

Economy

4 Economy

Economy Key Facts

- An economy worth £3.85 billion (Gross Value Added (GVA), 2015)
- A healthy, entrepreneurial economic environment with a high business start-up rate and above average number of enterprises and business units per head of population (estimated 13,500 businesses, 2015)
- High levels of employment, with 95,000 jobs in total, and the highest business start-up rates within the Leeds City Region, with the district's residents some of the most qualified in the north of England.
- A diverse local economy, with a variety of business sectors, including: life sciences, financial and professional services, warehousing and manufacturing, and the headquarters for companies that trade internationally, such as: TSYS, Harrogate Spring Water and Econ Engineering.
- A vibrant visitor destination that attracts a total of over five million business and leisure visitors per annum, supported by the Harrogate International Centre (HIC).
- The district's rural areas account for a quarter of the district's economy that adds to its diversity and provides supply chains for retail and catering industries.
- Low earnings, median workplace wages in the district being considerably lower than the regional and national averages, reflecting the high proportion of part-time jobs and disproportionate skew in local employment towards low value sectors, including catering and accommodation.
- A diminishing supply of commercial office accommodation, due to permitted development changes in use to residential.
- There has been an overall reduction in hotel bed spaces since 2011 across the district.

EC1: Protection and Enhancement of Existing Employment Areas

Draft Policy EC 1

EC1: Protection and Enhancement of Existing Employment Areas

The following key employment sites as identified on the Policies Map should continue to be occupied by employment uses:

- Cardale Park, Harrogate
- Hornbeam Park, Harrogate
- St James Park, Knaresborough
- Melmerby Business Park, Melmerby
- Claro Park, Harrogate
- Plumpton Park, Harrogate
- Manse Lane, Knaresborough
- Boroughbridge Road, Ripon
- Harrogate Road, Ripon
- Dallamires Lane, Ripon
- Bar Lane, Boroughbridge
- Fearby Road, Masham
- Marston Business Park, Tockwith
- Manse Farm, Knaresborough

- Dunlopillo, Pannal*
- New York Mills, Summerbridge
- Draft Employment Allocations, once developed
 - H16: Playing fields, Harrogate College
 - H28: Land at Wetherby Road, Harrogate
 - FX4: Employment site to the south of the A59, Flaxby Green Park
 - MB3: Land south of Barker Business Park, Melmerby
 - TW2: Land to the north of Marston Business Park, Tockwith

The development or redevelopment of land and premises within these sites for purposes other than business, general industrial and storage and distribution (as defined by Use Class B1, B2 and B8 of the General Development Order) will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed use is ancillary to the functioning of the employment site and the following criteria are met:

- A. There is no unacceptable impact on the quality and quantity of employment land supply;
- B. There is no unacceptable impact on the operation of the site as a key employment area;
- C. There is no unacceptable amenity impact;
- D. The proposal provides a complimentary benefit to the employment area.

The use of other employment sites for non Business, General Industrial and Storage/Distribution (B1, B2, B8) uses will be resisted. However, in considering proposals for alternative uses the following will be considered:

- E. Impact on the quality and quantity of employment land supply;
- F. Ability to accommodate smaller scale requirements;
- G. Details of active marketing;
- H. Viability of employment development;
- I. Amenity considerations;
- J. Planning problems of the continued use of the site for employment.

* this would relate to the area of the site in employment use

Justification

- 4.1 Employment land can be placed under pressure from alternative uses, therefore, it is important for the well-being of the local economy to secure the long-term future of a range of employment opportunities. The approach to site protection set out in this policy applies equally to sites last in employment use, but currently unused as well as those that are allocated for employment use but not yet developed. This policy relates to business, general industrial and, storage and distribution uses which are currently defined by Use Class B1, B2 and B8 of the General Development Order or whatever may precede it.
- 4.2 The council has undertaken a district Employment Land Review (ELR) to inform the employment land requirement up to 2035. This review assessed the employment sites throughout the district and concluded that the majority of existing employment areas are operating effectively and are viable as employment locations. The district also contains a

number of employment sites/areas which should be retained in employment use and should be protected against loss and their gradual erosion through the encroachment of alternative uses because they represent the district's key employment sites. Given the shortfall in readily available, viable and deliverable employment sites to meet the projected B1 and B8 need over the period to 2035 it is vital that protection is provided for the existing employment land supply and in particular the key sites. For these key sites, the change of use for purposes other than B1 (business), B2 (general industrial) or B8 (storage and distribution) will not be permitted except where the use is considered to be ancillary to the main employment use of the site.

- 4.3** Whilst the change of use to non B class uses on key sites will be resisted, it is recognised that there are a limited number of non B1, B2 and B8 uses which could be considered as acceptable on employment sites as they would provide a service to employees and their clients and contribute to the efficiency of the employment site. These are genuine ancillary uses such as small cafes or childcare nurseries which are needed to serve the employees of the area. When determining planning applications for such uses however, the applicant needs to demonstrate that the proposal does indeed provide a complimentary benefit to the employment area and support the needs of the employees as well as demonstrating that there is no unacceptable impact on the quality and quantity of employment land supply, the operation of the site as a key employment area and general amenity considerations. Applications for non B Class uses that are not considered ancillary will be refused.
- 4.4** In terms of other sites, the council recognises that although there is a general resistance to change of use, there may be some cases where it might be appropriate to allow re-development where this would create alternative employment opportunities. In considering such proposals the council would have consideration to the following issues.

Impact on the quality and quantity of employment land supply

- 4.5** The council regularly monitors employment land in the district and in particular looks at the take up and losses of employment land. In assessing quantitative and qualitative issues, regard will be had to available land and premises in the local area.

Ability to accommodate smaller scale requirements

- 4.6** The market demand analysis of the ELR identified that employment requirements are often for small and medium scale development. Therefore, in assessing qualitative impacts for releasing employment land from business, general industrial and storage/distribution uses regard will be given to the ability of the site to accommodate these smaller scale requirements.

Viability and marketing

- 4.7** Proposals will have to provide evidence that employment use (B1, B2 and B8) of the site is no longer viable through relevant marketing information, and feasibility or viability studies. The following information will be required:
- copy of sales particulars including any subsequent amendments made;
 - details of the original price paid, date of purchase and the new guide price;
 - schedule of advertisements carried out, with copies of the advertisements and details of where and when the advertisements were placed, along with an estimate of the expenditure incurred from advertising;
 - the confirmed number of sales particulars distributed, along with a breakdown of where the enquiries resulted from, for example from the "For Sale/To Let" board, advertisements, websites etc;

- websites used to promote the property/site together with details of links to other relevant sites, number of hits and if the council's Sites and Premises service has been used and on what date it was registered;⁽⁷⁾
- details of the number of viewings including who and when;
- resulting offers and comments on the offers;
- details of the period when a "For Sale/To Let" board was displayed, or if not, the reasons behind the decision;
- timetable of events from the initial appointment of the agents to current date;
- details of agency/joint agency appointed including contact details;
- date property/site brought to the market;
- copies of accounts for the last five years.

4.8 The above information needs to show that the property/site has been actively marketed for a period of two years at a value that reflects its existing use. Where there is evidence that a business has been allowed to run-down, an independent viability assessment may be required. Where a mixed use scheme is proposed the council would wish to be satisfied that the amount of non business, general industrial and storage/distribution use (B1, B2, B8) is the minimum required to make the scheme viable.

Amenity considerations

4.9 Where the continued employment use would cause unacceptable planning problems (e.g. residential amenity, traffic) the policy to resist the loss of business on 'other' sites would not apply. This is most relevant with non-conforming uses.

Permitted Development Rights

4.10 Permitted Development (PD) rights are a national grant of planning permission by parliament allowing certain changes of use without the need for a planning application. Recent changes to PD rights now allow the change of use from B1a offices to C3 residential and temporary changes allow from B8 storage and distribution (up to 500 sq m) to C3 residential until May 2018. The difference between employment and residential value poses a risk to the large scale loss of employment stock and, therefore, jobs. The loss of smaller, affordable employment units could have an adverse impact on smaller businesses, as well as business start-ups. Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 gives local planning authorities the power to remove permitted development rights in some circumstances where they have the evidence to justify that this is necessary to protect the wellbeing of an area. Permitted development rights covering change of use also apply differently within the AONB.⁽⁸⁾

4.11 As evidenced in the Employment Land Review (June 2015) a significant amount of office space is identified to be lost to residential use through the PD right changes, the majority of which is within Harrogate town centre, where office demand is greatest. The council have acknowledged the potential threat to good quality office floorspace within Harrogate town centre and have confirmed an Article 4 direction affecting properties used as offices on Victoria Avenue in Harrogate, which will remove the right of owners of properties falling within Use Class B1(a) to convert these properties to residential use. The council will continue to use its Article 4 powers where appropriate.

⁷ Further details of the council's sites and premises service and Propertyfinder database are available on the council's website.
⁸ For further information please visit the Planning Portal website.

Further Information

Related planning policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Policy GS5: Supporting the District's Economy
- Policy EC2: Expansion of Existing Firms
- Policy EC3: Employment Development in the Countryside
- Policy HP2: Heritage Assets
- Policy NE3: Protecting the Natural Environment

Further information/guidance for applicants (see bibliography Economy for more details)

- Harrogate Borough Council: Employment Land Review, Atkins, (2015)
- Harrogate Borough Council: Business premises and property finder
- Planning Portal: Permitted development rights
- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995: Article 4

Evidence that may be required from applicants to accompany a planning application

- Justification, viability and marketing assessment for change of use proposals.
- Justification for ancillary applications.

Designations/boundaries to be shown on the policies map

- Key employment sites

EC2: Expansion of Existing Businesses

Draft Policy EC 2

EC2: Expansion of Existing Businesses

Proposals for the expansion of existing businesses in open countryside and outside established employment areas will be permitted where:

- A. There is a proven need for such development in terms of operational requirements of the business;
- B. The proposed development cannot physically and reasonably be accommodated within the curtilage of the existing site;
- C. The scale of development is appropriate in the proposed location;
- D. There is no unacceptable impact on the character of the countryside, the surrounding landscape, the form and character of the settlement or biodiversity;
- E. There is no unacceptable impact on the operation of the highway network;
- F. There are no significant adverse impacts on residential amenity.

Justification

- 4.12** The NPPF states that a Local Plan should positively encourage sustainable economic growth and support the expansion of existing businesses as well as supporting economic growth in rural areas. There are a number of established businesses in the district that are either based on the edges of settlements or within the countryside (outside the defined development limits). These businesses play an important role in the local economy. Where businesses have 'outgrown' their respective sites and premises and have aspirations to grow, they should not be unduly constrained by their location; there are likely to be instances in which their expansion into open countryside may be appropriate.
- 4.13** One of the focuses for supporting sustainable economic growth in the district is meeting the expansion needs of local businesses. The council's economic priorities for the Harrogate district are summarised in the draft Economic Growth Strategy 2016-2035 and supporting Economy Action Plan. It is important that existing firms have the opportunity to expand and adapt for the continued success of the business with regard to normal planning considerations and other policies in the plan.
- 4.14** It is important that the Local Plan enables sustainable economic growth where appropriate. Businesses that are established in a particular location will have invested in a site and may be unwilling or indeed unable to relocate in order to facilitate further growth. Relocation of businesses in rural locations can result in the loss of valuable local employment opportunities that may not be replaced and indeed loss of the business where the particular location is critical due to issues such as access to staff, suppliers and clients.
- 4.15** Whilst the preference is for development to take place within settlements, the expansion of existing businesses into the open countryside may be appropriate if there are no available sites suitable for expansion as a result of operational and locational requirements. Nevertheless, there must be a demonstrable need for such development and the scale of

the proposal should be appropriate in the proposed location. Equally, it is essential that such development does not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the countryside, the surrounding landscape, the form and character of the settlement or biodiversity.

Further Information

Related planning policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Policy GS5: Supporting the District's Economy
- Policy GS6: Sustainable Development
- Policy EC1: Protection and Enhancement of Existing Employment Areas
- Policy TI1: Sustainable Transport
- Policy HP2: Heritage Assets
- Policy NE3: Protecting the Natural Environment
- Policy NE4: Landscape Character
- Policy NE1: Air Quality
- Policy HP3: Local Distinctiveness

Further guidance for applicants (see bibliography Economy for more details)

- Harrogate Borough Council: Economic Growth Strategy 2016 - 2035
- Harrogate Borough Council: Economy Action Plan

Evidence that may be required from applicants to accompany a planning application

- Evidence regarding operational requirements of the business.

Designations/boundaries to be shown on the policies map

- Settlement development limits.

EC3: Employment Development in the Countryside

Draft Policy EC 3

EC3: Employment Development in the Countryside

New employment development will be permitted in open countryside where all the following criteria are met:

- A. It involves either:
 - i. the re-use or adaptation of an existing building, a proposal for farm diversification or other small-scale proposal requiring a countryside location for operational reasons; or
 - ii. small scale new building adjacent to a rural settlement, which is well related to the settlement, benefits the local economy, and reduces the need for increased car commuting to urban centres.
- B. The local road network can accommodate proposed traffic movements;
- C. It would not have a significant adverse effect on the character, appearance or general amenity of the area.

Outside defined settlement development limits, the re-use of existing buildings to employment use from other uses will be supported where:

- D. The building is of permanent and substantial construction, structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for substantial extension, alteration or reconstruction.
- E. The scale, form and general design of the building and its proposed conversion are in keeping with its surroundings, local building styles and materials.
- F. The proposed alterations are of a high quality design, retaining the features that contribute positively to the character of the building and its surroundings.
- G. The building and its curtilage can be developed without an adverse effect on the historic environment, the character of the local landscape or its setting.
- H. It can be demonstrated that there is no significant impact on local biodiversity, including protected habitats and species.
- I. The proposed use would not harm the countryside by way of traffic, parking, storage, light and noise pollution or the erection of associated structures.

Where a future alteration or extension could have a detrimental effect on the character of the converted building or the area, permitted development rights will be withdrawn for such development.

Justification

- 4.16** The NPPF supports sustainable economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity. It supports sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings.

- 4.17** The district is largely rural in character, comprised of a high quality and varied landscape that is greatly valued by both residents and visitors. Agriculture and forestry activities have influenced the character and appearance of the countryside and continue to do so. However, changes in agriculture have meant that it is increasingly important to diversify the rural economy in order to ensure that large parts of the district continue to thrive. Diversification can bring with it development pressures, which if not carefully managed can harm the intrinsic character of the countryside.
- 4.18** Generally new employment development will be directed towards allocations of land specifically for employment purposes and/or existing settlements. However, employment development within the countryside can be appropriate where it is small scale and well located to an existing rural settlement and where it does not have a significant impact on the character of the countryside. Such businesses can help to sustain and diversify the rural economy, and potentially reduce the need for increased car travel to the larger urban centres.
- 4.19** Recent legislative changes in relation to permitted development rights have introduced more flexibility about the conversion and re-use of existing agricultural buildings in rural areas without the benefit of planning permission. These permitted development rights do not apply to listed buildings or buildings located within a conservation area or within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 4.20** The council will require comprehensive information on the current structural condition of the building and the method by which it is proposed to convert it to the new use to assess whether it is of substantial construction, structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for substantial extension, alteration or reconstruction.
- 4.21** Where a future alteration or extension could have a detrimental effect on the character of the converted building or the area, the council may consider the withdrawal of permitted development rights for such development.
- 4.22** This policy is, therefore, intended to apply to schemes outside of the exemptions covered by permitted development or conversion from non-agricultural uses.

Further Information

Related planning policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Policy EC4: Farm Diversification
- Policy HP3: Local Distinctiveness
- Policy NE3: Protecting the Natural Environment
- Policy NE4: Landscape Character
- Policy HP2: Heritage Assets

Further information/guidance for applicants (see bibliography Economy for more details)

- Harrogate Borough Council: The Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings A Design Guide, (1992)
- Harrogate Borough Council: Heritage Management Guidance Supplementary Planning Document, (2014)
- Planning Portal: changes of use not requiring planning permission

Evidence that may be required from applicants to accompany planning applications

- Protected species survey.
- Structural survey of building.

EC4: Farm Diversification

Draft Policy EC 4

EC4: Farm Diversification

Proposals relating to farm diversification and other land-based enterprises will be permitted where all of the following criteria are met:

- A. The new enterprise will not dominate the agricultural activity on the holding;
- B. The development will not detract from the character and appearance of the landscape or the farm holding;
- C. There is no significant effect on amenity, biodiversity or heritage assets;
- D. The proposal should make use of existing buildings wherever possible and where new or replacement buildings are required they should be closely related to the existing farm group, and their siting, form, scale, design and external materials are in harmony with existing traditional buildings;
- E. The proposal forms part of a comprehensive diversification scheme and is operated as part of a sustainable farm or appropriate land-based enterprise and will contribute to making the existing business viable;
- F. The approach roads and access to the site have the capacity to cater for the type and levels of traffic likely to be generated by the development; and
- G. The proposal will benefit the local rural economy and not generate significant number of unnecessary journeys by private car.

Justification

- 4.23** The National Planning Policy Framework, (paragraph 28), supports the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. The agricultural sector remains a valuable part of the Harrogate district economy and therefore the council seeks to support the ongoing viability of agricultural and other land based enterprises because of the benefits to the sustainability of the rural area.
- 4.24** Farm diversification may involve various type of enterprise, including the introduction of different methods of agricultural production, the use of new crops, adding value to farm products, tourism, recreation, farm shops and leasing land or buildings to non-agricultural businesses.
- 4.25** By encouraging economic and agricultural diversification, it is important that the countryside is not damaged by unrestrained and inappropriate development. Therefore, diversification proposals should be of a scale and nature appropriate to the location and be capable of satisfactory integration into the rural landscape. Such proposals should seek to reuse existing buildings wherever possible and have regard to the amenity and impacts on neighbouring uses.
- 4.26** Proposals for diversification must be accompanied by a comprehensive farm diversification plan which indicates how new uses will assist in retaining the viability of the farm and the agricultural enterprise, and how it complements other short or long term business plans for the farm. A farm diversification plan should include the following:

- Farm profile: details of existing activities of the farm, site area, type of farm, existing buildings on the farm, what wildlife exists on the farm, number of employees.
- Details of why there is a need for the diversification including what present problems are being encountered on the farm.
- Proposal details: what the proposal is for, landscape plans, traffic data, structural survey of existing buildings, parking, employment information.
- Impacts: what are the implication of the proposal for the environment and rural economy.

Further Information

Related planning policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Policy GS6: Sustainable Development
- Policy EC3: Employment Development in the Countryside
- Policy EC8: Sustainable Rural Tourism
- Policy TI1: Sustainable Transport
- Policy HP2: Heritage Assets
- Policy NE3: Protecting the Natural Environment
- Policy NE4: Landscape Character

Further information/guidance for applicants (see bibliography Economy for more details)

- Harrogate Borough Council: The Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings A Design Guide, (1992)⁽⁹⁾
- Harrogate Borough Council: Heritage Management Guidance Supplementary Planning Document, (2014)
- Historic England: Nidderdale Traditional Farmsteads

Evidence that may be required from applicants to accompany a planning application

- Farm diversification plan.

9 This guidance is due to be updated.

EC5: Town and Local Centre Management

Draft Policy EC 5

EC5: Town and Local Centre Management

- A. Proposals involving either the loss of existing A1 shop(s) in ground level frontages, or the creation of additional floorspace at ground floor level not intended for an Class A1⁽¹⁰⁾ retail use within the Primary Shopping Frontages of Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon will only be permitted where there is no harmful impact on the vitality and viability of the centre.⁽¹¹⁾
- B. Proposals for non Class A1 uses considered appropriate to a shopping area will be permitted at ground floor level within the Secondary Shopping Frontages of Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon; the Primary Shopping Areas of Boroughbridge, Masham and Pateley Bridge; and Harrogate's Local Centres (Cold Bath Road, High Harrogate, Jennyfield, Kings Road, Leeds Road, Starbeck and Knaresborough Road) provided this would not result in, or add to, a concentration of similar uses, the cumulative effect of which would:
- i. Adversely impact on the vitality or viability of the centre;
 - ii. Adversely impact on the retail character and amenity of the frontage;
 - iii. Generate levels of traffic that would cause significant congestion and/or road safety problems;
 - iv. Result in three or more consecutive shop units in non-A1 use; or
 - v. Result in conflict with other policies of the plan.

In all cases applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have considered all alternative vacant premises last in non Class A1 Use within the Primary Shopping Area based on availability and suitability.

- C. The following proposals will be required to demonstrate compliance with the Sequential Approach;
- i. Retail development that does not serve a purely localised need outside of the primary shopping areas of Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon, Boroughbridge, Masham and Pateley Bridge.
 - ii. Non-retail main town centre uses outside the:
 - Town centre boundaries of Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon
 - Primary shopping areas of Boroughbridge, Masham and Pateley Bridge
- D. Proposals for retail developments outside the Primary Shopping Area but within the settlement's development limit must be supported by an Impact Assessment where they are of the following sizes:

¹⁰ or any definition that replaces this use class
¹¹ Development consisting of a change of use of a building from Class A1 (shops) to Class A2 (financial and professional services) is classed as Permitted Development.

- i. Harrogate: convenience retail of 1000 sq m or more and comparison retail of 2500 sq m or more.
- ii. Ripon: convenience and comparison retail of 1000 sq m or more. EC5
- iii. Knaresborough: convenience retail of 250 sq m or more and comparison retail of 500 sq m or more.
- iv. Boroughbridge, Pateley Bridge and Masham: convenience and comparison retail of 250 sq m or more.

In all other areas, including the open countryside, an Impact Assessment will be required for convenience and comparison retail proposals of 250 sq m or more.

Where it is considered that proposals would be likely to have a significant impact on a centre(s), the council reserves the right to require an Impact Assessment for retail proposals below the thresholds, or within a centre as well as office and leisure proposals.

- E. Proposals for retail development appropriate in scale and type to the size and role of Harrogate's local centres to provide for people's day-to-day needs, will be permitted within, or as an extension to, these centres.
- F. Proposals that help develop the evening and night-time economy will be supported as valuable additions to the vitality and viability of town and city centres, where the operation of such activities can be controlled to address amenity implications.
- G. Proposals involving residential or office development above ground floor premises within town or city centres will be permitted provided that they will not cause unacceptable planning problems for other adjacent land uses. In addition, development at ground floor should not compromise the current use, or future reuse of upper floors.

Justification

4.27 In order to promote the vitality and viability of town and local centres, national planning policy sets out a strong 'centres' first policy, through a sequential test that directs main town centre uses to existing centres. This is supported by an impact test which requires development that might harm a centre to be assessed against a range of factors. Class A1 is defined as shops where the sale, display or service is to visiting members of the public. Other main town centre uses are defined by the NPPF as leisure, offices and arts, culture and tourism development.

4.28 The NPPF requires the boundary of each centre and the main shopping area of the centre to be defined. These ensure that a strong retail mix is supported and provides flexibility for defining those areas (Primary Frontage) that contain a high proportion of retail uses. The Harrogate District Retail Study (2014) provides the evidence base for the policy. Within the core streets of the Primary Shopping Areas of Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon there is a concentration of prime shopping facilities where the commercial rental values are highest. It is such facilities which provide the greatest attraction and it is considered important for the continued shopping character of the centre that they are protected from the introduction of non-shopping (i.e. non-Class A1) uses.

4.29 Exceptions to the restriction in primary shopping frontages may be made where it can be demonstrated that the introduction of a non-shopping use is the only means of restoring or improving a building of heritage or aesthetic significance, or it would make an important contribution to the vitality of the shopping centre and in either case would not have a harmful impact on the shopping frontage.

4.30 In order to maintain the vitality and viability of centres, proposals for:

- **retail development** outside of the Primary Shopping Areas of Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon, Boroughbridge, Masham and Pateley Bridge
- **other uses** outside of the:
 - Town Centre Boundaries of Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon;
 - Primary Shopping Areas of Boroughbridge, Masham, Pateley Bridge
 - Local Centre Boundaries

will only be allowed if:

- a. It is demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites (including consideration of their availability and viability and whether operators have demonstrated flexibility in terms of scale and format), or the development has a particular market or operational requirement that cannot be accommodated within a sequentially preferable location. In applying the sequential approach, applications for main town centre uses should be directed to sites in a town or local centre, before considering edge of centre (within 300m of the town/local centre but not outside the urban area) locations. Where proposals are located in an out of centre location, preference should be given to sites well served by a choice of means of transport, which are close to the centre and have a higher likelihood of forming links with the centre. In determining the area of search to be considered through the sequential approach it will be necessary to consider the form and scale of development. This should recognise that some proposals serve a localised need, such as a local foodstore, whereas others will serve a much wider catchment.
- b. There is clear evidence that the proposal will not lead to a significant adverse impact on a centre. This should involve consideration of the effect that the proposal would have on planned investment and the vitality and viability of a centre, including local consumer choice and trade in the centre and wider area up to five years from the time the application is made. For major schemes where the full impact will not be realised in five years, the impact should also be assessed up to ten years from the time the application is made. Thresholds have been set to identify when a retail proposal should consider the impact of the development on an existing centre. These reflect the different roles and functions of the centres. Developments above the threshold may have a significant impact upon the centre, or other centres within the catchment area, and planning applications should be accompanied by an impact assessment.

4.31 The council commissioned Peter Brett Associates to produce the Local Retail Impact Thresholds Advisory Note (2014), which looked at whether a locally set threshold is needed for the district and if so what size threshold would be considered appropriately proportionate.

4.32 To conduct their assessment Peter Brett considered the findings of the Harrogate District Retail Study (2014) along with data on previous planning applications from 2004 - 2014. They focused their assessment on the following:

- scale of previous proposals relative to town centres
- existing viability and vitality of town centres/vulnerability for local town centres
- cumulative effects of recent developments
- likely effects of further development on any town centre strategy/planned investment

- 4.33** Recent permitted development changes, however, now allow more opportunities to change the use of class A1 units to non A1 uses. In some circumstances (change from A1 under 150 sq m to A3 (restaurants) under 150 sq m) a request for prior approval determination needs to be submitted. This enables local planning authorities to protect valued and successful retail provision in key shopping areas such as town centres as well as ensure that there are no amenity and highway impacts of the change of use. Prior notification is required where it may be undesirable for the building to change to a use falling within class A3 because;
- there could be an impact on the adequate provision of services of the sort that may be provided by a building falling within class A1 but only where there is a reasonable prospect of the building being used to provide such services or;
 - the building is located in a key shopping area and there could be an impact on the sustainability of that shopping area.
- 4.34** Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 gives local planning authorities the power to remove permitted development rights in some circumstances where they have the evidence to justify that this is necessary to protect the wellbeing of an area. The council may therefore look to use its Article 4 powers to remove the permitted development rights in areas where the need to protect valuable and successful retail provision is justified.
- 4.35** Recent changes to permitted development allow the conversion of agricultural buildings under 500 sq m to uses including retail and, therefore, in these cases there would not be a need to submit a Retail Impact Assessment.

Further Information

Related planning policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Policy GS5: Supporting the District's Economy
- Policy HP1: Town Centre Improvements

Further information/guidance for applicants (see bibliography Economy for more details)

- Harrogate Borough Council: Harrogate District Retail Study, Peter Brett Associates, (2014)
- Harrogate Borough Council: Local Retail Impact Thresholds Advisory Note, Peter Brett Associates, (2014)
- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995: Article 4
- Planning Portal: change of use not requiring planning permission

Evidence that may be required from applicants to accompany a planning application

- Sequential Assessment
- Retail Impact Assessment

Designations/boundaries to be shown on the policies map

- Town Centre Boundaries: Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon
- Primary Shopping Areas: Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon, Boroughbridge, Masham and Pateley Bridge.
- Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages: Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon.
- Local Centre Boundaries: Harrogate

EC6: Protection of Tourist Facilities

Draft Policy EC 6

EC6: Protection of Tourist Facilities

Hotel Protection

Proposals involving the change of use of hotels in the district with 20 or more lettable bedrooms will not be permitted unless clear evidence is provided to demonstrate that they are no longer viable, including:

- A. Evidence that the hotel has been actively marketed at existing use value for at least 12 consecutive months;
- B. Occupancy rates for the last three years of operation; and
- C. Capital expenditure in the last five years of operation.

Applicants will also be required to demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse impact on the supply or quality of visitor accommodation available in the area.

Protection of Tourist Attractions

Proposals that would result in the loss of a tourist attraction will not be permitted unless:

- D. Clear evidence is provided to demonstrate that the continued use is no longer viable, including:
 - i. evidence that the attraction has been actively marketed at existing use value for at least 12 consecutive months;
 - ii. visitor numbers for the last three years; and
 - iii. capital expenditure in the last five years of operation; or
- E. The attraction is viable but has been actively marketed at existing use value for two years.

Proposals for non-tourist related development, which would be likely to result in harm to the continued attractiveness and operation of an existing tourist attraction, will not be permitted unless that development would deliver clear public benefits that are incapable of being provided in a less harmful manner.

Justification

- 4.36** The NPPF (paragraph 28), recognises that tourism makes a significant contribution to the economy, particularly in rural areas, and that the planning system should facilitate and encourage development and improvement in tourism provision. Tourism both for business and leisure, is an important industry for Harrogate district, a largely rural authority containing a number of historic market towns and attractive rural villages set in an exceptionally high quality landscape which includes an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The district boasts a wealth of tourist attractions and activities that draw both national and international visitors to the area such as the World Heritage Site at Fountains Abbey and the Great Yorkshire Show. Located between the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors and close to the historic city of York and vibrant cosmopolitan Leeds, the district is an ideal base to explore the wider area. Protecting existing tourist facilities, including ensuring that there is a sufficient

range and quality of visitor accommodation available in the district, whilst encouraging investment in existing and new tourist facilities and supporting infrastructure is therefore vital to the continuing success of this sector.

Hotel protection

4.37 The health of the visitor and business tourism industry is important to the continued vitality and viability of the district's towns and villages, and the communities that live and work here. Similarly, the conference and exhibition business in Harrogate plays an important role in the local and regional economy. A good supply and range of serviced accommodation is essential to protect the town's role as one of the country's top conference and exhibition centres and as a recognised holiday tourism destination. The concentration of hotels offering a good range of accommodation within walking distance of the conference centre and exhibition halls or easily accessible by public transport is a unique aspect of Harrogate which is environmentally sustainable and needs to be protected.

4.38 The council developed a hotel protection policy as part of the Local Plan Selective Alteration (2004) in response to pressure to convert hotels to other uses, particularly residential properties, and evidence that the volume and range of visitor accommodation available was inadequate to sustain the business tourism industry in Harrogate town. The need to maintain an adequate supply of visitor accommodation in the district remains, because without this, the overall attraction of Harrogate as a tourist and business destination will be threatened and as a consequence the local economy will be harmed. Hotels are also major employers in the district and the policy is therefore also aimed at protecting local job opportunities.

4.39 identified that hotels with 20 or more lettable bedrooms provide in the order of 72% of the total bedroom stock in the district and also tend to have higher room occupancy rates than smaller establishments. These larger hotels, however, account for only around 19% of the number of establishments offering serviced visitor accommodation in the district. Therefore, the loss of hotels of this size has a significant impact on the availability of visitor accommodation in the district, on local employment opportunities, and on the district economy.

4.40 It is accepted that it may not always be reasonable to insist on all hotels remaining in that use. However, to accept any loss it must be demonstrated that the hotel is no longer viable for use as such for the foreseeable future. In order to demonstrate non-viability, proof will be required to show that a hotel has been effectively marketed by an appropriate agent at existing use value for at least a year. Evidence will also be required of occupancy rates for at least the last three years and of capital expenditure in the last five years. The following information will be required:

- copy of sales particulars;
- details of the original price, date of purchase and the new guide price;
- schedule of the advertising carried out, with copies of the advertisements and details of where and when the advertisements were placed, along with an estimate of the expenditure incurred from advertising;
- the confirmed number of sales particulars distributed, along with a breakdown of where the enquiries resulted from, for example, from the "For Sale/To Let" board, advertisements, etc.;
- details of the number of viewings;
- resulting offers and why they were dismissed;
- details of the period when a "For Sale/To Let" board was displayed, or if not, the reasons behind the decision;
- timetable of events from the initial appointment of the agents to current date.

- 4.41** It must be demonstrated that the loss of the hotel will not undermine the existing supply of serviced accommodation in the area. Specifically, the loss of the hotel should not significantly affect the overall number of rooms available or the quality of accommodation in the area. This will be particularly relevant to rural areas outside of Harrogate town where there may be limited choice of alternative accommodation and where accommodation is important to support the local economy.
- 4.42** This policy will apply across the district to applications involving the loss of a hotel in its entirety, and equally to proposals involving the loss of one or more individual bedrooms that would reduce the total number of lettable rooms in a hotel to below 20 rooms.

Protection of tourist attractions

- 4.43** The term tourist attractions is used in this policy to define places of interest where tourists visit and includes theatres, museums, concert halls, botanical gardens, theme parks, wildlife parks, historic buildings, and buildings catering for the needs of visitors to locations of natural beauty, built or archaeological heritage. The definition only includes attractions that are open to the public for at least six months of the year and does not include shopping centres or sport and leisure attractions (e.g swimming pools, gymnasiums, sports grounds or soft play centres etc). This policy is particularly important in the district's main urban areas where there is greater pressure for change from competing land uses.
- 4.44** Where an attraction is demonstrated to be no longer financially viable the council will consider proposals for a change of use or redevelopment of the land and property on their individual merits and in accordance with the development plan. Where an attraction remains viable as an ongoing concern, an applicant will be required to demonstrate that the property has been actively marketed by providing the same detail as set out for hotels above.
- 4.45** Any commercially sensitive information will be treated in confidence, although specialist financial details may be subject to independent expert assessment.

Further Information

Related planning policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Policy GS5: Supporting the District's Economy

Further information/guidance for applicants (see bibliography Economy for more details)

- Harrogate Borough Council: Harrogate District Visitor Accommodation Study, (2015)
- Harrogate Borough Council: Statement of Community Involvement, (2014)
- Harrogate Borough Council: Economy Action Plan for 2015 - 2020
- Department for Culture Media and Sport: Backing the Tourism Sector: A Five Point Plan, (2016)

Evidence that may be required from applicants to accompany planning applications

- Marketing details and evidence of occupancy rates and capital expenditure as set out in the policy's supporting text.
- Pre-application consultation in line with the council's Statement of Community Involvement.

EC7: Sustainable Rural Tourism

Draft Policy EC 7

EC7: Sustainable Rural Tourism

Proposals involving the development of new, or extension of existing, tourist and leisure attractions or visitor accommodation in the countryside will be permitted provided that:

- A. It can be demonstrated that proposals for new attractions or accommodation cannot be located within or adjacent to the main towns, local service centres and primary service villages and subsequently that locations within or adjacent to secondary service villages have been fully considered;
- B. The scale, layout and design of development is appropriate to its location and maintains or enhances the high quality of the district's built and natural environment;
- C. They would not cause unacceptable planning problems for other adjacent land uses;
- D. Appropriately located existing buildings are re-used where possible;
- E. They result in an improvement to the range and quality of attractions and/or visitor accommodation in the area;
- F. They will benefit the local economy and help to protect local services; and
- G. They would not generate levels of traffic that would have an adverse impact upon the operation of the highway network or on highway safety or on air quality.

In particular, support will be given to proposals that meet the above criteria and form part of a comprehensive farm diversification scheme, or are directly linked to the long-term conservation and enjoyment of publicly accessible natural and cultural heritage assets.

In addition to the above criteria, proposals for caravan, holiday chalets and camping development (either new or extensions to existing sites) should be accessible to existing local services and public utilities, but should not adversely affect them.

Justification

4.46 The NPPF seeks to support sustainable rural tourism that benefits businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respects the character of the countryside. This includes supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres. Tourism is important to the Harrogate district, making a significant contribution to the local economy, creating employment opportunities and assisting in attracting investment. Tourism also helps to support rural areas and rural diversification.

4.47 Within the district, there are a number of important architectural, historical and natural features that serve to attract visitors such as the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the World Heritage Site at Fountains Abbey and Studley Roger and Ripon Cathedral. Other key visitor facilities include, amongst others, the Harrogate International Centre and Royal Hall, Lightwater Valley Theme Park near Ripon, the Turkish Baths in Harrogate, Mother Shipton's Cave in Knaresborough, Knaresborough Castle, Ripon Racecourse, Harrogate Theatre, Newby Hall and Harlow Carr Gardens in Harrogate. A number of special events further enhance the district as an important tourist attraction, including the Great Yorkshire

Show at Yorkshire Showground in Harrogate, the Ripon International Festival and the Knaresborough Bed Race. The district also contains a wide range of visitor accommodation, in terms of size, quality and type, in rural and urban locations that plays a central role in attracting visitors to the district and in supporting the tourist related attractions and activities. Visitors to the district include the holidaymaker, the business visitor and the leisure day tripper.

- 4.48** However, there can be drawbacks arising from tourism including additional public authority costs, traffic and parking congestion, commercialisation of the historic environment and conflicts of use in the countryside. The council's approach is to therefore encourage the expansion and improvement of the range and type of tourist facilities in a sustainable manner that safeguards the district's environment.
- 4.49** In applying criterion one of the policy the council is aware that there will be certain activities that may not be suitably located within or adjacent to a built up area. Where this is believed to be the case, applicants will be expected to provide evidence to justify this position.
- 4.50** The high quality of the district's countryside and the numerous attractions and activities it has to offer attracts a large number of people each year wanting to spend time and stay in rural areas outside of Harrogate's main urban centres. This policy seeks to control the location, scale and type of tourism development within rural areas, to encourage sustainable development that minimises its impact on the environment, local communities and the highway network.
- 4.51** Development proposals should, wherever possible, make best use of any existing local public transport services in the vicinity of the application site and explore all opportunities to improve accessibility to the district's main urban centres where this is required by a Transport Assessment. Consideration should also be given as part of any proposal to providing links to the cycle/footpath network to encourage non-car travel to rural attractions.
- 4.52** Support will also be given to proposals linked to the long term conservation and enjoyment of publicly accessible natural and cultural heritage assets. This could involve the development of facilities (e.g. car parking, information centre, public amenities etc.) to support visitors to a particular landscape feature, archaeological site or historical building. In all cases, the scale and nature of facilities proposed must be in keeping with the character of the site and not harm the value of the asset they are catering for.
- 4.53** In line with the NPPF, when determining applications for tourist facilities in rural areas the council will carefully weigh the local economic benefits of a proposal with the need to protect the environment. The council will refuse planning permission for development proposals that would cause irremediable harm to the very reasons that attract people to the district's countryside, principally the high quality of the landscape and the natural and built environment.
- 4.54** Camping and caravan development can be particularly intrusive in the open countryside and have an adverse impact when located within existing woodland and so deserve special consideration in areas of high quality landscape. Therefore, all caravan, camping and holiday chalet development must demonstrate that it will not cause an adverse harm to, or be prominent in, the landscape. These types of development should also be accessible to local services and utilities (including a local convenience store, public transport and adequate water and sewerage facilities) so that they can be self-sustainable, benefit the local economy and not place unnecessary pressure on the local road network.

Further Information

Related planning policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Policy GS4: Green Belt
- Policy GS5: Supporting the District's Economy
- Policy EC4: Farm Diversification
- Policy T11: Sustainable Transport
- Policy HP2: Heritage Assets
- Policy HP3: Local Distinctiveness
- Policy HP4: Protecting Amenity
- Policy HP8: New Sports, Open Space and Recreation Development
- Policy NE3: Protecting the Natural Environment
- Policy NE4: Landscape Character

Evidence that may be required from applicants to accompany a planning application

- Transport assessment.
- Assessment of the availability and suitability of alternative sites within or adjacent to main towns and villages.