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# Introduction

This Joint Structure Plan sets out strategic land use policies to guide the scale and location of development in the Plan Area. The Plan covers the scale and broad location of housing and employment land, the protection and enhancement of the environment, transport, recreation and tourism, and shopping. Local plans prepared by the District Councils (apart from Minerals and Waste in the administrative County) provide detailed policies and show proposals on a Proposals Map. The new plan-making system, see below, replaces local plans with local development documents.

The Plan period is 2001-2021 and the Plan takes into account the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS] approved by the Secretary of State in March 2005. The Plan divides the Plan Area into three parts for policy purposes, reflecting the sub-areas used in RSS - see Figure 1.

This Plan when adopted will replace the current County Structure Plan, adopted in November 1996, and provide the framework for more detailed local plans, emerging local development documents (LDDs), the Local Transport Plans and for general development control guidance. The 1996 Plan has an end date of 2011, so the Joint Structure Plan will influence and cause a reassessment of uncommitted development proposals set out in adopted local plans, the local plan review for Rushcliffe Borough, and in emerging LDDs.

This is the first time that the Structure Plan preparation has been a joint venture and the two Councils set up an advisory Joint Committee to assist County and City Councillors in this process. The joint working arrangements have operated well as is evidenced by this Plan.

The Plan takes as a key objective the need to achieve sustainable development. The achievement of this objective will not be easy and will not be secured by a single Plan; nevertheless, the Joint Structure Plan is a significant milestone in this direction.

Under the provisions of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, this will be the last Structure Plan for the geographic County. In future, strategic planning will be undertaken by the East Midlands Regional Assembly which is preparing a new East Midlands RSS to 2026. The RSS will contain Sub-Regional Strategies for the Nottingham/Leicester/Derby area and for the north Derbyshire/west and north-west Nottinghamshire areas. The Joint Structure Plan is prepared under the transitional arrangements of the 2004 Act, and will be operative for a period of around three years or until the emerging East Midlands RSS is approved by the Secretary of State.

Whilst it is operative, the Joint Structure Plan will act as the framework for more detailed

plans and strategies. It is aided in this function by being drawn up in accord with the existing East Midlands RSS and therefore provides a bridge at strategic level between the old and new plan-making systems.

The two Councils recognise that difficult and sensitive decisions have had to be made, decisions that could and should not be avoided or ignored. Not everyone will be pleased with the policies in the Joint Structure Plan but the final adopted Plan has been the subject of consultation with stakeholders and the community, and been the subject of rigorous scrutiny by the independent Panel who conducted the Examination-in-Public in the summer of 2004.

We would like to thank sincerely all those who have participated in the process of producing this Joint Structure Plan.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Kirkham'.

Councillor David Kirkham  
Leader Nottinghamshire County Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. N. Collins'.

Councillor Jon Collins  
Leader Nottingham City Council



# Strategy

- 1.1** The Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan (JSP) is the strategic land use plan for the County and the City. It sets out land use policies covering matters such as the scale and broad location of residential and employment areas, the protection and enhancement of the environment and major transport schemes. The JSP acts as the strategic planning framework for the more site specific policies and proposals of local plans or local development plan documents<sup>1</sup> prepared by District Councils and the unitary City Council. The JSP will also provide a key input to the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies and Sub-Regional Strategies to be prepared by the Regional Planning Body.
- 1.2** The County and City Councils place great importance on positive measures to secure sustainable development and will work with partners, such as Sub-Regional and Local Strategic Partnerships, and other relevant bodies to define and refine the process of meeting sustainable development targets. The JSP takes into account relevant strategies, plans and programmes and has been prepared in consultation with a wide range of partner organisations.
- 1.3** The Government has published its Communities Plan (Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future 2003) which sets out a long term programme of action for delivering sustainable communities in both urban and rural areas. In order to implement this overall strategy the Government produced the East Midlands Regional Action Plan. This Action Plan sets out the challenges facing the East Midlands Region which range from meeting the housing pressures around the main cities and towns to the problem of maintaining adequate levels of services in the more rural parts of the Region. To a certain extent all of these challenges are evident within the Plan Area. At the regional level policy guidance is provided by the overall vision set out by the East Midlands Regional Assembly in its Integrated Regional Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8).
- 1.4** Whenever an RSS8 policy is felt to adequately cover the situation in the Plan Area then reference is made to it. Specific policies are only included where they add value to other planning guidance, either by adapting RSS8 to the local situation or by providing more specific guidance on topic areas which are not covered by RSS8.

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<sup>1</sup>The new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the new style development plans which include local development documents. Under the transitional arrangements this Plan would become a saved plan until the new Regional Spatial Strategy is published in its final form which is likely to be in 2008.

**1.5** This Strategy sets out the framework for the JSP and introduces some of the major themes which are addressed in more detail in the topic chapters. It is firmly based on the principle of sustainable development which is fundamental to achieving the objectives of the Plan.

**The vision for the Joint Structure Plan is the promotion of:**

A thriving and prosperous County and City, with a good and improving quality of life for the whole community based on new development which promotes greater accessibility to homes, jobs, services and facilities in an enhanced built and natural environment.

**1.6** The policies of the JSP have been framed with this vision in mind. In order to realise this vision the following objectives have been set:

- to further social inclusion through the regeneration of disadvantaged areas by ensuring that all members of the community have improved access to a wide range of employment, housing, services, education, training, cultural and leisure opportunities;
- to promote health and social well being through the provision of sufficient suitable good quality housing, designing safer and more attractive environments and improving accessibility to leisure and recreation facilities;
- to produce good quality environments in urban and rural areas so that the unique character and distinctiveness of Nottinghamshire, with its attractive market towns, the Trent Valley and Sherwood Forest and the City of Nottingham, with its industrial heritage, parks and waterways are protected and enhanced;
- to improve economic prosperity and employment opportunities by encouraging economic diversification and by providing for a wide range of suitable sites and premises for business;
- to further integrate land use and transport so that the need to travel is reduced while accessibility to employment, homes, services, facilities and other resources is improved by enhanced sustainable transport choices;
- to protect the natural and built environment and cultural assets of the Plan Area by avoiding significant harm and securing appropriate mitigation with particular regard to protecting and enhancing biodiversity;
- to ensure that finite natural resources are managed prudently, to ensure that waste materials are managed efficiently and effectively and to encourage energy efficient patterns of development, including maximum use of urban and previously developed land.

**1.7** These objectives underpin the policies which are presented in this Strategy chapter and also in the topic chapters that follow. These objectives will be monitored to assess the extent to which the JSP has been successful in each case. Further information on the range of indicators which will be used in monitoring is contained within the Implementation chapter.

- 1.8** The County and City Councils acknowledge that the JSP cannot by itself satisfy the vision and objectives set out above. It is largely the responsibility of local planning authorities to put in place more detailed policies in local plans which will ensure that the objectives are met. The JSP is, however, a material factor which influences the actions and interests of many public and private sector organisations, including those involved in environmental protection and enhancement, economic development, health, transport and education.

## Sustainable Development

- 1.9** Achieving sustainable development is the key strategic issue that is central to the strategy in order to prevent damaging effects such as climate change, increased pollution and loss of biodiversity. The JSP will therefore seek to ensure that development is undertaken in accordance with the four principles of sustainable development as set out in the Government's White Paper "A Better Quality of Life" (May 1999):
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
  - effective protection of the environment;
  - prudent use of natural resources; and
  - maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- 1.10** This approach is clarified in the Government's sustainable development strategy 'Securing the Future' (March 2005) which develops the strategy set out in 'A Better Quality of Life'. The key to sustainable development is to integrate social, economic and environmental factors in development proposals and to encourage development which works positively towards all three factors. For example, the provision of public transport infrastructure not only reduces the burden on natural resources but also encourages social inclusion and can help to promote growth in the local economy.
- 1.11** The JSP fosters sustainable development through the provision made for housing, employment, transport, services, facilities and other resources. It has considered the needs of the people throughout the Plan Area in order to promote their well being and encourages development to meet these needs in a manner that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 1.12** Sustainable development involves maintaining and enhancing environmental quality and biodiversity as well as meeting peoples' social and economic needs for jobs and homes. It is about encouraging appropriate development and safeguarding critical aspects of the environment as well as ensuring consultation, participation and equity.

## The Sequential Approach

- 1.13** A sequential approach to the selection of land for development should be adopted in local plans/local development plan documents in accordance with the priorities set out in RSS8 Policy 2. The priority order for site selection is as follows:

- a) suitable previously developed sites and buildings within urban areas that are or will be well served by public transport;
- b) other suitable locations within urban areas not identified as land to be protected for amenity purposes;
- c) suitable sites in locations adjoining urban areas, which are or will be well served by public transport, particularly where this involves the use of previously developed land; and
- d) suitable sites in locations outside of (that is not adjoining) urban areas, which are or will be well served by public transport, particularly where this involves the use of previously developed land.

**1.14** The vast majority of development will be concentrated within and adjoining the urban areas and an appropriate amount of development in and around the market towns. RSS8 identifies the Nottingham urban area as a principal urban area (PUA) that will act as a focus for significant levels of new development. It also identifies sub-regional centres (SRCs), including Mansfield, Newark and Worksop, which are intended to perform a complementary role to the PUAs but on a lesser scale.

**1.15** Outside of urban areas and the market towns other smaller settlements that are accessible to their rural hinterlands will also have a role to play in meeting more local development needs. Such rural centres will be identified in local plans. Development should be located within and adjoining such settlements. Local plans should identify such rural centres which serve a rural hinterland and contain all or most of the following functions:

- a primary school;
- a post office;
- a general store;
- a Doctor's surgery;
- a pharmacy;
- good existing or potential for public transport provision;
- employment in addition to those employed in the above functions.

**1.16** In order to ensure that urban capacity is maximised and greenfield development minimised the JSP will include specific policy guidance on phasing. This is elaborated fully in the Housing chapter.

## POLICY 1/1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

All new development must work towards the principles of sustainability. The County and City Councils will promote sustainable development through adopting the sequential approach to the location of development set out in RSS8 and by encouraging:

- a) a range of quality employment land to promote economic growth and appropriate employment opportunities (Policy 4/1); residential development of a type and in locations which meet the needs of the community (Policy 3/1);
- b) an integrated transport network to support new development whilst reducing the need to travel, especially by private car (Policy 5/1);
- c) a range of services and facilities to support business and to meet the needs of communities;
- d) as a priority, development to improve the economy, services and environment in disadvantaged areas and those with high levels of social need;
- e) the protection and enhancement of the distinctive landscape character, built environment and cultural heritage of the Plan Area (Policies 2/7, 2/10, 2/11 and 2/12);
- f) the protection and enhancement of the Plan Area's biodiversity to ensure no net loss of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, and opportunities sought to achieve a net gain (Policy 2/1); and
- g) all development to be of a high standard of design and energy efficient.

### Sustainable Development Principles

**1.17** In addition to the locational priorities for development set out in paragraphs 1.13 to 1.16 above it is also important that regard is given to other factors if sustainable development is to be achieved. A list of such criteria is set out in Policy 3 of RSS8. The JSP fully endorses the importance attached to these criteria, and places particular emphasis upon the following:

#### Developing Previously Used Land and Vacant and Under Used Buildings

**1.18** Government guidance encourages the redevelopment of previously developed land so as to relieve the pressure on greenfield sites and encourage regeneration. RSS8 sets a target of 60% of new residential development on previously developed land and through conversions. This target is adopted here.

**1.19** Urban areas contain some significant areas of derelict, vacant and under used land and buildings, and their redevelopment for productive uses can fulfil many of the objectives of sustainable development.

**1.20** However, there are occasions where the previously developed land may be located in rural locations, for example the many former colliery sites across the Plan Area. In such cases careful assessment in line with the sequential approach will be necessary to establish the suitability of the site for redevelopment in light of its location and accessibility.

## Improving Accessibility and Enhancing the Capacity of Existing Infrastructure

- 1.21** The transport policies of the JSP include priorities for reducing congestion and improving accessibility by integrating transport and land use, reducing the need to travel and promoting the use of public transport.
- 1.22** The East Midlands Development Agency's (emda) Economic Strategy recognises the importance of high quality transport infrastructure in meeting economic growth and regeneration objectives. Examples of where this is taking place are:
- the new Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR) which links up to the Rainworth Bypass - the first part of the MARR route to be completed will improve the accessibility between Newark, Mansfield and the M1 motorway, increasing the economic attractiveness of employment sites;
  - improvements to public transport, most notably a network of routes for the Nottingham Express Transit focussed on a transport interchange at Nottingham Midland Railway Station, reducing congestion, improving accessibility and enhancing regeneration; and
  - building on the Multi-Modal Studies for the A453 and A52 could significantly aid in regenerating the eastern side of the Nottingham conurbation and minimise the impact of traffic on some of the most congested parts of the road network.

## Overcoming Constraints on Development

- 1.23** The increased emphasis on reusing brownfield land places more stress on overcoming constraints to development. Such constraints may include:
- dealing with flood risk - Government guidance in the form of PPG25 'Development and Flood Risk' advises that development on land at risk of flooding or where it would increase the risk elsewhere, should be avoided where possible. Development involving new flood defences will be the last option and any alleviation or defence measures are the responsibility of developers;
  - ground contamination - Government advice is that any necessary works must be undertaken to deal with unacceptable risks to health or the environment taking into account its actual or intended use;
  - other constraints to site development may relate to a lack of infrastructure or to access problems or arise because of ownership constraints. Developers will be expected to meet the costs of access or infrastructure directly relating to the development in question. However, more general problems relating to the need to improve accessibility to broad locations or improving other infrastructure may be addressed by the actions of local authorities or other agencies often working in partnership with the private sector which may help to 'open up' sites for development. Local planning authorities may also seek to use their compulsory purchase powers to assemble sites.

## Reducing Environmental Impact

- 1.24** Development can have positive as well as negative effects upon the natural and built environment. Good quality, well designed buildings can help to regenerate run down areas, but on the other hand insufficient regard for design and the effects of a development upon its surroundings can lead to the loss or degradation of critically important environmental features.

- 1.25** Development proposals should have regard to the characteristics of the area in which they are located. They should encourage local distinctiveness, 'a sense of place' and respect for the historic character of the area. Well designed modern buildings can make a major contribution to the quality of the environment. Buildings should be built at densities which make the most productive use of the site whilst respecting the context of the surrounding area (see Policies 2/7, 2/10 and 2/12).
- 1.26** In order to promote effective protection of the landscape, it is necessary to have an understanding of its character and distinctiveness. The Countryside Agency's Landscape Character approach is a useful tool for this which has been supplemented by a finer level of analysis undertaken by the County Council. The adoption of this approach will ensure that development proposals respect the character and distinctiveness of the surrounding area.
- 1.27** In line with the need to integrate environmental objectives into the consideration of development options the JSP will have particular regard to the need to protect and enhance the richness and variety of wildlife and habitats around us, that is biodiversity, to ensure there is no net loss in Nottinghamshire (see Policy 2/1).
- 1.28** The siting, design and location of new development can play a key role in reducing energy consumption and therefore influencing climate change. For example, mixed use developments with good public transport routes can reduce the need to travel and reliance on the private car; and the siting and materials used in new buildings can maximise solar heat gain, both reducing environmental impacts such as carbon dioxide and other pollutant emissions.

### **Promoting Mixed Use Development and Strengthening Local Communities**

- 1.29** Following its Urban White Paper the Government has been keen to promote mixed use development in urban areas so as to reduce the need to travel through the close proximity of different land uses such as housing, employment, retailing and other services.
- 1.30** The JSP will promote the creation of balanced and sustainable communities. Housing provision that will contribute to diversification of tenure and household types will be encouraged. Family housing is particularly important to sustain local communities, and in particular support local schools.
- 1.31** The provision of services close to where people live promotes more sustainable lifestyles as it reduces the need to travel and can generate local employment.
- 1.32** In order to strengthen local communities throughout Nottinghamshire, certain locations will be given priority for action to tackle the most severe problems of disadvantage and social need. As identified in RSS8, regional priorities for regeneration include the deprived inner areas and outer estates of Nottingham City and those areas in the north and west of the County which have previously been dependent on mining employment. Throughout the Plan Area there are also pockets of high levels of social need which will also be given priority for action. The 'Social Need in Nottinghamshire' Study 2004 provides further details regarding the location of these areas.

## **POLICY 1/2 THE NOTTINGHAM DERBY GREEN BELT**

Planning permission will only be granted for appropriate development which is located and designed so as not to adversely affect the Green Belt, in particular its open character. Appropriate development will include:

- a) uses appropriate to rural areas including agriculture, forestry and mineral extraction;
- b) essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation;
- c) cemeteries;
- d) limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, limited infilling in existing villages, limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing sites as identified in local plans;
- e) change of use of agricultural and other buildings, with priority being given to employment and tourism uses, which help to diversify the rural economy.

Local plans/development plan documents for areas covered by the Green Belt will review its boundaries to meet the development land requirements of the Joint Structure Plan to 2021. In this review of Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities will have regard to:

- i) sustainable development principles and the sequential approach to development;
- ii) the principles and purposes of existing Green Belt land, in particular the need to maintain openness and prevent coalescence;
- iii) the retention of existing, or definition of new, defensible boundaries.

**1.33** The Nottingham Derby Green Belt was established to prevent the coalescence of the two cities and the towns in the Erewash valley. It surrounds the Nottingham built-up area and extends to over 60,000 hectares in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. When first established statutorily in 1980, the inner boundary was tightly drawn around the urban area of Nottingham.

**1.34** RSS8 reaffirms the principle of the Green Belt, but proposes that the boundaries of the Green Belt should be reviewed to take account of development needs. Such a review should ensure that the most sustainable sites are developed, minimising the need to travel by private car whilst taking full account of the importance attached to the Green Belt at the local level.

**1.35** The sustainability appraisal of the Nottingham Derby Green Belt Study by Baker Associates in August 1999 recommended that the application of a sequential approach should be the preferred way forward in the review of Green Belt boundary changes to identify the most sustainable opportunities for urban extensions.

## POLICY 1/3 PLANNING CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions will be required from developers to meet relevant measures/costs arising from the proposed development that cannot be addressed by way of conditions to a grant of planning consent. The following types of measures may be sought:

- a) the provision of affordable housing;
- b) the provision of open space;
- c) integrated transport measures; and
- d) other infrastructure, sport/recreation, community facilities (including education) and resources necessitated by the development, including measures to protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage.

Contributions may be by way of the provision of land, buildings and/or finance.

- 1.36** Circular 05/05 enables local authorities to enter into legal agreements with developers whereby the developer agrees to provide directly, or makes a contribution towards the provision of infrastructure, services or resources made necessary by the development. Planning permission will be refused where such contributions are not forthcoming and the development is not therefore acceptable. When assessing the measures and costs arising from development proposals, the cumulative impact of a number of developments will be taken into consideration where appropriate and any identified need and costs required will be on a proportionate basis between the developments. This is to ensure that a number of small developments do not generate a greater demand for infrastructure, services and resources, than one large development. Further, more fundamental, Government guidance regarding the use of planning obligations is anticipated before the end of this Plan period. Policy 1/3 will need to be applied in the context of any such guidance. Further information on the types of measures detailed above is contained in the topic chapters and in the Planning Contributions Strategy (in preparation).

### South Nottinghamshire Sub-Area

- 1.37** South Nottinghamshire includes the Nottingham urban area (consisting of the City of Nottingham (including Clifton) and the adjacent urban areas of Arnold, Beeston, Carlton, Stapleford and West Bridgford) and surrounding towns of Eastwood, Kimberley and Hucknall (see Key Diagram). It comprises of the Districts of Gedling, Rushcliffe, Broxtowe, and parts of Ashfield and Newark and Sherwood. The Nottingham Derby Green Belt plays an important role in preventing the coalescence of settlements and maintaining open countryside close to the urban area.
- 1.38** RSS8 identifies Nottingham as a principal urban area in which significant levels of development should be located in accordance with the sequential approach set out in paragraph 1.13. The nearby towns of Eastwood, Kimberley and Hucknall that surround Nottingham are specifically referred to in RSS8 in the context that they are effectively part of the Nottingham conurbation. This means that planning policy should recognise the strong functional relationships between Nottingham and the surrounding towns of Hucknall, Eastwood and Kimberley which are defined as urban areas in this Plan.

Figure 1: Sub-Areas of the Plan Area



## Population and Employment

- 1.39** The Sub-Area comprises 66% of the total Plan Area's population and 67% of employment. At its heart the City of Nottingham is the major commercial, industrial administrative and cultural centre in the Plan Area with influence that extends across the East Midlands. Nottingham City Centre regularly rates amongst the top national shopping centres while the City also performs a key role in terms of higher education, health care and public services.
- 1.40** The Sub-Area is the economic driver for the Plan Area, and it is the area where there is most demand for land for housing, employment and services. While there is significant demand for housing land as a result of in-migration, the built-up area also contains significant levels of economic, social and physical deprivation.
- 1.41** New residential development is a key element in achieving regeneration, for example family housing can help to support City schools and other local facilities, enhance local economic prospects and reduce out-migration. It can also encourage the move towards sustainable and balanced communities by providing more choice in dwelling size, type and affordability.
- 1.42** Dwelling requirements for South Nottinghamshire are likely to mean that there will also be a need to consider other sites outside of the built-up area. The most sustainable way to provide for this would be in the form of well planned urban extensions well integrated with the existing built-up area identified through the sequential approach and released in phases as set out in the Housing chapter.
- 1.43** It is important that a range of employment sites are provided in terms of both size and location to provide for a wide variety of business needs.
- 1.44** The majority of job growth is expected to be in the service sector and is likely to occur in existing or redeveloped sites and premises and in locations where new employment land allocations are not specifically made or in sectors such as for retailing. Manufacturing will still be an important economic sector and will require new employment land to be provided to allow for expansion, restructuring and relocation.
- 1.45** The City Centre and the Regeneration Zones in the City present significant opportunities to accommodate B1 employment uses (office, light industrial and research and development), and together with other identified sites is likely to mean that sufficient land is available for B1 employment uses. Public intervention may be required in order to bring sites forward.
- 1.46** There will be a need however to bring forward more sites for B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution uses). It is not possible to meet all of Nottingham City's employment land needs due to the constraints imposed by the tight administrative boundaries. Some employment land will need to be found in the surrounding Districts in order to meet the relocation needs of City firms. Studies have shown that there is a mismatch between the supply and demand for such sites across the Sub-Area. Demand is greatest in the west of the Sub-Area close to the motorway while there is less demand for sites to the east of Nottingham largely due to poorer access to the motorway.

**1.47** Consequently, in line with RSS8, local plans should undertake a comprehensive assessment of employment land allocations and commitments. Further guidance is given in Policy 4/4 of the Economy and Employment Land chapter. Particular attention should be given to improving the accessibility of less attractive sites.

## Transport

**1.48** The key transport priorities of the Plan are improving accessibility, reducing the use of the private car and promoting a step change in the quality and quantity of public transport.

**1.49** Access to the City of Nottingham is constrained especially at peak times. This is particularly the case from the south-west along the A453 for which a programme of improvements is planned including dualling the road through to Clifton as well as associated public transport improvements. Consideration should be given to other opportunities to access the conurbation over the timescale of the plan.

**1.50** Transport and land use planning decisions should be fully integrated so as to reduce the need to travel and to provide opportunities for public transport use.

**1.51** Enhancements to public transport such as the development of the Nottingham Express Transit, the implementation of the proposals of the Nottingham Station Master Plan and the development of public transport interchanges will contribute towards greater public transport use and provide a major boost to the local economy.

## West and North-West Nottinghamshire Sub-Area

**1.52** This Sub-Area is centred on the urban areas of Mansfield (comprising Mansfield and Mansfield Woodhouse, including Forest Town), Worksop and Sutton-in-Ashfield (including Huthwaite, Fulwood, Skegby and Stanton Hill) and Kirkby-in-Ashfield (including Annesley Woodhouse). The settlement of Warsop is also identified as an urban area in recognition of its role and function in regenerating the wider area (see Key Diagram). RSS8 identifies Mansfield and Worksop as sub-regional centres which should continue to be a focus for employment, housing, shops and services and other development. RSS8 also identifies other medium and small sized towns such as Sutton-in-Ashfield and Kirkby-in-Ashfield as strategically significant. The northern part of the Sub-Area also has a strong relationship with South Yorkshire, with Sheffield and Doncaster (with its new airport) being strong influences.

**1.53** RSS8 identifies the need to significantly strengthen the sub-regional centres of Mansfield and Worksop as part of its strategy for regenerating the Northern Sub-Area which is a regional priority. The local economy has undergone a substantial amount of restructuring and whilst there have been extensive job losses in traditional industries the area has attracted new jobs in the manufacturing, distribution and service sectors. Manufacturing remains a vital economic sector but the economy must become more diverse if it is to improve its performance. Key to improving the local economy and quality of life is improving accessibility from local communities to the urban areas which provide employment opportunities, services and facilities.

**1.54** The Sub-Area also contains a number of larger rural settlements such as Ollerton and Harworth/Bircotes. It may be appropriate to identify those larger settlements that have good public transport links to surrounding rural areas for appropriately scaled development. Suitable settlements close to the new Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield and the A1 corridor are well placed to offer good opportunities for development associated with the new airport.

## Population and Employment

**1.55** The Sub-Area has experienced net out migration since the early 1990s although this was reversed in the 1998 - 1999 period when there was some modest in-migration. The area experienced considerable job losses during the 1990s due to coal closures and its associated knock on effects. More recently there have been large scale losses of jobs in the traditional manufacturing sectors. For example, around 6,000 jobs were lost in the preceding 12 months to July 2001 with Worksop being particularly badly hit. Unlike Nottingham there has only been modest growth in service based employment and this has not been sufficient to offset job losses. Similarly in contrast to other areas of the UK the Sub-Area has not seen significant growth in high value added manufacturing although the food sector and precision engineering sectors have witnessed some growth.

**1.56** It is highly likely that the difficult employment prospects facing many local residents has been a major factor influencing migration trends and that this has led to younger and more mobile residents leaving the area. This leads to further negative effects as it limits the skills available to existing and potential employers and also reduces the catchment population for goods and services produced locally.

**1.57** A key objective of the Plan is therefore to strengthen and diversify the economy. This means:

- attracting new service based employment and high value added manufacturing jobs;
- provision of appropriate infrastructure and sites to support modern industries and services;
- provision of supporting measures including business support, education and training.

**1.58** The Regional Quality of Employment Land Study (QUELS) recommends that there is merit in enhancing the supply of high quality sites, as very few are currently available in this Sub-Area. Public intervention can play a key role to attract and retain employment on such sites, especially for prestige manufacturing and specialist distribution.

**1.59** The Sub-Area's industrial history has left a legacy of derelict and despoiled land. Some of this has already been subject to reclamation schemes but much work needs to be done. The reclamation of some of this land in accessible locations close to former pit villages may present employment opportunities. The reclamation of other sites in less accessible, more remote areas can be for "softer" uses, for example, forestry, landscaping, nature conservation or open space.

**1.60** The Sub-Area has a wide range of natural and cultural assets including the Sherwood Forest Area and the Dukeries Estates of North Nottinghamshire. Partly due to its industrial history the Sub-Area has a rich built heritage greatly adding to local character and distinctiveness. It also has much attractive countryside such as the Sherwood Forest Landscape Area. As a result, it has proved attractive for tourists and visitors and there is scope for further appropriate tourist development. The challenge set out in the Regional Environmental Strategy is to reconcile areas of dereliction with opportunities for environmental improvement and new job growth. The Northern Coalfields Environmental Study 2003 highlights a number of areas where environmental enhancement will also contribute to social and economic regeneration. These include:

- securing improvements through reclamation including sustainable reuse of former colliery sites;
- enhancing the environmental quality and image of the Northern Coalfields settlements and countryside settings;
- economic diversification including sustainable tourism.

## Transport

**1.61** The Coalfields Task Force Report (CTF) recommended new road improvements in order to open up employment sites and increase accessibility across the North Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire coalfield. The CTF specifically acknowledged that the problems of such former coalfield areas partly arose because of their relative isolation and reliance on historic mineral rail lines. The CTF considered the transport and sites and premises infrastructure was seen to be inferior to more prosperous areas - a situation that required rectifying if jobs lost underground were to be replaced. The CTF proposed the Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route which was included in the 1996 Structure Plan and this new route will improve accessibility between Mansfield and the M1. The last link - the Pleasley Bypass extension in Nottinghamshire and the Glapwell Bypass in Derbyshire - will need to be progressed. The Pleasley Bypass will therefore be a priority scheme for North Nottinghamshire and the County Council will press for similar treatment for the Glapwell Bypass.

**1.62** There is also an urgent need to improve accessibility by public transport both within the Sub-Area between large and small settlements, and between Sub-Areas. Improving peoples' accessibility to jobs and services is one of the most important ways of facilitating social inclusion and tackling social exclusion.

## Town Centres

**1.63** The attraction and retention of service based employment will depend upon investment in the town centres from both the public and private sector. A policy priority will be to promote and enhance Mansfield as a major sub-regional centre for shopping and services. CB Hillier Parker consider that Mansfield has the potential to strengthen its position as the second most important shopping destination after Nottingham. There are considerable opportunity sites for both shopping and office development in and around the central area of Mansfield. Public sector initiatives and investment will be necessary to help bring sites forward for development.

- 1.64** Worksop is a sub-regional centre offering a wide range of services and facilities. The plan will seek to promote this role and give encouragement to opportunities that would enhance this provision.
- 1.65** Local authorities will place a high priority on securing and sustaining investment that will improve the attractiveness and accessibility of the town centres in the Sub-Area.

## **East Nottinghamshire Sub-Area**

- 1.66** The Sub-Area contains the urban areas of Newark and Retford. RSS8 identifies the large market town of Newark as a sub-regional centre which should be strengthened through appropriate development. Medium sized market towns such as Retford, together with smaller market towns are also considered suitable for appropriate development.

## **Population and Employment**

- 1.67** The population of the Sub-Area is 100,000 (approximately 10% of the Plan Area). Migration trends indicate strong net inward movement over the last 10 years which has produced population growth unlike the rest of the Plan Area.
- 1.68** Given the decline of the traditional manufacturing sector there is a need to diversify the local economy. For office based sectors the most suitable and sustainable locations are sites within or adjoining the central areas of Newark and Retford. Manufacturing remains important and not all manufacturing firms have been in decline as some have increased or sustained their employment. For example, the Sub-Area has a concentration of important and expanding food producing firms. A key issue and a priority is to ensure that suitable employment sites and premises are actually available and in the right locations. This should include suitable premises for new and expanding small firms and more specialist requirements such as for distribution.
- 1.69** Newark and Retford are both historic market towns with a wealth of historic buildings and archaeological heritage which require enhancing and protecting. Both towns have attractive waterside environments and there is potential for further development that is in keeping with the historic character of these towns which should help maintain and enhance their role as service centres. In addition to the two historic towns the presence of the River Trent and attractive countryside are also important factors in the visitor appeal of the area. The leisure and tourism industry is already an important economic sector. This sector must be viewed as a priority for sustainable growth given it has good potential to provide new employment. Tourism development should be appropriate to the needs and character of the area.
- 1.70** Farm diversification will also be important as the agricultural sector is expected to continue to face difficulties. The leisure and tourism market for example may provide opportunities for suitable diversification schemes.

## Transport

- 1.71** Improving access between settlements in the Sub-Area and major settlements elsewhere in the Plan Area or wider region by public transport is a continuing priority. This is one of the most important ways in which the JSP can assist people especially in the more remote rural areas access jobs and services and hence help encourage social inclusion.
- 1.72** The Sub-Area has good existing links to national and regional routes, notably the A1 (T) and the East Coast Main Rail Line. North south communications are particularly good and east west access between the A1 (T) and the M1 is also good. To the north of the Sub-Area this is provided by the A57 (T) whilst in the south the new MARR route has increased accessibility between the M1 and Newark. The proposed Kelham bypass will further improve this route between Newark and the M1 as well as remove through traffic from the village. Planned improvements to the A46 (T) between Widmerpool and Newark will also enhance the strategic location of Newark.

## Town Centres

- 1.73** Sustaining and increasing the role of Newark as a sub-regional centre is a key strategic planning objective. Newark is the third largest shopping centre in the Plan Area and provides a good quality shopping environment and is also an important service centre. The 2002 CB Hillier Parker shopping study notes that Newark has potential for retail growth and there is also growth potential within the service leisure sector through increasing visitor patronage.
- 1.74** The Countryside Agency has identified Retford under its Market Towns Initiative. Retford is an attractive market town and includes a number of attractive historic buildings within its central area. The CB Hillier Parker shopping study identifies that the challenge for Retford will be to realise its potential by promoting the attraction of its historic buildings through initiatives such as the Townscape Heritage Project. There is scope to enhance its retail and service role through appropriately designed development that respects the character of the town.