

**CHAPTER 6**

**EMPLOYMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

## **6. EMPLOYMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

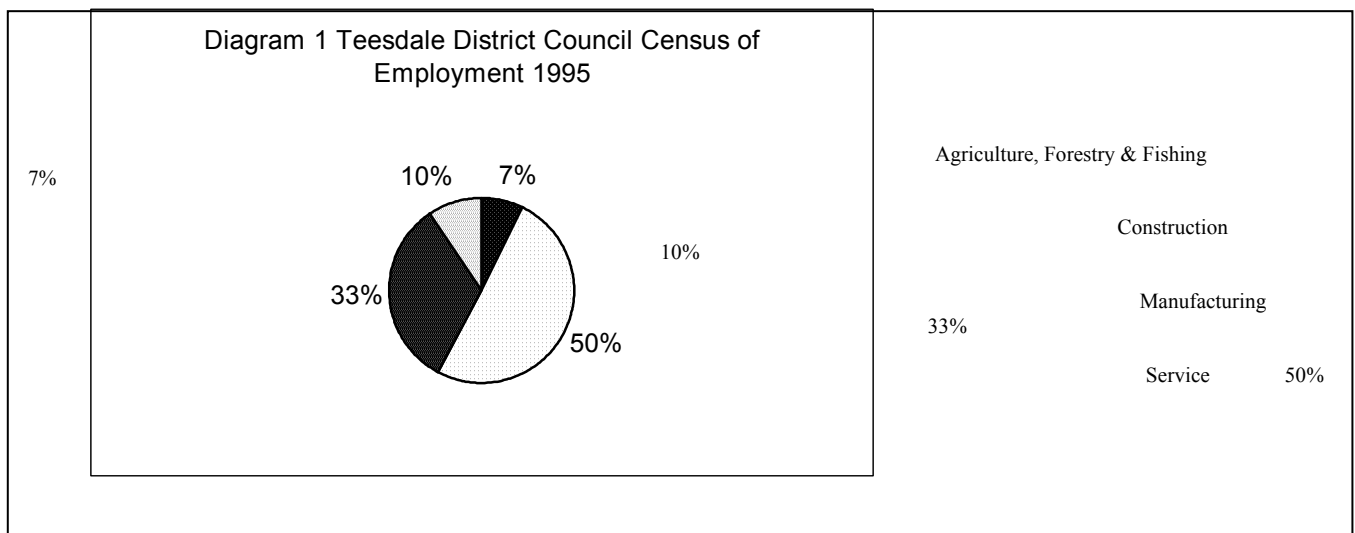
### **6.0 INTRODUCTION**

6.0.1 In 1995, the total employed population of the district was 6,694. Of these approximately 41% worked in Barnard Castle. Consideration of the issues relating to employment and the local economy are therefore heavily influenced by the dominant position of Barnard Castle as an employment centre.

### **6.1 EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE**

6.1.1 The Census of Employment information for 1995 (shown in diagram 1) indicates that the employment base of the district is predominantly made up of manufacturing and service industries. This however is only based on employed persons and does not take into account the self-employed, such as farmers and those working in tourism.

6.1.2 The proportion of people actually working in farming will be somewhat higher than the Census of Employment breakdown but this does not affect the general decline of the number of people employed in agriculture which has fallen from 8.9% in 1991 to a figure of 7.3% in 1995.



6.1.3 The manufacturing base which currently employs approximately 33% of the workforce is dependent on a small number of large employers. The employment base of the district could, therefore, be decimated by the closure of one of these employers which would have a knock on effect to the service industries. There is a need to diversify the economic base of the district to gain protection from the effects of the demise of any particular employer.

- 6.1.4 There is a need to strengthen the local economy and to improve the range of jobs and services available locally. At the same time, it is essential that the viability of agriculture is secured because of its continuing importance to the local economy and to the maintenance of the landscape.
- 6.1.5 The District Council has limited powers to promote employment growth directly, although it does have power to carry out economic development under Part 3 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The current economic development role of the District Council includes support of the Teesdale Enterprise Agency which provides business advice, training and counselling. The District Council operates a business grant scheme and also provides rent concessions for businesses starting up in its own premises. Support is also given towards provision of new industrial land and premises in partnership with the Countryside Agency. As the Local Planning Authority, it can enable new job opportunities to be created in suitable locations and premises. It is possible to accommodate and encourage industrial and business development in ways that do not conflict with the special environmental character and public enjoyment of the countryside.
- 6.1.6 The growth in new technology has reduced the need for locational considerations in the siting of certain industries. These industries could be attracted to the district because of the quality of the environment. There may be appropriate uses for redundant buildings or as a part of existing residential properties.

## **6.2 UNEMPLOYMENT**

- 6.2.1 The published unemployment statistics relate to the Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle Travel to Work Area. These statistics are therefore of limited use in interpreting the position in Teesdale District. The unemployment rate for the district in November 1998 was approximately 6.1%.
- 6.2.2 Although the unemployment rate compares favourably with that of County Durham, which is 7.4%, the concern in Teesdale is that whilst there is an underlying trend of a reduction in unemployment across the country, Teesdale has only reduced very slightly in the last five years, from 6.4% in October 1993. The other major concern is the dependency on a limited number of employment sectors and employers. An economic recession or a restructuring of a national company could result in closure of an employment base in the district, which would have disastrous consequences on the unemployment rate, due to the limited number of employment opportunities in the district.

### **6.3 INDUSTRIAL LAND**

6.3.1 The main area for industrial land is the Harmire Enterprise Park, Barnard Castle. Other industrial sites include Evenwood Industrial Estate, former Randolph Coke Works, Evenwood, Cockfield Industrial Estate, Middleton in Teesdale Industrial Estate and Stainton Grove Industrial Estate. Although this illustrates that there are a number of industrial estates located around the district, there are still a number of larger villages without industrial land opportunities, notably, Gainford, and Bowes. At Staindrop there is only a limited area within the former County Council Depot. Randolph Coke Works site and Stainton Grove are estates where environmentally problematic *sui generis* industrial uses may be more readily sited.

### **6.4 RURAL ECONOMY**

6.4.1 The Census of Employment undertaken in 1995 revealed that 491 people were employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing in the district. This figure only relates to those employed and does not reflect the number of people who earn a living from agriculture in the district. The changes in agriculture mainly through changes to the Common Agricultural Policy, may result in less employment in agriculture and farmers seeking other employment to subsidise their income.

6.4.2 It is recognised that there are other employment sectors in the rural areas such as service, manufacturing, construction and tourism, these all play an important part in the local economy.

### **6.5 POLICY OBJECTIVES**

6.5.1 The policies in the Plan will attempt to secure the following objectives:-

- ◆ To ensure there is an adequate supply of serviced industrial land throughout the district.
- ◆ To encourage the diversification of the employment base within the district.
- ◆ To direct employment opportunities towards areas of highest unemployment.
- ◆ To support employment opportunities in the remote rural areas.
- ◆ To provide employment opportunities in key settlements in order to minimise the distance that people have to travel for jobs.

- ◆ That development proposals take account of the policies contained within the natural environment chapter to protect areas of nature conservation value.

## **6.6 POLICIES AND PROPOSALS**

### **6.6.1 AVAILABILITY OF INDUSTRIAL LAND**

6.6.2 It is important to the aim of diversifying the economy that there is sufficient serviced industrial land available throughout the district. Within the existing industrial estates of Randolph Coke Works, Harmire Road, Middleton Station Site, and Stainton Grove, there are still sites available for industrial use. In addition to these sites, further sites are allocated at Bowes, Gainford and Staindrop as well as land south of West Auckland within the proposed West Auckland by-pass which corresponds with an industrial allocation in the Wear Valley District Local Plan. Durham County Structure Plan Policy 22 indicates that sites to meet local employment needs and to encourage the diversification of the rural economy should be identified in Local Plans. This Plan seeks to allocate land at key settlements which act as a focus for a broader rural area, thus reducing the distance which people need to travel to be able to find employment. The sites allocated seek to maximise the use of previously developed land within, or in close proximity to, key settlements thus protecting open countryside and, by providing employment, contribute to sustaining local services. The sites allocated are close to public transport links, seeking to reduce the need for employees to have to use the private car.

6.6.3 In total some 54.62 hectares is allocated for industrial land in the District with approximately 36.35 hectares being located on brownfield sites, which is 66.5%. The only greenfield land allocated is where it adjoins an existing or proposed industrial site and it is the logical extension to the site.

6.6.4 The industrial allocations take into account the Teesdale District Strategic Options Study carried out in 1999 and the priorities identified and approved by the District Council on 27 October 1999.

6.6.5 Sites allocated at Policy ECON1 are: -

- i) Harmire Enterprise Park, Barnard Castle where undeveloped land exists on a serviced industrial estate. Some additional adjoining land has been allocated to facilitate extension without needing to open up a completely new site if the current use of that land should no longer be needed or viable.
- ii) West of the County Highways Depot, Bowes where a greenfield site would be accessed through the Depot, close to the village but not necessitating access through it. The site would service a rural hinterland.
- iii) South of existing industrial units, Cockfield where development would be a limited and logical extension of an existing industrial site. The development would service the hinterland of the Gaunless Valley.

- iv) Randolph Coke Works, Evenwood contains a small area of land which has been reclaimed to a standard which is capable of accommodating industrial development. Other parts of the former Coke Works site suffer from contamination and poor compaction making it economically unsuitable for built development because of the extremely high remediation costs involved.
- v) South of Evenwood Engineering, Evenwood land has been allocated. It is a greenfield site close to the village and other industry. Half of the site will be safeguarded to facilitate extensions to Evenwood Engineering. It is in a location that does not necessitate heavy goods vehicles passing through the village and is well served by public transport.
- vi) St Peters, Gainford is the location of a former residential school. The allocated site is previously developed land adjoining the A67 within 200 metres of Gainford and well served by public transport. The existing buildings may lend themselves to adaptation as an "internet village". Existing industrial land within Gainford, which created amenity problems for nearby residences, has been allocated for residential development.
- vii) Middleton Station, Middleton in Teesdale is previously developed land adjoining a public transport route and consists of the remainder of a serviced industrial site. The site serves a large rural hinterland.
- viii) East of the County Highways Depot, Staindrop has been allocated to enable provision of an appropriate area of land given that the majority of the depot area is now in an industrial use. The site is a greenfield allocation close to the village and good public transport, thus enabling development to serve a rural hinterland. A development brief will be prepared for the site which will incorporate the following elements: a) a restriction on B2 uses within the northern part of the site; b) a requirement for care and siting of development within the northern part of the site; and c) provisions for the phasing of works to minimise the effects of the site release in advance of direct demand for plots within the scheme.
- ix) Stainton Grove Industrial Estate, Stainton Grove consists of previously developed land forming the remainder of an industrial estate. The site is close to Stainton Grove and is well served by public transport.
- x) Land to south of West Auckland consists of a greenfield site within the proposed West Auckland by-pass. The allocation corresponds with an industrial allocation in the Wear Valley District Local Plan.

**POLICY ECON1**

**LAND IS ALLOCATED FOR BUSINESS, GENERAL INDUSTRIAL OR STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION USES (CLASSES B1, B2 AND B8 RESPECTIVELY OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (USE CLASSES) ORDER 1987). AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:-**

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>HECTARAGE</b>	<b>INSET NUMBER</b>
<b>HARMIRE ENTERPRISE PARK, BARNARD CASTLE</b>	<b>33.44</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WEST OF THE COUNTY HIGHWAYS DEPOT, BOWES</b>	<b>1.49</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SOUTH OF EXISTING INDUSTRIAL UNITS, COCKFIELD</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SOUTH OF EVENWOOD ENGINEERING EVENWOOD</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>RANDOLPH COKE WORKS, EVENWOOD</b>	<b>6.28</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SOUTH OF ST PETER'S, GAINFORD</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>MIDDLETON STATION, MIDDLETON</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>NW</b>
<b>EAST OF THE COUNTY HIGHWAYS DEPOT, STAINDROP</b>	<b>2.39</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>STAINTON GROVE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, STAINTON GROVE</b>	<b>5.13</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>LAND SOUTH OF WEST AUCKLAND</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>NE</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57.39</b>	



## **6.7 EXTENSIONS TO INDUSTRIAL ESTATES**

6.7.1 Existing companies with established premises within Industrial Estates may wish to expand their business but cannot do so within the constraints of the Industrial Estate. Extensions to business premises may be acceptable to the LPA in order to maintain local business and employment opportunities.

### **POLICY ECON2**

**EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING BUSINESS PREMISES AND INDUSTRIAL ESTATES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:**

- A) IT DOES NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE AMENITY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS;**
- B) IT DOES NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF THE AREA;**
- C) SUBMITTED DETAILS ARE ACCEPTABLE IN TERMS OF ACCESS, LAYOUT AND DESIGN; AND**
- D) THE DEVELOPMENT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ALL OTHER LOCAL PLAN POLICIES.**

## **6.8 CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS AND LAND CURRENTLY IN EMPLOYMENT USE**

6.8.1 In preparing the District Plan one of the District Council's goals is to ensure there are enough employment opportunities dispersed around the District and well related to existing settlements. This will assist in reviving rural settlements and contribute to sustainable development by helping to reduce commuting and therefore improve the quality of life and the fact that new employment activity will also benefit the existing economy and services.

6.8.2 Policy Econ 1 contributes to this goal by identifying industrial sites in key settlements in the District. There are other settlements however which are too small to support an industrial estate but already have land or buildings in employment use which unless protected would largely go for housing for commuters.

6.8.3 It is important therefore, to ensure that land or buildings which are currently in employment use or where the last use was for employment purposes, are retained in that use unless it can be proved that there is no demand for employment uses in that location or that an employment use on the site is detrimental to nearby dwellings and other properties.

**POLICY ECON3**

**WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT LIMITS OF SETTLEMENTS SHOWN ON INSET PROPOSAL MAPS THE CHANGE OF USE OR CONVERSION OF LAND OR BUILDINGS FROM AN EMPLOYMENT GENERATING USE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT MEETS AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING :-**

- A) THE SITE IS ALLOCATED WITHIN THE DISTRICT PLAN FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE.**
- B) THE CONTINUATION OF SUCH A USE WOULD BE UNREASONABLY HARMFUL TO THE AMENITY OF THE OCCUPIERS OF NEARBY DWELLINGS OR OTHER PROPERTIES.**
- C) THAT A LOCAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AND THE SITE WOULD BE RESTRICTED TO THAT USE.**
- D) THAT IT HAS BEEN PROVEN THAT THERE IS NO DEMAND OR NEED FOR EMPLOYMENT USES IN THE LOCALITY.**

**SUCH PROOF WOULD INVOLVE ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA :-**

- 1. THAT THE SITE HAS BEEN MARKETED AT A REASONABLE MARKET PRICE OR RENT LEVEL FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR.**
- 2. THE SITE HAS BEEN ADVERTISED IN LOCAL MEDIA AT LEAST FOUR TIMES AT REASONABLE INTERVALS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.**
- 3. NO REASONABLE OFFER HAS BEEN REFUSED.**

**6.9 BUSINESS USES WITHIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

6.9.1 The encouragement of new and existing small businesses will assist in attempting to diversify the economy and create new job opportunities. Businesses are often started by people in their own homes. These uses do not necessarily require planning permission, provided there is no material change in the use of the property as a residence.

6.9.2 Many businesses can be carried out in residential areas without disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties. Indeed, businesses carried out from the home can be seen to be sustainable by living and working in the same location and thereby reducing the need for motorised travel. Appropriate development may include office use, not involving customers visiting the premises or telephone based operations. Uses which may create a nuisance outside of the property for adjoining residents, due to the nature of the activity itself, such as motor vehicle repair, taxi businesses or workshops, would not normally be approved unless they would not create a nuisance. Examples of the types of effect which may justify refusal of planning permission are noise, fumes, vibration, hours of operation or traffic generation. Uses which could be approved may be conditioned to prevent nuisance such as hours of operation, type of machinery, car parking and sound-proofing.

#### **POLICY ECON4**

**BUSINESS USES WITHIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THERE IS NO UNREASONABLE HARM TO THE AMENITIES OF NEARBY RESIDENTS OR THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA, AND SUBJECT TO COMPLYING WITH THE CRITERIA OF POLICY GD1, WHERE RELEVANT.**

### **6.10 INDUSTRY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

6.10.1 Industrial development in the countryside may detract from the appearance of the district, be remote from population and consequently incur longer journeys to work and to be not well served by public transport. Also, it may impinge on areas of agricultural land or land valued because of its landscape or nature conservation interest. For these reasons, and in accordance with Government guidance, it is generally considered undesirable. However, if its provision would on balance provide significant economical benefits to the local economy to outweigh any detrimental affects then sympathetic consideration may be given.

6.10.2 Planning Guidance Note PPG7 expresses the need to accommodate employment generating uses within the countryside. The Plan meets this requirement by allocating industrial land at Bowes, Gainford and Staindrop. The Plan also encourages the conversion of rural buildings to workshops and employment generation uses in the countryside. (Policy BENV13).

6.10.3 Some industries however, need to locate adjacent to raw materials, such as mineral processing, or the production of agricultural or forestry products, and as such can demonstrate the need for a rural location. Such exceptions however, need to conform to other local plan policies, particularly the need to minimise loss of landscape

value, environmental quality and the amenity of local residents. In addition, opportunities exist for the conversion of redundant buildings in the countryside to industrial use.

6.10.4 Such conversions, as described in Policy BENV13 and in accordance with Government Planning Guidance Note No. 7, should respect the style and character of the original building and seek to protect its recognised qualities through both conversion and operation.

6.10.5 Proposals for industrial or commercial use in the countryside, if uncontrolled, may intensify to become unacceptably intrusive. Unless this intensification amounts to a material change in the character of use, it cannot be controlled, if unconditional planning permission has been granted. Consideration will, therefore, be given to the use of planning conditions and/or planning agreements to safeguard the environment and local amenity, where considered appropriate for preventing foreseeable problems.

#### **POLICY ECON5**

**OUTSIDE THE DEVELOPMENT LIMITS OF SETTLEMENTS SHOWN ON INSET MAPS AND OUTSIDE LAND ALLOCATED AS INDUSTRIAL SITES, PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GIVEN FOR INDUSTRY/BUSINESS USE UNLESS:-**

**A) IT INVOLVES THE CONVERSION OF A SOUND RURAL BUILDING COMPLYING WITH POLICY BENV13;**

**B) IT DOES NOT HAVE AN UNREASONABLE ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OR AMENITY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS; AND SUBJECT TO COMPLYING WITH THE CRITERIA OF POLICY GD1, WHERE RELEVANT.**

**CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE USE OF PLANNING CONDITIONS AND/OR PLANNING AGREEMENTS TO SAFEGUARD THE ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL AMENITY, WHERE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE.**