

An aerial photograph of Otley, showing a dense residential area in the foreground, a large lake in the middle ground, and rolling green hills and forests in the background under a clear blue sky.

OUR OTLEY

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

**A SUSTAINABLE MARKET TOWN
OF THE FUTURE**

**POLICY INTENTIONS DOCUMENT
NOVEMBER 2015**

Our Plan, Our Otley Neighbourhood Plan Policy Intentions Document

Dear Otley Resident,

The Otley Neighbourhood Plan has arrived at a key stage. The Steering Group has identified policy intentions based on the findings of the household survey held in 2014, but in order to proceed we need residents and businesses to let us know if these policies reflect your views on the future planning of our town.

The policies in the Plan provide for new homes and employment to meet local requirements. Without the Neighbourhood Plan, Otley would lose the ability to influence such decisions. Significantly, our policies must comply with those of the Leeds Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework and cannot be used to prevent development.

This is an important step in the development of the Otley Neighbourhood Plan, so please take time to read the document and consider the policies carefully.

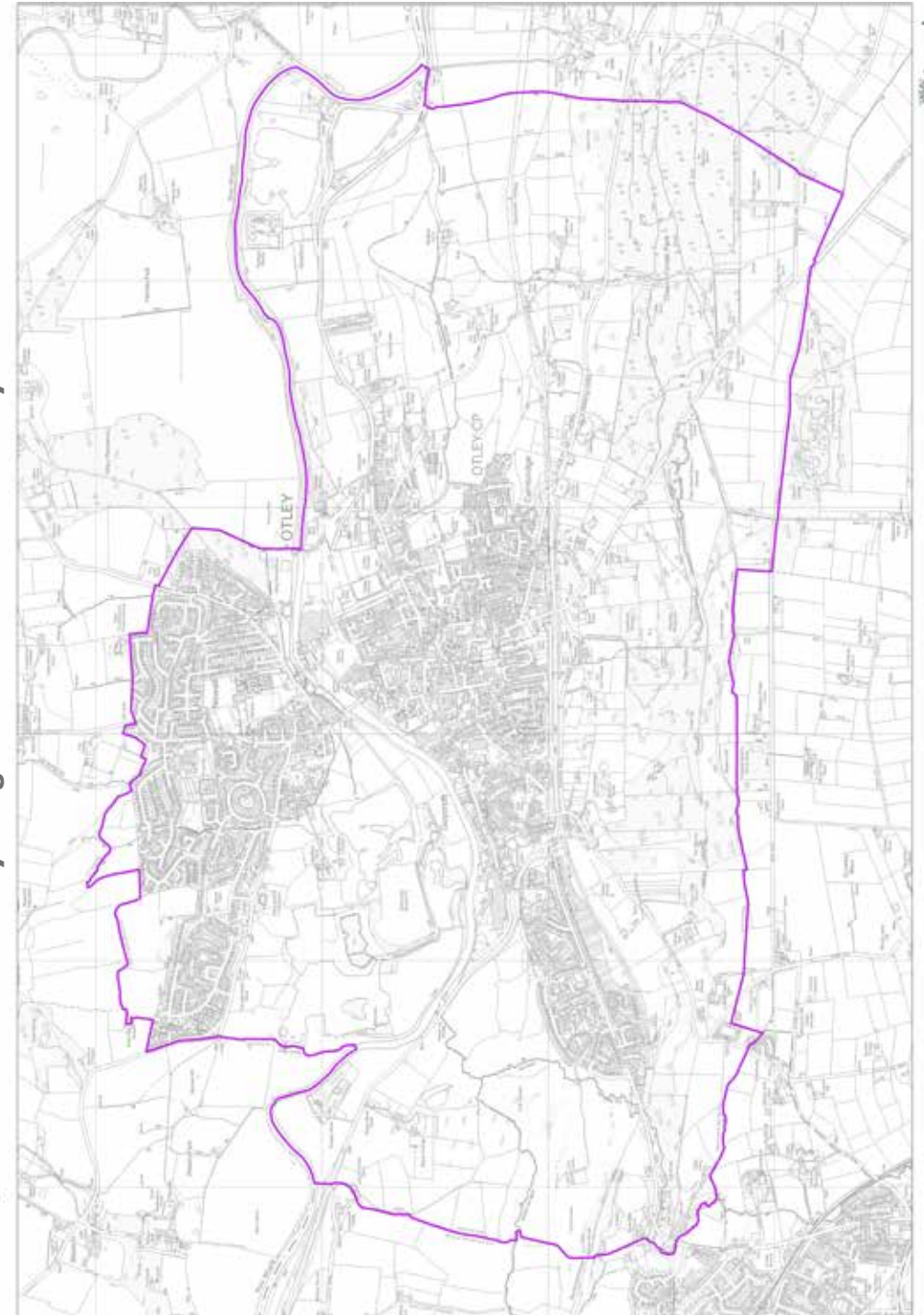
The closing date for responses is on Friday 15th January 2016.

Please complete your questionnaire and return to Otley Town Council, Unit 11, Orchard Gate, Otley, LS21 3NX or drop your questionnaire into the ballot boxes located in the Otley Core and Otley Library, or alternatively complete online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/otleypid

If you would like to know more or have any questions please contact Suzanne Kidger on 01943 466335 or email eo@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

A map of the Otley Neighbourhood Plan boundary is included on the opposite page here.

Otley Neighbourhood Plan boundary



A SUSTAINABLE MARKET TOWN OF THE FUTURE



Context

The Otley Neighbourhood Plan must comply with the wider development context set by the Leeds Local Development Framework for the planning period 2014 to 2028. This overarching development framework plans for an additional 66,000 homes, 493 hectares of general employment space and 1 million square metres of office space and identifies development sites across Leeds.

In Otley, the recent Site Allocations Plan (September, 2015) identifies:

- Over the period of the development framework approximately 1,300 additional homes are proposed for Otley on 15 identified sites. If all were developed, this would represent a proposed increase of 22% in the number of homes;
- The largest development sites are the former Garnetts Paper Mill (245 homes), East of Otley (550 homes), Rumpolecroft (135 homes) and Ashfield Works and Westgate (mixed-use development);

- Some of the identified development sites are already under construction or completed, at the Old Hospital site on Newall Carr Road (61 homes); the former Garnetts Paper Mill (245 homes); the Tannery on Leeds Road (10 homes) and Prince Henry's Court on Newall Carr Road (3 homes);
- In terms of employment space, there are 6.3 hectares of general employment space allocated mainly on sites at East of Otley and land off Ilkley Road and 604m of office space allocated at the former Garnetts Paper Mill site.

While the Leeds Local Development Framework sets the wider strategic context, the particular context for the Neighbourhood Plan is set by Otley. The 2014 household survey identified that residents consider Otley to be:

- an independent market town with a strong industrial heritage
- a strong sense of community
- an attractive rural setting enhanced by the river Wharfe and Chevin Forest Park
- a historical centre with an extensive conservation area
- a town constrained by its road network, with a single river crossing and medieval road layout

Residents expressed concerns over the lack of investment in infrastructure associated with recent developments and the scale and impact of planned developments and the need for adequate infrastructure and facilities in the future.



Otley Site Allocations Plan (September 2015)

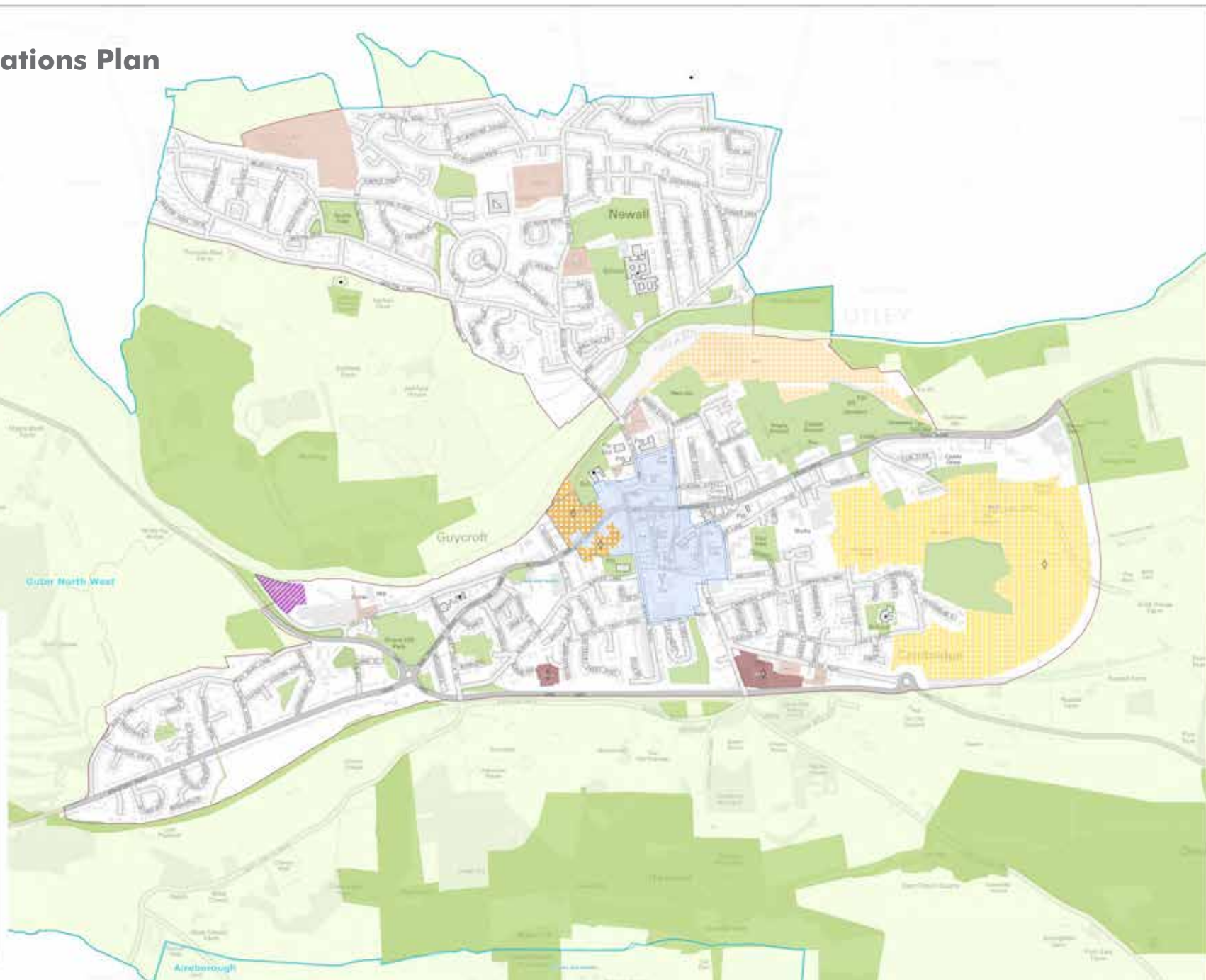
Key

Site Allocations

- ED1 - Limited office employment
- ED2 - Office allocation
- ED3 - Limited general employment
- ED4 - General employment allocation
- H21 - Limited housing
- H22 - Housing allocation
- H23 - Other services housing/independent living
- H24 - Allocation for schools
- Town & Local Centres
- M1 - Limited mixed use
- M2 - Mixed use allocation
- H23 - Subsequent land
- Green Space
- Green Belt

Other Information

- Leeds City Council Verds
- Housing Market Characteristic Areas
- City Strategy MAIN URBAN AREA
- City Strategy MAJOR SETTLEMENTS
- City Strategy SMALL SETTLEMENTS
- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools





The Vision for Otley in 2028 is:

'To develop, maintain and improve a vibrant and sustainable Otley by stimulating a thriving economy with a range of employment opportunities and affordable housing that supports an active and inclusive community and to build on Otley's natural assets whilst protecting and enhancing its unique environment and heritage.'

Objectives

The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to fulfil this vision by achieving the following objectives:

- ensure enough homes, especially affordable homes, to meet the needs of local people
- ensure employment opportunities within the town
- support and regenerate the local economy
- ensure the provision of better facilities for all
- improve transport infrastructure and develop safer routes
- protect Otley's rich built heritage
- encourage quality design in buildings and place
- protect landscape, wildlife and nature conservation interests.

The aspiration of the Neighbourhood Plan is that by 2028, Otley will be a more attractive, self-sufficient and sustainable community, building on its status as an independent and traditional market town in an attractive rural setting.

The town will be home to more people and so the emphasis will be on providing affordable homes for local people. There will be significant transport and infrastructure improvements (relief road, cycle ways, etc.) and, crucially, greater employment opportunities. Jobs in the creative, cultural and tourism industries will build on Otley's strengths and reflect the town's character. This will help reverse the trend towards becoming a suburb of Leeds.

Otley's bigger population will command greater resources, supporting much improved local facilities and services in the town centre and outlying areas.

A better deal for teenagers and young people will be a key feature of this enhanced provision.

The town's retail facilities will be very much improved and build on Otley's history as a distinctive, independent shopping centre rooted in local traders and businesses and a strong market culture.

Unique tourist selling points for Otley will be its character as an attractive town set in outstanding countryside, the music and pubs underpinning the town's cultural economy, its national status as an ever-growing cycling hub (supported by the development of a first-class cycling route network) and the provision of improved pedestrian routes.

The Chevin and River Wharfe will enjoy enhanced protection as a high quality recreational, wildlife and landscape corridor with the aim of more fully realising its potential as a community, tourist and day visitor attraction and amenity.

The town's essential character will remain firmly intact despite all of this growth, development, change and progress. A key element of the town's development will be to preserve and enhance Otley's heritage. Sustainable development over 13 years will create a town which, if anything, will look even more attractive than it does today and be an even better place to live.





POLICY & LAND USE INTENTIONS

If adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying land proposals map will be a statutory planning document with the same status as the Leeds Local Plan. As such, planning applications will be judged by reference to it.

For the purposes of this document, the policy and land use intentions that follow are presented in six sections. These are:

- 1. Housing**
- 2. Employment**
- 3. Town environment and derelict sites**
- 4. Community services and facilities**
- 5. Built and green environment**
- 6. Transport and travel**

The final policy wording, together with full evidence and detail will be presented in the final draft plan.



1. Housing

The Otley Neighbourhood Plan must be in line with national and local planning policy and cannot prevent allocated housing development. However, it can help to shape the mix of housing built and influence planning decisions so that any new housing meets the needs of local people, fits the character of the town and is sensitively and sustainably integrated into the town environment.

The proposed housing policies reflect the views of local people and the evidence collated by the Housing sub-group.

Affordable housing

The lack of affordable housing was raised by residents during the household survey. The term 'affordable housing' can mean different things to different people. In everyday use, 'affordable housing' is often used to mean 'relatively cheaper market housing to purchase or rent'. However, in planning it has a very specific meaning: 'social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market' (National Planning Policy Framework (2012), Annex 2).

In the planning sense, affordable housing targets for an area are set by the Leeds Core Strategy. Policy H5 of the Core Strategy sets an affordable housing target of 35% affordable housing to be provided on all new developments with more than ten homes.



Given that Otley has an average need for affordable housing in the planning sense, Policy H5 will continue to apply to all planning applications in Otley and so the Neighbourhood Plan does not need to include any additional policy. Nevertheless, evidence suggests there are two key issues affecting the amount of affordable housing actually being provided in Otley:

- low levels of social/affordable housing completions in recent years
- the redirection of affordable housing from Otley to other parts of Leeds.

The Neighbourhood Plan policies below seek to address these specific issues.

H1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Policy will require that the percentage of affordable housing built satisfies the needs of the local community in terms of type and tenure required and the amount allocated to local people, 10% to be starter homes, and that it remains as affordable housing in perpetuity.

Policy may support developments that provide a proportion of affordable homes suitable for or easily adaptable for occupation by older people or people with disabilities (e.g. that meet the Lifetime Homes standard).

Policy will seek to maximise on-site provision of new affordable housing within the Otley Neighbourhood Plan area, taking account of the most up-to-date assessment of Outer North West affordable housing needs at the time.

Policy will normally require affordable housing to be dispersed throughout any development and to achieve the same high-quality design as market homes on the site.

Any off-site requirements for affordable housing should be retained within the Otley Neighbourhood Plan area.

Housing mix: size, type and tenure

The research undertaken by the Housing sub-group has identified several local issues in terms of housing mix for the Neighbourhood Plan to address.

Growth in smaller households

Census data (2011) shows that household space in Otley (the number of rooms per household) is generally larger than the average for Leeds. This perhaps helps to explain the desire expressed in the household survey for more starter and/or affordable homes.

In addition, Otley's population in the youngest age groups (0–16, 16–25 and 25–44) fell by almost 20% between 2001 and 2011, while in Leeds and England as a whole these age groups showed a marked increase. This is a worrying trend and suggests that more young people and young families are leaving Otley or not moving into Otley.

Taken together, these two factors suggest a need to provide a greater range of housing sizes, including 1–2 bedroom homes, to cater for single people, first-time buyers, older people wanting to downsize, couples without children and/or younger people seeking to buy or rent.

Need for/retention of larger family homes

There is evidence to suggest the need to provide some larger (3–4 or more bedrooms) homes for families. Census data also shows that Otley has a slightly higher proportion of people who work from home than average for Leeds. This means there is likely to be a demand for homes with enough rooms to accommodate living and working space.

Strong demand for rented property

Census data shows relatively low rates of private renting in Otley, but that rental properties are let five times faster than in Leeds. This indicates that Otley is an area of high rental demand and suggests that many prospective home owners are renting as they cannot yet afford to buy.

H2 HOUSING SIZE

Policy will support developments that offer an adequate proportion of smaller homes (1–2 bedrooms).

Policy will normally discourage developments with a housing element consisting primarily of larger homes (3 bedrooms and over).

H3 HOUSING SIZE

Policy will require developments to provide a range of housing types, including flats, terraced, semi-detached and detached units, respecting and taking into account the surrounding types of housing. Flats and terraced housing will be particularly supported for urban infill sites.

H4 HOUSING TENURE

Policy will encourage developments, especially larger developments, to achieve a mix of tenures (e.g. private-rented, owner-occupation, shared ownership), dispersed throughout the development, that take into account the needs of the local community.

Otley's older population

Otley has a larger than average older population whose housing needs are not currently well catered for, with limited numbers of homes (including flats or bungalows) suitable for older people looking to downsize.

As a compact and relatively self-sufficient town, Otley is a good location for such housing and there is high demand for all forms of retirement property, including retirement homes, assisted living, sheltered housing and residential or nursing care homes, within easy walking distance of services and facilities.

However, the amount of housing appropriate for older people should remain proportionate to the needs of the local community. The aim is to meet local need, not to turn Otley into a retirement town.

H5 HOUSING SIZE

Policy will support the development of a range of housing designed for the needs of older people to be integrated within larger developments, which promote independence as far as possible in line with identified needs of the local community.

Policy will require housing designed for older people to be within easy access of public transport routes or a short walking distance from the town centre.



The provision of local employment opportunities is crucial to support a thriving community and to minimise the number of people who have to make long journeys to work. The Neighbourhood Plan will encourage business and employment opportunities by providing adequate employment land for current and future employment needs.

Retaining employment land and job opportunities in the town

Otley has traditionally been and aspires to remain a self-sufficient market town. Otley's roots are as an agricultural market town servicing its rural catchment and as a former manufacturing town, which provided employment in paper manufacture, printing, woolen mills, tanning and light engineering. With the decline in manufacture across the UK, particularly from the 1980s, traditional employment land in Otley has been steadily eroded.

The town has also experienced a steady decline in local employment opportunities with many more residents now commuting into the major urban centres of Leeds and Bradford for employment. The household survey identified a clear concern among residents that Otley should not become solely a dormitory/commuter town as a result of the proposed scale of housing development.

There is also local concern regarding Otley based businesses that have relocated or in the process of moving out of Otley due to lack of suitable sites for expansion in the town.

It is also considered that Otley needs more local employment opportunities given that it is less well placed than other close by settlements for commuting into Leeds or Bradford. This is based on having no train station and the town's population being severed by the River Wharfe and served by a single bridge that results in congestion within the town for those en-route to work.

E1 NEW EMPLOYMENT LAND

Policy will support the growth of new employment sites as a key factor in ensuring the prosperity of the Otley community, including the development of windfall sites. All new employment sites would need to be appropriate within their surrounding environment.

E2 EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND

Policy supports the retention of existing employment land for employment uses, in line with Policy EC3 of the Leeds Core Strategy.

Policy will support the growth of current employment sites where this is appropriate within the surrounding environment. Proposals which lead to improvement, modernisation or upgrading of current employment sites will be welcomed and supported.

Policy will encourage the conversion of unused spaces in old buildings in the town centre into modern contemporary spaces to provide employment opportunities.



Supporting employment opportunities in growth sectors

Otley's creative character, rural location and enterprising spirit is demonstrated by the above-average numbers of self-employed people/people working from home in small offices/studios in the digital, creative and cultural sectors. This makes Otley an attractive location for business start-ups and small businesses in sectors that rely less on access to road and transport infrastructure. These businesses will help Otley to continue to be a self-sustaining town.

In addition, the proposed scale of development will increase demand for local businesses and trades (plumbers, electricians, car mechanics, etc.) to supply services to this larger population. The town is broadly self-sufficient in most of these services but, given the size and short timescale of the planned population increase, new premises for trades and services will be needed to ensure that it remains so.

E3 SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN GROWTH SECTORS

Policy will identify a suitable site for an enterprise centre/incubator for small business start-ups to provide low-cost lease accommodation for a range of businesses including skilled trades and services, digital, creative and cultural businesses.

Employment opportunities generated by visitors

The historic character, rural setting and independent retail and market offer makes Otley a popular destination for day, overnight and short-stay visitors, within easy access of the cities of Leeds and Bradford and Leeds-Bradford Airport. As a good access point for the Yorkshire Dales and the start/finish point of the Six Dales Trail, and with a busy annual events and festivals programme, Otley attracts long-distance visitors for short stays. Tourism-related activity is therefore another economic driver that helps to generate local employment opportunities and enables Otley to remain a self-sustaining town.

E4 ENCOURAGE EMPLOYMENT SITES THAT SUPPORT TOURISM

Policy will support the development of sites and conversion of buildings that will attract and meet the needs of day, overnight and short-stay visitors, so creating employment opportunities in the town.

Live/work accommodation

Otley has a higher than average population of self-employed people and small businesses. Encouraging and supporting developments that offer live/work accommodation could be particularly useful, subject to agreements being reached on the use remaining as live/work space in perpetuity.

E5 DEVELOP LIVE/WORK ACCOMMODATION

Policy will support developments that provide live/work accommodation for small businesses and self-employed people.



3. Town environment & derelict sites

The household survey raised concerns about the number of brownfield sites and unused buildings in the town – developable land – that are neglected or derelict. This affects the quality of the town environment and creates a negative impression for visitors.

The future use for undeveloped sites and buildings depends on a range of factors including national and local planning guidance, location, previous use of the site; some land may be contaminated from previous industrial use, for example.

There is capacity within the town centre to develop unused spaces, such as those found above shops. The Neighbourhood Plan has little influence over sites that have been previously allocated for development but it can influence the use of sites that may come forward for development in future.

TE1 UNDEVELOPED SITES AND UNUSED BUILDINGS

Policy will outline preferred future long-term uses for unused or derelict sites and buildings.



Your Feedback is important!

This is your opportunity to have your say and influence the contents of the Otley Neighbourhood Plan and we need your feedback to get this right. Please tick what you **DO NOT** agree with and please add any comments to explain your answers. If there is insufficient room for your comments please add new sheets and attach to the back of this questionnaire.

1. Do you agree with the Plan Vision and Objectives?

Yes No

If **NO**, which aspect(s) of the plan vision and objectives do you disagree with?

Your comments:

2. Do you agree with all the Housing policies?

Yes No

If **NO**, please indicate which policies you **don't** agree with by placing an X in the relevant box(es) below.

H 1 H 2 H 3 H 4 H 5

Your comments:

3. Do you agree with all the Employment policies?

Yes No

If **NO**, please indicate which policies you **don't** agree with by placing an X in the relevant box(es) below

E 1 E 2 E 3 E4 E5

Your comments:

4. Do you agree with the Town Environment & Derelict Sites policy?

Yes No

If **NO**, please indicate why you **don't** agree with it.

Your comments:

5. Do you agree with the Community Services & Facilities policies?

Yes No

If **NO**, please indicate which policies you **don't** agree with by placing an X in the relevant box(es) below.

CSF1 CSF2 CFS3 CFS4 CSF5 CFS6 CSF7

Your comments:

6. Do you agree with the Built Environment policies?

Yes No

If **NO**, please indicate which policies you **don't** agree with by placing an X in the relevant box(es) below.

BE1 BE2 BE3 BE4 BE5 BE6

Your comments:

In relation to policy BE5, please list any assets you think should be protected below:

7. Do you agree with the Green Environment policies?

Yes No

If **NO**, please indicate which policies you **don't** agree with by placing an X in the relevant box(es) below?

GE1 GE2 GE3 GE4 GE5 GE6

Your comments:

8. Do you agree with the Transport & Travel policies?

Yes No

If **NO**, please indicate which policies you **don't** agree with by placing an X in the relevant box(es) below.

TT1 TT2 TT3 TT4 TT5

Your comments:

Any other comments:

Please return to Otley Core or Otley Library or alternatively complete online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/otleypid by Friday 16th January 2016.

Thank you in advance for helping to shape the future of Otley.

Name:

Address:



The ambition is to provide the people of Otley with the services and facilities they need now and aspire to in the future. A community is more than the sum of its inhabitants: a successful and vibrant community needs services and facilities which are inclusive, modern and fit-for-purpose. Current and projected housing development will increase the local population, which will mean pressure on existing services and facilities. The policy proposals therefore consider the provision of necessary facilities to meet the needs/demands of this growing population.

Community buildings

The household survey identified that the residents of Otley value the community buildings and facilities that serve the town. There is strong community support for the safeguarding and improvement of these important assets, which will be identified and registered as Assets of Community Value.

CSF1 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

Policy will seek to safeguard existing community buildings and facilities.

Policy will seek to add to and improve the existing stock of community buildings that serve the town.

Policy will welcome and encourage development which provides for the enhancement of community services and facilities across the whole town.



Sports, leisure and recreation facilities

Otley's location has contributed to the development of a wide range of sporting and recreational facilities and the household survey identified several areas that respondents like about Otley. In terms of recreational facilities, respondents specifically mentioned the Chevin Forest Park, River Wharfe and Wharfemeadows Park, as well as cycling and walking opportunities. Otley has a strong sporting presence, including rugby union, football, cricket, tennis, squash, golf, sailing and bowls.

However, residents also highlighted concerns about a lack of adequate leisure facilities, especially a sports centre and swimming pool. The facilities for certain major sports like football, rugby and athletics are in poor condition or inadequate relative to other local areas and could be significantly improved to widen participation.

CSF2 SPORTS, LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Policy will support improvements to existing and encourage the development of new sports and recreation facilities to enhance the provision of outdoor, multi-purpose, all-weather facilities.

Policy will promote and identify a site for the development of a new multi-purpose indoor leisure centre in a location accessible to all residents.

Entertainment and tourism

The household survey identified several entertainment activities and venues which respondents like about Otley, specifically community events/festivals, pubs and restaurants and Otley Courthouse Arts Centre. However, the availability of certain leisure facilities, notably a cinema, contrasts poorly with a number of similar towns across Yorkshire and means that residents have to travel elsewhere for such services.

CSF3 ENTERTAINMENT AND TOURISM

Policy will encourage the development of more and improved entertainment facilities commensurate with the town's size, specifically in relation to the provision of a large multi-purpose venue able to host music events, theatre productions and films.

Policy will support the development of more and better quality provision of overnight accommodation to enhance its offer to tourists and take advantage of our proximity to nearby major cities, surrounding countryside and the airport.

Health facilities

Health facilities were not mentioned in the top 30 things that respondents like about Otley or the top 20 dislikes. However, the lack of NHS dentists ranked tenth on the list of inadequate facilities and significant numbers of residents have to attend dentists in other areas. With the exception of Wharfedale Hospital, health facilities in the town are clustered around the town centre with no provision in neighbourhoods to the north of the river and west of the bypass.

CSF4 HEALTH FACILITIES

Policy will encourage the development of existing and new community health facilities to meet existing and evolving demand so that all members of the community have access to a GP and dentist within the Neighbourhood Plan area and encourage the more even distribution of health facilities (GPs, dentist and pharmacies) around the town.

Policy will encourage the development of Wharfedale Hospital as a base for community health facilities north of the river.

Improvement to retail and shopping

The household survey identified that residents like the independent and unique local shops, the markets and market place and the cafés and tea shops in Otley. However, residents dislike the number of charity shops (the Neighbourhood Plan is unable to address this issue unless there is a change to planning law), the lack of affordable car parking, the number of vacant shops, the lack of major high street retailers and the lack of variety. This is clearly a major area of concern for respondents.

CSF5 IMPROVEMENT TO RETAIL AND SHOPPING

Policy will support retail provision in the town centre in order to promote the vitality and viability of the town.

Policy will seek to ensure the town centre has a good range of both convenience and comparison retail and the presence of local independent traders.

Policy will support the retention of shopping parades and small-scale stand-alone convenience stores that serve local neighbourhoods and communities.

Policy will support the retention of the town's markets.

Facilities for older and younger people

In general terms, the household survey suggests that older people are relatively well-provided for in the town. Residents identified a lack of amenities for young people and felt the Neighbourhood Plan should address this issue.

CSF6 FACILITIES FOR OLDER AND YOUNGER PEOPLE

Policy will aim to encourage developments which provide and retain community facilities for vulnerable older people provided these are well-designed to meet their needs and are located in areas with good accessibility to services and public transport.

Policy will aim to encourage additional and improved indoor and outdoor recreational facilities for young people across the town to provide them with spaces to play and interact in a safe and welcoming environment.

Education

The likelihood of an increasing school-age population as a consequence of new development will inevitably increase the pressure on ensuring all children and young people have a school place in Otley. New educational facilities will be required to meet this increased demand.

CSF7 EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Policy will promote the development of additional and improved education facilities for pre-school, primary and secondary age children and increase capacity to ensure this meets the increased level of demand in Otley in a planned way and appropriately distributed across the town.



5. Built & green environment

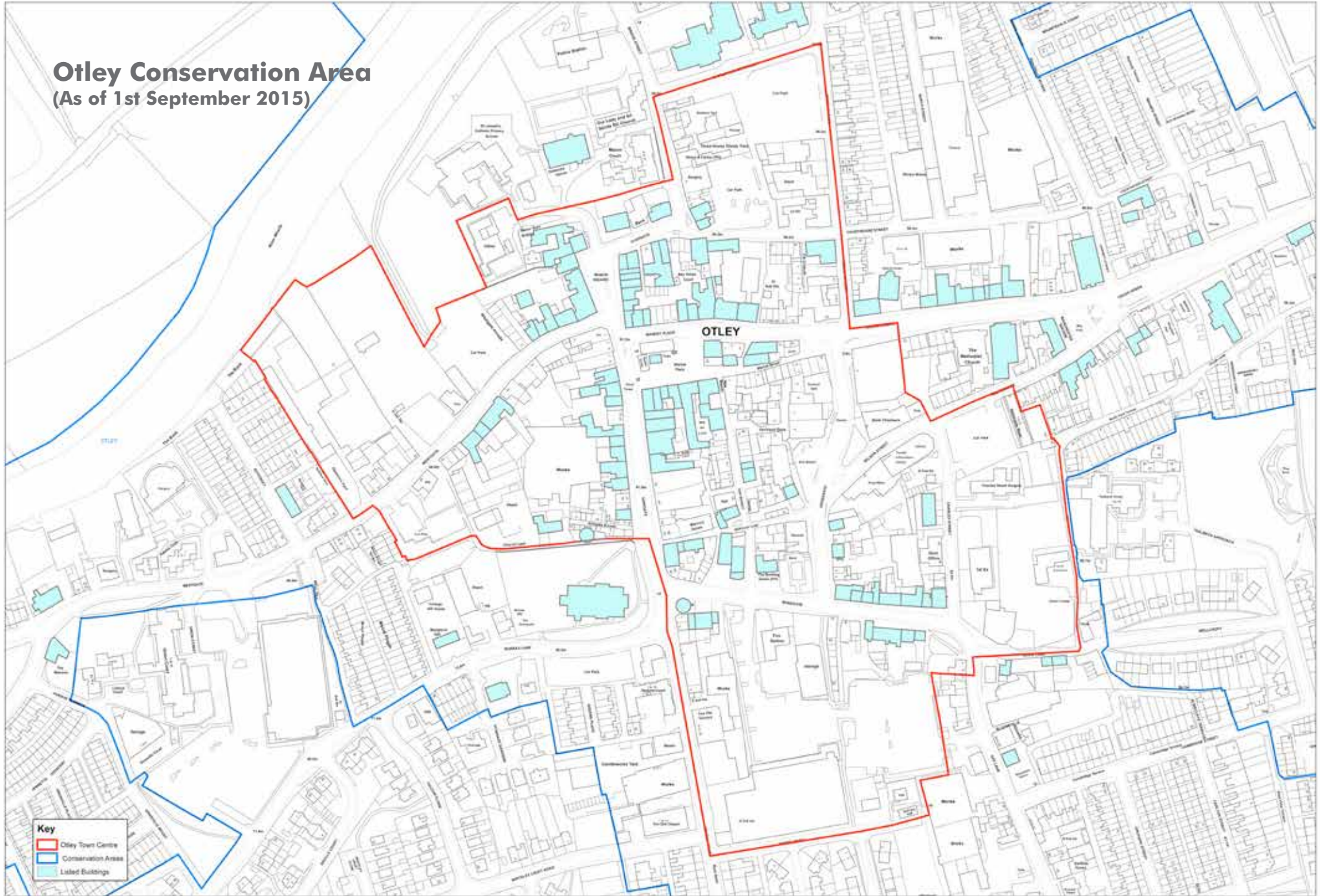
The household survey identified that both residents and visitors value the historic character and quality of Otley's environment and its attractive rural setting.

Otley's town centre has benefitted from Conservation Area status which has resulted in individual buildings being listed as of historic or architectural merit. However, there are concerns that recent development has led to the steady loss of buildings reflecting the town's industrial heritage and to fears that Otley's distinctive character and identity is being eroded. Similarly, it is important that any changes affecting the town's character, and the neighbourhoods within it, are sensitive to the appearance of what already exists.

In addition to the Chevin Forest Park and Wharfemeadows Park, Otley possesses a number of formal and informal areas of green space of varying size. Not all are publically accessible, but along with trees, hedges and gardens, they provide variety and interest to the street scene and benefit public amenity and wildlife alike.

Otley's environment has changed considerably in recent years and will continue to do so, but this must happen in a way that respects the principles of sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to conserve the best and ensure that future changes are for the better.

Otley Conservation Area (As of 1st September 2015)



Key	
	Otley Town Centre
	Conservation Areas
	Listed Buildings

The built environment

Public realm

Otley's historic core largely comprises the town's main shopping area, businesses and community facilities. As a prominent part of the public realm and the face of the town to residents and visitors alike, it is economically and socially important that environmental quality is maintained and where appropriate enhanced.

BE1 PUBLIC REALM

Policy will encourage only appropriate forms of development which maintain the town's historic character and provide for improvements to the public realm and the town centre's visual appearance.

Walling and paving, street furniture and signage

The character of the town is affected not only by structures and the ginnels, yards and spaces between them, but by other elements of the street scene. These elements include the substantial use of stone in walls and paving as well as in buildings, street furniture and the design of shop fronts. Many of these characteristic elements, particularly those associated with Otley's industrial past, have been lost over the years to development and utility works.

Only so much can be achieved through Leeds City Council's development control process, but encouraging positive improvements and restoration wherever possible is likely to play a major role in enhancing Otley's distinctiveness.

BE2 WALLING AND PAVING, STREET FURNITURE AND SIGNAGE

Policy will seek to retain walls and areas of paving significant to local character both within and without the Conservation Area and to encourage the restoration of these features wherever possible.

Policy will seek to retain attractive historic street furniture and signage and require new or replacement items to accord with a Street Scene Design Guide.

Conservation Area

The Conservation Area is the town's major distinctive asset and any development within or impinging on the Conservation Area must maintain and enhance the qualities for which it was designated. Details of these qualities will be set out in Leeds City Council's forthcoming update of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The boundary of the present Conservation Area merits some extension at its fringes in order to address inconsistencies in the original definition. Any proposed changes will be considered in the update process.

While Conservation Area status can lessen the threat of damaging development, sympathetic management is essential to maintain and enhance its attractiveness. The Neighbourhood Plan will monitor and aim to identify any omissions or deficiencies it feels are necessary to improve the Conservation Area Appraisal.

BE3 CONSERVATION AREA

Policy will ensure that any developments within the boundary of the Conservation Area reflect the town's historic and characteristic core.



Shop fronts

In recent decades Otley's shopping frontages have undergone considerable change, often due to standard brand formats or signage which appears disproportionate in size and visual impact. Some towns and landlords have had success in encouraging a more sensitive approach to design without being overly prescriptive and a Shop Front Design Guide would assist in this.

BE4 SHOP FRONT DESIGN

Policy will encourage all future changes to shop fronts to be in line with the updated Conservation Area Appraisal and an Otley Town Centre Shop Front Design Guide.

Heritage assets

Areas of the town beyond the town centre also contain streetscape features that reflect Otley's history and different phases and types of development. Some individual buildings, structures and spaces, including green space, that are attractive in themselves or which lend character to the locality may merit some form of protection against possible future redevelopment, for example through definition as 'Areas or Assets of Local Heritage Value'.

Leeds City Council's site allocations map identifies protected green space but this is not comprehensive and does not cover individual buildings or structures. Residents in Otley and organisations in the town have been invited to identify any candidates for local heritage asset designation.

The policy below is conditional on appropriate suggestions from members of the public.

BE5 PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS

Policy will protect and support the sympathetic enhancement of local heritage assets identified on the plan proposals map.

Design and new development

Substantial new development is proposed for Otley in addition to on-going redevelopment and more facilities and infrastructure will be required to sustain this larger population. The principle should be that whatever form development takes, it should enhance rather than detract from the environment where people live, work and visit. There is potential for the production of an overall Town Design Guide, incorporating shop front and public realm design. Resources would need to be identified to produce this document.

BE6 DESIGN AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

Policy will require the design of all development to make a positive contribution to the town and to respect the local historic, architectural and environmental character of its surroundings and Otley generally.

The green environment



Green space

Otley possesses a range of green space within and surrounding the town, including parks, play spaces, playing fields, allotments and small plots of undeveloped land. Together with trees, woodland and other greenery, this comprises a 'green infrastructure' that has an important role in enhancing public enjoyment, recreation and amenity, protecting wildlife, providing shade and reducing flood risk. Some parts of Otley are better served than others and an aim is to secure improvements in green infrastructure and tree cover wherever practicable. Tree Protection Orders apply to many trees across the town but as information on them is not easily to access, some valued trees may be at risk.

GE1 PROTECTION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Policy will protect designated Local Green Spaces, as identified on the plan proposals map, from any development and change of use which would adversely affect their value to the local community or adversely impact on wildlife unless special circumstances can be demonstrated.

GE2 PROVISION AND IMPROVEMENT OF GREEN LINKS

Policy will seek to improve and include provision for linked networks of green spaces and corridors essential to wildlife where development takes place.

GE3 TREE PROTECTION

Policy will encourage the protection of all important trees through preservation orders. Any new developments should ensure the retention of existing mature trees and hedgerows as well as enhancing the overall number of trees and hedgerows through additional planting.

GE4 TEMPORARY GREEN SPACE

Policy will encourage the creation of green space as a temporary change of use where necessary on a short-term or a long-term basis.

Riverside

The River Wharfe and its bridge is a major asset for Otley. The Wharfe provides an essential wildlife corridor through the town and is both valued by residents and an attraction for visitors. In 2003, the study A Vision for Otley Riverside set out a framework for possible developments and recreational management within the river corridor. This strategy and its principles met with a favourable public response and needs revisiting to ensure that new developments comply with its principles.

GE5 RIVERSIDE CORRIDOR

Policy will require that any new development and change of land use in the riverside corridor be tested against the framework set out in A Vision for Otley Riverside and that design briefs should be specifically drawn up for key sites identified on the plan proposals map.

Local wildlife sites

Several areas on the fringes of Otley such as the Chevin Forest Park, the Otley Wetland Nature Reserve and the Gallows Hill Nature Area are particularly valued as habitats for wildlife. Alongside these are smaller areas of greenery within the town that also play their part and merit appropriate protection and enhancement.

GE6 PROTECTION OF LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES

Policy will protect designated and defined local wildlife sites identified on the plan proposals map from development and change of use which would adversely affect their nature conservation value.



Traffic congestion, cycling provision, road and footpath maintenance, car parking and bus service shortcomings all emerged as key issues in the household survey. Long-term concerns such as an Eastern Relief Road, HGV bans/weight limits and the return of the railway to Otley were also raised.

Some of these issues are substantially non-planning in nature and their solutions lie outside the core remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. Others, such as the Eastern Relief Road, are likely to be 'strategic' in nature and as such are the preserve of the Leeds Local Plan. However, many of the community's transport priorities are aimed at encouraging sustainable local transport choices and sit within the terms of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Walking and cycling

Given the small scale of the town, walking is a preferred option for getting around Otley but this requires footpaths which are both accessible and well maintained with clear signage. Otley is fortunate in that there are a number of public rights of way (PROW) connecting the town to the wider countryside. Such access routes are important for recreation and enjoying Otley's built and green environment. However, this PROW network is not comprehensive and there is scope for improvement by providing links or new routes where opportunity permits, for example along the former railway corridor (Wharfedale Greenway project), connections to any new bridge across the River Wharfe or linkages within new developments.



Otley is considered to be a 'cycling town' but very few local journeys are currently made by bike, whether to school, work or for shopping, due to fears around road safety. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to promote and develop a safer cycling network around the town, featuring: designated cycle paths and cycle lanes on roads where possible, particularly to improve safety for cyclists on major roads and at key junctions; a new two-way cycle lane to run parallel to any Eastern Relief Road; connecting safer routes into the town centre and onto the future Wharfedale Greenway; and, if feasible, a new cycle/pedestrian bridge over the River Wharfe.

POLICY TT1: IMPROVED WALKING AND CYCLING PROVISION

Policy will seek to improve and protect walking and cycling routes and access points identified on the Neighbourhood Plan proposals plan and ensure that the design of all new developments incorporates appropriate measures to enable safer and efficient public access by foot and bicycle within the town and to the wider PROW network and the proposed Wharfedale Greenway.

Bus/train integrated services

The household survey identified a need for improved bus links to Leeds, Bradford and Harrogate, especially in the evenings, and for better circular town links. The aim is to create an integrated train/bus network with through ticketing and real-time electronic departure boards in Otley Bus Station allowing Otley residents to reliably access rail services at Menston and Weeton.

POLICY TT2: IMPROVED INTEGRATED BUS/TRAIN SERVICES

Policy will support new development which contributes to establishing integrated local bus and rail services.

Eastern Relief Road

An Eastern Relief Road or bypass, running from Pool Road to the Leeds Road roundabout, has long been put forward as a necessary condition of any future East of Otley development and this view was supported by some residents in the household survey. It is expected that a detailed independent traffic study will be conducted as part of any future planning application. This would assess the combined consequences of any developments associated with or enabled by the relief road, with a particular focus on traffic conditions in Otley and the A660 route to Leeds.

POLICY TT3: EASTERN RELIEF ROAD

Policy will support the construction of an Eastern Relief Road, on the alignment shown on the Local Plan, as a stand-alone project or as a necessary condition of any East of Otley housing development. The road is to be constructed and completed within five years of any housing construction commencing.

Car parking

The availability of car parking is considered a problem for both residents and visitors to Otley, particularly at certain times of the year and on certain days of the week (usually market days). There are three types of parking – on-street, public car parks and private parking areas for commercial premises or housing.

The aim is to maintain the current car parking capacity of the town but also to support the improved use of existing car parks and provision of additional car parking areas and to consider options such as Park & Ride/Park & Walk, time limits on stays and on-street permits.

POLICY TT4: CAR PARKING IN OTLEY

Policy will maintain current parking capacity in the town centre, with proposals for new development expected to demonstrate how any additional parking requirements generated will be accommodated. Any new housing developments will also be required to provide a minimum of one off-road parking space for units with 1–2 bedrooms and a minimum of two off-road parking spaces for units with 3 or more bedrooms.

Policy will seek to identify additional public car park provision particularly through park & ride/park & walk facilities to cater for increased demand.

The return of the railway

The long-standing loss of its rail service is much lamented in Otley. Although the cost is likely to be prohibitive for the foreseeable future, and the prospect of appropriate investment is currently small, the return of the railway to Otley remains a long-term objective. The Neighbourhood Plan is keen to ensure that this aspiration is kept in view and that any development over the plan period does not prejudice this objective/aspiration by severing or blocking the line of the former railway.

POLICY TT5: OTLEY RAILWAY SERVICE AND STATION

Policy will support the development of a railway service and station within Otley and will protect the corridor of the former railway, to be shown on the Neighbourhood Plan map, from any development which would prejudice the reinstatement of a line and station along its length.

Policy will protect the route of the railway corridor for dual use in conjunction with the development of the Wharfedale Greenway.



