

Chapter 12 : Prizing, Protecting and Enhancing Sheffield's Natural Environment and Distinctive Urban Heritage



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CS71 Protecting the Green Belt

- 12.1** In keeping with the Regional Spatial Strategy and the spatial strategy for the city, it is proposed to maintain the strategic extent of the Green Belt.

Policy CS 71

Protecting the Green Belt

Countryside and other open land around the existing built-up areas of the city will be safeguarded by maintaining the Green Belt, which will not be subject to strategic or local review. Exceptionally, changes may be made to remove untenable anomalies where the change would not undermine the purposes or objectives of Green Belt in that area. Development needs will be met principally through the re-use of land and buildings rather than through expansion of the urban areas and villages.

- 12.2** The policy follows from the spatial vision of a city renewing itself rather than spreading out. It complements the priority to regeneration and the redevelopment of previously developed land and reflects the very high value attached by the people of the city to the openness of the surrounding countryside. It also complements the Green Belt designations in neighbouring areas, where there are also no proposals for review.
- 12.3** The policy conforms with national policy, which states that the general extent and boundaries of existing approved Green Belt should be altered only exceptionally. The principal potential reason for review was to enable expansion of the urban area to release sufficient land for housing. However, it has been established that there is enough identifiable land within the city to meet the foreseeable needs for housing development. Provision for added flexibility or for land in excess of the requirement in the Regional Spatial Strategy was not considered to be exceptional grounds for a review.
- 12.4** Untenable anomalies will be taken to comprise such circumstances, for example, where it is no longer possible to trace the boundary on the ground, as required by national policy. Such changes would normally be minor and would result from problems with the operation of the Green Belt rather than policy issues. Any changes would conform to national policy for the purposes of Green Belt and objectives for the use of Green Belt land. It is essential that any changes do not undermine confidence in the permanence of the Green Belt. The only non-minor change will be at the airport runway, which will be resolved with a land swap, excluding land on the runway and adding a larger area to the south, which also satisfies the purposes of Green Belt.
- 12.5** The policy will be implemented through the development management process, in accordance with national policy for Green Belts. Anomalies in local boundaries will be rectified through the City Policies and City Sites documents, and the SDF Proposals Map, which will also

designate sustainably located developed sites in the Green Belt as Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 2.

CS72 Protecting Countryside not in the Green Belt

- 12.6** The permanence of the Green Belt means not adding to it as well as not taking land out of it. However, there are areas of countryside around the city that are safeguarded in the spatial strategy as much as the majority of land that is in the Green Belt. These areas are greatly valued for the way in which they contribute to Core Strategy objectives for the natural environment, rural settings and opportunities for peaceful enjoyment of the countryside.

Policy CS 72

Protecting Countryside not in the Green Belt

The green, open and rural character of areas on the edge of the built-up areas but not in the Green Belt will be safeguarded through protection as open countryside, including the following locations:

- a. to the east of Woodhouse
- b. to the south-west and north of Mosborough Village (at Mosborough Moor and Moor Valley)
- c. at the former Holbrook Colliery
- d. south of Stocksbridge (at Hollin Busk).

- 12.7** The land at the edge of Mosborough/Woodhouse is valued for its attractive open character, natural history interest and the ready access it provides to the wider countryside. Some of this land was previously allocated for housing but the much increased capacity of housing sites within the urban area means that it is now possible to protect these peripheral areas from development which would be less sustainable than in other available locations, requiring extension of infrastructure and services. The heavily overgrown former Holbrook Colliery site merits protection because of its extremely high natural history value.
- 12.8** The land at Hollin Busk is a large and integral part of the countryside south of Stocksbridge, prominent in local views and providing an important visual break between the settlements of Stocksbridge and Deepcar. Its rural character is greatly valued locally and there is no need to develop it as new housing can be provided on previously developed land within the urban area. Indeed, protection of the area makes a significant contribution to the character and distinctiveness of Stocksbridge.
- 12.9** Protection of these areas will be achieved through designation as open countryside in the City Sites document and on the SDF Proposals Map, and the consideration of any applications for permission to develop. As future resources permit, the areas owned by the

City Council will be enhanced, starting with Woodhouse East where implementation of a management plan has begun.



CS73 The Strategic Green Network

12.11 Sheffield's main river corridors are one of its most distinctive and valued features, defining the main areas of the city and associated with its historic development. They form part of a more extensive network of locally accessible open space that provides the means for wildlife and people to move through the built-up areas and to connect with the surrounding countryside.

Policy CS 73

The Strategic Green Network

Within and close to the urban areas, a Strategic Green Network will be maintained and where possible enhanced, which will follow the rivers and streams of the main valleys:

- a. Upper Don
- b. Loxley
- c. Rivelin
- d. Porter
- e. Sheaf
- f. Rother
- g. Lower Don/Canal;

and include other strategic corridors through:

- h. Oakes Park to the Limb Valley
- i. Gleadless Valley
- j. Ochre Dike Valley
- k. Shire Brook Valley
- l. Shirtcliffe Brook Valley
- m. Blackburn Brook Valley and its tributaries
- n. Birley Edge.

These Green Corridors will be complemented by a network of more local Green Links and Desired Green Links.

12.12 The Network will be secured by preserving open space through development control, enhancing existing open space, creating new open space as part of new development and through developer contributions. The draft Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan proposes to enhance the provision of good quality paths and network links to and along the river corridors. It also proposes to integrate parks, woodlands site facilities, canal/riverside, and open country access into the overall path network. New lengths of footpaths and cycle

routes and improvements will be funded, for example, through Natural England and the Public Rights of Way budget for the Local Transport Plan.



CS74 Design Principles

12.13 Sheffield enjoys a highly distinctive location amongst English cities, with its hills and valleys, its industrial heritage and its reminders of the smaller settlements around which the modern city has grown. The vision of the Sheffield Development Framework embraces this distinctiveness, affirming it in the face of any economic pressures that could compromise it. The Regional Spatial Strategy (policy ENV9) seeks to safeguard and enhance the historic environment and reinforce the distinctiveness of elements including former industrial landscapes, housing areas and civic buildings of note, especially in West and South Yorkshire. However, some of the legacy of the city's past is not fit for future generations and the policy reflects the process of long-term transformation that is already under way in economic regeneration areas and through Housing Market Renewal. More detailed guidelines on design are set out in national policy and good practice. This policy focuses on what is distinctive to Sheffield and its vision.

Policy CS 74

Design Principles

High-quality development will be expected, which would respect, take advantage of and enhance the distinctive features of the city, its districts and neighbourhoods, including:

- a. the topography, landforms, river corridors, Green Network, important habitats, waterways, woodlands, other natural features and open spaces;
- b. views and vistas to landmarks and skylines into and out of the City Centre and across the city to the surrounding countryside;
- c. the townscape and landscape character of the city's districts, neighbourhoods and quarters, with their associated scale, layout and built form, building styles and materials;
- d. the distinctive heritage of the city, particularly the buildings and settlement forms associated with:
 - i. the metal trades (including workshops, mills and board schools)
 - ii. the City Centre
 - iii. Victorian, Edwardian and Garden City suburbs
 - iv. historic village centres and the city's rural setting.

Development should also:

- e. contribute to place-making, be of a high quality, that contributes to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment, that promotes the city's transformation;
- f. help to transform the character of physical environments that have become run down and are lacking in distinctiveness;
- g. enable all people to gain access safely and conveniently, providing, in particular, for the needs of families and children, and of disabled people and older people;
- h. contribute towards creating attractive, sustainable and successful neighbourhoods.

12.14 The first part of the policy identifies those heritage and landscape issues that are most important for the city's distinctiveness. It aims to make the most of the opportunities that new development presents to enhance this distinctiveness and this will mean respecting the scale, grain and context of the places in which development is proposed. Design that reflects the character of particular areas will help to strengthen the identity of neighbourhoods, people's sense of belonging to them and, potentially, their perceived need to travel outside

them. The heritage associated with the metal trades is of particular importance given their unique role in shaping the development of Sheffield. Design should ensure that new development recognises this heritage and regeneration initiatives in the City Centre and the older industrial areas should take full advantage of the opportunities to enhance this heritage. The character of the distinctive Victorian suburbs and old village centres is an important factor when weighing the requirement for higher density of development (see policy CS26).

12.15 The second part of the policy identifies three strands of design of particular importance for the Strategy's overall vision, dealing with economic, physical and social implications. The policy signals that, in all areas, good design is seen as supporting economic and physical regeneration rather than being a consideration to trade off against economic benefits. The design and quality of buildings and spaces has a vital role to play as a positive driver for change in bringing about new forms of distinctiveness and making run-down areas both physically and economically more attractive. Inclusive design and sustainable neighbourhoods are an essential principle in all parts of the city, reflecting the vision for opportunities, well-being and quality of life for all.

12.16 The policy will be implemented through the development management process, including preparation of planning briefs, other advice to developers and negotiation with applicants for planning permission. For residential schemes, all new developments of 10 dwellings or over should achieve a Building for Life assessment rating of good as a minimum. Areas of historic or architectural significance will be managed through the designation and management of conservation areas and the listing of buildings and the provision of local listings. In areas needing regeneration, the policy will be implemented through masterplans for Housing Market Renewal and other areas. More detailed guidance on specific issues, including inclusive design, will be provided through Supplementary Planning Documents.

CS75 Improvements to Gateway Routes into and through the City

12.17 The first impressions of potential investors and workers on entering the city are important and gateways have a special contribution to achieving the strategy's objective of design to support economic transformation.

Policy CS 75

Improvements to Gateway Routes into and through the City

Gateway routes with priority for improvements will be:

- a. Lower Don Valley routes, A6109, including Attercliffe Common and Attercliffe centre, and at landmark locations on the M1 junctions and east of the Wicker
- b. Penistone Road and landmark locations on Shalesmoor
- c. Inner Ring Road and landmark locations at Park Square
- d. the railway line between Heeley and Blackburn Meadows.

12.18 The routes selected are those in most need of improvement, offering greatest potential for improvement and most significant in terms of the wider transformation of the city.

12.19 Improvements will be achieved through design criteria for these locations, set out in the City Policies document, funding for environmental improvements linked to economic regeneration, protection of open space through planning controls and carrying out road improvements on Key Routes (see policy CS52).

CS76 Tall Buildings in the City Centre

12.20 A tall building can be defined as any building that is substantially higher than its context or one that will shape the city's skyline. Elegantly designed and appropriately sited tall buildings can create landmark structures in areas of strategic importance. As distinctive and bold features on the skyline, they express confidence about a city that can encourage investment. This will promote the transformation of the City Centre outlined in the spatial strategy (see paragraph 4.10).

12.21 The guiding principles reflect the detailed assessment for the City Centre Urban Design Compendium. This shows how tall buildings should enhance and reinforce the character of particular Quarters of the City Centre and this influences the height that would be appropriate in different areas.

Policy CS 76

Tall Buildings in the City Centre

Tall buildings are appropriate in the City Centre where they:

- a. help to define identified gateway sites,
- b. mark an area of civic importance,
- c. mark a principal activity node or a key route,
- d. form the focal point of a vista or enhance the city skyline
- e. re-inforce the topography
- f. support the vision for City Centre quarters
- g. reflect the strategic economic vision for the city.

12.22 The policy will be developed in a Supplementary Planning Document on Tall Buildings. Specific locations will be identified through the City Sites and City Policies documents and the Proposals Map, and implemented through Area Action Plans, planning briefs and decisions about applications for planning permission.

