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A Sustainable Future for Lower Wensleydale: Middleham Report

Report To

Richmondshire District Council

August 2009

Report From

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Acknowledgements

The authors of this report would like to thank the many people within the community of Middleham who all contributed to the compilation of this report. Middleham Trainers Association was especially helpful in giving their time to inform the analysis of the racehorse training sector.

The project sets out to present an evidence base and to use the findings to work with the community to develop jointly inspired and owned action plans. We hope that this report adequately represents the views of the people of Middleham and that the actions within it are seen as relevant, robust and actionable.

Sam, White and Nick Miller, August 2009.

Contents

1. Executive Summary

To be completed

2. Introduction

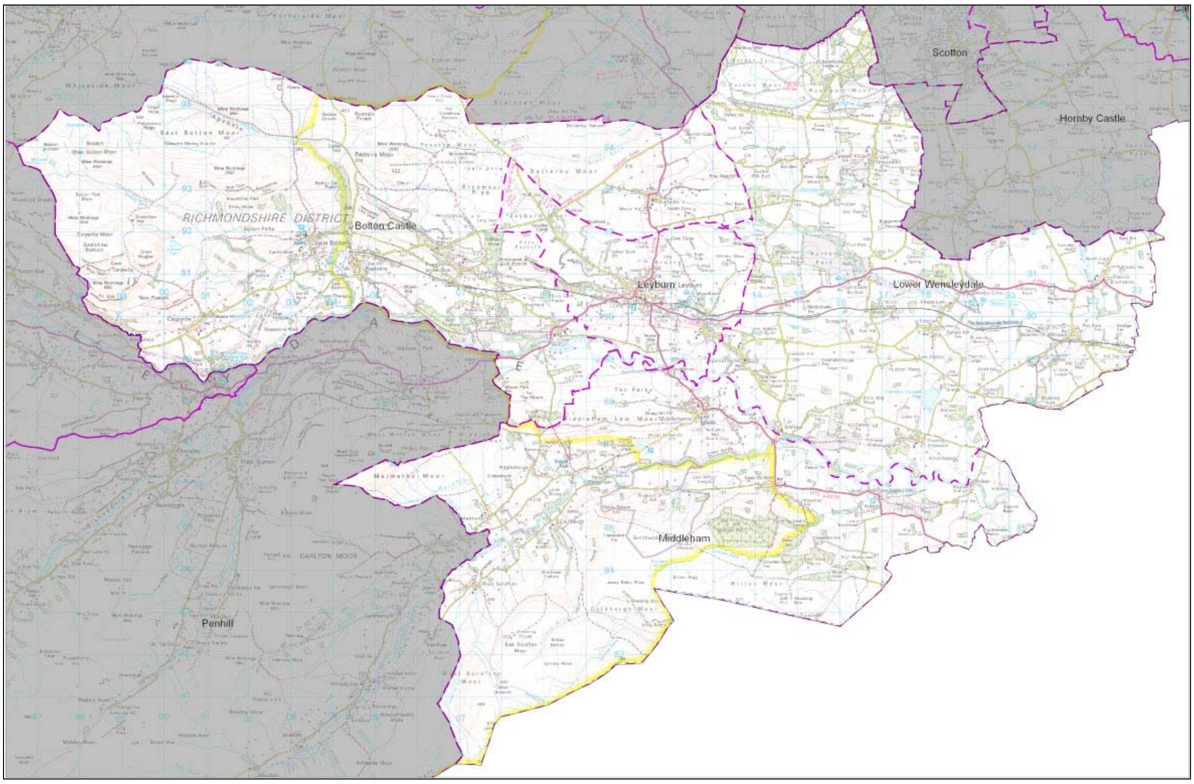
2.1. Aims and Objectives

This report documents the findings of a study into the sustainable economic, social and environmental future of the Lower Wensleydale area. Richmondshire District Council's Corporate Plan (2008-2012) identified the requirement for spatial and community planning in five distinct areas in the district. This study focuses on one of these five distinct areas, namely Lower Wensleydale, which is centred on the market town of Leyburn and comprises the ward boundaries of Bolton Castle, Leyburn, Lower Wensleydale and Middleham.

This report brings together a sound evidence based approach to sustainable solutions and a community driven engagement process for the first time in the Lower Wensleydale area. The result is an action plan that not only addresses a wide scope of issues in the two major settlements in the region (Leyburn and Middleham); but also a plan that is well integrated with the community. Our belief is that a plan with full ownership of the community is more likely to be taken forward and implemented, creating a legacy of progress in the area for years to come.

The objectives of the study are twofold. Firstly, this process must provide robust plans which clearly map the future direction of the area in order to attain sustainable prosperity in the region for the economy, society and the environment. Secondly, the study must empower a group of individuals to become the driving force for the implementation of the action plans, improving the sustainable performance of the area's primary settlements. Community empowerment is an important aspect of this study and the methodology undertaken has reflected this.

Figure 1 Study Area



Source: Richmondshire District Council © 2009

2.2. Methodology

Our approach to meeting the objectives of this study was based on a hybrid methodology, combining aspects of our well-established Retail Distinctiveness and Market Town Welcome models.

These models provide a means of looking at the existing offer available to residents and visitors in each town and the reaction of retail and hospitality businesses to their current clientele. Hence, although focusing on retail and tourism, the models use these as an entry point for a more holistic appraisal of how beneficiary towns work in their regional and sub-regional contexts.

In previous work, our research has demonstrated different issues in every town, but with common themes of close relevance to the development of Market Towns as viable places to live and as attractive destinations for visitors. Generic issues include, for example:

- Variable customer service with little added value;
- Poor evening-time offer and many shops / cafes not open on Sundays / Bank Holidays;
- Lack of choice and differentiation amongst public houses – many of which aimed at the weekend youth drinking market;
- Lack of high quality accommodation for visitors and business tourists;
- Predominance of short break and day tourism;
- Lack of investment in public houses by remote landlords – especially some pub chains; and
- Lack of a local food culture and few opportunities to showcase local and distinct produce.

Our model for this project was designed to address all the key stages of the project outlined in the original client brief. These were conducted as follows:

To describe these in more detail:

Stage 1 – Inception.

The Miller Research team met with the client group to provide an opportunity for all parties to have an open discussion about the subtleties of the work and to highlight any contextual issues that we needed to be aware of in carrying out the project.

Stage 2 – Baseline

The baseline phase comprised a number of different activities, aimed at providing a holistic description of the economy of Lower Wensleydale in its wider context.

These included:

- A brief look at key strategic and policy documents relating to the area;
- An economic profile of the area, based on official data sources;
- Results of a telephone survey of 100 businesses in the area, conducted for this study;
- Results of a study of the Wensleydale Railway; and
- Results of a short survey of visitors to the Dales Food festival, conducted for this study.

Stage 3 – Racehorse Industry Analysis

The racehorse training sector is critical to the economy of Middleham and has underpinned its daily life for centuries. In this section, we briefly set out to look at the economic contribution of the sector and to identify areas where greater value to the wider community could be gained from it.

Stage 4 - Distinctiveness

In this stage, we presented the results of our Retail Distinctiveness survey, which assessed the retail and visitor offer in Leyburn. This comprised a visual distinctiveness survey and a vitality and viability survey. In addition, we carried out a series of business interviews across the area to provide a qualitative boost to the telephone survey findings, and a ‘mystery shopper’ analysis of customer service in Leyburn.

Stage 4 - Workshops and Community Engagement

During this stage of the study we engaged with a group of key stakeholders in the town, through a series of workshops:

- Workshop 1 presented the evidence base and looked at current visitors to the town;
- Workshop 2 comprised a thorough SWOT analysis of factors affecting Middleham; and
- Workshop 3 took themes from the previous elements of the work and used these as a basis for discussion of potential ideas and actions.

Stage 5 – Analysis and Reporting

The materials from the elements described above have been brought together in this report, along with some more detailed actions for consideration. We present these as projects to be further developed and taken forward by the stakeholder group, which we have termed the “Middleham Partnership”.

We have striven to ensure that the actions within the plans reflect a combination of evidence, community aspirations and a sustainable vision for Middleham as an attractive centre for racing, art and heritage in one of the finest landscapes in the UK.

3. Baseline

3.1. Context

Regional Economic Strategy (RES) – Yorkshire Forward

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for 2006-2015 has as it vision that Yorkshire will become: "*a great place to live, work and do business, that fully benefits from a prosperous and sustainable economy.*" It lists six key objectives for achieving sustainable economic growth:

- More businesses that last;
- Competitive businesses;
- Skilled People – benefiting business;
- Connecting people to good jobs;
- Transport, innovation and environment; and
- Stronger cities, towns and rural communities.

These themes are very much the focus of this research, aimed at building a sustainable economic future for Lower Wensleydale.

Richmondshire 2021 – Sustainable Community Strategy

The Sustainable Community Strategy points out that Richmondshire is one of the largest districts in England, covering more than 600 square miles with a population of just over 60,000 – with almost 30% of that figure involved in military activities.

The strategy is based around five themes: Safe places; strong neighbourhoods; healthy lives; prosperous communities; and green living. The strategy lays out investment plans for developing Catterick Garrison as a focal point for the District, with significant development of retail and housing to complement the enhanced status of Catterick as a "super garrison". The challenge is to ensure that the towns of Lower Wensleydale (especially Leyburn) can maintain their role as local service centres and not lose out through substantially increased retail leakage. Leyburn is acknowledged as a centre for tourism.

Other commitments include:

- Support for affordable housing;
- Improving the range of cultural, leisure and sporting facilities;
- Improving the quality of the tourism product;
- Maximising funding opportunities and delivering regeneration projects throughout the District;
- Supporting skills for life delivery in the District;
- Encouraging the use of alternative means of transport for visitors and local residents;
- Supporting measures to safeguard and protect the character and appearance of historic towns; and
- Encouraging the re-use and restoration of historic buildings… particularly in support of rural regeneration and diversification.

Yorkshire Dales National Park

The Yorkshire Dales National Park is located in the North of England, and straddles the central Pennines in the counties of North Yorkshire and Cumbria.[1] Covering an area of 1,762 square kilometres (680 square miles), the national park has outstanding scenery, a range of wildlife habitats and a rich cultural heritage. According to the Richmondshire Economic Development Strategy (2002/03) approximately 57% of the land area of Richmondshire district falls within the boundary of the National Park, to the West of Richmond and Leyburn. The district strategy also stresses recent economic problems common to the upland agriculture and a decline in visitor numbers over recent years. It would be reasonable to expect that a decline in visitor numbers would have an impact upon Lower Wensleydale's local economy and this report is aware of this issue. Further still, anecdotal evidence suggest that perceptions of the Yorkshire Dales as a visitor destination have waned. In recent years, the profile of the area as a whole has become less prominent thanks largely to national marketing campaigns of other destinations. It is important for this report to acknowledge the potential effects of a fall in visitor numbers to the Yorkshire Dales, which itself serves as an indication of the area's popularity. A key issue for the National Park is to stop the declining visitor numbers and increase the profile of the Park, which can only serve to improve the profile of the surrounding area. Lower Wensleydale must be in a position to capitalise upon this.

Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Consultation (2008)

The LDF Consultation allows for residents to input into the planning process for the District. In the document, some key issues and challenges for Richmondshire are laid out. These include:

- The fragility of the rural economy;
- The affordability of local housing;
- Access to services;
- Delivering sustainable development / sustainable communities;
- Impact of military expansion at Catterick Garrison; and
- Protection of historical and environmental assets.

Within the Council's preferred option for the LDF vision, Leyburn is acknowledged as the District's main settlement after Richmond and Catterick Garrison and that its role as the local service centre for Lower Wensleydale should be safeguarded. Outside of the main settlements, development would be limited to that required to meet local needs – in particular affordable housing to support the sustainability of local communities. (50% affordable housing will be sought on residential development proposals for four or more dwellings or 0.15 hectares.)

In relation to the economy, there is a commitment to safeguard employment land at Leyburn and to review the need to allocate additional sites for the period beyond 2015. There is also commitment to utilising the historic character of Leyburn as a catalyst for investment and improvement, including in the tourism sector and to supporting key local employment sectors, such as the racehorse training industry based in and around Middleham. Other key elements include: support for resisting

[1] Extract taken from online source, http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk, [Accessed 20/08/2009].

proposals that would result in the loss of vital local services and facilities; and support for development proposals for re-use of vacant or disused sites and premises.

On infrastructure, the preferred option includes improving provision of and access to foot and cycle networks and supporting public transport and non-car based travel.

The LDF is a key document in relation to RDC support for many of the proposals within this report.

Low Carbon Rural Capitals Scoping Study – Yorkshire Forward

Yorkshire Forward commissioned ARUP as part of its Rural Capitals programme to undertake a scoping study to examine the number of settlements in the Yorkshire and Humber region and build an evidence base that could guide interventions to reduce their carbon impact.

The report defines three types of settlements and subsequently appraises the opportunities that exist for each settlement to achieve its low carbon vision. Finally, the report discusses thematic interventions and approaches applicable across the settlements. The defined settlement types are 'rurbs' which are rural or urban settlements with strong links into or within a city region, remote rural settlements and coastal settlements.

The report boldly concludes that "a settlement that begins its journey towards a low carbon future will reduce its exposure to future economic, social and environmental climate change related risk, and can play its role in reducing the region's carbon emissions." It is important therefore, that this study into the sustainable economic, social and environmental future of the Lower Wensleydale area is sensitive to the region's low carbon vision and potential to reduce emissions. Particularly pertinent to this study is the report's acknowledgement that achieving a low carbon vision is an inextricable part of creating a sustainable settlement. Further still, the report references the Mathew Taylor review of Rural Economy and affordable housing (DCLG, 2008) to highlight concerns that "focussing on a narrow range of sustainability criteria can hold back appropriate development in rural communities."

3.2. Lower Wensleydale Profile

Lower Wensleydale is located on the Eastern fringe of the Yorkshire Dales National Park in North Yorkshire and comprises the wards of Bolton Castle, Leyburn, Lower Wensleydale and Middleham. The area occupies a significant South East portion of the Richmondshire District and to the South shares its border with Hambleton and Harrogate Districts. Lower Wensleydale's favourable location next to the Upper Dales provides the area with an idyllic backdrop as well as plethora of visitor attractors on its doorstep. Its other neighbour in the district is the vibrant settlement of Catterick Garrison which currently acts as a service centre for residents of and visitors to the area.

The table in These headline statistics point towards the conclusion that the average age in the Lower Wensleydale area is more heavily weighted in the groups outside the working age bracket – due to an over-representation of older people. This is supported by the North Yorkshire County Council Neighbourhood Profile, which presents a narrative of the 2001 census age profile for Lower Wensleydale and states that the area has an ageing population with the percentage of residents aged 0-15 and 16-49 being below the district, county and country levels.

Figure 2 Population

	Ward				Study Area*	District	Country
	Leyburn	Middleham	Bolton Castle	Lower Wensleydale	Lower Wensleydale	Richmond	Great Britain
Population (numbers)	2,211	1,302	1,200	1,338	6,051	47,010	57,103,923
Working Age Population (%)	51.8	59.9	59.6	56.1	56.0	62.5	61.5

Source: ONS Labour Market Profile (2001 Census)

*The study area comprises all four wards (Leyburn, Middleham, Bolton Castle and Lower Wensleydale) and is therefore the average of the four wards.

The Progress in York and North Yorkshire report indicated that the proportion of older people is increasing at a faster rate in York and North Yorkshire than in England as a whole: "Since 2001 the number of people who are of retirement age in York and North Yorkshire has increased by 10% while the percentage of children aged 0-15 has dropped by 3.8%." (YNYPU, March 2009). The report continues its analysis, highlighting that Richmondshire (along with Hambleton) has experienced the most notable changes in the population of older people with increases of over 16%.

shows that the two main settlements in Lower Wensleydale are Leyburn and Middleham (wards) which comprised populations of 2,211 and 1,302 respectively at the time of the 2001 Census[2]. The remaining wards, Bolton Castle and Lower Wensleydale collectively contain approximately 2,500 people taking the area total to just over 6,000.

The working age population[3] for all wards in the Lower Wensleydale area is below the national average of 61.5%, which itself is slightly below that of Richmondshire District (62.5%), and of the four wards, Leyburn has the lowest working age population percentage. These headline statistics point towards the conclusion that the average age in the Lower Wensleydale area is more heavily weighted in the groups outside the working age bracket – due to an over-representation of older people. This is supported by the North Yorkshire County Council Neighbourhood Profile[4], which presents a narrative of the 2001 census age profile for Lower Wensleydale and states that the area has an ageing population with the percentage of residents aged 0-15 and 16-49 being below the district, county and country levels.

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[2] More recent data is not available from the ONS at ward level.

[3] Working age includes males aged 16 to 64 and females aged 16 to 59.

[4] North Yorkshire Neighbourhood Profiles, Richmondshire District, Lower Wensleydale Neighbourhood.

Working Age Population (%)	51.8	59.9	59.6	56.1		56.0	62.5	61.5

Source: ONS Labour Market Profile (2001 Census)

*The study area comprises all four wards (Leyburn, Middleham, Bolton Castle and Lower Wensleydale) and is therefore the average of the four wards.

The Progress in York and North Yorkshire report[5] indicated that the proportion of older people is increasing at a faster rate in York and North Yorkshire than in England as a whole: "Since 2001 the number of people who are of retirement age in York and North Yorkshire has increased by 10% while the percentage of children aged 0-15 has dropped by 3.8%." (YNYPU, March 2009). The report continues its analysis, highlighting that Richmondshire (along with Hambleton) has experienced the most notable changes in the population of older people with increases of over 16%.

Life expectancy in Lower Wensleydale is generally high in comparison with district, county and country levels, despite the area displaying comparatively poor district and county comparisons in obesity levels and limiting long term illness.[6]

At 84.3 years, Middleham residents enjoy the highest life expectancy in the area, whilst Leyburn residents are predicted a slightly lower life expectancy at birth of 79.6 years. Surprisingly however, Lower Wensleydale had a higher level of obesity (23.7%) than any other area in the district and the county. Further still, Leyburn recorded the highest percentage of limiting long term illness in Lower Wensleydale, with the area itself recording higher percentages than the district and county as a whole. It could be argued that this would be expected in an ageing population, if it is reasonable to assume that there is more likely to be long term illness in an elderly population.

3.3. Economic Context

At present the UK economy, like many other economies throughout the world, is deeply entrenched in the world's worst economic downturn for well over 60 years.[7] As financial institutions around the globe restrict borrowing entitlements in an attempt to curb the economic downturn, reverberations of the recession are felt throughout many regions of the UK. Observation of the most recent NOMIS employment statistics indicate that the Yorkshire & Humber region has witnessed a negative change in employment between March 2006 and March 2009 that is 2% greater than the national figure[8]. Although this is not a measure of unemployment and is not adjusted for population variances, it does provide an indicative illustration that the economic downturn has penetrated the region in terms of levels of its workforce in employment.

However, within the region, North Yorkshire's total claimant count for April 2009 was down 0.7% on the previous month's figures, which may suggest that the recession is easing in the area, or may be

[5] Prepared by the York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit (YNYPU), March 2009.

[6] North Yorkshire Neighbourhood Profiles, Richmondshire District, Lower Wensleydale Neighbourhood.

[7] HM Treasury Online, available at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/speech_chex_080709.htm, [Accessed 20/08/2009].

[8] ONS Estimates of workforce in employment.

due to more seasonal effects. It is still necessary to put this into the context of the wider recession by considering the annual change in claimants for North Yorkshire, which has been a staggering 111.3% increase over the previous year. This is significantly higher than the England annual change over the period (of 87.6%) and is a clear indication that the area has been affected by the global economic downturn.

The recession has had a noticeable impact on business confidence across the region with the majority majority (56%) of businesses surveyed as part of the National Business Survey[9] indicating that by November 2009 they November 2009 they expect their business climate to deteriorate. The table in

Figure 3 shows businesses perceptions of future business climate conditions and illustrates that York and North Yorkshire as a whole is comparatively pessimistic. With only 7.2% of businesses interviewed expecting business conditions to improve in the 12 months from November 2008, it is clear that the business community generally perceives itself to be badly affected by the recession. [10]

Figure 3 Business Confidence

†(All figures are %)	Nov-09		
	Improve	Remain Stable	Deteriorate
England	9.6†	35.6	54.8
Yorkshire & Humber	8	35.6	56.3
York and North Yorkshire	7.2	36.8	56

Source: National Business Survey, November 2008

As was discussed previously, initial consideration of the proportion of Lower Wensleydale's working age population that are in employment suggests that the area is relatively prosperous. The table in Figure 4 shows that a high proportion of the working age population in Lower Wensleydale are economically active (82.6%, or 8.7% higher than the national average) and that unemployment levels are 40% lower than the national average (at just 3.5%). However, as was noted in section 3.2, Lower Wensleydale has a significantly lower percentage of working age population than the national average which will undoubtedly impact upon per capita GDP and hence the prosperity of the area.

Figure 4 Employment Levels

	Ward				Study Area*	District	Country
†(All figures are %)	**Leyburn**	**Middleham**	**Bolton Castle**	**Lower Wensleydale**	**Lower Wensleydale**	**Richmond**	**Great Britain**
Economically Active	81.60†	84.0	81.3	83.5	82.6	82.3	76.0
In employment	79.00	81.5	78.1	80.2	79.7	79.3	71.6
Employees	60.80	55.8	53.0	55.0	56.2	65.9	62.6
Self	18.20	25.7	25.1	25.2	23.6	13.4	9.0

[9] Survey carried out by Ipsos Mori on behalf of England's Regional Development Agencies and Invest Northern Ireland.

[10] It should be noted, however, that the businesses surveyed in this study demonstrated increasing optimism about trading conditions next year.

Employed							
Unemployed	3.10	3.0	3.9	3.9	3.5	3.6	5.8
Economically Inactive	18.40	16.0	18.7	16.5	17.4	17.7	24.0
Retired	5.20	3.7	4.6	2.4	4.0	2.9	2.2
Student	2.20	1.8	3.1	3.1	2.6	2.8	5.5
Other	11.10	10.6	11.0	11.0	10.9	12.1	16.3
Full Time Employment	72.00	74.5	72.3	76.7	73.9	78.0	76.4
Part Time Employment	28.00	25.5	27.7	23.3	26.1	22.0	23.6

Source: ONS Labour Market Profile (2001 Census)

*The study area comprises all four wards (Leyburn, Middleham, Bolton Castle and Lower Wensleydale) and is therefore the average of the four wards.

The 2001 census figures indicate lower levels of students among the economically inactive as well as high levels of retired people across the Lower Wensleydale area as a whole. Anecdotally it is evident that many of those leaving the area to undertake education elsewhere are failing to return to the area. This is a significant problem among many rural towns in the UK and Lower Wensleydale has to deal with this issue.

Lower Wensleydale's economy reflects many rural communities, in that there is a relatively high proportion of both proportion of both skilled trades and self-employed, which are twice the Great Britain average. In consideration of

consideration of

Figure 6 which shows that a slightly higher percentage of employees in the Lower Wensleydale area are employed in construction (5.9%) than the England percentage (4.8%), there is a suggestion that many of the self employed work in construction.

There is also a significant difference in the 'Other Services' sector of

Figure 6 where the percentage of employees falling into this category in the Lower Wensleydale area is more than three times the England average. This category encompasses a range of activities including arts and sporting related services and will reflect the high levels of employment in racehorse training in Middleham.

Further observation of employees by industry (

Figure 6), shows that the percentage of total Lower Wensleydale employees working in manufacturing is two fifths lower than the England percentage, which is typical of a rural location. The level of personal services in the area is also higher than both the district and country average by approximately 40% which is an indication of a greater tourism and hospitality sector in the region than in other regions across the UK. The table also shows the level of persons employed in the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector to be 20% higher than the England percentage, as might be expected.

The proportion of managers and senior officials in the Lower Wensleydale area (15.7%) and in Middleham in particular (17%), is higher than the Great Britain average (14.9%). This may be due to the fact that people live in the area but travel to work at larger centres such as Darlington or York.

Figure 5 Employment by Occupation

	Ward				Study Area*	District	Country
†(All figures are %)	Leyburn	Middleham	Bolton Castle	Lower Wensleydale	Lower Wensleydale	Richmond	Great Britain
Managers and senior officials	14.40†	17.0	16.4	15.0	15.7	14.7	14.9
Professional	7.90	5.6	10.4	13.5	9.4	8.6	11.2
Associate professional & technical	9.30	10.4	9.5	10.6	10.0	23.8	13.9
Administrative & secretarial	9.20	7.5	12.0	9.8	9.6	9.9	13.2
Skilled Trades	18.90	21.9	20.9	22.6	21.1	13.7	11.8
Personal Services	9.90	14.1	6.4	7.8	9.6	6.4	6.9
Sales and customer services	6.30	3.8	3.8	2.4	4.1	4.8	7.7
Process plant and machine operatives	9.50	7.7	5.7	7.3	7.6	6.4	8.7
Elementary occupations	14.50	12.0	15.0	11.0	13.1	11.8	11.8

Source: ONS Labour Market Profile (2001 Census)

*The study area comprises all four wards (Leyburn, Middleham, Bolton Castle and Lower Wensleydale) and is therefore the average of the four wards.

Figure 6 Employees by Broad Industry Classification

†(All figures are %)	Study Area	Country
Industry Category (Standard Industry Code)	Lower Wensleydale	England
1 : Agriculture and fishing (SIC A,B)	0.0†	0.8
2 : Energy and water (SIC C,E)	0.7	0.5
3 : Manufacturing (SIC D)	6.5	10.6
4 : Construction (SIC F)	5.9	4.8
5 : Distribution, hotels and restaurants (SIC G,H)	27.5	23.5
6 : Transport and communications (SIC I)	6.7	6.0
7 : Banking, finance and insurance, etc (SIC J,K)	13.5	22.3
8 : Public administration, education & health (SIC L,M,N)	22.0	26.3
9 : Other services (SIC O,P,Q)	17.1	5.2

Source: NOMIS Annual Business Inquiry

A further issue for the area, in terms of the composition of employment, is that the area has a larger percentage of people in part-time employment

Figure 7 Qualifications

	Ward				Study Area*	District	Country
	Leyburn	Middleham	Bolton Castle	Lower Wensleydale	Lower Wensleydale	Richmond	Great Britain
No qualifications or level unknown	42.00%	34.8%	30.7%	32.8%	35.1%	32.6%	35.8%
Lower level qualifications	40.70%	46.7%	41.5%	43.0%	43.0%	48.3%	43.9%
Higher level qualifications	17.30%	18.5%	27.8%	24.2%	22.0%	19.1%	20.4%

Source: ONS Labour Market Profile (2001 Census)

*The study area comprises all four wards (Leyburn, Middleham, Bolton Castle and Lower Wensleydale) and is therefore the average of the four wards.

Whilst Lower Wensleydale's population as a whole has a greater proportion of higher level qualifications than either Richmond or Great Britain, the situation in Leyburn is markedly different, with a high proportion of unqualified people and a proportion of higher level qualifications significantly below the GB average. Middleham has a greater emphasis on those with lower-level qualifications and it also has a relatively low proportion of individuals with higher level qualifications.

Conclusions

The picture that emerges from the above analysis shows Lower Wensleydale to have some of the typical characteristics of a rural economy:

- An ageing population;
- Significant outward commuting from the rural area, by mainly higher–skilled individuals;
- A high proportion of low skills (and by implication low wages), especially in the towns;
- Significant self-employment in agricultural services and construction; and
- A high proportion of employment in tourism related activities, much of which is part-time.

Hence the challenges for Middleham include actions to retain and attract younger people, to increase the value of the tourism sector by appealing to higher spending market segments, to boost entrepreneurship in higher-value services to mitigate the effects of out-commuting and to develop a culture of learning and upskilling in the town.

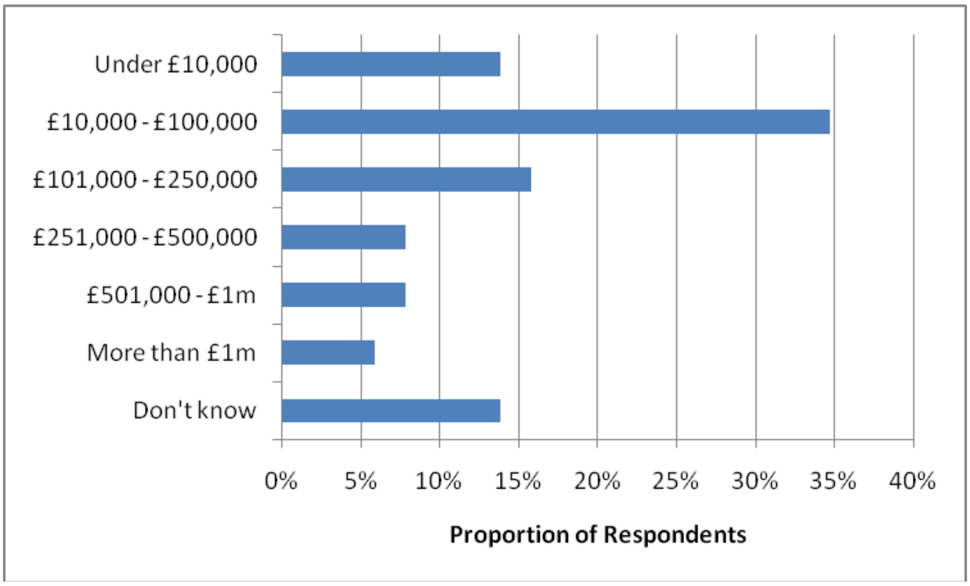
3.4. Business Survey Results

Introduction and Background to Businesses Responding to the Survey

A telephone survey of 101 businesses in Lower Wensleydale was carried out to provide input to the project from the commercial sector of the area. As might be expected, there was a strong representation amongst the responses from the tourism and agriculture-related sectors, followed by other service activities, including professional services and retailing.

The great majority were micro-enterprises: more than 90% of businesses responding each employed fewer than 5 people and only one employed more than 25. There is widespread part-time working (almost 80% of businesses employ some part-time staff) although relatively low incidence of seasonal employment to meet fluctuations in demand (20% of all respondents) and of overseas workers (10% of respondent businesses).

Figure 8 Annual Turnover of Businesses Surveyed



The small nature of many businesses was reflected in their annual turnover: almost 50% have an annual turnover of £100,000 or less and 14% of them turn over less than £10,000 per year (predominately accommodation providers). However, 6% said that they have a turnover of £1m or more.

The majority of businesses see their impact area as local, as might be expected, although one-third said that they have a national impact and 9% an international one. Similarly, 49% source the majority of their supplies locally, 28% nationally and 7% internationally.

The majority of employees travel to work by car (70%), which perhaps reinforces the issue of parking difficulties in both Leyburn and Middleham.

Business Issues

Only 12% of businesses surveyed claimed to suffer from labour shortages, primarily in tourism and agriculture – although specific shortages included retail assistants, racehorse handlers and mechanics. However they were more likely to find it difficult to recruit people with a particular skill for a job (25%). Chefs and catering provided the main shortage of skills needed, although other areas included both generic skills such as IT and communication, and vocational skills such as dry stone walling and knowledge of firearms.

Only a very small proportion of businesses recognised any skills shortages amongst their current workforce (7% of the total), although this may reflect low expectations on the part of employers rather than the actual skills available in the area.

Despite the difficult economic climate at present, 20% of businesses surveyed were planning expansion, mainly to access new markets. However, half of these faced some kind of significant barrier at the time of the survey, mainly financial. Interestingly, 23 businesses that were not currently planning growth also cited barriers to them expanding. Here, planning issues and the effects of the recession were the strongest disincentives to expansion. Planning issues extended across a range of bodies, from RDC, through the National Park, to landlords and estates.

Figure 9 Barriers to Expansion – Those Planning to Expand and Those Prevented by Current Barriers

Barrier	No. of Businesses Affected	
	Planning Expansion	Not Planning Expansion
Finance	5	5
Premises shortage	1	2
Planning issues	2	7
Export licensing	1	
The recession	1	7
Personal circumstances		1
Skills		1

Overall, 61% of those interviewed said that the current recession had had an impact on their business, mainly a reduction in turnover due to the market downturn. However, a small number of tourism businesses reported an increase in business, as more people choose to holiday in the UK.

Only 33% of businesses expected to experience future impacts of the recession, demonstrating some optimism regarding the depth of the downturn.

When asked what barriers exist to new businesses wanting to open in the area, the three main issues raised were:

- Planning and premises;
- Competition; and
- Finance.

Fifty-six percent of respondents said that they were aware of the current availability and / or cost of business premises, suggesting that lack of information is not a barrier at present.

In terms of business support, the main facilities accessed were through Business Link, followed by support from private banks. Of those not accessing business support at present, the majority (57%) said that they were aware of facilities available to new businesses or business opportunities.

Finally, a question was asked about the impact of the Wensleydale Railway on businesses. Thirty-seven percent of respondents said that it had an impact on their businesses. The great majority of these were tourism businesses, whose clients use the railway to access Leyburn and other parts of

Lower Wensleydale. However, there were some retailers included in the list and some companies which supply goods and services to the railway.

The majority of respondents (53%) were positive about the potential impacts of an extension of the railway line to link up with the East Coast main line at Northallerton. Potential benefits included accessing visitors from a wider catchment and attracting more visitors without increasing road traffic. However few people saw real potential for commuting via the railway.

Summary and Conclusions

The survey outlined a picture of the local business economy being dominated by tourism and agriculture, with a high proportion of micro-businesses and a significant share of low turnover, lifestyle or diversification enterprises, such as holiday lets. However, the findings showed a small proportion of high value-added service sector businesses, with some serving an international market.

The proportion of businesses with labour shortages was revealed to be relatively low, although there was a higher proportion of a shortage amongst those trying to recruit particular skills, especially chefs and skilled catering staff. Few businesses recognised skills shortages within their current staff complement.

The majority of those surveyed claimed to have suffered some effects of the recession however a fifth of respondents expressed in intention to expand in the near future. A further set of businesses were not considering expansion, because of barriers such as finance, perceived planning constraints and the recession.

This points to a relatively stable economy, with relatively low staff turnover and a reasonable supply of local workers, supplemented in some cases by overseas staff. The difficulty of attracting specialist skills to a rural area is a common one and a difficult issue to address. Generally, businesses appeared relatively optimistic about the future, with only one in three expecting the recession to impact beyond the current year.

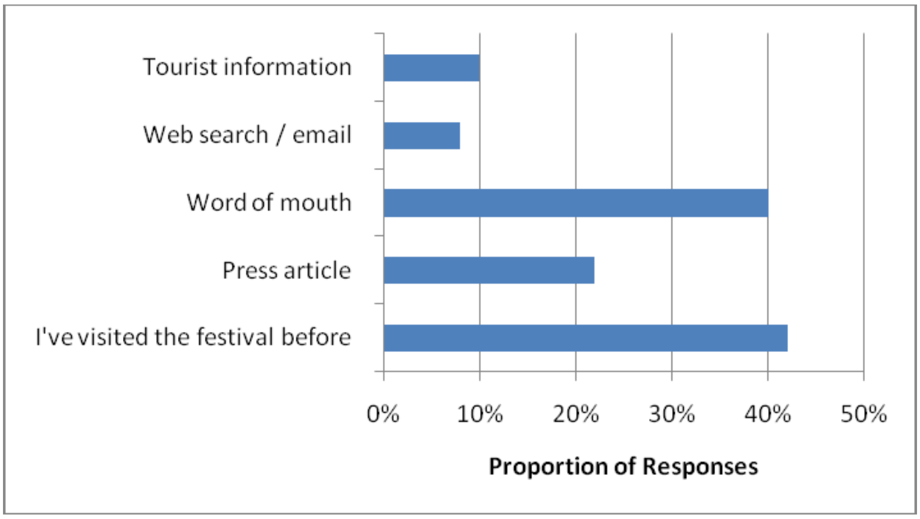
3.5. Dales Food & Drink Festival

As part of this project a short survey of visitors to the highly successful Dales Food Festival was carried out, during the 2009 festival. The survey was administered by festival volunteers and a total of 43 responses were obtained. Hence, although the sample was not large enough to provide robust statistical conclusions, some useful indicative results emerged. In addition, it may point the way to an expanded survey in future, to inform decision making regarding the food festival.

Awareness of the Festival

Attendees were asked how they became aware of the Dales Food Festival. The largest group (42%) had attended before and the second largest had heard via word of mouth. This is encouraging, in that it shows that people are loyal to the festival and want to return and also that they tell friends and relatives about it, to encourage them to attend.

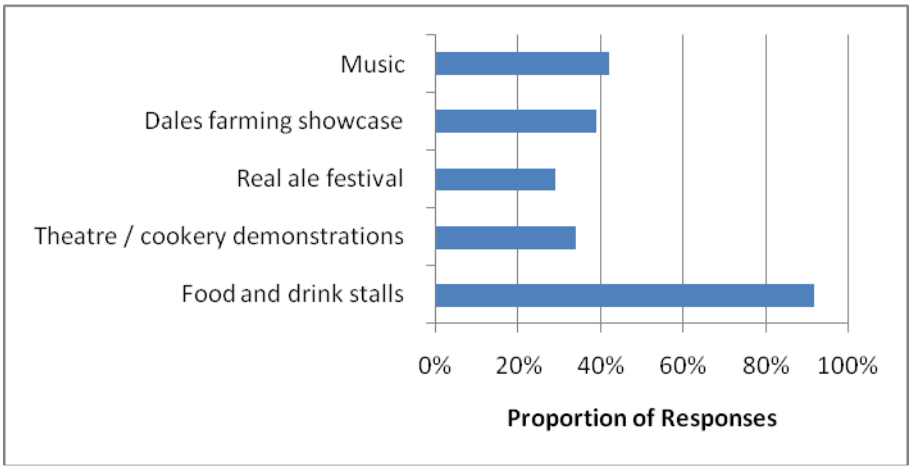
Figure 10 How did you become aware of the Festival?



Attractors

Unsurprisingly, the food and drink stalls are the major attractor to the festival. However, the overall mix is clearly important, including the more theatrical aspects of the event.

Figure 11 What aspects of the festival particularly appeal to you?



Respondents were also asked about a range of factors that might be considered important in organising an event of this type. The three factors that stood out clearly were:

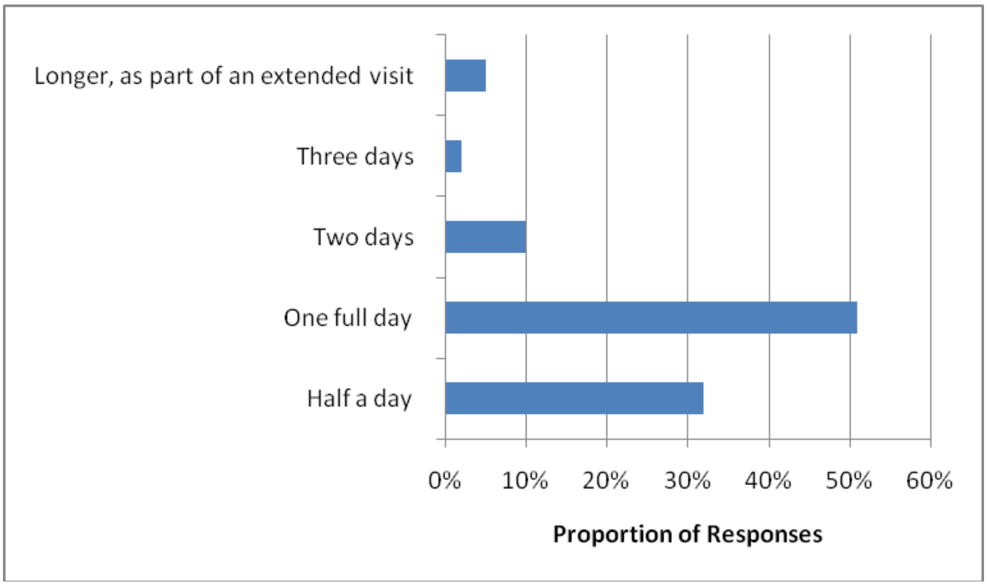
- Local and regional produce;
- A rural location; and
- Car parking.

Other factors, such as interesting speakers, the size of the event and good weather were considered fairly important in addition to this list.

Impact on Wensleydale

Visitors were asked a few questions about their trip to the Dales. First of all, they were asked how long they might stay in the area. The majority (51%) said that they were there for a full day, followed by 32% who were just staying for half a day. Encouragingly, however, a further 17% were staying longer in the area.

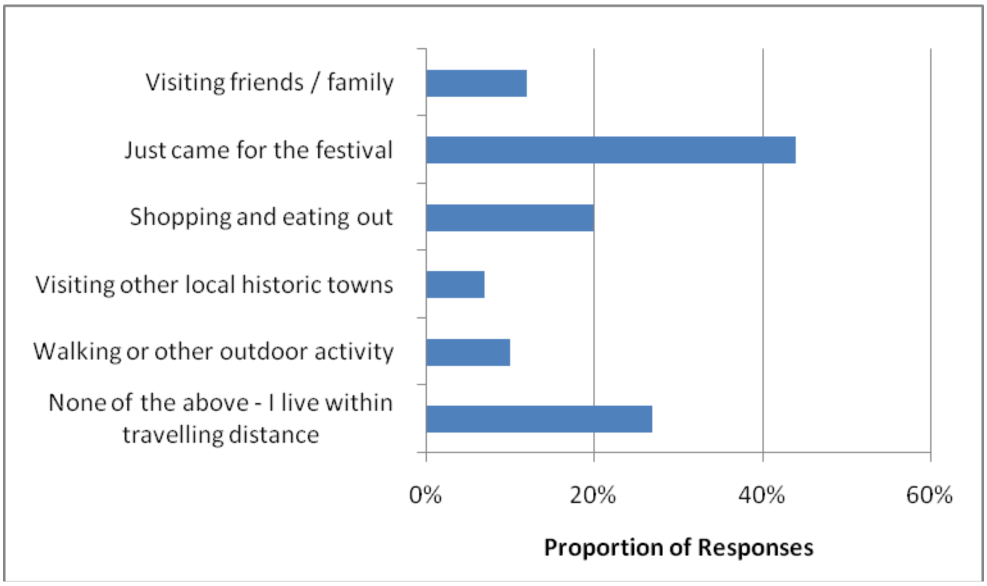
Figure 12 How long will you stay in the area?



Those who were staying in the area were most likely to be staying with friends and family, camping or staying in a hotel or pub.

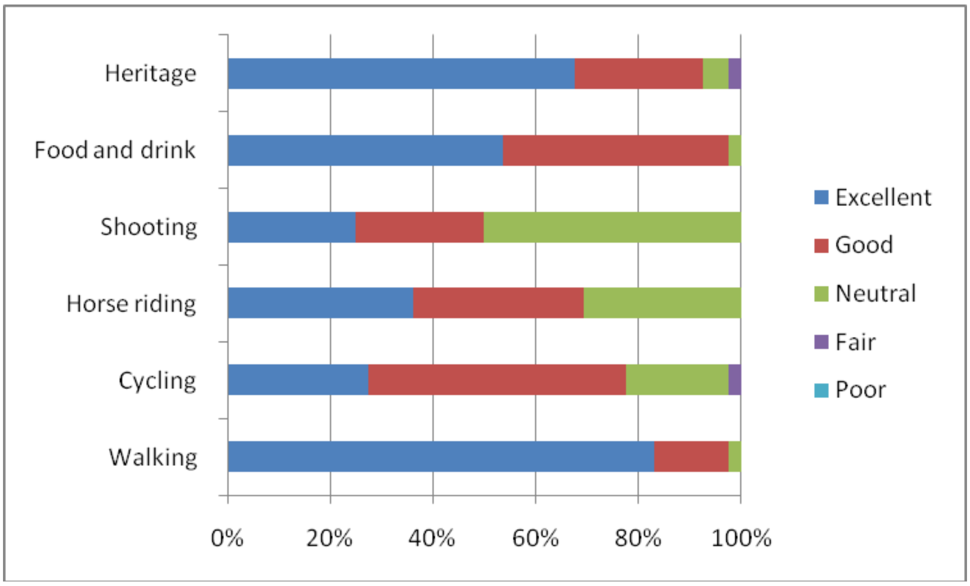
Although the largest proportion (44%) came to the area just for the festival, a further 20% intended to do some shopping and eating out, 7% said that they would visit other historic towns and ten individuals intended to do some walking or other outdoor activity. Hence the Festival is aligned with other activities and potentially has some significant indirect impacts.

Figure 13 Other activities whilst in the area



With regard to visitor perceptions of Wensleydale, the survey asked them to rate the area as a destination for various activities. Walking came out top overall, followed by heritage and food.

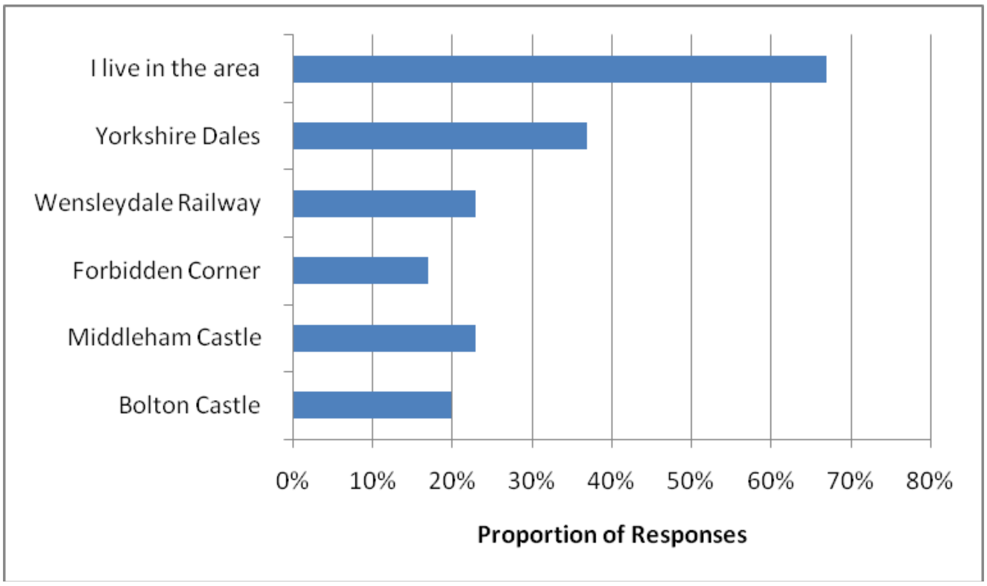
Figure 14 Perceptions of Wensleydale as a destination



Further to this, visitors were asked whether they had visited any neighbouring historic towns during their visit. Not surprisingly, Leyburn was the most commonly visited (63%), followed by Richmond, Middleham and Hawes.

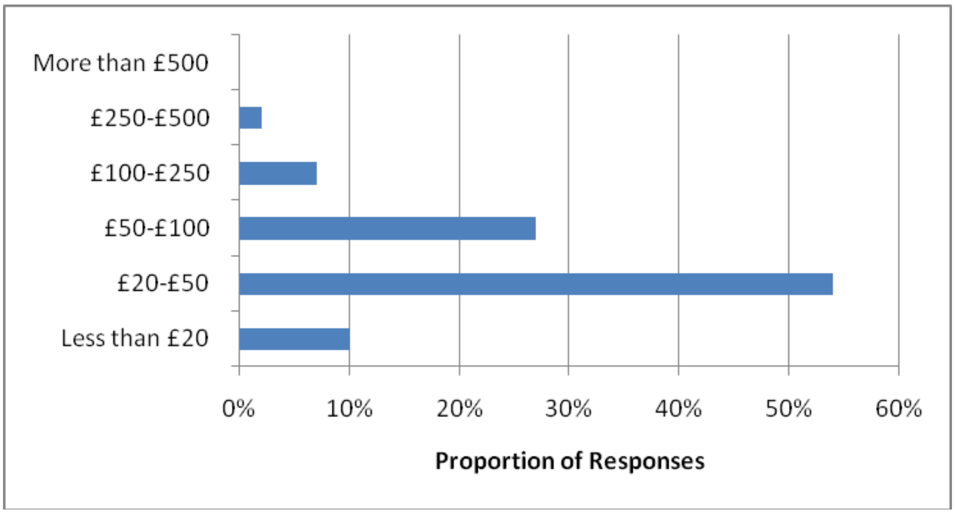
Similarly, a question was asked about attractions. The responses showed the Dales in general as most popular, followed by the Wensleydale Railway (although few people used it to travel to the festival) and Middleham Castle.

Figure 15 Attractions visited



The survey also asked about total expenditure whilst visiting the festival, including accommodation and food whilst in the area. Visitors were most likely to expect to spend between £20 and £50, but some expected to spend in excess of £250.

Figure 16 How much do you expect to spend during your visit?

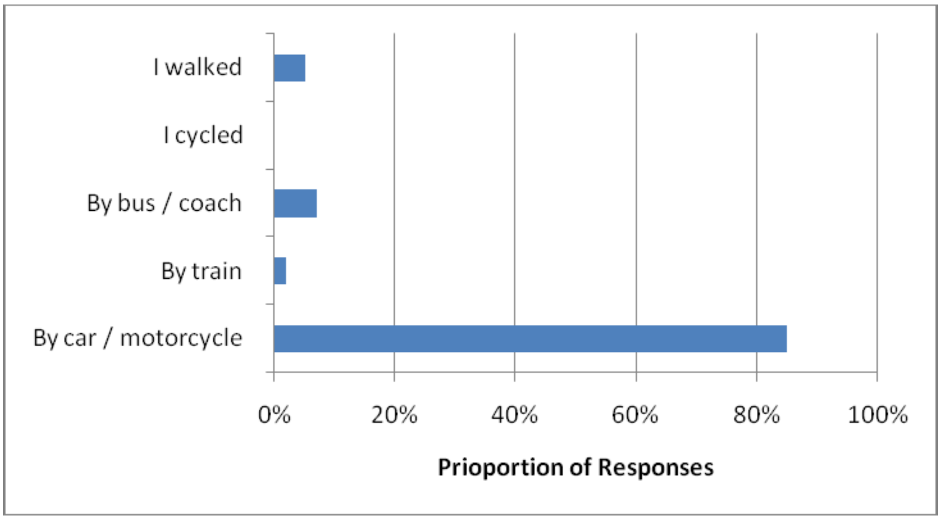


If these figures are grossed up, they represent an average expected spend of £63, with a range from £38 to £86. Based on a nominal estimate of 12,000 visitors, this would imply a contribution of between £450,000 and £1.03m entering the local economy directly as a result of the festival. Again, it would be useful to the festival organisers and potential funders to understand this more fully, by capturing more comprehensive data in future years.

Getting There

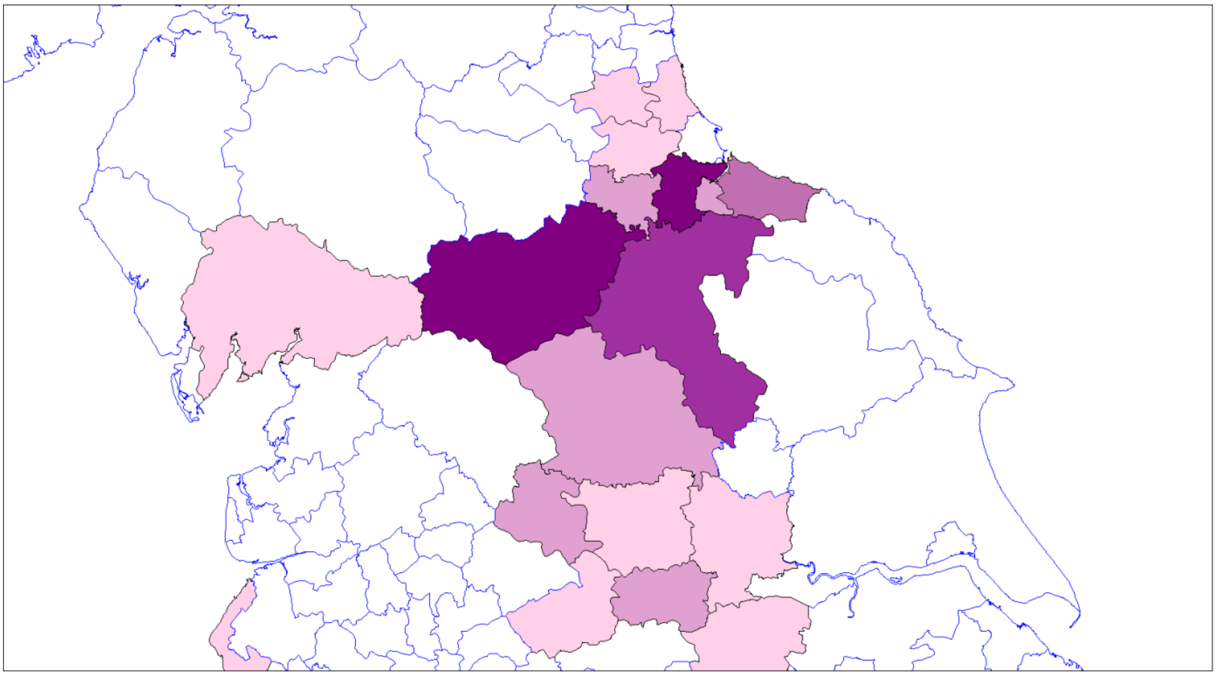
Visitors surveyed were overwhelmingly likely to have travelled by private car to the festival. Only 2% came by train and 7% by bus or coach. Five percent lived close enough to walk to the event. Although the majority of those responding to the survey had visited Wensleydale before, some 7% said that it was their first visit. Hence, the Festival also has an important role to play in attracting new visitors to the Dales.

Figure 17 Modes of travel to the Festival



Visitors were asked for their postcode of residence, to track the festival catchment. Clearly, with such a small sample, this was only indicative, but it can be seen from the map below, that visitor density of the sample was greatest from the local area, followed by two swathes – one from the East towards Darlington and north towards Middlesbrough and the other stretching down through Yorkshire to the south. Again, this exercise could be repeated in future years to guide the festival marketing.

Figure 18 Map of visitor sample by residence



Conclusions

The Dales Food Festival is an excellent event for Wensleydale and for Leyburn in particular. It brings a significant number of new and regular visitors to the areas, many of whom stay to shop, walk and visit attractions nearby. However, the proportion of these that visit Middleham during their stay could be increased.

Economically, it is likely to be worth up to £1m per year in terms of direct impact. However, the intangible benefits of putting Wensleydale on the map may be even more valuable in the longer term.

The management team of the festival may wish to consider taking on the visitors' survey in future years, to develop an effective means of monitoring their performance and to identify ways in which their marketing and programming could be fine tuned.

4. Racehorse Industry

4.1. Background to the Industry

According to a recent report for the British Horseracing Board (BHB)[11], the sport has an annual economic impact of almost £3bn across the UK. The industry employs some 19,000 people[12] and attracts almost 6m individual attendances at a total of 1,300 race meetings each year.

Racehorse training is clearly a key part of the sector, accounting for 14% of all capital expenditure. In 2005, there were 569 licensed trainers in Britain (with a further 358 permit holders and hunter trainers), with a total annual revenue of more than £200m and a staff complement of 6,500 full and part-time workers.

Yorkshire has a long history of association with the sport. In the 18th century, racing was only permitted at Newmarket, York and Hambleton – giving Yorkshire two of the three official courses in England.

Middleham has a long and distinguished history of being associated with racehorse training, dating back to the early 18th Century. Regular races were held on the High Moor up until the 1870s, when they were halted after a dispute over access rights.

Despite a decline during the latter part of the twentieth century, investment from the current set of trainers, perhaps most notably Mark Johnston, has revitalised the town and reinstated the industry as the prime mover in the local economy.

The Middleham Trainers' Association currently lists 15 trainers, some of whom have more than one yard, and there are additional facilities in neighbouring communities, such as West Witton and Constable Burton. This makes the town the most prominent location for trainers in the North of England and only behind Lambourn and Newmarket in a UK context.

4.2. Current Size and Value of the Racehorse Sector in Middleham

Introduction

In order to inform our estimates of the size and value of the sector in Middleham, consultations were held with a selection of key stakeholders in the industry. These consultations provided some key primary data for use in our subsequent impact estimates, (see below), as well as valuable contextual information on the sector.

Local Impact Estimates

In assessing the impact of the racehorse training sector on Middleham, we have taken the following approach:

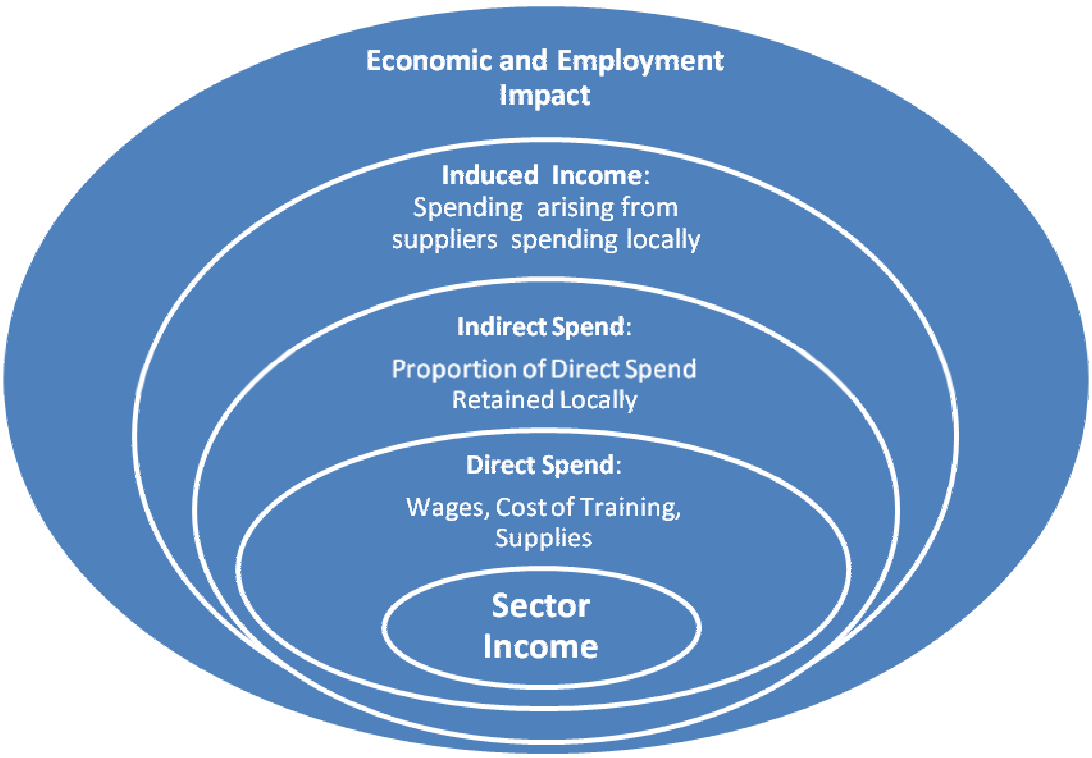
[11] *Economic Impact of British Racing,* Deloitte for British Horseracing Board, June 2006.

[12] Full-time equivalents

- **Size of Sector:** Examined the current numbers of horses in training and associated levels of employment;
- **Sector Income:** Estimated the income received by trainers for training activities[13];
- **Direct Spend:** Made estimates for the total direct spend on supplies and the annual staff wages bill;
- **Indirect Spend:** Estimated of the proportion of the direct spend and wage bill which stays in the local economy[14];
- **Induced Spend:** Estimated for the amount of local spend by suppliers benefiting from indirect spending.
- **Employment Supported:** Estimated additional jobs supported as a result of indirect and induced spending;
- **Total Impact:** Estimated the sum of direct, indirect and induced spending.[15]

In several cases, we have employed a range of estimates – to give a low and high impact assessment, along with a likely average figure.

Figure 19 Approach to Economic Impact Assessment



[13] We have ignored any additional income arising from prize money, although some of this will accrue to both trainers (some 7-8%) and their staff (5% according to BHB). We have also excluded income from sales and costs of buying horses.

[14] The local economy will encompass all of Lower Wensleydale.

[15] This figure does not include tourism income, such as owners staying in the area, or the Open Stables event.

Assumptions

In compiling these estimates, we have employed the following assumptions:

- Staff to horse ratio in stable yards of between 1:2 and 1:4[16];
- Average non-wage costs of training, per horse of between £2,000 and £2,600[17] - to include costs of feed, veterinary bills, farriers' costs, equipment and transport to races[18];
- Average wage costs of between £14,000 and £20,000 per year including overtime and allowances (although some yards have considerably higher averages, many pay minimum wages to the majority of their training staff);
- Between 50% and 70% of staff wages and 30% - 50% of other direct spend on training remaining in the local economy;[19]
- 20% - 30% of indirect spend (mainly on food, accommodation, transport and leisure) supports employment in the local economy and that 25% - 35% of the induced income is also retained locally.

Outputs

In all our calculations, we have taken low, average and high estimate figures for each element of the economic and employment impacts.

According to our estimates, there are currently some 550 horses in training in Middleham (or 4% of the UK total), with an employment ratio of between 1:2 and 1:4 (people to horses), giving total direct employment of between 200 and 280 staff.

Turnover is likely to be in the region of £11m - £14.3m per year[20] and this suggests salary costs ranging from £2.8m to £5.6m per year. If the proportion of wages spent locally is between 50% and 70%, this will put between £1.4m and £3.92m into local businesses.

The total direct spend on non-wage cost of supplies will represent approximately 10% of turnover – hence a total of £1.1m to £1.43m per year. If 30% - 50% of this is retained locally, this will imply an injection of between £367,000 and £715,000 annually into the local economy.

Hence the indirect spend arising from wages spent and purchase of goods and services will total between £1.77m and £4.64m per year in the local area.

This spending will in itself create or support additional employment, as suppliers require staff to deliver supplies. We estimate that approximately 30% of this spend will support staff costs –

[16] In the calculations, we used a ratio of between 1:2 (rate for Mark Johnston's stable) and 1:4 as a more pessimistic estimate. Consultations suggest the actual average for other yards is likely to be near 1:3.

[17] The BHB Analysis assumes a figure of £2413 as an average for the UK.

[18] The majority of these supplies can be met locally within Lower Wensleydale, with the exception of feed, beyond locally grown haylage (and straw for bedding) and equipment, such as saddlery goods. However, feed costs make up a significant proportion of the overall cost – leading to leakage from the local economy.

[19] Some commentators placed a higher proportion on this, but it is felt that the number of overseas workers sending money home will counterbalance this.

[20] Based on ratio of known turnover to horses in training for a number of stables.

implying a figure between £353,000 and £1.39m. Assuming average wages in supplier businesses of around £18,000, a total of between 20 and 77 further jobs will be supported.

On the further assumption that between 25% and 35% of these employees' wages will also be spent locally, an additional sum of between £88,000 and £487,000 will find its way into the Lower Wensleydale economy.

These figures imply that the total added value from the racehorse training sector lies between £1.86m and £5.12m, with a "likely average" figure of just over £3m per year. Added to the turnover of the stables themselves, the value of the sector to Lower Wensleydale comes to between £12.9 and £19.4m per year – emphasising the very significant contribution of training to the area.

The distribution of this spending will depend on the location of suppliers. Hence Middleham is likely to especially benefit from incidental spending on food and drink, housing costs and hospitality.

What is particularly interesting is the extent of benefits accruing to those parts of the community not directly involved in training. Currently we estimate that some 24% of sector turnover is going into other businesses. The challenge for Middleham in particular is to look at how a larger proportion of this could be retained in the area – either by providing more services locally, or by supporting increased turnover amongst the training sector.

Figure 20 Summary Table of Annual Economic Impact of Racehorse Training

	Low	High	Likely Average
No. of Horses in Training	550	550	550
Turnover	£11,000,000	£14,300,000	£12,650,000
Direct Employment	200	280	227
Wages	£2,800,000	£5,600,000	£3,853,333
Direct Spend	£1,100,000	£1,430,000	£1,320,000
Indirect Spend (Wages)	£1,400,000	£3,920,000	£2,312,000
Indirect Spend (Goods and Services)	£366,667	£715,000	£528,000
Total Indirect Spend	£1,766,667	£4,635,000	£2,840,000
Employment Costs Supported	£353,333	£1,390,500	£710,000
Employment Supported	20	77	39
Induced Spending Effects	£88,333	£486,675	£213,000
Hence Total Effects			
Added Value to the Economy	£1,855,000	£5,121,675	£3,053,000
Multiplier[21]	17%	36%	24%
Total Value to Lower Wensleydale	£12,855,000	£19,421,675	£15,703,000

[21] The percentage of added value in relation to turnover.

4.3. Links to Tourism

Open Stables

Currently, the focus of linkage with the tourism market is the highly successful Middleham Stables Open Event, which attracts visitors from a wide area, although predominately from the North and North East regions. The 2009 event brought in more than 6,000 people and raised in excess of £10,000 for local charities.

The event provides an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the extent of training in Middleham and to publicise opportunities for potential investors. Several of the yards attempted to broaden the appeal to visitors by hosting events, such as an open microphone "question time" session, which proved extremely popular.

There is a threat to the event from the prospect of staging Racing on Good Friday, which would directly compete with the Open Stables event and threaten its viability.

Opening the stables on a more regular basis poses difficulties in terms of health and safety and the interface between the needs of visitors and the day to day work of the yards.

Exploiting the Gallops

The Middleham Gallops have the potential to be enhanced as an attraction in their own right. However, there are issues in terms of continuing land use conflict, between the needs of trainers and those with common grazing rights for sheep on the land – which put an end to racing on the Moor over a century ago.

Facilities that would be the minimum requirement to underpin use of the Gallops include:

- Convenient and safe parking;
- Viewing points for visitors;
- Adequate signage; and
- Quality access routes.

There may be scope under the RDP to support the development of the gallops and viewing facilities. These are further discussed in the action planning section of this report.

Hosting Owners

Owners are based all over the world (for example some 60% of Mark Johnston's stock is Arab owned), but the fact that others are owned by (UK) syndicates implies that there are significant numbers of owners who either currently visit or could be encouraged to do so.

Action could be taken to develop owner visits, by providing additional interests or linked trips (possibility of shooting excursions?) to encourage longer stay times and increased spend.

Linked Packages

Much of the focus in marketing racing is currently on extending the audience beyond the core betting fraternity. It was recognised in the BHB research[22] that

[22] See above.

65% of racegoers attend only one race meeting per year. If 25% of these could be persuaded to go racing twice a year instead, it would bring in a further £6m in admissions alone.

This has led to a number of initiatives aimed at broadening the appeal of the sport. For example, Go Racing in Yorkshire[23] is targeting a range of offers at non-traditional audiences, featuring Family Days (with bouncy castles, clowns and entertainers), Ladies' Days, and midweek events marketed as a means of those strained by work pressures to relax with friends, family or colleagues.

Recent research conducted on behalf of the Tote and BHB[24] examined the social aspects of racing and concluded that it is unique amongst sports in providing a setting for people to mix in a relaxed atmosphere, make contact and interact with strangers in a manner not seen elsewhere. The research also showed that racegoers demonstrate exceptionally good manners, low levels of aggression and that the racecourse is the "last bastion of old-fashioned chivalry".

This suggests that there is scope for a general broadening of the appeal of racing and, by association, of training.

Currently there is limited provision of tourism packages for people wishing to visit Middleham for a visit linked to racing[25]. There may be scope for developing a wider package, to include, for example:

- Overnight accommodation in Middleham;
- Day trip to neighbouring race meeting;
- Evening meal with a trainer as guest speaker; and
- Early morning visit to the Gallops to view horses in training.

This type of package would be ideally suited to small and medium sized groups. It would have appeal beyond those with a keen interest in racing.

One of the issues here is that the development of trips of this nature is not going to directly benefit the trainers themselves, apart from raising awareness. It will therefore be necessary to stimulate interest amongst hospitality providers or tourism bodies to provide the steer for this kind of development. In principle, there could be scope for collaboration with trainers and hospitality businesses in Malton, to provide an embryonic racing-tourism network for Yorkshire.

4.4. Issues and Potential Developments

Rural Challenge

The Rural Challenge programme came up with a range of activities to enhance the role of Middleham and the potential of the racehorse training industry. These need to be revisited, to see what has changed and what could be taken forward.

Affordable Housing

The training industry places large demands on the housing stock of Middleham, especially considering the impact of up to 280 staff on a settlement of 840 people. There remains an acute

[23] www.goracing.co.uk

[24] *The Social Behaviour of Horsewatchers,* SIRC for BHB and the Tote,

[25] Examples are those arranged for guests at the Black Swan, Middleham or at Swinton Park, Masham.

shortage of housing and many stable employees live further afield, in Leyburn or even Catterick. Several houses have been purchased by stables in order to provide staff accommodation. However one trainer claimed that staff members are much more likely to respect single accommodation than they are shared units and that more of this type of accommodation should be developed.

Identification of sites for additional units is an issue, as is the current investment climate in relation to property development.

Staff Training

The majority of trainers are genuinely committed to staff development. Greater use could be made of the Key Centre to provide a base for training – whether on a drop-in basis or based around more structured courses.

Local Suppliers

There may be scope to develop supply chains in the area. For example, some local farmers are growing haylage and straw for trainers at present, but this could be expanded and there may be the possibility of branching into other forms of feed.

Tack repairs are not currently available in the immediate area, although provision of this service is not far away, in Richmond.

An increase in the use of local suppliers could bring about significant additional benefits to the area. For example, taking the "most likely" economic impact scenario above, an increase in the proportion of spending on local goods and services from 40% to 50% would bring in an additional £135,000 to the local economy. Similarly, an increase in local retention of wages from 60% to 70% would secure an additional £385,000 for the local economy. Clearly then, any initiatives aimed at raising these proportions will have significant economic potential.

Infrastructure

Trainers identify a number of infrastructure issues as barriers to continued development of the sector in Middleham, including:

- **Parking, especially in the centre**. There are no sites identified for edge of centre parking and the market place should ideally be available for short-term shopper and visitor parking;
- **The road surface through the square** is currently dangerous for horses, as they could slip, endangering horse and rider, but also threatening passing traffic.; and
- There are few **places for younger members of staff to meet**, other than the public houses.

4.5. Conclusions

Racehorse training is a very significant contributor to the economy of both Middleham and Lower Wensleydale. However, the town may not be as widely recognised as a centre for the industry as it could be and there may be scope for further branding and for raising awareness to a wider audience.

Local businesses could benefit more from the sector, perhaps especially those potentially involved in supplying feed and services to trainers and also those in tourism–related and retail businesses.

Current threats to the sector (beyond the economic downturn) include the ongoing access issues to the moor, development of facilities for viewing the gallops and the management of horses and traffic in the town centre.

5. Distinctiveness

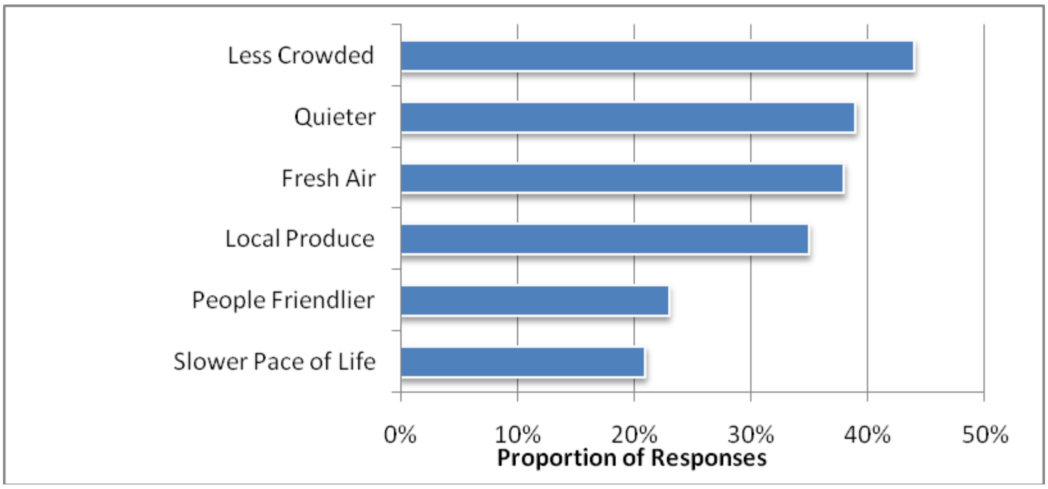
5.1. Introduction

This section of the report provides the results of the Retail Distinctiveness survey carried out in Middleham, as part of the primary data gathering. The work is based on a customised version of the Retail Distinctiveness model developed for ONE North East by Miller Research, which has been run in eighteen towns across the UK. It was included in our approach despite the low level of retailing in Middleham, as it provides a holistic look at the town and its retail, hospitality and physical / heritage assets.

The original rationale for the Distinctiveness model was to counter the "cloning" of town centres and to aid thinking in creating and preserving vibrant small communities – especially rural market towns.

Primary market research in urban centres helped to define the factors which contribute to a successful small town. Four hundred people were interviewed on street and asked to think of a small town that they visited regularly. They were asked to think about the aspects of that town that they found attractive and what made them go there. Examples included a sense of the town setting, a countryside context, a less crowded or rushed shopping experience, and the availability of local produce.

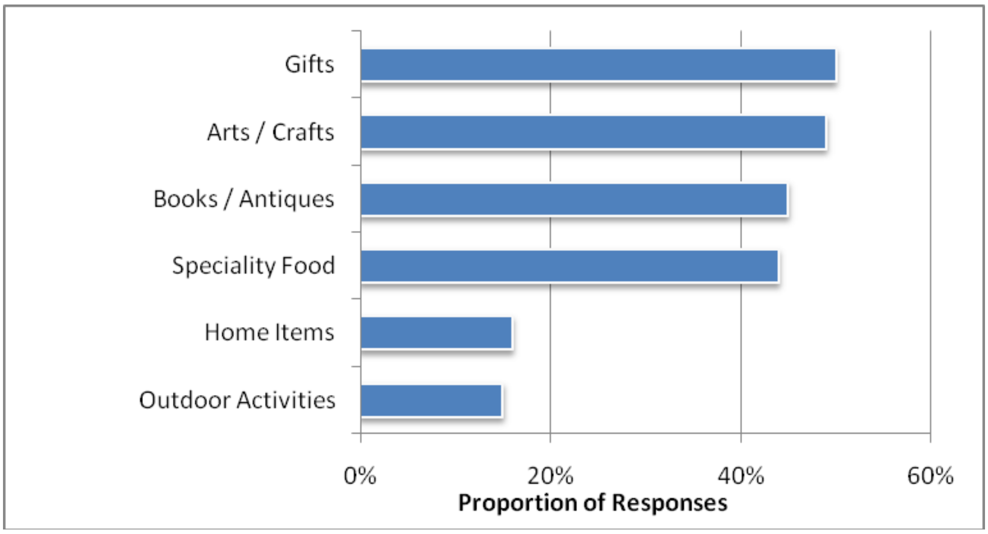
Figure 21. Small Towns – Main Attractors



Source: Retail Distinctiveness Research

In terms of the retail offer, the main attractors for visitors were gifts, arts and craft shops, along with speciality food retailers. Home items, outdoor equipment and independent clothing shops were also featured.

Figure 22 Small Towns – Retail Attractors for Visitors



Source: Retail Distinctiveness Research

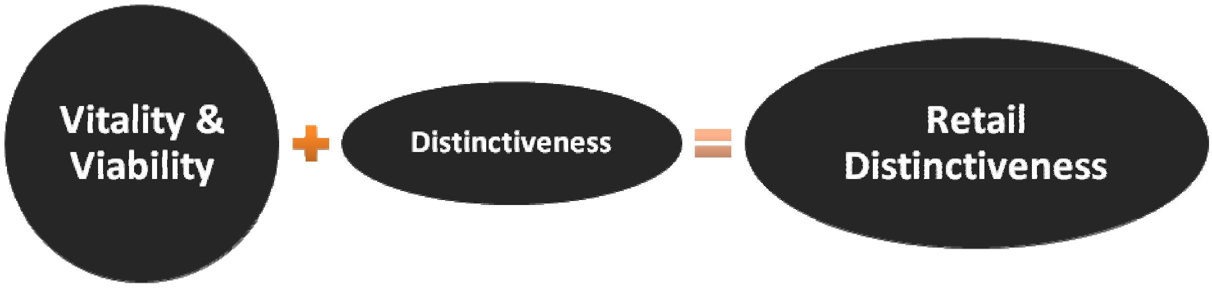
These factors, along with others from the original surveys and complemented by the results of a series of focus groups, led to a working definition of the variables affecting Distinctiveness, as shown below.

Figure 23 Overall Variables Contributing to Small Town Retail Distinctiveness

Source: Retail Distinctiveness Research

The survey results give a profile of the town, which can be benchmarked against neighbouring or comparator locations, or used to assess the impacts of regeneration projects.

The model becomes more meaningful, however, when combined with a vitality and viability assessment. This allows the subject town to be benchmarked as both a distinct destination for visitors and as a local service centre for residents. The model can then be used more effectively to consider comparator centres and can be used to plan what sort of offer a community wishes to develop.



The overall model comprises the following elements, which have all been covered to some extent in the Middleham survey, with the exception of the markets assessment (due to the lack of a market presence in the town).

Table 1 Retail Distinctiveness, Vitality and Viability Indicators

Theme	Activity
Vitality and Viability	
	Diversity, accessibility, rental levels, satisfaction levels (primary market research results), footfall, vacancy rates, accessibility, etc
Retail Distinctiveness	
Visual Assessment	Shop-fronts, shop-windows, shop-floor goods, local products, accessibility
Food and Drink Assessment	Segmentation, quality, local produce sourcing, locational issues
Markets Assessment	Frequency, types, coverage, layout and stalls/equipment, user mix, management
Customer Care	Welcome, knowledge of product, added value
Retail Environmental Assessment	Public space, built environment, accessibility, street furniture, signage, event space, street care

Source: Miller Research (UK) Ltd

The following sections of this report present some brief context to the town and its retail and hospitality offer, along with the Distinctiveness survey results.

This leads into some broad areas for consideration, with regard to increasing the competitiveness of Middleham as a destination for residents and visitors alike.

5.2. Measuring Vitality and Viability

Vitality and viability has been briefly surveyed, to provide context for the work. As noted above, the vitality and viability elements of the Retail Distinctiveness model include factors such as:

Customer Satisfaction levels

The level of customer satisfaction covers issues such as residents' use of the town, perceptions of the retail and hospitality offer and overall attractiveness of the town as a retail centre for residents and visitors.

In this project we have used background interviews with businesses to inform this indicator.

Accessibility

An important factor in the vitality and viability of a town centre is its accessibility. This can be measured in terms of the availability of car parking, public transport services and the ease of pedestrian and cycle movement through the centre.

Within our model, accessibility is rated under the following headings:

- Car parking - Supply and management;
- Public transport - Level of provision; and
- Pedestrian / Cycle - General accessibility: Provision of pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities.

We have carried out a brief visual survey of these factors.

Footfall

Footfall is the measurement of pedestrian flow within a town centre environment, which demonstrates activity which may lead to direct purchases or an association with town centre related uses. In this project, we have not had access to a footfall count and so a "finger in the air" estimate has been used, based on very limited observations of Middleham.

Investment

Analysis of rental levels and commercial yields can provide a useful indication of the retail performance of a town centre. In this study, we have researched local agents' views on current rental yields and demand for premises.

Confidence or Retail Performance

The measurement of investor confidence in a town, as illustrated by demand from retailers and property investment yields has been estimated.

Retailer Representation

This is an analysis of the present representation of retailers wanting to come into a town centre. It will focus primarily on national and regional retailers, as the range of independents is accounted for in the retail distinctiveness element of the survey.

Retail Diversity

The diversity of town centre uses is a measure of how much space is in use for different functions, such as shopping, offices, cultural and entertainment activities, restaurants, accommodation, community and educational uses and housing, amongst others. A visual survey of Middleham was carried out to assess diversity.

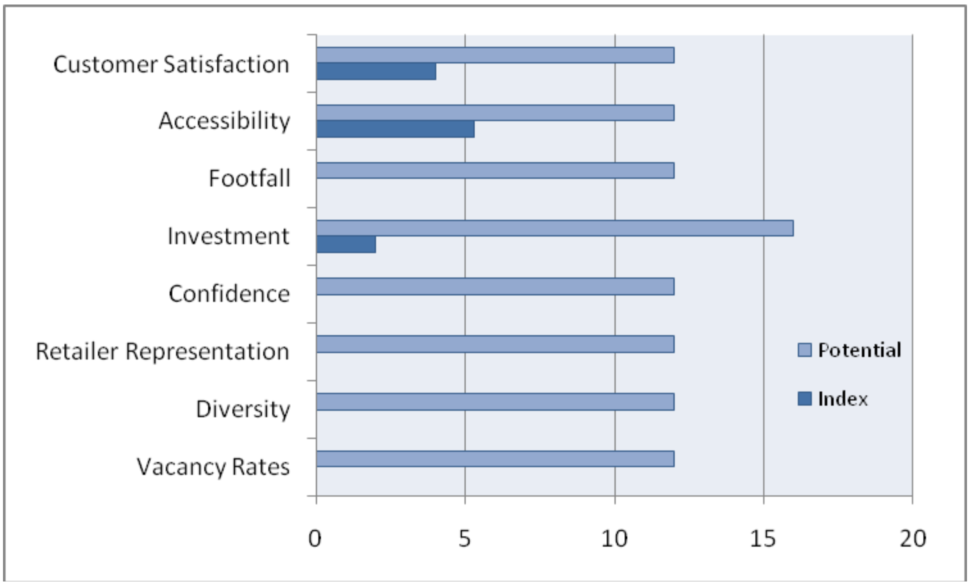
Vacancy Rates

The presence of vacant ground floor units within a town centre is a visible indicator of how the town is trading. Vacant units can be due to factors such as the location of the unit, immediate environmental conditions, servicing facilities, ownership, and the degree of confidence in investing in the town centre.

5.3. Vitality and Viability Results

The results of our headline survey of vitality and viability for Middleham are shown below. The "potential" bars refer to our weighted model, based on market research elsewhere, displaying the maximum score that can be achieved for each indicator. The "index" level is the score for Middleham.

Figure 24 Vitality and Viability Results – Middleham



Source: Miller Research (UK) Ltd

Overall, Middleham is positioned very much where it might be expected on vitality and viability, given its small size and relatively isolated location.

Customer satisfaction was given a middle ranking, as the town centre was judged to partially meet the needs of residents. This is not to overlook the fact that those local residents who use the town do so on a regular basis and are very loyal.

The town is relatively accessible, especially given its location. There is free car parking in the town centre and limited parking on street for opportunity visitors, although this provision is insufficient at busy times. There are limited public transport links via the Dales Bus, although this does not run frequently enough to provide for the needs of the community. Pedestrian and cycle navigation through the town is good, although no cycle storage facilities were apparent. Pedestrian signage is of reasonable quality and is well located. However, walking and cycling links to Leyburn are poor and the bridge over the River Ure is a particular barrier to safe movement.

On investment, rental levels are reported to be high for the very limited number of premises available. Unsurprisingly for a community of this size, there is no national retailer represented.

The town has a relatively high vacancy rate, in that from a small pool of premises, there is one very prominent vacant shop and a vacant restaurant at present.

Overall the town was rated as scoring 11.5 points out of a possible 100. However, it is worth noting that a town of Middleham's size would be unlikely to score significantly more than this, and probably has a maximum potential of around 30 points.

5.4. Retail Distinctiveness Overview

In compiling the distinctiveness methodology, we set a number of guiding principles, which underpin the actual variables measured through the town survey work. These include:

- Distinctiveness is not neat: it is not marketing, it is fuzzy, overlapping, and necessarily inclusive, and impossible to pin down precisely;
- Local people have primacy: if they feel a place is distinctive, then it is – and this can be used to draw in outsiders;
- Distinctiveness must be authentic: what is distinctive is not usually susceptible to marketing unless it has genuine roots – often historic roots – in the places where it is claimed;
- Assets are more than just economic: they might be a communal memory about a place or a sense of good neighbourliness. They will not always be assets that can be exploited economically, though they may make economic exploitation easier;
- Small things are as important as big things: it is the texture that makes a place authentic as much as recordable economic assets, and very small changes – like signage or the removal of very small eyesores – can enhance people's sense of that as much as anything that requires major investment;
- Distinctiveness requires a sense of responsibility: building distinctiveness normally requires new local institutions or practical alliances capable of bringing local stakeholders together to make things happen;
- History gives depth to a place: it gives added dimensions – but it has to be about history alive and well today, rather than just about the past which leads to deadness.

The retail distinctiveness survey focuses on a number of areas:

- The independent retail offer;
- Food and drink;
- Customer care;
- The town context;
- Townscape;
- Streetscape; and
- Street elements and furniture.

Within each of these variables, some simple indicators have been developed which can easily be surveyed in the target town. The scoring for each of these is weighted back to the results of the original market research, to ensure that important factors are given greater significance in the results.

Independent Retail

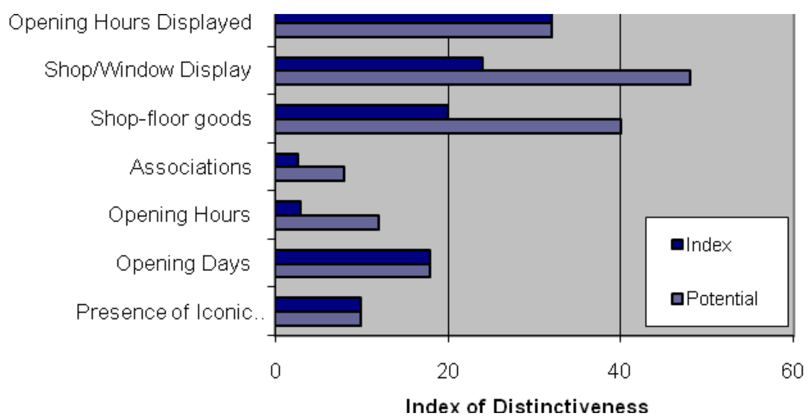
The survey of independent retailers focuses on the types of shops described as important to the visitor appeal of a small town. The variables measured include:

- Whether opening hours and days are displayed;
- The extent of local or distinct produce in the shop window display;
- The extent to which this is carried through onto the shop floor within;
- Cohesion: Is the retailer a member of a specialist trade group or local business association?;
- Does the shop open beyond the standard 9-5 day?;
- How many days a week are the premises open?;
- Finally, does the town have an "iconic retailer" – that is the kind of shop that will make visitors go out of their way to visit?

Middleham scored 59% overall for its independent retail – a strong score, reflecting the significant strengths of the small number of shops present.

The town scored well on information to customers, days of opening and to some extent the presence of local or distinct goods on sale – although more could be done to promote local food.

Figure 25 Distinctiveness Survey – Results for Independent Retail



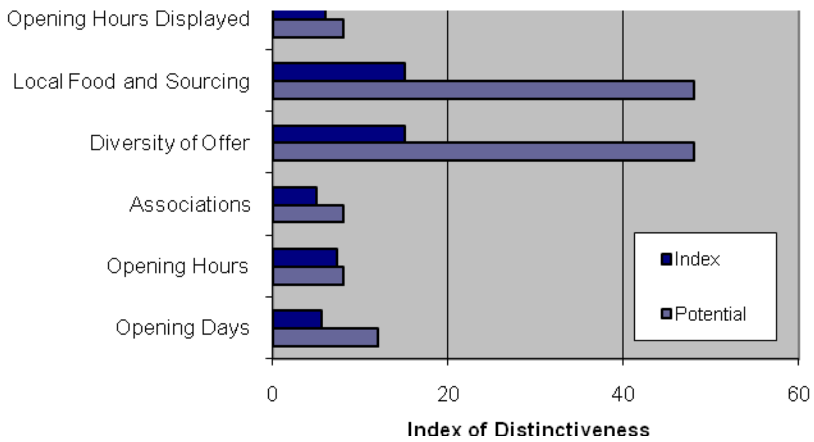
Food and Drink

The food and drink survey looks at premises selling hot food and drinks – both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. The variables measured include:

- Whether opening hours and days are displayed;
- The extent of local or distinct produce on the menu and whether it is acknowledged;
- The diversity of the food and drink offer, in terms of Fine Dining/Specialist, Popular Dining/Pub Food, Fast Food or Takeaway and Coffee Bar/Tea Shop;
- Cohesion: Is the retailer a member of a tourism group or local business association?;
- What hours are the premises open – is it just daytime, just evening or both?;
- How many days a week are the premises open?

The food and drink in the town centre scored reasonably well, at 41% of the potential score. It is acknowledged that some key food attractors lie in the rural hinterland outside the area surveyed and that these offer a good range of food and drink which was not accounted for.

Figure 26 Distinctiveness Survey – Results for Independent Food and Drink



In the town centre itself, there is a good range of mid-tier food in the hotels, pubs and café/ tea rooms and the one takeaway. However, local food is not prevalent in most premises in the town.

Customer Care

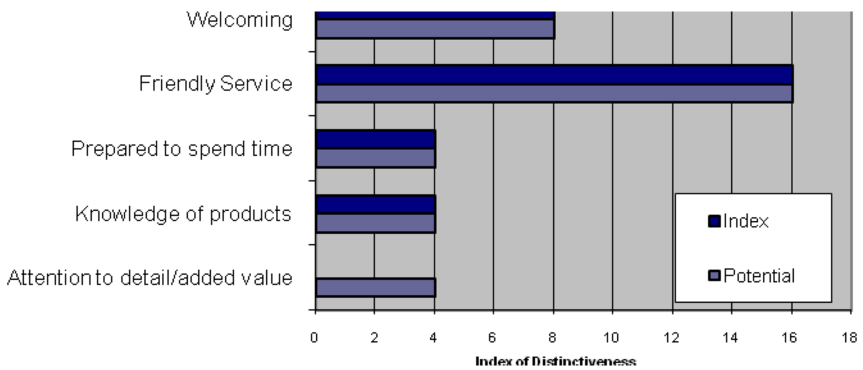
A mystery shopper is used to assess customer care, by visiting the shop or restaurant unannounced to the retail assistant or shop owner. They can then scrutinise the quality of customer care they receive in a number of areas including:

- Initial welcome: the length of time taken to greet the mystery shopper;
- Friendly service: the degree of friendliness demonstrated;
- Willingness to engage: readiness to devote time to the mystery shopper;
- Knowledge of products; and
- Attention to detail and added value to customer service.

The final category (added value) includes an open ended option that allows the mystery shopper to credit any extra effort made by the individual to improve the level of customer care demonstrated.

The results of the mystery shop were generally very encouraging, displaying a high standard of customer care, genuine interest in products sold and a real pride in Middleham. The town scored 100% of the potential score on measured variables, aside from added value - although this does not mean that there is no room for further improvement!

Figure 27 Distinctiveness Survey – Results for Customer Care



The Town Context

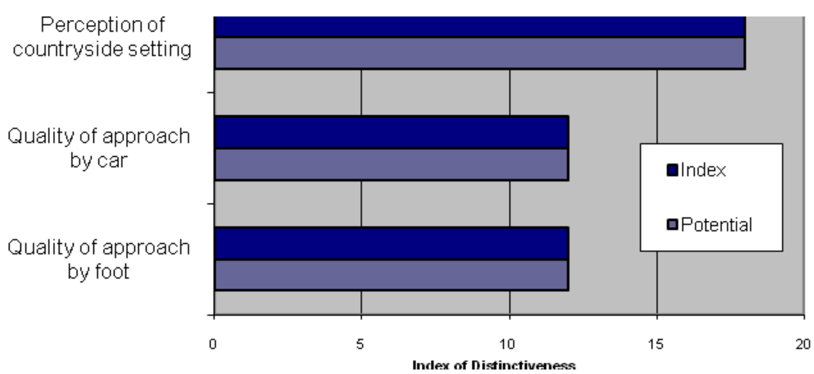
This first part of the survey of physical elements of the town is based on a simple set of indicators to assess the quality of the town setting in its wider landscape, along with the initial impressions gained from the quality of approach to the town:

- How does the town fit in its wider landscape? Is there a perception of it fitting in with the surrounding countryside?
- How does it announce itself?
- Is there a sense of arrival?
- Is the entrance to the town impressive? Clean? Well Maintained?

Middleham scored 100% on this measure, boosted by its position in a spectacular, historic landscape and strong sense of countryside location.

The quality of approach by car was judged to be excellent, with a sense of a town that is well cared for by its residents. Similarly, the quality of approach by foot is excellent, once within the town boundary. In terms of wider access, the narrow road bridge over the River Ure is a detractor.

Figure 28 Distinctiveness Survey – Results for Town Context



Townscape

This part of the survey provides a visual assessment of how well the elements of the town fit together to create a cohesive character.

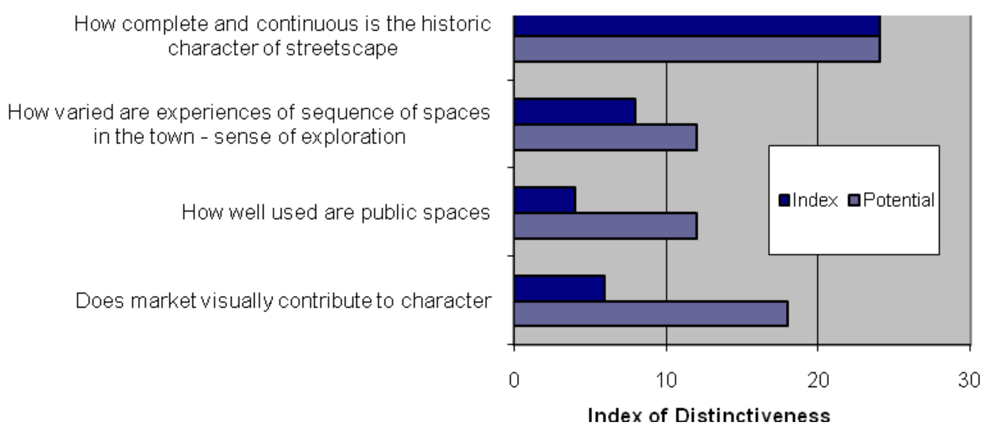
- How complete is the streetscape? Is it continuous, or is there a mix of architectural style and age of buildings?
- Does the town offer a sequence of spaces which invite exploration?
- Are there accessible public spaces that people want to use, to relax, meet others and pass time?
- Is there a market? If so, does it add to the character of the town?

Middleham scored 64% on this measure – a very respectable score. On the positive side, the historic character of the streetscape is considered to have suffered very little evident loss and is thus both complete and continuous. There is some variety of spaces within the town centre, although the character is generally consistent and homogenous, with a culmination at the castle.

The public spaces are generally well used and there is significant social interaction, although some spaces are blighted by the high levels of car parking.

The market place is a significant asset, although the lack of a regular town market is results in less vibrancy.

Figure 29 Distinctiveness Survey – Results for Townscape



Streetscape

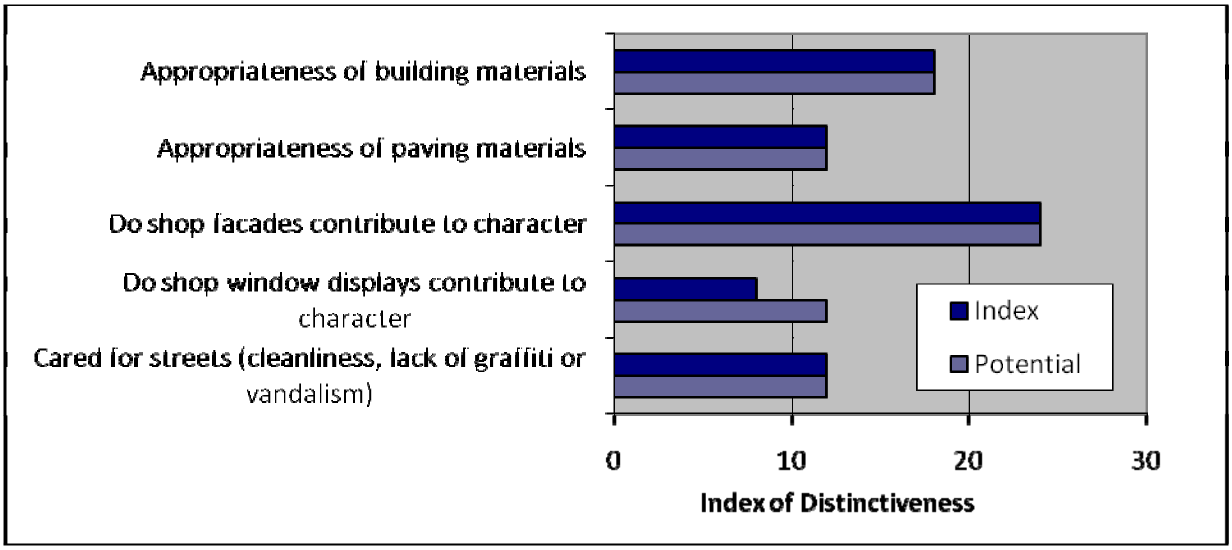
The streetscape element of the survey looks at how the street fixtures and fabric contribute to the distinctiveness of the town.

This part of the survey includes:

- The use of appropriate building and paving materials;
- The extent to which the shop facades and shop windows are appropriate and contribute to the character of the town; and
- The state of maintenance of the street – street cleaning, lack of vandalism or graffiti.

Both the building and paving materials were judged to be highly appropriate and the majority of the shops and restaurant facades contributed strongly to the town's character. Some of the shop and restaurant window displays were a little less effective in their contribution. However, the streets are well cared for and there is very little sign of vandalism or graffiti.

Figure 30 Distinctiveness Survey – Results for Streetscape



Street Elements and Furniture

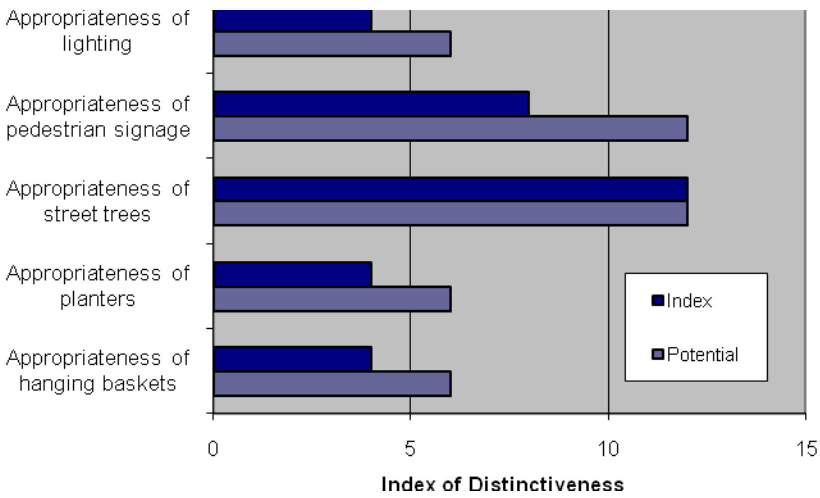
The street elements section examines the contribution of the street fittings to the overall distinctiveness, including:

- The appropriateness of the street furniture, planters and signage;
- Does the lighting contribute to the town's character?
- Are there trees on the street and do they fit with the built environment?
- Are hanging baskets contributing to the overall effect?

Again, the town centre scored well on these indicators, rating 74% overall. The street furniture was judged to be appropriate in scale and character, without being too obtrusive. However, some upgrading would be desirable and there is no public shelter from the weather. Signage and lighting provision within the town is adequate.

There are few trees on the street, although many on the approaches to the town and in gardens and appropriate (ie minimal) use of planters in the centre. Occasional hanging baskets add an element of colour.

Figure 31 Distinctiveness Survey – Results for Street Elements and Furniture



Overall Distinctiveness Profile

Overall, Middleham rated a total of 382 points out of a potential score of 600, which renders it a very distinctive town, given its limitations of size and small retail footprint.

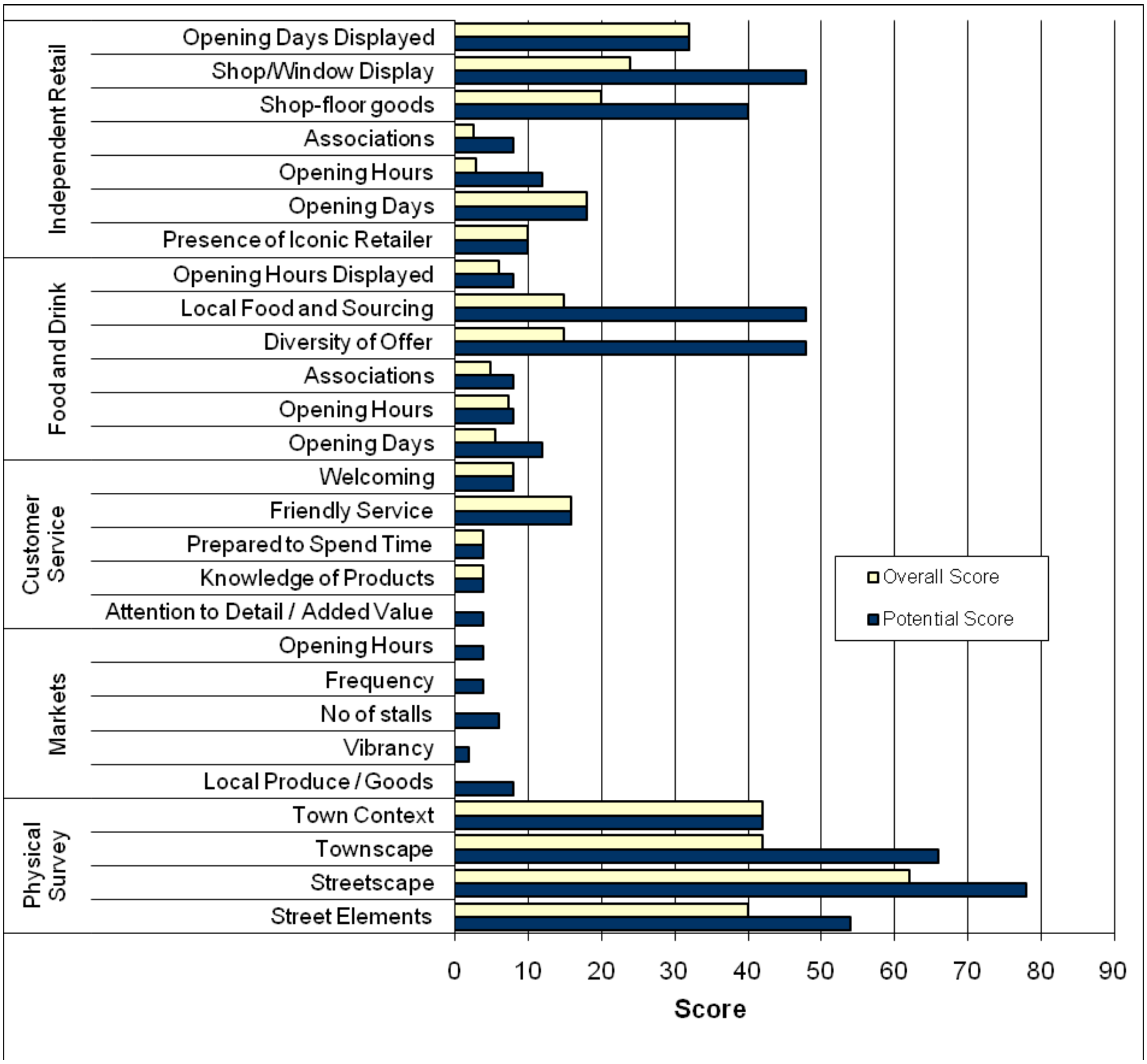
The high quality built environment, intact mediaeval and Georgian architecture and highly scenic backdrop combine to produce an excellent canvas for the creation of a truly distinctive destination.

The range of businesses demonstrates the demand for both basic convenience supplies and visitor requirements. The continuing presence of vacant premises is a threat to the overall attractiveness of the retail centre.

Key issues for consideration include:

- Greater promotion and acknowledgement of local food and drink and increased presence of the same in food outlets;
- Creation of some added value, such as common branding or promotions;
- The establishment of a small regular market, either general or specialist, in the town centre;
- Collective action amongst traders to encourage owners of derelict or vacant premises to tidy and enhance street frontages; and
- Consideration of how levels of parking in the town centre could be reduced, to free up the market square.

Figure 32 Distinctiveness Survey – Overall Results

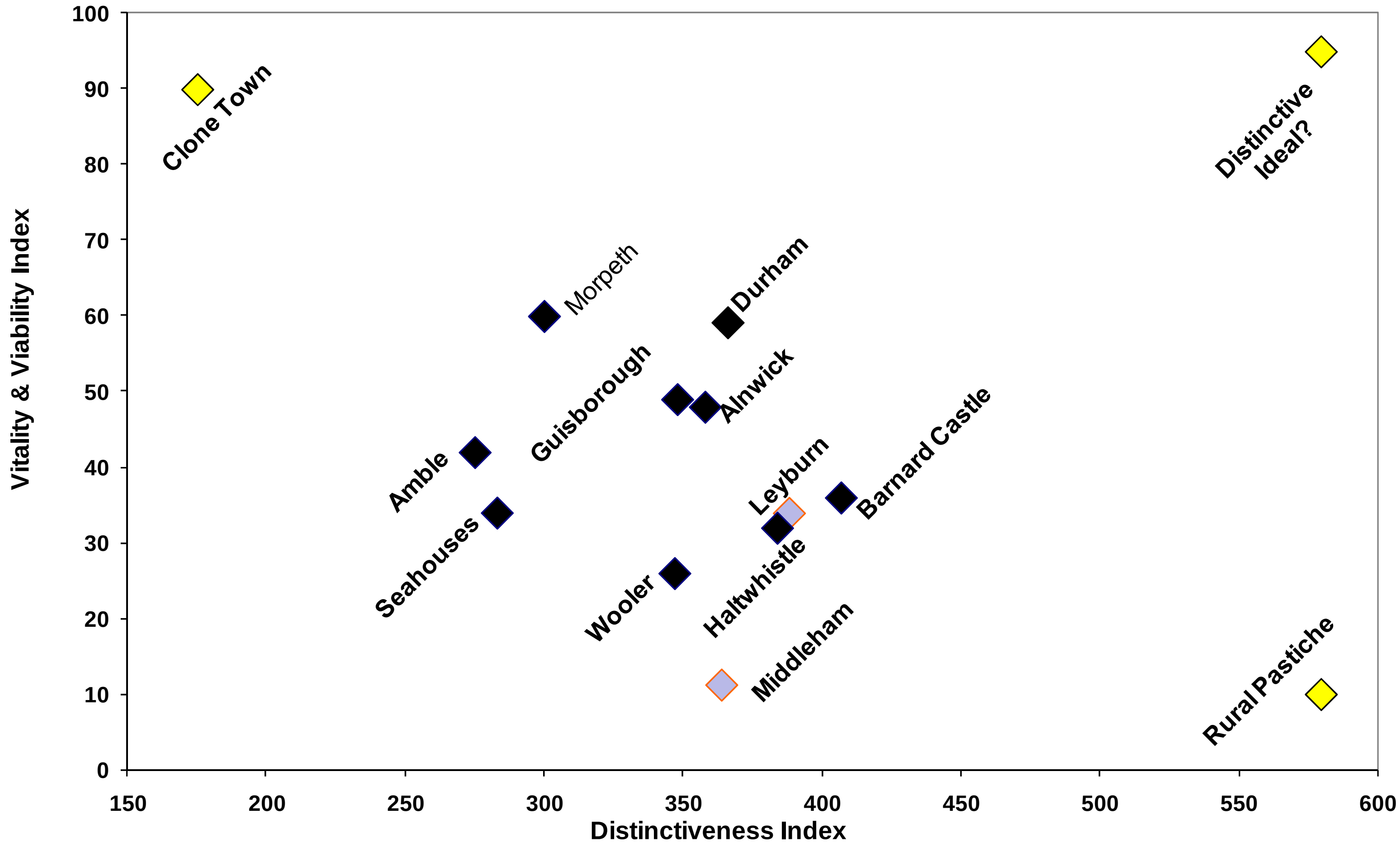


By plotting the overall distinctiveness score against that for vitality and viability, we can see Middleham in relation to other (larger) towns that have been through the Retail Distinctiveness process. The majority of these at present are in NE England, but the results show some interesting comparators.

For example, Middleham is clearly low on vitality and viability, as evidenced by the very small number of retail premises. However, in terms of distinctiveness, the town scores very well. The aspiration of the town should be to move up and to the right on the graph. This requires a mix of two factors:

- Encouraging the Middleham community and its hinterland to make full use of what the town has to offer; and
- Expanding the tourism offer to encourage visitors to extend their dwell time by exploring the town, dining out and ideally staying for a night or two.

Figure 33 Middleham: Distinctiveness vs Vitality and Viability



5.5. Tourism Accommodation in Middleham

Middleham offers a good selection of accommodation for a small community, ranging from good quality private and public hotels, through pubs with accommodation to guest houses and self-catering.

We estimate that there are some 60-80 serviced accommodation spaces within the town, with probably 24-30 self-catering places in addition.

Table 2 Visitor Accommodation in Middleham[26]

	Name	No. of bedspaces, units or pitches
Hotels Inns or pubs with accommodation	White Swan Black Swan Hotel Waterford House Hotel Richard III	
Guesthouses/B&Bs	Middleham Grange Yore View Jasmine House Domus The Priory Chapelfields	 3 en-suite rooms 3 en-suite rooms
Self-Catering	Honeykiln Cottage Jade Cottage Stonecroft Middle Cottage Demonicus Cottage Grange Cottage	Sleeps 4 Sleeps 4
Camping and Caravan Sites	None Identified	

5.6. Attractions near Middleham

There are a number of high profile attractions in and around Middleham. These include:

- Middleham Castle;
- The Forbidden Corner;
- Bolton Castle;
- Constable Burton Hall and Gardens;
- The Wensleydale Railway; and
- Jervaulx Abbey;

[26] Awaiting confirmation from North Yorkshire Tourism

6. Workshop Outputs

Three workshops were held in Middleham to take the baseline forward into devising actions plans.

- Workshop 1 presented the evidence base and looked at current visitors to the town;
- Workshop 2 comprised a thorough SWOT analysis of factors affecting Middleham; and
- Workshop 3 took themes from the previous elements of the work and used these as a basis for discussion of potential ideas and actions.

6.1. Vision

A vision for Middleham, which captures the township's aspirations for the future, was developed during the project process as a culmination of group discussions and idea sharing. The vision is intended to focus the efforts of those involved in carrying out the action plan to achieving the specified objective. In effect, it is the town's mission statement for its economy, environment and society. The vision statement will guide the delivery of the action plan and it is essential therefore that it encompasses a holistic impression of the town and the surrounding hinterland from a visitor's perspective.

> The future for Middleham is as a vibrant, sustainable and unique township that provides for the needs of its community and visitors alike. Middleham will be renowned as the Northern Centre of racehorse training with a well developed and diverse economy that incorporates the township's historic significance, arts, heritage and beautiful natural setting. With its stunning Georgian architecture and excellent hospitality, Middleham will provide the perfect setting for a relaxed visit to Wensleydale.

6.2. Visitor Journey and Segmentation

In order to see Middleham as a visitor might, workshop participants were encouraged to see their town as a first time visitor might. In order to do this, small groups were given roles, representing different market segments, and were asked to think about their expectations from a trip to Middleham. They were then asked to compare this with the reality of the town, to see which visitors it might appeal to the most and also where the gaps in provision lie.

To help them in their thinking, visitor segments based on the Ark Leisure model were used. These were as follows:

Eventeers / Occasioneers Visit the region for a specific occasion or event, possibly to be with family or friends. They stay for a limited amount of time although tend to stay in commercial accommodation they are one of the lowest spending groups.
Explorers These people have chosen to stay in the area to explore the region and visit the heritage attractions on offer. They are drawn to the area because it is a place they haven't experienced and they want to

try new things.
Creatures of Habit This segment chooses their destination because they are familiar with it, or what it has to offer. They are doing similar activities to the explorers, visiting the countryside and towns, historical and heritage attractions.
Family Sightseers This segment consists mainly of families that are spending quality time together going round the family and heritage attractions in the region.
Rural Hikers This segment is choosing North Yorkshire for the countryside and the scenery, but more so for the activities they can do in the countryside like serious walking
Go for its This is a very active segment that seems willing to give many things a try. They are a young segment with a male bias and are most likely to be travelling in an adult only group.

The three segments chosen as current and future visitors by the group were (in order):

1. Creatures of Habit;
2. Explorers; and
3. Rural Hikers.

Creatures of Habit

This segment wishes to visit North Yorkshire to explore the region and visit the heritage attractions on offer. They are choosing North Yorkshire because it is a familiar location to them. They are doing familiar activities in terms of exploring the towns and the countryside as well as visiting historical and heritage attractions but are looking to slow down and rejuvenate themselves.

This segment is slightly older than average with a higher propensity for being above 45 years and in terms of life stage they are more likely to be in the older family or old with no children stages.

Short breaks are their most common choice but this segment has a higher propensity than average to stay for more than seven nights, in self catering or camping accommodation. They are one of the lowest spending segments.

Explorers

This segment consists of people that are visiting North Yorkshire for the first time, again to explore and visit the heritage attractions on offer. This group are influenced by visiting a destination they have not been to before and wanting to experience something new.

They are the oldest segment with the highest proportion of over 55s (30%) and are most likely to be travelling as a couple. They are slightly more likely than average to be travelling as part of an organised tour.

They are more likely than other visitor groups to be staying in guest houses or B&Bs, highlighting the slower speed of holiday and desire for accommodation offering the personal service they desire.

A greater proportion of visitors from this segment come from the North West of England and the South East of England.

They spend a significant amount on accommodation but compared with a number of the other segments they do not spend a significant amount on other elements of their holiday.

Rural Hikers

This segment is choosing North Yorkshire for the countryside and the scenery, but more so for the activities they can do in the countryside, such as serious walking. They are also choosing North Yorkshire because it is somewhere new for them.

They are there to rejuvenate and to slow down, but this is more likely from their everyday routine, due to the fact that they are participating in serious walking whilst on their trip.

This segment tends to be slightly older than the average visitor, favouring the over 45s and is most likely to be travelling as a couple.

Although short breaks account for the majority of trips among this segment, trips of 7 nights are higher among this segment than many of the others.

They tend to favour the types of accommodation that are available in the rural areas namely guest houses / B&Bs or camping and caravanning.

Summary

The segments chosen by the stakeholder group all share some similar characteristics. They are older than average and are looking for a quiet, stimulating environment, centred on rurality and heritage. They are generally lower spending (with the exception of the Explorer segment spends on accommodation) and likely to favour guest houses, B&Bs and self-catering for longer breaks.

Whilst these segments fit with the main offer in and around Middleham, the economic contribution of tourism could possibly be boosted by seeking to attract a younger, higher spending market segment. Although Middleham has an excellent family attraction in the Forbidden Corner, stakeholders did not perceive the town to serve the family market at present.

6.3. SWOT

An extensive and detailed analysis of Middleham's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) was undertaken throughout the study process. It was carried out during the initial and subsequent wider workshop sessions, allowing detailed input from the workshop attendees as well as comments from stakeholder interviews. The SWOT analysis provided a number of general points about the township which have subsequently been categorised into four broad areas, economic, tourism, social and environmental. Within each category, the points have grouped in common themes to provide a holistic representation of the SWOT as shown below. Where applicable a letter, referring to a specific part of the SWOT has been appended to the item in brackets.

Economic	Tourism
Retail • Lack of Specialist Retail (W) • Scope for Collective Art Gallery (O) • Threat of Business Closures (T) **Horse Race Training** • Housing Issues (W, T) • Part of a Regional Racing Strategy? (O) • Threat of Recession Affecting Investment? (T) **Agriculture** • New Diversification into Racing Supply? (O) • Art (O) • Links to Retail and Tourism (O)	**Business** • Centre for Those Working in Catterick? (O) • Market Business Standard Accommodation (O) • Need for Excellent Customer Service Skills (W,O) • Lack of mobile phone connectivity (W) **Walkers / Country Sports / Equine** • Scope for Tours Linked to Races and Yard Visits (O) • Package Tours for Potential Investors? (O) • Viewing Platform on Gallops? (O) • Links Between Racing and Country Sports (O) **Food and Drink** • High End & Family Eating not Well Catered (W) • Scope for Clearer Promotion of Local Food (O) **Marketing** • Links with Harrogate not Effective (W) • Wensleydale Lacks Strong Identity (W)

Social	Environmental

Excellent Facilities at Key Centre • Social Cohesion (O) • Ties to Wider Community (O) • Skills and Training (O) **A Place to Live, as Well as Visit** • Strong Community (S) • Threat from Emphasis on Tourism? (T) **Need for Sustainable Employment** • Encourage Entrepreneurship (O) • Lack of Connectivity (W) **Not disability friendly** **Affordable Housing** • Issue of Second / Retirement Homes (W) • Pressure from Stables (T)	**Historic Built Environment** • Excellent Market Place (S) • Scope for Markets / Events (O) • Castle (O) • Theatre / Music? (O) • Restrictions on Activities (W) • Empty Properties (W) • Artworks in Windows? (O) **Transport** • Risk from Shared Use? (T) • Horses and Cars (T) • Poor Public Transport Links (W) • Car Parking Pressures (T) • Traffic Speed Management (O) **Quality of Landscape**

7. Action Plans & Delivery

The SWOT analysis developed in the workshops was distilled into a set of key themes for action plan development. Some of these themes are distilled here, to provide a summary for how the vision for Middleham can be fulfilled.

7.1. Themes and Priorities

Infrastructure and Facilities

There was strong feeling in the workshops that Middleham has to achieve a balance between meeting the needs of the community and those of visitors. Although predominately a well-off, healthy community, there are social issues that need to be addressed – perhaps especially affordable housing, community cohesion, sustainable employment and low skills. The Key Centre is an excellent facility that can provide the venue for services to address some of these issues, including training to upskill the community, services to encourage entrepreneurship and as a social centre to build cohesion.

Housing supply is under pressure from a number of angles: from people moving in to commute to urban centres, from purchase as second homes or for renting out as holiday lets and, above all, from the needs of the racing stables to house their staff in reasonable conditions.

The shortage of housing, along with limited employment opportunities and shortage of leisure facilities are factors in the migration of young people away from Middleham to cheaper locations, such as Catterick. This will have an increasing impact on the vibrancy and indeed the sustainability of the community unless the issue can be addressed.

Middleham could also benefit from becoming better connected in a number of ways. One key issue is the cycling and pedestrian link over the River Ure and to Leyburn. The road bridge is narrow, with poor vision and it is extremely hazardous for those on foot or on a bicycle. Steps should be taken to identify possible means of establishing a safe route, which will benefit residents and visitors alike and improve the connectivity between the two communities.

Connectivity in other areas is also an issue – mobile phone coverage is poor in the village and public transport inadequate, especially in the evenings.

The racehorse training sector has invested in the infrastructure for its activities in recent years, but more could be done to raise the profile of the sector and to build on its benefits to the community. One key area is access to the gallops for tourists. Work needs to be carried out to establish a quality viewing platform and safe access route for visitors. This should be complemented by moves to ensure adequate levels of safety with regard to the shared use of the road from the town centre up to High Moor.

Other opportunities for the sector include measures to build on the local supply chain for goods and services for the sector. This could include supporting local farmers and growers to meet the needs of the stables more effectively, or by encouraging other services to look at the requirements of the industry.

Retail and Tourism

The retail offer in Middleham is limited to some extent by both the size of the settlement and availability of premises. However, there may be scope to increase the niche retail offer, complementing the existing high quality general store, galleries and antiques shop. Hospitality provision is more extensive, with a good selection of food and drink premises, some 60 serviced accommodation bedspaces and a range of non-serviced accommodation. Local attractions – perhaps most notably the Forbidden Corner and Middleham Castle, complement the excellent natural surroundings and spectacle of horses passing through on their way to the gallops.

Action could generally be taken to encourage local hospitality providers to work together to promote an image of excellent service, more extensive use of local produce, provision of business tourism facilities such as free wi-fi and to take full advantage of the assets that Middleham has to offer – most notably the spectacle of racehorse training, the outstanding built and natural heritage and the vibrant arts cluster.

Tourism linked to racehorse training fits well with a general ethos in racing at present that the sport needs to be opened up and marketed to non-traditional racegoers. Middleham has great potential to attract visitors with even a peripheral interest in racing, as it offers an almost unique atmosphere and unrivalled early morning opportunity to see horses being exercised. There is scope for hospitality providers to market linked visits more proactively than at present, incorporating trips to a race meeting, meetings with trainers and (limited) stable visits. There may also be scope for linking these with country sports trips, already common in the local area. Links to the wider racing community across Yorkshire would also be of benefit.

The Town Hall presents another possible opportunity for development in relation to racing tourism. As a prominent building in the centre of the town, the Hall would make an excellent racing heritage museum and hence provide a focus for tourism in the town. At present, the National Racing Museum in Newmarket is the only comparable facility and one in Middleham could serve the North of England. Facilities could include educational trips linked to the national curriculum, displays of existing racing heritage materials, seasonal art exhibitions and lecture programmes linked to racing. Importantly, the museum would provide the ideal co-ordinating body for racing trips as described above (as the one in Newmarket does), which would be income generating and assist sustainability.

Art-based tourism may be another potential growth area, building on existing painting courses in the area and contributing to the strength of the Middleham arts cluster.

Marketing and Awareness

Middleham is well known in certain quarters, but it lacks a strong image in UK terms. The Wensleydale brand is similarly underdeveloped and has not been prominent in tourism marketing under the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate brand.

There is scope for the town to adopt a stronger identity and to market itself to its chosen target segments. Branding of towns is not yet a common tool for building a visitor presence. Many towns have a logo to promote their materials, but this is rarely incorporated into a full brand that places the town in potential visitors' minds.

Arts Culture and Events

Middleham has some significant strengths as a centre of practising artists and offers both gallery space and training courses for residents and visitors. The high quality natural and built environments, along with the daily spectacle of racehorses travelling to and from the gallops, present some excellent inspiration and subject material for a range of working artists.

There is scope to develop a more formalised cluster of working artists in the area, to raise their individual and collective profiles and to bring greater recognition of arts excellence to the area. The Key Centre can play a vital role in stimulating interest in practical arts, through use of space for workshops and exhibitions.

Vacant shop windows and other prominent spaces in Middleham could be utilised as temporary gallery space, both the provide exposure for local artists, but also to mitigate any sense of Middleham being closed for business.

The castle is used for events to a limited extent, although it is acknowledged that there are difficulties in extending these to any great degree.

Delivery Mechanism

The actions plans below summarise the issues and opportunities highlighted in collaboration with the stakeholder group through this study. They can only be taken forward with the willingness and co-operation of all interested parties and subject to the availability of funding.

It is recognised that communities the size of Middleham lack the critical mass and resources to pursue multiple lines of development. Indeed, Middleham has travelled an enormous distance in recent years, thanks to the efforts of its residents. These actions have been tied into wider network activities wherever possible, as this route will remove some of the burden from Middleham itself, whilst achieving the benefits of collaborative action across communities in Lower Wensleydale and Richmondshire as a whole.

The stakeholders who have taken part in the workshops have been dubbed the Middleham Partnership in the action plans. The Partnership, however, will mainly provide the co-ordination for a wider range of stakeholders to deliver the results.

7.2. Actions

Infrastructure & Facilities	**To develop a better-connected Middleham**
	To preserve, develop and invest in the racehorse training infrastructure
Retail & Tourism	**To maintain & develop a strong local, independent retail & hospitality sector**
	To develop further tourism associated with the horse racing industry
Marketing & Awareness	**To develop & market a strong brand for Middleham**
	Promotion of the area to its natural visitor segments
Arts, culture & events	**To develop Middleham as a hub for the arts in Lower Wensleydale**
Delivery Mechanism	**To develop a joined up, proactive approach to delivery**

Actions: Infrastructure & Facilities

To develop a better-connected Middleham	**IF1 – Develop walking, cycling and public transport links to Leyburn**
	IF2- Develop the Key Centre as a hub for business and the community
	Other Recommendations

IF1 – Develop walking, cycling and public transport links between Middleham and Leyburn				
Action **IF1 a**	To build safe, sustainable travel links between Middleham and Leyburn	**Priority** Med	**Cost** £10-£15k initially	**Timescale** 3-5 Years

Description

To work towards an alternative cycleway for the journey from Middleham to Leyburn. In the short-medium term, however, there may scope to create a second bridge over the Ure, with short links either side back to the roadway. This would allow the project to be delivered in phases.

Delivery

Middleham & Leyburn Partnerships, RDC, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Sustrans.

Funding

Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
Leader (Capitalizing on the Environment strand) 40% up to £20K
Sustrans
Safe Routes to School Funding
Aggregates Levy Environmental Fund

Actions

- Convene a meeting of interested parties to discuss the project;
- Seek support for a feasibility study of a cycle way from Middleham to Leyburn, including design and construction of a new cycle bridge over the River Ure;
- Act on the results of the study.

Evidence

The workshops in both Middleham and Leyburn identified that the current road link between Middleham and Leyburn is hazardous for cyclists and walkers, especially the River Ure Bridge.

What Would Success look like?

A well used cycleway between Middleham and Leyburn, encouraging alternatives to car use and increasing community wellbeing.

IF2 – Develop the Key Centre as a hub for business and the community				
Action **IF2 a**	**To expand the activities of the Key Centre, to provide for the needs of existing and start-up businesses**	**Priority**	**Cost**	**Timescale**

<table>
<tr><td>Description

The Key Centre to market its facilities to businesses, for use as conference / meeting / presentation space, hot desking / quiet working and to promote networking.</td><td rowspan="2">Delivery & Funding

Key Centre, Middleham Partnership, RDC, Business Link.

Leader (Supporting Community Provision strand, 40%).

Leader (Developing Effective Business Networking strand, 50%)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Actions
Install wi-fi broadband access across the Key Centre, to meet the needs of business users;
Prepare basic marketing materials to publicise the facilities available at the Centre, that may be of interest to businesses in Wensleydale;
Collaborate with Business Link to prepare a series of seminars aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship or providing upskilling to existing businesses in Lower Wensleydale;
Develop regular business network meetings at the Key Centre to cater for micro-entrepreneurs located away from the main centres of population. These could be aimed at sharing best practice, promoting collaborative approaches to dealing with the difficulties of working in a rural area and possibly joint purchasing schemes.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Evidence

The Key Centre is an excellent facility for Middleham and Lower Wensleydale. Evidence from the workshops shows that although used extensively by some parts of the community, the Centre does not currently function as a business venue, or play a role in stimulating local entrepreneurship.</td><td>What Would Success look like?

A thriving centre, providing a range of packages for local businesses and new start-ups.</td></tr>
</table>

IF3 – Other Recommendations

Lobby for improved mobile phone and broadband coverage

Middleham, in common with other parts of Lower Wensleydale, still suffers from some gaps in mobile phone coverage and variations in broadband access quality and speed. These are barriers to successful business development and can have an impact on business tourism. RDC could consider commissioning an audit of mobile and broadband coverage and use the results to lobby mobile operators and strategic bodies for improvements.

Improve car parking facilities

Car parking in Middleham is frequently full at peak times and the historic townscape is often blighted by large number of cars. A lack of space provides a disincentive for visitors to stop in the town and so businesses may be losing out. There are acknowledged difficulties of locating more land for additional, off centre parking and so other initiatives may have to be considered.

As the market place is not listed as a car park, there are no powers to limit parking in the space. Any charges for parking would imply a business rate liability on the space and would require a planning change of use.

Provision of alternative transport will be limited in scope, given the rural nature of the area. Hence schemes such as park and ride are unlikely to be viable. Current public transport is sporadic and services in the evenings are inadequate, if not non-existent.

Hence the most suitable approach might be to persevere with identifying alternative land for car parking off centre and to supplement this with community initiatives to promote car sharing, cycling and walking where possible.

To preserve, develop and invest in the racehorse training infrastructure	**IF4– Investment in the infrastructure to provide safe and legible access to the gallops, along with good quality facilities for visitors**
	IF5 – Building the local supply chain for the sector
	IF6 – Encouraging inward investment in the sector
	IF8 – Building training and skills supply for the industry

IF4 – To preserve, develop and invest in the Racehorse Training infrastructure				
Action **IF4a**	**Investment in the infrastructure to provide safe and legible access to the gallops, along with good quality facilities for visitors**	**Priority** **Med**	**Cost** **£50k - £100k**	**Timescale** **Med**
Description To develop facilities around the racehorse training infrastructure, which will build economic capacity, strengthen the visitor offer and attract inward investment.		**Delivery & Funding** MTA, RDC, Middleham Partnership Rural Enterprise Investment Programme (RDPE) (50%)		
Actions • Investment in the infrastructure to provide safe and legible access to the gallops, along with good quality facilities for visitors – most notably improved viewing platforms, safe surfaces and access routes. The plans will need to be underpinned by an initial feasibility study for investment and will need to secure matched funding from trainers.				
Evidence Interviews with stakeholders demonstrate that facilities for viewing training on the High Moor are lacking at present. In addition, safe and clearly signed access routes need to be put into place to ensure that visitors can access the moor without endangering other road users or horses travelling from stables out to the moor.		**What Would Success look like?** The racehorse training sector becoming a true tourist attraction, linked closely to the hospitality providers in the area.		

IF5 – Building the local supply chain for the sector				
Action **IF5a**	**To build on the economic impact of the racehorse training sector, by increasing the level of local supplies bought it.**	**Priority** **Med**	**Cost** **£5k Initially**	**Timescale** **Short**

Description

To build on the economic impact of the racehorse training sector, by increasing the level of local supplies bought in, from local farmers and growers, as well as other non-feed supplies.

Delivery & Funding

Middleham Partnership, MTA, YDMT, RDC, Business Link, Yorkshire Forward.

RDPE - Rural Business Support Programme (50% up to £25k)

Rural Enterprise Investment Programme (RDPE) (50%, minimum spend £50k)

Actions

- MTA to conduct an audit of supplies bought in;
- Broker an initial meeting between MTA members and potential local suppliers – a “meet the buyer” event;
- Negotiate discounts for MTA members to promote local suppliers;
- Examine potential for developing new methods of growing / processing / mixing feeds locally.

What Would Success look like?

The racehorse training sector becoming a true tourist attraction, linked closely to the hospitality providers in the area.

Evidence

Our assessment of the racehorse training sector in Middleham estimates that some £15.7m is added to the Wensleydale economy annually as a result of activities in the industry. This could be significantly enhanced if the level of supplies bought locally could be increased from an estimated 40% to, say 60%.

IF6 – Building training and skills supply for the industry				
Action **IF6a**	**To investigate learning opportunities for the racehorse training sector.**	**Priority** **Med**	**Cost** **Depends on scope**	**Timescale** **Med**

Description

To facilitate improved learning development amongst racehorse training staff, by providing locally–based provision, available at times to suit potential learners.

Delivery & Funding

Middleham Partnership, MTA, Racing Welfare, Key Centre, Northern Racing College, Learning and Skills Council (LSC), RDC. Yorkshire Forward.

Actions	
• To work with the Northern Racing College to identify any potential outreach learning opportunities – for example key and technical skills linked to Advanced Apprenticeships; • To work with the Key Centre to establish the potential for drop-in sessions for stable staff.	Leader (Creating Stronger Communities Strand) 40% up to £150,000 RDPE Rural Enterprise Investment Programme (80% with a minimum spend of £50k) LSC
Evidence	**What Would Success look like?**
Discussions in stakeholder workshops described how staff working in the stables could benefits from further training, both sector specific and generic. As the majority of stable staff are away from home, learning could be used to support the activities of Racing Welfare in promoting social inclusion and ensuring their mental and physical wellbeing.	Staff in the racehorse training sector developing faster along the career path. Greater community cohesion and general wellbeing amongst individuals.

IF7 - Other Recommendations for Consideration
• Create inward investor packs to signpost potential investors to relevant contacts, property, local suppliers and other information; • Ensuring planning consent can be granted quickly for potential new or relocating yards, by inputting into the current LDF consultation to make this a priority.

Actions: Retail & Tourism

To maintain & develop a strong local, independent retail & hospitality sector	**RT1 – Protection of Premises**
	RT2 – A Co-ordinated Hospitality Offer
	RT3 – Local Produce Initiative

RT1 – Protection of Premises				
Action	**Protection of Premises**	**Priority** High	**Cost** Low	**Timescale** Short
Description To take steps to protect the remaining retail and hospitality premises in Middleham and to work against any further conversion to private accommodation. **Actions** To investigate whether there is scope for planning protection to restrict change of use from commercial to residential, perhaps through the LDF consultation process.		**Delivery & Funding** Middleham Partnership		
Evidence The retail and hospitality sector in Middleham has been eroded in recent years, with several closures and contractions of existing businesses. It is vital that the remaining premises are protected from conversion to private accommodation, to retain the unique and vibrant character of the town and to prevent it from losing critical mass.		**What does Success look like?** Middleham continues to enjoy a good range of hospitality venues, with a strong and growing independent retail sector.		

RT2 – Development of a Co-Ordinated Hospitality Offer				
Action	**A co-ordinated Hospitality Offer**	**Priority** Med	**Cost** £10k	**Timescale** Med
Description To bring hospitality and tourism providers together across Lower Wensleydale to promote an image of excellent service, more extensive use of local produce, awareness of business tourism needs such as free wi-fi and a collective offer to potential visitors.		**Delivery & Funding** Middleham Tourism Businesses Yorkshire Tourism Business Link		

Actions Convene a meeting of local providers to share best practice and establish a programme of events built around staff training, emerging area tourism policy, collective marketing and supply chains for local produce.	Leader (Developing Effective Business Networking strand) 50%
Evidence There are some excellent tourism providers in and around Middleham, which could form the nucleus of a cluster of well-networked, high quality businesses, catering for discerning clients from the market segments identified in the workshops. Business interviews demonstrate that there is considerable existing business tourism in Middleham. The town provides a pleasant and peaceful setting for those working in Catterick Garrison or other locations towards the A1 to relax and unwind.	**What does Success look like?** Middleham and Lower Wensleydale will become renowned for excellent service, use of local produce and quality accommodation. The area will be prominent in regional marketing.

RT3 - Other Recommendations for Consideration: Local Produce Initiative

- Middleham should lobby its neighbours across Lower Wensleydale to investigate the potential for a local produce initiative, to:
    - increase demand for local foods from residents and hospitality providers;
    - Stimulate production and marketing of local produce;
    - Assist in distribution of local produce across the area.

To further develop tourism associated with the horse racing industry	**RT4 – To develop a co-ordinated approach to the development of racing-linked tourism in Middleham**
	RT5 – Feasibility Study for Use of Middleham Town Hall as a Racing Museum

RT4 – To develop a co-ordinated approach to the development of racing-linked tourism in Middleham

Action **RT4a**	**To develop a co-ordinated approach to the development of racing-linked tourism in Middleham**	**Priority** **High**	**Cost**	**Timescale** **Short - Medium**
Description There is scope for a co-ordinated effort to arrange, brand and market tourism associated with racing in Yorkshire and Middleham should be at the heart of this, given its position as the “Newmarket of the North”.		**Delivery & Funding** Middleham hospitality providers. RDC. North Yorks Tourism. Middleham Trainers’ Association.		

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Leader (Tourism opportunities based upon culture, heritage and environment) 40% up to £20K</td></tr>
<tr><td>Actions
Develop a brand for racing visits, ideally across North Yorkshire, or the whole of Yorkshire (allowing collaboration with Malton trainers);
Develop a flexible package for individual and group visits, based around four core elements:
High quality hospitality, food and accommodation;
Day visit to a race meeting within 2 hours' drive;
After-dinner speaker from one of the Middleham Stables;
Early morning visit to the High Moor, to view racehorses training.
Promote the package through traditional and non-traditional racegoer channels, including a package targeted at visitors to the 2012 Olympics.</td><td>What Would Success Look Like?

Middleham would be recognised across the UK as a premier location for racing tourism.

Regular parties of visitors would boost the visitor economy and help to raise the profile of trainers located in the area.

Occasional new investment would arise from those looking to buy into a horse or share of a horse.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Evidence

The assessment of the racehorse training sector demonstrates the willingness of all stakeholders in the racing industry to market their product to a wider, non-traditional audience.

Currently, there are custom trips available from a number of hospitality operators such as the Black Swan, or through operators such as Middleham Racing Breaks, which include outings to race courses and visits to stables. However, these could be extended by a co-ordinated branding and marketing exercise to bring in a wider range of visitors.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">RT5 – Feasibility Study for Use of Middleham Town Hall as a Racing Museum</td></tr>
<tr><td>Action

RT5 a</td><td>Feasibility Study for Use of Middleham Town Hall as a Racing Museum</td><td>Priority

Med</td><td>Cost

£7K</td><td>Timescale

Short</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Description

To investigate the possible use of Middleham Town Hall as a museum for horse racing heritage and enhanced offices for Racing Welfare.</td><td colspan="3">Delivery & Funding

Middleham Town Council, RDC, MTA

Leader – Capitalising on the Environment Strand (80%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Actions
To undertake a short study examining the feasibility of creating a racing heritage museum. The study should look at the possible</td><td colspan="3">What Would Success Look Like?
A fully costed plan for acquisition and conversion of the Town Hall to provide a</td></tr>
</table>

options for acquiring the building from the Town Council, potential for developing a museum and planning for sustainable funding; • To scope out the level of support within the racehorse training sector and any potential sponsors.	sustainable attraction for Middleham, which also engenders a source of pride amongst current residents.

Evidence

Middleham Town Hall is a key building fronting onto the market square. It is currently underused and in need of renovation / conversion to increase its community benefit.

A museum of racing heritage in Middleham would raise the town's profile amongst the racing fraternity and provide a key tourist attraction to link into other racing-focused initiatives.

For comparator museum see http://www.nhrm.co.uk/index.html

Actions: Marketing & Awareness

To develop & market a strong brand for Middleham	**MA1 – Developing a Brand for Middleham**
Promotion of the area to its natural visitor segments	**MA2 – To Promote and Raise Awareness of Middleham**

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">MA1 – To develop an identity for Middleham</td></tr>
<tr><td>Action
MA1 a</td><td>To develop an identity and brand for Middleham to boost the profile of the town</td><td>Priority
High</td><td>Cost
£5K</td><td>Timescale
Short</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Description
To develop and market a strong brand for Middleham to raise the profile of the town as both a centre for racehorse training and as a focus for arts and heritage. The brand will not compete with umbrella brands for the area, but will provide Middleham with a distinct identity within these.</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="2">Delivery & Funding
Middleham Partnership, MTA, Local Businesses

Possibly Leader (Supporting Community Service Provision strand, 40%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Actions
Develop a brand for the town and create a suite of marketing materials to support it. This will require support from a marketing professional to work with the Partnership to identify a USP for the town and to build a brand around this.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">What Would Success look like?
Middleham has one recognised brand that is used on all its promotional information – providing the town with an identity that can be ‘sold’ to potential visitors.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Evidence
Consultations with stakeholders outside Wensleydale suggest that Middleham is not as well known as its profile in the racehorse training sector suggests it could be. Similarly, its excellent heritage and arts assets could be further promoted across a wider area.</td></tr>
</table>

MA2– To Promote and Raise Awareness of Middleham

<table>
<tr><td>Action
MA2 a</td><td>To Promote and Raise Awareness of Middleham</td><td>Priority
High</td><td>Cost
£10K</td><td>Timescale
Short</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Description
A marketing campaign is required to roll out the newly designed brand. This should set out guidelines to ensure that the brand is used widely and correctly and well as provide an overall marketing strategy for the town.
In addition, the strategy should consider the creation of a network of towns to promote the region as a whole. This would require effective collaboration with neighbouring communities.</td><td colspan="3">Delivery & Funding
Middleham Partnership, MTA, Local Businesses
Possibly Leader (Supporting Community Service Provision strand, 40%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Actions
• Devise a marketing kit, based on the agreed brand, which would provide all businesses and community groups with a unified suite of materials to use on cards, signage, town information and advertising / PR materials. Examples of these from projects developed elsewhere are appended to this report at Appendix 1;
• Secure buy-in from local businesses to ensure that the whole community become ambassadors for the town. Branding could then be adopted in a wide variety of areas – including the Middleham online website, promotional materials, menu cards and carrier bags.</td><td colspan="3">What Would Success look like?
Middleham would be at the forefront as a destination for visitors to the Dales.
Middleham would be recognised across the UK as a premier location for racing tourism.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Evidence
Work elsewhere has shown that the adoption of a unified strategy, even within a small community, can have a strong impact in terms of bringing the business community together, as well as promoting the town to the outside world.</td></tr>
</table>

Actions: Arts, Culture and Events

To develop Middleham as a hub for the arts in Lower Wensleydale	**CE1 – Develop the Key Centre as a hub for Arts Workshops and Exhibitions**
	CE2 – Develop a more effective fine arts cluster in Middleham
	CE3 - Utilise vacant shop windows as display space

Develop the Key Centre as a hub for Arts Workshops and Exhibitions

Action	**Develop the Key Centre as a hub for Arts Workshops and Exhibitions**	**Priority**	**Cost**	**Timescale**
CE1		**Medium**	**£5K**	**Short**

Description

Develop the Key Centre as:

- A hub for participative Arts Workshops for both residents and visitors, offering hands-on coaching and demonstrations by local and visiting artists. The former nursery provides a wet area suitable for a variety of arts activities and this initiative would build on the reputation of the Key Centre as both a hub for the arts and a natural choice of venue for learning;
- An exhibition space for Lower Wensleydale artists.

Actions

- Developing a pilot programme of participative workshops with local artists for residents and visitors;
- Instigate an exploratory programme of exhibitions of local artists' work to test the market.

Delivery & Funding

Arts in Richmondshire (AIR), Middleham artists,

Key Centre,

RDC.

What would Success look like?

A regular programme of participative arts events in the Key Centre, attracting members of the community from across Lower Wensleydale.

A higher profile for Middleham fine art across the region and the establishment of a network of subscribers to the exhibition mailing list.

Recognition of the Key Centre as a key element of the arts network in North Yorkshire.

Evidence

The Key Centre presents an excellent local facility for Middleham, which needs to be used by the community as much as possible.

Development of arts workshops would serve a dual purpose: Building the image of Middleham as a centre for the arts and helping to ensure the financial viability and sustainability of the Key Centre.

Exhibition space has been identified as lacking throughout the Dales. Although Nancy Murgatroyd has developed the Hill House Gallery in Middleham, this is largely an online presence, with physical opening limited to three or four times a year.

The Yorkshire Dales Leader Programme aims to create stronger communities through the creation of local hubs to increase community led skills development, foster greater community achievement and sense of place. The Key Centre is ideally placed to form part of a network of such hubs.

Develop a more effective fine arts cluster in Middleham

Action CE2	To develop a more effective fine arts cluster through promoting the Open Studios weekends in Middleham	Priority Medium	Cost £5K	Timescale Short

Description

The Open Studios initiative offers an excellent opportunity for the promotion of both individual artists and of Middleham as a whole. It can also help promote increased networking between artists and contribute to the development of a recognised arts cluster in and around Middleham.

Delivery & Funding

AIR, Middleham artists, RDC.

Artistic Dales Leader Strand (40%)

Actions

- Develop a more cohesive arts cluster in Middleham, through co-ordination of an arts practitioners group;
- Promote Middleham artists through the Open Studios initiative, ensuring that an increased profile for the cluster is achieved;
- Support the AIR initiative to provide creative business support for artists, enabling more effective promotion of the cluster.

What Would Success Look Like?

A higher profile for Middleham in the Open Studios brochure and marketing.

A well-networked and marketed arts community in Middleham, with regular collective exhibitions.

Evidence

Although some key artists such as Nancy Murgatroyd and Winifred Hodge are represented in the Open Studios event, Middleham itself is not widely acknowledged as a location for artists (literally not featuring on the Open Studios map).

The Yorkshire Dales Leader Programme aims to improve the commercial strength of artists in the Leader area, by developing new markets, creating a higher profile and by promoting the area to new audiences.

Utilise vacant shop windows as display space

Action CE3	To work with shop and other commercial premises owners to use vacant display space as a temporary art or craft gallery.	Priority Med	Cost Low	Timescale Quick Win

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Description

Any vacant shops in Middleham could provide additional display space for event information, arts or other cultural displays. This would serve two purposes, to provide gallery space and also to utilise otherwise unattractive vacant space. Although Middleham has only a small number of commercial premises, any vacant shop fronts are highly noticeable and detrimental to the character of the town.

To avoid the need to pay business rates on the premises, shop displays should be rotated within the allotted six week period.</td><td>Delivery & Funding

Middleham Partnership, RDC, Arts Community.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">What does Success look like?

A town centre without obviously vacant shops, restaurants, or other prominent buildings</td></tr>
<tr><td>Actions

• Appoint an arts practitioner to manage the production and coordination of shop window displays;
• Achieve buy in from vacant shop owners.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Evidence

By increasing the vibrancy of the town’s vacant retail sites, future investment could be stimulated.</td></tr>
</table>

7.3. Delivery Mechanism

The delivery mechanism is an essential function in ensuring the successful delivery of the action plan. It is essential that the delivery partnership itself is adequately equipped with the necessary skills needed to deliver the actions set out in this plan. It will also need sufficient funding in order to carry out the work needed to instigate and coordinate the suggested actions.

It is suggested that a suitable delivery mechanism for the effective delivery of this management plan will be known as the Middleham Partnership developed as a result of the Lower Wensleydale study.

The diagram in **Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.**Figure 35 depicts a schematic of how the delivery mechanism should be designed. It is expected that the ‘core’ of the partnership should comprise representation from the business community, the town council and the district council, as well as other interest groups. Collectively, these representatives will take responsibility for coordinating the delivery of the action plan. That is not to suggest that these individuals will be responsible for the delivery of all of the actions, more that they will be the links between the various organisations and individuals from within those organisations who are necessary in order to carry out specific actions.

The diagram (**Error! Reference source not found.**Figure 35.) shows the partnership group at the centre of the radial, with links directly into four key organisations / groups (blue) and 1 funding avenue. It is from the four groups that the core members of the partnership will be sourced. In turn, these individuals will have links with other organisations / groups necessary for a variety of tasks and will be drawn upon as required to meet individual action’s requirements. In effect, for the delivery of each action the core partnership group will determine the persons, organisations and funding bodies required to carry out the actions and will effectively establish an ‘action project sub-group’. This group will work together to successfully deliver the action as specified in this plan.

For example, if an action requires the development of a physical structure, the planning department at the district council would need to be consulted and the link to that department would come from the partnership's district council representative. Similarly, if an action requires buy in from the accommodation sector of the town, the business representative would provide the necessary link. Relevant persons from with the business community who would be crucial to the delivery of an action which required the backing of the accommodation sector would be drafted in to carry out that particular action.

At a minimum therefore, the leadership group is expected to comprise the following:

Figure 34 Partnership Core Composition

Organisation	Number of Representatives
Business Representatives	1 – 2
Town Council	1 - 2
Interest Groups	1 – 2
District Council	1
Total	4 – 7

Source: Miller Research (UK) Ltd. 2009.

Once established, the core partnership group should arrange to meet on a regular basis to arrange the delivery of the action plan. Action sub-groups will be established by recruiting the necessary persons to ensure the delivery of the action.

Figure 35 Middleham Partnership and Relationship to other Stakeholders

8. Appendix – Example of Town Branding – Draft Concept for Guisborough

North York Moors
Guisborough
be moor active

029 2061 4064 studio@capellcreative.co.uk

Alternative Straplines

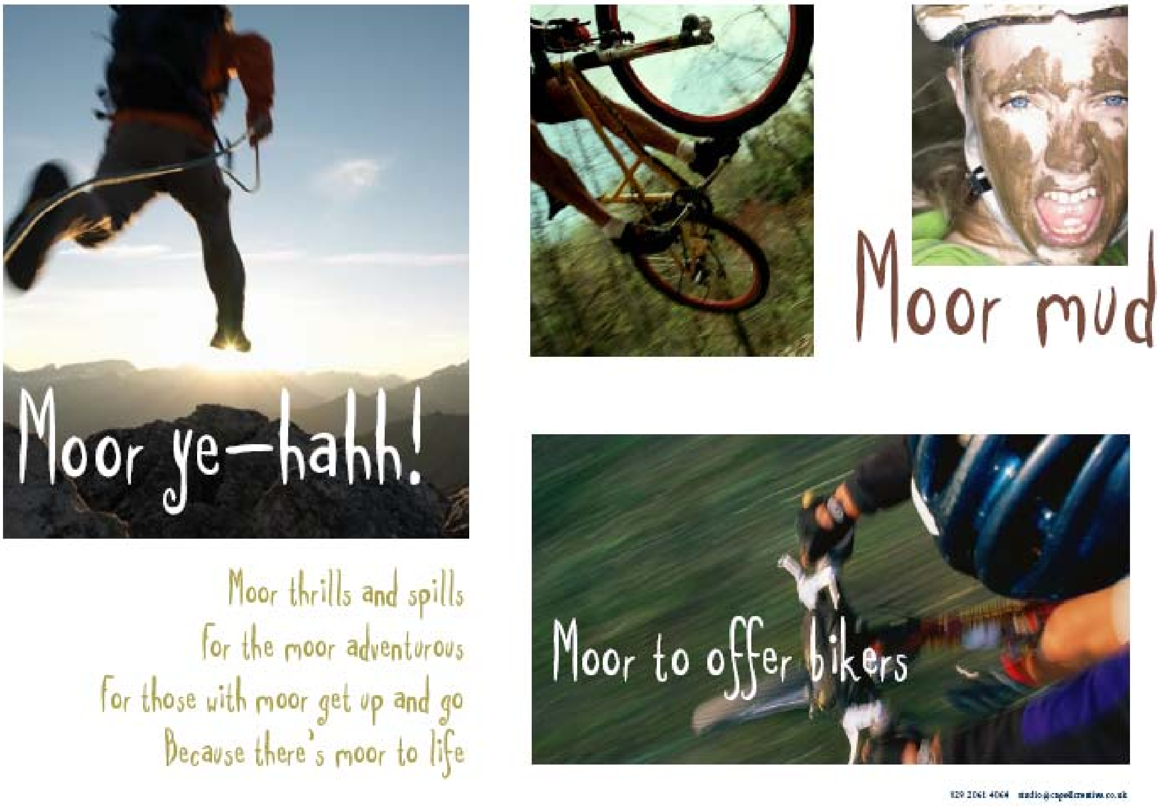
Much Moor
Do moor, much moor
So much moor to enjoy
So much moor to do
So much moor on your doorstep
Be moor active
Moor active breaks
A moor convenient base
A moor convenient location
Because you want moor from your break!
Enjoy it moor often
Treat yourself moor often
More than you can squeeze into one day/break
What moor do you want?

Positional statements

Gateway to the North York Moors
Springboard to the North York Moors
Your route to the North York Moors
The big heart of the North York Moors

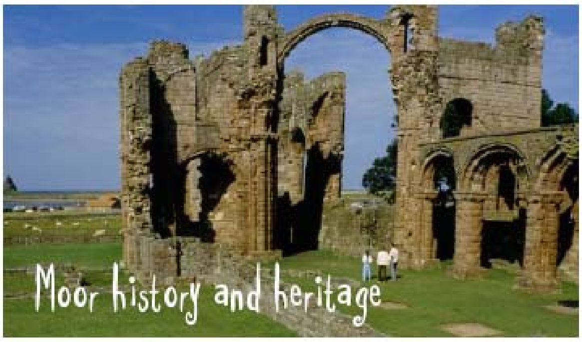
Copyline concept

Get the Guisborough goose bumps
Just thinking about it!
Get the Guisborough goose bumps
Guess where? Guisborough!
Topping the bill (Roseberry Topping)
Get fast tracked to the top! (Roseberry Topping)
Walk, rest and play


Moor ye-hahh!
Moor mud
Moor thrills and spills
For the moor adventurous
For those with moor get up and go
Because there's moor to life
Moor to offer bikers


Moor to offer diners
Be moor pampered
Be moor relaxed
Moor to savour
Moor indulgence
Moor me-time!
Moor to offer all round


Promotional concept
The Guisborough guest list
Moor relaxed
Moor pubs
Moor cream?
Moor cake?
Moor time to enjoy
Moor coffee?



A moor friendly welcome
Moor for the family
Moor leisurely walks
Moor to offer culture vultures

Moor for less (Voucher scheme)

Moor culture
Expect moor

Moor choice