



CHAPTER 2 - DISTRICT PLAN STRATEGY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Mansfield District lies at the heart of North Nottinghamshire close to the M1 motorway. Much of the District is substantially urban in character though it does contain valuable tracts of open countryside. Mansfield town centre serves as a sub-regional centre for the North Nottinghamshire area and adjacent parts of Derbyshire. The District covers an area of about 77 square kilometres (30 square miles).

2.1.2 Mansfield District's resident population at the 1991 Census was 100,386, comprising 49,211 males and 51,175 females. The breakdown of population between the District's three main areas was:-

- Mansfield - 69,326;
- Mansfield Woodhouse - 18,019;
- Warsop Parish - 13,037

(N.B. these figures are rounded down slightly and do not, therefore, match the District total).

Figure 2 illustrates the District's 1991 Census age breakdown.

Figure 2: **1991 CENSUS AGE BREAKDOWN**

AGED	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
0-4	3,591	3,233	6,824
5-17	8,480	8,214	16,694
18-39	16,022	16,265	32,287
40 - Retirement	14,596	11,999	26,595
Retirement +	6,522	11,464	17,986

Throughout the 1980s Mansfield District's population remained stagnant. According to Census figures there was a slight fall in the District's population of 0.6% between 1981 and 1991 (based on the 1981 survey method). During this ten year period, Ravensdale, Leeming and Forest Town wards experienced the highest growth whilst Meden, Cumberlands and Lindhurst wards experienced the greatest declines in population. According to population projections, provided by the County Council (1991 based projections, assuming Structure Plan Review migration levels), Mansfield District's population is anticipated to rise to approximately 104,100 by 2001 and to 105,100 by 2006. According to the 1991 Census (based on a 10% sample), 21.6% of the District's resident population in employment, worked in distribution and catering, 19.6% in manufacturing industry and 12.2% in energy/water. Only 1.1%, by 1991, worked in mining. Of the total in employment, 43% worked outside the District.

- 2.1.3 Much of the District's employment activity has centred on the coal mining and textile industries. Both these traditional industries have suffered severely in the last ten years. The District now has no 'active' collieries within its area. The effects of the coal review and the recent privatisation of the coal industry have led to significant reductions in employment opportunities in coal related activities in the North Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire area. There will also be additional employment losses arising out of the impact on firms supporting the coal mining industry and the reduction of money spent in the local economy. Unemployment in the Mansfield Travel to Work Area was 14.8% in June 1995, the highest in Nottinghamshire. Because of the above factors this is likely to increase in the near future. Mansfield's role as a sub-regional centre creates a variety of job opportunities in the town centre.
- 2.1.4 The District comprises two urban settlements, Mansfield and Warsop. Whilst none of the open countryside surrounding these settlements is included in the green belt, it is valued by local communities. Much of the land in the eastern part of the Local Plan area adjoins the Sherwood Forest area. The rivers Maun and Meden flow through the District and contain some important features of interest. The District's substantial natural mineral resources, both deep mined coal and Sherwood sandstone have been exploited over a period of many decades and the resultant workings have had a profoundly damaging impact on the District's environment. However the District also contains a substantial number of environmental assets which it is the District Council's intention to protect and enhance. The District contains ten conservation areas, over 240 listed buildings and four scheduled ancient monuments. The area covered by the Plan also includes seven ancient woodland sites and six Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs), which include a number of important areas of lowland heath, such as those at Strawberry Hills and Sherwood Forest Golf Course. In addition there are many "sites of nature conservation interest" including areas of woodland, heathland and sites of local geological and biological interest. These assets provide a sound environmental base and framework on which to build.
- 2.1.5 Mansfield has suffered in the past from low levels of development activity. This has resulted partly from the development industry having a poor perception of the area and because of infrastructure problems (subsidence, damage to drainage/other utilities and poor transport infrastructure). This 'poor' image has been reversed in the recent past with the attraction of the Japanese textile company 'Toray' to Mansfield and other major developments at Oakham Business Park. A major programme of improvements has also taken place in Mansfield town centre. The District Council has also invested heavily in industrial infrastructure at Oakham Business Park and Crown Farm Industrial Park and has provided workshop units at Grove Street (Mansfield Woodhouse), Burns Lane (Warsop) and Tenter Lane. Enterprise Zones have also been designated in the Newlands Road/former Mansfield Colliery areas. Other facilities such as the Manor Park recreational complex and the Water Meadows Wet Leisure Complex also add to the attractions of the District. Substantial sums of money are currently being invested in Mansfield's sewerage network (by Severn Trent Water Limited) and a major extension to the water treatment works at Bath Lane is nearing completion. The passenger railway service between Nottingham and Worksop has also been re-opened with new stations at Mansfield town centre and Mansfield Woodhouse.
- 2.1.6 This Local Plan aims to build on the strengths of the District and to have the flexibility to be able to grasp opportunities as they arise.

2.2 **National Policy Context**

2.2.1 In preparing this Local Plan account has been taken of national planning guidance and other relevant planning policies, principally Acts of Parliament and associated regulations. Of direct relevance to the process of preparing this Plan are the Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. These provide general advice on local plans, retail developments, housing etc. Recent PPG's of particular relevance to local plans include PPG 6: Town Centres and Retail Developments, PPG 13: Transport and PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment.

2.2.2 The new Planning Policy Guidance Note on Local Plans (PPG 12) entitled "Development Plans and Regional Policy Guidance" contains some important guidelines on what Local Plans should or should not contain. In particular the note introduces the concept of 'sustainable' development to the Local Plan process. This means that whilst Plans must make adequate provision for development they must at the same time take account of the need to protect the natural and built environment. Development decisions should not therefore deny future generations the best of today's environment.

2.2.3 The District Council will continue to press for more central government funding for Mansfield in recognition of the declining coalfield, high unemployment levels and urban deprivation. The Mansfield Travel to Work Area has recently been granted Development Area status and two Enterprise Zones have been established around the Mansfield Colliery/Newlands Road area in Forest Town.

2.3 **Regional Policy Context**

2.3.1 "Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands" was issued in March 1994 (RPG8). This document sets out the strategy which will carry planning in the East Midlands forward into the next century. The document sets out a number of key objectives for the future development of the East Midlands. Of particular relevance to the Mansfield area is the aim to spread the benefits of economic growth to the less well favoured areas such as the coalfields. The need for improved east-west links between the M1 and A1 to the East Coast ports is highlighted with the idea of a route improvement between the A1 and the M1 via Mansfield.

2.3.2 The District is eligible for funding from the European Union (under Objectives 2 and 5b). The Warsop area and parts of Pleasley Hill, Forest Town and Rainworth are included in the Nottinghamshire Rural Development Area and are eligible for Rural Development Commission funding. The Mansfield Partnership has also recently been successful in obtaining funding under the Single Regeneration Budget for the District, with a particular concentration of projects in the Mansfield Woodhouse area.

2.4 **County Strategy**

2.4.1 The Nottinghamshire Structure Plan Review was adopted in November, 1996. The Review replaces the 1991 Structure Plan and covers the period 1991 - 2011.

2.4.2 The Structure Plan Review reflects the need to assist in regenerating and restructuring the local economy by ensuring that the land and infrastructure the County needs to 2011 is provided and in the right locations; to sustain the quality of the environment as a place to live, work and visit; and to improve accessibility within the County and to the rest of Britain and abroad.

2.4.3 The County Council adopted its Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan in November, 1997, and placed its Nottinghamshire Waste Local Plan on Deposit in January, 1998.

2.5 **The Local Plan Strategy**

2.5.1 This District Wide Plan will provide guidance on and control over the scale, location and character of development which is considered appropriate in different parts of the Plan area. This will be determined through a process of public consultation and examination and to withstand this examination it is important that the policies and proposals in the Plan emanate from a coherent and consistent strategy. The development plan should provide:-

- guidance (to help people plan confidently and sensibly);
- incentive (to stimulate development);
- control (to ensure developers cannot insist on a change against the public interest);
- certainty (for both developers and the public interest);
- involvement (in the plan process for the general public and organisations).

2.5.2 A major plank of the strategy of the Local Plan is the Council's commitment to achieving economic growth and widening the employment base of the District. The Plan will also seek to maintain and enhance Mansfield's role as a sub-regional centre for North Nottinghamshire and adjacent areas. This growth and development should be achieved in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and accords with the undoubted economic needs of the area. The policies and proposals of the Local Plan will thus seek to achieve a balance between the undoubted needs of development in the area and the need to conserve the best features of Mansfield's environment. Land use planning is a fundamental tool of environmental protection and enhancement which can help to improve the quality of life within Mansfield District, both for existing and future residents. The policies and proposals of the Local Plan should reflect this.

2.5.3 Primarily the overriding strategic objectives of the Local Plan will fall within three main categories. These are:-

Economic Growth and Development: Objectives are aimed at accommodating residential, industrial and commercial development and at encouraging enterprise, investment and the creation of jobs.

Quality of Life: Objectives are aimed at ensuring provision for retailing, leisure and countryside recreation, to maintain and enhance accessibility to protect residential amenity and to meet social and community needs.

Conservation of Environmental Resources: Objectives are aimed at protecting and enhancing the environment including listed buildings, archaeological sites, ancient monuments, designated sites of nature conservation value, the countryside, best agricultural land, natural habitats and to protect the best features of Mansfield's built environment.

2.6 **Sustainable Development**

2.6.1 Recent Government guidance has placed great emphasis on the role that development plans can play in ensuring that development and growth are sustainable. Sustainable development has been defined as:-

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

2.6.2 The effective control of development through the land use planning system and the protection of the environmental attributes of the District are major considerations of this Plan. The Plan tries to ensure the full and effective use of land within the urban area. It recognises the need to locate development close to existing facilities so as to minimise transport journeys and the use of the private car. This is reflected both in the strategic policies and all other policies put forward in this Plan.

2.7 **Environmental Appraisal**

2.7.1 PPG12 now recommends that Local Authorities should carry out an Environmental Appraisal (E.A.) of the policies and proposals in their development plans. The advice does not stipulate how this should be done, but it should seek to demonstrate how environmental concerns have been consistently taken into account in the preparation of the Plan.

2.7.2 During the preparation of the Plan the District Council collected a variety of environmental information which has been used to provide a basis for formulating policies and proposals. This information has been used to balance the development needs of the District with environmental concerns.

2.7.3 The Plan has a series of major aims. These include the conservation of environmental resources and quality of life objectives. In addition, the two overriding strategic objectives of the Plan seek to :-

- i) balance the development needs of the District with the protection and enhancement of the environmental attributes of the District;
- ii) concentrate development within and adjoining the main urban areas of the District.

This strategy seeks to concentrate development into established settlement patterns so that housing, employment and other developments are well related to transport routes and existing infrastructure.

2.7.4 The environmental implications of the individual policies and proposals of the Plan were considered during their formulation and environmental considerations feature prominently in the written statement of the Plan. Many of the policies of the Plan include environmental criteria against which planning applications will be judged.

2.7.5 An environmental appraisal of the Local Plan has been undertaken to assess the Plan's likely environmental impact.

2.8 **Major Aims of the Local Plan**

2.8.1 Economic Growth and Development:-

- To ensure that at all times there is an adequate supply of housing and employment land available in the District;
- To facilitate development and economic activity that will provide jobs for Mansfield residents;
- To achieve compatibility between the interests of economic development and environmental protection;
- To maintain and enhance Mansfield's role as a sub-regional centre;
- To meet the needs of new development; (including the use of planning obligations in the case of major new development).
- To ensure that all new development is co-ordinated with the provision of the necessary infrastructure.

2.8.2

Quality of Life:-

- To ensure the provision of shopping, recreation and community facilities that meet the needs of Mansfield;
- To seek to maintain and enhance the role of Mansfield town centre and the district centres, as locations for shopping and commercial activity;
- To improve the quality of the physical environment of the District through derelict land reclamation and other enhancement schemes;
- To ensure that community safety issues are fully considered in the consideration of all development proposals;
- To ensure due attention is paid to creating a safe and secure environment;
- To seek to prevent excessive traffic generation and environmental pollution;
- To assist and facilitate the process of urban regeneration;
- To enable public enjoyment of suitable parts of the countryside.

2.8.3

Conservation of Environmental Resources:-

- To protect, conserve and enhance the architectural, historic and environmental qualities of the built environment;
- To protect, conserve and enhance the open countryside;
- To conserve higher quality agricultural land wherever possible;
- To protect, conserve and enhance valued areas of open space and wildlife habitat in the District.



2.9

Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan

2.9.1

The District Council will identify a continuing supply of land for the growth of employment and housing in the District which:-

- Meets the needs of Mansfield District;
- Is well related to the Transport Network;
- Accords with the detailed policies of the Plan.

2.9.2

The District Council will continue to support and promote Mansfield town centre as a sub-regional centre for shopping, commercial and leisure based activities.

- 2.9.3 The District Council will support and promote the development of new retail schemes where these accord with the detailed policies of the Plan.
- 2.9.4 Encouragement will be given to the provision of community, leisure and tourist facilities where these accord with the detailed policies of the Plan.
- 2.9.5 Priority will be given towards the reuse or recycling of vacant or redundant sites and suitable schemes for the reuse or restoration of derelict land will be encouraged.
- 2.9.6 There will be a presumption against development outside the defined areas in the Local Plan unless a proven need can be demonstrated which cannot be met elsewhere in the Plan area.
- 2.9.7 Protection will be afforded to the open countryside and its amenity value and recreation potential will be enhanced.
- 2.9.8 Encouragement will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the existing built environment and to the achievement of a high quality and standard of design in new development.
- 2.9.9 The nature conservation resources of the District will be protected and enhanced.
- 2.9.10 The District Council will seek to ensure that the relevant agencies provide the infrastructure necessary to support the level of development proposed in the Plan.
- 2.9.11 To ensure the particular needs of disabled people, elderly people, young children and the less mobile are given due consideration in development proposals.
- 2.9.12 Major development proposals should provide appropriate community and infrastructure facilities based on the scale, location and nature of the development.
- 2.9.13 In considering all development proposals the District Council will ensure that due attention is given to crime prevention and the creation and maintenance of a safe and secure environment.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

2.10 Commitment to Economic Development and Environmental Protection

- 2.10.1 The District Council is committed to the creation of jobs necessary to replace those lost in the mining and textile industries. These needs however have to be balanced against the need to protect the environmental attributes of the District.

DPS1 PROVISION WILL BE MADE WITHIN THE PLAN PERIOD (1996-2006) FOR THE SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT NECESSARY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT WHILST AT THE SAME TIME PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENTAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE DISTRICT TO PROGRESS TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT.

- 2.10.2 This policy reflects the need within the District to regenerate and restructure Mansfield's economy and to cater for the needs of Mansfield's present and future population. Such development needs to be carried out in a manner consistent with the concept of sustainable development which recognises the constraints imposed by the environmental attributes of the District.

- 2.10.3 The Plan seeks to secure urban regeneration through the reuse of derelict land and under used land in the urban areas and the reinforcement of the role of the town centres of Mansfield, Woodhouse and Warsop.
- 2.10.4 The Local Plan earmarks a variety of sites for employment purposes including some prestige and exceptional sites on the fringe of the urban areas. The allocation of these sites is essential to attract inward investment to the District, but wherever possible these sites have been selected to ensure that the environmental attributes of the District are not compromised. Provision is also made for the level of housing required over the Plan period together with sufficient provision for shopping facilities to be provided for the District's population over the Plan period.
- 2.10.5 The strategy will also seek to ensure that land use and transportation issues are considered in concert to help promote sustainable solutions to development objectives.
- 2.10.6 The environmental attributes of the Plan area are set out in the document and policies are proposed to ensure their proper protection and enhancement. All development proposals would be expected to respect and take account of the environmental attributes of the District.
- 2.11 **Distribution of Development**
- 2.11.1 In order to achieve sustainable patterns of development in the District it is considered preferable to concentrate development within the main urban areas of Mansfield.

DPS2 DEVELOPMENT WILL BE CONCENTRATED WITHIN AND ADJOINING THE MAIN URBAN AREAS OF MANSFIELD, WOODHOUSE AND WARSOP.