

Chapter 17

The Dearne





The Dearne

INTRODUCTION

17.1 The Mexborough/Conisbrough area differs from other parts of Doncaster Borough in two key respects. Firstly, it forms part of the wider Dearne area, encompassing adjacent parts of Rotherham and Barnsley, to which it is closely tied economically and socially. Secondly, in common with the rest of the Dearne its problems - unemployment, dereliction, social - have long been particularly acute. Indeed, Local Plans for the respective parts of the Dearne Valley were prepared jointly early on by the three District Councils of Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley in recognition of the severity of the problems of the Dearne.

17.2 The need for regeneration of the Dearne as a whole is also recognised in Strategic Guidance and hence the Mexborough/Conisbrough area forms one of the Regeneration Priority Areas identified in the UDP.



~~SD 1
THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL REGENERATION OF THE MEXBOROUGH/CONISBROUGH AREA AS PART OF THE WIDER DEARNE VALLEY INITIATIVE.~~

Replaced by
Core Strategy
Policy 2: Growth
and
Regeneration
Strategy

17.3 In the late 1980's, because of the severity of the Dearne's problems, the three Local Authorities concerned - Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham Borough Councils - joined together to form the Dearne Initiative, with the aim of attracting both private and public funds to the Dearne. In 1990, with Urban Programme funding, the three Boroughs commissioned an "Economic Strategy Study and Business Plan" which set out practical steps for the regeneration of the Dearne including formation of the Dearne Valley Partnership.

17.4 Regeneration of the area has already begun using Urban Programme, Derelict Land Grant and other sources of funding. More recently, the decision of the Secretary of State for the Environment to accept the Dearne Partnership's City Challenge bid has provided a major boost to the Dearne programmes and has resulted in a considerable improvement in the area's fortunes.

17.5 The UDP will contribute to the regeneration of the Doncaster part of the Dearne in a number of ways: through the allocation of land for

industrial, commercial and residential development; through major proposals for environmental improvement; by securing the conservation of the more environmentally attractive parts of the Dearne, both urban and rural; and through proposals to improve transport and communications.

17.6 Detailed proposals for the Mexborough/Conisbrough area are set out in the appropriate Topic Chapters. The following sets out, in summary, the main issues and problems facing the area and the UDP policy framework for dealing with these.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

17.7 Job losses, largely due to the contraction of the coal industry, have been particularly severe in the Mexborough/Conisbrough area. For employment purposes, the area cannot be divorced from the wider Dearne area, the whole of which has long suffered from very high unemployment levels. The Dearne Business Plan, referred to in para. 17.3 above, recommends that the Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley UDP's together provide for some 240-320 hectares of industrial development in the Dearne Valley to achieve an

initial target of 4000 additional jobs before the year 2000. A substantial proportion of this will be provided within Rotherham and Barnsley Districts, particularly at the Wath-Manvers reclamation site (around 160 hectares) within Rotherham District. Within the Doncaster part of the Dearne, a total of approximately 30 hectares will be provided, principally at Pastures Road, Mexborough and Denaby Lane Industrial Estate. Land at Denaby Lane has been included in the Dearne Enterprise Zone which expires in 2005.

17.8 Proposals are designed to encourage a wider range of employment opportunities, with ample scope for service employment, such as office employment and that associated with major leisure provision, in addition to manufacturing. Two currently proposed projects, The Earth Centre at Cadeby Colliery and the University of the Dearne at Wath Manvers will, in time create an additional leisure and educational focus in the area.

ENVIRONMENT

17.9 The Dearne has an important natural and built heritage including a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (eg. Denaby Ings Nature Reserve), Scheduled Ancient Monuments (eg. Conisbrough Castle) and outstanding landscape features (eg. Sprotbrough Gorge). Much of the countryside is designated as Green Belt and some of it falls within areas identified as being of Special Landscape Value. The policies of the UDP seek to protect and enhance the best features of the area.

Initiative as a response to the scale of cross-boundary dereliction in this homogeneous part of South Yorkshire. This approach is supported by the underlying concept that sustainable economic regeneration is unlikely to occur unless a significant improvement to the environment of the Dearne has been secured.

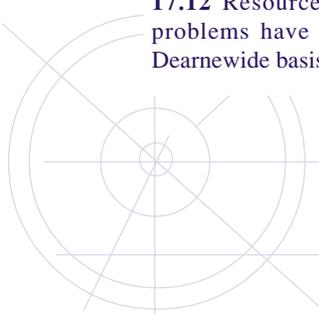
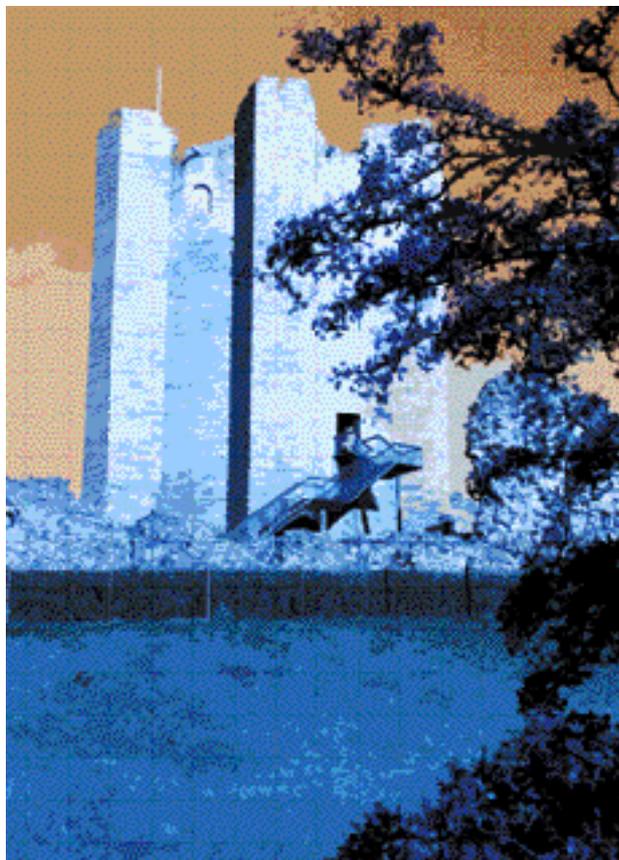
contains policies and proposals which are aimed at environmental improvement as a precondition to economic regeneration. Within Doncaster Borough the major part of the Dearne Valley to receive environmental improvement is the Don/Dearne Valley Mixed Use Regeneration Project which includes the former Cadeby and Denaby Main Collieries and spoilheaps, and the former Mexborough Power Station site.

17.10 Mexborough and Conisbrough and their surrounding areas suffer the problem of environmental damage caused by colliery closure and the legacy of decades of industrial exploitation.

17.11 This problem is not new and the Borough Council has consistently sought to bring about meaningful environmental improvements in this part of the Dearne area. The Mexborough/Conisbrough District Plan proposed a number of policies aimed at a wide ranging upgrading of the local environment. For example, colliery spoil heaps have been restored for amenity and agricultural uses and the urban areas have benefited from improvement programmes. However, there are still many environmental problems which range from local, small scale neglect in residential areas to large areas of effectively derelict colliery land.

17.12 Resources to remedy these problems have been secured on a Dearne-wide basis through the Dearne

17.13 The UDP therefore confirms and encourages this approach in the Mexborough/Conisbrough area and



HOUSING

17.14 The Borough Council recognises that Mexborough/Conisbrough is an integral part of the wider Dearne Area and notwithstanding the allocation of housing land in the UDP from a Borough-wide requirement of 18,665 it is important to recognise the role new and refurbished/improved housing can play in regenerating the Dearne. The allocation of housing sites seek to meet the regeneration objectives set by the UDP. Economic regeneration can be partly provided by a strong new build housing element, environmental regeneration will be secured by the development of both existing poor quality and potentially attractive sites, and a measure of social regeneration can be achieved by providing a wide range of sites primed for both high quality housing and housing for special needs households.

17.15 The refurbishment and improvement of the existing housing stock in the Mexborough/Conisbrough



area is a priority for the Borough Council and was included in the Housing Strategy which accompanied the Housing Investment Programmes submission 1991/92. The targetting of both Borough Council and grant-aided

resources to the Dearne Area, for housing stock improvements, reflects both the scale of the problems and the commitment of the Borough Council to aiding programmes of housing improvements

TRANSPORT

17.16 The Dearne is less accessible by road than many parts of Doncaster, and in order to achieve its successful economic regeneration, particular attention is given to the need to improve the relative accessibility of the area.

17.17 The Department of Transport has proposals for upgrading the A1(M) north of Redhouse and to provide an additional junction on the M18 south of Conisbrough. Both these proposals are outside the Dearne but will have a significant impact on improving the regional and national links into the area.

17.18 Proposals are included to replace the railway level-crossing between Mexborough and Conisbrough with a road bridge on the A6023 at Denaby (Policy T2(3)). This will remove a major bottleneck in the Highway Network within the Dearne. Other major proposals include a new link between the M18 and Conisbrough (Policy T2(10)) and by-passes for villages along the line of the A635 at Hickleton (Policy T2(4)) and Marr (Policy T2(5)). The A635 will act as

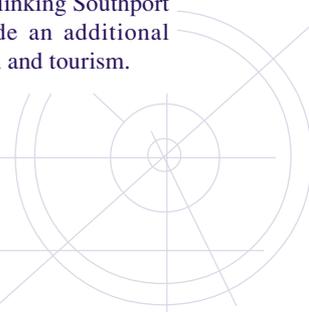


the eastern link into the Dearne Towns from the A1(M).

17.19 In addition to the Highway Network, overall accessibility to the Dearne Valley relies on the provision of public transport by both bus and rail. The Dearne will benefit from the wider objectives of the Borough Council to create an integrated public transport system based on the local rail network and bus network together with associated improvements to facilities to encourage use. In particular, improvements to the local rail network

in the Dearne will give access to the Inter-City national rail network via Doncaster and Sheffield.

17.20 Other general policies relating to the canal network and public rights of way, including cycleways, will contribute to general public access objectives in the Dearne. Specific proposals to establish a Trans-Pennine Trail (Policy T44) will create a combined cycle and footpath route through the Dearne linking Southport to Hull and provide an additional forum for recreation and tourism.



SHOPPING

17.21 Mexborough Town Centre is the second largest shopping and commercial centre within the Borough. Conisbrough Town Centre is much smaller but important in the local context. The Borough Council's policies for these centres are geared to promoting their enhancement and modernisation, continuing the work

already commenced, particularly in Mexborough, where the pedestrianisation and other improvements to High Street have certainly strengthened the commercial centre. In Mexborough Town Centre, the more important shopping frontages will be consolidated and strengthened through Policy SH5 which restricts

changes of use from retail to non-retail. In both Mexborough and Conisbrough centres, the Borough Council will encourage and promote shopping development and appropriate redevelopment schemes particularly the provision of supermarkets in line with Policies SH8 and SH12.

RECREATION AND LEISURE

17.22 The reclamation of areas of derelict land such as Viaduct Tip, Nursery Lane and Nearcliffe Quarry to provide new areas of amenity woodland and other open space will achieve substantial environmental improvement and provide important opportunities for local informal recreation. The reclamation of Cadeby Colliery will provide amongst other things, a major new country park.

17.23 The need for a sports centre to serve the immediate needs of the area for indoor recreation has been identified (Policy RL24) and a leisure centre will be built adjacent to Denaby level crossing. The full realisation of the wider recreation and leisure opportunities identified within the Don/Dearne Valleys Mixed Use Regeneration Project will provide an exciting range of recreation facilities of regional and potentially national importance, a tremendous resource for local people and a major attraction of investment to the area.

17.24 The benefits of tourism and tourist related activities in the Dearne can promote and sustain economic, environmental and social regeneration. The Dearne is covered by the Heritage Area in Policy ST01 and the key



elements (Policy TO1) of tourist activities are Conisbrough Castle, the Don and Dearne Rivers and Valley, Earth Centre and the Trans-Pennine Trail. The linking of tourism to regeneration is clearly illustrated by these three tourism attractions. The historic attractions and associations of Conisbrough Castle act as a focus for visitors. The Don and Dearne Valley's natural environmental features are coupled with reclamation schemes throughout the Valley which have

proposals for tourist elements such as Country Parks to the fore. The Trans-Pennine Trail will link the Borough with adjacent areas and encourage visitors to view the attractions in the Dearne such as Earth Centre at Conisbrough. The social and economic impact of tourism in the Dearne will be significant and the tourist facilities can act as a catalyst to improve the social and economic outlook in the area.

