



Shaping Places and Spaces

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR CRAVEN DISTRICT
OUTSIDE THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

Craven District Council

Consultation Paper 4:

ENVIRONMENT & DESIGN

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Colin Walker
Director of Environmental & Planning Services

**Craven District Council, Planning and Building Control, Council Offices, Granville
Street, Skipton, BD23 1PS**

**Telephone Number 01756 706470 Email: ldf@cravenc.gov.uk
Web: www.cravenc.gov.uk**

Environment & Design

1. KEY ISSUES

Conference Outcomes

During the Shaping Places & Spaces conference delegates were asked to consider the following questions that relate to the environment:

How important do you think each of the following factors are when assessing proposals for new development?

All the factors set out within the question were considered as being important in terms of assessing proposals for new development. The factor identified as having the highest priority however was:

- The protection of the local landscape character.

This issue was closely followed by (in priority order):

- The historic character/local distinctiveness of the locality;
- Protection of air and water quality;
- Local ecology;
- Energy efficiency; and
- Flood prevention.

When considering an overall development strategy for rural areas, it was agreed that the LDF should contain policies which would:

- Help to improve the local rural economy, such as encouraging the development of live/work units and farm diversification, both of which work towards the achievement of sustainable communities.

In discussing the protection of the environment:

- Consensus was not achieved in respect of whether development should be concentrated mainly on brownfield or greenfield sites. However it was felt that LDF policies should allow for an appraisal to be made of the biodiversity value of both types of sites;
- Overall it was agreed that all new development should successfully maintain the existing character of the locality.

How can the LDF help to improve the built environment of the plan area?

As with the question set out above all the factors included within the question which could help to improve the built environment were rated as being important. The factor given the highest priority was:

- The need for the LDF to require buildings to be well designed to reflect the character and scale of the local area.

This issue was closely followed by:

- Encouraging designs that take account of sustainable building principles including sustainable urban drainage systems;
- Including open areas within developments designed to promote biodiversity;
- Requiring well designed landscaping;
- Designing development to incorporate traffic calming measures or pedestrianised areas;

- Encouraging innovative building designs; and
- Designing development to take account of personal safety and security.

It was also agreed that, in terms of design, LDF policies should:

- Encourage a range of housing types based on need;
- Encourage new residential development that is built at densities that retain the openness of the plan area; and
- Should provide sufficient car parking for residents and visitors, particularly in rural areas and reflect the requirement for access and connectivity to services, transport and communication.

In addition it was considered that:

- Any new development on the edge of rural settlements should form a natural progression of the existing settlement; and
- Conservation Area boundaries should be reviewed as part of the LDF process.

How can the rural environment of the plan area be enhanced through LDF policies?

- A total of 94% of delegates considered that the need to protect natural resources is the most important factor to be enhanced through LDF policies.
- 89% of delegates felt it important for LDF policies to ensure the conservation of specific features and sites of landscape, wildlife or architectural value, in accordance with statutory designations.
- The need for LDF policies to ensure landscape character and biodiversity are protected and enhanced were rated next in terms of priority with 83% of delegates feeling this issue was important.
- This was followed by the need for LDF policies to support other countryside based enterprises and activities which contribute to rural economies, and/or promote recreation in the countryside, which 75% of delegates felt were important.
- 71% of delegates considered that LDF policies should support development that delivers diverse and sustainable farming practices.
- A total of 63% of delegates felt that the need for policies to provide for the sensitive exploitation of renewable energy sources

Whilst the results of consultation relating to this question have been placed in order of priority, it is clear that they are all considered important issues for the LDF to provide a response and seek to encourage through policy.

In addition it was considered that LDF policies should encourage:

- New development to be located in areas that would result in the least amount of harm to be caused to the rural environment i.e. focussed on existing settlements.

Do you agree that renewable energy sources should be encouraged through LDF policies?

- 89% of delegates agreed that renewable energy sources should be encouraged through LDF policies; whereas
- 9% felt LDF policies should not encourage the use of renewable energy sources.

It was agreed however that:

- An important consideration in terms of assessing proposals for larger scale renewable energy schemes was that the need for such schemes should be balanced against the impact on landscape character;

In addition:

- LDF policy should encourage mitigation measures for renewable energy schemes, for example through the use of colour; and
- LDF policies should require developers to justify why they are not proposing to use renewables within proposals.

If you agree with the above question how should the development of renewable energy sources be encouraged?

The following methods were identified:

- Provide advice on how to minimise environmental impact i.e., through mitigation measures such as innovative design.
- Encourage innovative schemes.
- Make developers aware of grants and subsidies available for use of renewables in new development.
- Reward use of recycled materials and minimising waste.
- Identify suitable areas for both large and small scale development of renewable energy schemes.

What specific types of renewable energy generation should be encouraged?

- Wind Energy – wind turbines
- Energy from organic matter - Biomass
- Hydro electric power
- Solar energy – Photovoltaic cells

From the options set out above:

- The highest (72%) and same priority was given to biomass, hydro electric power and solar energy;
- 54% of delegates felt that wind energy should be encouraged through LDF policy.

Opinion relating to wind farms was mixed:

- Some delegates felt that larger scale wind farms should be resisted as there is potential for small scale wind turbines using a sensitive approach to siting within appropriate areas;

- Some delegates however felt that all wind farms can be intrusive and detract from the wider environment, in addition to being dependant on the variable factor of wind speed.

In terms of biomass as a means of creating energy from renewable sources, it was considered that:

- LDF policies should encourage Biomass schemes and provide information on how to set up such schemes;
- Some delegates however felt that the generation of energy from biomass was not practical within the plan area.

With regard to hydroelectric power it was considered that:

- The potential within the plan area exists for hydroelectric power from river flow; and
- There is also potential within the plan area to generate solar energy through the use of solar panels, which could be encouraged within new developments through LDF policy.

In conclusion it was considered that the LDF should encourage all of the types of renewable energy generation set out above through small scale, locally owned schemes. In addition waste minimisation should be encouraged.

2. SUMMARY OF NATIONAL & REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT: What the Local Development Framework Can and Cannot Influence.

The national planning guidance that relates to environmental issues is wide ranging. This guidance emphasises the importance of promoting good design to create high quality environments through the conservation of the natural heritage and the historic environment in addition to improving existing and encouraging the provision of new open spaces, promoting the use of renewable energy and reducing the risk from flooding.

Regional planning guidance also encourages the promotion of a wide range of environmental issues. Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) addresses the need to promote renewable energy through encouraging the more efficient use of land, reducing waste, improving energy efficiency and reducing the need to travel, particularly by car. In terms of the promotion of renewable energy, draft RSS sets out District level renewable energy generation targets to 2010. The District target set for Craven is 17.6MW per year, 17MW of which should be derived from wind. This would broadly equate to 8 no. 2 mega watt wind turbines being located within the district, when taking account of existing provision. Draft RSS also maintains that in order to maintain the region as a safe and prosperous place to live and work it is essential that the region seeks to minimise flood risk and protect existing settlements and key infrastructure. Draft RSS specifies that 100% of Local Authorities should have completed a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) by 2010. Craven is in the final stages of finalising a joint SFRA with Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council

and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (see Section 3 of this paper for further details relating to the SFRA).

Section 3 of this paper provides further detail relating to the national and regional planning context in terms of environment and design.

3. OPTIONS

Based on the issues identified through the Shaping Places and Spaces Conference the following options relating to environment and design have been formulated:

A. Protection of The Rural Landscape*

Option 1: Continuation of existing Local Plan approach to protect and maintain the character of the countryside through the designation of a Special Landscape Area throughout the plan area.

Option 2: Adopt a new approach where policy development would be informed by the landscape character set out in the Landscape Appraisal for Craven District outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Forest of Bowland AONB 2002. This appraisal identifies different landscape character types that exist throughout the plan area.

Option 3: Do nothing and leave protection of open countryside to National and Regional Policy.

Option 4: Another Way?

* Air, water, soil quality and biodiversity are encompassed in the term rural landscape

B. Flooding

In terms of protecting new development from the risks of flooding, emphasis should be placed on:

Option 1: Locating development where there is market demand (i.e.a “do nothing” approach).

Option 2: Locating development within the lowest risk settlements/sites (free from flooding problems).

Option 3: Locating development on sites within settlements/sites with some flood risk, if appropriate flood risk measures are taken.

Option 4: A combination of Options 2 and 3 using a sequential approach and taking account of the results of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. This option would aim to focus development in specific locations, depending on the severity of risk.

Option 5: A new approach

C. Renewable Energy: Scale of Provision from Wind

The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets a target for the District of 17.6MW of energy to be provided from renewable energy sources by 2010. RSS also states that 17MW, should come from wind energy. Therefore, in terms of scale of renewable energy development from wind sources, should emphasis be placed on:

Option 1: The bringing forward of large scale provision of wind turbines

Option 2: The bringing forward of small to medium scale provision of wind turbines

Option 3: The encouragement of micro schemes

Option 4: Encouraging the upgrading of existing renewable energy wind installations

Option 5: Allowing the market to determine the location of wind farms dependant on demand and technical ability. (i.e. a 'do nothing' approach)

Option 6: A balanced combination of the above options

D. Renewable Energy: Scale of Provision from Other Technologies

Although energy from wind is the most viable form of renewable energy at present, in the future there may be scope for other forms of renewable energy to be encouraged in developments. Therefore in order to further reduce green house gas emissions through the use of renewable energy technologies other than wind, should emphasis be placed on:

Option 1: Reducing consumption in new and existing households and commercial developments through implementing energy efficiency measures (e.g. sustainable urban drainage systems) and through incorporating renewable technology (e.g. solar roof tiles)

Option 2: Developing other renewable energy sources such as biomass and hydro where practical in the District

Option 3: A balanced combination of the above options

Option 4: Do nothing.

Option 5: A new approach

E. Townscape and Design – The Historic Built Environment and Open Space* Within Settlements

In order to determine the future protection of the historic built environment and the existing open spaces found within our settlements what priority should be given to the open character and historic nature of our towns and villages?

Option 1: A high priority is given to protection of the historic built environment along with all existing areas of open space within town and village settlements in order to protect and maintain a sense of space. In order to protect the existing open character of settlements, this option accepts the need for some Greenfield development outside development limits.

Option 2: The level of protection of existing open spaces would be guided by the Assessment of Open Spaces For Craven Outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park 2004. This option may result in some areas of existing open space being released for development, but also may accept the need for some Greenfield development to occur.

Option 3: Do nothing. Low priority would be given to protecting the historic built environment. As a result existing areas of open space would be developed according to market forces. Although this approach could encourage an element of town cramming thus creating a dense built environment, it could also result in less Greenfield land being brought forward for development.

Option 4: A new approach

*Open space includes land identified within the adopted local plan as existing Important Open Space and Existing Recreation/Amenity Space. These sites are currently located both within and outside existing settlement development limits. Open space also includes various hard paved areas such as car parks.

F. Conservation & Design

Options have not been formulated in respect of conservation and design of the built environment, at this stage. Instead the following series of questions are set out for consideration within the Environment and Design Response Form attached to this document. Comments and responses to these questions will help inform the preparation of Core Strategy preferred options relating to the issue of environment and design.

Question 1: How can the LDF preserve and enhance existing Conservation Areas in the plan area?

Question 2: How can LDF policies help to protect/enhance listed buildings?

Question 3: How could the Local Development Framework improve urban quality and the design of places and new developments?

Question 4: How can the LDF encourage development that is safe and secure to its users? Should this apply to all kinds of development?

Question 5: Should policies contained within the Core Strategy encourage energy efficiency and sustainable construction in new developments?

4. INFLUENCES: ENVIRONMENT

National Planning Policy Context

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks
- Urban and Rural White Papers
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing

These documents emphasise the importance of promoting good design to create high quality environments in which people will choose to live. Local distinctiveness and high quality new development are also emphasised by the Government.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 9: Nature Conservation provides guidance on the Government's policies for the conservation of the natural heritage which are to be reflected in land use planning. It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and to conserving the diversity of our wildlife.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning & The Historic Environment sets out the Government's policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment. This guidance complements **Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning**.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation and **Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing** both encourage the provision of new open spaces and the improvement of existing ones, some of which can, of course, provide valuable wildlife habitats.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 22: Renewable Energy encourages planning authorities and developers to promote the use of renewable energy.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 25: Development and Flood Risk sets out the Government's policy to reduce the risk to people and the natural and built environment due to flooding. It acknowledges that river flooding problems are getting worse in frequency and scale and, in relation to the production of LDFs, advises that:

- Flood risk be properly taken into account in the planning and design of developments to reduce the risk of flooding and the damage which floods cause.
- In looking for potential development sites a risk-based sequential test should be followed giving priority to areas of lower risk.
- The use of sustainable drainage systems to control run off from new development be encouraged.
- Flood resistant construction techniques be used where appropriate.

In addition other Government Planning Policy Guidance Notes deal with such matters as noise, minerals and waste.

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy, as approved for the purposes of consultation by the Regional Assembly provides a strategic context for addressing environment and design issues within the Local Development Framework. In this regard, the key draft Regional Spatial Strategy policies for this paper are:

- ENV1 “Floods and Flood Risk”;
- ENV5 “Energy”;
- ENV7 “Agriculture”;
- ENV9 “Cultural Heritage” and;
- ENV10 “Landscape”

The chapter also contains a number of other policies that relate to matters not being addressed within this paper.

Taking each policy in turn, draft policy ENV1 seeks to set a strategic context for addressing the issue of development in areas at high risk from flooding. This is particularly significant for the plan area, as parts of it are at significant risk from flooding (as witnessed in the year 2000 flood event). In terms of implementation, the policy seeks that local authorities undertake a Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA) in order to inform site selection processes that would form part of the Local Development Framework process. A SFRA is currently under preparation in line with this policy approach.

Draft policy ENV5 addresses the issue of energy both in terms of efficiency and creation. Of particular significance to this paper are the sub-regional renewable energy targets (expressed in Megawatts or MW) for the period to 2010. The targets, set at local authority level, indicate the anticipated level of energy to be created by renewable sources within each district. For Craven District, the target is as follows:

District	Target Total (MW) energy created from renewable sources by 2010
Craven	17.6

Background papers to the policy approach indicate that for Craven District as a whole, the majority of the target could be met through wind turbine development as the District is considered to be well resourced in terms of wind capacity and speeds. In addition, the potential for small scale hydro electric energy creation is also considered to offer some potential. In terms of policy approaches to address this issue, the fact that the majority of the district is covered by statutory designation (e.g. National Park or AONB) presents some challenges for the Local Development Framework to resolve.

Draft RSS Policy ENV7 provides strategic support for the principle of agricultural diversification and sets out the nature of proposals that could be acceptable. The largely rural character of the plan area means that agriculture is a key aspect of the character of it. As this is the case, the challenges resulting from the restructuring of the agricultural industry will be

present within the plan area and the Local Development Framework may be required to provide a response.

In terms of addressing cultural heritage and associated issues, draft policy ENV9 provides a context for the emerging Local Development Framework to consider. In this regard, the draft policy seeks to safeguard the historic character and appearance of the historic environment through the preparation of other plans and programmes. In terms of the emerging Local Development Framework, such an approach could directly influence how the issues of land use and design are dealt with within historic settlements such as Skipton and Settle.

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy proposes policies in relation to landscape, and this is expressed in draft policy ENV10. Of particular significance to the plan area is the presence of part of the Forest of Bowland AONB and the proximity of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. In addition there are two registered parks and gardens of historic interest within the plan area. Given that this is the case, and the rural character of the plan area, draft policy ENV10 will clearly influence the approach taken by the Local Development Framework in respect of landscape conservation and enhancement.

Regional Sustainable Development Framework For Yorkshire and The Humber

This document identified a number of aims to address the issues arising from climate change. The LDF can help to minimise climate change by encouraging sustainable transport, energy efficient buildings, promoting renewable energy sources and encouraging tree and woodland planting and conservation.

Evidence Base

There is a wide range of environmental information available to the Council, which is produced by both public and private bodies.

Landscape Character Assessment for Craven District outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Forest of Bowland AONB, 2002

This document provides an assessment of the landscape character types together with strategies for their management. It also provides evidence to inform preparation of landscape associated planning policies, will be used as evidence to guide where certain types of development may be accommodated within the landscape without undue detriment to overall form and character and sets out where improvements to landscape character could be secured via the development control process.

North Yorkshire Sub Regional Renewable Energy Study 2005

A partnership of local authorities in North Yorkshire has commissioned consultants to undertake a sub regional renewable energy study. The project is made up of the following four interrelated elements:

- Review of the technical constraints and opportunities for renewable energy development in North Yorkshire.

- Preparation of planning guidance on sustainable energy for local planning authorities.
- Assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape to accommodate renewable energy developments.
- Preparation of guidance for local authorities on delivering renewable energy as part of their corporate strategies.

A regional study was commissioned by the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber in 2001/2002 to establish targets for each of the four sub-regions. This study sets a target for North Yorkshire to have capacity for at least 194MW of electricity to be produced from renewable resources by 2010. A further study, building on this original work provides targets for each local authority based upon an assessment of broad landscape types, technical constraints and cumulative impacts. The target for Craven District is 17.6MW of electricity to be produced from renewable resources by 2010.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2006

A partnership of the four local authorities in Northwest Yorkshire (i.e. Craven, Harrogate, Richmondshire and the Yorkshire Dales National Park) has commissioned consultants to undertake a sub regional Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) as recommended in PPG25: Development and Flood Risk. The aim of the study is to assess the different levels of flood risk (high, medium or low) in Northwest Yorkshire and map these for statutory land use planning purposes. This will inform the production of the Local Development Framework, the determination and contents of planning applications and make recommendations on the effect of land management on flooding. Amongst other things the production of an SFRA can:

- Reduce the risk of the Environment Agency objecting to the LDF or planning applications;
- Identify high-risk areas unsuitable for development;
- Inform the site allocation process;
- Identify infrastructure weak spots;
- Help with emergency planning for the area; and
- Speed up with development control process

Other Relevant Strategies

Documents, plans and strategies produced by North Yorkshire County Council such as the Bio-Diversity Action Plan and the Local Transport Plan also contribute to the evidence base, which will inform the aspect of the Core Strategy that relates to the environment.

5. HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The options and questions contained within this document are set out on the Environment and Design Response Form, which is attached.

Please send your comments and responses to the Council by **Monday 31st July 2006**.

- It would be helpful to the Council if you could complete the attached Response Form and send it, within the prepaid envelope to:
Planning Policy
Craven District Council
Council Offices
Granville Street
Skipton
North Yorkshire
BD23 1PS
- Alternately the response form can be completed online via the Council's website www.cravencd.gov.uk
- Whilst the use of the response form is encouraged, the Council will also accept comments sent by Email to ldf@cravencd.gov.uk

All responses will be recorded and then considered by the Council in moving to the preferred options stage of preparing the Core Strategy Document.