

2 THE BOROUGH

- 2.0.1 The Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed is the northernmost district in England, with the Borders Region of Scotland to the north and west. The town of Berwick-upon-Tweed is 50 miles further north than the border between England and Scotland on the west coast of the country. The River Tweed forms the north-western boundary with Scotland until three miles west of Berwick town, when the border arches northwards around the town to the North Sea coast.
- 2.0.2 A large part of the Borough's western boundary lies deep within the Cheviot hills and is inaccessible except via the public footpath network. The Pennine Way national footpath follows the border before entering Scotland and the final few miles to Kirk Yetholm. Crowned by the granite dome of the Cheviot itself, 815 metres above sea level, the hills within England form part of the Northumberland National Park. The boundary of the National Park and therefore that of the Local Plan area is largely defined by the edge of the foothills.
- 2.0.3 The southern boundary of the Borough from the National Park to the sea is the only boundary which the Borough shares with another English District. Eastwards, the North Sea coastline defines the edge. The coast is of international importance to nature conservation, particularly bird life, and of significance as the 'birthplace' of Christianity in England. It is also designated as a Heritage Coast and, south of Berwick-upon-Tweed, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town of Berwick-upon-Tweed lies by the coast at the estuary of the River Tweed and is itself situated in the northernmost part of the Borough.

2.1 Population

- 2.1.1 The Borough, along with surrounding Districts, is predominantly rural and sparsely populated, with fewer than 27,000 people in an area over 370 square miles. For the first time, the 1991 Census (OPCS) shows that over half the population lives in the 'urban' area of Berwick, including the adjoining village of East Ord. There are three other main settlements, each with fewer than 2,000 residents: Wooler, on the edge of the Cheviot foothills; Seahouses, a fishing village and popular seaside tourism centre; and Belford, a smaller village midway between Berwick and Alnwick on the old Great North Road. Figure 1 shows the location of these settlements and other villages in the Borough.
- 2.1.2 Table 1 shows that there has been a gradual increase in population in the Borough during the last twenty years, with growth in the urban area of Berwick contrasting with fluctuating population levels in rural areas.

	1971	1981	1991
Berwick including East Ord	11,937	12,886	13,467
Belford	960	943	994
Seahouses (North Sunderland Parish)	1,725	1,759	1,782
Wooler	1,833	2,034	1,868
Other Rural Parishes	9,324	8,583	8,622
Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed	25,779	26,185	26,733

Source: OPCS Population Census 1971, 1981, and 1991.

INSERT FIGURE 1

2.1.3 These figures mask a loss of population in many of the Borough's 37 Parishes. The turnaround in the rural population between 1981 and 1991 shows few clear trends and is confined to just 15 Parishes, only 3 of which - Norham, North Sunderland and Ord - also experienced an increase between 1971 and 1981. Of the remaining 22 Parishes experiencing a loss of population in the 1980s, 15 also experienced decreases in population between 1971 and 1981. Only 10 Parishes - including Wooler, Belford and Beadnell - experienced net increases in population between 1971 and 1991.

2.1.4 The modest increase in overall population throughout the Borough since 1971 is attributed to net inward migration, compensating for a net loss through natural change in population levels. However, migration has largely been characterised by a loss of young adults, and an increase in older people. Consequently the Borough's population structure is becoming increasingly orientated towards the older age groups in society. Table 2 shows a comparison for 1991 between the population age/sex structure of England and Wales, and that for Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough.

Table 2: Population age/sex structure: Comparison

Age	England and Wales			Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough			Comparison
	Male	Female %	Total	Male	Female %	Total	
<1	0.70	0.67	1.37	0.37	0.37	0.74	-0.63
1-4	2.74	2.60	5.34	2.60	2.31	4.91	-0.43
5-14	6.33	5.98	12.31	5.95	5.95	11.90	-0.41
15-29	11.40	10.98	22.38	9.29	8.65	17.94	-4.44
30-44	10.57	10.58	21.15	10.04	10.13	20.17	-0.98
45-59	8.25	8.27	16.52	8.57	9.29	17.86	+1.34
60-74	6.41	7.47	13.88	8.27	9.66	17.93	+4.05
75+	2.43	4.62	7.05	2.97	5.58	8.55	+1.50
Total	48.83	51.17	100.00	48.06	51.94	100.00	

Source: OPCS, 1991 Key population and vital statistics

2.1.5 It can be seen from the above, under the column headed "Comparison", that the proportion of the Borough's population in each age group below the age of 44 is less than the national rate, and above 44 years of age it is above the national rate. The most significant differences are for the 15-29 age group, with 4.44% less of the population in that age group locally, than throughout England and Wales, and the 60-74 years age group, with 4.05% more of the local population in that age group than nationally. This age structure has an obvious impact on the nature of employment and service provision in the Borough. In order to maintain a reasonable age balance there is a need to address the serious net loss of young people through migration.

2.2 Communications

2.2.1 As noted above, north Northumberland and the eastern Borders of Scotland are predominantly rural and sparsely populated. Berwick-upon-Tweed is the largest settlement for nearly 40 miles by road in any direction, and for over 45 miles on the main north-south transportation routes. Strategically it is midway between the nearest major urban centres in north-east England and central Scotland. Newcastle upon Tyne and Edinburgh are both 60 miles away.

2.2.2 However, despite its relative isolation the Borough is reasonably well served by the inter-regional transportation network, with both the East Coast Main Line railway and the A1 Trunk Road passing through the Borough. The East Coast Main Line railway is an important link for the Borough and the eastern Borders of Scotland to the national public transport network. Newcastle and Edinburgh are now accessible in approximately 45 minutes and London in three and a half hours from the inter-city station at Berwick. The only other station in the Borough is at Chathill which is served by a minimal commuter service to Newcastle.

- 2.2.3 The A1 Trunk Road is identified as a "Euroroute" and is the main 'all year' road route between Newcastle and Edinburgh, and the main road serving the Borough. It is predominantly single carriageway but the recent completion of improvements at Brownieside and those at Marshall Meadows, between the Berwick bypass and Lamberton just beyond the border in Scotland, have opened up the first stretches of dual carriageway in the Borough. In the longer term the Government is committed to the complete dualling of the A1 between Newcastle and Edinburgh, but no timetable has been published. Other main roads in the Borough include the A697, an alternative inland route between Tyneside and Edinburgh, passing through Wooler; the A698 from Berwick westwards to the Border towns and beyond; and the B6525 between Berwick and Wooler.
- 2.2.4 Berwick-upon-Tweed is also a commercial port importing and exporting grain, fertilisers, timber, aggregates and stone. The port is the only commercial port between Edinburgh and Blyth in the south of Northumberland, and consequently is of strategic importance to a large area of north Northumberland and the eastern Borders of Scotland. In 1991 it had a total throughput of 139,700 tonnes. This fell to 100,593 tonnes in 1993, largely as a result of the national economic recession. However, the entrance to the Tweed Dock from the river has recently been widened and the harbour can now accommodate ships with a capacity of up to 3,000 tonnes. In 1994, the total throughput at the Dock rose to 155,422 tonnes.
- 2.2.5 The nearest international airports for business and leisure travel are at Edinburgh and Newcastle. Passenger ferry services cross to the northern European mainland and Scandinavia from the Port of Tyne.
- 2.2.6 Policies relating to rail services, the road network, the Tweed Dock and other transportation matters are included within Chapter 7: "Movement".

2.3 Economic and Social Activity

- 2.3.1 The Borough's rural character and association with farming and fishing continues to influence the nature of economic activity in the area and patterns of social relations. Employment in the primary activities of agriculture, forestry and fishing is nearly four times the national average as a percentage of the working population, whilst employment in manufacturing is closely linked to these activities. Food and textile processing, engineering, construction, and transport companies, support, service and benefit from the primary activities.
- 2.3.2 The growth of tourism in the Borough has emerged against a background of the quality of the local countryside and the north Northumberland coastline, but much of its supporting services and accommodation is based upon individual rural enterprises or settlements which retain intimate connections with farming. The importance of tourism in sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of economic and social activities in the Borough, was recognised by the Council in commissioning a detailed study by the University of Bristol's Rural Tourism Development Project, which resulted in the report "Berwick-upon-Tweed - A Strategy for Sustainable Rural Tourism", published in July 1991, following extensive public consultations. Arising from the study, the Till Valley Tourism Initiative has been set up in Wooler to develop the role of tourism in the inland areas of the Borough; a Regeneration Study by the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit has been undertaken in Seahouses (North Sunderland Parish), resulting in the appointment of a Project Officer; and, the need for improved visitor management at Holy Island as identified in the 'Holy Island Management Plan 1997'.
- 2.3.3 The principal settlements of the Borough: Berwick-upon-Tweed, Belford, Seahouses and Wooler; have extended their economic bases attracting industries from outside the area, while a number of villages within commuting distance of Berwick, particularly Hornccliffe, Norham and Scremerston, are closely dependant upon the town for employment. The prosperity of the principal settlements, the wealth which they create and the services which they support and deliver are, of considerable importance to their immediate surroundings.

The decline of these settlements would undoubtedly affect the structure of population and economic activity in the rural areas.

- 2.3.4 Agriculture and Fishing are both industries in which major structural change is long-standing and likely to continue. Whilst significant upland areas of the Borough have been designated Less Favoured Areas by the European Union, the scale and operation of farming activity in the Borough have meant that levels of prosperity have been reasonably sustained, although certain sectors, notably traditional lowland beef and sheep rearing, are likely to become less viable during the Local Plan period. The fishing industry is also increasingly constrained by the imposition of quotas and the threat of enforced tying-up. In recognition of continuing change in the rural economy, from January 1994, the Borough is included in the European Union Objective 5b Programme Area for the Northern Uplands, which for the first time makes funding from the European Regional Development Fund available to applicable projects throughout the Borough.
- 2.3.5 Manufacturing activity in the Borough has not been the subject of the traumatic structural change experienced in areas which have associations with traditional heavy industries. Nevertheless the close ties with agriculture and fishing have resulted in fluctuations in the fortunes of processing and engineering businesses, and there continues to be a marked seasonal variation in employment levels (Figures 4 and 5 in Chapter 5 refer).

Table 3: Rural Services in Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough

Parish	Total Number of Services	Parish	Total Number of Services
Adderstone with Lucker	20	Ewart	3
Akeld	5	Ford	31
Ancroft	29	Holy Island	15
Bamburgh	23	Horncliffe	19
Beadnell	26	Ilderton	8
Belford	51	Ingram	12
Bewick	10	Kilham	11
Bowsden	16	Kirknewton	13
Branxton	13	Kyloe	14
Carham	14	Lilburn	7
Chatton	23	Lowick	30
Chillingham	5	Middleton	8
Cornhill-on-Tweed	19	Milfield	21
Doddington	9	Norham	39
Duddo	10	North Sunderland	52
Earle	5	Ord	14
Easington	3	Roddam	7
Ellingham	18	Shoreswood	15
		Wooler	66

Services includes permanent shops, mobile shops, cafes, public houses etc., deliveries and other services, childcare, day-care and education, medical facilities, places of worship, recreational facilities and clubs and societies.

Source: Rural Development Commission, Survey of Rural Services, 1991.

- 2.3.6 Changes in social and recreational patterns of activity, improved marketing and an increasing awareness of the quality of the environment of north Northumberland have meant that tourism has grown in the Borough. However its economic impact remains uncertain given the seasonal nature of employment related to it, and the scale and spread of income which it generates (Section 5.11. refers).
- 2.3.7 The scale and variety of shopping, banking, professional services and leisure and recreational opportunities available in Berwick town reflect its strategic location. Increasing

numbers are drawn into the town from north Northumberland and the eastern Borders of Scotland to take advantage of these services.

2.3.8 People are prepared to travel comparatively long distances to meet their needs, but the remotest rural areas of the Borough are severely disadvantaged in the availability of the most basic services. Table 3 shows the comparative availability of services across each of the Parishes within the Borough.

2.3.9 Clearly the sparseness of population and the relative concentration of activities in key settlements have an impact on the ability of remoter areas to sustain activities and services which support and enhance the quality of life of local residents.

2.4 Landscape, Buildings and Habitat

2.4.1 The Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed is remarkably rich in the quality of its landscape and seascape, which in turn support diverse habitats, wildlife, plants and trees. Buildings, on an individual basis within the landscape, or grouped together in villages and towns are generally of a high standard. The outstanding natural and built heritage of the Borough is recognised by the number of international, national and local designations.

2.4.2 The quality of, and variation in, landscape, building and habitat is influenced by, and results from, natural processes and human activity. The environment which results from this interaction is a valuable resource, contributing to the well-being and quality of life of those who live and work in the Borough and those who visit it for recreation.

2.4.3 As previously noted, a large part of the south-west of the Borough is within the Northumberland National Park, and the coastal landscape is designated as a Heritage Coast and, south of Berwick, as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Lindisfarne is a National Nature Reserve, Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site of international importance for waterfowl. The remainder of the coast is a proposed Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site following designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in July 1993. There are numerous other Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. In 1995 the Government forwarded to the European Union three candidate Special Areas for Conservation within or part within the Borough: the North Northumberland Dunes, the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast, and Newham Fen. These designations acknowledge the remote wilderness of the Cheviot Hills; the undeveloped character and scenic beauty of the coastline; the importance of inter-tidal areas, estuaries and the sea itself for bird and marine life; and the importance of locations throughout the Borough for plants, trees and geology.

2.4.4 The built heritage of the Borough and the buildings which are Listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest range from individual buildings and structures on the grandest scale, for example, Bamburgh Castle and the Royal Border Bridge at Berwick-upon-Tweed, to agricultural and domestic buildings. The need to conserve and enhance the inter-relationship between buildings and spaces in several settlements is acknowledged in Conservation Area designations.

2.4.5 The area is also of considerable importance in terms of archaeology; in addition to visible remains of man's oldest imprints on the landscape, there is much waiting to be investigated. Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Interest are spread throughout the Borough, from the remains of iron age settlements in the Cheviot Hills, to cup and ring marked rocks on exposed moorlands.

