

Investment Partnership for South Leeds

DRAFT INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Connecting Communities & Opportunities

SUMMARY REPORT

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What is The Investment Strategy for South Leeds...

It provides a summary of the issues, opportunities and challenges facing South Leeds, and sets out the aspirations of people who have been thinking about what the future could be. It has been put together by a partnership of key business interests in the area together with the City Council.

It is the result of talking over the last year to people who live and work in South Leeds, who told us what they thought is wrong with the area and what could be done to put things right, to make it a better place to live and work. It also looks at how the area compares with other places in Leeds and elsewhere in the UK. These discussions and research have been wide-ranging and have asked people to tell us not just what is wrong but what could be done to put things right, to make them better. Some of these could be simple changes that could happen now; others are possibilities that will take much longer to be achieved. All of the comments received will help to shape an agreed vision for the area, including how new investment can be attracted to South Leeds which could benefit local communities.

In Spring 2011 the Council will publish its Core Strategy. This is an important planning policy statement that plans for the period up to 2026 and will guide planning and land use decisions over the whole of the Leeds district. Comments made on this Draft Investment Strategy will be considered in drafting the final content of the Core Strategy where it has implications for South Leeds. But there are many short-term actions in the Draft Investment Strategy that are not reliant on updating planning policy guidance and so can benefit the area and local residents now.

...and who has produced the Investment Strategy?

Significant commercial property owners in South Leeds have worked in partnership with Leeds City Council to explore the future potential of the area and to develop a vision for the sort of place that South Leeds should become. The Investment Strategy for South Leeds was started in June 2009 and the emerging ideas need to be shared with the wider South Leeds community. Following this period of public consultation, the views expressed by local people and organisations will be taken into account in reviewing the Investment Strategy before it is formally agreed.

A Steering Group has been established for the project made up of Leeds City Councillors and officers alongside representatives of Munroe K, Sterling Capitol, Leeds United, Land Securities, Evans Property Group, Leeds Property Forum and the Chamber of Commerce supported by planning consultants David Lock Associates.

A Partnership Engagement Group (PEG) was also established to help prepare the Draft Investment Strategy through a series of workshops. The "PEG" has over 40 representatives of:

- *the local communities, voluntary, community and faith groups*
- *local politicians*
- *local businesses*
- *service providers including health, leisure, housing, training and education*
- *environmental interests*
- *transport operators*
- *funding providers*
- *local regeneration boards*
- *the police.*

This group will have an important future role in finalising the Investment Strategy and in its implementation.

Why turn the spotlight on South Leeds?

South Leeds is a cluster of distinct neighbourhoods which have their own separate character and identity. However, these communities face many challenges in common and this is an opportunity to work together, supported by public sector agencies, local businesses and investors, to confront these challenges head-on.

The City Council is committed to the long-term regeneration and prosperity of South Leeds and has prioritised the area for public sector investment in housing renewal and community facilities. This commitment is supported by property owners because they want to play a more prominent role in regeneration plans for the area. They have been open about their hopes that the potential for new development will generate more wealth across the area.

Looking at these opportunities and possibilities now means that future plans and policies can be properly informed about the views and aspirations of local people and other stakeholders.

Why is this Investment Strategy so important?

South Leeds is an area with great opportunities.

This has been revealed in discussions with local residents, businesses, investors and service providers across the whole area, people with ideas about the sort of future they would like to see for South Leeds,

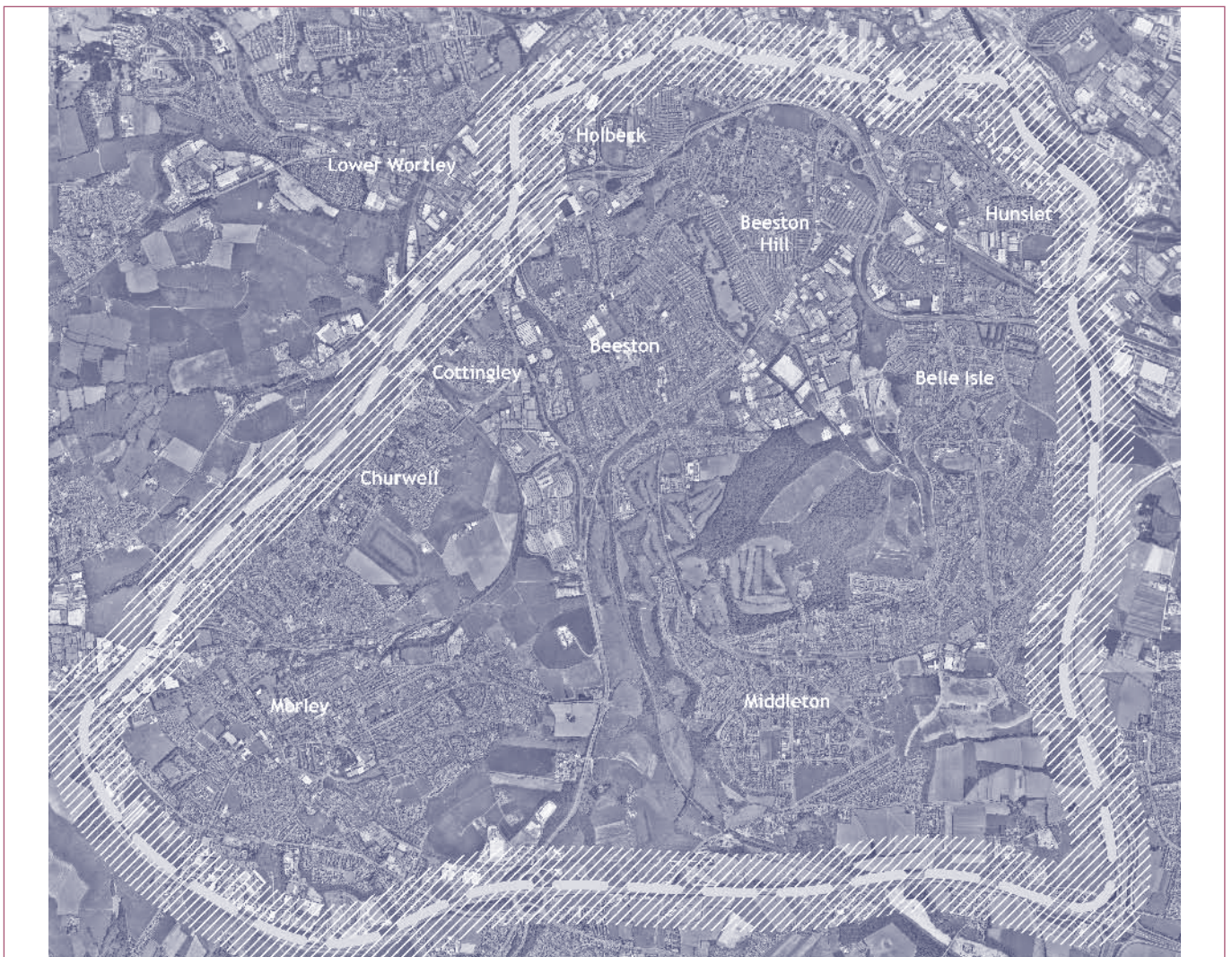


Figure 1: Investment Partnership Study Area Boundary

Whilst a few individual neighbourhoods already have plans and strategies in place to make good things happen, other parts of South Leeds do not and no-one has looked at the potential of the wider area; how it works, what it looks like, how it is perceived by others and how it could be improved as a place to live in, work in and invest in. Without a comprehensive regeneration strategy for the whole area the full range of possibilities will not be properly explored and opportunities may be lost. So this Investment Strategy is the first stage of adding a more strategic and commercial perspective to reinforce existing regeneration efforts.

As public sector investment is being reduced, capturing the potential of private sector investment becomes all the more urgent.

What are the issues, challenges and opportunities facing South Leeds?

94,000 people with a young age profile occupy 43,000 homes in South Leeds; but some communities have low income levels and low educational achievement so that overall deprivation is higher compared to other places. And more South Leeds people are unemployed compared with Leeds as a whole.

Of those that are working, a bigger proportion are in lower paid manual jobs, which is a contrast with the office, retail and leisure jobs available in the Dewsbury Road corridor.

The area has an undeserved poor image and outsiders' perceptions have a critical impact on some communities' sense of pride and general well-being, but also on future investment potential.

However, people who live in South Leeds appreciate the strong sense of community, cultural diversity, good primary schools, the green spaces and the high quality sports facilities. They also like easy access to the motorway network, the city centre and Morley Town Centre. They like having the White Rose centre, the Jon Charles Centre for Sport, and Elland Road in their midst and they appreciate the presence of good employers.

But local people also feel the need for housing to be improved in terms of quality and choice, and highlight proposals for new homes in Beeston Hill, Holbeck and West Hunslet. Local people also want better access to jobs and training. They want to feel safer and to have better connections to the places they need to visit, particularly by public transport, as part of an enhanced environment with improved neighbourhood shopping and local facilities.

When they looked at **the area as a whole**, local people felt they had poor access to services, facilities and job opportunities. Effective connections and improved transport links were very high on the list of priorities of those consulted so far and there is a belief that if these were improved it would lead to the revitalisation of Morley town centre, better supported neighbourhood centres, making the most of the economic drivers at White Rose, Capitol Park and Elland Road and making much more effective use of sports facilities and Middleton Park.

So based on discussions with South Leeds people so far, what do they think should happen....

The community's priorities for action seem to be:

...to the identity of the area and its quality of life?

- *A more positive image and perception for South Leeds*
- *Greater corporate recognition of South Leeds as an area that requires strategic thinking, future planning and investment*
- *Improvements to the housing stock with more affordable housing and more family homes with gardens. These are preferred on brownfield sites but some may have to be on green field land, in the right location*
- *Make use of empty buildings, especially those that are part of the heritage of the area*
- *Support for disadvantaged groups*
- *Better entertainment and leisure facilities including bars, restaurants and leisure attractions that are accessible*
- *New attractions in an improved Middleton Park*
- *An innovative approach to older industrial areas that could integrate residential communities*
- *Make existing attractions more accessible*

...to its existing centres and hubs?

- Regenerate local centres with better shopping, health facilities and places for local businesses
- Better access to a regenerated Morley Town Centre
- Exploit the potential of White Rose/Millshaw as a public transport hub (including the possibility of a new rail halt) and shopping and leisure attraction with better facilities for young people and people who work in the area.

...to its links and connections?

- Better connections east to west across the Dewsbury Road valley to link to sports facilities and between home and work, especially for buses, walkers and cyclists, and park-and-ride
- Concentrate services and facilities in accessible places - existing centres - and make them transport nodes
- Extend the heritage railway into Middleton Park
- Connections across the M621

...to the South Leeds economy

- Support business and jobs by better understanding their needs and planning for them
- Support new businesses with starter and incubator units and high quality accommodation, particularly in the Dewsbury Road corridor and by redeveloping older industrial areas
- Target local people for new jobs through training and local recruitment agreements
- Use existing successes - White Rose, Millshaw, Capitol Park, Elland Road - to attract more businesses and create more jobs
- Encourage more people to work and live in South Leeds

...to education and skills?

- Community actions and initiatives to raise aspirations and expectations, especially among young people with improvements targeted at secondary schools and colleges and local higher provision in South Leeds
- A retail training facility at White Rose that could become an academy for a growing sector
- Stronger links between local businesses and the community

...to the environment?

- Better quality, useable and accessible green space with Middleton Park as a regional attraction at its heart
- Revitalisation of Morley's parks
- Enhanced local open space and play areas
- A new Country Park in the valley
- Cleaner, well maintained streets
- Potential for local food and energy production

What does the private sector think that it needs?

The priorities of business leaders, investors and property owners are complementary, and include:

- Better housing to attract and retain skilled and professional staff
- Enhanced and efficient public transport
- Better quality business accommodation and services such as broadband
- Skilled local labour
- Financial incentives for investment
- More facilities, services and places to meet that reinforce enterprise and entrepreneurship

This is an illustration of ideas. It is not a master plan nor does it propose any scale of growth or development. It suggests options for further exploration and discussion.

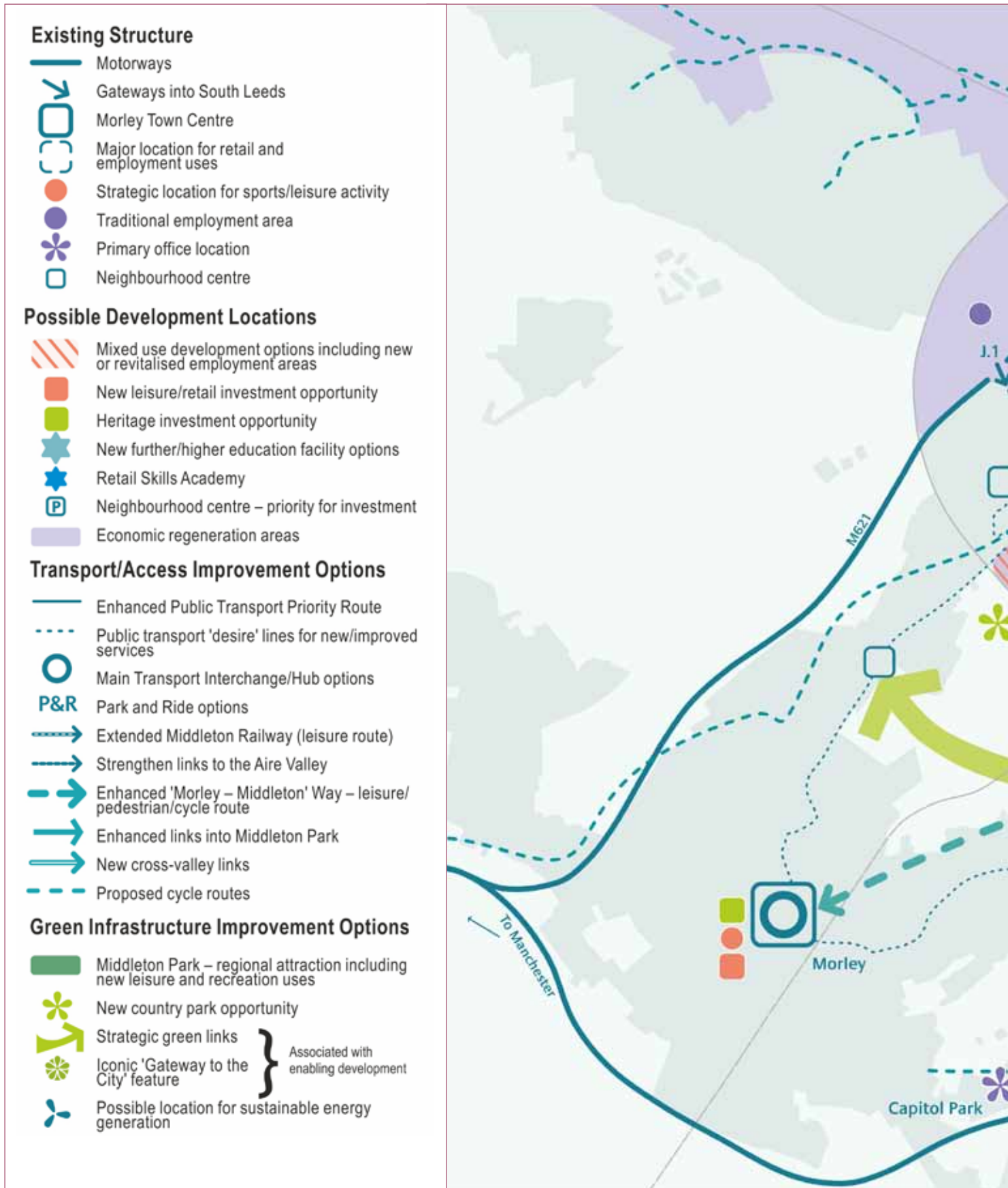


Figure 2: Composite Ideas



- *A higher standard of cleanliness and maintenance to create a better general environment*
- *A clear, pro-active, pro-business policy framework to provide much needed confidence*

All of which should lead to a more positive image and perception for South Leeds as a whole.

The private sector sees the greatest potential for new investment in:

- *New family homes with gardens*
- *Planned expansion of modern commercial accommodation for shopping, offices, and leisure facilities*
- *Additional local convenience retailing related to the needs of local communities*
- *Improved public transport*

...though the private sector recognises that delivering some of this could require changes to the local planning framework which limits such developments at present.

So, what are the investment opportunities and ideas that are helping shape a vision for the area...

The Investment Strategy identifies potential and possibilities over three time periods:

- *Short term investment opportunities that fit with existing planning policies and could be started now*
- *Investment opportunities that could lead to changes in planning policies through the City's emerging Core Strategy*
- *Longer-term opportunities that need more discussion for future change.*

...in the short term?

- *A new conference and exhibition centre, hotel and West Yorkshire Police HQ at Elland Road, which is just waiting for final agreements to be signed.*

- *Mezzanine expansion within the **White Rose centre** - a small area has planning permission and there is demand from existing retailers and catering businesses for 3898sqm more.*
- *A new Asda store in **Middleton** is planned*
- *A new food supermarket in **Holbeck** is thought to be desirable to complement new homes.*
- *6000sqm more office accommodation at **White Rose Office Park** has planning permission*
- *A number of new housing-led mixed use development projects within the existing built-up area*

These could provide investment to be used alongside public sector funding to support:

- *Improvements to **bus service** frequency and routing across South Leeds*
- *Improvements to **pedestrian and cycling** routes*
- ***Regeneration strategies** and master plans for key centres and facilities. Priorities include: Morley Town Centre; Middleton Local Centre; Beeston Hill Local Centre; Dewsbury Road District Centre; The Garnets/Holbeck Police Station; Holbeck Local Centre; St Matthews Community Centre.*
- *A community **enterprise centre** at Hillside*
- *Local **employment initiatives** and programmes including an enterprise centre, job shop and access point*
- *Refurbishment of the recording studios that occupy the **Old Chapel** in Holbeck*
- *Improvements to **local parks** and play facilities*
- *Better integration and targeting of **Council services***
- *New **allotments***
- *Regeneration of **Middleton Park***
- *New groups and activities for **young people**, including the Youth Hub in Belle Isle due to open in November 2010.*

...in the medium term?

There are some more significant proposals and investment opportunities - homes, jobs, facilities, services and regeneration - that could be delivered in the future to support wider regeneration objectives but which would need to be discussed and agreed by the City Council as part of the new Development Plan process. These ideas have are in the Draft Investment Strategy so that local people can express their views. Such opportunities include:

New homes. The number and types of new homes required is not yet clear but if this is a substantial number then, in addition to making best use of brownfield sites some land that is currently greenfield or in the Green Belt may have to be considered, and also whether sites are dispersed or concentrated. Concentrated development may be better able to support wider regeneration.

Intensification and diversification of development around White Rose Shopping Centre and Office Park and Millshaw Industrial Estate. There is potential to introduce additional retail, office, leisure, evening economy, residential and community facilities, and while such would require a change of planning policy it could be a major driver for regeneration, providing new job and training opportunities and funds for investment in other regeneration priorities.

Proposals for development at the Elland Road Stadium. There is potential for additional leisure and commercial land uses and the redevelopment of parts of the stadium to increase capacity and facilities which may be necessary to qualify as a Host City for the 2018 World Cup.

The further development of Capitol Park. The potential for land north-west of junction 28 of the M62 to provide additional employment, residential and other potentially complementary uses. Development in this location would require release of land from the Green Belt.

The development of the Tingley Station area. The potential for land north-east of junction 28 of the M62, to provide additional employment, residential and other complementary uses. The area is identified in the adopted local plan as having potential for long term development (PAS land).

This greater scale of new development could provide a greater level of investment to be used alongside public sector funding to support a wider range of projects, including:

- *Comprehensive improvements to bus routeing and service frequency to better connect residential areas, local centres and employment areas across South Leeds.*
- *Additional improvements to pedestrian and cycle connections. Integrating any new development with existing neighbourhoods will be an important requirement.*
- *An audit of existing community facilities and activities examining their accessibility and usage and determining whether there is a need for investment or new provision.*
- *New community buildings and local services and investment in existing facilities where required to support health, education, training and leisure needs to serve existing communities and within new residential areas.*
- *Local Employment Initiatives.*
- *New training facilities - a Leeds Retail Skills Academy to provide dedicated training facilities within South Leeds that could help local people to gain access to new jobs.*
- *Improvement or expansion of local schools.*
- *Examine the demand for and the accessibility of evening education and training facilities for adults and young people.*
- *Continuation of strategy for major improvements to Middleton Park.*
- *Creation of functional green corridors and spaces. Middleton Park could become the main hub of a comprehensive and connected network of accessible and useable attractive green spaces. The Core Strategy could facilitate delivery of the first components of a new South Leeds 'Country Park' for the benefit of the community at large.*
- *Develop new initiatives to prioritise community safety issues and improve perceptions of community safety.*

Other ideas for action in the long term?

There will be further potential for actions, some of which are beyond the scope of the new Core Strategy that takes us to 2026. This Draft Investment Strategy provides an opportunity for the local community to look to the longer term and to comment on whether it wants to see such opportunities and benefits realised. So these are set out here as “interesting ideas” that came out of the community workshops and consultation events when participants were asked what they thought South Leeds could be like in 20-30 years time. These are not proven ideas or an adopted vision. They are a record of suggestions put forward by local stakeholders that require and deserve further consideration.

Such ideas include:

- *More accommodation for businesses to create more jobs*
- *More homes to raise quality and provide greater choice*
- *More investment in Morley town centre and other neighbourhood centres to serve the wider community*
- *Additional investment at the White Rose Shopping Centre and White Rose Office Park, Millshaw Industrial Estate, Elland Road, Capitol Park and Tingley Station*
- *Major new leisure and evening economy attractions, such as a cinema for example*

It is this level of development that could fund a more fundamental restructuring and regeneration of the area by providing investment in:

1. *The development of new transport infrastructure to serve movements between existing and new centres of activity and communities, for example:*
 - a) *A new railway station at White Rose as the focus of a new, public transport interchange for the wider area;*
 - b) *New, innovative transport solutions, such as trams or guided buses;*

- c) *New park-and-ride facilities at strategic locations to reduce through traffic;*
- d) *Possible closure of Junction 2A on the M621 in Holbeck.*

2. *Deliver comprehensive improvements to existing local centres and facilities.*
3. *Support Local Enterprise. Incubator business space, small business space (serviced offices), conference meeting space, and other support services and facilities to support local enterprise and business formation.*
4. *Create stronger business and community links particularly through higher education.*
5. *Secure more locally based supply chains.*
6. *Explore further initiatives to target jobs for local people.*
7. *Deliver major investment in skills, training, and education including:*
 - a) *Opportunities for higher/further education including the potential for a new learning campus in South Leeds.*
 - b) *Expansion of the Leeds Retail Skills Academy.*
 - c) *Implement initiatives to support evening education, training facilities and life-long-learning for adults; and initiatives to improve the engagement of young people through education, learning and skills.*
8. *Complete the transformation of Middleton Park into a regional attraction.*
9. *Increase the amount and accessibility of high quality, accessible, connected, usable green space across South Leeds by implementing a comprehensive green infrastructure strategy.*
10. *Enhance local food networks and local food production by providing new allotments and small-holdings as part of a wider, comprehensive South Leeds green infrastructure strategy and to re-use derelict/underused land.*

- 11. Develop and implement further new initiatives to support cleaner streets and improved local services.*
- 12. Develop and implement further new initiatives to prioritise community safety issues to improve perceptions of community safety.*
- 13. Explore and deliver opportunities for local energy generation.*
- 14. Develop and implement a long term strategy for 'branding' and promoting South Leeds as a place with its own identity: a connected network of distinct communities, places and opportunities for the future.*
- 15. Implement a programme of events and initiatives that celebrate cultural and environmental diversity and heritage and build on successful community based initiatives in the arts, culture, enterprise and community development.*
- 16. Explore potential for a major landmark/iconic/gateway feature unique to South Leeds.*

This would be an exciting but very challenging future for South Leeds and so it requires a lot more discussion and exploration.

Next Steps

The Investment Strategy outlines current thoughts and ideas, the initial actions required and the key issues that will impact upon delivery of many of the projects outlined above. Many others cannot be progressed until fuller consultation has been undertaken through the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

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