Core Strategy 3: Identification of Spatial Planning Zones

Preliminary work in progress towards preparing the Core Strategy
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Identification of Spatial Planning Zones

Rotherham has very large levels of commuting across its borders due to its central location and proximity to Sheffield – there are distinct differences in travel to work patterns within different parts of the borough. The proposal uses these patterns as an evidence base for identifying five distinct ‘zones’.

There are various options which could be used to align these ‘zones’ to current boundaries –

Ward or Area Assembly boundaries would align with some of the Council’s plans/policies such as those proposed by Neighbourhood Services. Revised Area Assembly boundaries were presented in a report to Cabinet 06/07/05, minute B56 refers. Use of these boundaries has many drawbacks – these boundaries can change over time (note Ward boundaries changed in 2004 along with a re-alignment of Area Assemblies) making historical analysis impossible. Government datasets will in future be released at Output or Super Output area level making data analysis at a Ward level difficult and subject to inaccuracy (using a ‘best-fit’ basis). More importantly, Ward / Area Assembly boundaries may not make sense from a spatial planning perspective where all policies have to be monitored and statistical returns made to Central and Regional Government.

It is proposed therefore to use the new output / super output areas as the basis for future spatial planning as these will remain consistent (i.e. they will not change in the future). There are 830 OA’s in Rotherham this is probably too fine a grain for spatial planning purposes and data is not always available at this level due to disclosure / confidentiality issues. These are built up into SOA’s – lower layer of 166 and the middle layer of 33 (there will be a higher level, but no decision has as yet been agreed on this level). In light of the above the 33 mid level SOA’s have been used to identify spatial planning boundaries as most data should be available at this level.

Commuting:

The attached spreadsheets detail the numbers (and percentages) of people who commute into and out of each of these 33 SOAs and their destination – this is taken from the 2001 Census origin/destination tables which is the most accurate information available.

From this data the proposal ‘splits’ the borough into 5 zones:

**Dearne Settlements** – Brampton, Dearne, Swinton Town, Kilnhurst
Characteristics: Significant out commuting into Barnsley and Doncaster with a limited number also to West Yorkshire, less close relationship to Sheffield than other parts of the borough.

Characteristics: Less out commuting than other parts of the Borough, close association with the town centre, predominantly urban landscape.
Urban Fringe – Ravenfield, Bramley, Wickersley Village, Whiston. Characteristics: Less close association with town centre with a mix of commuting to Sheffield and, to a lesser extent, the Doncaster area. Large parts of this area rural.

Outlying Settlements – West Maltby, East Maltby, Laughton, Thurcroft, Dinnington Town, Anston. Characteristics: Predominantly rural but with significant settlements linked to Rotherham centre by quality bus corridors (Maltby and Dinnington/Thurcroft routes). Mixed commuting but significant numbers commute to Sheffield (proximity of M18 and M1) as well as Nottinghamshire (mainly Bassetlaw) and Derbyshire.

Sheffield Corridor – Wentworth, Kimberworth, Templebrough, Waverley, Aston, Rother Valley, South Rural. Characteristics: Extensive commuting into Sheffield (all areas over 30%) with additional numbers also to Nottinghamshire /Derbyshire in south of corridor and to Barnsley/West Yorkshire in north of corridor. Limited association with Rotherham – less than 50% work in the Borough.

Inward commuting follows a similar pattern to outward commuting – significant numbers travelling from Sheffield to work in the eastern parts of the Borough and the town centre. Significant numbers travelling into the Dearne Settlements from Barnsley and Doncaster

Consideration was given to the emerging spatial options put forward as part of the Sheffield Development Framework by the City Council, and the likely impact the boundaries proposed by SCC would have on the Rotherham proposals.

Rural areas:

Rotherham has widespread rural pockets (using the latest urban/rural five definitions) and the possibility of identifying these areas as a zone was considered. However they are scattered in small pockets throughout the Borough (outside the central urban area), usually very close to areas with more urban characteristics – for this reason it was decided a better approach would be to consider these areas as part of the larger ‘zones, but to take into account there particular needs in drafting spatial policy.

Conclusion:

There are numerous variations on this proposal for example it could be argued that South Rural should be an ‘Outlying Settlement’ or that Masbrough should be in the Sheffield Corridor – however the current ‘fit’ is proposed as a starting point for the preparation of the spatial options for the emerging Core Strategy. Significantly differing options could include – removal of Urban Fringe into Urban Area or into Outlying Settlements, or a large M1/M18 corridor. In conclusion the current proposal is shown on the map with each zone highlighted and all 33 SOA boundaries shown.
Potential Spatial Planning Zones

Spatial Planning Zones Map