Matter 3. Strategic Approach

Spatial strategy

Q3.2. Is the broad spatial distribution of development proposed in policies 2 and 3 justified? In particular, the aims to accommodate:

a) At least 50% of new homes in and around the Main Urban Area; approximately 40% at seven Main Towns; and about 10% at ten Service Towns and Villages.

b) The ranges for the number of new homes in and around each of the individual Main Towns and Service Towns and Villages.

c) Major new employment sites in locations accessible from the Main Urban Area and Main Towns in locations attractive to the market with good access to the strategic transport network as well as Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

d) Retail, leisure, office, cultural and tourist developments in the network of town centres defined in Table 2.

The Service Towns and Villages are defined as providing a good range of services meeting their own needs and the local area. To maintain and enhance their role as service towns and villages which provide housing, employment, retail, and key services and facilities for the local area, these settlements will be a focus for accommodating an appropriate level of growth to meet their local needs, as well as renewing and regenerating any run-down neighbourhoods. As such, we support that at about 10% of new homes should be located in this location.

As per the policy wording, “about 10%”, suggests that this should be an indicative target and 10% should not be a viewed or proposed as a cap to development. It is vital that communities across the Borough remain viable; supporting the services and facilities that already exist in a range of towns and villages and that the sites identified in the plan to accommodate this growth are deliverable, developable and viable to ensure that the special approach is met.

Q3.3. Is the broad spatial distribution of development proposed by the employment and housing allocations in policies 4 and 6 justified having regard to the aims set out in policies 2 and 3? Are any main modifications required to ensure that the Plan is unambiguous and internally consistent in this respect?

Whilst we do not have any comments to make with regard to any main modifications required to ensure that the Plan is unambiguous and internally consistent in this respect, we do have concerns over the proposed green belt release in and around Tickhill in respect of meeting the identified house need and enabling development to come forward in line with the broad spatial distribution of development proposed by the employment and housing allocations in the Draft Plan. Please therefore see our comments to Matter 4 below providing further details in respect of our concerns.

Q3.5. Is the approach to deciding development proposals based on the figures for new homes set out in policy 3 for Doncaster Main Urban Area, the Main Towns and the Service Towns and Larger Villages justified, and is it sufficiently clear to be effective?
In accordance with the settlement hierarchy outlined in Draft Policy 2, Draft Policy 3 goes on to state the specific distribution of development across the Borough, with *about 10%* of development being directed to the Service Towns and Larger Villages. As the term ‘about’ is included, this does not / should not cap the development of new homes in Service Towns and Villages to only 10%. The number of development proposals can increase to assist in meeting the minimum housing requirements as set out in Policy 3.

Whilst we support the use of the settlement hierarchy to help establish the most sustainable locations of growth, it is important that the figures set out in Draft Policy 3 are just *minimum* figures. Capping development in some areas could lead to stifling sustainable development in the future. As such, providing a minimum figure only (with no ceiling / cap) would readdress the soundness of the plan, in accordance with paragraph 60 of the NPPF.