

No. 7

Strategic Development
Sites

(February 2010)



Core Strategy Background Paper

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Introduction

- 1.1 This Background Paper provides evidence and information concerning the selection of strategic development sites to accommodate future employment and housing growth at Selby.
- 1.2 It should be read in conjunction with the Sustainability Appraisal Report (which examines the relative merits of each of the strategic sites) and the Sequential Test undertaken as part of the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Background

Regional Context

- 2.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) establishes the broad scale and distribution of growth across the region for the period up to 2026.
- 2.2 The core policies in the Strategy promote continued urban renewal and sustainable growth in the Regional Cities, Sub-Regional Cities and Principal Towns. Smaller scale development is promoted in Local Service Centres (which are to be identified by Local Planning Authorities) to support economic development and meet local needs.
- 2.3 Selby is identified as one of the Principal Towns which are intended to provide the main local focus for housing, employment, shopping, leisure and cultural facilities.
- 2.4 In terms of future housing provision RSS establishes a minimum District wide net requirement for the period 2008 onwards of 440 dwellings per annum. This is equivalent to 7,920 dwellings for the period 2008 – 2026 and is the second highest housing requirement of all North Yorkshire authorities.
- 2.5 While RSS does not promote an employment land target it does identify Selby as “*a place where increased job growth is required*” (para 6.6), and refers to the fact that within the York Sub - Area “*Selby will be the focus of significant, but lower scale growth of housing and employment*” (than York) (para 6.11). Policy Y1 (York Sub Area) specifically promotes development at Selby to foster regeneration and to diversify its economy within the Leeds City Region.

Core Strategy Response

- 2.6 The Core Strategy identifies the general settlement locations for accommodating future housing and economic growth and assigns broad amounts of development to each location. In accordance with RSS, the majority of new housing and employment growth is focussed on Selby.
- 2.7 The town benefits from a by-pass which opened in 2004 and a number of major residential and employment schemes are already committed. The

redevelopment of older employment sites combined with regeneration projects coming forward as a result of the Renaissance Programme will further support the continued regeneration and enhancement of the town.

- 2.8 One of the key challenges for the Core Strategy is to address current high levels of out-commuting. Developing and revitalising the economy of the District has emerged as a major priority if a more self-contained, sustainable way of life for residents is to be achieved.
- 2.9 Steering economic growth toward Selby will help to achieve this aim as well as supporting the towns 'Principal Town' role. Selby has a significant role to play as the economic, cultural and social hub for a large rural hinterland. It is also well placed to benefit from growth associated with the Leeds City Region and its near neighbour, York.

Approach to Satisfying the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Requirement

- 3.1 Given the scale of housing growth required and the fact that Selby is the only Principal Town in the District identified by the RSS, it was apparent at an early stage in preparing the Core Strategy that it would be difficult to absorb the scale of growth required within the existing built up area of the town.
- 3.2 This conclusion is supported by both the 2008 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which was published in 2009, and the PPS 25 Sequential Test carried out as part of a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).
- 3.3 The SHLAA identifies capacity for about 2,000 dwellings inside the existing built up area in the period up to 2026 (excluding land within planning permission), in comparison with 2,900 dwellings earmarked for Selby and the immediately adjoining villages (Barlby / Osgodby, Brayton and Thorpe Willoughby) in Core Strategy Policy CP2. This would leave a shortfall of approximately 900 dwellings.
- 3.4 While there is additional capacity, for a further 2,000 dwellings in the adjoining villages, this is mostly greenfield land outside existing development limits and the option of deflecting significant growth to these villages has been rejected on sustainability grounds, and because it would conflict with the RSS. Growth in these surrounding settlements is intended to be complimentary to, not instead of, growth in Selby.
- 3.5 The PPS 25 Sequential Test also demonstrates that opportunities to accommodate future growth on low flood risk land in Selby are very limited, and only about 420 dwellings on land identified in the SHLAA would be at low flood risk.
- 3.6 In addition to housing growth additional land is required for economic expansion (in the region of 20 – 30 ha to meet the Council's aspirations), particularly since on the evidence of the 2007 Employment Land Study many existing allocations are constrained in the short – medium term.

- 3.7 It is therefore concluded that there is insufficient, reasonably available land to accommodate the scale of growth required within the existing Selby urban area. The Council therefore decided to examine the scope for delivering the strategic housing requirement and meeting its aspirations with regard to economic growth, through one or more strategic development sites on greenfield land in the form of sustainable urban extensions.
- 3.8 This approach is consistent with the guidance in PPS12, (Local Spatial Planning) which suggests that LPA's may allocate strategic sites for development in Core Strategies, where these are considered "central to the achievement of the Strategy, and where investment requires a long lead in" (para 4.7).
- 3.9 As well as satisfying housing and employment growth requirements Strategic Development Sites are intended to contribute to the development of sustainable communities by ensuring the provision of appropriate highway and infrastructure improvements, and developing improved linkages between where people live, work and visit for shopping, leisure and cultural activities.

Alternative Strategic Development Site Options

- 4.1 As part of the consultation on Further Options in November/December 2008, the Council sought views on a number of strategic development site options. These comprise 6 potential urban extensions, plus 2 strategic employment sites close to Selby bypass.
- 4.2 The sites are identified on the plan attached at Appendix 1.

Strategic Housing Sites

Site A – Cross Hills Lane (42 hectares / 1,000 dwellings +).

Located adjacent to Selby Dam at the north western edge of Selby. Access would be from Cross Hills Lane and Leeds Road, via a new access road bridging Selby Dam.

Site B – Land West of Wistow Road (25 hectares / 500 dwellings)

Situated between Flaxley Road and Wistow Road at the northern edge of Selby. Access from Flaxley Road and Wistow Road.

Site C – Land off Bondgate/Monk Lane (47 hectares / 1,000 dwellings +)

Situated to the east of Bondgate and north of the Holmes. Access from Bondgate and Monk Lane.

Site D – Olympia Park, Barlby (38 hectares / 800 dwellings)

To the east of Barlby Bridge contained by the River Ouse, the A19 Barlby Road and the Potter Group freight transhipment depot. The northern part of the site is bisected by the Selby – Hull railway line. The site comprises a mixture of existing industrial uses and former operational land associated with BOCM Pauls animal feedstuffs, allotments, playing fields and agricultural land. Access from Barlby Road via a new access road bridging the railway.

Site E – Baffam Lane (26 hectares / 500 + dwellings)
Situated between the A19 (Doncaster Road) and Selby Canal and bisected by Baffam Lane. Forms part of the strategic countryside gap between Selby and Brayton.

Site F – Foxhill Lane / Brackenhill Lane (31 hectares / 750 dwellings)
Situated between the A19 (Doncaster Road) and the Selby-Leeds railway line. Forms part of the strategic countryside gap between Selby and Brayton.

Strategic Employment Sites

Site G – Olympia Park (land adjacent to Selby bypass) (54 hectares)
Agricultural land between Selby bypass and the Potter Group freight transshipment depot, with some redundant buildings associated with BOCM Pauls animal foodstuffs on the Barlby Road frontage. The northern part of the site is bisected by the Selby – Hull railway line. Land north of the railway has planning consent for a mixture of B1, B2, B8 and commercial activities. Access from Selby bypass via an existing roundabout.

Site H – Burn Airfield – (195 hectares)
Former airfield to the south of Selby canal and east of the A19 at Burn. Predominantly agricultural use. Runways, hangars etc used by Burn Gliding Club. This site was recently promoted (unsuccessfully) as a potential site for the European Spallation Source (ESS) Project and has the benefit of planning consent for a single occupier research establishment.

Response to Consultation

- 4.3 An analysis of the general response to the Further Options consultation is presented in Appendix 2, and summarised below. Details of key stakeholder comments, including North Yorkshire County Council (Highways and Planning), the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, Yorkshire Forward, and the former Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly, are provided in Appendix 3.

Strategic Residential Sites

- 4.4 None of the sites were universally popular and all had at least one negative issue associated with their development to full capacity. Flooding and highway constraints were the two most frequently mentioned factors. From the preferences given by respondents, Site D and Site A emerge with relatively consistent results, appearing most in the highest rated sites and least in the lowest rated sites, and generally receiving the most positive comments. Opinions were divided on Site F which scores equally as a favoured and non favoured site. Sites B, C and E have consistently low ratings, with site C the least favoured of all.

4.5 Points raised were as follows:-

Site A (Cross Hills Lane)

- good access and/or opportunity to provide better access to the north of the town
- high flood risk, and associated issues,
- high infrastructure costs

Site B (Wistow Road)

- an appropriate natural extension of Selby
- high flood risk and associated issues,
- high infrastructure costs
- poor access and highway capacity

Site C (Bondgate/Monk Lane)

- high flood risk and associated issues,
- high infrastructure costs and poor access
- highway capacity

Site D (Olympia Park)

- previously developed land
- would bring much needed visual improvement
- well related to the highway and public transport network.
- high flood risk
- high infrastructure costs

Site E (Baffam Lane)

- low flood risk
- good access
- impact on the Strategic Gap between Brayton and Selby and the resulting coalescence of the two settlements.

Site F (Foxhills Lane/Brackenhill Lane)

The issues raised on this site were very similar to those on Site E.

4.6 North Yorkshire County Council (Planning) support Sites A and D because they consider preference should be given to previously developed land, minimising flood risk, existing local plan allocations and maintaining strategic gaps. Yorkshire Forward support sites C and D because they are linked to sites identified in the Renaissance Strategic Development Framework.

4.7 In terms of potential constraints the Environment Agency have differing degrees of concern about sites A, B, C and D, particularly site C which is considered the most vulnerable to flooding, and signal the need for more detailed examination of sites through a Level 2 SFRA and Sequential Test. Sites E and F are considered sequentially preferable by the Agency in flood risk terms.

4.8 NYCC Highways identified highway capacity constraints regarding sites B and C which they consider cannot be alleviated. Site F is not considered suitable for the scale of development envisaged and considerable highway investment would be required to facilitate delivery.

- 4.9 Other issues identified include the potential impacts on Conservation Areas (sites A, D, E and F) and listed building (sites B, E and F) raised by English Heritage and the need to take the impact of development on the landscape and biodiversity resources into account on the advice of Natural England.

Strategic Employment Sites

- 4.10 Despite the high flood risk associated with Site G, this site is overwhelming preferred (6 to 1) by respondents to a major business park/general employment development at Burn Airfield. The site is generally considered to be a favourable one with regard to its location and setting within the Selby urban area and its accessibility for the Selby workforce, although there appeared to be some misconceptions about the amount of previously developed land within Site G and also a slightly rosy general perception of the accessibility of the site by public transport and walking (particularly from the main part of the site to the south of the railway).
- 4.11 A number of contrasting views were put forward. For example Yorkshire Forward supports both sites and suggest a third at Gascoigne Wood, while the Highways Agency are concerned about the scale of development and potential impact on the strategic road network. Natural England considers both sites have significant landscape implications. NYCC (Highways and Planning) prefer Site G (good access, improved flood defences, potential to use the rail network, well located to the workforce, does not impact on the countryside and a more sustainable location). The (former) Regional Assembly express concern about the prospect of general employment on the Burn site because of its unsustainable location and flood risk issues.
- 4.12 Both sites fall within areas of identified high flood risk although the Environment Agency comment that further understanding of the risk is required through a Level 2 Assessment and advise that although part of the Burn site is identified as falling within the functional floodplain it is likely that more detailed investigation would demonstrate that it is not.

Site Evaluation

- 5.1 As a result of consulting the public and key stakeholders it is apparent that some of the sites are severely constrained (Site B because of inadequate highway capacity, and Site C because of a combination of highway and flood risk issues), and that these constraints cannot realistically be overcome. It is also apparent that sites that are least constrained in flood risk terms (Sites E, F & H) are also potentially those most likely to have an adverse impact on landscape and built heritage considerations, or to result in coalescence of settlements.
- 5.2 A number of technical studies have therefore been undertaken to help inform the selection process. These comprise:

- a sustainability appraisal of strategic development site options
- a landscape assessment
- an assessment of the relative impacts of development on the highways network
- a PPS25 Sequential Test and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

5.3 In addition all main landowners (where known) were contacted to establish where land is genuinely available for development, and whether landowners are prepared to co-operate with each other, and to work with the Council to ensure that schemes are viable and would deliver comprehensively planned, sustainable urban extensions. This has resulted in a positive response.

Sustainability Appraisal

5.4 The summary results from the Sustainability Appraisal of potential strategic development sites are attached at Appendix 4. (See Sustainability Appraisal Review of Further Options and Strategic Development Sites, February 2009 for details). This provides a guide as to the differing impacts of development against the range of social, economic and environmental criteria used to assess the Core Strategy, based on Core Strategy Objectives.

5.5 It will be seen that none of the strategic residential sites are able to satisfy all the criteria. Sites A, B, C, E and F have similar ratings due to their characteristics and locations on the edge of Selby. A number of issues would require addressing or mitigating in each case.

5.6 Site D performs the best in view of its good relationship with the existing pattern of development, close proximity to Selby town centre, and access to a frequent bus service, plus the fact that it is a brownfield site.

5.7 Site G performs best of the two strategic employment sites because it is closer to facilities in Selby and enjoys better access and public transport. Both sites include some brownfield land.

Landscape Assessment

5.8 The landscape assessment, which is attached at Appendix 5, provides an indication of the relative physical and visual sensitivity of the landscape surrounding Selby. Each of the development site options is scored according to whether development is judged to have a low, medium or high effect. The

5.9 The study was informed by the Landscape Character Assessment of Selby District undertaken by Woolerton Dodwell Associates in 1999. It has also been prepared in accordance with guidance produced by the former Countryside Agency on Landscape Character Assessments (2002) and Topic Paper No 6 on 'Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity.

- 5.10 While none of the potential residential sites are considered to have a high sensitivity to development the study concludes that land to the north, west and east of the town is less sensitive than land to the south in the open countryside gap between Selby and Brayton, and land to the north east, which is more open to view.
- 5.11 Employment site H is the only site considered to have a high sensitivity to development owing to its open nature and exposed location.
- 5.12 Development of Sites D and G which are enclosed by Selby bypass and existing development is considered to have the least impact.

Highways Impact assessment

- 5.13 In order to assess the impact of additional trips generated on the Selby road network North Yorkshire County Council commissioned Jacobs Consultancy to undertake a traffic modelling Option Study of residential sites A, D, E & F and employment sites G and H. This was undertaken in two phases:
- Phase 1 examines the impact on the road network of each site individually
 - Phase 2 looks at the impact of preferred combinations of sites arising from the phase 1 results, and other considerations.
- 5.14 Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 Reports are available on the Councils website.
- 5.15 The Phase 1 Options Testing and Forecasting Study assessed the impact of additional traffic generated on all of the Selby bypass roundabouts, on signal controlled junctions in the town centre and Brayton Cross Roads and 3 level crossings (Doncaster Road Selby, Leeds Road Thorpe Willoughby and Brayton Lane Brayton).
- 5.16 The outputs from this study suggest that of the 6 residential options development of Site D would have the least overall impact on the road network, and development of Site E would have the most overall impact. Sites A and F have varying positive and negative effects. For example, Site A would result in a significant increase in queuing at the Leeds Road Level Crossing but would have the least impact on existing roundabouts. Site F would have the greatest impact on the roundabouts and result in increased delays at the Doncaster Road Level Crossing.
- 5.17 Signal controlled junctions in the town centre would exceed capacity as a result of developing any of the sites, and would require mitigation measures.
- 5.18 Site G has the least impact on the network of the two employment site options.
- 5.19 On completion of the Phase 1 Testing, housing Sites A and D and employment Site G were taken forward for testing in Phase 2. Sites F and H were rejected for a combination of highways and planning reasons. In the case of Site F the negative planning impacts include the erosion of the open countryside gap between Selby and Brayton and the

risk of coalescence. In the case of Site H the negative planning impacts are due to its weaker sustainability and locational characteristics plus the opportunity of retaining Site H for a future strategic inward investment proposal rather than a business park development.

- 5.20 Two separate tests were undertaken in Phase 2, namely Site D and Site G combined, followed by Sites A, D and G. The results indicate that 2 of the signalled junctions in the town centre (Gowthorpe/Scott Road and the Toll Bridge junction) would be operating over capacity and that the level of congestion would increase significantly if all three Sites were developed. Modifications would be required at these junctions in order to accommodate the additional traffic.
- 5.21 In each case the roundabouts tested all coped comfortably with the additional trips generated, suggesting that there is scope to divert traffic away from the congested town centre to make more use of the bypass.

PPS 25 Sequential Test

- 5.22 The Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment published in 2008 indicates that significant parts of Selby and the surrounding area are at risk from flooding. A PPS 25 Sequential Test was therefore carried out as part of a Level 2 SFRA in order to direct growth to 'reasonably available', lower flood risk land first. (Level 1 and Level 2 Reports and the PPS25 Sequential Test are available on the Councils website)
- 5.23 The application of the Sequential test demonstrates that it is not possible to accommodate all housing and employment land requirements in Selby, on land at lowest risk of flooding if wider sustainability and regeneration objectives are to be achieved.
- 5.24 In considering the strategic development site options the following sites were not considered to be 'reasonably available':-
- Site B (low flood risk) was discounted as Wistow Road does not have the capacity to accommodate additional development on any significant scale and there is no realistic solution to the highway problem
 - Site C (high flood risk) was discounted for the same reason as B, but also because the site is considered to be at significant flood risk, particularly when the dike which drains the site becomes flood locked and/or by failure of the Wistow barrier bank
 - Sites E and F (mixture of low and medium flood risk) were discounted as although after Site B they are the least constrained in flood risk terms, significant development on either site would erode the open countryside gap between Selby and Brayton village, potentially leading to the coalescence of the two settlements.
 - Site H (mixture of high and low risk) was discounted because it is less sustainable than the alternative employment Site G due to poorer public transport and accessibility and its exposed location.

- 5.25 This leaves Sites A (mixture of high risk and low risk), D (high risk) and G (high risk). Part of Site A has the benefit of an existing housing allocation in the Selby District Local Plan, it is reasonably well related to the existing pattern of development, and provides opportunities for green infrastructure. Site D includes a significant area of previously developed land and could bring significant regeneration benefits to the town. Site G occupies an accessible strategic location, including an element of previously developed land.
- 5.26 For these reasons Sites A, D and G were taken forward into the Level 2 SFRA in order to assess the nature of the flood risk in more detail. The Level 2 Assessment identifies the areas within each of the sites which are more vulnerable to inundation and likely to be subject to greatest depth of flooding, and makes a series of recommendations to ensure that development would be 'safe', and that the flood risk is adequately managed incorporating measures to mitigate the impact.
- 5.27 Owing to the vulnerable nature of residential uses in areas of high flood risk the Level 2 residential sites have been subject to an additional 'Exceptions Test', in compliance with PPS 25. Both sites pass the test, which requires developments to provide wider sustainability benefits, to be on previously developed land unless there are no reasonable alternatives, and to be safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Conclusions

- 6.1 The results of the evaluation of strategic development sites are summarised in appendix 6, including highways and flood risk rankings. A commentary on all the technical and planning considerations which have been taken into account, including infrastructure constraints and requirements, is provided in Appendix 7.
- 6.2 Residential Sites A and D are considered to provide the best opportunities for creating sustainable urban extensions, consistent with overriding Core Strategy objectives.
- 6.3 Employment Site G is considered to provide the most sustainable location for future economic growth, and can be linked with residential Site D to provide a mixed scheme.
- 6.4 Site B is rejected for highway capacity reasons and Site C is rejected for a combination of highway and flood risk reasons.
- 6.5 Sites E and F are rejected because development of either site would erode the open countryside gap between Selby and Brayton village, leading to coalescence of the two settlements. Site E would also have the most impact on the existing road network. Both sites would also have significant environmental impacts.
- 6.6 Site H is rejected because it is a less sustainable option than Site G.