holt Park. Proposals include a Park and Ride scheme at Stourton which will offer approximately 2,200 car parking spaces along with a depot for the new network providing important job opportunities for people in the local area. Future extensions may also provide better connectivity to the Aire Valley.

The introduction of NGT services could provide important opportunities for other bus services to be reviewed to feed into this network, making it easy to use for residents in Belle Isle and Middleton.



Proposed 'Park and Ride' site for the NGT scheme



### **Connections**

#### **Road Improvements**

Integration between New Forest Village and the original Middleton estate is poor. This is in part due to poor pedestrian connections and no direct road link. To improve movement across the area, connections should be created between Towcester Avenue and Throstle Road. This will need to be carefully considered to ensure that rat running is not encouraged.

Speeding was seen as a particular issue by residents with many wanting to see further speed bumps and cameras. However, other solutions should be found to reduce traffic speed including measures to reduce long distance visibility which often encourages drivers to speed, and planting/ parking arrangements that reinforce the shift in a road's alignment.

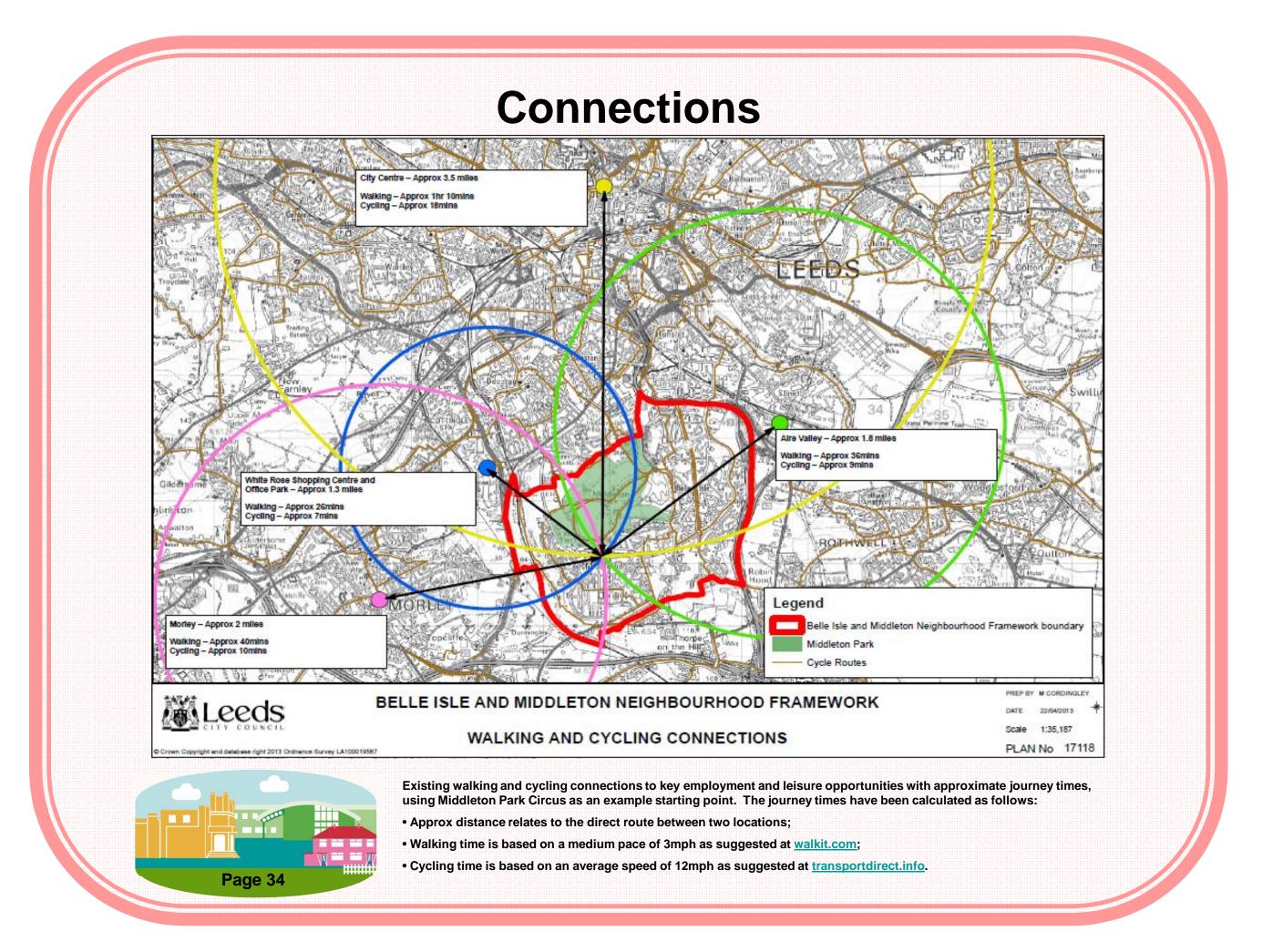
A design solution could be considered for Middleton Park Circus to rebalance priority between pedestrians and vehicles. This could deliver a number of benefits including improving the public realm, environmental qualities of the area and pedestrian safety.



Connectivity between older estates and newer estates needs to be improved







# Community

### **Community Buildings and Action**

Belle Isle and Middleton have a rich social history. The areas have a strong sense of community and residents have pride in where they live. There is a strong community desire to further improve the area and there are many ways that local residents can get involved.

#### **Community Facilities and Buildings**

There are a wide range of community services in Belle Isle and Middleton operating from dedicated premises. This has resulted in a large number of community buildings in the area being used inefficiently. St Georges Centre however, offers a number of Council and NHS services from a single location, including a one stop centre, library and minor injuries clinic which attracts people from a wide area. Residents value this facility and felt that the concept should be extended to include other services and organisations in the future.

Whilst many of the buildings are valued there may be the opportunity to rationalise the number of community buildings by encouraging joint service delivery and co-location to utilise remaining buildings more efficiently. Some buildings may lend themselves more than others to redevelopment because of their proximity to development sites identified within this document.

#### **GP** Services

Residents in Belle Isle currently have to travel to Middleton or Hunslet to visit a GP. To improve access to services surgery provision within the Belle Isle area should be considered by commissioning bodies.

#### Broadband

Poor broadband speed in the area was cited as a key issue. Current speeds fall well short of those available in the rest of the city and as part of new development schemes, broadband providers should be encouraged to invest in their services to improve the bandwidth.

#### **Sports Centres**

Middleton Leisure Centre has been refurbished to provide a good quality sports facility within the area. The closest swimming pools can be found at the John Charles Centre for Sport (JCCS) which provides world class sports facilities. However, this centre lacks regular direct bus services and feels disconnected from Belle Isle and Middleton despite it being only a short distance. Many residents do not identify with this facility saying that the pools at Middleton Leisure Centre should not have been closed. It is essential that the connections by bus, as a pedestrian and a cyclist to JCCS are improved and that this facility is better promoted in the community.





## Community

### **Youth Provision**

#### South Leeds Youth Hub

Some young people and parents from the area are not fully aware of what the South Leeds Youth Hub has to offer. Young people from Middleton and other parts of South Leeds also struggle to attend evening sessions due to the frequency, reliability and routing of bus services at this time of day. To maximise the impact that the Youth Hub has, ways of providing transport from surrounding areas must be explored.

Residents would also like to see the Youth Hub broaden its appeal. Young people would like to see more facilities such as a skate board park and separate kick around area whilst other residents would like to see the building made available for other sections of the community who could make use of some of the facilities such as recording studios, IT suites and workshops.

#### **Play Areas**

The quality of children's play areas must be addressed, many of which are vandalised because they are not well used or overlooked. The number of play areas could be rationalised and replaced by fewer, but more accessible robust parks in more strategic locations.

#### **Off-road Motorbikes**

Unlawful motorbike riding through the housing estates was raised as one of the key anti-social behaviour issues by residents. In contrast, a number of young people highlighted that they didn't have anywhere to ride their motorbikes in the area. These views must be balanced and there is scope to explore opportunities for provision of a semi-formal track away from residents to tackle this issue and meet the demand from young people.





South Leeds Youth Hub - a good asset for the area

#### **Child Friendly**

Expected population growth, alongside the development of new houses will put more pressure on nursery and childcare provision, as well as primary and secondary schools. Opportunities to expand existing schools are already being addressed and new schools may be required. Already many secondary school children attend schools outside of the area.

Some of the housing sites identified within this framework could be capable of accommodating schools/ child nurseries, and these options will be considered before sites are sold for housing. Schools in particular, need to be well placed with good access and measures in place to limit the impact on local residents particularly at the beginning and end of the school day. There is also scope to locate schools close to existing playing pitches to make more efficient use of these facilities through the week and reduce the amount of land take a new school requires.

# **Delivery and Implementation**

#### Delivery

There are two approaches to the delivery of this framework: investment in new buildings such as houses and shops, and other investment and community benefits covering matters such as greenspace and sports pitch improvements, and connections.



#### Investment in new buildings

The majority of the housing sites set out in this framework are owned by Leeds City Council. The City Council will market the sites in a planned way to make sure that development and it's impact is phased across the area and that it delivers the type of investment which is required at the time.

Some land in the area is privately owned. Where this is the case the Council will seek to enter into discussions with land owners to discuss the opportunities for their land and the wider vision and aspirations for the area. This has been the case with the Aldi and Asda schemes to make sure that they bring about improvements to the existing shopping environment.

**Thorpe Road New Build Housing Development site** 

#### Other Investment and changes

Developers are required to pay planning contributions as part of any new development, to cover the cost of works without which the development would be problematic or its full benefits might not be realised. At present these contributions are called S106 obligations but in the future some will be made under the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Contributions can be for open space and public realm improvements, the creation or enhancements to new footpaths, play areas or other local facilities, changes or improvements to public transport services, schools and finally to ensure the delivery of the right number of affordable houses. Equally, S106 agreements can also be used to ensure that jobs and training opportunities are made available to local people in the first instance.

The Council will be reviewing its buildings in the area to make sure that only buildings which are well used and in a good condition are kept in the long term. This may mean some difficult decisions are made and it will be essential that these are worked through with any affected organisations and community groups to ensure that they can continue their work.

#### **Community Action**

Local residents can become more involved in directly improving their neighbourhood. There are a number of small-scale open space improvements identified which local groups could take forward to create community gardens or allotments. Some organisations such as Groundwork offer small pots of grant funding to support this type of work which community groups may be able to bid for if they develop proposals that meet the funding criteria.

In time as community capacity increases, the council will encourage neighbourhood improvements being brought forward by residents, supported by partners.



A good Neighbourhood Improvement example – Manor Farms



### **Delivery and Implementation**

### Funding

Financial contributions from new development in the Belle Isle and Middleton area will be used to pay for some of the open space and connectivity improvements set out in the framework and proposals plan.

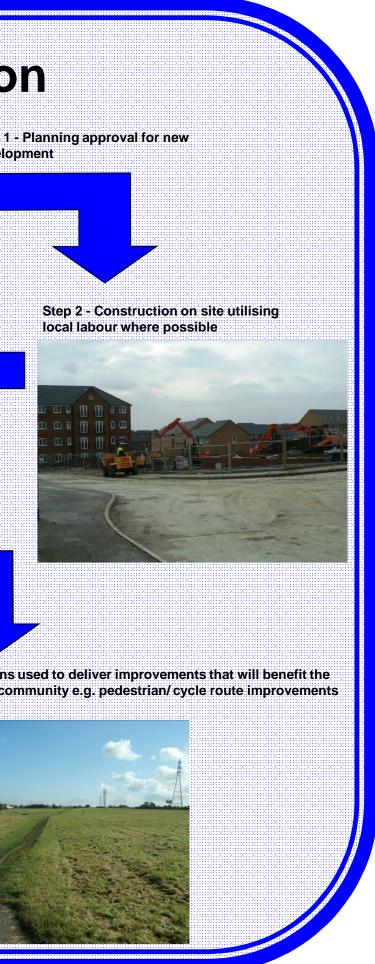
Equally, more significant developments in adjoining areas will also be expected to contribute to the improvements identified in this framework, to ensure that residents in the area can commute to new jobs either as a pedestrian or by public transport. They will also be expected to make commitments to utilise local labour in the same way that Asda and Aldi have as part of their schemes.

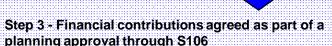
The identification of particular proposals in this document will help to support grant applications to funding bodies should money be made available for open space and public realm projects. If applications are successful this funding could be matched with any developer and private sector contributions to maximise the impact of schemes.

Overall, the private sector will play a key role in delivering the ideas included in this framework.





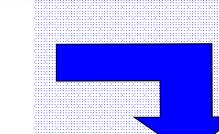




DATED		2013
	LEEDS CITY COUNCIL	
	And	
	A DEVELOPER LIMITED	



planning approval through S106



to nearby employment



		De	liver	y and	Implementation
Site No.	Site Name	Location	Site Size (Hectares)	Suitable Development Use	Shopping List of Improvements to
1	Throrpe Road North East	Middleton	1.58	Housing	assistance of contributions from ne
2	Thorpe Road South West	Middleton	1.18	Housing	<ul> <li>Green Loop – creation and accessible routes around th</li> </ul>
3	Throrpe Crescent	Middleton	0.48	Housing	
4	Acre Mount	Middleton	2.08	Housing	
5	Thorpe View	Middleton	0.62	Housing	and Belle Isle with cycle and
6	Thorpe Square	Middleton	0.76	Housing	to White Rose Shopping Ce
7	Thorpe Road East	Middleton	0.1	Housing	the city centre;
8	Intake View	Middleton	0.13	Housing	
9	Throstle Terrace	Middleton	0.45	Housing	Greenspace improvement
10	Throstle Road	Middleton	1.9	Housing	other existing areas of oper
11	Throstle Rec	Middleton	6.3	Housing, Play Area, Greenspace	<ul> <li>Play areas – investment in</li> </ul>
12	Sissons Road	Middleton	8.3	Housing	accessible play facilities;
13	Middleton Park Grove	Middleton	0.39	Housing	
14	Throstle Mount	Middleton	0.37	Housing	<ul> <li>Outdoor Gym – provision of</li> </ul>
15	Acre Road South	Middleton	0.24	Community, Leisure	use outdoor gym equipmen
16	Tivoli Building	Middleton	0.18	Housing or Leisure	leading a healthier lifestyle;
17	Acre Road North	Middleton	0.4	Housing	
18	Middleton Park Road	Middleton	0.04	Housing	<ul> <li>Trim trail – provision of an</li> </ul>
19	Stank Hall, New Hall, Stank Hall Barn	Middleton	0.8	Housing (conversion of existing buildings)	Middleton Park to further pr
20	Benyon House	Belle Isle/ Middleton	2.03	Leisure	Public realm and shopfro
21	Manor Farm Road	Manor Farms	0.21	Housing	Middleton Park Circus and
22	Manor Farm Rise	Manor Farms	0.47	Housing	shopping parades;
23	Nesfield Gardens	Belle Isle	0.19	Housing	<b>n</b>
24	Broom Court	Belle Isle	0.28	Housing	<ul> <li>Bus services – Re-task se</li> </ul>
25	Newhall Road former garage sites	Belle Isle	0.15	Housing	to White Rose and other pa
26	Newhall Gate	Belle Isle	0.62	Housing	
27	Former Merlyn Rees School	Belle Isle	3.2	Housing, Leisure	
28	Winrose Drive	Belle Isle	0.4	Housing	
29	Middleton Road	Belle Isle	2.02	Housing	

0.23

34.52

Housing

N/A

Belle Isle

TOTAL

30 Low Grange View

pping List of Improvements to be delivered with the stance of contributions from new development:

- Green Loop creation and improvement of accessible routes around the perimeter of Middleton and Belle Isle with cycle and pedestrian connections to White Rose Shopping Centre, the Aire Valley and the city centre;
- Greenspace improvements Middleton Park and other existing areas of open space;
- Play areas investment in fewer but larger accessible play facilities;
- Outdoor Gym provision of accessible and free to use outdoor gym equipment to help residents towards leading a healthier lifestyle;
- Trim trail provision of an accessible trim trail in Middleton Park to further promote use of the park;
- Public realm and shopfront improvements Middleton Park Circus and other neighbourhood shopping parades;
- Bus services Re-task services to create direct links to White Rose and other parts of South Leeds.



