

## ■ DISTRICT PROFILE

- 1.1 Hambleton District at 1,310 square kilometres (506 sq miles) is one of the largest Districts in England and had a population at the time of the 1991 Census of 79,500. The District is essentially rural and includes part of the North York Moors National Park. To the north are the heavily built-up areas of Darlington and the Teesside conurbation providing a sharp contrast in character. To the south is the compact city of York. Figure 1 shows the Plan area in its setting.
- 1.2 The Vales of York and Mowbray formed from the drainage basins of the Rivers Ouse and Swale cover about 75% of the District and run its entire length from the Tees in the north to York in the south. For the most part the Vales are high quality farmland.
- 1.3 On the west of the District are the Rivers Ouse, Swale and Ure and the foothills of the Yorkshire Dales. Along the eastern fringe there is a steep escarpment creating an abrupt change in landscape character as the Vales give way to the more dramatic upland landscape of the North York Moors. This area, which forms a backdrop to the lowlands, lies mainly within the North York Moors National Park and is outside the Plan area. To the south-east the escarpment gives way to the lower more rounded and undulating landscape of the Howardian Hills which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.4 There are excellent north-south transport routes. The District straddles the main east coast road and rail routes from London to Scotland, with the A1 cutting through the west of the District and the electrified east coast main railway line passing through the centre of the District between York and Darlington. In the east, skirting the escarpment, the A19 links York with Teesside. Transport links from east to west are less good.
- 1.5 The District is characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern of market towns, villages and hamlets. Settlement pattern and character are strong elements in the District's identity. The pattern is dominated by the market towns of Northallerton, Thirsk, Bedale, Easingwold and Stokesley which accommodate 42% of the population. Northallerton and Thirsk are the largest market towns, having populations at 1991 of 15,050 and 7,620 respectively. Bedale, Easingwold and Stokesley are smaller with populations of 3,300, 3,570 and 3,960 respectively. The market towns are the traditional service, commercial and social centres of the District. Each market town has a group of villages which naturally look to it for services and facilities, and for employment.
- 1.6 There are over 130 villages in the District. On the whole villages tend to be small: 30% have a population of less than 100 persons, 60% contain less than 250 persons and 88% less than 500 persons.
- 1.7 The settlements are generally of high environmental quality and this characteristic contributes to the culture and identity of Hambleton. All market towns have a conservation area at their heart and some are of exceptionally high quality. The villages too are attractive and over 40 of these are designated as conservation areas.
- 1.8 Although not without large employers the District does not rely on a single large employer. Many firms reflect the largely rural economy of the area.

## ■ ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

- 1.9 The 1991 Planning and Compensation Act introduced a requirement for district-wide local plans to be prepared for all areas. This Document is the District-Wide Local Plan for Hambleton District. However, it does not cover that part of the District in the North York Moors National Park. It sets out the Council's planning policies for the development and use of land for the period April 1991 to March 2006. Together with the Structure Plan, it forms the statutory Development Plan for Hambleton District.
- 1.10 The Plan has four main functions:
1. To develop the Government's national planning policies and the policies of the Structure Plan and relate them to precise areas of land;
  2. To provide an objective and consistent basis for planning decisions on proposals to build on land or change its use;
  3. To provide a detailed basis for long term planning by public services, businesses and the public;
  4. To bring local and detailed planning issues into the open for public scrutiny.
- 1.11 The Plan consists of:
1. A Proposals Map covering the entire Plan area with Inset Maps showing certain areas in greater detail. These relate the policies to precise areas of land and so provide a comprehensive visual index of the policies and proposals of the Plan.
  2. A Written Statement which explains the overall strategy of the Plan and sets out the policies for the development and use of land and the justifications for them. The policies are set out in a box in bold letters and cross referenced to the Proposals Map so that the precise areas of land involved can be easily appreciated. Should there be any discrepancy between the Written Statement and the Proposals Map, then the Written Statement prevails.
- 1.12 It is important to note that policies should not be looked at in isolation and the Plan needs to be read as a whole. Individual development proposals may need to be judged against several policies. Also, there is statutory provision for exceptions to be made to policies where justified by material considerations. It is for applicants to justify why an exception to a policy should be made.

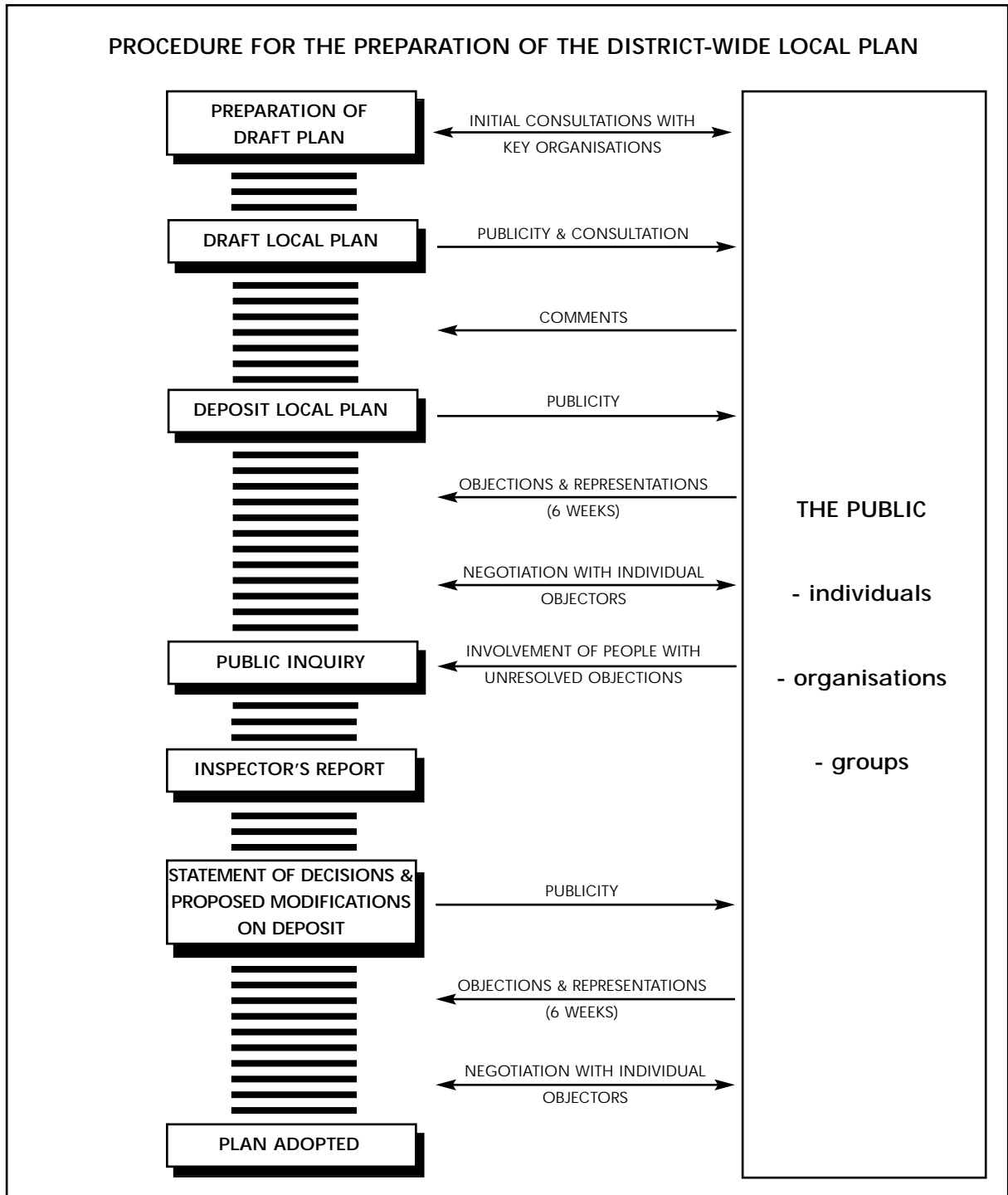
## ■ THE LOCAL PLAN PROCESS

- 1.13 As the Development Plan will form the statutory basis for planning decisions it is important that local people are able to be involved in its preparation from the earliest stage. The Secretary of State for the Environment emphasises this in PPG 12. The procedure for the preparation of the District-Wide Local Plan, illustrated in Figure 2, provides several opportunities for local people to be involved.

### Draft Local Plan

- 1.14 The Pre-Deposit Draft District-Wide Local Plan was approved in April 1993 and was the subject of a thorough public consultation exercise between July and October 1993, designed to involve as many people, organisations and communities as possible. Full details of the publicity and the consultation programme, and the responses received were set out in a report entitled "Statement of Pre-Deposit Publicity and Consultation". Over 500 written responses were received, raising approximately 1400 individual comments. Arising from the public consultation exercise a number of changes were made to the Local Plan.

Figure 2



**Deposit Local Plan**

1.15 The Plan was placed on 'deposit' for a six week period ending 3 March 1995. This means the Plan was publicly available to provide people, as well as organisations and interested groups, an opportunity to formally object or support its policies and proposals. There were approximately 2,160 objections and 1100 representations of support. In an attempt to resolve objections, 337 separate changes were proposed to the Deposit Draft Local Plan.

### Public Inquiry

- 1.16 All unresolved objections were considered at a Local Plan Inquiry conducted by an independent planning Inspector. The Inspector heard evidence for and against the policies and proposals of the Plan. The Inquiry opened on 27 February 1996 and sat on 56 days. It was formally closed on 22 October 1996. During this time 310 objections were considered, the remaining 1,850 objections were dealt with as written representations.

### Inspector's Report

- 1.17 The Inspector's Report was submitted to the Council on 14 July 1997 setting out his conclusions and recommendations on each objection.

### Statement of Decisions and Proposed Modifications

- 1.18 The Council carefully considered the Inspector's Report and prepared a statement of its decisions on each recommendation giving its reasons. 73% of the Inspector's recommendations were accepted.
- 1.19 In response to the Inspector's Report, the Council proposed modifications to the deposited Plan. These, together with modifications recommended by the Inspector but not accepted by the Council, were placed on "deposit" for a six week period until 10 July 1998 to allow objections and representations of support to be made.

### Adoption

- 1.20 Approximately 350 objections and 150 statements of support were made to the proposed modifications. Having carefully considered these the Council decided that no further significant modifications were necessary and the Plan was formally adopted on 19 January 1999.
- 1.21 The main modifications to the Deposit Draft Local Plan arising from the Inspector's Report are summarised below:

The inclusion of new policies on:

Historic Battlefields

Engineering, Other Operations and Change of Use of Land within the York Green Belt.

Northallerton Town Centre Redevelopment Site.

Water and Sewerage Facilities.

Renewable Energy.

The deletion of the policy on:

Forestry Operations.

The allocation of the following new housing sites:

East of A167, Northallerton

Huby Old Hall, Huby

The Holding, Dalton

White House Farm, West Rounton

The deletion of the following housing allocations:

Northallerton Road, Brompton

Tannery Lane, Northallerton

Old Farm, East Cowton

The allocation of the following new employment sites:  
West of Leeming Bar Industrial Estate, Leeming Bar  
South of Stillington Road, Easingwold

The deletion of the following employment allocation:  
Roxby House, Easingwold

## ■ THE CONTEXT OF THE PLAN

- 1.22 The Plan has been prepared within a wider context of national, regional and strategic planning policy, this is described in general terms below.

### National Planning Policy

- 1.23 The Government has issued a number of statements of national planning policy providing guidance on a wide range of issues and the District-Wide Local Plan must be consistent with these. The most relevant to the Plan are contained in Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions Circulars and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs). The Plan has also had regard to other Government policies and statements such as the 1995 Rural White Paper, "Rural England" (Cm 3016) and the 1990 White Paper on the Environment "This Common Inheritance".

### Regional Planning Policy

- 1.24 In March 1996 the Government issued Regional Planning Guidance for Yorkshire and Humberside. The main function of regional guidance is to provide a framework for the preparation of structure plans and local authorities are expected to take it into account in preparing these plans. Where appropriate, regional guidance should also be taken into account when preparing local plan policies.

## The Structure Plan

- 1.25 The Plan amplifies and applies in detail the policies of the Structure Plan. This has been prepared by the County Council to establish broad planning policies for the County as a whole. The District-Wide Local Plan is required to generally conform to it. The Structure Plan was approved by the Secretary of State in November 1980. Alterations to certain policies, including a roll forward of the housing and industrial land provisions to 1996, were approved by the Secretary of State in January 1987. A second set of alterations dealing with policies for mineral development, oil, gas and waste disposal was approved in August 1989. A third set of alterations was adopted by the County Council on 6 October 1995. These roll forward housing and employment land provision to a new end date of 2006, update the position on road schemes and introduce two new policies, one controlling development in the countryside and the other allowing large-scale business/industrial development as an exception to normal planning policy.
- 1.26 The strategy of the Structure Plan is to:
- Give a high priority to the conservation and protection of the County's natural resources and the quality of its environment;
  - Relate the scale and nature of development more closely to the needs of the County and to restrain development generated by outside demands;
  - Reduce house-building rates in order to reduce inward migration into the County and relate the supply and distribution of new housing more closely to needs arising within North Yorkshire;
  - Provide for the future prosperity of the County by encouraging economic development based on its natural advantages and resources and by achieving a greater diversification in jobs;
  - Direct the majority of housing and jobs to within the confines of existing built-up areas.
- 1.27 In preparing the Local Plan, the Council has had full regard to the above strategy and to the individual policies of the Structure Plan. These policies are reproduced in full in Appendix 3.
- 1.28 Account has also been taken of the strategic policies for neighbouring areas, most notably those for the Tees Valley which has the greatest impact on the District. The strategy here is termed "compact urban growth", under which most development will take place within the conurbation thus helping to regenerate the older urban areas and reducing the need to develop greenfield sites.

## Existing Local Plans

- 1.29 The District-Wide Local Plan has replaced a number of old-style local plans formerly in operation in the District and these have now ceased to have effect. These mostly comprise local plans based on sub-areas of the District prepared by the Council. Also included are the River Ure and Ouse Recreation Subject Plan and the York Green Belt Local Plan, as they apply to Hambleton District, both of which were prepared by the County Council. All superseded local plans are set out in Appendix 2.

## ■ ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

- 1.30 There is greater concern than ever before about environmental issues. Local plans are expected to reflect this concern and find the right balance between conservation and development. To this end PPG12 recommends that plan preparation should include a basic environmental appraisal of the proposed policies and proposals. Authorities are expected to show that environmental concerns have been comprehensively and consistently taken into account and to set this out in the Written Statement. This short section explains how this requirement has been met and shows that environmental issues have been prime considerations in the preparation of the District-Wide Local Plan.
- 1.31 At the outset a series of topic papers was prepared to provide a framework within which specific detailed policies could be prepared. Environmental issues ranging from traditional concerns such as landscape quality, nature conservation and the built heritage to new environmental concerns such as global warming, sustainable development and energy conservation were covered in the topic papers. In preparing the topic papers, the Council took into account Government advice on the environment and the published advice of conservation amenity groups. This work provided a sound environmental base for the preparation of the Plan indicating the weight to be given to environmental matters, the issues to be covered and how environmental concerns were to be reconciled with the development needs of the area.
- 1.32 The topic papers resulted in several studies and surveys to fill gaps where existing information on the environment was shown to be deficient. For example, a Landscape Appraisal, Village Character Survey and a Phase I Habitat Survey were undertaken.
- 1.33 As a result of environmental issues being considered at the outset, principles such as energy conservation, seeking sustainable development and the conservation of the District's natural environment and cultural heritage have been built into the Plan's General Strategy and "Guiding Principles". Through including such principles in the General Strategy the Council has aimed to ensure that environmental considerations are properly integrated throughout the Plan and consistently taken into account.
- 1.34 Subsequently, in the development of individual policies and proposals their environmental implications were identified, weighed up and reported. This included a systematic appraisal of a range of policy options, assessment of the pros and cons of alternative development allocations and the identification of measures required to ameliorate the environmental effects of policies. Environmental considerations also appear prominently in policies themselves, most usually as criteria to be considered in determining planning applications.

- 1.35 The Council places considerable value on the expert advice of national and local conservation and amenity groups. These organisations have been consulted throughout the preparation of the Plan and some have supplied “model” policies and commented on various sections of the Plan. The consultation process has been used as a form of independent environmental audit of the Plan to ensure that it has a sound environmental basis. Responses from organisations concerned with the environment revealed very few omissions from the Plan. Amendments to policies have been made to cover the subjects of renewable energy, the development of water and sewerage facilities and to protect historic battlefields. Elsewhere minor wording changes have been made to clarify or strengthen certain policies in the light of environmental concerns.
- 1.36 Finally, the environmental impact of all policies will be monitored, as set out in Chapter 16, and they will be reviewed if they are not having the desired environmental results.