

# The Environment

## Introduction

Bradford District covers an area of approximately 400 square km and has a varied environment which ranges from moorlands in the north and west of the district, to the valleys and floodplains formed by the river systems flowing through the District. Surprisingly two-thirds of the District is rural; and the topography means that most of the industrial and residential development has taken place along the valley sides, with the majority of the population living in the urban centres of Bradford, Shipley, Bingley, Keighley and Ilkley. There are also a number of smaller centres, towns and villages. All these areas have their own identity and every effort is made to preserve the best elements of this and balance the future needs of the District (e.g. increasing housing provision) with the need to develop a more sustainable environment.

The Bradford District Environmental Strategy 2005-2007 “Protecting Bradford’s Environment” has been developed by a partnership of organisations that have a significant role in minimising environmental impacts. The strategy sets out the key challenges facing the District and the objectives that have been agreed to address them.

## Transport

Rising vehicle numbers and increased use of cars causes significant traffic congestion and noise in urban areas and contributes to local air pollution. Road traffic is a major contributor to emissions of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter

- **Car ownership**

Between 1991 and 2001, the total number of cars owned in Bradford rose by 28% (the national figure was 23%). The proportion of households with no car fell from 41% to 33%, over the same period. The 2001 figure for England and Wales is 27%. Forecasts for car ownership show that this trend is set to continue - between 2001 and 2015 car ownership is set to rise by 28% in Bradford compared with a national forecast of around 23%.

- **Traffic**

Between 1979 and 1993 all day traffic in Bradford District increased significantly (by 45%); since then growth has levelled off - with an increase of only 1.3% between 1993 and 2005. Peak traffic levels within Bradford have remained fairly static over the last twelve years, with flows in 2005 slightly lower than those recorded in 1993. Census data, however, indicates significantly increased journey lengths for commuters between 1991 and 2001, with Bradford workers travelling an average 21% greater distances over

that period. Government forecasts are for an increase in car journeys of 12% in Bradford District between 2005 and 2015.

- **Public Transport**

Bus patronage in West Yorkshire has been declining for many years, however rail usage continues to rise. The number of rail journeys increased by 43% between 1999/2000 and 2005/06 to more than 23 million per year.

The number of bus passengers declined by 3% between 1999/2000 and 2005/06 to 194.8 million journeys per year through West Yorkshire, although the introduction of specific initiatives has led to an increase in passengers – the Manchester Road Quality Bus has seen an increase in 9% of passengers since it was introduced in 2001.

- **Road Injuries**

Road injuries in the District are measured against target reductions to 2010 set in the National Road Safety Strategy; the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan – Safer Roads; and the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA1 and 2).

These targets included 40% fewer people killed or seriously injured, 50% fewer children killed or seriously injured, and 50% fewer pedestrians killed or seriously injured. The LPSA 1 target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads in Bradford by a further 20 people by 31 December 2005 was not met, but the 2010 target reduction in killed and serious injury to children was met in 2005.

2006 was a year of consolidation after significant falls in road injuries in 2005. Final figures show that all injuries are slightly more in 2006 than in 2005, with a very small increase in the numbers of children injured. The figures are still well below those occurring in 2004. The total for the category 'All killed and seriously injured' is marginally above 2005 and more work needs doing to get back on track to meet the 2010 target reductions. Pedestrian injuries continue to fall.

LPSA2 target reductions to achieve stretch targets in 2008 in the reduction of killed and serious injury to children and children overall as pedestrians, cyclists and car passengers, are still on track.

Further initiatives being developed include pedestrian skills training, speed management and targeted police enforcement

- **Greenways**

A system of greenways is being developed to encourage biodiversity and enable people to become more active and get around the District without having to use a car. The initial strategic routes will be based around the following:

- The Sustrans routes on the canal towpath connecting Shipley to Leeds and Shipley to Keighley with links to the town centres of Shipley, Bingley and Keighley.
- The planned route along the side of the new canal spur from Shipley to Forster Square in Bradford and its extension through Bowling to link with the Spen Valley Greenway.
- The planned Worth Way route linking Haworth to Keighley.
- The Great Northern Trail linking Queensbury to Denholme.

## **Waste Management and Recycling**

The Government estimates that over 100 million tonnes of waste (household, industrial and commercial) are produced in England and Wales each year, and that this increases by 3% annually. Most of this waste is commercial and industrial, and just over a third is already recycled or composted. Only a small proportion is household waste – just 12% of this is recycled or composted.

The 2005 European Landfill Directive will have a major influence on waste management over the next 20 years. Waste disposal authorities in the UK are expected to move away from landfill towards composting, recycling and energy from waste schemes.

Certain types of waste need special attention, these include electrical and electronic goods, tyres, organics, packaging and vehicles.

- **Household Waste**

The Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 requires all English waste collection authorities to collect at least two types of recyclable waste from all households in their area, which could include batteries, garden waste, glass, hazardous household liquids (i.e. paint and varnish), kitchen waste, metals, paper, plastics, textiles and shoes, electrical or electronic waste (e-waste) and wood.

The aim of the Act is to increase the recycling rate, which currently stands at 17.7%, by helping local authorities achieve their statutory recycling targets which underpin national targets to recycle or compost at least 30% of household waste by 2010 and 33% by 2015.

Landfill tax is being used as an incentive; in 2006/7 the rate of tax was £21 per tonne and by 2010 it is expected to cost an additional £33 per tonne. Bradford currently recycles around 18%, and composts 9% of its household waste. Councils, such as Bradford, are expected to develop alternatives to landfill through expanding their composting, recycling and energy from waste schemes.

- **Litter and Cleanliness**

A user satisfaction survey carried out in 2006 found that 62% of respondents were satisfied that the Council kept land clear of litter.

In a “Speak Out!” survey carried out in 2006, 64% of respondents described the quality of the environment in their neighbourhood as good or very good.

In April 2006, £5m Neighbourhood Renewal Funding was allocated to the Environmental Partnership over 2 years (NRF must be targeted within the 10% most deprived communities across the District, which also have a poor local visible environment). £4m has been allocated to the Environmental Task Force which aims to replicate and build upon the successes of the Go Girlington and Big Sweep initiatives. £1m will be used to support the local environmental initiatives across the District.

## **Pollution**

- **River Quality**

Three river systems serve the District; the Aire, the Wharfe and some tributaries of the Calder.

The quality of the nation’s river water is monitored and graded by the Environment Agency. Samples are collected at different times of year and the results for three consecutive years are combined to produce an overall grade. The rivers are graded from A (very good) to F (bad).

A summary of the test results from the Environment Agency (according to the General Quality Assessment for chemicals, but does not include pesticides or other pathogens) shows that the water quality is more likely to be poor or bad in the urban areas such as the centre of Bradford, and in the becks to the south of the district which drain towards the Calder catchment. The Aire catchment tends to have better water quality until it reaches the confluence with Bradford Beck in Shipley. The Council is working with the Environment Agency to improve the quality of these watercourses. It is also running a trial involving two areas of reed beds – these are being used to evaluate their effectiveness in cleaning up diffuse pollution. The Wharfe water quality tends to be very good through the north of the district.

- **Air Quality**

The Government estimates that air pollution in the UK kills between 12,000 and 24,000 people prematurely each year.

Cars are the greatest source of air pollution and they are responsible for the majority of smog forming gases. The other main sources of air pollutants in Bradford are wood and coal smoke from wood and coal heaters and industry.

The Environment Act of 1995 set out a new system of local air quality management (LAQM). Each local authority reviews air quality in its area, and assesses present and likely future air quality against objectives laid out in the Air Quality Regulations 2000. The National Air Quality Strategy of 2003 introduced tighter air quality targets for local authorities to meet.

A second assessment was carried out in 2005 to investigate present and likely future air quality in the District, and assess air quality in relation to three pollutants – nitrogen dioxide, fine particles (PM<sub>10</sub>) and sulphur dioxide. This led to four areas (Mayo Avenue, Thornton Road, and Manningham Lane in Bradford and Shipley Airedale Road) being declared as Local Air Quality Management Areas.

- **Biodiversity**

“Biodiversity” is a blanket term for the variety of plants and animals and the interdependency between them. In recent decades the activities of people have destroyed the habitats of many of these wild animals and plants – mostly as a consequence of agriculture and development.

Bradford has a wide range of habitats from lowland grassland and upland pastures to woodlands, moorlands, river valleys, other watercourses and wetlands, including many reservoirs. The Bradford Biodiversity Action Partnership (led by the Council, along with other environmental agencies and the local community) is currently developing a Local Biodiversity Action Plan to protect a number of nationally and locally important species and habitats, which are under threat.

## **Conservation Areas**

The District has a large number of interesting and architecturally important buildings, mostly constructed from local stone. There are approximately 5,800 listed buildings and 61 conservation areas in the District. The model village of Saltaire has also been inscribed as a World Heritage Site.

## More information

Local businesses and the environment (Bradford Business Environment Forum)

<http://www.bbef.org.uk>

Draft Bradford District Multi-Agency Environmental Strategy 2002 - 2007

<http://www.bradford2020.com/maes/>

*(The Bradford District Environmental Strategy 2005-2007 "Protecting Bradford's Environment" will be launched shortly)*

Environment Agency "What's in your backyard"?

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/yourenv>

Air pollution monitoring in Bradford

[http://www.bradford.gov.uk/environment/environmental\\_protection/environmental\\_monitoring/air\\_quality.htm](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/environment/environmental_protection/environmental_monitoring/air_quality.htm)

Air pollution measured at the Government owned site in Bradford

<http://www.airquality.co.uk>.

Biodiversity in Bradford

<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/lbap.aspx?id=500>

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