

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 6.1 In spite of its rural character, the economy of the Plan area is based on industrialised forms of employment, including coal mining and power generation. There is acute unemployment owing to difficulties associated with the recession and structural weakness in the economy.
- 6.2 The Plan area supports over 33,000 jobs. Most employment is concentrated in Selby and adjacent Parishes, Sherburn in Elmet, Tadcaster and Eggborough/Whitley Bridge, with isolated pockets at rural locations, including six coal mines and two electricity generating power stations. Whilst employment in agriculture is declining, agriculture remains an important use of land and source of opportunities for rural diversification. Other employment in rural areas is concentrated in service villages in the form of shops and other local services.
- 6.3 Although significant out-commuting occurs to surrounding employment centres such as Leeds and York, there is expected to be significant growth in the number of people seeking local employment.
- 6.4 This chapter considers the amount and distribution of additional land to be allocated for economic development, together with policies to promote economic recovery and control proposals for particular types of employment development.

### **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

- 6.5 National planning guidance emphasises the importance of stimulating continued economic development in a way which is compatible with environmental objectives. Development plans are expected to give greater certainty about the types of industrial and commercial development that will be permitted at different locations, whilst taking into account the locational demands of businesses, and the desirability of safeguarding and enhancing the environment. There is also a long-standing commitment to promote diversification of the rural economy.
- 6.6 These themes are echoed in the Regional Planning Guidance (now Regional Spatial Strategy), which also stresses the importance of creating the right conditions to attract inward investment. Local authorities are encouraged to ensure that a good supply of attractive and developable sites is available, particularly in areas of high unemployment. Government and European initiatives, such as the Single Regeneration Budget and the Rechar Programme, are expected to be complemented by appropriate planning policies.
- 6.7 The North Yorkshire Structure Plan establishes the level and broad location of economic development within the County. Policy I5 requires that provision for industry and other businesses is mainly in and around urban areas and towns, whilst Policy I6 states that industrial and commercial development will normally be permitted within or, where appropriate, adjoining existing industrial estates/areas and on sites located within or in close proximity to a built-up area.

Provision is also made for small-scale industrial development in rural settlements, and for commercial development in and around town centres.

- 6.8 The Third Alteration to the County Structure Plan rolls forward the employment land requirements to 2006. A significant increase in the supply of employment land is proposed in order to address the acknowledged structural weakness in the local economy.
- 6.9 The District Council's Economic Development Strategy is also relevant to the formulation of Local Plan policies. This aims to promote and secure the regeneration and diversification of the local economy through the creation of new employment opportunities and inward investment. The Strategy also supports the expansion of existing businesses.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- 6.10 The employment policies of the Plan have the following main objectives:
- 1) To ensure adequate provision of employment land and a range of sites in terms of type and location to cater for the needs of differing businesses, and to encourage inward investment.
  - 2) To safeguard existing employment land and premises.
  - 3) To promote the diversification of the local economy, including rural diversification, where this is compatible with the character of the area.
  - 4) To support the needs of agriculture where compatible with the Plan's environmental objectives.
  - 5) To encourage the expansion of existing businesses and the establishment of small local firms.
  - 6) To create opportunities to improve the quality of the existing business environment and to ensure a high standard of design and landscaping in new economic development.
  - 7) To improve opportunities for people to live near their work and minimise traffic movements.

### **POLICIES AND PROPOSALS**

#### **Employment Land Requirement**

- 6.11 The Local Plan employment land requirement has been calculated on the basis of the County Structure Plan Third Alteration. This suggests a requirement of 125 ha of land for industrial/business development in the Plan area in the period of 1991-2006, in order to create the additional jobs needed to help overcome high unemployment, and to meet the projected increase in the size of the workforce.
- 6.12 The Structure Plan requirement should not be seen as a 'target' level to be achieved, but rather as a guide to the level considered appropriate to the area. After taking account of net completions and the expected contribution from

outstanding commitments at 31 March 1998, the employment land requirement to be met through Local Plan allocations is broadly as follows:

	<b>Area (Ha)</b>
Structure Plan Requirement 1991-2006 (Alteration No. 3)	125.00
Land taken up 1.4.91 to 31.3.98 <sup>1</sup>	7.50
Expected contribution from outstanding planning consents at 31.3.98 <sup>2</sup>	68.57
<b>RESIDUAL REQUIREMENT TO BE MET THROUGH LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATIONS</b>	<b>48.93</b>

<sup>1</sup> excluding small sites in rural settlements,

<sup>2</sup> excluding Weeland Road, Eggborough which is allocated for residential purposes.

- 6.13 The expected contribution from outstanding commitments has been discounted by 20 ha to allow for the fact that not all sites with planning permission are likely to be fully taken up, or are capable of being developed, within the Plan period owing to ownership, marketing, infrastructural and other constraints. These include 3.32 ha at Roman Road, Tadcaster (unlikely to be taken up until after the Plan period), 10.97 ha at Roall Lane, Eggborough (overhead lines) and 29.1 ha at Sherburn in Elmet (outline planning consent extended beyond the Plan period to 2012), for which a combined allowance of about 50% has been made.
- 6.14 The employment land requirement excludes small-scale (ie <0.4 ha) industrial/business development in rural settlements, the extension, expansion or replacement of existing businesses, and the establishment of business uses in and adjacent to town centres for which additional unspecified provision can be made in accordance with Structure Plan Policies I4, I8 and I12. It also excludes land which may come forward through the 'Strategic Exceptions' Policy (POLICY EMP11).
- 6.15 Local Plan allocations are intended to accommodate manufacturing, commercial office and storage activities, corresponding with Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.
- 6.16 Although only 48.93 ha of land for new industrial/business development are required to be allocated to meet Structure Plan guidelines, a total of 58.6 ha has been allocated. It is considered that this small degree of over provision (8% of total required provision) will provide an element of flexibility in the choice and variety of sites available to help stimulate economic recovery, and to replace older employment premises which may be redeveloped for other purposes. For example, about 4 ha of employment land may be displaced from The Holmes, Selby within the Plan period in connection with proposals to redevelop the site with a modern mixed development including residential and business uses.

**EMP1 Provision will be made for about 125 hectares of land for industrial/business purposes within the plan area in the period from 1991-2006.**

## The Location of Economic Development

- 6.17 Provision for new industrial/business development has mainly been made in and around Selby, Sherburn in Elmet, Tadcaster and Eggborough, including the granting of consent for a major inward investment proposal south of Eggborough Power Station in the form of the St Gobain float glass plant. These locations provide the best opportunities for job creation without compromising the environmental objectives of the Plan. They are conveniently located for the workforce and accessible by public transport, and will assist one of the Plan's principal objectives of improving opportunities for people to live near their work. Smaller allocations of land and other policies in the Plan are intended to facilitate small-scale development in villages and rural areas, in order to strengthen the rural economy and to consolidate existing employment development.
- 6.18 In identifying locations for future development, the District Council has taken a range of factors into account including unemployment levels, market demand, constraints on land and the availability of funding through Government and European investment initiatives.
- 6.19 Individual sites have been selected for development on a similar basis as potential housing allocations, in order to minimise environmental impact, utilise spare capacity in services and infrastructure and to promote sustainable forms of development. Some sites that were previously allocated for development in the adopted Rural Areas Local Plan (1990), or in informal Local Plans, have not been developed. Where these do not have the benefit of a valid planning consent the opportunity has been taken to re-examine their development potential.
- 6.20 POLICY EMP2 identifies the broad distribution of employment land allocations. The District Council's detailed requirements in relation to the development of individual sites are set out in Policies incorporated in Part Two of the Local Plan.

**EMP2 New employment development will be concentrated in and around Eggborough, Selby, Sherburn in Elmet and Tadcaster. Encouragement will also be given to proposals for small-scale development in villages and rural areas in support of the rural economy. Land is allocated for industrial/business development at the following locations:**

<i>Site Ref</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Proposals Map</i>	<i>Ha</i>
		<i>Inset No.</i>	
BAR/1	Magazine Road, BARLBY	4	5.4
BAR/1A	Rear of Olympia Mills/BOCM, BARLBY	4	7.0
BRAY/1	Selby Business Park, BRAYTON	11	8.5
BRAY/2	East of Bawtry Road , BRAYTON	11	1.6
CLF/1	Cliffe Common, CLIFFE	23	1.5
EGG/5	Selby Road (north), EGGBOROUGH	27	5.2

EGG/7	Selby Road (south), EGGBOROUGH	27	2.4
SEL/3	Bawtry Road, SELBY	53	3.2
SEL/4	Denison Road, SELBY	53	12.4
SHB/2	Enterprise Park, SHERBURN IN ELMET	54	2.4
TAD/3	London Road, TADCASTER	60	9.0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>58.6</b>

**Proposals for the development of allocated sites should meet the detailed requirements set out in specific policies contained in Part Two of the Local Plan.**

### **Renewal of Industrial and Business Commitments**

- 6.21 A number of sites in the District have planning permission for employment development. These sites make an important contribution to future employment land supply and it is important that they continue to be available for development within the Plan period.
- 6.22 Progress on meeting the employment land requirement will be monitored to ensure that there is always an adequate range and size of sites available. If the supply should fall short of meeting the Local Plan requirements, the District Council will consider other means of increasing supply through the granting of further planning consents, or review of the Plan.
- 6.23 Whilst applications for renewal of outstanding planning consents will normally be approved, where continued failure to begin development would jeopardise the Council's employment strategy, permission may not be renewed and consideration will be given to granting consents at other appropriate locations. Similarly, where circumstances have changed since the original approval, it may not be appropriate to renew consents.

**EMP3 Applications for the renewal of existing or expired planning consents for industrial and business development will be permitted, and proposals for other uses will not be permitted on such sites, unless:**

- 1) **There has been a material change in circumstances since the previous permission; or**
- 2) **Continued failure to begin the development will result in a shortfall of employment land supply within the locality before the end of the plan period.**

### **Retention of Established Employment Areas**

- 6.24 The main concentrations of employment in the Plan area are found in and around market towns and service villages. It is important that these areas, which have proved acceptable locations for employment uses, are retained

as they make an important contribution to the local economy and are well related to the local workforce and public transport, providing a variety of premises and opportunities for the relocation and/or expansion of businesses.

- 6.25 The retention of established employment areas which are identified on the Proposals Map may help give confidence to investors whilst releasing the pressure for development in less sustainable locations. Proposals for changes of use or redevelopment of the following areas to non-employment uses will therefore be resisted unless there would be significant amenity, highways or other benefits in permitting other uses, for example by removing non-conforming uses, or it can be shown that there is either no demand for employment development locally or there is an adequate supply of land and premises to meet planned requirements over the Plan period.

<b><i>Employment Area</i></b>	<b><i>Proposals Map Inset Map Number</i></b>
Selby Business Park, Brayton	11
Selby Road, Eggborough	27
Station Road, Tadcaster	60
York Road, Tadcaster	60
Sherburn Enterprise Park/Trading Estate	54

- 6.26 Unless there are strong overriding environmental objections, proposals for infilling, redevelopment or expansion of existing businesses within safeguarded employment areas will normally be acceptable in accordance with POLICY EMP6.

**EMP4 Development proposals which would result in the loss of industrial/business floorspace within established employment areas, as defined on the proposals map, will not be permitted unless:**

- 1) **Significant environmental, highway or community benefits would be achieved; or**
- 2) **The development would overcome or alleviate significant environmental or amenity problems; or**
- 3) **The supply of industrial/business land and premises is sufficient to meet the requirements over the plan period; or**
- 4) **Evidence can be provided that no suitable industrial/business occupier can be found.**

#### **Non-Conforming Uses**

- 6.27 Within the Plan area there are some existing firms which, by their very nature, cause environmental problems through noise, smoke, vibration, pollution or the effects of associated traffic. A number of firms have also

outgrown their original site and operate in cramped conditions with poor access and servicing arrangements. In some cases such businesses are located in or near predominantly residential areas, where it is desirable to safeguard and improve the living conditions of residents. In other cases, outside built-up areas, existing operations can detract from their surroundings.

- 6.28 The District Council will strongly resist the establishment or expansion of firms which create serious environmental problems. In a limited number of cases it is acknowledged that remedial action may be required through negotiation, in order to introduce physical improvements or changes in site management. Where appropriate, firms will be encouraged to relocate to a more acceptable location. Such a move can often be funded by the redevelopment of an existing site.
- 6.29 Environmental objectives must also be balanced with the desirability of safeguarding local jobs. Only in the most severe cases will the District Council use its legal powers to discontinue a non-conforming use of a long-standing nature.

**EMP5 Proposals for the creation or expansion of non-conforming industrial/business uses which are likely to create conditions prejudicial to highway safety or which would have a significant adverse effect on local amenity will not be permitted.**

**In cases where existing operations cause significant environmental, amenity or highway problems, the district council will encourage firms to overcome such problems or to relocate to a more suitable site or premises.**

### **Employment Development Within Development Limits and Established Employment Areas**

- 6.30 Sites which have been allocated for industrial and business development are considered to most appropriately meet the future economic needs of the Plan area, and to minimise the impact on the environment and the amenity of adjoining occupiers.
- 6.31 This does not mean that other proposals for economic development will necessarily be refused. Considerable opportunities exist for continued development within established employment areas either by making better use of the available land or through the redevelopment, subdivision and refurbishment of existing premises, particularly to provide low-rent starter units. The District Council wishes to encourage the selective redevelopment of premises in order to help overcome existing environmental problems in older estates, such as lack of landscaping, inadequate access and car parking, and poor boundary treatment. The modernisation and enhancement of established employment areas will help create a better business environment as well as reduce the pressure for release of greenfield sites.

- 6.32 The District Council is also concerned that policies should not operate so as to threaten the economic wellbeing of existing local firms by preventing reasonable future expansion. Similar encouragement must be given to the establishment of new employers, not only to create additional employment opportunities but to diversify the local employment base.
- 6.33 PPG4 (Industrial and Commercial Development, 1992) indicates that many types of industry and commerce can be carried out in residential areas, without causing unacceptable disturbance. This is a particular characteristic in a number of settlements where the mixture of small-scale business, residential and other uses is an essential element in the character and vitality of the area.
- 6.34 Proposals for the provision of local employment opportunities will therefore be supported in most towns and villages provided the nature and scale of the proposal is appropriate to the locality, and development would not be at the expense of residential amenity or the character of the area. This stance is compatible with Policy I8 of the County Structure Plan and reflects PPG advice aimed at supporting the establishment of small businesses particularly in smaller, rural settlements.
- 6.35 The following policy is intended to clarify the circumstances in which economic development will be permitted within towns and villages and established employment areas. It does not apply to rural areas outside defined Development Limits where different considerations apply (see POLICY EMP7).

- EMP6 (A) Within allocated sites and established employment areas, as defined on the proposals map, proposals for new industrial and business development, including infilling, extension or expansion of existing firms, redevelopment of existing sites, or the change of use of land or premises, will be permitted provided:**
- 1) There is no significant adverse effect on existing businesses;**
  - 2) The proposal would not create conditions prejudicial to highway safety or which would have a significant adverse effect on local amenity; and**
  - 3) The proposal would achieve a standard of design, materials and landscaping appropriate to the locality and would not have a significant adverse effect on the appearance or character of the surrounding area.**
- (B) Elsewhere, within defined development limits, such development will be permitted provided the above criteria are satisfied and:**
- 1) The nature and scale of the proposal is appropriate to the locality;**



- 2) **The proposals would not prejudice the future comprehensive development of land; and**
- 3) **The proposal would not harm acknowledged nature conservation interests or result in the loss of open space of recreation or amenity value or which is intrinsically important to the character of the area.**

### **Employment Development in the Countryside**

- 6.36 PPG7 (The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development, 1997) outlines the national commitment to promoting a healthy rural economy. The advice indicates that the countryside can accommodate many forms of development without causing unacceptable planning problems, provided the location and design of development is handled with sensitivity. Particular encouragement is given to farm diversification activities and the establishment of small-scale enterprises, including new development in and around settlements.
- 6.37 Whilst the Plan provides for the bulk of new employment opportunities to be accommodated in the market towns and service villages, encouragement is given to the re-use or adaptation of existing rural buildings through POLICY EMP8, and to the expansion of existing businesses in the countryside through POLICY EMP9. The scope for significant amounts of unobtrusive new development is, however, more limited. Isolated development also places a greater strain on services and infrastructure and is less conveniently located for workers.
- 6.38 The following policy is intended to support small developments of an appropriate scale where a rural location is justified, for example in associated with farm diversification activities, or for operational reasons, such as agricultural engineers, or where premises are required in connection with leisure or tourism activities. In order to safeguard the countryside from unnecessary development, applicants will be encouraged to consider using existing buildings where these are available on the farm holding, or within the locality. Development will not be permitted where it is likely to adversely affect the character of the countryside or create other planning problems. It is not intended that the Policy will apply within areas of Green Belt which are covered by POLICIES GB1-4.

**EMP7 Outside areas of Green Belt, small-scale business and farm diversification development will be permitted in the countryside (outside defined development limits), provided the proposal:**

- 1) **Requires a countryside location which will benefit the rural economy;**
- 2) **Is of a sensitive design and scale appropriate to the locality;**

- 3) **Would not have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area or harm acknowledged nature conservation interests;**
- 4) **Would not create conditions prejudicial to highway safety or which would have a significant adverse effect on local amenity; and**
- 5) **Is adequately screened and landscaped.**

### **Conversions to Employment Use in the Countryside**

- 6.39 PPG7 (The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development, 1997) makes it clear that proposals for the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings can provide valuable workspace and help reduce the demand for new buildings in rural areas. Such developments can often be carried out without damage to their surroundings, and may give rise to no greater disturbance or traffic generation than the former use. A significant number of jobs have already been created in this manner in connection with a variety of commercial, industrial and recreational uses, in accordance with Structure Plan policies and policies in the adopted Rural Areas Local Plan (1990).
- 6.40 In particular, the re-use or adaptation of existing farm buildings can often provide accommodation for farm diversification activities. With the changes that are continuing to occur in agriculture, it is increasingly important for farmers to be able to look outside agriculture for sources of income and to generate rural employment.
- 6.41 In line with national planning policy, the District Council will in future give preference to the conversion of buildings to employment uses rather than residential use because of the greater economic and social benefits involved, and because it is often easier to retain the existing character of the building and minimise the impact on the locality. The conversion of buildings to employment uses will also be acceptable in principle in areas of Green Belt, subject to the normal restrictions and conditions applied to such areas, as outlined in Chapter 3, Paragraph 3.25 and POLICY GB2.
- 6.42 When considering proposals, it is important to ensure that the form, bulk and general design of the building will be in keeping with its surroundings. In any conversion, the District Council will also ensure that the intrinsic character of the building will not be lost through unsympathetic alteration. Buildings must be structurally sound and proposals for major reconstruction or extensions will not be acceptable, since this is likely to fundamentally alter the character of the building.
- 6.43 Care will also be taken to ensure that any incidental outside areas required as part of the scheme can be provided without adversely affecting the appearance and character of the surrounding area or encroaching into the open countryside.
- 6.44 Some rural buildings may provide nesting and roosting sites for barn owls and bats which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act

(1981). In such circumstances, proposals will need to comply with the requirements of POLICY ENV14.

- 6.45 PPG advice indicates that Local Authorities may wish to take steps to ensure that the construction of new farm buildings with the intention of early conversion to another use is strictly controlled. In considering proposals for the re-use of modern buildings, particularly those erected under permitted development rights, applicants will be required to demonstrate that the building has been used for its originally intended purposes. The Council will investigate carefully the history of a building proposed for conversion in order to guard against abuse of the system.

**EMP8 Proposals for the conversion of rural buildings for commercial, industrial or recreational uses, including appropriate farm diversification activities, will be permitted provided:**

- 1) **The building is structurally sound and capable of re-use without substantial re-building;**
- 2) **The proposed re-use or adaptation will generally take place within the fabric of the building and will not require extensive alteration, re-building and/or extension;**
- 3) **Conversion would not damage the fabric and character of a building of architectural or historical interest, or a traditional building which makes a positive contribution to the character of the countryside;**
- 4) **The form, bulk and general design of the building is in keeping with its surroundings;**
- 5) **The conversion of the building and ancillary works, such as the creation of incidental outside areas, and the provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements, would not have a significant effect on the character and appearance of the area, or encroach into open countryside; and**
- 6) **The proposal would not create conditions prejudicial to highway safety or which would have a significant adverse effect on local amenity.**

#### **Expansion of Existing Employment Uses in Rural Area**

- 6.46 Many small businesses make a valuable contribution to the rural economy and provide wide and varied employment opportunities for local people, including those formerly employed in agriculture. The District Council wishes to encourage the continued availability of employment opportunities on existing sites by permitting reasonable redevelopment and/or expansion of existing businesses.

- 6.47 There is no specific national planning advice regarding the scope for expansion of existing business premises in the countryside. Policy IND5 in the adopted Rural Areas Local Plan (1990) is generally accommodating in this respect subject to amenity, agricultural land and Green Belt considerations. No significant problems have been encountered with the operation of this policy to date and it is proposed to carry the policy forward subject to the incorporation of additional controls to safeguard the character and amenity of the countryside.
- 6.48 In particular, proposals must be of a scale and design which is in keeping with the surrounding area, and not create or exacerbate highway or amenity problems. Proposals will not be permitted where it is considered that the scale or nature of the use suggests it would be more appropriately located within an industrial area intended for that purpose. Proposals which impact upon areas within the Green Belt will be considered in accordance with Paragraph 3.40 of Chapter 3 (Green Belt and Control of Development in the Countryside) and the provisions of POLICY GB4.
- 6.49 Generally, redevelopment or expansion proposals will be expected to take place within the confines of existing sites. Where expansion onto adjoining land is proposed, this has to be balanced against the need to protect the character and appearance of the countryside and other significant environmental resources, in addition to safeguarding best and most versatile agricultural land. Where proposals are acceptable in principle they must be accompanied by appropriate landscaping.
- 6.50 In areas of Green Belt, strict controls will be applied to ensure that any expansion and/or redevelopment would not affect the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, in accordance with paragraph 3.26 and POLICY GB2.

**EMP9 Proposals for the expansion and/or redevelopment of existing industrial and business uses outside development limits and established employment areas, as defined on the proposals map, will be permitted provided:**

- 1) The proposal would not create conditions prejudicial to highway safety or which would have a significant adverse effect on local amenity;**
- 2) The nature and scale of the proposal would not have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area, or harm acknowledged nature conservation interests;**
- 3) The proposal would achieve a high standard of design, materials and landscaping which complements existing buildings; and**
- 4) Proposals involving expansion onto adjoining land would not result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and the site would be well related to existing development and well screened and/or landscaped.**

## **Homeworking**

- 6.51 Recent developments in computing and tele-communications have led to more and more people working from home – a trend which is likely to increase in future years. Homeworking does not necessarily need planning permission, which is generally only required when the business use is of sufficient intensity as to affect the overall character of the property's use as a single dwelling. For example, the use by a householder of a room as an office, or childminding complying with the Department of Health's standard recommended ratios<sup>1</sup> is unlikely to change the character of the house's use. In such cases the Council would not require planning permission to be sought. However, if the business is not, or has ceased to be, ancillary to its use as a single dwelling as a result of the intensity of the business activity, planning permission will be required.
- 6.52 The Council is anxious to protect the amenity of residential areas from unreasonable nuisance caused by homeworking, which, for example, may be caused by increased traffic generation, noise, fumes or unreasonable hours of working. Anyone considering working from home is advised to seek advice from the Council at an early stage.
- 6.53 In cases where a planning application is deemed to be necessary because there is a possibility that the use will change, or has already changed, the overall character of the property's use as a single dwelling house, the Council will judge proposals in accordance with the following policy.

**EMP9A Business uses operating from a single dwelling house, or within its curtilage, will only be permitted where the proposal:**

- 1) Would not generate visitors, traffic, noise or fumes over and above what might be expected if the property were in use as a single dwelling without ancillary use;**
- 2) Would not have a significant adverse effect on the visual amenity of the local residential area; and**
- 3) Would not create conditions prejudicial to highway safety.**

## **Coal Mining/Power Generation Industries**

- 6.54 The Selby District has a major interest in energy from fossil fuel. The Plan area contains the Selby Coalfield, Kellingley Colliery and Drax and Eggborough coal-fired power stations. Ferrybridge coal-fired power station is situated adjacent to Brotherton. In addition, an innovative renewable energy scheme involving the combustion of willow, to supply electricity to the national grid, is located near Eggborough.

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<sup>1</sup> The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations, Volume 2 – Family support, day care and educational provision for young children; HMSO

- 6.55 Both deep-mined coal production and the established base of coal-fired electricity generation constitute a significant source of direct employment and support a wide range of ancillary economic activities. For example, RJB Mining (UK) Limited employs 3,000 people in the Selby Complex alone (including 1,000 people on contract to the company). The complex generates approximately £245 million per annum to the economy in equipment, labour cost and contractors and other expenses.
- 6.56 The District Council has consistently supported the development of both industries, including a proposal in 1997 to extract coal from the Stanley Main seam, in the Selby Coalfield, (in addition to the original consent to work the Barnsley seam).
- 6.57 Both industries however face major challenges, particularly through competition from gas fuel generators, following negotiations on revised coal supply contracts and the imposition of mandatory emission limits for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates. Whilst the Government has taken short-term steps to assist the coal industry, changing market economics may result in increased use of cheap imported coal, displacement of coal by pet coke and with reduced demand for coal from local mines. The consequential effects of these changes would be potentially very significant for both the local economy and the environment, including the risk of increased road transport.
- 6.58 These factors, combined with continuing geological problems and the abandonment of proposals to extract coal east of the river Derwent may mean that the life of the Selby complex will not extend much beyond the end of the Plan period. The recent closure of the Whitemoor Mine is the first step taken by RJB Mining leading to the eventual de-commissioning of the Selby Coalfield. The District Council is therefore investigating the scope for European (Objective 2) funding after the year 2000 to assist in overcoming problems caused by the anticipated decline in primary sector employment.
- 6.59 Whilst the Plan assumes continued use of the remaining 4 shaft sites and Gasgoigne Wood Drift Mine for coal mining, further closures would have significant economic and planning consequences. Not only would there be an immediate impact on local employment but further consideration would need to be given to the potential after-use of sites as an alternative to agricultural restoration. Both the County Council and the District Council have supported the re-use of the remaining buildings at Whitemoor Mine for employment purposes. Other mine sites are not necessarily as well located in relation to local centres of population, road networks and public transport. Consideration would therefore have to be given to the appropriateness of different types of alternative uses or whether the original condition in favour of agricultural restoration should be applied.
- 6.60 The District Council therefore proposes to adopt a planned approach to future de-commissioning and to investigate the scope for the positive re-use of remaining sites, in liaison with both the County Council and City of York Council (North Selby Mine having been transferred as part of the 1996 Local Government Reorganisation). The results of this exercise will be incorporated in the First Review of the Local Plan, and if necessary adopted first as Interim Guidelines.

- 6.61 At the same time the Council will continue to support existing coal and power generation industries where there is no insurmountable conflict with established planning policies. It is envisaged that the continued development of environmentally-friendly technologies could have a bigger role to play in the future.

**Additional Industrial Development at Drax and Eggborough Power Stations**

- 6.62 The adopted Rural Areas Local Plan (1990), included a Policy (IND6) to facilitate ancillary industrial development at, or close to, Drax Power Station. The intention was to enable the manufacture of plasterboard and cement on site, using gypsum produced as the major after-product from the flue gas desulphurisation process (FGD), which has been installed in order to reduce harmful sulphur dioxide emissions.
- 6.63 Whilst the development of a wallboard factory now appears unlikely, the principle of utilising by-products in a productive way on-site is clearly preferable to the alternative of disposal of large quantities of waste. Land to the north of Drax Power Station, which was used for 'temporary development' in conjunction with the FGD installation may become available following restoration, and may be suitable for development of this nature.
- 6.64 Permission has been granted for an air separation plant within the curtilage of Eggborough Power Station, using direct electricity supply from the power station. This plant is now operational. Additional development of an ancillary nature could be accommodated to the south-west.

**EMP10 Additional industrial/business development may be permitted at or close to Drax and Eggborough power stations provided the proposal:**

- 1) **Is directly related to the process of generating electricity, either by making use of by-products from the power station or utilising a direct source of electricity;**
- 2) **Would be suitably linked to the strategic highway and rail networks and would not create conditions prejudicial to highway safety;**
- 3) **Would not create environmental problems associated with noise, smell or water pollution or dust emissions;**
- 4) **Would not have a significant adverse effect on residential amenity in nearby settlements;**
- 5) **Would be related to existing development and would be well screened, including provision for earth mounding and strategic off-site planting; and**

**6) Would not harm nature conservation interests or sites of archaeological importance.**

**Exceptional Major Industrial and Business Development**

- 6.65 The Third Alteration to the County Structure Plan incorporates a new Policy (I15), to facilitate the provision of large-scale industrial and business development in exceptional circumstances where proposals cannot ordinarily be accommodated within allocated employment land. The policy is intended to cater for major inward investment proposals that require large, strategically located sites that would otherwise have to be treated as a departure from the Development Plan.
- 6.66 The District Council strongly supports the policy which may assist the economic objectives of strengthening and revitalising the local economy. The relocation of a major national or industrial employer within the Plan area may, in addition to providing a significant number of jobs, also promote opportunities for creating spin-off employment through related business and services.
- 6.67 The District Council will apply the policy as an exception to normal policies of countryside restraint. Proposals will still be required to satisfy normal planning criteria and to safeguard acknowledged environmental resources such as important nature conservation and archaeological sites, and must not impact adversely on existing settlements. Proposals will not be acceptable within areas of Green Belt, Locally Important Landscape Areas or Historic Parks and Gardens.
- 6.68 The development of a major exceptions site under this Policy would be over and above the POLICY EMP1 land requirement.

**EMP11 In exceptional circumstances, large-scale business or industrial development for occupation by a single large operator and any related development directly linked to its operation may be permitted provided:**

- 1) The development would result in substantial employment or other economic benefits;**
- 2) There are clear and substantive reasons why the proposed development cannot be implemented on land allocated for business or industrial development in accordance with Policy EMP2;**
- 3) The site is not situated within green belt, a locally important landscape area, an historic park and garden or an area of archaeological importance, and the proposal would not harm acknowledged nature conservation interests;**
- 4) The proposal would seek to minimise the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land and no suitable alternative site is available;**



- 5) **The proposal would be well related to the strategic highway network, and would not create conditions prejudicial to highway safety;**
- 6) **The proposal would be well related to the existing public transport network or would incorporate measures to ensure the employment opportunities are accessible to the potential workforce by a variety of transport means;**
- 7) **The proposal would achieve a high standard of design, materials and landscaping appropriate to the locality; and**
- 8) **The proposal would not have a significant adverse effect on residential amenity in nearby settlements.**

### **Agricultural and Related Development**

6.69 Agriculture and related industries still provide a significant though declining number of jobs in the Plan area (the agricultural sector accounted for over 8% of jobs in 1991 in comparison with a national figure of 1.3%). The agricultural value of the Plan area is considerable in terms of land quality and output. In addition to safeguarding the best and most versatile agricultural land, the District Council will continue to support the modernisation and expansion of the agricultural industry subject to ensuring that such development does not threaten the character of the landscape and local amenity.

#### *Protection of Agricultural Land*

- 6.70 Much of the Plan area lies within the Vale of York, a fertile, predominantly flat area centred upon the Ouse Valley, where farming practice is mainly devoted to the cultivation of cereals and root crops. In spite of changes in agricultural policy to reduce crop surpluses, the general fertility and high yields in the Plan area suggest that the overwhelming majority of farmland will continue in productive agricultural use.
- 6.71 The richness of the land is reflected in the fact that substantial areas are classed as Grade 1, 2 and 3a by DEFRA, that is the best and most versatile agricultural land. Whilst PPG7 (The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development, 1997) indicates that it is no longer necessary to protect agricultural land for its own sake, best and most versatile agricultural land retains its importance as a national resource, and considerable weight should be given to its protection.
- 6.72 Whenever possible, Local Plan allocations have avoided best and most versatile agricultural land. Proposals for acceptable forms of development in rural areas will be expected to utilise lower quality land or derelict/non-agricultural land, and to protect agricultural interests against the effects of development on neighbouring land wherever possible.

**EMP12 Development proposals which would lead to the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless there is an exceptional overriding need and there is no suitable alternative site available.**

*Agricultural Development*

- 6.73 The Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 1995 grants consent for the principle of a wide range of agricultural development. In certain circumstances, prior notification must be given to the District Council, providing information about the proposed development. Where proposals are, in the opinion of the District Council, likely to have a significant impact on their surroundings, councils may request full details in order to influence the siting, design and use of materials. Development not permitted by the GPDO will require planning consent in the usual way.
- 6.74 Proposals for agricultural buildings which require planning permission will be expected to be sited close to existing buildings, or in a location with minimal visual impact. In view of the generally flat landscape, particular care must also be taken in respect of the scale and design of buildings, especially where they might impact on Locally Important Landscape Areas (POLICY ENV15) or Historic Parks and Gardens (POLICY ENV16).

**EMP13 Agricultural development will be permitted provided the proposal:**

- 1) Is necessary for agricultural purposes;**
- 2) Is well related to existing farm buildings or situated on a site which minimises its visual impact;**
- 3) Would not create conditions prejudicial to highway safety or which would have a significant adverse effect on local amenity;**
- 4) Is of a scale and design appropriate to its setting;**
- 5) Is adequately screened and landscaped; and**
- 6) Would not harm acknowledged nature conservation interests or a historic park or garden.**

*Quasi-Agricultural Activities*

- 6.75 A significant number of local businesses and manufacturing concerns are dependent on agriculture and agricultural products. Firms involved in the bulk storage and distribution of agricultural products require locations with good access to trans-shipment points, particularly the mills and wharfage facilities at Selby. Due to the high volume/low margin nature of these businesses, difficulties have been experienced in securing sites owing to higher site values commanded by other forms of development.

- 6.76 In order to address this problem, land was specifically allocated for this purpose at the former airfield, Riccall Common in the adopted Rural Areas Local Plan (1990). Some development has already taken place on this site and it is proposed to carry forward the allocation into this Local Plan (See POLICY RIC/1, Inset Proposals Map 50 in Part Two of the Local Plan).
- 6.77 The need for additional distribution and storage facilities will be kept under review. Additional proposals for development of this kind will be considered in relation to POLICY EMP13.
- 6.78 Haulage contractors and agricultural equipment suppliers, whilst serving the agricultural industry, are not intrinsically agricultural in their nature. In general, the policies of the Plan are intended to prevent non-essential development in the countryside and exceptional circumstances would need to be demonstrated for agricultural service industries to be acceptable within the countryside (See POLICY EMP7).

#### *Intensive Livestock Units*

- 6.79 Intensive livestock units comprise buildings and associated works both for the permanent indoor housing of pigs, poultry or cattle and the temporary housing of such livestock when a slurry system is adopted. By virtue of their scale and nature of their operations, there is considerable potential for water pollution and nuisance associated with noise, smells, flies and vermin. The impact is not restricted to the immediate locality but may affect properties situated adjacent to land used for spreading slurry.
- 6.80 Whilst it is recognised that country dwellers must expect to experience unpleasant smells from time to time, the District Council will seek to minimise conflicts by defining a protective distance between new units and existing occupied property. The risk of nuisance may be further reduced where the proposed buildings are suitably designed and make adequate provision for the storage of manure to prevent pollution occurring and to avoid the need for spreading in adverse conditions.
- 6.81 The spreading of slurry from livestock units for the purposes of agriculture is not subject to planning control. It remains important however to minimise the risk that such activities cause from nuisance or smell. The Council's Environmental Health Officers will need to be satisfied that neither the operation of the unit nor the use of land for spreading slurry or manure would create environmental problems, and that satisfactory arrangements are made for spreading liquid or solid manure either under an applicant's own control or by agreement with another farmer. Operators should follow the advice given in the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water, Soil and Air published by DEFRA.
- 6.82 The risk of pollution, for example from ammonia depositions close to ground water resources, is also a major consideration. The Control of Pollution (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) Regulations 1991 set minimum standards for both new and existing operations, and the District Council will consult the Environment Agency regarding appropriate measures. Similarly, English Nature will advise on the potential implications of proposals regarding nature conservation interests.

- 6.83 In considering proposals, the cumulative impact of the new development and existing intensive livestock units will be taken into account, particularly regarding the effect on local amenity. Proposals will also be expected to comply with the normal criteria for assessing agricultural development.
- 6.84 Many established intensive livestock units are situated within or adjoining built-up areas and would not now be likely to receive approval. However, proposals for expansion may be acceptable where these would help overcome existing problems and improve operational conditions for the benefit of adjoining occupiers.
- 6.85 Further advice on the operation of this policy will be provided in Supplementary Planning Guidance.

**EMP14 Proposals for new intensive livestock units or the extension of intensive livestock units will only be permitted where:**

- 1) The proposal satisfies the requirements of Policy EMP13 as an acceptable form of agricultural development;**
- 2) The unit or any associated structure is a minimum of 800 metres from the defined development limits of any town, and 400 metres from the defined development limits of other settlements. Elsewhere, proposals may be acceptable within 400 metres of an occupied property but not nearer than 100 metres in even the most exceptional case, depending on the particular circumstances and the number of properties affected; and**
- 3) The operation of the unit, either individually or cumulatively with existing livestock units in the locality, would not have a significant adverse effect on residential amenity or unreasonably constrain further residential development in a settlement.**

**Exceptionally the expansion of existing units within the limits identified in (2) above may be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the enterprise will continue to be operated in an environmentally acceptable manner or that the proposal is necessary to achieve an improvement in the operation of the existing unit.**

*Redevelopment of Intensive Livestock Units*

- 6.86 Whilst intensive livestock production is an important element in the local economy, units located within or adjoining settlements can give rise to complaints. In spite of recent improvements in operating conditions as a result of animal welfare and pollution control legislation, the potential for nuisance remains.
- 6.87 Environmental Health legislation empowers the District Council to prosecute operators, and where appropriate the Council will encourage

measures to overcome problems, including the possibility of relocation through POLICY EMP5. Where problems exist within or adjoining settlements, redevelopment of the site may be acceptable or even encouraged. It is envisaged that redevelopment for residential purposes would make a significant contribution to the supply of 'windfall sites'.

- 6.88 In considering redevelopment proposals, particular attention will be paid to the nature of the proposed use, and the scale and design in relation to the existing settlement. Proposals may not be acceptable if they would clearly alter the character and pattern of development.

**EMP14A Applications for the redevelopment of intensive livestock units within or adjoining defined development limits will be permitted provided the proposal:**

- 1) Would result in a material improvement in the amenity of adjoining occupiers;**
- 2) Is of a nature, scale and design appropriate to the form and character of the settlement and/or locality;**
- 3) Would not create conditions prejudicial to highway safety; and**
- 4) In the case of intensive livestock units adjoining development limits:**
  - i) The proposal is for commercial, industrial or recreational uses unless it can be demonstrated that the location is unsuited or that there is no demand for these purposes in the locality in which case residential use may be acceptable; and**
  - ii) The site is adequately screened and landscaped.**