

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to guide future development across the District up to 2033.

This Position Statement gives an update on how the Local Plan is evolving outlining the next steps in the timetable and the opportunities for public involvement.

It is not a document for public consultation, but rather has been produced for information purposes only.

### The Local Plan for the District

The Local Plan considers the key issues and opportunities facing the District and sets out through a range of planning policies how the district should develop over a period of time..

### What has been Done

Much work has already been done on developing the new local plan. Most recently in February 2015, the Council undertook public consultation on proposed strategic policies in the Draft Local Plan (Part 1) and a schedule of potential development sites.

The consultation highlighted uncertainties over the deliverability of the proposed strategy that called into question the soundness of the Plan.

In summer 2015 the Council decided to revisit the draft Local Plan's approach, and to bring forward a strategic review of the Green Belt. This was to allow for the reassessment of the Plan's strategy and the potential to consider higher growth levels at the towns of Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh in the north of the District. At the same time the

Council shifted to the production of the Local Plan as a single document

### How the Plan is Evolving

The Council is currently working on the integration of the previous consultation documents, together with new evidence such as the Green Belt review to inform the new draft local plan. Whilst much of the previous approach will remain, there will be some key changes:

*Format and layout of the Plan:* we are now preparing a single local plan. The layout will be very similar to the earlier draft Part 1 Plan, but will include additional content.

*Plan Period:* This has been rolled forward to cover the period up to 2033.

*Vision and Objectives:* These will be reviewed and updated to take account the decision to reassess the spatial distribution of development and bring forward the review of the Green Belt.

*Sustainable Development:* achievement of sustainable development will continue to be at the core of the new draft plan.

*Housing Target:* Current evidence supports a target 300 dwellings a year (6,600 dwellings for the period 2011 to 2033). This will be reviewed to ensure it remains appropriate.

*Distribution of Housing Growth and Green Belt Review:* Work is underway to refine the approach to the distribution of development should the findings of the Green Belt review indicate that land can be released around the towns of Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh without fundamentally undermining the strategic objectives of the Green Belt.

Such an approach will help to address the overarching issues of under delivery of

housing in the district, and offer the opportunity to meet affordable housing needs, and assist with the town centre regeneration ambitions for these towns.

*Economic Growth and Employment Land:*

Current evidence supports a gross employment figure of 50 hectares. It is anticipated that the Plan will continue to identify the mixed use strategic sites at Avenue and Biwaters and the strategic employment sites at Markham Vale, supplemented by a portfolio of other employment sites.

*Protection of the Environment:* protection of the District’s environmental assets will continue to have a strong influence in the new local plan.

**Next Steps**

The new draft Local Plan is scheduled to be published in February 2017 and will be subject to six weeks public consultation. This will be the next opportunity to make formal representations to the Council on the Local Plan.

## INTRODUCTION

North East Derbyshire District Council is in the process of preparing a new local plan to guide future development across the District.

The production of a Local Plan is a Government requirement. The Government has announced that it will intervene to accelerate the delivery of Local Plans where they are not in place by early 2017, reflecting their importance in delivering the Government's growth agenda.

This Position Statement provides a summary of where we are now and what still needs to be done to produce the draft plan. Its purpose is to provide an update on how the plan is evolving and what are the next steps in the local plan timetable.

It is not a document for public consultation, but rather has been produced to inform people of what has happened since we last consulted on the Local Plan in early 2015; to help people understand some of the current issues and the steps the Council is taking to address them.

## THE LOCAL PLAN FOR THE DISTRICT

The Local Plan is an important Council document. It considers the key issues and opportunities facing the District, and sets out how the District should develop over a specific time period, and the means by which this will be achieved.

In preparing the Local Plan, the Council must consult with local people and co-

operate with a range of strategic partners including neighbouring authorities. This is important to give people the chance to influence the way in which the area will change and to ensure the Plan aligns with the relevant plans of other organisations (the 'What will happen next' section provides information about when you can next get involved in the process).

The Council must also take account of national planning policies and guidance mainly set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) which have a major influence on the Plan.

Once prepared the new Plan will include:

- A description of the area to provide a Spatial Picture of the key issues and challenges facing the District;
- A planning Vision and set of related Plan Objectives for the District as a whole, and for each of the District's four main towns i.e. Clay Cross, Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh;
- A Spatial Strategy for the District setting out how much development is needed, broadly where it should be located, when it is needed, and how it will be delivered;
- A portfolio of Site Allocations to meet identified development needs to the end of the Plan Period;
- A number of other detailed Development Management Policies to guide decisions on planning applications including policies to protect sites and areas from certain types of development; and
- A set of targets and indicators to provide the basis for Monitoring the

effectiveness of the plan’s policies and the need for any early plan review.

Overall, the Plan will ensure that the District’s development needs for new homes, jobs and services are provided in the most sustainable locations, alongside the necessary supporting infrastructure to enable its sustainable growth.

## WHY A NEW LOCAL PLAN

A new Local Plan is urgently needed to replace the existing North East Derbyshire Local Plan which is out of date in a number of key respects. The existing local plan was adopted just over ten years ago and covered the period up to 2011.

The new Plan will give a 15 year time horizon and provide strategic direction to inform decisions on planning applications, to encourage and steer future investment within the District up to 2033. It will also set the context for Neighbourhood Plans as and when they are brought forward by Parish and Town Councils across the District.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

In the past much work has been done on developing a the local plan for North East Derbyshire under the previous system of Local Development Frameworks, which required the production of separate documents to cover strategic policies and more detailed polices/allocations. This work included public consultations on Issues and Options for a Core Strategy in 2009, and on the emerging Local Plan Strategy in 2012.

In February 2015, following a period of further evidence gathering, the Council undertook a major public engagement exercise on an Initial Draft Local Plan (Part 1) which included strategic policies on the overall scale and distribution of development and a portfolio of potential housing sites.

Although representations in support were received for many elements of the draft plan, some specific challenges both to the format of the Local Plan and to the proposed Strategy were raised during the consultation. These together with the findings of further work on land availability and suitability highlighted the following significant areas of concern:

- **The format of the 2-part Plan is outdated and non-compliant:** the NPPF is clear that the Government now expects Local Plans to be prepared as a single documentation and it would have been increasingly difficult to justify continuing with a 2 part plan.;
- **Uncertainty over the deliverability of the proposed strategy:** there is a significant mismatch between the strategy and the proposed spatial distribution of housing, land availability and demand; such that the levels of growth being planned for across the District could not be accommodated in a sustainable way or where demand and viability were highest.

Detailed site analysis had found a high level of potential supply in the south of the District where there are issues around the viability of delivering large numbers of sites in a relatively small area. Elsewhere in the District there is

a significant undersupply of housing land. The Green Belt tightly constrains development in the North and West of the District, areas with particularly high demand.

- **Need to bring forward the Green Belt Review:** in light of the above issues it is difficult to justify postponing the Green Belt Review. The review is necessary now, to provide an objective assessment of the role of individual land parcels in fulfilling the purposes and objectives of the Green Belt. This can then be used as the basis to assess the potential capacity to meet both the District’s development needs and enable the Council to respond to any requests to accommodate the unmet development needs from other local authority areas

When taken together these issues raised significant uncertainty and serious concern over the soundness of the Draft Plan. This led the Council to reconsider the overall approach to the Local Plan and to balance the desire to have a plan in place at the earliest opportunity against the risks of proceeding with a plan which may well not have passed through the examination stage

In August 2015 the Council took the decision to prepare a single Local Plan and to bring forward a strategic review of the Green Belt. On the basis that this would enable the Council to revisit the strategy approach in terms of the overall spatial distribution of development, providing the opportunity to create a more evenly balanced distribution of development across the District. It would also enable

the consideration of higher growth levels in the North of the district to support the role of the three towns of Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh.

In October 2015 the Council adopted a new timetable for the production of the Single Local Plan. This effectively delivers full policy coverage within the same timescales associated with the previous timetable for the production of the Plan in two parts.

### Insert Timetable graphic

In June of this year, the Council decided to streamline the local plan programme and undertake a single consultation on a preferred draft plan in February 2017. The main reason for this was to enable the Council to complete the Green Belt Review to inform the draft plan, and to aim to meet the Government’s latest target date for producing a Local Plan.

Whilst the change in the Plan’s approach has prolonged the evidence gathering stage a considerable amount of evidence has already been collated through studies and consultation exercises. Much of this work is still relevant and will be utilised in the preparation of the Draft Plan.

Work on completing the evidence base (including updates to reflect more recent information and data) is on-going.

Appendix 1 gives more information on the evidence base that will be used to inform the Draft Plan and includes documents which are completed, currently under review, or are still yet to be produced.

## HOW THE PLAN IS EVOLVING

### Format and layout of the Plan

The new Local Plan will be a single planning document containing all the Council’s planning policies. It will aim to address the key planning issues facing the District in terms of how much, where, when and how future development should take place.

In addition to strategic sites, the Plan will allocate other specific sites for housing and commercial development, and will designate important areas to protect such as Green Belt, countryside, Local Settlement Gaps, key environmental assets and recreation sites, for example.

The structure of the new Plan will be similar to the earlier draft published in February 2015 featuring a largely thematic approach with policies placed under main chapter headings. However, its content will vary as the Plan will need to respond to emerging issues and opportunities and will include a number of more detailed Development Management Policies

The publication version of the Plan will also be accompanied by a Policies Map on an Ordnance Survey Base illustrating spatial policies including site specific allocations and designations.

<b>Proposed Local Plan Structure</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
<b>SPATIAL PORTRAIT</b> – A description of the District and its varied communities. This sets the scene for what we need to achieve.
<b>VISION AND OBJECTIVES</b> – Looking at our vision for the District in 2033 and what we consider are the main objectives we want to achieve to get there.
<b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b> - An overarching theme with an overarching Sustainable Development policy.
<b>SPATIAL STRATEGY</b> - The framework policies covering the district. Housing requirement and growth target, Settlement Hierarchy, Distribution of Growth, Strategic Site Allocations, Green Belt, Local Settlement Gaps, Development on Unallocated Sites, Development in the Countryside. Key diagram illustrating the strategy.
<b>LIVING COMMUNITIES</b> - Housing Delivery, Housing Need, Range and Choice.
<b>WORKING &amp; LEARNING COMMUNITIES</b> - Economic Growth and Employment Land Provision, Town Centres, Tourism.
<b>SUSTAINABLE PLACES</b> - Towns, Large & Small Settlements and Rural Areas.
<b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT &amp; COMMUNITIES</b> - Protecting & Enhancing the Environment, Sustainable Design, Landscape Character, Biodiversity and Geodiversity, Historic Environment, Renewable & Low Carbon Energy, Flood Risk, Environmental Quality, Safeguarding Mineral Resources.
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b> - Green Infrastructure, Social infrastructure, Sustainable Transport.
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY</b> - Developer Contributions/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
<b>MONITORING &amp; IMPLEMENTATION</b>
<b>APPENDICES:</b>
A. Housing Requirement by Settlement – Total for plan period 2011-2033
B. Five Year Housing Land Supply Calculation
C. Sustainability Appraisal
D. Glossary of Terms
E. Summary of Local Plan policies

## Plan Period

The previous Draft Local Plan Part 1 published in February 2015 covered a 20 year period from 2011 to 2031.

In order to provide for a 15 year time horizon from the anticipated date of adoption, now 2018, the new Plan will need to be rolled forward to cover the period up to 2033

## Plan Vision

The Draft Local Plan Part 1 set out a vision for North East Derbyshire which was generally supported through the previous round of public consultation.

In overall terms, it seeks to ensure quality of life, with residents, businesses and visitors all benefiting from what the district has to offer. It also sets out specific visions tailored to the key challenges facing the four distinct sub-areas: the North, South, East, and West, which are still relevant.

### Insert graphic of sub-areas

However, due to the identified mismatch between the strategy for the distribution of development, land availability, and demand, it has been necessary to bring forward a strategic review of the Green Belt.

The Green Belt Review has the potential to enable the positive promotion of growth in the north of the District where it will not unduly compromise the overall strategic purposes of the Green Belt; and to allow for a more balanced spread of

development than has been possible in recent years. This would allow for a spatial distribution which focuses on the most sustainable settlements in the District in line with the strategy approach of the emerging Local Plan

Such an approach would help to address the overarching issues of under delivery of housing particularly in the north of the District. It would also work positively towards meeting the affordable housing needs of these northern towns, and the Council’s ambitions for the regeneration and renewal of their town centres.

Whilst the thread of sustainable development will continue to run through the Plan, the vision for the north of the district is likely to change to reflect the decision to review the Green Belt:

**“In the North of the District, Dronfield as the Principal Town, and Eckington and Killamarsh, will have consolidated their role as retail and service centres, whilst minimising harm to the strategic functions of the Green Belt”**

## Plan Objectives

The Objectives link the vision for North East Derbyshire to the policies in the Local Plan, by focussing on the key issues and challenges to be addressed as identified through the Spatial Portrait.

The Draft Local Plan Part 1 set out a number of Objectives covering a wide range of issues. Whilst many of these



were generally supported through the previous round of public consultation we are currently reviewing the Objectives to avoid duplication, and to see if there is scope to reduce the number of Objectives by combining some of them together.

In the light of changes to the Vision we will review and update Objective N2 relating to the Green Belt to ensure it reflects the emphasis on sustainable growth in the North sub-area.

It should be noted that as before the Draft Plan's Objectives will not all necessarily be compatible with each other. In such cases, it will be for the policies to indicate where the priority should be given. The Plan's policies are the means of achieving the Vision and Objectives to be determined through the development management process.

## **Sustainable Development**

Like the NPPF, the Plan will have sustainability at its core, seeking to ensure that it meets the objectively assessed development needs of this generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

We will promote sustainable patterns and forms of development through our revised approach to the location of development, and by amongst other things, including policies which seek to secure sustainable design, transport, and encourage the use of renewable and low carbon energy, for example.

## **Housing Target**

In the light of the release of more up to date information on population and households we have done some work to provisionally update the evidence on housing need. This appears to support keeping the previous housing figure of 300 dwellings a year although this will be reviewed in more detail.

We are continuing to engage proactively with our partners on the strategic matter of housing need, and agreement is currently being sought with our neighbouring planning authorities on the scope of further work to update the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Subject to the outcome of this work we will continue with the figure of 300 new dwellings a year as an appropriate target for the District. This would give a housing requirement of 6,600 dwellings from 2011 to 2033.

## **Distribution of Housing Growth & Green Belt Review**

The previous Spatial Strategy in the Draft Plan sought to direct new housing growth to the most sustainable settlements across the District based on the evidence in the settlement hierarchy. However this could not be achieved whilst the Green Belt maintained a bar to development. In addition, it identified three Strategic Sites for housing namely the Former Biwaters Site at Clay Cross, the Avenue at Wingerworth, and the Former Coalite site to the east of the District close to Bolsover.



The Council is committed to helping bring forward new housing on these large scale brownfield sites, and as such they will continue to be central to the new Draft Plan. This is in line with the government's core planning principle which encourages the re-use of previously developed land.

Work is underway to determine precisely how much reliance we can place upon these sites to deliver the new housing needed within the plan period. Alongside this, work has begun on refining the approach to the distribution of development which will consider the potential for higher overall housing levels in the District's three northern towns should the findings of the Green Belt Review indicate that land can be released without undermining the strategic objectives of the Green Belt.

It is crucial that the Green Belt Review is undertaken in a robust and transparent way. Independent consultants have been appointed to undertake this work to a detailed methodology, lending objectivity to the process. Initial findings of the review have revealed that all but a few parcels continue to perform a valid Green Belt function. This means that if we wish to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development and provide a sufficient level of development in the North of the District to meet needs, we must accept that this will have an impact on the Green Belt.

In order to redress the balance of housing growth (which in recent years has focused on the south of the District) it is likely that

we will need to look to release land from the Green Belt to accommodate between 1500 and 2000 dwellings in this plan period. It will also be necessary to consider identifying safeguarded land to ensure that development needs beyond this plan period are addressed.

Further supplementary assessment of the Green Belt land parcels is taking place to identify those parcels that would cause least harm to the strategic functions of the Green Belt. At this stage it is clear that this would apply to only a limited number of sites, all of which, if suitable would need to be considered for release from the Green Belt either to meet development needs within this plan period or to be safeguarded to meet future needs.

The findings of the Green Belt review, including any supplementary assessments will be published as part of the consultation on the Draft Local Plan early next year.

## **Economic Growth and Employment Land**

The previous draft plan identified a range of sites for the purposes of protecting their existing or proposed employment uses. This included the strategic sites which are expected to deliver employment land alongside other uses.

Unlocking and facilitating the development of these sites is a key element of the Council's economic growth strategy, and as such they will continue to be allocated to meet the District's employment needs in the new Draft Plan.

In addition, it is anticipated that the existing portfolio of employment sites spread across the North, South and East Sub-areas will broadly provide for the amount and deliver the quality of sites we need to meet a gross employment land target of about 50 hectares. We will also continue to seek to diversify the local economy by including policies in the Plan that support diversification and tourism activity within the rural areas of the District including the West Sub-area.

## **Protection of the Environment**

We plan to meet our development needs whilst at the same time enhancing our communities and protecting the most valued assets of our local environment.

Like the previous draft plan protection of our environmental assets will continue to have a strong influence in the Draft Plan. As before the Council will propose policies which protect the natural and built environment including those which

designate areas for protection such as the Green Belt, Local Settlement Gaps, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and Conservation Areas, for example.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT**

The Council is currently working on the integration of the earlier consultation documents, together with new evidence gathering, in order to inform the new Draft Plan.

The new Draft Plan will be published early in 2017 and will be subject to six weeks public consultation in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This will be the next opportunity to make formal representations on the Local Plan.

The Draft Plan will list all of the intended policies and site specific allocations and confirm the approach to housing and employment requirements following further work on the evidence base.

The Council will consider the comments it receives and then a Publication document will be produced. There will be a further round of public consultation on the soundness of the Local Plan at this stage.

The Local Plan will then be submitted to the Secretary of State, along with the comments made on the document, and an Examination in Public will be held. This will give an independent Planning Inspector the opportunity to test the soundness of the Local Plan, ensuring it is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The Council aims to

# Local Plan – Position Statement

2016

---

submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State by February 2018.

The detailed timetable including the latest 'live' update can be viewed on the Council's website.

Insert graphic of plan stages

## APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE BASE

### HOUSING

#### Need for Housing Land

A key starting point for the Local Plan is to establish the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for market and affordable housing over the plan period. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was produced in 2013, and this was updated and the subject of Sensitivity Testing Analysis (STA) in 2014.

This work indicated that providing 6,000 new dwellings over a 20-year period between 2011 and 2031 i.e. 300 dwellings a year, would be an appropriate figure to set in the Local Plan.

Since then our timescales have changed slightly and we now need to look further forward to set a housing figure up to 2033. In addition, we are aware that the Government has released 2014-based population figures and household projections which we need to reflect upon in setting our housing figure. In light of this we are currently working with our strategic partners within the Housing Market Area to consider the scope of the work needed to update the evidence on housing need.

#### Housing Land Supply

A critical component of the evidence base for the Local Plan is the Land Availability Assessment (LAA). The overall purpose of this assessment is to identify the suitability of land available for housing

and economic development, the development potential, and when development is likely to occur.

Work on identifying sites for housing first began in 2008, and this has regularly been updated as new sites have been put forward by landowners and developers through various 'Call for Sites' over the years. The most recent 'Call for Sites' was held during 2015/16, and as at June 2016, we had received a total of 439 potential housing sites to consider.

During 2015, in the light of changes in government guidance, the Council agreed with neighbouring authorities a new joint methodology for assessing sites through the 'Land Availability Assessment' (LAA).

Work is progressing on updating the previous assessments and assessing additional sites submitted using the new methodology. The results of this will be used to inform the proposed housing sites which will be included in the new Draft Plan. The updated LAA will be published alongside the new Draft Plan early next year.

Work on the LAA will look closely at deliverability issues on potential housing sites. We will ensure that the housing trajectory proposed for the Draft Plan demonstrates a sufficient supply of deliverable sites across the whole plan period including for the first five years.

#### Affordable Housing

Affordable housing requirements have changed recently, and the Government has introduced new duties to promote the

supply of Starter homes – a form of discounted market housing.

Our evidence in the latest SHMA concludes that the District's high level of need for affordable housing is far in excess of the levels that could be achieved through public funds, or through cross subsidy from private housing development.

In terms of the Council's approach to affordable housing, much depends upon the viability of housing development, which although is likely to be positively impacted upon by the government's proposals for Starter Homes, will have implications for the delivery of other forms of affordable housing including homes for rent.

We propose to undertake further work on the issue of affordable housing once these legislative changes become clearer, and will aim to set out the Council's position in the new Draft Plan.

## **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**

The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) report carried out in 2014 identifies a requirement for 15 additional pitches over the period 2014-2034.

The Government revised the Planning Policy for Travellers in August 2015 which will have implications for the way in which needs are assessed. New government guidance on how to prepare GTAA's is anticipated. The Council is awaiting the guidance and considering how to respond to the Government's new policy position.

Whatever the outcome, the Council will aim to make provision for any identified need for traveller sites in the new Draft Plan.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

### **The Economy and Employment Land**

In 2013, the Council commissioned an Employment Land Projections update for the district, followed by an Employment Sites Review in 2014.

The outcome of these studies was that while current provision of employment land was sufficient for the District's needs, the quality of land needed to be improved as many sites have been undeveloped for a long period of time.

The Plan needs to ensure that development and economic growth will take place and so the attractiveness of sites to the market is one of the important factors to consider.

Further work to update the evidence on employment land including assessing existing and potential employment sites from both a sustainability and market perspective is progressing. Once fully complete, it will help the Council decide which sites are most suitable to allocate in the new Plan to meet its employment needs.

## **RETAIL**

### **Shopping and Town Centres**

Existing evidence on shopping patterns and future retail needs is being updated through a new Retail Study.

This work will be important in developing policies for and defining the limits for the town centres of Dronfield, Clay Cross, Eckington and Killamarsh, and the District's other smaller local centres. The study will consider the need to identify sites for town centre uses, identification of primary shopping frontages and for setting local thresholds to trigger impact assessments

## SETTLEMENTS AND SEPARATION

### Role of Places

We have a sound understanding of the roles that the different settlements perform for our District's communities, and how these settlements relate to one another, from the work carried out in the Settlement Role and Function Study, 2013.

This work remains a key element of the evidence base and will continue to underpin the overarching hierarchy of settlements upon which the plan's growth will be distributed. It will be updated to reflect any significant changes and used to inform the Plan's settlement hierarchy. As part of this work we will also carry out a review of Settlement boundaries.

From what we know already it is unlikely that the settlement hierarchy previously proposed will change significantly. Dronfield, Clay Cross, Eckington and Killamarsh function strongly as towns at the top of settlement hierarchy. We will continue to identify them as a focus for growth based upon their sustainability credentials and the opportunities that

they present to create more sustainable patterns and forms of development across the District.

Below this level there are key service centres and large villages which are considered to be suitable locations for planned development, some of which have seen significant development pressure in recent years.

Insert graphic of settlement hierarchy

### Green Belt Review

In the light of the need to re-consider the distribution of development and to consider potential areas for growth around the main northern towns and urban edges of Chesterfield and Sheffield a strategic review of the Green Belt was commenced in 2016.

The review was undertaken as an objective assessment of whether parcels of land still meet the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Only once this has been established is it possible to identify the potential suitability of sites to support sustainable development.

Initial findings from the latest Green Belt review tell us that only relatively small scale expansion of several large settlements, is likely to be the only form of development which avoids compromising the strategic role of the District's Green Belt.

The Green Belt Review is a major piece of work which has made the previous local

plan timetable unachievable, it has sought to put the Council in the best possible position to demonstrate compliance with planning regulations, national policy and good practice. Once finalised it will form a key element of the Plan's evidence base that is critical to ensuring that the tests of soundness that are required by central government later in the examination stage of the local plan process are met.

The Green Belt review will be published alongside the revised draft plan early next year. This will provide an indication of what land is most suitable to release from the Green Belt and the reasons why.

### **Local Settlement Gaps Study**

In recognition of the specific characteristics of the dense network of villages lying in the South Sub-area we have looked specifically at the issues of settlement identity and coalescence through a Local Settlement Gaps Study.

The Council considers that its overall recommendations to designate a number of Local Settlement Gaps still holds good today. Although minor updates to the Study may be needed in the light of other work to define settlement development limits, for example.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **Green Infrastructure Study**

A Green Infrastructure Study was completed in 2012. It identifies the existing Green Infrastructure Assets across the District, and considers how they could be extended and improved. Subject to

some minor updating it will continue to be used to justify a policy on Green Infrastructure in the Draft Plan.

### **Landscape Character Assessment**

The landscape character of the District is classified into character areas and types in the 'Landscape Character of Derbyshire' document completed in 2013.

The document provides detailed information on the character of the District's landscape which remains valid and will continue to be used to underpin the Draft Plan's approach to the protection and enhancement of the landscape.

### **Historic Environment Study**

North East Derbyshire has a unique and irreplaceable collection of heritage assets which are valued by our communities. Information on these assets together with analysis of the distinct differences in the historic character of the District's sub-areas is documented in the 2012 Historic Environment Study.

Subject to some minor updating in the light of more recent changes to the policy context, the Study is largely fit for purpose and can be used to justify the inclusion of a policy dealing with heritage assets in the Draft Plan.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Infrastructure Study and Delivery Plan**

The provision of services such as education, healthcare, public transport, and public utilities is critical in supporting



sustainable communities. But the total cost of infrastructure needed to support the District's growth cannot be met by development alone, and so co-ordinating the investment plans of service providers and other public funding partners is crucial to the delivery of the plan.

An Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be produced alongside the new Local Plan to link up future planned locations for development with local facilities and services. We will also continue to build relationships with infrastructure providers and monitor existing capacity against potential future needs.

## **Transport**

A traffic model for North Derbyshire was completed in 2012. This was used to assess the cumulative traffic impact of the development being proposed by the Council at the time.

Since then the situation has changed and we will need to undertake a review of and update the transport modelling as necessary in order to assess the traffic impacts of the development proposed in the Plan.

A major study is currently under-way to identify potential transport improvements needed to support major housing and employment growth along the A61 Growth Corridor which will be delivered through the D2N2 Local Enterprise Growth Deal grant funding. Stage 1 of the Study has been completed, but further work is on-going through Stage 2 to further appraise and develop a preferred

package of potential options to take forward in the Local Plan.

## **Viability Assessment**

A key requirement is to assess the viability of the delivery of the local plan and the cumulative cost impact of policies contained within it.

In due course we will begin to test the viability of the emerging policies through a Whole Plan Viability Assessment. This assessment will help the council determine whether the emerging draft policy requirements are realistic, cost-effective, and can deliver the sustainable development of the District without putting the implementation of the Plan at serious risk.

Key outputs of the assessment will provide further evidence to help the Council to set thresholds and requirements for affordable housing and to inform a decision on the case for preparing and implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

## **Low and Zero Carbon Energy Study**

In 2011 a Low and Zero Carbon Energy Study was completed. The Study assessed the potential in the District for renewable energy technologies including for wind, biomass, hydro energy, micro-generation, and district heating. It found both sufficient 'technical' and 'practical' potential for the deployment of renewable energy technologies to justify the inclusion of policies in the Local Plan.

Since then the government has tightened its position on wind energy such that wind turbines can only be permitted in areas identified as suitable for wind energy on the Local Plan policies map.

In North East Derbyshire there is 'practical' potential for wind energy for up to 13 large scale 2.5MW turbines which would generate 83 GWh of electricity per year. However because this is distributed across many small sites, it would only be of limited interest to the commercial market, and would result in cumulative impacts over time. On this basis, the Council considers it is inappropriate to seek to identify wind energy opportunity areas in the new Draft Plan.

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**

We have a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which is based upon the best available information at the time the study took place in 2007. This may need to be updated and we are currently in discussion with the Environment Agency about this.

In the meantime we will continue to cooperate with the Environment Agency on our preferred policy approach to water environment related issues. We will also continue to ensure that planned development across the District is directed away from areas at high risk of flooding.

### **Water Cycle Study**

A Water Cycle Scoping Study was completed in 2010.

In terms of water supply it identified no potential capacity issues. However, the Study found that there are capacity issues at a number of the waste water treatment works which serve the District's settlements.

We will liaise directly with water infrastructure providers through the preparation of the Infrastructure Study to further investigate these issues and to ensure the timely provision of appropriate additional infrastructure to cater for the spatial distribution of growth proposed through the new Draft Plan.

### **Built Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy**

We are currently working to prepare a Built Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy. Its main purpose is to assess the district's needs for indoor sports facilities, playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities, and the opportunities for new provision.

Once complete it will provide analysis of the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability of provision in the district. Not only will this provide the evidence to help protect and enhance existing sports facilities and playing pitch provision, it will be used to help the Council review its existing local quantity and accessible standards for these types of open space.

### **Open Space Study**

In order to complete the picture we are also currently carrying out work to update our information on allotments, children's play space, churchyards / cemeteries, amenity space, youth facilities and other forms of specialist provision to help us

determine the district's requirements for these other forms of open space.

## **OTHER EVIDENCE**

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

Local Plans have to be tested with a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) (SA). The first stage is to prepare a Scoping Report, which was first published in 2007, and updated in 2012.

Through this process a set of SA objectives has been established which will be used to assess and improve the sustainability credentials of the emerging plan policies and proposals. A report setting out the progress on the SA, including the assessment of the policies in the new Draft Plan and the reasonable alternatives considered will be published at the next stage.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

There is a requirement for all Local Plans to be subject to Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).

The aim of the HRA is to identify any aspects of the Plan that would have the potential to cause a likely significant effect on European Sites of nature conservation importance.

The designated sites of European interest in North East Derbyshire are the Peak District Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC), albeit they are located outside of the area

covered by the Local Plan. Other European sites near to North East Derbyshire, but outside of the administrative boundary, are the Peak District Dales SAC, and the Gang Mine SAC in Derbyshire Dales District.

As a first stage in the HRA process we prepared an initial 'Screening Report' of an early 'Core Strategy' version of the Plan in 2011, to assess whether there were likely significant effects on European sites. This highlighted uncertainty over whether likely significant effects might arise through the detailed policies of the plan. Screening will be revisited as the Plan progresses and will examine the risks of adverse effects, to ensure suitable mitigation measures are put in place within the new Draft Plan.

### **Health Impact Assessment**

As part of the process of preparing the Plan we will also carry out in stages a Health Impact Assessment. This is to ensure that health and well being are fully considered as part of the preparation of the Plan's policies.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

A further requirement is for all Local Plans to be subject to Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA).

The purpose of this is to assess the impact of policies on people with protected characteristics. We will carry out an EqIA as part of the process of developing the Draft Plan.