

Allerton Bywater, Leeds

Key details

Name	Allerton Bywater Millennium Community
Location	Leeds, West Yorkshire
Number of dwellings	562
Date first homes sold	2006
Homes delivered to date	More than 380
Percentage of affordable homes	25%, pepper-potted across site
Average house price	£193,000
Road vehicle trips forecast	Phase 4 residential (191 dwellings) – 113 AM trips, 122 PM trips; phase 4 commercial – 79 AM trips, 140 PM trips.
Parking provision	1.6 spaces per unit (phases 1 and 2); ~2 spaces per unit (phases 3 and 4)
Walking distance to railway station	43 minutes
Size of site	23 ha
Housing density	40-50 dph in phases 3 and 4; (24.4 dph gross including green areas)
Planning guidance	Initial application PPG3; phase 4 application NPPF



Background and context of development

The village of Allerton Bywater lies six miles south east of Leeds, West Yorkshire. With long-standing links to the coal industry, the village was home to the last remaining colliery in Leeds, which closed in 1992. Prior to development of the Millennium Community, Allerton Bywater had a population of around 4,000.

Allerton Bywater Millennium Community was announced by John Prescott in 1998 as the second Millennium Community, after Greenwich in south east London. It lies on the former site of Allerton Colliery, control of which passed from the National Coal Board to English Partnerships (now the Homes and Communities Agency) in 1995. Initial work focused on land remediation and decontamination, dealing with issues relating to the legacy of the colliery such as capping pit-shafts. Flood alleviation was also necessary as the site lies within the River Aire floodplain and severe floods occurred in 2000 and 2002. One of the first SUDS schemes in the north of England was thus developed. Flooding is still a concern locally, and the road from Allerton Bywater to Castleford continues to flood several times a year.

Rather than focusing purely on the site itself, the idea was to incorporate the whole of Allerton Bywater in the development, as a more comprehensive Millennium Village. This would help to prevent the onset of post-industrial decline following the pit closure and instead make a positive change to the character of the village.

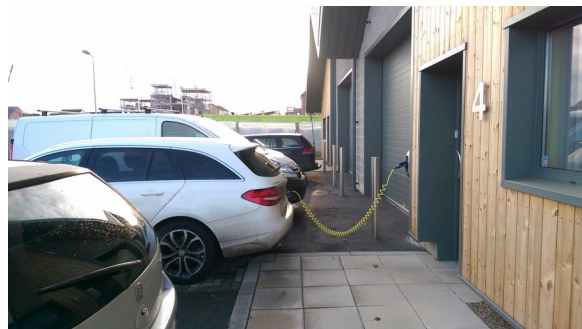


Overall the site has benefited from £24 million upfront public investment by English Partnerships and the HCA, including drainage, roads, site clearance and decontamination works. Given the difficult nature of the site, development may have been unlikely without this. As part of the development process, land development, such as remediation, infrastructure provision, parcel sub-division and

marketing, has been separated from the housebuilding on the parcels themselves, simplifying the process for the private developers.

A design and development competition was won by Aire Regeneration Partnership who presented a Masterplan in 2000 proposing densities of 30-50 dwellings per ha with an ‘urban’ feel and an interconnected street pattern with perimeter blocks. One the largest HomeZones in Europe would see pedestrians and motor vehicles given equal priority on kerb-free streets. It was proposed that the 23-ha site would receive 520 new dwellings and 25,000 sq.m of commercial space.

After some initial delays, English Partnerships took a more central role and commissioned a design code from EDAW in 2004. EDAW ran a series of workshops, from which a design code was developed, based on the existing Masterplan. Some of the more outlandish ideas presented to the public, which never saw the light of day, included a deep-sea diver training centre making use of the old mine shaft, and houses with movable internal walls. The design code was adopted by Leeds City Council as an approved planning document, speeding up the decision making process (planning approval for phase 3 took just 13 weeks) and providing developers with greater certainty. Development of the site began in 2005 with the first homes occupied in December 2006.



The first phase was led by Miller Homes, with 193 new homes and a network of HomeZone streets. The second and third phases made use of innovative Modern Methods of Construction. Phase 2 comprised just 23 homes, while phase 3, led by Barratt’s, included a Design for Manufacture competition, launched April 2005, to demonstrate that it is possible to build good quality homes for a construction cost of no more than £60,000. The 191 homes in the final phase are now under construction, while the 510 sq.m of retail space and 1,424 sq.m of industrial floorspace which also forms part of this phase is already complete. In addition, at the eastern edge of the site, 12 industrial workspace units and 4 office units have been built, the first in the UK that meet the BREEAM ‘Excellent’ standard. All new homes were built to meet the EcoHomes ‘Excellent’ standard or the subsequent Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3.

Public Realm	
Urban trees	Some
Grass verges	On some streets
Front gardens	Occasional
Back gardens	Yes

Public transport accessibility

Little action has been taken to improve public transport in the vicinity of the site. Fairly regular buses already ran through Allerton Bywater to Leeds, Castleford, and other local destinations such as Garforth and Kippax before the Millennium Community was built, although the journey time to Leeds is over 40 minutes. These buses follow various routes, with some passing along Park Lane to the north of the site and others following Station Road to the south.

At first it was suggested that the buses would pass through the centre of the Millennium Community, but this never came to fruition. In fact, evening bus services have actually reduced slightly in recent years. A deal was also originally brokered to provide the occupants of the affordable homes in the initial phases with one year's free Residential MetroCards allowing bus travel throughout West Yorkshire, but the contribution for this was not paid. However, a number of bus shelters have been installed and an S106 contribution was made to install a real-time information screen at a bus stop near the site, although this didn't appear to be working at the time of our visit.

In 2013, Arriva introduced some of the first hybrid buses in Leeds on routes 163 and 166. The centre of Castleford is subject to an Air Quality Management Zone, while Leeds City Council is planning to implement a Clean Air Zone by the end of 2019. Air pollution is a major problem here, although less so in Allerton Bywater itself. The hybrid buses have now been transferred by Arriva to another route, and replaced with new low emission Euro VI vehicles.



The nearest station is Castleford, probably one of the most dilapidated stations in West Yorkshire, although it is due to be refurbished. Just 2km from the site it is easily reached by bus or bicycle. A derelict railway line runs from Castleford to Allerton Bywater, formerly serving the colliery. There were reports in 2009 that Network Rail was considering reopening the line but the cost would be high given the relatively low local population.

To the north west, the Lines Way cycle path follows the line of this former railway, running along the northern edge of Allerton Bywater linking the Millennium Community with the local secondary school and the town of Garforth. A short section of this path passes through the site. In the opposite direction a well-maintained path along the River Aire links the village with the local town of Castleford. Efforts are also being made to link the Lines Way with the local primary school. These paths form an excellent cycle and walking network, although sections of the Lines Way can get very muddy in winter. The Transpennine Trail also provides a cycle link into the centre of Leeds following the Aire and Calder Navigation, but this route takes about an hour, with sections that can get muddy and a long, steep set of steps to negotiate at one point.

Destination	Company	Route numbers	Weekday daytime frequency	Weekday evening frequency	Saturday frequency	Sunday frequency	Travel time	Location of bus/train stop	Last return time
Leeds city centre	Arriva Yorkshire	167 and 168	Every 30 mins (hourly from two different locations)	Hourly (168 only)	Every 30 mins (hourly from two different locations)	Hourly (168 only)	41- 45 mins	Two routes, on either side of the site (Park Lane and Station Rd)	22:34
Castleford railway station / town centre	Arriva Yorkshire	163, 166, 167, 168	Six hourly (incl. buses from two different locations)	Three hourly (incl. buses from two different locations)	Six hourly (incl. buses from two different locations)	Three hourly (incl. buses from two different locations)	13 mins (incl. 4 min walk)	Two routes, on either side of the site (Park Lane and Station Rd)	23:00
Garforth town centre	Arriva Yorkshire	163, 166	Every 15 mins (incl. buses from two different locations)	Every 30 mins (incl. buses from two different locations)	Every 15 mins (incl. buses from two different locations)	Every 30 mins (incl. buses from two different locations)	25-33 mins	Two routes, on either side of the site (Park Lane and Station Rd)	23:15

Most parking is on-street, with smaller amounts in garages, on-plot or in courtyards. The first phases had 1.6 parking spaces per dwelling, but since many families had two or more cars this led to large amounts of parking on-street and calls to increase parking provision in the subsequent phases. Barratt's and Keepmoat have around 2 parking spaces per dwelling.

Trip rates for Phase 4 have been estimated based on average rates for Kippax and Methley ward, which assumes 73% of journeys are made by car drivers. Travel to work data for the parts of the Millennium Community that had been built by time of the 2011 census shows that, of 493 recorded trips to work (including home working), 77% were by car drivers. This compares with 67% for neighbouring parts of Allerton Bywater, and 68% for the much more rural neighbouring areas of Ledston and Ledsham.



Local Facilities

Instead of building most facilities within the site itself, as part of the Millennium Village concept the new homes are incorporated into the existing village of Allerton Bywater and rely on a range of pre-existing, refurbished or new facilities nearby, within the wider village. By 2010, English Partnerships had invested £2 million in new social and community facilities in Allerton Bywater. Improvements include refurbishing the former school building and the Miners' Welfare Hall as community venues, plus cricket and bowling greens, a skate park, and new allotments.

The old village school building, which borders the site, had become derelict and was due for demolition as part of the Millennium Village scheme, but after a public outcry the building was instead refurbished in 2003 at a cost of £750,000, and became the new home of Allerton Bywater library, which needed to move in order to allow Allerton Primary School to expand. The local primary school thus received a new classroom as part of the development.



Unfortunately the library subsequently closed in 2011 along with 11 others, under measures designed to save the council £600,000 a year. The nearest remaining libraries are in Castleford (within Wakefield Metropolitan District) and Kippax. On the closure of the library, the building continued to be used as a community centre known as Vicar's Court and run by the Allerton Bywater Community Partnership. Other local venues include the Allerton Bywater Youth and Adult Centre, which runs a weekly youth club, and the Miners' Welfare Hall.



Allerton Bywater's location in the Lower Aire Valley is reflected by the large number of lakes nearby. Many of these are former industrial sites which have been restored and converted to nature reserves, and also play an important role in flood alleviation for the village. Bordering the development is Letchmire Pastures Local Nature Reserve, managed by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. Within three miles are RSPB Fairburn Ings, the RSPB's first reserve in West Yorkshire and home to breeding spoonbills in 2017, and the newly established St Aidan's, the only other RSPB site in West Yorkshire. There are no parks within the Millennium Community site itself, but it does have a central square containing a children's playground. Nearby is a recreation area containing a cricket pitch, skate park, a multi-use games court, the Miners' Welfare Hall, and tennis courts which need resurfacing and repair.

A large One-Stop recently opened, next to the industrial estate in Phase 4. Since opening it is said to have been burgled 12 times. The relatively isolated location with no houses nearby seems to have made the shop vulnerable and though well-used they are now considering closing in the evenings.

The popular Samuel Valentine Urban Food Hall opened five years ago, in a better location where the old village meets the new.

Type of facility	Plans and current state of progress within development	Built yet within site?	Closest example	Estimated time to reach nearest example outside development			
				Walking	Cycling	Driving	Public transport
Convenience store	One Stop newly opened on site	Yes					
Café / restaurant	Samuel Valentine The Urban Food Hall (cheesemonger/delicatessen/cafe/mini bar)	Border of site					
Drinking establishment	The Picture House	Border of site					
High street shops	Good range of shops in Allerton Bywater, more in Castleford	No	Castleford town centre	40 mins	10 mins	7 mins	10 mins (incl. 5 mins walk)
Supermarket	One Stop newly opened on site	Yes					
Nursery	ABC Daycare & Ozone (community-run nursery in Vicar's Court)	Border of site					
Primary school	New classroom opened in Allerton Bywater Primary School due to Millennium Village	No	Allerton Bywater Primary School	9 mins	3 mins	3 mins	Not necessary
Secondary school	None	No	Brigshaw High School	31 mins	9 mins	6 mins	13 mins (incl. 7 mins walk)
Park	Some small patches of public green space within the site. Recreation area borders site.	Border of site					
Playground	In the centre of the site	Yes					
Playing fields	None	No	Leeds Road Playing Fields	21 mins	7 mins	4 mins	8 mins (incl. 5 mins walk)
Tennis courts	Within the recreation area, but out of use and in need of repair	No	Saville Park, Castleford	49 mins	15 mins	10 mins	22 mins (incl. 14 mins walk)
Leisure centre	None	No	Castleford Lock Lane Sports Centre	27 mins	7 mins	4 mins	9 mins (incl. 4 mins walk)
Swimming pool	None	No	Kippax Leisure Centre	39 mins	11 mins	8 mins	14 mins (incl. 4 mins walk)
Wildlife area	Letchmire Pastures Local Nature Reserve (and others)	Border of site					
Community Centre	Vicar's Court (old primary school; reopened 2004)	Border of site					
Daytime / evening	Vicar's Court (old primary school; reopened 2004)	Border of site					

classes								
Medical facilities	None	No	Nova Scotia Medical Centre	12 mins	3 mins	3 mins	7 mins (incl. 5 mins walk)	
Post office	None	No	Allerton Bywater Sub Post Office	20 mins	7 mins	4 mins	10 mins (incl. 6 mins walk)	
Library	None	No	Castleford Forum Library and Museum	39 mins	10 mins	5 mins	12 mins (incl. 7 mins walk)	
Co-working space	No, but some homes contain 'atelier' units to allow home working.	No	Carrwood Park, Garforth	Not practical	28 mins	12 mins	42 mins (bus 163/166)	

Developer contributions

An S106 fund of £500,000 was established in 2003 and made available to the Community Initiative Subgroup of Allerton Bywater parish council, which was established with the aim of managing these funds. To date, approximately £140,000 has been spent under a capital scheme and £270,000 has been spent on other schemes. A wide range of projects have been funded through this, including £14,000 for flood lighting at the local rugby club, £24,724 for Barnsdale Road improvements, £30,000 for an all-weather pitch at Brigshaw High School, £40,000 for the new Miner's Memorial, and £10,000 towards build of a zebra crossing, plus a programme of mechanical bulb planting and the resurfacing of a car park. A community chest has also been used to provide small amounts of capital funding for a wide range of community projects such as an under 7s football group.

Subsequently, S106 contributions of £493,884 were mandated corresponding to the final phase of the Millennium Community which received planning consent in 2014. All of these have now been paid. The majority (over £450,000) is an Education Contribution for the provision of primary and secondary school facilities. Other components include a travel plan monitoring fee of £5,000 and £10,000 for the provision of real-time information at a bus stop near the site.

Summary

The development of the Millennium Community, along with the wider idea of the Millennium Village, seems to have done a good job of helping to revitalise a village which had been at risk of becoming a declining former industrial area. While the site does not entirely feel integrated with the rest of the village, it is easily accessible and centrally located, and the use of funds to provide facilities for the village as a whole has had many successes, such as the refurbishment of buildings used as community venues and the establishment of a £500,000 fund for community projects, distributed by the Parish Council.

Both the site itself and the local area make good provision for walking and cycling with lots of potential destinations nearby. One problem with the design appears to be the isolated location of the new One-Stop which has left it open to burglary. A more centrally located independent food hall has fared much better.

There is disappointment locally that many of the initial promises have not been kept, but the determination and community spirit of local residents has made a big difference nevertheless. An

excellent example of this is the Miners' Memorial which was funded through S106 payments and stands at the main entrance of the site.

