

12.0 THEME ELEVEN – RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

- 12.1 Despite the presence of towns such as Bridlington, Withernsea and Hornsea, the coastal zone is mainly rural in nature with a relatively sparse population. Nearly 6% of the workforce in Southern Holderness for instance is in the agricultural and fishing sectors, compared with 1.3% in the whole of the UK. While many residents find the rural nature an attractive element of the area, with its unspoilt village character, it does provide problems too. While many of the issues faced by those living in rural communities on the coast are the same as those found elsewhere, it should be stressed that coastal communities often face heightened problems. This is mainly due to the geography of the coast where settlements have only 180-degree hinterlands. These are mainly centred around isolation and poor access to services.
- 12.2 In terms of agricultural productivity, Holderness is above average and is nationally pivotal in terms of pig production. Agriculture must still be considered to be a core economic activity in the coastal zone, and this needs to be reflected.
- 12.3 The Regional Economic Strategy for the Yorkshire and the Humber region, produced by Yorkshire Forward (the Regional Development Agency) identifies the peripherality of the coast and rural deprivation as weaknesses for the region in economic development terms. This is heightened by coastal erosion. However, opportunities are also identified that have relevance to the coast, in particular in key high growth sectors such as environmental technologies and tourism and the assets of the natural environment.
- 12.4 Southern Holderness has been identified as an area that is particularly remote and isolated. It takes over one hour to travel from Withernsea to Hull by bus along the main route into Hull, while the M1 is two hours drive away by car.
- 12.5 As with many isolated rural areas, southern Holderness suffers from severe economic and social deprivation. The spiral of decline that started with the closure of the railway and the consequent effects on tourism has deepened to leave a community with serious problems. Unemployment rates are consistently high, the economic base is narrow and the job opportunities are limited.



Honey Suckle Farm

- 12.6 The total agricultural labour force in the East Riding has declined by 14% between 1984 and 1994 (Source MAFF 1996) while trends within that show that full-time jobs have declined by 18% while part time jobs have increased by 7.7%.
- 12.7 Increasingly, farmers are looking to diversify beyond agriculture to supplement incomes. This includes activities such as holiday accommodation and other tourist developments, equestrian businesses, farm shops and craft workshops. Other avenues might lie in promoting the production of local produce for local market places. There are examples of diversification within the Coastal zone but also significant opportunities for more, especially in Holderness, linked with the need to expand the tourism sector in the coastal zone, and around the resort of Bridlington. It should be noted, however, that there are capacity and “competitive threat” issues when considering tourism expansion. It should also be noted that diversification, specifically into tourism, does face difficulties as competition with other areas is intense. Marketing on a regional level is crucial to ensure that the overall tourism product can compete with areas such as East Anglia.



Honey Suckle Farm

- 12.8 Schemes that provide grants for farmers to implement environmentally friendly techniques and manage their land for the benefit of nature conservation as well as production are becoming more popular as the economics of farming become more marginal. The Countryside Stewardship scheme provides payments for various sorts of work from the creation of wide field margins and ponds to the avoidance of pesticide use or high density stocking. The Farm Woodland Premium Scheme seeks to encourage the conversion of agricultural land to woodland while the Organic Aid Scheme helps

farmers wishing to convert land to organic production. These are unlikely to have a far-reaching impact in the coastal zone without close advisory, economic and encouraging support. The key agency to enable this is the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). There are several good examples of very successful Countryside Stewardship schemes in the coastal zone, particularly the Heads Farm scheme on Flamborough Headland, which has been developed in partnership with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council Countryside Section.

12.9 The Government's policies for the countryside are set out in the White Paper *Our Countryside; The Future, A Fair Deal for Rural England*. They are based on ensuring both rural prosperity and the protection and enhancement of the character of the countryside. The White Paper outlines 10 themes:

- Support for vital village services;
- Modernisation of rural services;
- Provision of affordable homes
- Delivery of local transport solutions;
- Rejuvenation of market towns and a thriving rural economy;
- Setting a new direction for farming;
- Preserving what makes rural England special;
- Ensuring everyone can enjoy an accessible countryside;
- Giving local power to country towns and villages;
and
- Ensuring rural needs are taken into account in decision making.



Hornsea Boat compound

12.10 PPG 7 outlines the Government's guidance on planning in relation to the countryside. The guiding principle in the countryside is that development should both benefit economic activity and maintain or enhance the environment. Rural areas can accommodate many forms of development without detriment, if the location and design of development is handled with sensitivity. New development should be sensitively related to existing settlement patterns and to historic, wildlife and landscape resources. Building in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or from areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled. In areas statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities, policies give greater priority to restraint.

12.11 The East Riding of Yorkshire Rural Strategy (1998) provides a framework for action in tackling problems and realising opportunities in rural areas. Many organisations and individuals were involved in its development and much of the work identified is directly relevant to the coastal zone. The Rural Strategy has the following objectives:

- Maintain a prosperous agricultural economy and enable the farming community to respond to a changing economic climate while at the same time protecting the environment for future generations.
- Ensure that the infrastructure and support mechanisms are in place to encourage appropriate inward investment and enable existing and new businesses to be efficient and competitive.
- Diversify the tourism sector, drawing on the potential of the countryside and the heritage of the East Riding of Yorkshire, to create employment for local people and to help support rural services.
- Enable people to gain access to training and employment either locally or in nearby towns or cities
- Ensure that the distinctive transport / access needs of people are met, whilst at the same time recognising the need to reduce traffic and protect the environment.
- Enable people irrespective of socio-economic status to afford good quality, appropriate and well-maintained housing with security of tenure.
- Provide access for all, particularly the elderly, to good quality health and social care.
- Provide access for all, particularly young people, to high quality education and related activities within reasonable travelling distance.
- Support the vital services provided by village shops / post offices, garages and pubs and so enable people, particularly the less mobile, to gain access to a range of goods and services.
- Ensure that people have access to sports, arts and other recreational activities and encourage the use of these tools to promote community development and capacity-building.
- Maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment in villages, farmsteads and market towns, whilst at the same time recognising the need for new housing and commercial development.
- Maintain and enhance the wide variety of landscapes, fauna and flora and ensure



that the quality of air, soil and water, is such that it meets the economic, social and environmental needs of today and of the future.

- Maintain and enhance access to the countryside for recreational pursuits, whilst at the same time ensuring good management and educating people in the care and appreciation of the environment.

12.12 An East Yorkshire Rural Partnership has been established to implement and are currently reviewing the Rural Strategy. The partnership consists of a wide range of organisations, from the public, private and voluntary sectors including parish councils and community-based groups.

12.13 The Countryside Agency is launching a new approach that provides rural communities with an opportunity to improve their quality of life. The new “Vital” Villages programme will include:

- new approaches to village appraisals and plans
- new community services grant schemes
- new parish transport partnership grant schemes

12.14 The Countryside Agency has formed a partnership with Yorkshire Forward (the Regional Development Agency), and Local Authorities to develop a Market Town Initiative in the Yorkshire and Humber region. They are currently in the process of bringing together other key regional agencies to create a more formalised regional body to share information and develop the initiatives. The Initiative brings Countryside Agency and Yorkshire Forward funding for action planning, administration and projects works in selected towns. It aims to act as a demonstration of how a strategic partnership can address the multiple issues facing Market Towns and their rural hinterlands.

12.15 The Market Towns Initiative (MTI) was launched on 29 June 2000 in Malton, North Yorkshire and, following consultation with Local Authorities, the first 6 towns were announced on 12 August 2000. The 6 towns selected for the second phase of the pilot were announced on 1 May 2001. Hornsea has been



Hornsea Mere

selected as one of the pilot towns. The “Lets Go Hornsea” partnership was already in existence while a new partnership has been set up to oversee delivery of the MTI. Following extensive community consultation, an action plan has been developed and approved, a project manager is in post and projects are being considered for approval.

- 12.16 The cross-cutting theme of geographic adaptation in the Regional Economic Strategy means that the objectives and actions in the strategy are just as applicable to rural areas as they are to urban. It is recognised that rural areas have particular needs that require particular objectives.



Hornsea Mere

12.17 POLICY AIMS:

- RU1. To recognise the importance of agriculture to the rural economy and to encourage the diversification of agricultural businesses where appropriate**
- RU2. To support initiatives aimed at tackling social exclusion and rural isolation**
- RU3. To recognise the importance of coastal towns as service centres for the rural hinterland**
- RU4. To support parish based partnerships, to address local needs**
- RU5. To support schemes that implement environmentally friendly farming techniques**



Hornsea Mere