ROtherham

Rural Strategy
Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Defining Rural Rotherham
Chapter 3: Local Policy Context and Vision
Chapter 4: National & Regional Policy Context
Chapter 5: Rural Rotherham
  5.1: A changing population
  5.2 The environment, biodiversity and landscape of rural Rotherham
  5.3 Developing our rural economy
  5.4 Addressing rural deprivation
  5.5 Access to services
  5.6 Education and skills
  5.7 Health and well-being in rural Rotherham
  5.8 Ensuring community safety in rural areas
  5.9 Housing in rural Rotherham
  5.10 Transport and travel
  5.11 Developing community involvement, inclusion and community cohesion in rural Rotherham
  5.12 A place of culture and leisure
  5.13 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
Chapter 6: Consultation
Chapter 1: Introduction

Much of Rotherham can be said to be rural, comprising a complex mix of towns and villages interspersed with large areas of open countryside. Within the Borough there are large areas of attractive landscape, and there is also a long tradition of farming. Many of Rotherham's rural villages have Norman or earlier heritages, while other settlements in the rural parts of the Borough developed as a result of the boom in coal mining during the Industrial Revolution. Whatever, the pedigree of individual rural villages, the nature of life in rural Rotherham has changed in recent years, and continues to change.

Generally, the quality of life in rural Rotherham is higher than in urban areas with relatively low levels of deprivation, good employment prospects, a lower fear of crime and a high quality environment. This is one of the main strengths of rural Rotherham and why it is so popular to live and visit. Overall, the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (the Government’s measure of poverty and disadvantage) shows that rural parts of the Borough are less deprived than the Borough as a whole, and are near to the England average.

However, there are pockets of deprivation within rural areas which need to be addressed. For example, the sustainability of some small communities is being threatened by the closure or relocation of service and retail businesses. This has increased isolation for people without access to private transport or access to ICT and broken the link between locally produced goods and the consumer.

The key aims of this strategy are to address the challenges facing rural communities in Rotherham, to respond to the needs of the people who live in rural Rotherham, and to enhance and preserve the countryside for those who live in the Borough and further afield. This will be achieved by focusing on the following key areas:

- Population change
- The environment, biodiversity and landscape of rural Rotherham
- The rural economy
- Rural deprivation
- Education and skills
- Community safety
- Housing
- Transport and travel
- Community involvement, inclusion and community cohesion
- Culture and leisure
- Funding.

The strategy should be read in conjunction with a wide and diverse range of key national, regional and local plans and policies, outlined in chapters 3 and 4.

Real progress has already been made within Rotherham. For example:

- We have developed cultural, sport and physical activity and green spaces strategies to enhance and protect our rural heritage and to contribute to community safety, education and skills, health and well-being and community involvement and inclusion
- We are supporting parish councils to enhance their community leadership role
- We are working with our partners to build a network of accessible customer service centres across the Borough
• We have a shared commitment through our Community Strategy to develop a mixed rural economy.

However, challenges remain, and this Strategy aims to ensure that the Council works with its partners to address these. The Strategy itself has been developed through extensive research and consultation. This identified a number of key issues that were especially important to Rotherham’s rural communities. They are:

• xxx
• xxx
• xxx
• xxx
• xxx

(to be completed following consultation)
Chapter 2: Defining Rural Rotherham

Identifying which areas are rural in Rotherham, and the UK more generally, has long proved problematic, with various models used by academics and government. By the late 1990s, there was concern within Government that the lack of a consistent definition was hindering policy development. A Government backed review highlighted significant weaknesses in existing definitions, and recommended a new model based on settlements.

Using this definition, about 53% of the Borough is rural or semi-rural in nature, (comprising 24% Town & Fringe, 9% Village and 20% Hamlets and Isolated dwellings). This is an important change in policy, because under earlier definitions used by Government, the entire Borough was classified as urban, which had a potential adverse impact on access to rural funding streams. However, this model doesn’t provide an easy to understand definition for local residents and service providers, as it is based on statistical units called ‘Super Output Areas’ that do not always relate to identifiable local communities. A simpler definition has been developed by Bradford City Council, which classifies rural settlements as:

- **Rural village**: Population less than 3,500; few or no facilities; surrounded by open countryside

- **Dispersed settlement**: Historically was able to operate independently of other communities. Population of less than 10,000, but greater than 3,500; surrounded on at least three sides by open countryside

- **Rural Service Centres**: population of 10,000 or above. Surrounded on at least three sides by open countryside; provides shopping, education, banking, finance and other professional services, leisure services and socialising opportunities, emergency services and health services to other settlements. Also acts as a public transport hub providing access to other rural and urban communities.

Using this model, 48% of the Borough area is rural, i.e. rural villages and surrounding countryside. In developing this Strategy, Rotherham has decided to apply the Bradford model, as it provides local people with an easy to understand definition that relates to their communities. Using the Bradford definition, Rotherham has:

- 35 rural villages, some with populations as small as 100
- 6 dispersed settlements
- 2 rural service centres
- 2 urban areas

In addition, there are many small rural hamlets, such as Turner Wood in the far south of the Borough, that comprise of a few houses.

Details of how the Bradford model applies to Rotherham are set out below. Appendix 1 shows a map of Rotherham’s urban and rural areas as defined by the Bradford model.
### Rural Villages:

### Dispersed Settlements:
Aston (including Aughton and Swallownest), Greasbrough, Thorpe Hesley, Thrybergh, Thurcroft and Wales/Kiveton Park

### Rural Service Centres:
Maltby and Dinnington (including North Anston/South Anston and Throapham)

### Urban Areas:
- Dearne Valley: Swinton / Kilnhurst, Wath Upon Dearne, Brampton
- Rotherham core: includes Rawmarsh, Bramley
Chapter 3: Local policy context and vision
Rotherham’s Rural Strategy is part of a wider set of documents, which provide a vision that promotes social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the Borough.

The most important of these is Rotherham’s Community Strategy, which sets out a long-term strategy for the Borough, and acts as a focus for all other plans and strategies.

To ensure that the Rural Strategy adds value to and compliments the Community Strategy, the Action Plan at chapter 7 (to be developed) has been developed around the five Priority Themes contained in the Community Strategy. These are:

- **Achieving**: Rotherham will be a prosperous place, with a vibrant mixed and diverse economy, and flourishing businesses. Inequalities between parts of the borough and social groups will be minimised. There will be an excellent town centre known for the high quality design of its public spaces and buildings, specialist and quality shops, markets, and cultural life for all age groups. Rotherham will be accessible from other areas and will have a wide choice of integrated transport options available. Villages and rural areas will be revitalised and provide high quality of life amongst Rotherham’s beautiful countryside.
- **Learning**: Rotherham people will be recognised as being informed, skilled and creative, innovative and constructively challenging. They will be self-confident and have a sense of purpose. They will aspire to develop and achieve their full potential in their chosen careers, work, leisure and contributions to local life. Learning and development opportunities will be available and accessible to all. Through this enabling, learning environment, involvement and entrepreneurship will be encouraged.
- **Alive**: Rotherham will be a place where people feel good, are healthy and active, and enjoy life to the full. Health services will be accessible and of a high quality for those that require them. Rotherham will celebrate its history and heritage - building on the past, and creating and welcoming the new. People will be able to express themselves and have opportunities to be involved in a wide-range of high quality cultural, social and sporting activities. The media, arts, literature and sport will flourish. As a society, we will invest in the next generation by focussing on children and young people.
- **Proud**: Rotherham people, businesses and pride in the borough are at the heart of our vision. The borough will have a positive external image and its people will be renowned for their welcome, friendliness and commitment to the values of social justice. Active citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. Achievements and diversity will be celebrated. Rotherham will be a caring place, where the most vulnerable are supported. It will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive communities, both of place and interest, and there will be many opportunities for people to be involved in civic life and local decision-making. The means to do this will be clear, well-know and accessible.
- **Safe**: Rotherham will be a place where neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well-maintained, with well-designed, good quality homes and accessible local facilities and services for all. There will be attractive buildings and public spaces. Communities will be peaceful, but thriving, relatively free from crime, the fear of crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour. Environments, people and businesses will
be protected and nurtured. Children will be safe from harm and neglect. A preventative approach will be taken to minimise crime, accidents and hazards; and to further strengthen resilience and thus safeguard all Rotherham citizens.

There are also two cross cutting themes, which underpin the actions in the Action Plan:

- **Fairness**: All individuals in Rotherham will have equality of opportunity and choice. Rotherham will provide open and accessible services. We will treat each other with fairness and respect, and our diverse needs and strengths will be understood and valued. Rotherham will actively challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination and ensure that all the priorities encompass an equalities approach.

- **Sustainable Development**: Rotherham will be a place where the conditions are right to sustain economic growth, the well-being of its citizens is prioritised and there is a high-quality living environment, sustained through minimising harm from development. Rotherham will be recognised locally, nationally and internationally for the positive impact of all organisations being excellent in sustainable development practice.

The Rural Strategy directly contributes to a number of key Community Strategy priorities, such as:

- Developing a mixed rural economy to provide specialist shops, markets and events, and ensure complementary local centres.

- Develop the Borough’s identity, building on its existing economic, cultural, social and environmental assets to strengthen local pride in and connection with Rotherham.

It will also make a contribution to the delivery of Rotherham’s Local Area Agreement (LAA). The LAA is a three year agreement that Partner agencies in Rotherham agreed with Central Government in March 2006, the aim of which is to improve partnership working in Rotherham and to improve services for all across the Borough. Rural areas are addressed in a number of objectives, including improving the quality of the local environment by creating cleaner, greener, safer and better used public spaces including rural centres. More specifically, an Enterprise Hub is being developed for South Rotherham, in Dinnington Town Centre, which will help to revitalise villages and rural areas in its surrounding area. Discussions are also taking place with the other three Local Authorities in the South Yorkshire area around potential areas of collaboration to link our LAAs. Rural issues is one of the areas which will be taken forward by further discussion and development in 2006/7.

The Rural Strategy is closely linked to a number of other key strategies. These include the Local Development Framework, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, the Cultural Strategy, the Local Transport Plan, the Green Spaces Strategy, Community Safety Strategy and the Rural Housing Strategy. It also links to the Regeneration Plan 2004-2007, which brings together a set of key actions that contribute to regeneration of the Borough and embrace education, housing, economic development, sport and recreation, social, community and other functions.

It is important to note that the Strategy has also been developed following detailed consultation with the people of Rotherham, and in the context of national and regional rural
policy developments, as set out in the chapter 4.
Chapter 4: National & Regional Policy Context
Since 2000, rural issues have moved rapidly up the agenda of the Government, with the publication of the Rural White Paper in 2000 marking the beginning of the change agenda. The Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001 brought the rural agenda into sharper focus, and provided a major catalyst for change in central government.

In addition to taking forward the proposals in the Rural White Paper, which sets out a vision of sustainable rural communities and the Government's approach to addressing the key challenges affecting rural areas, the Government also established the Haskins' Review in 2001 to examine how to improve the effectiveness of rural policy and service delivery.

Haskins reported in 2003 and made recommendations that centred on the separation of policy development from service delivery, bringing delivery closer to customers by devolving power to regional and local government, reducing the number of organisations involved in rural service delivery and improving customer focus.

Through the Rural Strategy 2004, the Government accepted Haskins' recommendations, and acknowledged that there was a need for a streamlined approach to rural delivery, based on targeting need, partnership working and putting customers first. The Rural Strategy was also set within the framework of the Government's public service reform agenda, which focuses on devolution to the front line, flexible service delivery arrangements and expanding choice. Regional Development Agencies, regional Government Offices and local authorities were all seen as having a key role.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 implements key elements of the 2004 Rural Strategy, creating Natural England, which has responsibility for enhancing biodiversity and landscape, and promoting access and recreation. It also established the Commission for Rural Communities to act as an independent advocate, adviser and watchdog for rural people. Its role will be to ensure that policy makes a difference to people living in rural areas. A particular focus will be on tackling social exclusion.

In addition, a number of other national programmes and initiatives are linked to taking forward the Government's rural policy agenda. They include:

*Rural proofing*—ensures that national and regional policy takes account of rural circumstances and needs.

*Rural Service Standard*—sets out details of the minimum services that people in rural areas can expect to receive, covering issues as diverse as education, support for older people, access to ICT, rural post offices, healthcare and public transport.

*Quality Parish Councils*—an accreditation scheme to encourage all parish councils to reach the standards of the best. Achieving quality parish status demonstrates that the council has met certain minimum standards expected from an effective, representative and active parish council.

With the publication of the Rural Strategy, the Government placed regional structures at the heart of the rural agenda. In the Yorkshire & the Humber region, this has manifested in
Yorkshire Forward and the Government Office for Yorkshire & the Humber (GOYH) being given an enhanced rural delivery role.

Yorkshire Forward leads on the rural objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), with a focus on ‘creating a broader and stronger economic base for rural communities’. Market towns are a key focus of the RES, while delivering targeted business support and tackling rural access and exclusion are also identified as priorities. The Renaissance Market Town Initiative, launched in 2003, aims to support sustainable small towns by ensuring that they are places where people want and are able to live, work, invest and visit.

The key role of GOYH is to lead on modernising rural delivery, by developing and implementing a Regional Rural Delivery Framework – the *Yorkshire & the Humber Rural Framework* (YHRF). The purpose of the YHRF is to achieve better results, improve access to funds and to help rural areas fulfil their full potential. GOYH has put in place structures, including a Rural Board, Rural Affairs Forum and a Rural Practitioners Group to oversee and support the development of the Framework.

In addition, GOYH has also led on the *Y&H Rural Evidence Base*, which was launched in 2005 to help shape the understanding of rural priorities. Alongside this, it published the *Y&H Rural Priority Themes*, which were developed from existing plans and strategies, the *Rural Evidence Base* and widespread regional consultation.

At the South Yorkshire level, the South Yorkshire Partnership (SYP) provides the focus for sub-regional activity by bringing together the South Yorkshire partners, along with representatives of GOYH and Yorkshire Forward. The South Yorkshire Sub-Regional Investment Plan (SRIP) is a key output of the SYP, and provides the strategic framework for economic development across the county. Theme 5 of the SRIP 2004/09 focuses on the “Built and Green Sustainable Environments (Urban and Rural) Meeting Expectations of a Modern High Value Economy and Providing Distinctive Quality of Life”. Through this theme, partners are looking at how to maximise ‘green’ assets, whilst enhancing and conserving the environment, in order to capitalise on investment and develop a joined-up response to the priorities identified within the RES. In particular, the focus is on how South Yorkshire’s environmental assets can be integrated more fully into the overall economic strategy. Actions proposed, include developing waterway corridors to promote rural renaissance.

However, since autumn 2005, RMBC has been engaged in discussions with other key partners across the sub-region, under the auspices of the Yorkshire Rural Community Council, to establish a South Yorkshire Rural Partnership. This body will act as the focus for rural partnership working across South Yorkshire.
Chapter 5: Rural Rotherham

In Chapter 2, we set out the definition of rural Rotherham, and said that 48% of the Borough is rural. This definition is based on identifiable rural villages and the surrounding countryside. This area is, of course, home to Rotherham’s rural communities, and an understanding of people living in these communities is key to developing the Rural Strategy. Of equal importance is an understanding of Rotherham’s natural environment and landscape. The first two sections of this Chapter focus on population and the natural environment.

The remainder of the Chapter highlights key issue—economy, services, community safety, community involvement, etc—affecting people living in rural Rotherham, details our successes and sets out why these issues are important to the development of the Rural Strategy.
5.1 A changing population

Why population change is important to the Rural Strategy:

- Overall growth and decline in population needs to be monitored to ensure that services and infrastructure meet the needs of local communities
- The movement in population from urban to rural can place extra burdens on some services and reduce demands for others
- Population changes can alter the social structure of rural communities, for example, a loss of young people through outward-migration can reduce sustainability of rural villages and lessen demands for some services
- Dispersed populations can make service delivery expensive and potentially less efficient
- Demand for housing in attractive locations can increase house prices, leading to a lack of affordable accommodation for local people
- Older people and people with disabilities living in sparsely populated areas are more likely to face isolation
- Less populous BME communities in rural areas are more likely to face isolation

In total, Rotherham covers 287 sq km, and has a population of 252,300. However, population is not spread evenly across the Borough. Applying the Bradford rural definition model, around 5.5% (15,200) of Rotherham’s population live in the 48% of the Borough that is rural. Therefore, in the most rural parts of the Borough, population density is 110 persons per square km (the EU benchmark of sparcity is 100 persons per square km.), compared to 871 per square km across the Borough as a whole. However, in recent years there has been a movement in population from urban to more rural areas, as people are choosing to live in town fringe and rural environments. For instance, between 1991 and 2001 there was a 1.5% increase in population in rural/semi-rural areas of Rotherham, compared to a 2.6% fall in urban/sub-urban areas over the same period. Furthermore, between the 2001 Census and the 2004 mid-year estimates, there was an increase in the overall Borough population of 1.7%, but in rural areas the population grew by 2.8%.

The breakdown of the Borough’s population identifies some important differences between rural villages and the overall Borough population. For example, there is a marked difference in the Black & Minority Ethnic population, with only 1.6% of population of rural villages identifying themselves as from a non-white British background (compared to 4.1% across the Borough), and only 0.4% of the rural population is from Black, Asian or Chinese background.

There is also a marked difference in the age profile, with rural villages having a n older population, and fewer children and young people.
Table 1: Age profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-17 yrs</th>
<th>18-29 yrs</th>
<th>30-59 yrs</th>
<th>60-74 yrs</th>
<th>75+ yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Villages %</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotherham %</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2001

The gender profile of rural villages reflects the overall gender profile of the Borough, with 51.5% of the rural population female, while the number of people in rural areas with a Limiting Long Term illness is 21.3%, below the Borough average of 22.4%.

**Summary Objective**
- To ensure that communities are sustainable
- To ensure that services are high quality and responsive to needs
5.2 The environment, biodiversity and landscape of rural Rotherham

Why the environment, biodiversity and landscape are important to the Rural Strategy

- Rotherham’s countryside is a resource to be protected for all our residents and future generations
- Protecting and enhancing the environment, biodiversity and landscape will bring benefits to Rotherham people. These include:
  - Improved opportunities to access, enjoy and study the countryside and participate in environmental activities
  - An improvement in the physical environment where people live, work participate in leisure activities
  - A strengthening of the local economy through attracting inward investment, people with skills and visitors;
- The countryside is facing a range of challenges, ranging from fly tipping to development encroachment

The physical environment, biodiversity and landscape underpin life in rural Rotherham, and consequently underpin this Strategy. As set out in Rotherham’s Biodiversity Action Plan, “biodiversity affects our quality of life aesthetically and spiritually, and boosts local economies and supports inward investment.”

Indeed, the environment, biodiversity and landscape are strongly linked to Rotherham’s vision of social, economic and environmental well-being as set out in the Community Strategy:

Achieving: Rotherham’s environment attracts inward investment and limited leisure tourism, but high corporate business tourism, as well as drawing people with skills to live in the Borough

Alive: The countryside provides access to leisure, and promotes good and healthy lifestyles

Learning: The countryside can be used as a resource for schools, to increase learning opportunities to improve their understanding about the natural environment and biodiversity

Proud: Rotherham’s beautiful landscape promotes pride in the Borough

Safe: Rural villages provide excellent quality of life

Striking a balance between infrastructure/housing/economic developments and protecting the environment is difficult. Rural areas of the Borough are attractive to housing developers and property buyers alike, while there are employment opportunities to be gained from encouraging tourism and developing leisure facilities and transport infrastructure in rural areas.

However, both rural and urban dwellers alike value Rotherham’s countryside, and want to enhance and preserve it for the benefit of future generations. Change can be unwelcome
and resisted, particularly if it is seen as a threat to the countryside. The environment can be both an opportunity and a constraint.

RMBC is working to strike the right balance. Consultation is currently taking place on the Local Development Framework, which will determine land use policy in the coming years, while revitalising rural areas has been highlighted as a priority in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.

In taking this objective forward, Council officers are working in partnership with other key agencies to protect, conserve and enhance the countryside and the viability of rural areas through the promotion of sustainability. Current priorities include:

- Coordinating the implementation of a Sustainability Appraisal for the Rotherham Local Development Framework utilising the good practice guide for planning for tourism as agreed by Tourism Panel 17 July 2006
- Delivering Rotherham’s Biodiversity Action Plan
- Establishing a Local Wildlife Site system for Rotherham to ensure areas of substantive nature conservation value are identified and protected
- Establishing a Landscape Character Assessment as a tool to guide the determination of planning applications, and inform other strategies
- Developing a green space strategy for the Borough to make best use of Rotherham’s rural and urban parks and woodlands

As well as the pressure for infrastructure, housing and economic development in rural areas and the threat of encroachment into the greenbelt, the environment and landscape also faces a number of other challenges. These include:

- Agricultural change, and the impact that energy crops and other new crops may having on the physical appearance of the countryside
- Opportunities for alternative land use, such as wind farms
- Ensuring continued environmental stewardship and biodiversity as farmers continue to leave the land or need to find ways to diversify
- Negative use of the countryside, with activities such as quad biking, badger baiting and fly tipping impacting on rural communities and the environment/landscape

Our achievements:
The Council has taken/is taking steps to preserve and enhance the environment, biodiversity and landscape. Examples include:

- Support for the Rotherham Biodiversity Forum and the development and implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan
- Development and implementation of a Sustainability Appraisal for the Rotherham Local Development Framework and establishing a Landscape Character Assessment
- Preservation of greenbelt and development of country parks and South Yorkshire Forest
- Working with the farming community to promote agri-environment schemes and countryside stewardship. During 2005/6 the Council supported farmers in drawing
down £240,000 of EU agri-environment funding, which was used to support and
enhance biodiversity
• Targeted action to reduce fly-tipping and enviro-crime in rural areas
• Assisting Developers to incorporate biodiversity gain into their proposals, e.g.
maintaining areas of semi-natural vegetation, installing bat or bird boxes and
developing appropriate land management plans.

Summary Objectives
• To ensure that Rotherham's countryside is protected and nurtured for all residents
  and future generations
• To protect and enhance the environment, biodiversity and landscape of Rotherham
5.3 Developing our rural economy
Rotherham’s economy is at its strongest for many years. Millions of pounds of new investment have been attracted into the Borough, and thousands of new jobs have been created in a diversified local economy. Whilst much of the focus has been on large developments at Manvers and Templeborough and in Rotherham’s town centre, the Borough’s rural areas have also contributed to the rise in Rotherham’s prosperity. This includes major business areas at Wales, Dinnington and Maltby, and a scattering of smaller business locations at Thurcroft, Kiveton Park, Aston and Swallownest.

Agriculture continues to provide a small, but important, source of employment, as well as ensuring environmental stewardship. Meanwhile, small businesses have developed in the Borough’s dispersed settlements, rural service centres and rural villages, bringing employment opportunities to local communities. In addition, Rotherham’s dispersed settlements and rural villages are home to many, who are attracted by the quality of life in rural areas, and who travel to work in urban Rotherham, as well as other surrounding towns. Rotherham’s rural areas are, therefore, an attraction for people who bring investment and skills to the Borough.

5.2.1 Agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why agriculture is important to the Rural Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• People working in the agricultural and forestry sectors preserve and enhance the Borough’s environment, biodiversity and landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agriculture and forestry provide a source of employment in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People employed in agriculture and forestry have a range of unique skills that if lost will be hard to regain, and which are particularly important to environmental protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The beauty of the countryside attracts visitors into the Borough, and generates employment in other sectors, e.g. retail and hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The countryside, and attractive rural areas attract inward investment, and people with skills into the local economy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2001 Census provides the most up to date and accurate estimate of the number of people employed in ‘rural occupations’, with a figure of around 800 people across the Rotherham [approximately 0.8% of people aged 16 to 74 in employment] employed in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing in 2001. Although the total number is relatively small in terms of overall levels of employment and the amount earned by people employed in the sector, the non-quantifiable impact that people in this sector have on the environment, biodiversity and landscape of the Borough and the maintenance of our environmental assets is enormous.
This is illustrated by the fact that, according to the Yorkshire and the Humber Rural Evidence Base, just over 50% of the Borough is in agricultural production, covering 14,594 hectares (from a Borough total of 28,560 hectares). The majority of this land is graded as ‘very good quality agricultural land’ (Grade 2) or ‘good to moderate quality agricultural land’ (Grade 3), capable of growing a wide range of arable and horticultural crops, although the dominant farm type is cereal.

A study undertaken by the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) on behalf of Yorkshire Futures has investigated the likely socio-economic impacts of Common Agriculture Policy reform on the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in Yorkshire and the Humber region. The study found:

- There are likely to be reductions in land use, the number of farm holdings and employment (both direct and ancillary) in key sectors, including cereal and diary
- Small farms will generally benefit more from CAP reform than medium sized and large farms, which are likely to reduce in their size and/or production level (in the cereal sector, less productive and, therefore, less profit-generating land is likely to be taken out of production)
- Considerable environmental impact is expected, with an improvement in soil nutrient, a decline in soil erosion and a decline in water pollution
- Considerable declines are expected in the beef and sheep sectors

Although the study looks at the region as a whole, the impact of the CAP reforms is likely to be felt locally, as Rotherham has a mixture of farm sizes, as illustrated in the table below:

Table 2: Farm Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size (hectares)</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 &lt; 5</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 &lt; 20</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 &lt; 50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &lt; 100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Agricultural and Horticultural Census data June 2003

The findings from CSL’s research suggest that Rotherham’s small-to-medium sized farms (75% are less than 50 hectares) will benefit from the CAP reforms. Nevertheless, 25% are medium-to-large units, and the dominant farm type in Rotherham is cereal, and both of these categories are expected to see a decline in production and employment. However, it is likely to take two-three years of the new payment regime for the impact to be felt.

Agriculture continues to respond to changes in market demands and European funding. There has been an increased interest in alternative land use in the Borough, with Rotherham’s farmers diversifying into growing fuel crops, looking at using land for wind power and other initiatives. There is also a growing demand for local produce through farm
shops and farmers’ markets. However, there continues to be a decline in farming, with many farmers over 55 years, and younger people leaving the industry.

**Our achievements:**
The Council has taken/is taking steps to support agriculture. Examples include:

- We have provided assistance and support, through Culture & Leisure, to support farmers to access agri-enviro and funding. For example, during 2005/06 the Council helped secure over £240,000 in ‘Entry Level Environmental Stewardship funding’ for local farmers to support bio-diversity and landscape improvements
- A farmers forum was set up in response to the Foot & Mouth crisis and was cited by the Local Government Association as an example of good practice
- The Council, in partnership with landowners, has introduced guided walks and opportunities for educational visits to promote the work that is being done by farmers to support bio-diversity (included in the Walking Festival annually in July).

**5.2.2 Business & Employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why business and employment are important to the Rural Strategy:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Businesses in rural areas provide employment opportunities for local people, and help ensure the sustainability of local communities. In particular, they can help ensure that young people do not move away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To a considerable extent, these businesses have replaced coal mining jobs that fuelled the original development or expansion of many of the Borough’s rural settlements; although mining has mainly gone, these former mining settlements represent considerable physical and social infrastructures that need to be sustainable in to the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local businesses, employing local people, have the potential to have a positive environmental impact by reducing travel to work by car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The demand created by local employment for public transport connections can justify bus routes that are then available for wider use by rural people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some businesses ‘feed off’ a rural setting, particularly in the tourism and hospitality sector but also in other sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local business growth can be the catalyst for further development, with specialist rural businesses supporting each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All business development needs to be sensitive to environmental impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In recent years, the focus for economic growth in Rotherham has been on the key urban sites of Manvers, Templeborough and Rotherham town centre. However, major developments at Waverley and Dinnington, which are surrounded by rural villages and dispersed settlements, are also engines of growth. For example, the development of an RMBC run business centre at Dinnington will increase economic activity in the rural south-east of the Borough by pulling in inward investment and supporting the development of local
start-up businesses, creating employment opportunities for people in the surrounding rural villages and dispersed settlements.

Rural service centres, rural villages and dispersed settlements also provide a source of local employment, particularly in the small business and retail/service sectors. For example, in Thurcroft there are 47 business units, with only one (2.13%) unoccupied in 2005/06. Other non-agricultural types of employment in rural areas of Rotherham include tourism (through a range of visitor attractions in rural areas), hospitality associated with tourism, local food production and retail (farm shops, etc) and horticulture (garden centres and nurseries). Other specific forms of industry found in rural Rotherham include quarrying.

The table below compares the number of enterprises in rural areas in 1999 and 2004, and illustrates business survival rates in urban and rural areas. Although the numbers of businesses in rural areas are relatively small and, therefore, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions, there has been a larger percentage increase in number of businesses in rural areas over last five years. In addition, medium-term business survival rates for new businesses in rural areas is slightly higher. Further research in this area may be necessary as part of a rural economic strategy.

**Table 3: Businesses in rural areas of Rotherham**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural Area</th>
<th>Non-Rural area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Businesses in 1999</strong></td>
<td>413</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Businesses in 2004</strong></td>
<td>513</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase in number and % businesses between 1999 and 2004</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>24.2% increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survival rate of one year for new business set-up in 2003</strong></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survival rate of three years for all businesses existing in 1999</strong></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survival rate of five years for all businesses existing in 1999</strong></td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The BETA Model

This activity largely takes place without direct public intervention, and there is only a limited amount of specific activity taking place to support economic development in rural parts of the Borough. At present, the Council does not have a rural economic strategy. Our focus, in line with the findings from consultation, is on business development in urban areas and the two strategic economic zones (the Dearne Valley and MI Technology Corridor), with the benefits of these developments reaching across the Borough. The Employment and Workforce Development Plan regards employment inactivity as essentially an urban issue, particularly in the neighbourhood renewal areas.

There is a potential for growth around the tourism sector. For instance the YES Project, the South West of the Borough will generate employment opportunities in the surrounding area. An eco-tourism study will assess the opportunities for tourism related employment in the south of the Borough, while the development of the Chesterfield Canal has the potential to create tourism, hospitality and boat maintenance related employment.
New visitor accommodation in the rural areas should complement the surroundings, preferably utilising existing buildings, of high quality assessment ratings of 4 star or higher for self catering or serviced facilities. Travel style accommodation in rural areas is to be avoided. Niche attractions and accommodation in Rotherham’s rural area should be welcomed. However, it should be ensured that existing services are not adversely affected.

Another potential area for economic development in rural areas is the Renaissance Market Town Initiative. In addressing the development of market towns, Yorkshire Forward established the RMT initiative in January 2003 as a ten year plan to support sustainable small towns by ensuring that they are places where people want and are able to live, work, invest and visit. The objective of RMT is to generate sustainable development through the development of an ambitious town vision that is translated into an action plans with prioritised projects. There are a number of settlements in the Rotherham Borough area that potentially qualify for RMT status, and RMBC is engaged in on-going discussions with Yorkshire Forward over the potential for a RMT in the Borough.

Transport infrastructure is an issue in some rural parts of the Borough, with key routes such as the A57 facing increased congestion from commercial traffic and people commuting from rural villages/dispersed settlements to urban industrial/business centres. This is a potential disincentive to investors, as well as having an impact on quality of life of local people.

**Our achievements:**
The Council has taken/is taking steps to support business in rural areas. Examples include:

- The development of industrial parks in dispersed parts of the Borough, which provide employment opportunities for local communities
- The Tourism Strategy promotes tourism, and generates business, in south Rotherham and other rural areas of the Borough. For example, the Rotherham Walking Festival and the Churches Tourism Initiative including the five churches walk in the south of the Borough and the six churches walk featuring the north of the Borough
- The Yorkshire Entertainment Sensation (YES) project at Rother Valley Country Park could generate 2,700 jobs. Although classed as urban fringe, it is of an altogether different scale of magnitude to the type of project that normally takes place in the countryside. Planning permission has been granted by RMBC, and the ‘call in’ to the Secretary of State is being actively supported by RMBC for the perceived economic benefits that it would bring to the Borough
- Ongoing work to restore the Chesterfield Canal will create leisure related employment opportunities in the south of the Borough. Yorkshire Forward have supported a study to investigate the potential of connecting the last part of the Chesterfield Canal, through the Rotherham area from Killamarsh
- All community libraries offer support to local businesses via the Business Information Service, based in the Central Library, supplemented by specialist collections where appropriate.
**Summary Objectives**

- To create a sustainable and robust local economy that creates wealth and employment for rural communities in the Borough
- To increase the employment rate of people living in rural areas
- To increase the number of small and medium sized enterprises in rural Rotherham
5.4 Addressing rural deprivation

Why rural deprivation is important to the Rural Strategy:

- Deprivation in rural areas can be more isolating due to its dispersed nature and the fact that it can be found in the midst of affluence
- Some rural villages and dispersed settlements have lost their traditional focus of coal mining, and consequently face high levels of unemployment. This is a particular issue for older men
- A lack of opportunity in rural areas can lead to anti-social behaviour, crime and substance misuse amongst younger people
- Access to health and other key services can be problematic for deprived individuals and families, due to the lack of transport

Affluence and quality of life are generally higher in the rural parts of the Borough, with people experiencing better health, a lower fear of crime and better educational qualifications than their urban counterparts (see sections below). Unlike some parts of the country, housing affordability is not currently a significant issue in Rural Rotherham. In addition, the quality of life in Rural Rotherham continues to attract people, as evidenced by the move of population from the urban to the more rural parts of the Borough. Overall, the index of multiple deprivation 2004 shows the rural parts of the Borough are less deprived than the Borough as a whole, and are near to the England average.

However, there are pockets of acute deprivation in rural Rotherham. For example, Treeton West falls in the top 20% most deprived areas nationally. In part, these pockets of deprivation reflect the fact that some of Rotherham’s rural villages and dispersed settlements have lost their traditional focus – the pit – and have struggled to find a new role. Older men, in particular, have faced and continue to face higher levels of unemployment in these communities, while young men have lost a traditional source of work, and a focus of social activity.

Furthermore, deprivation can be found in the midst of affluence – within a single household in a rural village – and can, therefore, be more isolating. The fact that there is a significant level of deprivation across the Rural Rotherham, can be illustrated in the table below (classifications are based on the Government’s new rural/urban definition).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Income Deprived</th>
<th>Employment Deprived</th>
<th>Limiting Long Term Illness</th>
<th>No Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town &amp; Fringe</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village, Hamlet &amp; Isolated Dwelling</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Whilst it is clear that higher levels of deprivation are found in urban and fringe areas, rural Rotherham still has significant deprivation, with levels of ‘limiting long-term illness’ and ‘no
qualifications’ only just below those in the more urban areas. Levels of employment deprivation are also around two-thirds of that found in urban areas.

As indicated above, deprivation can also be masked by apparent affluence. For example, people living in 85% of households in Anston & Woodsetts have access to a car, but this means that 15% do not, and have to rely on public transport to access services/jobs. This is particularly an issue for young people, older people, people with disabilities and families on low incomes.

**Our achievements:**
The Council has taken/is taking steps address deprivation in rural areas. Examples include:

- the Council and its partners, through the Community Strategy, share a common, high-level commitment to minimising inequalities in all parts of Rotherham
- the refreshed Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy sets out strategic actions to address deprivation in key communities of interest, including those living in rural areas
- Other major plans are directed at addressing specific areas of deprivation. For example, the Council and its partners have plans to address the needs of children and young people, older people and public health
- the Council has an enviable record in attracting inward investment into the Borough, and reducing deprivation through job creation
- unemployment in the Borough is at its lowest rate in many years
- schemes, such as the Wheels to Work initiative, help young people in rural areas access employment

**Summary Objectives**
- To reduce overall deprivation for those living in rural areas, particularly for those most disadvantaged
5.5 Access to services

Why access to services is important to the Rural Strategy:

- The Council has a duty to ensure equitable access to services
- An inability to access services can lead to isolation and social exclusion for key groups identified in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- Local services, such as pubs, post offices and shops, provide rural villages with a sense of identity and cohesion
- Perceived isolation from services and the urban core can lead to disconnection with the democratic process and create problems of community cohesion.

Over the last two decades, the way in which people access services has changed considerably, with people travelling greater distances on the one hand and accessing services electronically, at home, on the other. Historically, dispersed settlements, and even larger rural villages, were able to operate independently. However, in recent years many service and retail businesses have closed down or moved away from rural communities. Nationally, there has been a loss of post offices, pubs, petrol stations, banks and local shops in rural areas, as local people increasingly travel to supermarkets and out of town shopping centres, or bank electronically or by telephone. This trend – from access by proximity to access by mobility – has had several impacts. It has increased reliance on private transport, increased isolation for people without private transport or access to ICT, broken the link between locally produced goods and the consumer, and undermined the sustainability of local communities.

Rotherham’s dispersed settlements and rural villages continue to contain many local businesses. However, they trade in an increasingly competitive market place, and face particular market pressures from supermarkets.

The public sector, including parish councils, plays an important role in the provision of services in rural areas. Many public services are located in rural service centres and dispersed settlements, with a smaller number in rural villages. These include libraries, community centres, residential homes, sheltered housing, neighbourhood offices, health centres and GPs, local police station/police houses, parks and recreation grounds. Other services are delivered to people living in rural areas. These are either services where there is an assessed need, such as home care, or universal services, such as household refuse collection. At a national level the Government has introduced Rural Service Standards, which set out the details of the minimum services that people in rural areas can expect to receive, covering issues as diverse as education, support for older people, access to ICT, rural post offices, healthcare and public transport. It has also introduced Rural Proofing to ensure that policy decisions take account of rural circumstances and needs. If carried out effectively, policy makers should systematically:

- consider whether the policy is likely to have a different impact in rural areas, because of particular rural circumstances or needs
- make proper assessment of those impacts
- adjust policy, where appropriate, so solutions to meet rural needs

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- An inability to access services can lead to isolation and social exclusion for key groups identified in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- Local services, such as pubs, post offices and shops, provide rural villages with a sense of identity and cohesion
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- consider whether the policy is likely to have a different impact in rural areas, because of particular rural circumstances or needs
- make proper assessment of those impacts
- adjust policy, where appropriate, so solutions to meet rural needs
Both Rural Service Standards and Rural Proofing are initiatives that could be applied in Rotherham.

The Countryside Agency conducts a Rural Services Survey (where only rural households are surveyed), regarding accessibility to a number of local services. These results are based on map point location of services and rural households. The table below shows access to commonly used local services, in comparison to our South Yorkshire neighbours.

In general, Rotherham compares favourably with our neighbours. However, it can be seen that over 20% of households live more than 2 km from a GP, almost two-thirds of households are more than 2 km from a secondary school, and that almost half of rural households live over 2 km from a library:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Barnsley</th>
<th>Doncaster</th>
<th>Rotherham</th>
<th>Sheffield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GP &amp; cash machine</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Centre</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol station</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post office</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Yorkshire & Humber Rural Evidence Base, 2005

Ensuring equitable access to public services is a challenge in rural areas, and there is a particular issue around the cost of providing services in the more remote parts of the Borough. Accessing many Council services, such as those available from council offices and leisure facilities, can be problematic for people living in rural Rotherham, particularly those who rely on public transport. This group includes people who are disadvantaged through disability, low income and family circumstances. However, the issue of access can be compounded for people in the rural north and south of the Borough who may personally relate more closely (and have easier public transport access) to rural service centres in neighbouring local authorities. For example, many people in the south of the Borough travel to work and shop in Sheffield, north Nottinghamshire and north Derbyshire, and unlikely to regularly visit Rotherham town centre. By way of example, although it is only four miles away (and the nearest large settlement in Rotherham), there is no direct bus route from Thorpe Salvin to Dinnington. The journey involves a change of buses and takes one hour, while a direct bus to Worksop takes 20 minutes.

This is a challenge for the Council and our partners, as perceived isolation from services and the urban core can lead to disconnection with the democratic process and create problems of community cohesion. Findings from Rotherham Reachout highlight that many people feel that the Council and its partners marginalise the needs and priorities of rural Rotherham and overstate those of urban Rotherham.

There is, therefore, a need for public service providers to work collaboratively and innovatively to ensure all individuals and communities can access services. This may include co-location, widening access to ICT and broadening the range of electronically available services, providing a wider range of peripatetic/visiting services, improving transport links and working with neighbouring authorities.

Our achievements:
The Council has taken/is taking steps to improve access to services. Examples include:

- Developing the provision of peripatetic services, such as mobile libraries and sport and physical activity outreach work
- The aim of the Library Service is to provide a static library within 2 miles of every resident. Where that is not possible, the supplementary aim is to provide a mobile library halt within 1 mile
- Establishing a network of customer service centres across the Borough through the use of new and existing facilities, and exploring access to service through other organisations
- Ensuring a wider range of services available through ICT
- Offering free access to the internet and e-mail through community libraries
- Developing customer service standards, and considering the introduction of rural service standards
- Exploring Rural Proofing, as means of ensuring that rural communities are not disproportionately affected by changes to services

**Summary Objectives**

- To improve access to key services in rural areas
- To improve satisfaction with key services in rural areas
5.6 Education & Skills

**Why education and skills are important to the Rural Strategy:**
- An overall improvement in education and skills attainment is important for the Borough as a whole as it provides the basis for social and economic well-being
- People living in many rural communities (former pit villages and agricultural based villages) face new skill challenges as traditional industries disappear and face significant change
- Access to further education can be difficult for people without transport in rural areas
- ICT and broadband presents new opportunities for home working
- Developing entrepreneurial skills will allow farmers to diversify and ensure the success of their business
- Traditional agricultural skills need to be preserved, while farmers need to acquire news skills in environmental stewardship

Rotherham has an extensive network of schools and colleges, which serve urban and rural areas. As illustrated in the section on Access to Services, 96% of rural households live within 2 km of a primary school, while 37% of households live within 2 km of a secondary school. Many of the secondary schools that serve the rural villages and dispersed settlements also have sixth form provision.

The north of the Borough is served by Dearne Valley College at Wath, and the south by Rother Valley College Annexe at Dinnington, both of which offer a range of vocational and academic courses. Rural areas of Rotherham are also well served by libraries and community centre/parish halls, which all provide a basis for access to education and training in rural areas.

Overall, provision of education in the rural parts of the Borough is good, and this is reflected in higher than Borough average levels of attainment, with the percentage of people with ‘Level 4 and 5 qualifications’ significantly higher than the Borough average and the percentage with ‘no qualifications’ significantly lower, as illustrated in the table below.

**Table 6: Educational and skills attainment showing rural areas compared to whole Borough:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No qualifications</th>
<th>Level 1 qualifications</th>
<th>Level 2 qualifications</th>
<th>Level 3 qualifications</th>
<th>Level 4 / 5 qualifications</th>
<th>Other qualifications level unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Rural Rotherham: All People (16-74)</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Rotherham: All People (16-74)</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2001 Census*
However, overall qualification levels in Rotherham are below the national average, and the Council is working with its partners, through Rotherham Partnership, to address general attainment levels. In particular, there are dispersed settlements and rural villages in rural Rotherham where the traditional source of employment and skills development – the pit – has disappeared. In these areas there is a generation of older men, with outdated skills, and young men who have to look to new sources of employment. Skilling up both of these groups for the new economic realities is key to ensuring the continued vibrancy of these communities.

Another issue for the adult population in rural areas relates to access to further education, with people having to travel to Dinnington, Wath or Rotherham Town Centre to access the wide-range of courses on offer. As we have seen in the section on Access to Services, this can be problematic for people without access to transport – one of the groups that are most likely to have few or no qualifications.

Other issues relating to education and skills in rural Rotherham include:

- Promoting the development of ICT skills and the availability of broadband in rural areas, which could open up possibilities for greater home working, with a consequent positive environmental impact
- Developing business and entrepreneurial skills for people who work the land to enable them to successfully diversify and develop their businesses. This should include skills for women whose partners work the land
- Ensuring that traditional skills, which have been passed down from generation to generation, associated with traditional crafts, animal husbandry, environmental maintenance, etc, are not lost to future generations
- Supporting farmers to gain a greater understanding of new approaches to biodiversity and environmental stewardship, funding and regulations

Our achievements
The Council has taken/is taking steps to improve education and skills in rural areas. Examples include:

- Learning is a one of the five core themes of the Community Strategy. It is supported by all key agencies – public, private and voluntary – and is underpinned by a set of shared priorities which aim to improve overall educational and skills attainment
- The Community Strategy includes a commitment to create specific initiatives to maximise the engagement and participation of particular targeted groups or disadvantaged geographical areas
- Rotherham’s Corporate Plan reflects the need to increase skills and develop opportunities across the Borough’s workforce
- Overall educational attainment is improving across the Borough, and this is reflected in schools in rural areas

Summary Objectives
- To increase access to information, support and learning opportunities in rural areas, especially for those in the agriculture sector and former pit villages
- To improve educational attainment for children in rural areas
• To improve transport links in rural areas to primary and secondary schools
5.7 Health and well-being in rural Rotherham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why health is important to the Rural Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The countryside provide a resource which can be promoted to improve general health and well-being through informal recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Former mining villages in rural have high incidences of industrial related disease and higher levels of a male unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Older people and people with disabilities without transport can face difficulties accessing health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The changing nature of agriculture has the potential to create health related difficulties for the farming community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with educational attainment, people living in rural villages generally have a better standard of health than their urban counterparts. This is illustrated in the table below, which compares the percentage of people with a long-term limiting illness.

Table 7: percentage of people with Long Term Limiting Illness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% with Long Term Limiting Illness</th>
<th>% without Long Term Limiting Illness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Rotherham</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotherham: all areas</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2001

This position reflects the overall lower levels of deprivation in rural villages, and the higher quality of life with, for example, lower levels of air pollution and greater access to informal countryside recreation. Rural areas also provide plentiful opportunities for the wider population to access informal recreation, such as walking, and thereby improve their overall health and well-being. The Council’s Cultural Strategy sets out actions that promote positive healthy lifestyles through this kind of activity.

RMBC does not have a specific approach to addressing health and well-being in rural areas. Instead, the Council and its partners have developed/are developing a number of key strategies aimed at improving health and well-being across the Borough. These are particularly aimed at vulnerable groups, and include:

- **Older People’s Wellbeing Strategy** – promotes a better quality of life for Rotherham’s increasing population of people who are over 50
- **Public Health Strategy** – raises the profile of public health and sets out an action plan to improve, promote and protect health
- **Children & Young People’s Wellbeing Strategy** – sets out Rotherham’s approach to the Every Child Matters agenda of being healthy, staying safe, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being
- **Green Spaces Strategy** – seeking to establish equitable provision of green space sites and service across the Borough.

Draft 13.10.06
• **Sport & Active Recreation Plan** – aims to increase the numbers of people actively involved in sport and physical activity because of the proven associated benefits to health and well being. It has specific targets for priority groups including older people, young people, disabled people, BME communities and women.

These and other plans have established partnership priorities, with action led by RMBC’s Children & Young People’s Service and Adult Social Services, and Rotherham Primary Care Trust. Other partners, such as the Police and the voluntary and community sector are also heavily engaged in developing, delivering and supporting these priorities across the Borough.

The actual delivery of services in rural areas takes a number of forms. Vulnerable adults receive assessed need services in their homes, or through day care and residential provision. GP surgeries and health centres are generally available in larger villages, dispersed settlements and rural service centres, with seventy-nine percent of rural households living within 2 km of a GP surgery. However, this means that over one in five households have to travel over 2 km to see their doctor. This is particularly problematic for older people or people with disabilities, who are less likely to have access to private transport, and more likely to need to see a doctor. In addition, as the population of rural villages changes, with younger people leaving, older people and people with health related difficulties face the risk of greater isolation. The Council is working with other partners, particularly the Rotherham PCT, to develop a network of customer service centres, which will included access to health related information and services. It also works with the voluntary and community sector to ensure support is available to vulnerable groups and has a number of Culture and Leisure outreach services that target rural communities.

There are specific health issues that are particularly prevalent in some of Rotherham’s rural communities. For example, rural villages/dispersed settlements in former mining areas, have an inheritance of industrial related disease and higher levels of unemployment amongst men. In addressing this, Rotherham is at the forefront of tackling respiratory disease, with the new Breathing Space centre pioneering this work.

In addition, in recent years there has been a steady decline in farming, with many farmers over 55 years and younger people leaving the industry. Traditional farming has also faced market pressures, regular crises and has become less profitable. Nationally this has led to increased levels of ‘rural stress’, and a rise in the number of farmers taking their own lives. The extent of this problem is unknown in Rotherham, and developing a farmers’ forum may present a means of determining the extent of the issue, as well as providing general support to farmers and their families.

**Our achievements:**
The Council has taken/is taking steps to improve health and well-being in rural areas. Examples include:

• Development and delivery of key health and well-being strategies, including Older People’s Strategy, Public Health Strategy and Children & Young People’s Wellbeing Strategy, Green Spaces Strategy and Sport & Active Recreation Plan.

• Partnership work with Rotherham PCT to develop network of customer service centres.

Draft 13.10.06
• Addressing respiratory disease through the groundbreaking Breathing Space Centre

**Summary Objectives**
• To improve health and wellbeing in rural areas
• To improve access to health services in rural areas
• To ensure the needs of rural areas are embedded into key policies and strategies addressing health and wellbeing
5.8 Ensuring community safety in rural areas

Why community safety is important to the Rural Strategy

- Crime and anti-social behaviour has a major detrimental impact on the quality of life of local people wherever it occurs
- Fly tipping and off-road vehicle nuisance are increasing problems in rural areas, and pose a threat to wildlife, biodiversity and public safety
- Speeding vehicles have a serious negative impact on quality of life and pose a danger to other road users in rural villages

In addressing crime and anti-social behaviour across the Borough, RMBC works closely with the Police and other partners. The key document is the Community Safety Strategy, which was developed by the Safer Rotherham Partnership. The Strategy identifies eight priorities:

1. Illegal drugs
2. Preventing offending and re-offending
3. Victims, witnesses and vulnerable people
4. Violent crime and licensed premises
5. Domestic burglary, vehicle and business crime
6. Anti-social behaviour
7. The fear of crime
8. Young people as victims and offenders

The Community Safety Strategy sets out a series of challenging targets to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and key to achieving these is the development of Safer Neighbourhood Teams across the Borough. SNTs are multi-agency teams that are able to work together on the basis of shared information and a commitment to tackle local crime, grime and disorder issues. Teams will consist of local Police Officers (Police Constables, Special Constables and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs); a Neighbourhood Manager and Neighbourhood Champions; Rotherham Wardens; Neighbourhood Enforcement, Streetpride staff; Anti-Social Behaviour specialists and Young People’s Service staff, and will have good local links to the communities they serve.

In addition, in rural areas the Rangers’ and Wardens’ services also have a significant role to play in addressing enviro-crime and anti-social behaviour, such as off-road vehicle nuisance. Parish Councils also have a key role to play in their local area.

In actual fact, overall levels of reported crime and anti-social behaviour in rural villages are below the Borough average, which reflects the higher quality of associated with rural Rotherham. In particular, rates of violent crime and rowdy/nuisance behaviour are significantly lower than the Borough average. Furthermore, Rotherham Reachout has highlighted that people living in the Area Assemblies covering the rural parts of the Borough are least concerned about crime.

That said, there are particular issues that affect community safety in rural areas, with the table below comparing Rotherham's rural villages with urban areas in terms of some of the major types of reported crime and anti-social behaviour.
The table highlights the number of reported crimes/incidents for 2005/06, with a converted rate per 1000 population (per 1000 households for burglary dwelling). The table shows that in rural areas there was an overall reported crime rate of 71.0 per 1,000 population, compared to 114.9 per 1,000 population in urban areas. The 'difference' column calculates the difference in rate between rural and urban areas.

The figures suggest that fly tipping and off-road vehicle nuisance are the biggest crime and anti-social behaviour issues affecting rural areas (NB: the figure for ‘theft from vehicle’ is strongly influenced by Woodall Services being located in a rural area and hence the ‘real’ difference is probably much higher than 16%).

### Table 8: Crimes / Anti Social Behaviour Incidents 2005/06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crimes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Crimes</td>
<td>1089</td>
<td>27141</td>
<td>28230</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>114.9</td>
<td>112.2</td>
<td>-38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary Dwelling</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1316</td>
<td>1375</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>-36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary Other</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2048</td>
<td>2148</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of Vehicle</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1271</td>
<td>1336</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>-21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft from Vehicle</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2191</td>
<td>2311</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5008</td>
<td>5133</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Damage</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7264</td>
<td>7488</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>-53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anti Social Behaviour</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rowdy/Nuisance Behaviour</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>7399</td>
<td>7663</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Road Vehicle Nuisance</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>2043</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fly Tipping</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>3409</td>
<td>4239</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Traffic issues also have an impact on community safety in rural areas. This is particularly an issue with speeding on rural lanes and through rural villages.

The Council’s Speed Management Strategy contains the framework for managing speed throughout the Borough. The aim is to create a safer road environment for all users, whilst allowing journeys to be conducted in a way which meets the needs of the travelling public and businesses. Both the Government’s Rural White Paper and Rural Speed Management Strategy state that 30 mph should be the normal speed limit in rural villages. It is the Council’s aim to make residential roads in villages 20 mph and distributor roads through villages 30 mph. In the case of strategic roads through villages, the Council aims to provide a 30 mph limit where possible. In terms of the Borough’s rural roads that are outside villages, the Council believes that strategic and distributor roads should be unrestricted and residential roads should be 20 or 30 mph.

### Our achievements

The Council has taken/is taking steps to improve community safety in rural areas. Examples include:
- Addressing speeding and road safety issues in rural areas through the Countryside Traffic Management Strategy and Speed Management Strategy
- Lower levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in rural areas
- Effective partnership working with Police and others through the Safer Rotherham Partnership, leading to the development of a Community Safety Strategy
- Implementation of multi-agency Safer Neighbourhood Teams across the Borough
- General reductions in all forms of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Developing the role of warden’s rangers to address anti-social behaviour in rural areas

**Summary Objectives**
- To reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in rural areas, particularly fly-tipping, motor vehicle nuisance and speeding vehicles
5.9 Housing in Rural Rotherham

Why housing is important to the Rural Strategy:

- Appropriate and affordable housing underpins the sustainability of rural communities, and wider objectives
- Insufficient supply of owner-occupied housing can lead to high demand and inflated prices, particularly where there is pressure from second home/holiday buyers and commuters
- ‘Local people’, especially young people, on low incomes find it difficult to get onto/move up the housing ladder in areas of high housing demand
- A limited supply of socially rented housing is a further barrier for ‘local people’ looking for housing in rural areas
- At the same time, a limited choice of housing in rural areas has the potential to act as a disincentive to people with skills moving into the area
- Properties in remote rural areas can have poorer access to mains gas/electricity supplies, and are more likely to be solid stone built, with the result that residents have higher heating and running costs

Rotherham’s approach to housing investment and development is set out in the Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2005-2010. This describes how investment in housing can help reduce deprivation and tackle a range of quality of life issues within neighbourhoods.

The Housing Strategy focuses on four key themes:

- **Developing neighbourhoods** – by delivering investment, neighbourhood management and partnership working to support neighbourhood regeneration
- **Ensuring decent homes** – by meeting the Decent Home Standard for social housing by 2010, and supporting the most vulnerable households in the private sector to achieve the same standard
- **Renewing the housing market** – by working through the Housing Market Renewal pathfinder to address areas of housing that are suffering from weak housing market conditions
- **Providing fair access and choice** – by building on the Supporting People programme, ensuring that there is choice of suitable housing and support available to those that need it

A Rural Housing Strategy, which is aligned to the Borough’s Rural Strategy, has been drafted, but is subject to further development and consultation.

At a national level, several reports and initiatives have underscored the links between affordable housing in rural areas and sustainable rural communities. For example, the Commission for Rural Communities has recently published *The Housing and Support Needs of Older People in Rural Areas*, which states that:
enabling choices around meeting housing needs in rural areas is not just about housing, but about making critical links with other key features of rural living, such as transport and access to a range of services

In Rotherham, the position in relation to rural housing remains to be determined, and a key component of future development of the Rural Housing Strategy is a Housing Needs Assessment, which will include a Rural Housing Assessment, Housing Needs and Affordability Survey. This assessment of housing needs is core to the delivery of the wider Housing Strategy for Rotherham, and will provide a clear understanding of supply and demand for housing in rural areas.

Some factors are, however, already known. For instance, across the region there has been an outward migration from urban areas to rural areas, and this has been mirrored in Rotherham. For example, between 1991 and 2001 there was a 1.5% increase in population in rural/semi-rural areas of Rotherham, compared to a 2.6% fall in urban/sub-urban areas over the same period. Furthermore, between the 2001 Census and the 2004 mid-year estimates, there was an increase in the overall Borough population of 1.7%, but in rural areas the population grew by 2.8%.

In South Yorkshire, there was an increase in overall house prices in the period December 2004 to December 2005 of 5.5%. This compares to the national average for England and Wales in the same period of 4.29%. Lower mortgage rates and the under supply of new houses have fuelled the demand. Unemployment in the Borough is around the national average, but gross salaries are only 84% of the national average, which can create difficulties for people entering the housing market, particularly in areas where there is limited choice and availability.

Average earnings increases in England and Wales have been well below the rate for house price increases for several years, which as resulted in a large rise in the ratio of house prices to earnings. In Rotherham, earnings rose at a similar rate to house prices between 1999 and 2000, with house price inflation only beginning to outstrip wage inflation from 2001. Between 2000 and 2004 the ratio rose from 4.7 to 6.5 in England and Wales, while in Rotherham the ratio rose from 2.9 to 4.6 over the same period. As a result, housing remains far more affordable for first-time buyers or those looking to move up the property ladder in Rotherham than nationally, though in terms of actual wealth generation, Rotherham has become relatively less wealthy.

Although Rotherham is not recognised as a significant tourist area, any purchasing of second homes by the more affluent does preclude local people from accessing affordable housing. This alone prevents disadvantaged groups from have sufficient choice for decent affordable housing. Furthermore, there is evidence of people moving into Rotherham’s rural villages, because of the higher quality of life, and commuting to jobs in Rotherham’s urban areas and other parts of the sub-region.

The outcome of the Housing Needs Assessment will underpin a Rural Housing Strategy by providing information that will determine the affordable housing policy within the Local Development Framework. It will also provide key information about the need to build affordable housing to benefit the groups identified as at risk of exclusion. However, the draft Rural Housing Strategy identifies a number of potential actions. These include:
• Develop and implement range of options to make better use of existing stock
• Develop and implement Affordable Warmth Strategy in rural areas, leading to a reduction in the number of people suffering from fuel poverty
• Establish a consistent approach to developing affordable housing in rural areas
• Maximise the supply of affordable housing in rural areas through s106 agreements
• Review effectiveness of existing s106 agreements and those currently in the pipeline, to establish future targets
• Review funding sources to build or acquire properties in rural areas
• Deliver affordable housing through partnership mechanisms
• Stimulate the private sector in rural areas of Rotherham
• Impede the sale of council owned properties in specific rural areas
• Stimulate the choice of housing options to encourage choice within the affordable housing portfolio

Our achievements
The Council has taken/is taking steps to improve housing in rural areas. Examples include:

• Rotherham 2010 Ltd, our housing Arms Length Management Organisation, achieved a ‘good’ 2-star rating from the Audit Commission in autumn 2005, which means that £330 million can be invested into the Council’s housing stock to ensure that it meets the Decent Homes Standard by 2010
• Working with our partners in the other South Yorkshire councils to deliver the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder
• Working with the private sector to develop the Private Landlord Accreditation Scheme, with the aim of improving accommodation in the private rented sector
• Developed a Strategic Housing Partnership to oversee the development and implementation of the Rotherham Housing Strategy
• Introduced the Affordable Warmth Strategy, which aims to eradicate fuel poverty by 2015
• Commissioned a Housing Market Needs Assessment, which includes a Rural Housing Assessment, Housing Needs and Affordability Survey
• Began work on formulating a Rural Housing Strategy for the Borough

Summary Objectives
• To improve the quality, choice and affordability of housing in rural Rotherham
5.10 Transport and travel

Why transport and travel are important to the Rural Strategy

- Access to transport in rural areas is key to accessing jobs and services and is core to the wider social inclusion agenda
- Rural areas face a number of transport challenges, including excessive speeds on country roads and traffic growth affecting businesses and communities, with congestion affecting business profitability and investment, as well as the overall quality of life and road safety
- Some rural communities live with heavy traffic passing through their village that has no connection with the community, but which causes noise, pollution and road safety concerns.
- Bus patronage is falling, with rural services dependant on public subsidy
- Access to transport links can increase commuting and affect local housing markets, leading to competition for local housing from more affluent households who can choose to live in perceived attractive locations

Access to transport in rural areas, be it public or private, is the key to accessing jobs, services and leisure and, as such, is core to the wider social inclusion agenda. As set out in the section on Access to Services, increased access to private transport has been linked to a decline in rural shops and services, with people travelling greater distances to larger towns and out of town shopping centres. However, those without cars in rural villages and dispersed settlements (15% of households in the relatively affluent Anston & Woodsetts area) have to rely on public transport to access jobs and services, and, as we have seen, it takes one hour and a change of bus to travel the four miles from Thorpe Salvin to Dinnington.

In fact, rural areas of Rotherham currently face a number of transport challenges, including excessive speeds on country roads and traffic growth affecting businesses and communities, with congestion affecting business profitability and investment, as well as the overall quality of life and road safety. Generally, the Borough is very well served with motorways and trunk roads, but this major network places pressure on surrounding roads. This is particularly evident on the A57, which runs through the rural south of the Borough. Furthermore, some rural communities, for example Nether Hague, live with heavy traffic passing through their village that has no connection with the community, but which causes noise, pollution and road safety concerns.

To address these issues, the Council has developed a Countryside Traffic Management Strategy (CTMS), linked to the Local Transport Plan. It was formulated by a working group consisting of representatives South Yorkshire’s local authorities, South Yorkshire Police, the Countryside Agency and the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

A substantial Action Plan sets out how the CTMS will be implemented. For example:

- Investigation of possible sites for Quiet Lanes
- More appropriate speed limits and traffic calming on country roads
• Routing of Heavy Goods Vehicles

As well as tackling traffic issues, the CTMS explains how the Council will work towards improving public transport, conditions for cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders, motorcyclists and people with disabilities. A number of existing and new initiatives support these aims, for instance:

• Safer roadside verges
• Improved cycling and horse riding facilities

Public transport is core to the CTMS; although in recent years there has been a steady decline in bus patronage in South Yorkshire, with the majority of rural bus services increasingly dependant on public subsidy. RMBC works closely with South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE) to develop public transport in rural areas, and is actively involved in the South Rotherham Rural Transport Group. It is also an active supporter of Rotherham Community Transport, which provides vital links to people in rural Rotherham.

A significant success for RMBC and SYPTE is the development of the Quality Bus Corridor between Worksop and Rotherham and the new Dinnington Interchange. Another successful initiative impacting on rural areas is the Wheels to Work scheme, which is supported by Objective 1 and the Local Transport Plan, and provides motor scooters to help young people access employment.

Access to transport links can also affect local housing markets, with commuting increasingly common. This can lead to competition for local housing from more affluent households who can choose to live in perceived attractive locations. Although not at the same level as some in parts of the country, a lack of affordable housing, at a price that reflects local wage levels, has the potential to become an issue in parts of the Borough. The table below illustrates the way in which people in rural areas travel to work, compared to the Borough as a whole.

Key differences are that people in rural areas are more likely to work from home and travel to work by private car/van, but less likely to use the bus or walk.

Table 9: Travel to work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Work mainly at or from home</th>
<th>Under ground metro, light rail or tram</th>
<th>Train</th>
<th>Bus, minibus or coach</th>
<th>Taxi or minicab</th>
<th>Driving a car or van</th>
<th>Passenger in a car or van</th>
<th>Motorcycle, scooter or moped</th>
<th>Bicycle</th>
<th>On foot</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All People (16-74)</td>
<td>106,489</td>
<td>7391</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>12747</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>64948</td>
<td>8821</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>8751</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural All People</td>
<td>7,071</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4817</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2001 Census

As well as extensive road networks, the Borough is also served by the national rail network. For rural Rotherham, the main rail line is from Worksop to Sheffield, travelling through the Kiveton Park-Wales-Aston area. The services on this line compete with journey times on the adjacent A57. Rail lines also pass through the north of the Borough heading out to Doncaster and Wakefield, though these are predominantly urban. Rural areas in the north...
and east of the Borough are poorly served by heavy rail. To promote better integration of
cycling and rail services the Council is working towards the provision for the carriage of
cycles on train services, cycle routes to stations and more secure cycle parking. A possible
improvement to the rail network in the Borough include a new station near Swallownest and
in the vicinity of the Waverley/Orgreave development area

The CTMS is being reviewed as part of the development of the Local Transport Plan in
2006.

Our achievements:
The Council has taken/is taking steps to improve transport and travel in rural areas.
Examples include:

- Developed and implemented Countryside Traffic Management Strategy to address a
  wide-range of rural transport and travel issues, including traffic reduction, reallocate
  road space, increase use of walking, cycling and public transport facilities, and
  implement appropriate routing of vehicles.
- Secured Rural Bus Challenge funding to develop the Worksop to Rotherham Quality
  Bus Corridor and the Dinnington Interchange in partnership with SYPTES
- Wheels to Work scheme to help young people in rural areas access employment

Summary Objectives
- To provide and promote affordable transport links
- To increase the number of people using public transport
5.11 Developing community involvement, inclusion and community cohesion in rural Rotherham

Why community involvement, inclusion and community cohesion is important to the Rural Strategy

- The Government’s agenda of ‘double devolution’ is placing increased emphasis on transferring powers to the sub-local authority level
- Parish Councils, which largely cover the rural areas of Rotherham, are perceived as having an important role in service delivery and the democratic process
- Minority groups in rural areas lack support networks, and face higher levels of isolation
- Perceived isolation from services and the urban core can lead to disconnection with the democratic process and create problems of community cohesion.

The Council works closely with its partners, including the voluntary and community sector, to support and develop community involvement, social inclusion and community cohesion in rural Rotherham. A number of high level strategies set out the Council’s approach at a borough wide level. For instance, the refreshed Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy prioritises the active involvement of identified communities of interest, while the Corporate Community Involvement & Consultation Framework and the Social Inclusion Strategy underpin the Council’s approach to involvement and inclusion. In addition, Rotherham Partnership’s Community Cohesion Action Plan addresses community cohesion issues across the Borough.

There is other activity taking place that specifically addresses involvement, inclusion and cohesion in Rotherham’s rural communities. For example, involvement in the decision-making process is being encouraged through Area Assemblies, Community Planning and the Parish Planning process.

Seven Area Assemblies operate across the Borough, with those in the north and south taking in significant rural areas. In addition, twenty of the Borough’s forty community-planning areas, including those in rural areas, have developed community plans, which provide local people with an opportunity to influence priorities in their area. The role of Area Assemblies and community planning is currently being reviewed by the Council and its partners. However, the Government’s focus on ‘double devolution’ means that more power to make decisions is likely to be transferred to the local level.

In addition, Rotherham has a network of 29 Parish and Town councils (most of which cover rural areas). The councils vary greatly in size and resource, but all deliver local services. In particular, the majority operate or financially assist village/community halls and green spaces, which support a wide range of cultural activity, and make a significant contribution to strong, sustainable and cohesive communities.

The Government believes that Parish and Town Councils can provide strong local leadership, and should work in partnership with principal authorities to improve the quality and range of services available. In 2005, a conference between RMBC and all Parish and Town Councils in Rotherham looked at how to improve joint working. Twenty-four Parish and Town Councils confirmed their commitment to developing a joint Parish Charter, which
was subsequently developed through a joint working group. A Charter Signing Ceremony was held in April 2006, with the Charter:

- Setting out a basic statement of mutual rights and responsibilities
- Promoting and embedding joined-up working between the two tiers that will underpin public confidence in local democracy
- Providing a framework for service devolution and financial arrangements

Alongside this work, RMBC is also supporting work on the Quality Parish Council initiative, with a number of parishes already achieving quality status.

In addition to Parish Councils, the RMBC works closely with a wide range of interest groups that represent ‘rural voices’, these include environmental protection groups, such as the Council to Protect Rural England, wildlife organisations and landowners groups. During the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001, the Council was instrumental in establishing a Farmers’ Forum to ensure an effective local response to the crisis. However, the Forum has since stopped meeting, and there isn’t currently a Borough wide forum to address rural issues/

RMBC has a strong commitment to equalities, with the Corporate Equality Strategy and Action Plan (CESAP) setting out the broad framework that the Council uses to address equality and diversity. In particular, it sets out what the Council will do in its role as a community leader and service provider.

Although the CESAP identifies communities of interest that face disadvantage, it does not directly refer to discrimination and disadvantage in rural communities. This is important, because nationally, for example, there is evidence that Black and Minority Ethnic people living in rural areas face high levels of racism, but because of small populations has limited access to support networks. For example, only 0.4% of the rural population is from Black, Asian or Chinese background. Furthermore, other communities of interest can face disadvantage and discrimination in rural areas due to isolation, and difficulties accessing services.

Many people in the rural north and south of the Borough personally relate more closely to areas outside Rotherham. This is especially apparent in the south of the Borough, from where people are unlikely to regularly visit Rotherham Town Centre. This is a problem for the Council, as perceived isolation from services and the urban core can lead to disconnection with the democratic process and create problems of community cohesion. Findings from Rotherham Reachout highlight that many people feel that the Council and its partners marginalise the needs and priorities of Rural Rotherham and overstate those of urban Rotherham

Key to ensuring that the needs of rural communities are addressed in policy making is the concept of rural proofing. At a national level, the Government made a commitment to rural proof policy in the Rural White Paper to ensure that it takes account of rural circumstances and needs. If carried out effectively, policy makers should systematically:

- Consider whether the policy is likely to have a different impact in rural areas, because of particular rural circumstances or needs
• Make proper assessment of those impacts
• Adjust policy, where appropriate, so solutions to meet rural needs

Our achievements:
The Council has taken/is taking steps to develop community involvement, inclusion and community cohesion in rural areas. Examples include:

• Refreshed Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy prioritises the active involvement of key communities of interest
• Development of Consultation & Community Involvement Framework to ensure a corporate approach to consultation and community involvement
• Development of Social Inclusion Framework and Community Cohesion Action Plan
• Reviewing role of Area assemblies and community planning to ensure that local communities are involved in decision-making
• Joint work with Parish Councils to develop a Parish Charter, which has been signed by almost all parish councils
• Supporting Parish Councils to achieve Quality Parish status
• Establishing a Farmers’ Forum during Foot & Mouth crisis

Summary Objectives
• To ensure that the local community is involved in decision making
• To support Parish Councils in attaining Quality Parish and Town Council Status
• To improve access to support networks and mechanisms
5.12 Rural Rotherham – a place of culture and leisure

Why culture and leisure are important to the Rural Strategy

- Culture and leisure in rural areas provides opportunities for employment in tourism, sport, active recreation, hospitality and associated trades
- Country parks and other facilities provide educational opportunities for children and young people and promote a greater understanding of environmental and biodiversity issues
- Access to sport and recreation in the countryside contributes to healthy lifestyles
- In particular, culture and leisure opportunities in rural areas generate a sense of pride, community involvement and inclusion and community well-being amongst people living in rural areas and the wider Borough

Rotherham is blessed with a rich cultural heritage, which is built on a mixed industrial and agricultural past. Rural areas continue to contribute much to the Borough’s present day cultural inheritance, and provide leisure opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Within the Borough there are large areas of attractive landscape and a long tradition of farming. Many of Rotherham’s rural villages have Norman or earlier heritages, while other settlements in the rural parts of the Borough developed as a result of the boom in coal mining during the Industrial Revolution, and benefit from the cultural heritage that this brought about. Notable attractions in rural areas of Rotherham include:

- Roche Abbey
- Chesterfield Canal
- Wentworth village and Woodhouse
- Country Parks at Rother Valley, Thrybergh and Ulley
- Local Nature Reserves
- Accessible network of footpaths
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Woodlands
- Cultural landmarks such as Keppel’s Column and the Waterloo Kiln at Swinton

Rotherham’s approach to culture and leisure is set out in Rotherham’s Cultural Strategy: Future Perfect, which highlights how culture contributes to the Council’s wider social, economic and environmental well-being objectives. It addresses the contribution that culture makes to rural areas through, for example, tourism related employment and access to active recreation. The Cultural Strategy also identifies perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with Rotherham’s countryside.

A detailed action plan published in April 2006 aligns the Cultural Strategy to the priorities in Rotherham’s Community Strategy, Tourism Strategy and, as well as a range of Borough-wide priorities, it identifies a number of priorities that are particularly relevant to rural areas. For example:

- Develop and deliver a programme of activities that will raise awareness of local environmental and biodiversity issues
- Develop, complete and publish the Green Spaces Strategy
In taking forward key priorities in the Cultural Strategy, RMBC provides or supports a range of culture and leisure facilities in rural areas for the benefit of local residents and visitors. These include branch and mobile libraries, parks, swimming/sports facilities, outreach work and community halls. Some are found in rural villages, but are more often found in nearby dispersed settlements and rural service centres. Rural areas also include Rotherham’s three country parks at Thrybergh, Ulley and Rother Valley, as well as other woodlands and open spaces, play areas and playing pitches maintained by the Council, which provide formal and informal recreation. Through actions set out in the Cultural Strategy, the Council aims to improve these resources, as well as improving access to them.

However, resources are limited, and external funding is often unavailable to the local authority. The Council, therefore, works with a wide-range of external organisations groups from the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector, such as Friends Groups, to ensure that rural areas benefit from improvements to culture and leisure facilities.

At an informal level, there is a wide range of activity taking place in rural villages, often led by parish councils and supported by RMBC. This ranges from village fairs and festivals, local history events and exhibitions, involvement in Rotherham in Bloom and local arts and sports groups. These activities and groups play an important role in building cohesion in local communities. This has been particularly important in those rural areas that have faced significant economic change, such as former mining villages.

Culture and leisure play an increasingly important role in job creation. New employment opportunities have been created in the hospitality and tourism industries through an increase in the number of visitors to rural areas, although at present the impact in the Borough is small scale compared to traditional resorts. The area is attracting higher amounts of income to the economy and employment than comparable areas to Rotherham Borough. Tourism was estimated to be worth over £250 million in 2004 and supported over 4,400 employment positions. The proposed YES development at Rother Valley, on the fringe of Rotherham’s rural south, has the potential to create a significant number of jobs, as well as providing leisure opportunities for local people, and people from much further a field.

Our achievements:
The Council has taken/steps to support and develop culture and leisure in rural areas. Examples include:

- Implementation of Cultural Strategy aligned to Community Strategy themes
- Development of Sport and Active Recreation and Green Spaces Strategy
- Provision of popular Country Parks at Rother Valley, Thrybergh and Ulley
- Provision of targeted outreach work

Summary Objectives
- To improve access to culture, sport and leisure in rural areas
- To improve the quality of culture, sport, leisure and green spaces
- To increase job opportunities for local people through the provision of culture, sport and leisure services
5.13 Rural Rotherham: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Taken from Cultural Strategy - countryside

Strengths:
- Strong sense of identity & community
- Designated country parks & nature reserves
- Established access to countryside & woodland resources
- Extensive network of footpaths and bridleways
- Rotherham Walking Festival
- Green belt status protects remaining countryside
- Traditional country estates still well represented
- Additional European funding up to 2006
- Existing wood fuel processing plant
- Good uptake & range of agri-environment schemes targeted to enhance key wildlife, historic features & habitats
- Strong cultural key wildlife, historic features & habitats
- Strong cultural identity represented through landscape character and settlement patterns
- Farming and other land management occupations still well represented in most rural communities
- Proximity to centres of population
- Wide range of historical features
- Strong delivery partnerships already in place
- Inexpensive commercial property
- Range of reasonably priced family attractions
- Good location in relation to motorway network, airports & railways
- Strong voluntary sector represented by a wide range of clubs & societies

Opportunities:
- To reverse negative aspects of modern agriculture, to ensure environmental sustainability
- Integrated, increased aid packages from Europe & UK Government
- Growing demand for access, sport, recreation & countryside pursuits, education, heritage and tourism (e.g. national cycle network)
- Key high-growth sectors such as tourism
- Opportunities for agricultural diversification, farm and forestry related tourism and of other on-farm businesses
- Improvements in public transport
- Integrate activity to achieve Biodiversity Action Plan & Character Area initiatives
- Market towns
- Scope for new woodlands to increase areas available for public access & recreation
- Scope for new woodlands to deliver biodiversity benefits, e.g. new native woods
- Consumer demands for animal welfare, food safety & landscape, nature conservation, environmental protection & clear provenance will increase
• Rural tourist accommodation & attractions in certain locations & niche markets
• Livestock and/or crop products for energy, industrial, medicinal uses
• Protection by European Directives
• Increase skills base through training
• Organic/low input/ integrated farming systems

Weaknesses:
• Some habitats degraded by recent period of intensification of land management & insufficient agri-environment funds
• Rural deprivation leading to social exclusion, poor health, poor housing & unemployment
• Many farmers & landowners have no experience of woodland management
• Average economic size of holdings is small
• Long-term unemployment
• Poor environment/derelict land
• Tenancy constraints for on-farm diversification & agri-environment uptake
• Fragmented wildlife habitats
• Below average earnings
• Poor access to capital to diversify
• Falling farm incomes
• Weak property market

Threats
• Climate change
• Declining & ageing communities
• Declining rural services, e.g. shops, schools & banks
• Falling farm asset values
• Failure to prepare for changes resulting from information revolution & uptake of new technology
• Negative attitudes to education & training
• Requirement to comply with new legislation, e.g. health & safety, animal welfare & accreditation schemes with associated costs.
• Species & habitat loss
• High dependency of agricultural businesses on farm subsides
• Inability to maintain landscape infrastructure
• Inappropriate development
• Inappropriate recreational activities, e.g. motorcycling
Chapter 6: Consultation
To be developed following consultation – identifying key findings
Appendix 1: Rural – Urban Classification of Rotherham

Green = Classified as Rural
White = Classified as Urban