

# Bassetlaw Rural Settlement Study

Update August 2021



**Contents**

Introduction ..... 3

The approach to rural housing growth since the adoption of the 2011 Core Strategy..... 4

The approach to future rural housing growth in the Initial Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan in 2016

The review of the approach to rural housing growth in the 2019 Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan – Part One..... 6

The change to the approach to rural housing growth in the January 2020 Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan ..... 8

The revised approach to rural housing growth in the November 2020 Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan..... 10

The Publication Draft Local Plan 2021 ..... 16

How rural housing growth will be monitored..... 17

## Introduction

This background paper provides a narrative to detail the various options for rural growth that have been considered as part of the evolving spatial strategy for the Bassetlaw Local Plan. This should be read in conjunction with the updated Spatial Strategy Background paper. It will detail the following:

1. The approach to rural housing growth since the adoption of the 2011 Core Strategy;
2. The approach to future rural housing growth in the Initial Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan in 2016;
3. The review of the approach to rural housing growth in the 2019 Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan – Part One;
4. The change to the approach to rural housing growth in the January 2020 Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan
5. The revised approach to rural housing growth in the November 2020 Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan
6. The Publication Draft Local Plan
7. How growth related to Policy ST2 will be monitored

## **The approach to rural housing growth since the adoption of the 2011 Core Strategy**

As a rural District, Bassetlaw naturally has a range of settlements that vary in size and have differing levels of access to local services and facilities and availability of public transport. Whilst it is important that the settlements identified in Policy ST2 of the latest Local Plan are allowed to grow appropriately in order to maintain rural vitality, it is also important that these settlements retain their identity and distinctiveness, as often reflected by a settlement's size, scale of its local services and its character.

The current Development Plan - the Core Strategy - was adopted in 2011 and provides a settlement hierarchy which focuses growth towards the larger urban centres. Limited growth however was supported in some rural settlements through Policy CS8. This identified 20 villages where a share of 599 homes would be delivered over a period to 2028.

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, the Government produced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This introduced 'the presumption of sustainable development' which is very much tied to the Government's aim of increasing the supply of homes across the country. Later editions of the NPPF set strict targets for Local Authorities through the introduction of the five-year housing land supply.

The evolution of the NPPF resulted in some of the strategic elements of the Core Strategy being superseded. Certain strategic planning policies – including the District's housing requirement – were deemed 'out-of-date' and this subsequently led to an increase in residential applications being approved across the rural area in contrast to the original intent of the Core Strategy's spatial approach.

In 2012, the Localism Act saw Neighbourhood Planning introduced, bringing a new tier into the planning system. Designed to further empower local communities, and to give them a greater say in local policy and planning decisions, a growing number of communities across Bassetlaw have engaged in the production of a neighbourhood plan.

This, along with the time between the adoption of the Core Strategy and a formal review of the development plan, has contributed to the inconsistent management of rural growth across Bassetlaw. Some settlements have grown by hundreds of houses and others have had none, contributing to a growing conflict between the balance of sustainable growth and the benefits that generally accompany new development.

In Bassetlaw, these conflicts are translated – most apparently - into a lack of infrastructure being delivered to support a growing population and a large oversupply of residential planning permissions (or commitments) in areas – particularly those that, perhaps, do not have an adequate level of services and facilities to support such a high level of growth. This, in combination with other legislative changes, meant that the Council began to review the Core Strategy and the approach to growth across the District.

**The approach to future rural housing growth in the Initial Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan in 2016**

In 2016, an initial Local Plan consultation paper was produced which detailed hybrid options for a revised spatial strategy for the District. One of those options included the concept of ‘functional clusters’ – where smaller rural settlements are grouped with a larger one or one that has more services and facilities. The idea was to concentrate new growth in and around settlements that act as a “service hub or centre” to the surrounding smaller settlements.

**Figure 1: Functional Cluster Approach from 2016-2018**



Following public consultation, it was decided to review the ‘functional cluster model’, on the basis of consultation responses received, in addition to observations made by officers working with neighbourhood plan groups, and undertaking monitoring of service provision. Feedback identified a number of issues related to the functional cluster model that could potentially benefit from re-examination. A consistent theme concerned the potential for reassessing the case of some settlements not proposed to be included in a functional cluster. Concern was also raised that some of the diagrammed relationships between

functional cluster settlements were not representative of reality; that between Blyth and Harworth & Bircotes raised as a case in point. A concern that functional clusters would result in the merging of the constituent settlements, and a consequent loss of settlement integrity and distinctiveness was also voiced.

Working with neighbourhood plan groups across the district, it had become evident that the constraints on development in some settlements, as documented in the 2011 Core Strategy, would be perpetuated by the functional cluster model. Neighbourhood plan groups that sought to plan positively to respond to identified housing need in their respective areas would thus be prevented from doing so. The objectives of the Core Strategy could be appreciated, specifically in respect to protecting the character of settlements. However, the increasing level of locally-specific prescription being included in neighbourhood plans, particularly in respect to character and design, provides much greater scope for managing the form of new development. Through ongoing monitoring work undertaken by Planning Officers, the issue of the volatility of service provision was also factored-in to the review of the functional cluster model.

The review confirmed that the functional cluster model was a distinct simplification of reality, and not sufficiently attuned to local geography. Combining the observations from this review, it was agreed by the Council that the use of accessibility to core services, at one point in time, as a means to influence patterns of growth in rural Bassetlaw over a 17 year period was potentially unsound. On this basis, it was evident that an alternative approach to managing growth in the rural strand of the spatial strategy was required.

### **The review of the approach to rural housing growth in the 2019 Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan – Part One**

In 2019, the Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan – Part One provided a revised approach to managing growth in rural Bassetlaw. This provided the scope for development in a greater number of settlements. Consistent with the 2016 IDBP, the 2019 Draft Bassetlaw Plan distinguishes between rural settlements where growth is and is not supported. However, the differentiation was modified, to be based upon settlement size and potential impact of development, rather than service provision alone.

In giving form to this revised strategy, the focus was placed upon delivering proportionate growth. It was proposed that this would be delivered through the use of residential development caps and, in designated neighbourhood plan areas, through residential development requirements, both calculated as a percentage of existing numbers of dwellings. These would be set at 10% (requirement) and 20% (cap). This aligned with the revised NPPF and the need for Local Authorities to provide designated neighbourhood plan areas with a specific housing requirement.

The differentiation between rural settlements where residential development would and would not be supported was, thus, informed by an assessment of the current size and spatial morphology of each of the settlements in rural Bassetlaw, in addition to consideration of any significant constraints on future development.

The assessment process first involved identification of all rural settlements in the district, cross-referencing the lists included in both the 2016 IDBP and the 2011 Bassetlaw Core Strategy. Officers expertise and local knowledge informed the process.

All 103 settlements were then mapped, so as to allow them to be assessed. The assessment process first involved examining the spatial morphology of each settlement, in order to identify those that should be discounted, with two typologies used for this purpose:

- Size: Very small settlements, where any growth would have a significant impact on their size, form, and character; and
- Form: Settlements with a dispersed character, appearing more akin to individual dwellings in the open countryside or parkland, rather than one, unified settlement.

In order to generate figures for the 20% cap on projected growth, the remaining 73 settlements was assessed as to their current size. This exercise involved drawing boundary lines around each settlement, which were then used in conjunction with the District Council's Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) database in order to calculate the number of dwellings. The figures were generated and deemed current as of 13th August 2018. The 10% housing requirement figures, applicable to designated neighbourhood plan areas and provided for guidance purposes for not-yet-designated areas, were calculated on the same date using the same database.

Figure 2: 10% Requirement and 20% Cap Approach 2018-2019

		ROUTE 1: No NP OR NP with no allocations		ROUTE 2: NP WITHOUT allocations to meet HR		ROUTE 3: NP WITH allocations / organic growth policy to meet HR		ROUTE 4: NP WITH allocations to meet HR		ROUTE 5: NP OVER allocations to meet HR					
HOUSING CAP (20% OF EXISTING DWELLINGS IN SETTLEMENT)		ALL DEVELOPMENT UP TO HOUSING CAP MARKET-LED, UNDER LOCAL PLAN ORGANIC GROWTH POLICY		ORGANIC GROWTH UP TO HOUSING CAP, UNDER LOCAL PLAN POLICY		ORGANIC GROWTH UP TO HOUSING CAP, UNDER LOCAL PLAN POLICY		ORGANIC GROWTH UP TO HOUSING CAP, UNDER LOCAL PLAN POLICY		HOUSING ALLOCATIONS TO MEET HOUSING REQUIREMENT AND CAP					
HOUSING REQUIREMENT (10% OF EXISTING DWELLINGS IN NP AREA)		ALL DEVELOPMENT UP TO HOUSING CAP MARKET-LED, UNDER LOCAL PLAN ORGANIC GROWTH POLICY		ORGANIC GROWTH UP TO HOUSING CAP, UNDER LOCAL PLAN POLICY		WINDFALL GROWTH TO REQUIREMENT UNDER NP POLICY		HOUSING ALLOCATIONS TO MEET HOUSING REQUIREMENT		HOUSING ALLOCATIONS TO MEET HOUSING REQUIREMENT AND CAP					
						HOUSING ALLOCATIONS									
Existing number of dwellings															



## **The change to the approach to rural housing growth in the January 2020 Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan**

Following consultation on the 2019 Draft Bassetlaw local Plan – Part One, it became clear that a one-size fits all approach to rural housing growth across all settlements would lead to a disproportionate level of growth within some less sustainable locations. In addition, the inclusion of two separate figures (10% requirement and the 20% cap) led to confusion on how this could be effectively monitored moving forward.

A review of the spatial strategy followed and it was agreed that a clearer settlement hierarchy - of a more traditional form - would help address the issues raised through the consultation. Firstly, it was agreed that an additional tier in the settlement hierarchy for rural Bassetlaw would help separate the larger, more sustainable rural settlements from those that are smaller and are considered less sustainable.

The settlement hierarchy for rural Bassetlaw would include:

- Large rural settlements; and
- Small rural settlements.

Settlements were assessed for their size and the level of services and facilities. Large rural settlements are those that have the largest populations and have most services and facilities available to that community and beyond. Large rural settlements were very much seen as acting a “service centres” to nearby smaller communities. Small rural settlements were identified as those that are smaller in size and have fewer services and facilities. On balance, consideration was also given to those communities that had prepared, or were in the process of preparing, a neighbourhood plan.

In response to the feedback from consultation, it was considered that a single percentage figure for growth settlements, rather than the previous two figures, would provide a clearer, more consistent strategy for managing rural growth. As such, it was decided that the proposed 20% figure should both act as a requirement for neighbourhood plans areas and a cap to development in areas that are not producing one.



Figure 3: 20% Requirement/cap Approach 2019- 2020



## The revised approach to rural housing growth in the November 2020 Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan

The feedback from the consultation on the January 2020 version of the Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan largely reflected that of previous consultations. In addition, it also raised concerns about an unresolved relationship between the proposed 20% cap / requirement figure apportioned to settlements in Policy ST2 and the number of existing planning permissions in those settlements. Some communities had already reached the percentage cap (namely Shireoaks and Beckingham), whilst others had seen little growth.

In addition, it was felt that some small rural settlements would struggle to accommodate the required 20% growth due to existing planning constraints (i.e. flood risk and the availability or suitability of land). In some cases, this had been demonstrated through the development of neighbourhood plans, where assessment of sites for potential allocation to meet the proposed level of growth had proved difficult due to a lack of market interest in some locations of the District. It was therefore considered appropriate to further refine the spatial strategy for rural Bassetlaw.

The review was undertaken in the context of a broader re-evaluation of the spatial strategy for Bassetlaw as a whole. In accordance with the NPPF, the aim was to distribute growth amongst the tiers of the settlement hierarchy proportionate to their sustainability. The greater the service provision, public transport accessibility and infrastructure capacity a place has, the more sustainable it is considered to be.

To differentiate between the relative sustainability of rural settlements and their potential to accommodate growth, a Sustainability Matrix (see figure 4) has been developed. The matrix categorises all rural settlements in Bassetlaw based on their size, facilities, and the level of service/infrastructure provision on offer. The approach taken is relatively simple, but aligns with methods employed by other rural Local Authorities, and also enhances the assessment of settlements undertaken for the previous version of the Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan. In order to reflect the variance in the size and character of the settlements in this group, and to give form to a clear strategy, three classifications have been adopted, as detailed below:

- *Large Rural Settlements play a role as a 'service centre' for other settlements, have individually 500 or more dwellings and have all of the following; a primary school, doctors surgery/health centre, a community centre/hall, a convenience store, a church and a public house.*
- *Small Rural Settlements have, individually, 75 or more dwellings and, at least, two of the following: a primary school, doctor's surgery/health centre, a community centre/hall, a convenience store, a church and a public house.*
- *Other Settlements not listed above, are considered too small, have little to no service provision or are too constrained to receive any planned growth and will be treated as countryside as per Policy ST1.*

The final list of eligible settlements listed in parts 1 and 3 of Policy ST2, including all those in the Large Rural and Small Rural classifications detailed above, all have the potential to accommodate housing development over the plan period due to their size, location, infrastructure capacity and role in providing local services and facilities to their communities. Those settlements not listed in Policy ST2, included under the Other Settlements

classification, are considered unsustainable, and thus do not have the potential to accommodate future growth.

**Figure 4: Settlement Sustainability Matrix**

<b>Higher Sustainability</b>	<i>Large Rural Settlements play a role as a 'service centre' for other smaller settlements, have individually 500 or more dwellings and have all of the following; a primary school, doctors surgery/health centre, a community centre/hall, a convenience store, a church and a public house</i>	<i>Blyth, Carlton in Lindrick, Langold, Misterton and Tuxford</i>	<i>20% Growth Requirement</i>
<b>Medium Sustainability</b>	<i>Small Rural Settlements have, individually, 100 or more dwellings and, at least, two of the following: a primary school, doctor's surgery/health centre, a community centre/hall, a convenience store, a church and a public house</i>	<i>Barnby Moor, Beckingham, Claborough, Clayworth, Cuckney, Dunham on Trent*, East Drayton, East Markham, Elkesley, Everton, Gamton, Gringley on the Hill, Hayton, Laneham, Lound, Mattersey, Misson*, Nether Langworth, Normanton, North Leverton, North Wheatley, Styrrup, Rampton, Ranby*, Ranskill, Rhodesia, Scrooby, Shireoaks,</i>	<i>5% Growth Requirement  *0% Growth Requirement due to constraints.</i>

		South Leverton, Sutton cum Lound, Sturton le Steeple, Treswell, Walkeringham, West Stockwith*	
<b>Lower Sustaianbility</b>	<i>Other Settlements not listed above, are considered too small, have little to no service provision or are too constrained to receive any planned growth</i>	Askham, Babworth, Bothamsall, Little Morton, Morton, Upper Morton, Bilby, Saundby, Blyth North, Nornay, Carburton, Wigthorpe, Welham, Hardwick, Holbeck, Norton, Welbeck, Darlton, Fledborough, Ragnall, Whimpton Moor, Woodcoates, Sibthorpe, Drakeholes, Harwell, Eaton, Rockley, West Drayton, Haughton Tiln, Grove, Headon, Nether Headon, Stokeham Upton, Church Laneham, Bevercotes, Milton, West Markham, Mattersey Thorpe, Newington, High Marnham, Low Marnham, Skegby, Woodbeck, Little Gringley, Scaftworth, Bole, Coates, Fenton, Littleborough, West Burton,	0% Growth Requirement

		<i>Serlby, Torworth, Cottam, Fountain Hill, Wallingwells</i>	
--	--	--	--

The revision of the spatial strategy and its redistribution of growth across Bassetlaw means that the housing requirement for the rural area in general has been reduced (minus existing commitments) in November. This is reflected in an updated settlement hierarchy in Policy ST1.

A reduced housing requirement overall meant that there was no longer the need for such a high level of growth within each settlement and, therefore, the individual housing requirements could be reassessed. In parallel, it was considered that the significant number of existing residential planning permissions across the rural area, and the growing numbers of made neighbourhood plans, should also be factored-in when reviewing the level of growth for rural Bassetlaw.

In order to achieve this, the base date – for when planning permissions are counted towards meeting the required level of housing – should remain the same as before, 1st April 2018. This meant that settlements covered by Policy ST2 are being treated slightly differently than other settlements in the spatial hierarchy. For all other settlements listed in the hierarchy, 1st April 2020 is the base date from which housing commitments will be counted towards meeting their requirements. This approach is considered to strike an appropriate balance between the level and distribution of growth proposed in the District-wide spatial strategy, and the level of growth that can reasonably be accommodated and delivered, in terms of sustainability, within the rural area. Policy ST2 also enables local communities to take more control on how much development they plan for with some opting to go for more than anticipated to support local services or for regeneration.

In addition to the above, the overall housing position within the rural area is different to the rest of the District in terms of the level of planning permissions versus actual completions (see Appendix 2). As a percentage, small rural settlements have historically seen higher levels of commitments versus completions than in places such as the large rural settlements, Harworth, and Worksop. The high level of commitments in some small rural settlements since 2018 means that, should these not be factored-in to the growth requirement, in addition to the base date being moved from 2018 to 2020, certain places could see a much higher level of growth than the Local Plan envisages. This, coupled with

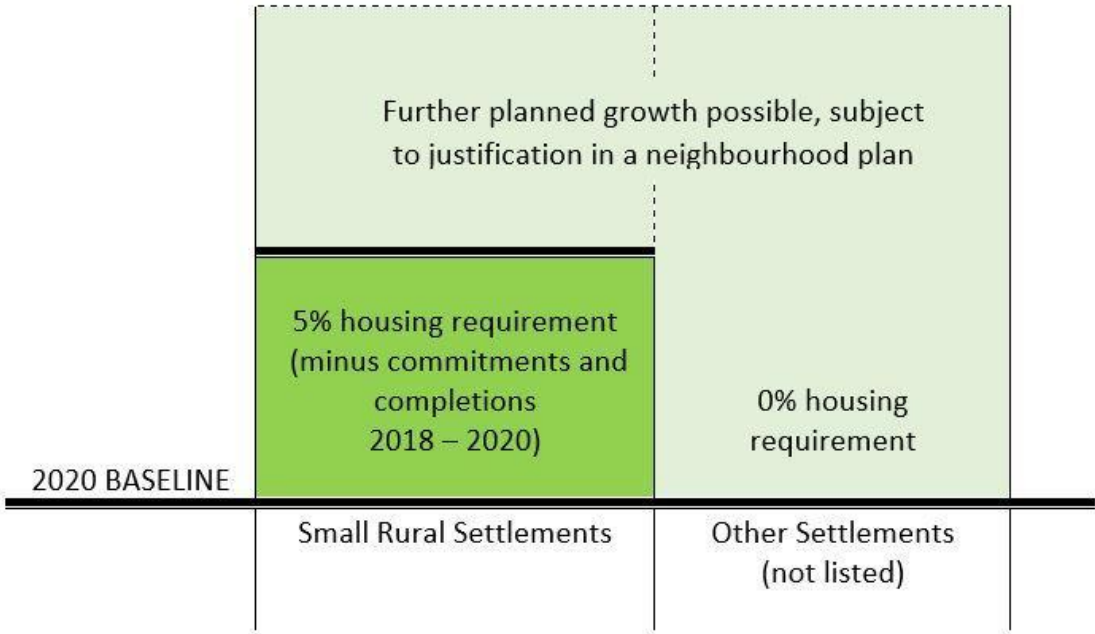
challenging planning constraints within individual settlements (such as flood risk, heritage, landscape and infrastructure), a lack of delivery from made neighbourhood plan allocations, and a lack of available or suitable sites to accommodate growth in certain settlements, means that the Local Plan cannot rely on a higher level of growth in this tier of the rural area as identified in previous versions. If it did, it would leave the spatial strategy and its proposed housing distribution vulnerable to challenge against the test of soundness.

By applying a lower standardised growth rate for small rural settlements means that, for the purposes of the Local Plan, the distribution of planned growth across the District is fairly balanced in terms of sustainability, whilst also responding to the feedback from communities voiced during the previous consultation. The revisions to Policy ST2 mean that each eligible settlement still has a standardised Local Plan housing requirement, but from a lower basis. Keeping a standardised level of growth maintains fairness and supports a consistent approach to monitoring over the plan period.

Similar to previous versions of the Local Plan, the housing requirements for settlements listed in Policy ST2 have been calculated using an existing baseline of the number of dwellings in each parish (as of 13th August 2018 - when the data was collected). The individual housing requirements have then been calculated as a percentage of this number. Those percentages are set at either 20% for Large Rural Settlements or 5% for Small Rural Settlements.

Policy ST2 only identifies those settlements (within a parish area) that meet the necessary sustainability criteria as identified in Figure 4. If a parish or settlement is not listed, then it means that it does not meet the sustainability criteria, and the housing requirement in relation to this policy is considered to be zero. These requirement figures are the default, baseline position to meet the needs of the Local Plan. However, there is scope for the level or distribution of growth to be increased or justified differently – through the demonstration of community support - within a neighbourhood plan or a review of an existing neighbourhood plan. The Council considers the neighbourhood plan process the most appropriate mechanism to demonstrate community support and to justify a higher level or alternative distribution of growth within their designated area based on local circumstance. Local circumstance can include, for example, previously developed sites that require regeneration, the change of use of land, or development to support the needs of the community, like affordable housing or a new community facility.

Figure 5: 5% Requirement Approach 2020 onwards





## The Publication Draft Local Plan 2021

The feedback from the November 2020 draft Local Plan consultation was generally supportive of the approach to the revised growth requirement for the Small Rural Settlements. There were some responses from communities where they felt they had exceptional circumstances that supported there being no growth requirement even though they are classified as a Small Rural Settlement. These issues largely resulted in links with Local Plan growth elsewhere within the parish or identified planning constraints.

Some communities also responded stating that they are planning for additional growth and the change in approach had led to local issues with their Neighbourhood Plans and that clarification was needed in a revised version of Policy ST2.

Responses from Tuxford also identified some inconsistencies with the proposed site area and the number of proposed homes. It was agreed that this would be clarified in a revised Policy ST2.

When reviewing all comments, it was agreed that some changes would be made to both the supporting text – for clarification and to the proposed criteria within Policy ST2.

The changes would largely result in certain settlements being identified for zero required growth due to issues raised in the consultation. This was confirmed for the settlements of Ranby, West Stockwith, Misson and Dunham on Trent.

The 20% and 5% growth requirements for both Large and Small Rural Settlements remained (excluding Ranby, West Stockwith, Misson and Dunham on Trent).

Policy ST2 was refined to make the criteria clearer for decision makers and applications. The main amendments included:

- Moving the affordable housing and exception sites to the affordable housing policy
- Part 1 of the criteria is for managing development related to the delivery of the proposed requirement for each eligible settlement.
- Ranby has been classified for zero requirement due to the Garden Village being located within its Parish.
- Dunham on Trent, Misson and West Stockwith have been identified for zero requirement due to a widespread high-flood risk.
- Part 2 of the criteria is to manage any additional development (beyond the proposed requirement for each eligible settlement) and this has been amended to reflect consultation responses and those from statutory consultees.
- A requirement for positive pre-application consultation for additional development has also been included (where additional development occurs either outside of a NP or through discussion with a community).
- The need for a residual requirement in Policy ST2 has been removed to just have the % requirement for each eligible settlement. The monitoring framework has been updated to reflect the latest position for each settlement.

## **How rural housing growth will be monitored**

The delivery of growth in eligible settlements as part of Policy ST2 is being monitored on a monthly basis to provide an up-to-date account of the demand for development and the remaining requirement in each large and small rural settlement going forward. In addition, annual monitoring will be undertaken for the Local Plan to monitor the effectiveness and delivery of the Policy. These documents will be published on the Council's website:

<https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/planning-and-building/the-draft-bassetlaw-local-plan/rural-monitoring-information/>

It is also important for local communities to monitor the delivery of growth – including extant planning permissions – so that development is being delivered in a way that is beneficial and acceptable to the community.