



Climate Change and Green Spaces Topic Paper

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Executive summary

The South Derbyshire Local Plan Part 1 Review (LPP1) contains policies and allocations to deliver development in sustainable locations, reduce emissions, build in climate change resilience, provide high-quality green spaces, facilities, connected habitat networks and biodiversity net gain to support active lifestyles and wildlife. To do this the LPP1:

- Locates new development in sustainable locations, reducing the need to travel and maximising opportunities to enhance sustainable travel options.
- Focuses on the delivery of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes to increase activity and avoid inactive children and adults and reduce obesity with a particular emphasis on tackling childhood obesity.
- Directs development to areas at least risk of flooding, ensuring that flood mitigation and management are key considerations for development, addresses overheating through the protection of existing trees and new tree planting and supports the efficient use of water.
- Maintains the strong protection afforded to valued landscapes, best and most versatile agricultural land, protected habitats, trees and hedgerows and other important open land.
- Has a clear strategy for the delivery of high-quality, multifunctional, well-connected green and blue infrastructure at the strategic allocations, including the provision of a Country Park at STRA2.

South Derbyshire context

South Derbyshire lies within a wider functional area influenced by Derby, Burton upon Trent and the East Midlands economy. The district consists of expanding urban areas on the edge of Derby, established rural settlements, major transport corridors, established employment areas, agricultural landscapes, important river corridors and locally valued open spaces.

The District is one of the fastest growing in the Country, making the need for sustainability and green space even more important, for both the health and wellbeing of new residents and the preservation and enhancement of the green areas in the District. There is unequal access to high-quality open space and nature, and levels of adult inactivity and childhood obesity are high compared to the national average but there are opportunities to connect new development with active-travel routes, existing employers and strategic habitat networks.

The district is an attractive location for new development which places significant development pressure in and around existing settlements and along major road links (including the A50). Notwithstanding this, three quarters of the district remains in agricultural use which means that there is a high reliance on private vehicles in many rural locations.

There are a number of rivers (Dove, Derwent, Mease and Trent) and waterways that cross through the district and much of it is susceptible to river and surface-water flood risk.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

As part of the three objectives of sustainable development, the NPPF states that, with regard to the environmental objective (paragraph 8), development should “*protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*” To achieve this the NPPF says (paragraph 20 d) that strategic policies should make provision for “*conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation*”.

The NPPF (para 153) requires that “*Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.*”

Sustainable construction, energy efficiency and renewable / low-carbon energy

New buildings constructed during the plan period are likely to remain in use beyond 2050. Poor performance would create future retrofit costs, higher energy bills and avoidable emissions.

The LPP1 aims to support the energy hierarchy by supporting development that reduces demand on energy and supports the reuse and recycling of waste (Policy BNE1) to ensure that energy is used efficiently. It also supports renewable and other energy development (Policy SD6) to ensuring that energy is supplied from renewable and low-carbon sources.

The LPP1 supports the higher environmental performance standards (Policy S3) from new residential and commercial development and seek to ensure the efficient use of transport infrastructure and availability of public transport services (Policy INF2 and S6).

Sustainable transport

The location of growth is one of the Local Plan's most significant sustainability decisions. Development remote from services and public transport can lock households into high-carbon travel patterns for decades.

Paragraph 105 of the NPPF says that *“Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”*

As detailed in the Strategy Topic Paper the growth strategy of the Local Plan, in line with paragraph 6.2.2 of the [Sustainability Appraisal Regulation 19 Addendum \(May 2026\)](#), delivers housing in locations with good access to existing services, employment and leisure opportunities. This contributes to minimising both the need to travel, the distance to travel, and the public transport options in place or to be provided to increase travel options without reliance on the private car. It gives the greatest benefit in terms of matching housing delivery with the necessary infrastructure provision to support development, both in terms of funding opportunities and securing housing where it can most benefit from existing infrastructure which is more focussed in and around Derby than in more rural parts of the District.

The Local Plan includes a settlement hierarchy for future development, this applies a realistic approach to rural accessibility, supports the vitality of settlements and local services at a scale proportionate to their role, avoids isolated development that creates unnecessary travel, and coordinates housing and employment growth with infrastructure.

The LPP1 ensures that sustainable transport outcomes will be delivered for all new development (Policy INF2).

In addition, a key focus for the strategic housing-led allocations (STRA1 & STRA2) is the ability to provide safe, attractive, well-connected walking and cycling routes both within the sites to schools and local facilities and to the wider area including areas within Derby City and existing key employers. This will reduce the need to travel via private car and will address wider health issues faced by the District. The provision of key strategic road infrastructure (as detailed further in the Transport Topic Paper) supports the provision of enhanced access to public transport services for new and existing residents.

Flood risk and climate adaptation

Paragraph 161 of the NPPF says that *“All plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible,*

flood risk to people and property. They should do this, and manage any residual risk, by:

- a) applying the sequential test and then, if necessary, the exception test as set out below;*
- b) safeguarding land from development that is required, or likely to be required, for current or future flood management;*
- c) using opportunities provided by new development and improvements in green and other infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, (making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management); and*
- d) where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to relocate development, including housing, to more sustainable locations.”*

To avoid development in areas at risk of flooding the LPP1 has directed growth towards areas at lower risk of flooding and has applied the sequential and exception tests where required (CC02). The Environment Agency have been consulted on these and have been supportive on regarding the outcomes.

The site-specific requirements for the strategic allocations and policy SD3 all require development to integrate sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water run-off and the avoidance of pollutants. Policy SD2 recognises that natural water storage form part of the SuDs mitigation and long-term management of water to ensure that new development remains safe and functional under future climate conditions including more intense rainfall and flood risk. LPP1 policy SD3 also supports the improvement of water efficiency in new homes to 110l per person per day in order to make more effective use of water as a resource.

The protection of existing trees and provision of new tree planting which will assist with shading and urban cooling is incorporated in the site-specific requirements for the strategic allocations and through other policies (BNE3, BNE4 and INF7) in the Local Plan. The Local Plan also includes a policy for the National Forest (INF8) which aims to achieve 33% woodland cover within the designated National Forest which covers a proportion of the south of the District.

The LPP1 recognises that agricultural land is important for food production, rural livelihoods, landscape and carbon storage and policy BNE4 seeks to protect soils that are classed as ‘best and most versatile’ (grades 1, 2 and 3a).

Green and blue infrastructure

Paragraph 92 of the NPPF states that planning policies should “*enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green*

infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”.

Green infrastructure includes parks, natural and semi-natural spaces, woodland, trees, hedgerows, farmland features, playing fields, allotments, cemeteries, gardens, sustainable drainage and rights of way. Blue infrastructure includes rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, canals and drainage features. The Local Plan seeks to ensure that these assets are planned as a connected multifunctional network, not as isolated parcels left over after development.

Development growth will increase demand for parks, play spaces, sports facilities, allotments and natural green space within the District. The [Playing Pitch Strategy](#) (IT06), the [Built Facilities Strategy](#) (IT07) and the [Green Space Strategy](#) (IT08) have informed the policy in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.

The Green Space Strategy identified that a significant challenge faced by the district was the inactivity of residents, this was despite having above the national average green space provision. 22% of South Derbyshire adults (approximately 21,500 people) are currently inactive with 15% doing no activity at all and around one-third of children and young people are less active. Childhood obesity rates have also worsened with one in five (20.6%) of reception children and one in three (34.5%) of children age 10 – 11 years being overweight / obese. In addition, the age profile of the district is changing with greater proportions of older people, which will put increased pressure on health services (expected to peak during the 2030s) and increase the significance of preventative strategies. The Green Space Strategy identified green space deficiencies including within the Derby Urban Fringe and recognised that STRA2 offers the best opportunity to provide a Country Park in the north of the district.

The provision of a Country Park is evidenced in general terms with the higher than average poor health and obesity outcomes for South Derbyshire¹ and Derby City (Micklover Ward²) residents, with childhood obesity rates having dramatically risen in both areas since 2007. In site specific terms there is a need for Country Park in the north of the District, and STRA2 is ideally located close to densely populated locations in both South Derbyshire and Derby, with the health these forming a key plank of the placemaking theme with the evolution from the health and well being provided by the Pastures Hospital to the sports and green infrastructure provision both to enhance the setting of the Pastures Hospital Estate, but also to provide much needed opportunities for an active lifestyle to reduce the health address the health and obesity issues in this area.

There is no disagreement between SDDC and the site promoters around the principle of providing a country Park as part of the STRA 2 allocation. This formed part of the Parkers promotion over several years. The issue is the location and scale of the

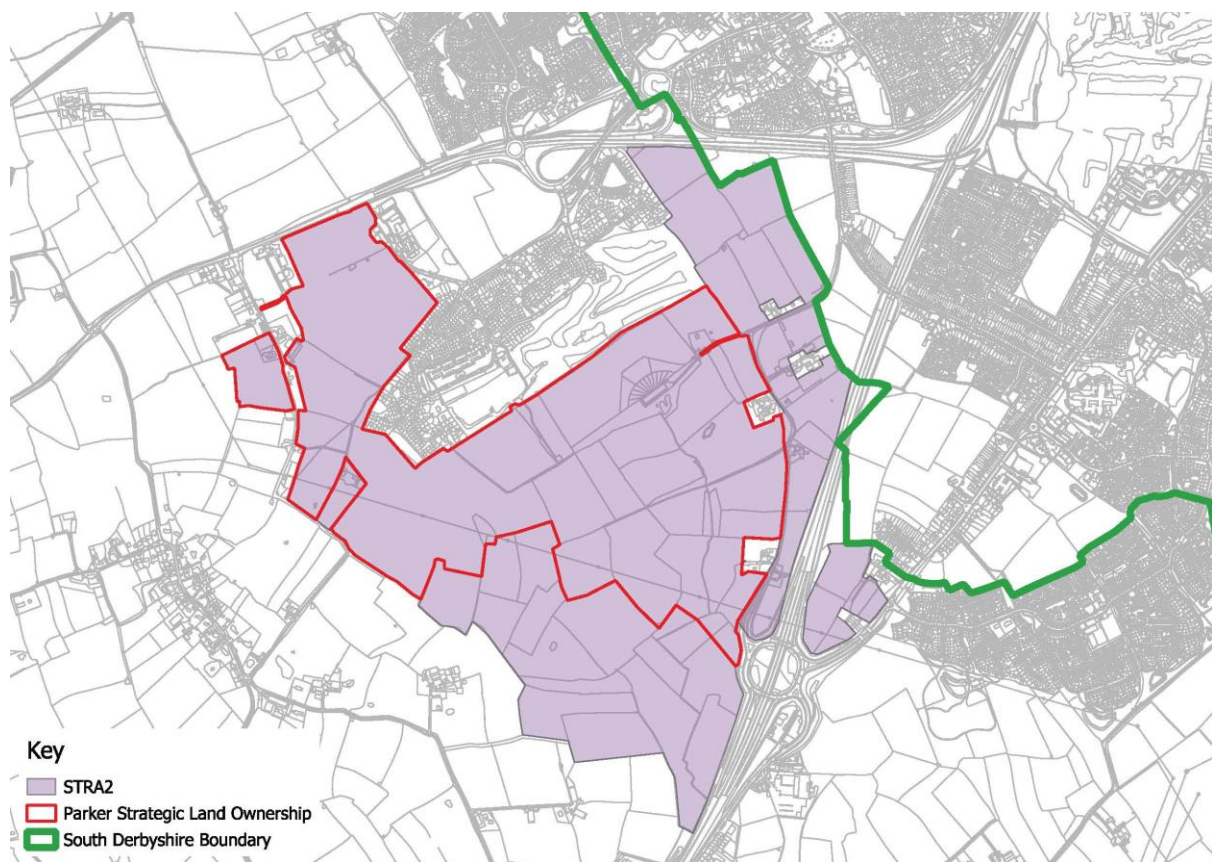
¹ [South Derbyshire \(E07000039\) - ONS](#)

² [Derby \(E06000015\) - ONS](#)

Country Park. SDDC considers the evidence points to a location in the north of the allocation in close proximity to existing residents with good opportunities to safe access and for this to form a key aspect of community cohesion between existing and new residents with a place to meet, to exercise, to walk dogs or to have an informal kickabout or play other outdoor games in a safe accessible and overlooked environment.

The site promoters preferred location in the south of the allocation does not have these same benefits in comparison and this land is available for housing in the control of a separate landowner (shown below).

Map showing Parker Strategic Land ownership in the context of the STRA2 allocation



The LPP1 (Policy INF7) seeks to conserve, enhance and extend blue and green infrastructure within the District. This is supported by site-specific requirements for the housing led strategic allocations (STRA1 & STRA2) to ensure the provision of an interconnected green infrastructure network including, new active travel connections to existing paths and facilities and the provision of sports and recreation facilities are included within the site-specific requirements for the housing-led strategic allocations at STRA1 and STRA2. For STRA2 this also includes the requirement for the provision of a Country Park and a wide green buffer around the Pastures Hospital estate.

To ensure that this happens requirement F of the housing-led strategic allocations sets a requirement to produce a Development Framework Document to include a strategic masterplan of the respective sites.

Policy BNE1 requires the design of new development to include the provision of public open space, sports and other leisure facilities and good quality green Infrastructure to promote active travel.

Policy BNE2 protects important open spaces in the context of heritage assets and Policy INF7 requires new development to ensure that existing and proposed communities have access to high-quality open spaces. Policy INF8 also requires the provision of open space associated with woodland in the context of the National Forest and Policy INF9 seeks to ensure provision of new or enhanced open space, sports and recreation and protect against the loss of existing facilities.

Policy INF1 will ensure that off-site contributions can be sought where appropriate where for example they would improve an accessible existing facility more effectively than small on-site provision.

Biodiversity and nature recovery

The Environment Act 2021 strengthened the statutory basis for biodiversity net gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and environmental targets. The Local Plan aligns growth with nature-recovery priorities and avoids treating biodiversity net gain as a substitute for avoiding harm to irreplaceable or important habitats.

The LPP1 protects designated sites and priority habitats and aims to restore ecological networks at landscape scale. Policy BNE3 and INF7 requires development to follow the mitigation hierarchy and consider potential opportunities to connect broader networks, corridors and assets identified in the Derbyshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and other cross-boundary projects. The [Derbyshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) was published in September 2025, Derbyshire County Council as Responsible Authority produced the strategy with South Derbyshire acting as a supporting authority in its development. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) sets out a long-term vision to work towards a resilient network for nature across Derbyshire (the county), by connecting and enhancing wild spaces so that people and nature can thrive. The LNRS system aims to deliver a coordinated approach for planning a nationwide network of more, bigger, better, and better-connected habitat across England. Many species are likely to benefit from this greatly improved habitat network delivered by LNRS measures, supporting species recovery and resilience. Policy BNE3 requires all development is expected to integrate biodiversity enhancing features (e.g. street trees, green roofs, etc.).

Policy INF7 supports development that maximises the opportunities to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and geological diversity. The LPP1 also supports the statutory duty to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain with the ambition that this provision should be on-site where possible. On-site biodiversity provision should be integrated into the layout and connected to habitats beyond the boundary.

The spatial strategy directs development away from the River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is a more sensitive habitat. Policy SD3 has been drafted in

collaboration with Natural England and the Environment Agency and this ensures that any development that is within the catchment of the River Mease supports the delivery of the River Mease Water Quality Management Plan and aims to improve the quality of the water.

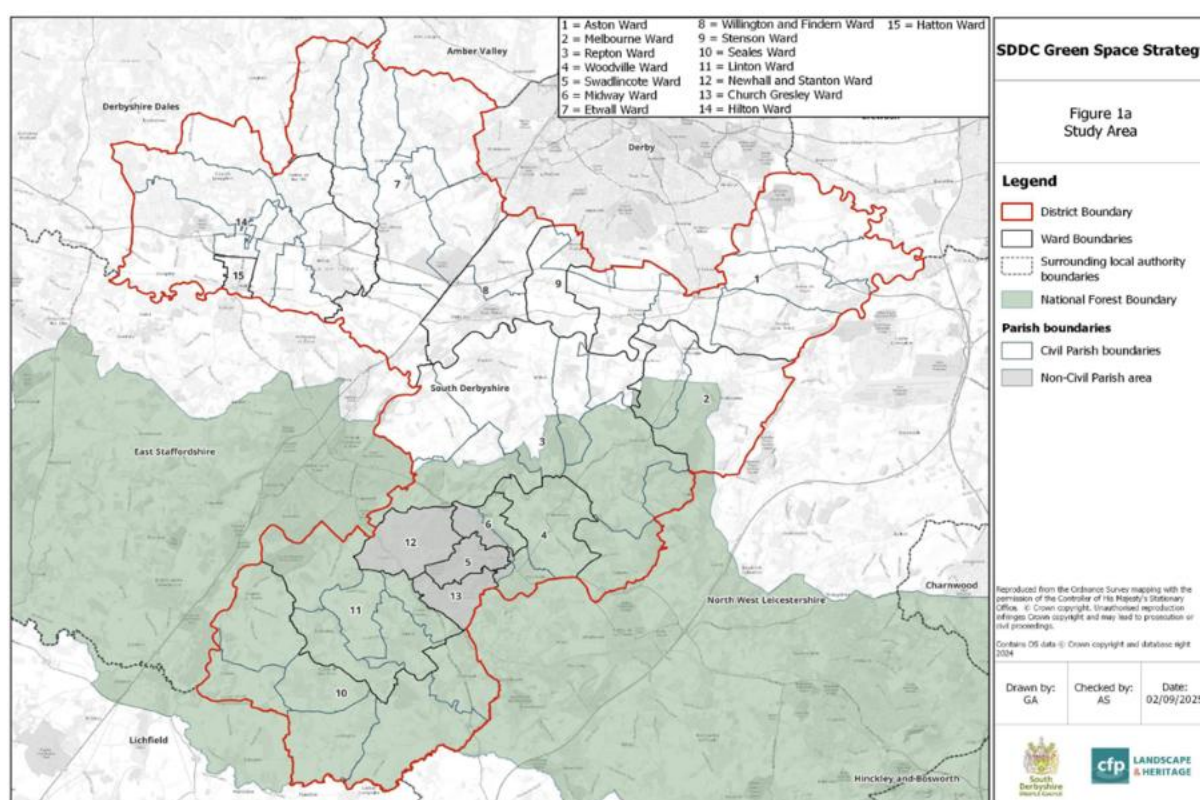
Trees, hedgerows and woodland

Paragraph 131 states that *“Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined⁵⁰, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”*

The LPP1 recognises that trees and hedgerows are central to landscape character, biodiversity, shading, carbon storage and surface-water management. The plan (including policy BNE3) establishes a presumption in favour of retaining ancient woodland, mature plantation and ancient, aged and veteran trees and hedgerows for their landscape, heritage or ecological value. The LPP1 aims to ensure that development is designed around retained trees rather than relying on replacement planting.

The south of the district is covered by the National Forest (shown in figure 1), this is a cross-boundary initiative spanning 200 square miles of the Midlands which was initiated to restore the former coal and clay mining landscape, over 9.5 million trees have been planted as part of that initiative to date. The National Forest initiative is driven by the National Forest Company, a charity working with partners across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, and supported by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). The Council has worked in partnership with the National Forest Company to draft policy INF8 which aims to deliver additional woodland planting and enhance the areas offer for tourism and leisure.

Figure 1: The National Forest



Conclusions

LPP1 provides an opportunity to establish a more integrated approach to sustainability and green spaces. Growth aspirations and development pressures mean that the Spatial Strategy is fundamental to ensure that new development is delivered in locations that does not generate high levels of car travel. The policies in the plan also support the delivery of active travel options to address local health issues and public transport provision.

Climate mitigation and adaptation is embedded throughout the plan. The local plan policies positively support sustainable construction, energy efficiency measures and the delivery of renewable/low carbon energy.

Development has been directed towards areas at lower risk of flooding and policies in the plan ensures that new development mitigates against future flood risk.

Green and blue infrastructure provision and protection is a key issue for the local plan and strategic allocations. The policies aim to deliver interconnected green spaces for play and active travel including a Country Park at STRA2.

Interconnected habitat provision, biodiversity net gain and protection for the River Mease Special Area for Conservation are fundamental for the LPP1. Supported by the retention of trees and hedgerows and support for the continued delivery of the National Forest.