
1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) is currently progressing the production of the Local Development Framework (LDF), the new style development plan. An important aspect of the LDF system is the requirement for policy formulation to be underpinned by a robust and credible evidence base.

Geodiversity can be defined as, “the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, landforms and soils, along with the natural processes that shape the landscape” (Stace and Larwood, 2006). Development can harm it both directly (e.g. mineral extraction, road building) and indirectly (e.g. air pollution), but may also offer opportunities to create more rock exposures, or planning permission may insist on mitigation, such as future monitoring and maintenance work.

In 1997 Doncaster, with Barnsley and Rotherham, undertook a survey to identify the geologically important areas of the Borough (see (Figure 1) for authority boundaries). However, since the 1997 survey the concept of geodiversity has moved up the planning agenda as authorities start to move beyond surveys and develop Geodiversity Action Plans. A key driver for this is Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (PPS9), which places equal (and considerable) weight on biodiversity and geodiversity (see section 1.3).

BGS was contracted to undertake a desk and field resurvey of these existing Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS), suggest up to five further sites for designation as RIGS and to report the results of this work.

1.2 Project objectives

The objectives of this project are to:

- Compile a desk summary of the geology of Doncaster, a stratigraphic column highlighting the strata that can be seen within Doncaster, and accompanying summary maps in A3 format.
- Present the above to a workshop in February 2007 to seek views on the content of the background document and whether any sites of importance were omitted from the 1997 survey.
- Re-survey the 27 existing RIGS within Doncaster, plus any additional sites identified as a result of the workshop, using the UKRIGS Field Record and Site Assessment form
- Present the results of the survey work as a final report and database linked to GIS layers in ESRI shapefile format.

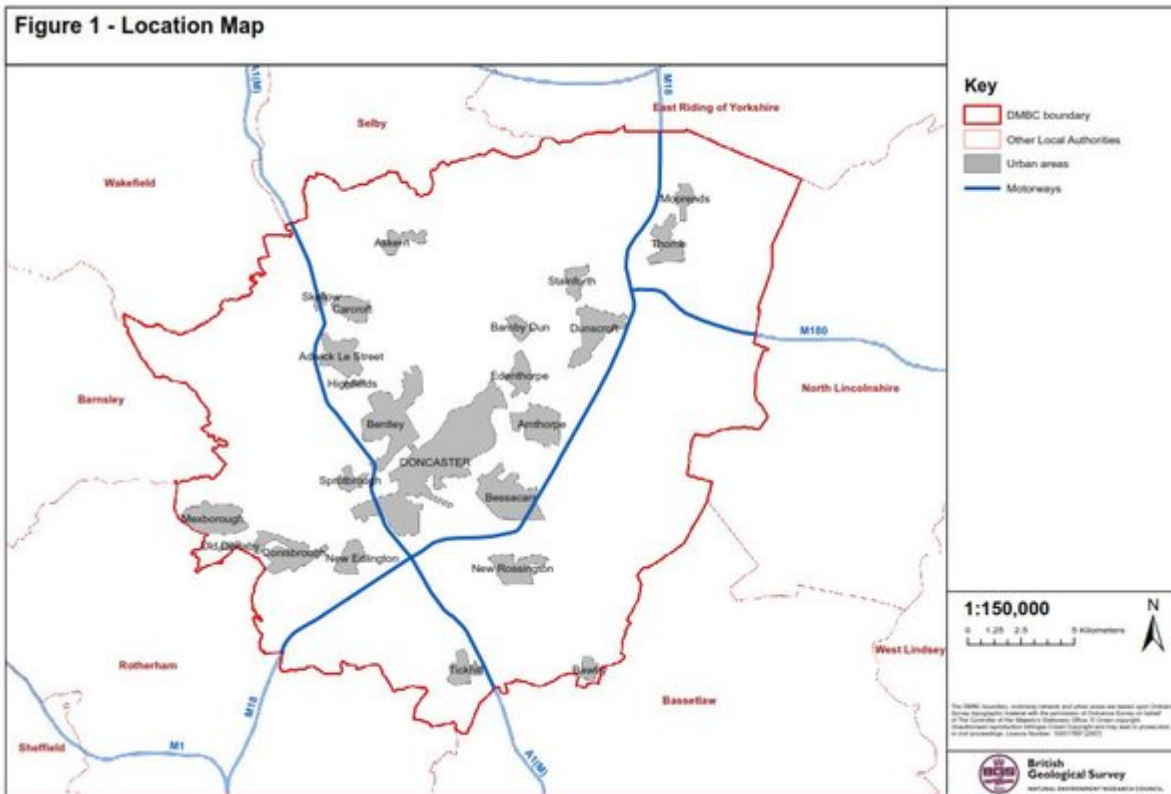
1.3 Legislative and policy context

The introduction of PPS9 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM, now DCLG, Department for Communities and Local Government) has elevated the importance of geodiversity to a new level in England and Wales. In PPS9, the Government’s objectives for planning include:

- to promote sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development, so that policies and decisions about the development and use of land integrate biodiversity and geological diversity with other considerations.
- to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England’s wildlife and geology by sustaining, and where possible improving, the quality and extent of natural habitat and geological and geomorphological sites; the natural physical processes on which they depend; and the populations of naturally occurring species which they support.

The first of six key principles in the document states:

- Development plan policies and planning decisions should be based upon up-to-date information about the environmental characteristics of their areas. These characteristics should include the relevant biodiversity and geological resources of the area. In reviewing environmental characteristics local authorities should assess the potential to sustain and enhance those resources.



(Figure 1) Location map.