

## **PLANNING STRATEGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 This section of the Plan outlines the District Council's overall land use strategy for guiding development. The strategy is intended to provide a framework for consistent decision making, enabling the District's needs to be met and new opportunities realised, without harming the best of today's environment.

### **THE LOCAL PLAN AREA**

- 2.2 The Local Plan covers the whole of the administrative area of the Selby District which is the most southerly (60,190 hectares) District in North Yorkshire. It extends over an area of 237 square miles being broadly contained by the A1 trunk road in the west and the river Derwent to the east.
- 2.3 Selby District is primarily a rural area, with a dispersed settlement pattern of market towns, villages and hamlets. It is mostly low lying, comprising parts of the Vale of York and a series of drainage basins and associated washlands. The District is characterised by open sparsely wooded arable landscapes, consisting of generally high quality farmland. Several major watercourses including the rivers Ouse, Wharfe, Aire and Derwent cross the Plan area and are fed by numerous drainage ditches. To the west a north-south running outcrop of magnesian limestone has produced a generally undulating ridge, giving extensive views over adjacent lowlands.
- 2.4 The Plan area benefits from well developed transportation links. It is crossed by a number of railway lines, including the electrified east coast line between London and Edinburgh and the Liverpool to Hull trans-Pennine line. A number of trunk roads including the M62 and A1 national routes, and the A19, A63 and A64 regional routes also cross the Plan area. The A1 is currently being upgraded to three lane motorway standard. Port facilities are available on the river Ouse at Selby.
- 2.5 The mid 1994 population of the District was estimated at 72,150 and is concentrated mostly in the three market towns of Selby, Tadcaster and Sherburn in Elmet, and a number of service villages. These provide a range of shopping, leisure and community facilities for surrounding rural areas, including numerous smaller villages and hamlets. Many settlements exhibit considerable environmental quality and contribute significantly to the character of the area. This has been acknowledged through the designation of 23 conservation areas.
- 2.6 Selby, with a population of approximately 12,600 (at the 1991 Census) is the largest settlement as well as the administrative and principal shopping centre in the District, serving a large rural catchment. It is noted for its magnificent Abbey and historic waterfront. Tadcaster is situated on the river Wharfe and has links with the brewing industry. Sherburn in Elmet is an expanding town, and one of the principal employment centres of the District.

- 2.7 In spite of its rural character the economy of the area is dominated by industrialised forms of employment. Selby District is the powerhouse of the region and has been affected by the recent development of the Selby Coalfield and coal fired electricity generating stations in the Aire valley which, together with industrial development around Selby, dominate the landscapes in the southern part of the Plan area. There is high unemployment associated with the recession and structural weakness in the local economy.

### **PRIMARY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 2.8 The Plan Strategy has been drawn up having regard to the wider planning framework outlined in the Introduction to the Plan. It has also been informed by local considerations, including results of Local Plan studies described in Appendix 3, which explains how environmental objectives and development needs have been integrated in the Plan.
- 2.9 The primary aims and objectives of the Plan are concerned with:
- 1) the promotion of sustainable development;
  - 2) the protection and enhancement of environmental quality; and
  - 3) planning for contemporary patterns of development.
- 2.10 The primary aims and objectives have been translated into more detailed land use objectives at the beginning of each topic chapter. They provide the framework within which individual policies and proposals have been formulated.

#### **1) Promotion of Sustainable Development**

**AIM:**

To meet the assessed employment, housing and other needs of the district in a way which does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**KEY OBJECTIVES:**

- (1) To balance competing demands on a finite quantity of land and make the best use of resources.
- (2) To ensure an adequate supply of suitable land for employment, housing and other purposes whilst safeguarding environmental and natural resources from inappropriate development.
- (3) To facilitate economic recovery and diversification in a way which enhances environmental quality.
- (4) To ensure full and effective use of land and property within existing settlements and to maintain the quality of the countryside.

- (5) To assist in meeting the national goal of reducing harmful CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- (6) To encourage energy efficient forms of development and renewable forms of energy.

- 2.11 The environment is under constant pressure for development and change. In particular the demands and aspirations of society for increasing prosperity, better living standards, new homes, jobs and leisure activities creates competing demands on finite land and other resources.
- 2.12 Because the Selby District is less constrained than other parts of North Yorkshire, it is capable of sustaining continued growth, without affecting sensitive locations to an unacceptable degree. The County Structure Plan requires an additional 9,300 dwellings to be provided in the District in the period 1991-2006 of which approximately 4,100 (44%) will be needed to cater for new household formation from the indigenous population and 5,200 (56%) for inward migrants. This level of growth is considered necessary to achieve a satisfactory balance between the environmental costs of new house building and the potentially damaging effects of excessive restraint on the local economy and the District's housing needs. The Plan also reflects the Council's concern that significant provision should be made for affordable housing in both urban and rural areas.
- 2.13 It is equally important to promote and strengthen the economic base of the District, which exhibits severe structural weakness and high unemployment. Economic recovery and diversification have previously been hindered by the unavailability of an adequate supply of serviced land and the Structure Plan identifies a need for an additional 125 hectares of employment land. Policies are also required to protect existing employment opportunities, to facilitate the expansion and relocation needs of existing businesses, to attract inward investment and to take a positive approach to small firms and the promotion of tourism.
- 2.14 There are concerns that the scale of previous population growth has not been matched by the provision of adequate social and recreational facilities and services. This is exacerbated by the decline of rural facilities and local shops. Additional demands are likely to be placed on existing infrastructure, health, education and leisure facilities. The Plan will therefore seek to safeguard and improve existing facilities and services, including open space, and to encourage additional investment particularly where this will overcome existing deficiencies.
- 2.15 These demands are occurring at a time when there is greater concern than ever before about the environment, ranging from issues such as the effects of global warming to the impact of development proposals at local level. The Government White Paper, "This Common Inheritance", published in 1990, set the scene for ensuring that future development and growth respect environmental objectives. This commitment has been reaffirmed both at international level at the South American Summit in Rio in 1992 (through the global environmental action plan, "Agenda 21") and at national

level through the UK Strategy for Sustainable Development published in 1994.

- 2.16 The concept of sustainable development has subsequently been endorsed in Government White Papers and national planning guidance. Local Plans are expected to find the right balance between conservation and development and considerable emphasis is placed on reducing the environmental impact of transport, (particularly CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, pollution and congestion) by influencing the nature and location of development.
- 2.17 More recently attention has been focused on the desirability of recycling resources through encouraging development on redundant land and buildings (brownfield sites) in preference to greenfield sites, and by encouraging renewable forms of energy.
- 2.18 Whilst changes in both the urban and rural environment are clearly inevitable and necessary, development must be managed and controlled in a way that preserves and enhances the District's environmental quality. Overriding importance will be given to ensuring, through the allocation of land and the application of policies, that development is sustainable.
- 2.19 PPG12 (Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance) suggests that Local Authorities should demonstrate how environmental considerations have been taken into account in formulating policies for development and transportation.
- 2.20 Whilst the policies and proposals in the Plan have not been subjected to a formal 'environmental appraisal', the environmental implications of alternative development options have been taken into account at each stage of the plan preparation process. Details of how environmental objectives and development needs have been integrated in the Plan are set out in Appendix 3.

## **2) Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality**

**AIM:**

To conserve and enhance cultural heritage and natural resources, and to improve the quality of life of residents.

**KEY OBJECTIVES:**

- (1) To protect and enhance the special character and wildlife habitats of the Selby District.
- (2) To protect the countryside for its open character and its landscape, wildlife, recreational and natural resource value.
- (3) To protect built heritage including important buildings, conservation areas, open spaces and historical sites.

- (4) To ensure control over the pollution of water, air, soil and other environmental assets.
- (5) To promote excellence in the quality of design of new development.
- (6) To safeguard the amenity of existing and proposed sensitive developments such as homes and schools.

2.21 Local Plans are specifically required to include policies for the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of land, and policies for the improvement of the physical environment.

2.22 The Selby District contains rich environmental resources in terms of its built heritage, natural features and wildlife habitats, some of which have received national and international recognition. Many of these resources are irreplaceable and their loss, depletion or fragmentation should be avoided at all costs. These include:

- 1) Sites of International Wildlife Interest – Within the Plan area the Derwent Valley, River Derwent and Skipwith Common are recognised as international wildlife sites. A total of approximately 543 hectares are affected by international designations and/or EC Directives (0.90% of the Plan area).
- 2) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – SSSIs are designated by English Nature under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These are areas of special interest by reason of their flora, fauna, geological or physiographic importance. Within the Plan area there are 13 SSSIs covering approximately 739 hectares (1.21% of the Plan area).
- 3) Scheduled Monuments – There are 52 scheduled monuments within the Plan area designated by English Heritage. Many of these are highly fragile and vulnerable to destruction.
- 4) Listed Buildings – Listed Buildings represent the best examples of built heritage in terms of architectural and historic interest. They are a finite resource. There are 631 listed buildings in the Plan area.
- 5) Conservation Areas – These are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are currently 23 conservation areas within the Local Plan area covering a total of approximately 449 hectares (0.75% of the Plan area).
- 6) Historic Parks and Gardens – The best examples are identified by English Heritage as part of a national register. There is a need to protect such sites from development which would destroy their historic interest or setting. Whilst only two sites in the Local Plan area are currently included in the national register, a further 8 are considered by the District Council to be worthy of protection for their

local importance. The 10 sites identified in the Local Plan area cover an area of approximately 92 hectares (0.81% of the Plan area).

- 7) Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land – Grade 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land represents an important national resource and considerable weight should be afforded to its protection. Grades 1, 2 and 3 agricultural land (including land graded 3b) covers approximately 66% of the Local Plan area (40,000 hectares).

2.23 Other resources are recognised by the District Council and other organisations for their particular importance. These include:

- 1) Locally Important Landscape Areas – These are areas considered worthy of special protection to ensure that new development does not detract from the particular landscape character. The principal area identified in the Local Plan affects the belt of magnesian limestone running through the western part of the District. This covers an area of approximately 8,665 hectares (13.4% of the Plan Area).
- 2) Non-scheduled Archaeological Remains – National Planning Guidance advises that all archaeological remains shall be seen as a finite non-renewable resource. The County Council maintains a Sites and Monuments Record containing details of known, unscheduled archaeological remains.
- 3) Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCS) – Following analysis of a Phase I Habitat Survey of the District by English Nature and a review of Grade 3 sites in 1993, a total of 144 sites have been identified for their local significance. Although these sites are not of national importance they are of such quality and importance that they cannot be adequately recreated, relocated, or compensated for elsewhere.
- 4) Areas of ancient woodlands, ponds and areas of amenity space within settlements also make an important contribution to the character of the District, the loss of which would cause irreparable damage to the environment.

2.24 It is acknowledged that the wider countryside of the District represents an important asset in its own right. The impact of modern agriculture practices, road building and development associated with the needs of town dwellers however has had a profound effect leading to erosion of traditional landscapes and loss of tree and hedgerow cover. Recent surveys reveal a continuing loss of wildlife habitats and less than 4% of the Plan area is now covered by natural or semi-natural habitats.

2.25 High priority is therefore given not only to protecting the Plan area's special designations, but to avoiding, minimising or compensating for the impact of development on other natural and man-made features, which contribute to the character and identity of the Plan area and to the quality of life of residents. A high quality environment is also important to the local economy assisting in the attraction and retention of business, investment and visitors.

- 2.26 The Council is committed to protecting as much of the historic and natural heritage of the District as possible, including its wildlife habitats. It will also seek to accommodate development in ways that enhance rather than detract from the quality of the environment. Where appropriate, improvements will be promoted in areas in need of regeneration and/or enhancement.

### **3) Planning for Contemporary Patterns of Development**

**AIM:**

To shape development patterns and concentrate development in a way which minimises the need to travel by car and ensures that future growth is sustainable.

**KEY OBJECTIVES:**

- (1) To concentrate new development within or close to market towns and selected villages that are capable of accommodating additional growth.
- (2) To sustain rural communities and the growth of the rural economy in a way which respects the character and appearance of the countryside.
- (3) To strengthen town and local centres by encouraging community, shopping and employment opportunities.
- (4) To maintain and improve choice for people to cycle, walk or use public transport rather than drive between home, jobs and facilities they use regularly.
- (5) To maximise the use of existing facilities and investment in infrastructure including public transport.

- 2.27 The established settlement pattern within the Plan area comprises the three market towns of Selby, Sherburn in Elmet and Tadcaster, numerous service villages where basic services, housing and employment opportunities are available to serve the surrounding area, and the network of smaller villages and isolated hamlets.
- 2.28 In line with strategic and national planning guidance, the Plan aims to meet the development needs of the District by directing development to the market towns and selected villages that are capable of sustaining continued growth. Concentrating development in this way will maximise the number of people with reasonable access to a wide range of facilities, jobs and choice of transport, maximise the use of existing infrastructure and services, help to sustain existing town and local centres and to protect more sensitive areas. A high priority is given to restricting the need to travel by private motor car and encouraging public transport; cycling and

walking through the appropriate location of new development, although in rural areas that are not well served by public transport the private car will remain the principal means of transport, in the short-term.

#### **(i) Housing Development in Market Towns**

- 2.29 The Plan allocates nearly two thirds of new housing development to Selby and Sherburn in Elmet. These are the largest centres of population and employment, and physically and environmentally are best able to accommodate significant additional growth.
- 2.30 Selby is the principal settlement in the District. Some recent residential and commercial development has already taken place in connection with the development of Selby coalfield. The town will benefit from a new bypass which is planned to start in the year 2000.
- 2.31 Sherburn in Elmet has acted as a focus for residential and employment growth for a number of years, and the principle of continued long-term expansion was established in a previous Local Plan by excluding land from the Green Belt for this purpose. The town is close to the A1 which is planned for upgrading to motorway status, and enjoys good accessibility, particularly following the opening of its bypass. Major investment in infrastructure has already taken place. Whilst further upgrading of water and electricity supply is required the comprehensive nature and scale of additional planned development will help offset costs.
- 2.32 Less development is directed to Tadcaster, the third market town, which has less scope for expansion being partially constrained by Green Belt, the A64 bypass and the flood plain of the river Wharfe. The Plan seeks to consolidate the town's role as a service centre by making limited provision for additional housing and employment growth and by aiming to regenerate the central area. Major growth at this stage would be likely to attract commuters from York and Leeds rather than meet the needs of District residents.

#### **(ii) Housing Development in Rural Settlements**

- 2.33 The strategy for rural areas directs housing growth to villages that have the capacity to absorb additional development and discourages significant development in sensitive locations and settlements likely to generate commuting. The Plan rejects total dispersal of new development on the grounds that this would not be sustainable, and because such an approach may forfeit the potential benefits of development by not maintaining and perhaps accelerating the loss of an adequate range of services and facilities for the rural population as a whole.
- 2.34 The extent of the built-up area of each settlement is defined on the Proposals Map, in the form of 'development limits'. The Plan provides for continued development within defined Development Limits appropriate to the form, character and circumstances of each settlement.



*Villages with the capacity for additional growth*

- 2.35 The following settlements have been identified where there is scope for additional housing development on brownfield sites (ie redundant land or buildings).

Appleton Roebuck	Church Fenton	Monk Fryston
Barlby	Cliffe	North Duffield
Barlby Bridge	Drax	Osgodby
Barlow	Eggborough	Riccall
Brayton	Fairburn	South Milford
Brotherton	Hambleton	Stutton
Byram	Hemingbrough	Thorpe Willoughby
Camblesforth	Hensall	Ulleskelf
Carlton	Hillam	Wistow
Cawood	Kellington	Whitley

- 2.36 All of these settlements have a reasonable service base and can absorb development of an appropriate scale without compromising the basic form and character of the settlement. The aim is to utilise spare capacity in services and infrastructure, to maximise the use of non-greenfield sites, to consolidate existing development and wherever possible, to help sustain local services.

- 2.37 A number of these settlements are also capable of accommodating additional residential development in the form of planned allocations of land (amounting to approximately 1/3 of all allocations). Land is allocated for development where it is well related to existing settlement patterns and close to existing and/or proposed sources of employment, and where the maximum benefit from infrastructural improvements and economies of scale can be achieved.

*Villages capable of accommodating only limited development*

- 2.38 The Plan provides for more limited development in remaining villages to meet local housing and employment needs. These tend to be smaller villages with an inadequate service base to support development on any significant scale, and where development could adversely affect the form and character of the existing settlement. At the same time it is acknowledged that there is scope for limited development in most settlements which can have desirable environmental, social and economic benefits, and which can contribute to achieving a wide distribution and choice of housing.

- 2.39 The following settlements have been identified where sensitive infilling on brownfield sites (including changes of use and conversions) may be appropriate within defined Development Limits subject to safeguarding local amenity and other planning considerations.

Barkston Ash	Cridling Stubbs	Newland
Beal	Escrick	Newton Kyme
Biggin	Gateforth	Ryther
Bilbrough	Great Heck	Saxton
Birkin	Healaugh	Skipwith

Bolton Percy	Hirst Courtney	South Duffield
Burn	Kelfield	Stillingfleet
Burton Salmon	Kellingley Colliery	Thorganby
Chapel Haddlesey	Kirk Smeaton	Towton
Church Fenton Airbase	Little Smeaton	West Haddlesey
Colton	Lumby	Womersley

#### *Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings*

- 2.40 In addition to the market towns and villages, the Plan area contains numerous dispersed hamlets, small groups of dwellings and isolated dwellings. These have very few, or none, of the basic facilities normally associated with villages capable of absorbing even minor development. They are therefore treated as part of the wider countryside and no Development Limits are defined. Residential development is limited to sensitive infilling within residential cartilages within small groups of houses where there would be no adverse effect on the character of the area.

#### **(iii) Employment Opportunities**

- 2.41 The Plan aims to provide a range of new employment opportunities throughout the District, taking account of the locational demands of businesses, unemployment rates, the availability of DTI and EC Funding and infrastructure, transportation and labour supply issues.
- 2.42 A significant increase in employment land supply is proposed in and around the market towns.
- 2.43 The Plan also aims to counter the problems brought about by declining agricultural employment and loss of rural services. Encouragement is given to appropriate forms of diversification and development that will improve the employment prospects of those living in rural areas, where this respects the character and appearance of the countryside. There is scope for small-scale employment development in and around many rural settlements. The eastern part of the District is also served by a limited amount of employment land at Cliffe Common. In addition, proposals for the conversion of redundant buildings to employment use, including tourism and the reasonable expansion of existing businesses, will often be acceptable in many rural areas.

#### **(iv) Vitality and Viability of Town and Local Centres**

- 2.44 Considerable importance is placed on improving the vitality and viability of existing town and local centres. Whilst policies to concentrate development in and around the market towns and selected villages will assist this objective, it is equally important to ensure that an attractive range of services and facilities are available to meet changing needs.
- 2.45 The future wellbeing of existing centres is also directly related to their attractiveness as places to live, visit and shop. Changing retail trends and advertising, and associated vehicular and pedestrian movements have had a significant cumulative effect on the character and appearance of many centres, particularly throughout a period of economic decline.

- 2.46 Selby and Tadcaster town centres fall within conservation areas and it is important that new proposals enhance the historic fabric of both centres. The Plan emphasises the importance of economic regeneration and also provides the framework for a series of environmental initiatives, such as pedestrianisation schemes and landscaping, to enhance the quality of the environment.
- 2.47 Other measures are aimed at encouraging the retention and provision of residential accommodation in town centres.