



**Sustainability Appraisal of
Core Strategy
Development Plan Document
Issues and Options
(Summary)**

April 2005

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of the conclusions and recommendations of each Topic Paper is set out below. Topic Paper 1 was not appraised, as it was solely an introduction to the other Topic Papers.

Topic Paper 2 - The Spatial Vision

Question 4 (a) asks the respondent whether the Spatial Vision should refer to planning for different sections of the community such as young people or the elderly.

Summary: Hambleton's young and elderly residents would both benefit from having their aspirations included in the Spatial Vision. The young and elderly share some aspirations in terms of affordable housing, access to services and facilities as well as public transport. The young would benefit from more specific aspirations in relation to education, jobs and leisure facilities. Whilst the elderly would benefit from more healthcare provision.

Topic Paper 3 - The Spatial Strategy

Question 1 states that the possible Spatial Strategy is based on the current levels of services and facilities and public transport in order to create the most sustainable communities. The respondent is asked whether this approach is the best option. Examples of other criteria, which could be used are given as maximising re-use of brownfield sites, balancing levels of new housing with new employment and avoiding flood risks etc.

Summary: Creating communities based on locations with access to services and facilities would help to minimise the need to travel, otherwise people would not have to travel to gain access to the services and facilities located elsewhere. Focusing new development on locations without public transport would either mean people are unable to gain access to services or would have to rely on private cars. This may not be a viable option for those unable to afford a car or those unable to drive due to their age or disabilities etc. On the other hand it may help the retention of services in such locations. The increase in car use would lead to issues such as heavy vehicle movements and congestion, which would increase car emissions and result in poor air quality as well as disturbed tranquillity. However, focusing development purely on locations with access to services and facilities as well as public transport could have impacts on the District's landscape and biodiversity as well as being unlikely to meet the needs of rural areas, which do not have access to public transport. Specific needs of the elderly and young are also likely to be overlooked, as development will not necessarily benefit areas in need of improved healthcare, education and recreational facilities. Maximising re-use of brownfield sites would help to avoid greenfield development and if in existing towns would provide concentrated development that could support existing services, facilities and public transport, walking and cycling. Similarly, balancing new housing and new employment would also reduce the need to travel by car. In theory, all of these could be achieved in association with a strategy that is based on current levels of services, facilities and public transport rather than being alternatives. Flooding is a key factor that should be considered when deciding where development should be located.

Question 4 (a) is linked with Question 3 (a) and asks whether development should be based on Sustainable Service Villages. Question 4 (c) asks whether the villages should be grouped in considering their scope for development in terms of sustainable communities.

Summary: Locating development within SSVs has a number of benefits, particularly due to the provision of services, facilities and public transport. Their rural location can help to support localised regeneration and can help to meet the local housing need, providing the housing type and affordable housing allocation provision is suitable. However, development within the SSVs should take into account any landscape and environmental designations as well as any flooding issues. The type of development will determine whether the needs of different groups of the community are met such as healthcare and residential housing for the elderly and recreational and education facilities for young residents. Grouping villages could also have a number of benefits. However, development in these areas should ensure that villages do not start to merge and impact on the local distinctiveness of Hambleton.

Topic Paper 4 - Housing

Housing Requirement and Affordable Housing

Question 1 asks the respondent how many dwellings should be provided in Hambleton per year. A number of options are provided ranging from less than 200 to more than more 400. The Regional Spatial Strategy calculates a need for between 200-250 dwellings. Therefore, it was not considered necessary to appraise all 6 housing options. Three options have therefore been assessed: less than 200 (option 1); 200-250 (option 2) and more than 250 (option 3). The Housing Needs Study concludes that a vast majority of households are adequately housed and the main issue regarding housing in the District is affordability

Question 2 (a) asks the respondent whether only 113 minimum affordable homes should be provided per year for the next 5 years or more than 113.

Summary: The greater the provision of housing; the more likely a greater impact on the environment in terms of landscape, biodiversity, use of primary resources, waste and water. However, depending on the proportion of affordable housing, the needs of the local community may not be met, particularly if there is a low proportion and only a few houses built. The location and tenure of the housing is also very important as the greatest need for housing is in rural areas and there is a need for diverse housing including bungalows and flats to accommodate the elderly. According to the Regional Spatial Strategy, Option 1 is unlikely to meet the needs of Hambleton as it is below the calculated provision. However, the Housing Needs Survey concluded that a vast majority of households are adequately housed and that the main issue was affordability.

The provision of affordable housing will help to meet the local housing need. However, the distribution of affordable housing is not stated and therefore, it unclear whether the housing will be provided in rural areas where there is the greatest need. The type of housing is also not stated and therefore, it is unclear whether the housing need will be adequately met. A diversity of affordable accommodation is required, but predominately houses, with some need for bungalows and flats. The minimum amount of affordable housing should meet the present need, but medium economic growth (as suggested by the Economic Development Study) may increase the number of households looking to locate in the area and a provision of affordable housing may also help to encourage people to locate in the District.

Housing Distribution

Question 4 asks the respondent where the new housing should be provided. The options for this question can be based on the options set out on the Key Issues Paper on where new housing should be located: focus on market towns; have majority in market towns with some development in 3-5 larger villages; promote

mainly in the market towns with development in 10-15 villages with services or provide even distribution between market towns and a larger number of villages. This appraisal has been carried out in more detail than the Stage 1 appraisal and takes into account the additional information on affordable housing requirements and distribution of recent housing development.

Summary: Focusing housing development solely on market towns may not meet the housing needs of the District as a whole. However, the development would have good access to existing services and facilities as well as public transport. Distributing housing development between market towns and larger villages would help to meet rural housing needs as well as ensure access to local services and facilities, which would help to reduce the need to travel. Developing houses primarily in villages with no access to employment, jobs and services or public transport would increase car use and the associated environmental impacts.

Topic Paper 5 - Economy

The Amount of Employment Land

Question 1 (a) considers the options set out in the Economic Development Study including High growth, Medium growth and Low growth and asks whether Medium growth is the most appropriate as concluded within the Study.

Summary: Both high and medium growth scenarios would be beneficial for Hambleton in terms of economy and employment. The low growth scenario would suggest an economic downturn and this could have a number of implications such as businesses moving out of Hambleton and potentially encouraging out-commuting. High economic growth is unlikely to be achieved due to constraining factors such as the District's rurality. All three scenarios could have environmental and landscape impacts.

Question 2 The Topic Paper sets out four possible options for an Employment Strategy in addition to the options set out in the Key Issues Report ranging from concentration of development in market towns to a more dispersed pattern.

Summary: Directing employment towards market towns is less likely to have environmental impacts and more people will gain access to employment within those areas. However, it will not help to regenerate deprived areas outside the market towns. Locating development close to transport links will have environmental benefits and will improve access to jobs. However, it is unlikely that these locations will be in rural areas as public transport networks are poor and therefore, some rural areas in need of regeneration may be overlooked.

Location of Employment and Tourism Development in the Countryside

Question 3 (a) asks the respondent whether employment development should be encouraged in the countryside i.e. in and around villages. Question 4 considers the options for reducing the need to travel within the countryside and asks whether scattered small-scale tourist and employment development should be more widely encouraged or whether it should be restricted to areas where there is suitable public transport.

Summary: Locating employment/tourism development within the countryside would help to regenerate rural areas and encourage agricultural diversification. However, it would have more of an impact on biodiversity and landscape than development in market towns.

Poor public transport networks could be unviable for some businesses and could lead to congestion, environmental and road safety issues if the employment/tourism attracts high numbers of visitors.

Market Towns Regeneration

Question 8 (a) asks the respondent whether existing employment and vacant and underused sites close to town centres should provide only for employment purposes or whether they should be allowed for other uses such as housing. Question 8 (b) considers the option of car park redevelopment, which has been appraised separately in the Transport Topic Paper.

Summary: The re-development of vacant or underused sites within town centres would be beneficial as they are close to existing services and facilities. Town centres may have greater needs in terms of housing or education etc that maybe more suitable for the sites. Re-development of sites may also lead to a loss of open space or urban habitats. A site-by-site assessment would help to determine the most suitable allocation.

Rural Regeneration Strategies

Questions 9 (c) and (d) suggest options for rural regeneration including permitting/creating new industrial units in redundant agricultural building (c) and development of live/work units in the countryside (d).

Summary: Creating industrial units through the re-use of redundant agricultural buildings would have a minimal impact on landscape and biodiversity as well as potentially reducing the need for primary resources and the production of demolition waste. Re-using the sites may help to regenerate areas and provide opportunities for employment and housing etc. Rural/minor roads may not be appropriate for business access in order for them to be viable. Modern businesses using information communication technology (ICT) may be more suitable depending on the broadband provision.

Topic Paper 6 - Community Facilities

Health

Question 2 gives an option of whether a number of health facilities should be concentrated in accessible locations or not.

Summary: Concentrating health facilities in accessible locations would generally be of benefit to a greater number of residents and may have benefits in terms of management of health/medical supplies and waste. Locations without public transport support would have to be accessed by some residents by private car, which would result in negative environmental impacts. However, the provision of health facilities in concentrated locations may have a negative impact on existing locally dispersed facilities.

Education

Question 4 gives the respondent the option of whether housing development should be promoted in areas with schools vulnerable to closure or not. Question 5 also gives the respondent options of whether education facilities should be co-located with other facilities such as leisure (a) or on separate sites (b).

Summary: Promoting new housing in areas with schools vulnerable to closure would have a number of benefits, particularly if the schools are located in rural areas in

need of affordable housing. New housing development needs to be supported by services and facilities as well as ensuring that it is not impacting on the environment or increasing flood risk. Co-locating facilities could have positive impacts as the use of facilities could be shared (e.g. schools and leisure centres) and travel between the facilities could be reduced. However, the facilities should be supported by public transport as well as safe walking and cycling routes. This will help to reduce car use and problems of congestion.

Social, Leisure and Cultural Facilities

Question 6 asks the respondent whether the LDF should support the needs of young people as a priority in the allocation of facilities such as skate parks and youth clubs against other competing demands. Question 8 gives the options of whether the LDF should enable the provision of new large scale residential care facilities in the District (a) or whether it should have smaller dispersed provision (b). Question 7 and Question 9 ask for suggestions of what the major planning issues are in providing for young people (Q7) and older people (Q9), which could be covered by the LDF.

Summary: Provision of residential care will specifically meet the needs of the elderly residents of Hambleton. Large scale residential care is most likely to have an localised impact on the landscape and settlement character, but would be more efficient and viable. Smaller scale residential care would have less of an impact and may help to meet local needs, as people are more likely more likely to be able to stay within their community. Priority allocation of sites to meet the needs of the young residents of Hambleton would only be suitable in locations where there is less pressure for affordable housing or employment etc.

Shops and Pubs

Question 10 asks the respondent whether the LDF should aim to support vulnerable village shops, post offices and public houses (a) or whether the facilities, if no longer viable, would have more favourable alternative uses (b).

Summary: The change of use of some facilities that are no longer viable could have a number of negative impacts such as loss of services, reduction of townscape quality and increasing the need to travel. The change of use may help to provide alternative uses that meet other local needs such as employment or affordable housing. An assessment should be made on a site-by-site basis in order to understand the consequences of the change of use for the most sustainable decision to be made.

Topic Paper 7 - Transport

Location and Design of New Developments and Public and Community Transport, Walking and Cycling

Question 1 asks whether future development should be directed to locations accessible by public transport in order to reduce the need to travel by car. Question 2 provides options for locations where future development should be concentrated either between the market towns and a range of villages or a more dispersed pattern of development.

Question 4 asks the respondent to choose whether the LDF should encourage public transport, walking and cycling as alternatives to car travel where practical. Question 5 supports this by providing a list of potential measures that could be implemented to encourage public transport, cycling and walking.

Summary: Reducing the need to travel by car would have a number of benefits including a reduction in congestion and improving air quality, which would help to maintain and enhance Hambleton's landscape and biodiversity. The need to travel by car can be reduced by encouraging new development in areas accessible by public transport. If new development were concentrated within market towns, this would help to reduce dispersed development and encourage a more efficient use of land and premises and more potential for commercially feasible public transport. However, public transport is not always a viable alternative between market towns and villages meaning that people in more rural areas would continue to experience problems of isolation and poor access to services. If new development was located in a range of villages as well as market towns, those without cars could still gain access to jobs and key services.

Encouraging public transport, cycling and walking through the LDF (Question 4) will help to improve access to services and facilities as well as reduce congestion. This would benefit businesses and reduce the need for future road building, which would help maintain the environment. The choice of cycling and walking over car use will also work towards improving the health of the district as well as improve air quality. However, the LDF should ensure that any measures used to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking as set out in Question 5, are sensitive to the surrounding townscape and local distinctiveness of the area.

Traffic Management

Question 7 asks the respondent to choose between an option for bypass building or a more holistic approach, as set out in the new transport plan, for the market towns and their rural hinterlands.

Summary: Bypass building in the District would have a positive impact on congestion within towns and villages. However, the process of road building may have a negative impact on the high quality landscape of the district and important habitats and species. Bypasses can also impact on the local economy of the towns and villages they are built to help as businesses can suffer from loss of custom. This could affect the accessibility of local services for people. Improving road networks could also encourage out-commuting, which is an issue identified by the Council. A holistic approach set within the new transport plan aims to ensure that the environment and the economy are protected from negative impacts.

Parking

Questions 8 and 9 provide options on whether the demand for car parking in market towns should be met by new car parks and other options such as multi-story car parks or that the supply of car parks should be reduced and other modes of transport should be encouraged, thus freeing some car parking areas for redevelopment.

Summary: The provision of more car parks, including the potential use of multi-storey car parks to meet the demand in market towns would have a detrimental affect on the character and attractiveness of the market towns. The reduction of car parks and the re-use of sites would help to reduce the use of greenfield land, which would not only benefit the environment, but would also provide brownfield sites within market towns that could be used for housing, mixed-use or employment, providing a number of benefits, such as developing the market town economy. Reducing the number of car parks may also put visitors and other users off from visiting the town centre, which would have a negative impact on the economy, if suitable alternatives to the car aren't available. Encouraging other uses of transport will help to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

Topic Paper 8 - Environment

Conservation and Design and Public Art

Question 3 asks whether high quality design should be promoted everywhere and in all developments.

Question 4 asks whether the LDF should encourage public art within the design of new development or not.

Summary: The District as a whole would benefit from a wide distribution of high quality design, not just within market towns. There are areas of historic importance within villages and market towns and enhancing the townscape could help to encourage business and boost the economy. Public art can also be encouraged to enhance the local distinctiveness and cultural heritage of the District. These forms of enhancement could be targeted to particularly benefit areas of deprivation within the District.

Secured by Design

Question 7b asks whether Secured by Design should be applied to all kinds of development including housing estates, town centres and industrial areas.

Summary: Designing out crime in new development would help to enhance the urban areas, and should help to reduce anti-social behaviour and the risk of vandalism. This may make Hambleton more attractive to both businesses and tourists. However, design should be sensitive in order to protect landscape and townscape quality.

Flooding

When allocating new sites for development in Hambleton, priority should be given to areas which have the lowest risk of flooding. Question 12 presents two possible options for achieving this, either allowing developments in settlements with flooding issues, but only on sites where a flood risk has shown development will not cause flooding problems or limit allocations to settlements which are free from flooding problems.

Summary: Allowing development in settlements with no flooding problems or on sites in settlements with flooding issues, but which will not cause flooding problems are both potentially viable options. Settlements that have been subject to flooding issues may nonetheless need the boost from new development, particularly if they have a specific requirement such as need for employment. Locations such as Northalton, Stokesley and Thirsk have a recent history of flooding, but also contain relatively high unemployment. Therefore, directing potential employment development away from these locations may not help meet the local need.

ISSUES NOT APPRAISED

The Spatial Vision

Question 1 provided options on whether the Draft Spatial Vision should be kept or changed to be more detailed or locally specific. However, the options were not suitable for appraisal. Questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 do not provide options for appraisal.

The Spatial Strategy

Question 2 was not appraised, as the options were based on those appraised in terms of housing (Topic Paper 4, Q4) and economy (Topic Paper5, Q2&3).

Therefore, the appraisal outcomes would have been similar and it was felt that to have appraised these would have led to duplication.

Question 3 set out options in relation to development within Sustainable Service Villages. However, the appraisal of the options was provided under Question 4 and therefore, this question was not appraised.

Questions 5 and 6 did not provide options for appraisal.

Housing

Question 3 did not provide options on how new housing should cater for local needs in terms of housing size, type and tenure.

Employment

Question 7 relates to the distribution of employment and has been incorporated in the appraisal of Question 1 in relation to the amount of employment land.

Environment

Questions 5 and 6 had options provided on the local energy targets set out in the RSS. However, none were provided for the LDF and therefore they were not appraised.

The issues relating to the environment and transport were covered in the Transport Topic Paper and therefore no options were set out in Topic Paper 8.

No options were provided in relation to the Natural Environment. Therefore, Questions 8, 9 and 10 were not appraised.