

Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

Introduction

- 7.58 Selby District contains a wealth of natural and man-made resources in terms of its heritage assets, natural features and wildlife habitats, some of which have received national and international recognition. Many of these resources are irreplaceable and their loss, depletion or fragmentation should be avoided. A number of these contribute to the District's Green Infrastructure, consequently providing accessible opportunities to improve the health and well being of the community.

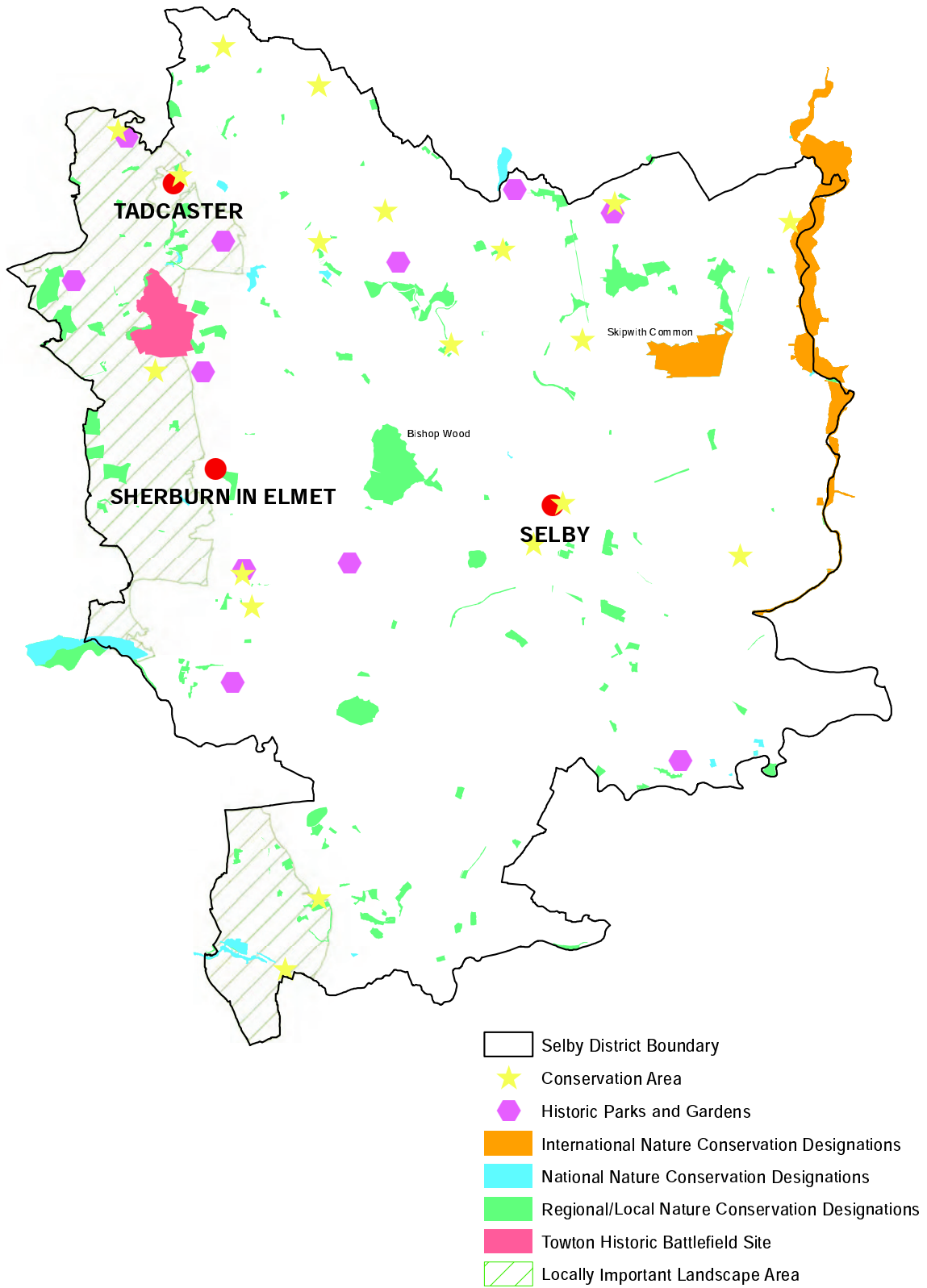
Context

- 7.59 The Council values the distinctive assets that are particular to the District and seeks to improve knowledge of what is here, how it can become multifunctional through identifying opportunities, and gain maximum benefits from partnership working with expert bodies in the field, in order to support the environment.
- 7.60 This approach is supported by principles established in the NPPF for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environments.
- 7.61 The evidence that supported former Regional Spatial Strategy policies also remains valid.
- 7.62 The Council also has a duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act to have regard to conserving biodiversity in all of its functions, and similar duties with regard to heritage assets. Protecting the historic and natural heritage of the District and, where possible improving it, is therefore a key issue for the local plan and reflects similar priorities in the Selby Sustainable Community Strategy (2010-2015) concerning the future wellbeing of our three Market Towns and surrounding rural areas and the desirability of improving the 'physical, natural and wider environment'. The Council seeks to exploit all emerging opportunities to the benefit of its precious environmental assets.

Relevant Strategic Objectives

2, 3, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16 and 17

Map 8 Environmental/Cultural Assets



Local issues

- 7.63 The provision of new green spaces and green infrastructure will be dependent on a combination of development proposals coming forward and co-operation with a range of landowners and infrastructure providers.
- 7.64 The Council has a series of Conservation Character Assessments dating from 1995 to 2003. A comprehensive review of the Assessments is being undertaken to help improve knowledge of individual conservation areas and their heritage assets, and to update management proposals and maintenance guidance. The Council will, as resources permit, encourage local communities to identify those elements of their historic environment which they consider to be important to their locality and to develop a strategy for their appropriate management.
- 7.65 Core Strategy objectives 11, 14, 16 and 17 recognise the strategic importance of protecting and enhancing natural and man-made assets. These assets play an important role in the District from enhancing the quality of life to providing local identity.
- 7.66 The Council is also committed to waste management and prioritises waste reduction above all other methods of management, and in order to achieve this will continue to support North Yorkshire County Council in implementing the priorities of its strategy⁹⁵ for sustainable waste management through the York and North Yorkshire Waste Partnership. Waste reduction is a key step towards maintaining, protecting and improving quality of life, for example, the re-use of secondary aggregates such as ash, which may contribute to the production of building materials from a sustainable source.
- 7.67 The main elements of the diverse range of assets that exist in the District (and which Policy SP18 seeks to protect and enhance) are:
- International, national and local areas of wildlife and ecological value. The River Derwent, Lower Derwent Valley and Skipwith Common are sites with European conservation status (Special Areas for Conservation under the UK Natura 2000) and the Lower Derwent Valley is also designated a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance
 - 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, which have national status, and are categorised as some of the country's best wildlife sites. In addition there are over 100 designated local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), including species rich grassland, ancient woodlands and wetlands;
 - The open countryside – best and most versatile agricultural land; and its character, landscape and appearance – the District has a high proportion of land in the highest quality agricultural

⁹⁵ Revised Municipal Waste Management Strategy for York and North Yorkshire 'let's talk less rubbish'. <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=381&p=0>

classifications and partly making up the Humberhead Levels;

- A large number of important medieval sites, particularly moated and manorial sites, especially in the Vale of York and in the drier areas of the north and west of the Humberhead Levels.
- The legacy of buildings and structures associated with its ecclesiastical history including Selby Abbey (one of the few remaining Abbey churches of the medieval period); Cawood Castle (the former residence of the medieval Archbishops of York); and The Bishop's Canal (which was built to transport stone for the construction of York Minster)
- The Registered Battlefield at Towton – the bloodiest engagement ever fought on British soil, and a pivotal battle in the Wars of the Roses;
- The numerous significant (currently undesignated) archaeological remains along both the Southern Magnesian Limestone Ridge and within the Humberhead Levels.
- Heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register that require a sustainable future – particularly the District's moated sites, Huddleston Hall, and the buildings at Abbot's Staithe;
- The form and character of settlements;
- Green infrastructure including:
 - Land of recreational and amenity value
 - Green corridors
 - Lakes, ponds and wetlands
 - Linear features such as rivers and canals
- Public Rights of Way;
- Groundwater – the important water resource of the Sherwood Sandstone Aquifer and the Magnesian Limestone Aquifer are located beneath the District; and
- Air quality.

7.68 The Lower Derwent Valley affects several local authority areas and the Council recognises the need for co-operation with adjoining local authorities and other organisations in order to safeguard its special landscape of great agricultural, historic, cultural, environmental and landscape value.

7.69 Many of the above provide easy access to green space for the local community and create the opportunity to take part in green exercise (exercise taken in natural spaces⁹⁶) and increase levels of physical activity.

7.70 Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has a vision for a connected ecological

⁹⁶ Health, place and nature – How outdoor environments influence health and well-being: a knowledge base. Sustainable Development Commission 01/04/08

network within Yorkshire and the Humber through 'A Living Landscape' in order to rebuild biodiversity. Many of the assets in the District fit the criteria, and it is considered an important scheme to help maximise the multifunctionality of the environment.

7.71 The Council is committed to working with a wide range of bodies including Natural England, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, English Heritage and the Environment Agency in order to achieve an environment that is enhanced and protected. For example, a strong partnership approach has been established through the preparation and implementation of the Selby Biodiversity Action Plan, which was adopted in August 2004. The Council will also continue to contribute to the development of the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy, and to take account of its emerging priorities.

7.72 Designations of specific areas such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Landscape Character Assessments, heritage assets, Conservation Areas, Local Amenity Areas and wider landscape character issues will be considered in future Local Plan Documents and shown on the Proposals map. Until such time, sites identified in the adopted Selby District Local Plan will continue to be afforded protection.

Policy SP18 Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

The high quality and local distinctiveness of the natural and man-made environment will be sustained by:

- 1. Safeguarding and, where possible, enhancing the historic and natural environment including the landscape character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance.**
- 2. Conserving those historic assets which contribute most to the distinct character of the District and realising the potential contribution that they can make towards economic regeneration, tourism, education and quality of life.**
- 3. Promoting effective stewardship of the District's wildlife by:**
 - a) Safeguarding international, national and locally protected sites for nature conservation, including SINCs, from inappropriate development.**
 - b) Ensuring developments retain, protect and enhance features of biological and geological interest and provide appropriate management of these features and that unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated and compensated for, on or off-site.**
 - c) Ensuring development seeks to produce a net gain in biodiversity by designing-in wildlife and retaining the natural interest of a site where appropriate.**

- d) Supporting the identification, mapping, creation and restoration of habitats that contribute to habitat targets in the National and Regional biodiversity strategies and the local Biodiversity Action Plan.**
- 4. Wherever possible a strategic approach will be taken to increasing connectivity to the District's Green Infrastructure including improving the network of linked open spaces and green corridors and promoting opportunities to increase its multi-functionality. This will be informed by the Leeds City Region Infrastructure Strategy.**
 - 5. Identifying, protecting and enhancing locally distinctive landscapes, areas of tranquillity, public rights of way and access, open spaces and playing fields through Development Plan Documents.**
 - 6. Encouraging incorporation of positive biodiversity actions, as defined in the local Biodiversity Action Plan, at the design stage of new developments or land uses.**
 - 7. Ensuring that new development protects soil, air and water quality from all types of pollution.**
 - 8. Ensuring developments minimise energy and water consumption, the use of non-renewable resources, and the amount of waste material.**
 - 9. Steering development to areas of least environmental and agricultural quality.**