North East Derbyshire Local Plan

For Consultation:

Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives

August 2012
Foreword

Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives Consultation

North East Derbyshire District Council is currently preparing a ‘Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies’ for the District. This is a strategic level document which will provide the spatial vision and strategy that will shape the future of North East Derbyshire. Part 2 of the Local Plan will be prepared in due course and will consist of site allocations and detailed development management policies. Both parts must be based on robust evidence.

Consultation is currently taking place on a number of key issues regarding the emerging Local Plan, including the vision and objectives, local strategy approach, local housing target and a Green Belt Review Methodology.

The Council has drafted a Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives paper for consultation. It is a vital part of the Plan preparation work as not only does it set the scene but also gives a clear indication of where the Council would like the District to be in 20 years time and how it hopes to get there. You are invited to comment on this. Please use the standard representation form to provide your comments. The consultation runs from 2nd August to 13th September 2012.
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1. Introduction

1.1 It is important to develop a clear understanding of the District, how it functions and the key issues that need to be addressed. Without recognising the features that characterise the District today, we cannot hope to plan for 20 years’ time.

1.2 The District’s Place Survey\(^1\) showed that 84% of people in North East Derbyshire District are satisfied with the local area as a place to live and 66% feel they belong to their immediate neighbourhood. It is important that these positive feelings are taken forward when future change takes place in the District and that this level of satisfaction continues to improve.

2. Location and Physical Context

2.1 North East Derbyshire District extends to 276 square kilometres and lies at the north of the County and the East Midlands region. It adjoins Derbyshire Dales district to the west, Bolsover to the east and Amber Valley to the south, whilst the borough of Chesterfield sits at the centre of the District. Whilst Chesterfield is an important service centre, the District is also part of the Sheffield City Region and the north of the District in particular, is influenced by both Sheffield and Rotherham authorities in South Yorkshire that adjoin its northern boundary. The western part of the District is part of the Peak District National Park. Map 1 shows North East Derbyshire District in relation to the surrounding area.

2.2 North East Derbyshire is a district of great variety and distinctive communities. It is categorised as a Rural 50 district by Defra\(^2\), which means that between 50 - 79.9% of its population live in rural census output areas. It has a diverse range of landscapes and towns and villages many of which have been shaped by the coal mining industry. The character, layout and form of groups of buildings, streets and spaces in settlement and countryside make a significant contribution to providing a sense of place, although it is recognised that there is scope for enhancement and improvement in some parts of the District. Generally residents have a strong sense of identity with their own settlement.

2.3 The District contains four towns, Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh in the north and Clay Cross in the south, where the majority of the population live. Each town has a centre with shops services, leisure and cultural facilities, although some do lack definition and cohesion. These towns have roles in providing the economic and social hearts of the District and each contributes to sustainable living and community spirit. The extent to which they can provide a vital and vibrant centre is partly dependent on the surrounding area, their layout, population, employment levels, spending power and accessibility.

\(^1\) The Place Survey 2008
\(^2\) Defra Classification of Local Authorities in England Updated Technical Guide, April 2009
2.4 The town centres continue to evolve and have changed in the way they look, the types of shops they contain and the way in which they are
accessed and used. They function as service and shopping centres catering mainly for local needs. It will be important to ensure that these towns build on their strengths and remain or develop into sustainable centres that provide a pleasant environment with a range of facilities.

3. **Population**

3.1 The District has a population of 98,200\(^3\) and about 48% live in the four towns. In line with national trends, it has an ageing population and a lower proportion of children and young people under the age of 35 than elsewhere in the East Midlands region and nationally. There is a lower than average proportion of young people in the District with higher qualifications (first degree and above) and many of these are seeking work.

3.2 It also has a higher proportion of older people, particularly women, than in the East Midlands region and nationally. 40% of the population is over 50; 22% is in the 50-65 year age group, 14% in the 65-79 age group and 5% is aged over 80 years, slightly higher than the rest of Derbyshire, regionally and nationally. Average life expectancy is just over 80 years for women and just over 77 years for men which is similar to the national picture. Forecasts indicate that there will be an increase in over 45s and a decrease in the number of under 19s and 30-44 year olds.

3.3 There is a slightly higher proportion of married couples than nationally and fewer single people and one parent families. The population is largely white British, although the ethnic population, particularly Black and Chinese, has increased over the past five years to 2.5%. The District is fairly self-contained. During 2006, 43.5% of house moves took place within the District, 18% came from Chesterfield and 12% from Sheffield and Rotherham\(^4\).

3.4 The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that 9.7% of the District’s population lives in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The District is ranked 280\(^\text{th}\) out of 354 authorities. Aspects of deprivation include low income, poor health, low employment, poor education and skills and problems accessing housing and services\(^5\). The level of health of residents differs significantly between the housing tenure of residents. 77% of residents in owner occupied housing are reported to have good health, compared to 53% of those in social rented property. Health deprivation is at its highest in those areas where residents are on the lowest incomes\(^6\).

\(^3\) ONS mid year population estimates 2008  
\(^4\) State of the District Report, SHU 2007  
\(^5\) Shaping the Future, NEDDC 2010  
\(^6\) Core Strategy Background Paper 5: Safe, Healthy and Active Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
4. Housing

4.1 In April 2008 there was estimated to be 43,906 dwellings in the District. That year the average house price was £157,847. There are more detached and semi detached and fewer terraced than regionally and nationally and a lack of small homes with three rooms or less.

4.2 A high proportion of the District's housing is owner occupied (72%) and local authority rented (22%). A low proportion lives in privately rented homes (5%). The condition of the housing stock has been gradually improving. Access to affordable housing is a problem in much of the District and in 2011 the District Housing Needs, Market and Affordability Study indicated an overall shortfall of almost 500 dwellings a year. The house price/income ratio, an indicator of access to affordable housing, remains high in much of the District and there is clearly a need to provide more housing that is affordable to first time buyers and others who are unable to afford market house prices.

5. The Economy and Employment

5.1 Employment opportunities are mainly provided in the four towns and on industrial estates throughout the District. Despite these employment opportunities, only about 35% of the 46,000 working population works in the District, whilst about 20% commute to each of Sheffield and Chesterfield. However, only 7,000 people travel from Sheffield and Chesterfield into the District to work, meaning that the District is a net exporter of workers. The commuting ratio is 1.63, meaning that for every person of working age there is just .63 of a job available in the District.

5.2 Average income from employment is lower than the regional and national average and the District scores 169th in relation to income deprivation and 130th in relation to education, training and skills out of 354 authorities. The District has a relatively small proportion of residents in the working age group (16-64 years for males and 16-59 years for females). 3.7% of the working population are claiming Job Seekers Allowance but a relatively high proportion of economically inactive residents are keen to find employment.

5.3 There is potential weakness within the economy as economic success is not shared equally across the District and wage rates in many employment sectors are low. The District has both areas of significant affluence and severe deprivation. Since the late 1990s there have been particularly heavy losses of jobs in manufacturing, whilst the key growth areas have been public administration, education and the health sector, alongside modest growth in transport and communications. Construction and tourism also feature. New business registrations are comparably similar to other

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7 Core Strategy Background Paper 3: Living Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
8 Core Strategy Background Paper 3: Living Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
10 Shaping the Future, NEDDC, 2010
authorities within Derbyshire but below the national average for England. Employment within small businesses has grown more than the national average but has not been as high as the majority of Derbyshire districts\textsuperscript{11}.

5.4 The East Midlands Northern Sub-Region Employment Land Review\textsuperscript{12} considered that in the District there is a lack of new traditional industrial premises to allow local companies to grow and evolve. There is a shortfall of quality business premises including managed workplace, incubation units and a range of plot sizes that allow companies to grow and expand without re-locating outside of the District. There is also a requirement for additional small sites for local need. This would allow expansion sites for existing businesses, small serviced plots to allow local companies to build their own premises and small, modern, light industrial buildings particularly in the south eastern part of the District. The study identifies the south east of the District as a major location for new investment and this is the area that has the greatest need for new employment.

5.5 The Employment Land Review expects the role of tourism to increase in future in view of the District’s proximity to a number of important attractions ranging from Chatsworth House, Hardwick Hall and Bolsover Castle to the stunning countryside of the Peak District National Park. The west of the District in particular is identified as a sustainable tourist and visitor destination particularly if it brands itself as ‘gateway to the Peak District’.

6. Transport Links and Public Transport

6.1 The District’s location in the centre of the country gives it good accessibility by road, rail and air. Nevertheless, the car remains the dominant form of transport. There is high reliance on travel to work by car and people travel longer distances to work than regionally and nationally. There is a high proportion of out commuting and relatively few residents cycle or walk to work. Increasing levels of congestion have been experienced in recent years and this is particularly evident around the edge of Chesterfield. However Clay Cross, Eckington and Dronfield and the villages of Wingerworth and Ashover all experience peak hour delays from time to time. Killamarsh also suffers from slow moving or stationary traffic during peak hours due to poor links with the strategic road network.

6.2 The M1 motorway runs to the east of the District and Junction 29 close to Heath and Holmewood and Junction 29A close to Long Duckmanton lie within its boundaries. The A6175 provides access to Junction 29, although it does experience some of the highest traffic flows in the District, the A632 provides access to Junction 29A, whilst the A616 provides access to Junction 30 just outside the District boundary. Junction 29A was completed in 2008 primarily to serve employment development at Markham Vale and there are only limited opportunities for increased use of

\textsuperscript{11} Core Strategy Background Paper 4: Working and Learning Communities, NEDDC, April 2009

\textsuperscript{12} East Midlands Northern Sub-Region Employment Land Review, Ove Arup and Partners Ltd, March 2008
this junction without upgrade. The A61 is the main north/south route, linking Sheffield and Dronfield with Clay Cross and beyond to Derby. It can become congested during busy times, particularly if the M1 becomes blocked locally, when it is used as a strategic diversion. A particular area of stress that experiences slow moving or stationary traffic during peak hours is the A61/A6175 junction at Clay Cross.

6.3 Rural roads linking villages and outlying farmsteads tend to be narrow and winding, whilst those connecting isolated farmsteads on the higher ground tend to be straight with fairly wide, uniform width verges.

6.4 Bus services are relatively frequent within the main urban areas, but more patchy and infrequent in the rural areas. Dronfield is the only town in the District with a railway station; elsewhere residents tend to rely on the station at Chesterfield that provides good services both to London and the north of the country.

7. Built Environment

7.1 The District contains 30 Conservation Areas ranging from urban areas such as parts of Dronfield and Eckington to small hamlets such as Pratt Hall near Cutthorpe. There are 487 listed buildings ranging from domestic and farm buildings to churches and the grandeur of Renishaw Hall and Sutton Scarsdale. The 32 Scheduled Monuments include stone circles, barrows, lead mills and wayside crosses. Over half are situated within Holmesfield parish.

7.2 Distinctive local character helps to define and distinguish one place from another and the District certainly contains differences in local vernacular ranging from the gritstone buildings of the Peak District National Park fringe to the sandstone and brick buildings and terraces of the coalfield areas. More recent development comprises typical national house builders' styles of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

7.3 It should be noted that new house building development in the East Midlands as a whole is failing to reach CABE’s good and very good standards. This in itself is a reason why new development should positively respect local distinctiveness and a sense of place through design.

8. Natural Environment

8.1 The landscape of North East Derbyshire is similarly varied. The wealth of natural resources shaped the history of the landscape on the eastern edge of the Peak District National Park, where the pattern of settlement has scarcely changed in thousands of years. Seven Sites of Special Scientific

14 Housing Audit 2006: East Midlands, West Midlands and the South West, Cabe, February 2007
Interest (SSSIs), woodland, hilly pastures, green dales and waterways all contribute to the District’s landscape, making it unique from other areas across the country.

8.2 The District also retains a wide variety of wildlife habitats as described in the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), the Peak District BAP and the North East Derbyshire Greenprint\textsuperscript{15} (which translates the BAP targets to the local level). These identify local priority habitats and species and set out detailed targets and action plans for achieving them. Protection is important as historically many important habitats and species have been lost through agricultural practices, road and housing development and neglect.

8.3 The whole of the District to the north and west of Wingerworth and Grassmoor is designated as Green Belt. Three of the District’s largest towns, Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh are surrounded by the Green Belt which has shaped these towns’ development over the past 60 years and now constrains further growth. Protection of the Green Belt is high priority for many local residents (See Section 11).

8.4 There are a number of railway lines left derelict after the coal industry declined. As well as providing good wildlife habitats, some of these have been restored as multi-use routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Together with more strategic routes such as the Trans Pennine Trail and the Chesterfield Canal, they offer potential to extend this ‘green infrastructure’ to provide links between the countryside and built up areas of the District.

9. Area Analysis of the District

9.1 Broadly the District can be divided into three distinct sub areas each with key common characteristics shared by the areas and settlements within them. Map 2 shows the three sub areas. The key features characterising each of these sub areas are as follows:-

**The Constrained North**

9.2 Three of the District’s towns, Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh lie in the north of the District. They are surrounded by an undulating area of mainly wooded hills and valleys, supporting mixed farming and a number of smaller settlements. The valleys provide important habitat corridors. The landscape around the towns of Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh is influenced by the coal measures of the Derbyshire Coalfield, a broad belt of low-lying land consisting of bands of sandstone, shale, mudstone and coal. These rock layers were uplifted, folded and eroded over time to form the characteristic ridges and valleys seen in the area.

\textsuperscript{15} A Greenprint for Biodiversity in North East Derbyshire, NEDDC, 2010
9.3 Around Dronfield, the landscape is characterised by greater amounts of sandstone and less coal and this results in wooded hills and valleys dissected by small streams, where any former mining has little influence.
This undulating landscape supports mixed, mainly pastoral, farming, heathy vegetation and densely scattered patches of ancient, semi-natural woodland, including the Moss Valley, a SSSI. Further east, around Eckington and Killamarsh, the landform is more gentle and undulating and supports mixed farming. The mature tree cover gives the impression of a well wooded landscape consisting of trees, hedgerows and small woodlands that support wildlife. The landscape supports sparsely scattered farmsteads and wayside cottages, often constructed from local sandstone with Welsh slate or red clay pantile roofs. Remnants of medieval strip farming are distinctive around the outskirts of Killamarsh. Whilst the mining industry has had a major impact on the landscape, predominantly in the form of spoil heaps and urban expansion, the area as a whole maintains a degree of visual unity with many field boundaries still intact. Eventually, further east, around Renishaw, the coal measures give way to magnesian limestone where arable farming has become the dominant land use. Long distance views are characteristic, due to the gentle relief and lack of hedgerows.

9.4 Dronfield acts mainly as a dormitory settlement to Sheffield and Chesterfield, although it does have a considerable amount of local employment opportunity ranging from tool manufacture and furniture production to high technology firms. It became prosperous between the 16th and 18th centuries as it lay on the route between the Peak District lead mining and the transport networks to the east and through the development of wool trading. Whilst coal mining was important historically there is little evidence of it today. It retains many of its historic buildings and has a strong civic centre with shops and leisure facilities. The Retail Capacity Study\(^{16}\) points to the fact that in 2006 the town ranked 1,173\textsuperscript{rd} in the Venuescore Index of retail centres, and whilst this is not very high, it does make this the largest shopping centre in the District. However retail unit vacancy rates are above the national average indicating that it is struggling to compete with the attractions of Sheffield. It is close to the Peak District National Park, adjacent to Sheffield, and has good transport infrastructure links.

9.5 Eckington expanded rapidly in the early 1800s when local coal deposits were worked; however, the decline in traditional industries in recent years has had a detrimental effect on the town, and the close proximity of two out-of-town shopping centres, Crystal Peaks and Meadowhall together with new supermarkets, has had a negative impact on its retail economy. This is evidenced by the particularly high number of vacant retail units and it is recognised that the town does need inward investment to secure its future. However, the town does have a number of positive qualities that could attract future investment, particularly as the economy recovers and development activity increases. Much of Eckington town centre falls within a Conservation Area, which is manifested by a number of attractive buildings of architectural and historical significance.

\(^{16}\) Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council Retail Capacity Study, April 2008, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners Ltd.
9.6 In 1988 a regeneration initiative was begun which sought to regenerate the centre of the town. In many respects this has been successful but the need for further regenerative work has been recognised to create a truly sustainable and vibrant community. The Council is committed to securing the regeneration of Eckington Town Centre and has adopted a supplementary planning document for the town setting out clear planning and urban design guidance to ensure a co-ordinated, cohesive and consistent approach to the regeneration of Eckington.

9.7 Killamarsh also developed as a result of coal, clay and limestone extraction, and further benefited from the transport and employment opportunities arising from the opening of the Chesterfield Canal in 1777. Improved road links to Sheffield followed in the late 18th century and the late 19th century showed a rapid increase in population. Collieries were replaced by industrial sites at Westthorpe and Norwood and the appearance of the town was consolidated during the 1960s when green spaces were developed with housing. The town centre changed with the addition of a leisure centre and library in the 1970s. The Rother Valley Country Park to the north of the town opened in 1983, providing additional facilities. The pedestrianised Parkside Shopping Centre that opened around the same time is soon to see improvements. Local industrial estates are now fully occupied and there is a lack of suitable new premises to allow local companies to evolve and grow. Difficulties such as these will need to be addressed if the town is to grow sustainably. However, the town’s strength lies in good transport links with Sheffield as the Halfway Interchange lies just over 2km away providing a tram link into the city centre. There is also potential to utilise and develop green links from the town into surrounding urban areas and countryside and capitalise on current activities to restore the Chesterfield Canal navigation.

9.8 These towns, together with nearby villages that look to them for service provision, are all constrained by the Green Belt which helps to retain their separate identities and prevent coalescence with Sheffield and Rotherham to the north. They are also influenced by South Yorkshire and the rest of Sheffield City Region in terms of transport links and employment opportunities. These factors have resulted in the development of large areas of housing within the settlements’ boundaries resulting in the loss of former green space and little opportunity for further development without encroaching into the Green Belt that surrounds them. Redevelopment opportunities within the towns, puts pressure on other land designations, such as employment and open space.

9.9 This area retains regular transport links with Sheffield through bus, rail and nearby tram links. It is relatively affluent, although there are pockets of deprivation. For instance, whilst the health of local residents is generally good there are small areas of relative deprivation such as in Eckington South where the level of limiting long term illness is high. Similarly there are a few pockets where criminal damage, violent crime and domestic
burglary are higher than the rest of the District, notably in Eckington North\textsuperscript{17}.

9.10 There is a lack of play areas in Killamarsh East and Dronfield Woodhouse, a lack of outdoor sports facilities in Killamarsh West and Dronfield South and a lack of outdoor youth facilities in Killamarsh, Eckington North and Dronfield Woodhouse\textsuperscript{18}. Some of the most affordable of the District’s housing is to be found in Eckington North and Killamarsh West. Dronfield, on the other hand, is a high demand area for housing, keeping prices relatively high and resulting in affordability problems\textsuperscript{19}.

\textbf{The Transitional South}

9.11 In the south of the District, the coal measures produce a broad, gently undulating landscape characterised by pastoral farming with localised arable cropping. The town of Clay Cross is the main service centre to former pit villages that often lie on ridge lines. The historic cores of the settlements are constructed of coal measure sandstone and brick terraces were later constructed to house colliers and their families. There are small woodlands, copses, linear tree belts and hedgerows with some mature hedgerow trees. Medieval strip fields are visually prominent in some areas, particularly around North Wingfield, Pilsley and to the east of Shirland, although in other areas widespread housing and industrial development have destroyed them. The restoration of former colliery sites has resulted in the creation of large fields, often enclosed by thorn hedges and areas of new woodlands, for instance at Grassmoor. To the east of the District, some historic villages, such as Heath and Sutton Scarsdale, have retained many of their traditional buildings.

9.12 Whilst Clay Cross is the dominant town in the south, it is in fact part of a group of former mining settlements that also includes Grassmoor, North Wingfield, Tupton and Pilsley making it the most developed part of the District. This part of the District has suffered adversely from economic restructuring and a number of brownfield sites have already been developed for housing and employment. Clay Cross itself is now undergoing significant regeneration. Historically it was an important market town, being home to pioneer George Stephenson’s Clay Cross Company, but over recent years provision of services in the Clay Cross area has struggled to keep pace with the town’s housing growth. Although the Coney Green Industrial Estate has seen a steady take up of land that caters for a range of new employment opportunities, some local residents have felt that the town has been forgotten and that this image has been a barrier to future investment. However, these issues will start to be addressed as the town experiences regeneration in the way of new shops (including a newly opened superstore) and other services.

\textsuperscript{17} Core Strategy Background Paper 5: Safe, Healthy and Active Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
\textsuperscript{18} Core Strategy Background Paper 5: Safe, Healthy and Active Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
\textsuperscript{19} Core Strategy Background Paper 3: Living Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
9.13 The loss of about 750 jobs at the former Biwater site (now rebranded Silkston) at the beginning of this century, had a serious impact on both the town and community, but it is hoped that outline consent for 980 houses, a new hotel and commercial uses will inject new life into the town. A ‘Regeneration Framework’\(^{20}\) for Clay Cross provides ambitions for the town’s future and proposals around the former school’s site provide a further opportunity to improve the built environment. It is also hoped that one day a railway station may be reinstated close to the town, offering direct links to Nottingham and London. Also, the town contains some attractive 19th century Victorian buildings which are designated as a Conservation Area. The historical legacy of Clay Cross could contribute to raising the profile of the town.

9.14 Lying about 3 miles to the north of Clay Cross is a further important brown field site, the former Avenue Coking Works, a strategic site offering opportunities for a mixed use development offering new employment, leisure and sustainable housing that could act as an exemplar for the rest of the District. This part of the District is identified in the Employment Land Review as a major location for new investment and it is also the area that has the greatest need for new employment. However, an ongoing problem has been the poor access to and from the M1 via the A6175.

9.15 Further employment creation is likely to take place at Markham Vale Enterprise Zone that lies at the boundaries of North East Derbyshire and Bolsover Districts and Chesterfield Borough and close to J29A of the M1. The settlements of Long Duckmanton, Calow and Arkwright Town have easy access to this site along the A632 and there may be opportunities to allow some housing growth in these villages as the Markham Vale site develops.

9.16 Partly explained by the coal mining legacy, the area suffers some of the poorest health. Health deprivation is highest and life expectancy lowest in those areas with the lowest incomes. A high proportion of residents in the wards of Clay Cross North and Heath and Holmewood have limiting long term illness. Death from circulatory disease and perinatal deaths are higher than in the rest of the District and nationally. The wards of Grassmoor, Shirland, Tupton, Morton, Heath and Holmewood have the highest proportion of residents with obesity problems\(^ {21}\).

9.17 Whilst crime levels in the District are generally low, North Wingfield, Shirland and Heath and Holmewood do have problems, whilst Clay Cross North has the highest reported levels of antisocial behaviour\(^ {22}\).

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\(^{20}\) Clay Cross Regeneration Framework, NEDDC, December 2009
\(^{21}\) Core Strategy Background Paper 5: Safe, Healthy and Active Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
\(^{22}\) Core Strategy Background Paper 5: Safe, Healthy and Active Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
9.18 This part of the District contains some of the most affordable housing, particularly in Clay Cross and Grassmoor.

9.19 There is a lack of play areas in Heath and Holmewood and a lack of both play area and outdoor sports facilities in Shirland and Higham. In addition, Holmewood residents have identified the need for a community centre.

9.20 Bus services are relatively frequent to Chesterfield and Derby and there are even services to Nottingham and Mansfield. However, the 2001 Census data shows little evidence of high levels of commuting from the District to either Derby or Nottingham.

The Rural West

9.21 The landscape in the west of the District on the edge of the Peak District National Park is particularly attractive. It consists of Dark Peak millstone grit that forms the backdrop to many of the District’s villages and hamlets with farmsteads and groups of cottages dispersed throughout the landscape. Open, upland-farming landscape on rolling hills with dry stone walls enclosing regular fields and straight roads joining occasional isolated farmsteads is typical of this part of the District. Buildings are built mainly of traditional gritstone with stone slate and Staffordshire blue clay tile roofs. More recently red brick housing has developed, whilst land use is low quality pasture for stock rearing. Further east, the area is characterised by moors, heath and wooded farmland.

9.22 The villages vary in size, character and the services they offer. Generally they provide relatively low key facilities such as a general store, a village hall and play area/recreation ground. Bus services tend to be infrequent which affect local residents’ accessibility to local services and jobs, particularly those without access to a car.

9.22 Population density is low, together with crime levels. There is a very low proportion of rented housing, a high proportion of detached housing with residents owning two cars or more and low use of public transport for journeys to work. There is a high level of deprivation in terms of access to housing and local services. Also the general appearance of affluence in the area masks the fact that the local economy is still very much based on agriculture, a sector that has seen a steady loss of employment. The house price/income ratio, which gives an indication of accessibility to the housing market, is high, particularly in Ashover, Barlow and Holmesfield. In addition, Barlow, Brampton, Holmesfield and Wingerworth have not received consent for any affordable units since a survey was carried out in 2002.

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23 Core Strategy Background Paper 3: Living Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
24 Core Strategy Background Paper 4: Safe, Healthy and Active Communities, NEDDC, April 2009
10. **Views of Local Communities**

10.1 The seven Community Partnerships in the District share a number of common priorities. All are concerned about crime and anti-social behaviour despite crime levels being considerably lower than the average within England. The majority feel that there should be more activities for children and young people. They are concerned about traffic congestion and public transport provision and are keen to protect the environment. The rural west, Dronfield and the south east of the District want a greater number of affordable homes, whilst the east wants better health provision. Regeneration of the town centre is a priority in Clay Cross, Eckington and Killamarsh.

11. **Suggestions for a Vision for the District at the Issues and Options Consultation (2009)**

11.1 At the Issues and Options consultation members of the public and partners were asked to suggest what they would like including in a Vision for the District. The most common suggestions in order of % support were:-

- Protection of greenfield sites and green spaces
- Provision of community facilities/services
- Maintenance of the Green Belt
- More public transport
- Investment in/provision for young people
- Local distinctiveness/identity
- Sustainable transport
- More employment opportunities
- Support for arts and facilities

12. **Challenges for the District**

12.1 The planning policy context together with the evidence base as reflected in the Spatial Portrait and views of local residents and partners make it clear that the District is facing a number of challenges. Some of these are already listed as Strategic Priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy and where it is considered that the Core Strategy could help deliver these priorities, they have been included in the following list of 10 key challenges:-

*Challenge 1* – Delivering and managing growth in line with the principles of sustainable development, including how the District’s 20 year housing requirement will be distributed among its towns and villages;

*Challenge 2* – Maintaining local services and facilities and ensuring that local people can access them, including through sustainable transport choices;

*Challenge 3* – Providing a mix and choice of housing, including affordable and special needs housing;

*Challenge 4* – Providing additional employment opportunities to secure a diverse local economy;

*Challenge 5* – Securing the necessary regeneration benefits to the District;
Challenge 6 – Ensuring that the District can prepare for and respond to the effects of climate change;
Challenge 7 - Developing and maintaining the District’s distinctive urban and rural environment;
Challenge 8 – Tackling crime and the fear of crime;
Challenge 9 – Recognising tourism opportunities;
Challenge 10 -Enabling change to contribute towards an improved quality of life for all residents through good design.

13. The Vision and Objectives

13.1 Having established what the District has to offer and its shortcomings and identified the challenges ahead, the Council needs to consider where the District wants to be in 2031. To get there appropriate policies are needed to address weaknesses and strengthen assets.

13.2 The Vision should consider the key socio-economic challenges currently facing the different parts of the District and capture and celebrate the unique history and character of each area to help ensure that future growth and development strengthens and enhances local distinctiveness and sense of place. It should also provide a focus for place-shaping and establish high quality standards of design and sustainability for future regeneration and renewal projects.

13.3 The Vision for the future must be rooted in the unique opportunities and challenges arising from the District’s geography and recent history, its connections with the Sustainable Community Strategy, its distinctive towns and villages and its attractive landscape setting. Added to this, feedback from public consultation events has given the Council a clear indication of what local people would like to see happen in the District.

13.4 The District’s geography is one of the key elements that sets it apart from other places. It is markedly different from many other places as it is influenced by a large town (Chesterfield) at its centre that is not within its administrative area. The four main urban areas lying within the District are substantially smaller than Chesterfield and physically separated from each other and Chesterfield by open countryside. There are considerable differences in terms of socio economic and environmental factors between the north, west and south of the District. However the District is united by the countryside that separates and surrounds the key settlements. This strong relation between town and country is a feature that is valued highly by local people and should be taken into account in the future planning of the District. This interrelationship between town and country, what should be protected and where there are opportunities for improvement need to be recognised in the Vision for the District.

13.5 The Core Strategy Vision needs to reflect the Vision set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. This Vision is ‘to improve the quality of life for all people in ..... North East Derbyshire so that residents, workers and visitors can benefit from what the area has to offer’. However this
Vision needs to be expanded to reflect the aspirations of the different areas of the District. It will be important to put in place measures that will help reduce the inequalities that are evident in the District. Over the next 20 years the Council will need to make changes that will result in all the District’s communities becoming better places in which to live, work, learn, relax, visit and do business, with all people experiencing an improving quality of life and more prosperous and secure in stable communities. This will involve identifying opportunities to raise the quality of life for certain parts of the District and capitalise on the benefits that new development in and around Clay Cross is offering.

13.6 Therefore the following Vision is proposed to encapsulate the Council’s, local residents’ and partners’ aspirations for North East Derbyshire District over the next 20 years:

‘To improve the quality of life for all people in North East Derbyshire so that residents, workers and visitors can benefit from what the area has to offer.

This will involve recognising, preserving and promoting the distinct character of different areas and creating safe, integrated and healthy communities by:

- protecting the best historic assets, landscapes and green areas;
- regenerating the most deprived areas;
- encouraging rural diversification that recognises the District’s tourism assets;
- providing a range of house types and tenures, local employment opportunities and accessible service provision;
- requiring high quality design in new development which incorporates sustainable building techniques to address climate change and which reduces the potential for anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime;
- protecting and creating valuable open spaces inside and outside settlements to ensure an accessible green network with good walking and cycling routes to promote healthy lifestyles and provide realistic alternatives to the use of the private car.’

13.7 In order to achieve this Vision, the following District wide general objectives will be sought:

**D1** To ensure that regeneration is the main driver in the future development of the District recognising opportunities to redevelop previously developed land and seeking to narrow the gap between the more deprived areas and the more affluent areas, so that everyone benefits from living in the District.
D2 To create inclusive communities, catering for the housing and service needs of the growing proportion of elderly people, at the same time being mindful of the requirements of younger residents who need recreational facilities and eventually a home of their own that they can afford.

D3 To create a safe, sustainable environment by ensuring that new development delivers good design and timely infrastructure (including transport, health, education and other local facilities), that addresses the impacts of climate change.

D4 To protect the most valuable landscape that separates the built up areas and ensure that it is easily accessed from the built up areas by a range of travel modes other than the private car, including walking and cycling. As well as assisting in reducing congestion on local roads, this will ensure people remain healthy and active.

D5 To recognise the value of open space within communities, providing opportunities for recreation and self-sufficiency.

D6 To preserve the general area of the Green Belt so that the towns and villages in the north of the District maintain their identities and are prevented from merging with the Sheffield conurbation and that villages such as Wingerworth and Grassmoor remain separate from each other and from Chesterfield.

D7 To improve employment opportunities and, where possible, seek to ensure that education and training are better related to skill shortages.

D8 To foster links with Sheffield City Region through strong transport infrastructure and employment opportunities to ensure the District does not exist in isolation.

D9 To recognise that the District has a role to play in the development of tourism by developing assets such as the reinstated Chesterfield Canal and rebranding the District as Peak District Historic Border Country to act as a gateway to and deflect pressure away from the National Park.

D10 To address the impact that relatively high levels of traffic, high car dependency and limited public transport facilities have on the social, economic and environmental state of certain parts of the District.

13.8 In addition, each of the three sub areas of the District will need specific objectives to meet the District’s Vision. These will help to provide a direction for the future of these areas by addressing their own individual opportunities and problems.
The Constrained North

N1 To ensure the viability of the 3 towns of Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh by supporting a range of improvements compatible with their local retail and service functions and reflecting the scope that exists for physical change within their centres.

N2 To protect the Green Belt from inappropriate growth, facilitating development that meets local needs without promoting levels of development that would result in substantial increased commuting to the Sheffield/Rotherham conurbation.

N3 To encourage proposals that support countryside recreational pursuits, particularly those involving the provision of linear routes and the reinstatement of the Chesterfield Canal.

N4 To give careful consideration to local flood risk issues when determining new development especially in areas of higher risk such as around Renishaw.

The Rural West

W1 To encourage larger settlements to maintain a level of service provision to meet their own needs and those of their hinterlands.

W2 To encourage public transport linkages from rural areas to settlements offering service provision.

W3 To preserve the open nature of the countryside, having regard to its proximity to the Peak District National Park.

W4 To allow opportunities for farm diversification/tourism, particularly where this will help secure the future economic viability of the area.

The Transitional South

S1 To support the settlements in their regeneration initiatives by ensuring that housing and employment are delivered alongside appropriate infrastructure and community facilities and widening the skills base of local residents.

S2 To secure the economic revival of Clay Cross through promoting both its unique historic background and the positive things it has to offer.

S3 To recognise The Avenue Site as being pivotal in the regeneration of the sub area by promoting good design and renewable energy techniques.
S4 To protect the general area of the Green Belt between Chesterfield and Wingerworth and Grassmoor recognising the importance of protecting green space in preventing the coalescence of these settlements.

S5 To maintain and improve long distance transport connections associated with the M1 and Network Rail.

S6 To recognise the role that Long Duckmanton, Calow and Arkwright Town can play in providing housing to serve future employment growth at the Markham Vale Employment Growth Zone.