

# Achieving Sustainable Communities in Richmondshire



**plan**ourfuture

A Local Development Framework  
Issues and Options Consultation Paper

November 2009





# Foreword

What will your town or village be like by 2026? It's not an easy question, but it is one that we need to try and answer with your help. Richmondshire's Local Development framework (LDF) will help shape future development across all parts of the District outside of the National Park. This includes Richmond, Leyburn, Catterick Garrison and the villages to the north and south. The National Park Authority is responsible for development in the rest of Richmondshire.

The LDF will be a set of policy documents that shape an overall direction for development in these places. These policies will help determine future planning applications for, amongst other things, housing, economic or green energy developments, once the LDF is adopted. Before we can write these policies we must understand local conditions. We need to find out about where people live and work and how they travel. We also need to recognise the sensitivity of the local environment and our local heritage to development.

This consultation report is one in a series of ten:

1. Achieving Sustainable Communities - Settlement Hierarchy
2. Achieving Sustainable Communities in the Central Area
3. Achieving Sustainable Communities in Lower Wensleydale
4. Achieving Sustainable Communities in the A66 North Richmondshire Area.

5. Scale and Distribution of Development
6. Economy
7. Environmental Assets
8. Housing
9. Infrastructure
10. Climate Change

Each report asks a series of questions about issues we need to debate. For example, how should we treat small villages in terms of development? Or how should Richmond and Catterick Garrison grow? You can make detailed responses to any of the questions using the on-line form on our website or by writing to us using the contacts below. Or simply get in touch with us to talk about the LDF.

Please ask if you would like this document in a different format or language.

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# 1. The Purpose of the Local Development Framework

- 1.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the new spatial plan for the eastern area of Richmondshire outside of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is about helping shape a sustainable future for the different towns, villages, and their surrounding areas which make up this part of the District.
- 1.2 The fundamental purpose of the LDF, in line with Government guidance, is to contribute to “the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community” (PPS1) - or in summary, to help achieve sustainable communities. It supports the overarching Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), which addresses needs identified across local communities and informs local initiatives and resource allocation to meet those needs. The LDF provides the spatial framework of how local communities work with each other to provide the qualities set out below:
- 1.3 At the heart of the LDF will be the Core Strategy. This will establish an appropriate spatial approach for achieving sustainable communities in this part of our District, which reflects local circumstances, problems and opportunities. One of the key tasks in developing a Core is to identify the characteristics of our different places, their problems and opportunities and, by working with communities and our partners, achieve a common view on what should happen to them. This means understanding the nature of our different settlements, establishing what roles they play now, and determining what they could and should play in the future.
- 1.4 This summary paper is the first in a series, and sets the scene for a set of more detailed papers. It builds on the preceding “Plan our Future” consultation, which we carried out in April 2009 to help us understand how local people thought about the settlements they lived in and how they met local needs for housing, work and leisure. The links to these papers are explained throughout and they will cover:

## Purpose of this Paper

### Sustainable Communities

...are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life.

Sustainable communities should be...

- active, inclusive and safe
- well run
- environmentally sensitive

- well designed and built
- well connected
- thriving
- well served
- fair for everyone

Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity  
- ODPM 2005



#### Spatial Issues

- Achieving Sustainable Communities - Settlement Hierarchy
- Achieving Sustainable Communities in the Central Area
- Achieving Sustainable Communities in Lower Wensleydale
- Achieving Sustainable Communities in the A66 Area

#### Strategic Issues

- Housing Market Issues
- Economy
- Environmental Assets
- Infrastructure
- Climate Change
- Scale and Distribution of Development

- 1.5 This paper looks at identifying the different places covered by the LDF and seeking views on which should be at its focus. One of the most important ways in which the LDF can contribute to the development of sustainable communities will be by developing the concept of a **sustainable settlement hierarchy**. This will form, through spatial planning, the basis of helping to organise activities, new development and patterns of service delivery by all our partners, in the most sustainable way possible. It's about establishing the LDF's spatial building blocks. It considers the relationship between the communities which make up this part of Richmondshire - and identifies the hierarchy of sustainable settlements, based on the role each place performs. At the heart of the hierarchy is Richmond, which together with the Garrison provides the greatest range of services for our residents. It then reaches out, ultimately, to our smallest villages and hamlets, with few if any facilities.



## 2. The Wider Context

2.1 Before considering the settlement hierarchy and sub-divisions of the District area covered by the LDF, the implications of four important parts of the policy context need to be set out:

- the Richmondshire Sustainable Community Strategy
- the North Yorkshire Sustainable Community Strategy
- the Regional Spatial Strategy
- the relationship with our neighbours

Each of these create goals for local communities, which an effective and appropriate LDF can help deliver

### The Richmondshire Sustainable Community Strategy

2.2 The Richmondshire 2021 Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), published sets out a very clear vision and direction for the future of our District. The Government expects the LDF to provide the spatial dimension of the SCS, and be a key means of delivery for its proposals. The Richmondshire SCS has many significant spatial elements, which are particularly important in terms of developing the LDF's approach to achieving a sustainable pattern of settlements, including the objectives of:

- channelling most future investment and growth towards a balanced programme of development in the Catterick Garrison area..... This programme is intended to make the Garrison area a focal point for the District, with new homes, updated services, better leisure

facilities and a new town centre to support both military and civilian growth, whilst ensuring this complements rather than competes with Richmond's role as a District Service Centre

- continuing to encourage investment to support the roles of Richmond and Leyburn (along with Hawes and Reeth within the Yorkshire Dales National Park) as local service centres, safeguarding the level of services they offer and maintaining growth in ways that do not harm their important heritage, landscape and environmental value
- investing in better transport within key road corridors.

### The North Yorkshire Sustainable Community Strategy

2.3 Richmondshire is part of the largest county of North Yorkshire and shares many issues in common with its neighbouring rural districts. The North Yorkshire Sustainable Community Strategy helps focus on these issues and identifies the following priority areas for action for 2008-2011:

- Access to public services and public transport
- Affordable housing
- Alcohol
- Children and young people
- Community Cohesion
- Community Safety
- Economy and enterprise
- Environment
- Health and being
- Older people



2.4 The Richmondshire LDF will help take our network of local communities forward into the future and is central to the achievement of many of the underlying actions supporting these priorities. One example is the provision of appropriate sites for development. These should enable affordable housing to be developed, where it is most needed and with good access to local services. Another example, would be to ensure that development is progressed in such a way as to respect our environmental assets and also to minimise its impact on climate change. It is important to ensure that the LDF takes full opportunity to contribute to the delivery of these objectives through enabling development. A comprehensive LDF which fully responds to the objectives of the District and County Sustainable Community Strategies should ensure that locally identified priorities are fully delivered.

### The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

2.5 The RSS for Yorkshire and the Humber (approved in May 2008) sets the regional and sub-regional policy context for the Richmondshire LDF. The LDF must be in “general conformity” with the RSS, which provides strategic policy guidance that needs to be taken into consideration in preparing the Core Strategy.

2.6 The LDF plan area lies predominantly within the “Vales and Tees Links” sub area established by the RSS, although Leyburn and the area to the west is part of the RSS “Remoter Rural” sub area.

2.7 The RSS indicates that this part of the Vales and Tees Links sub area is subject to potential development pressures from the main urban areas of the Tees Valley City Region. Richmond and the Garrison are jointly identified by the RSS as a “Principal Town”, providing a range of services with a catchment that extends westwards into the adjoining Remoter Rural sub area. Although the RSS does not anticipate the role of Richmond itself to change during the plan period, the Garrison is expected to have a different future. The potential development at the army base is also likely to support widening of the range of its services and facilities, complementary to those in Richmond, such that together they perform an enhanced Principal Town role. Development at the Garrison is also seen as having the potential to help reduce development pressure in Richmond, which is close to the North Pennine Dales and Meadows Special Area of Conservation.

2.8 The part of the LDF area around Leyburn which lies within the RSS Remoter Rural sub area is a small element of a wider upland area recognised for its environmental quality where the general policy approach is underpinned by safeguarding important environmental designations. Development generally is expected to be limited and restricted to Leyburn as a Local Service Centre. Development at Leyburn is expected to contribute to sustaining its role as a local centre whilst addressing affordable local housing needs or providing opportunities to promote economic diversification which uses the built and natural assets of the area in a sustainable way.

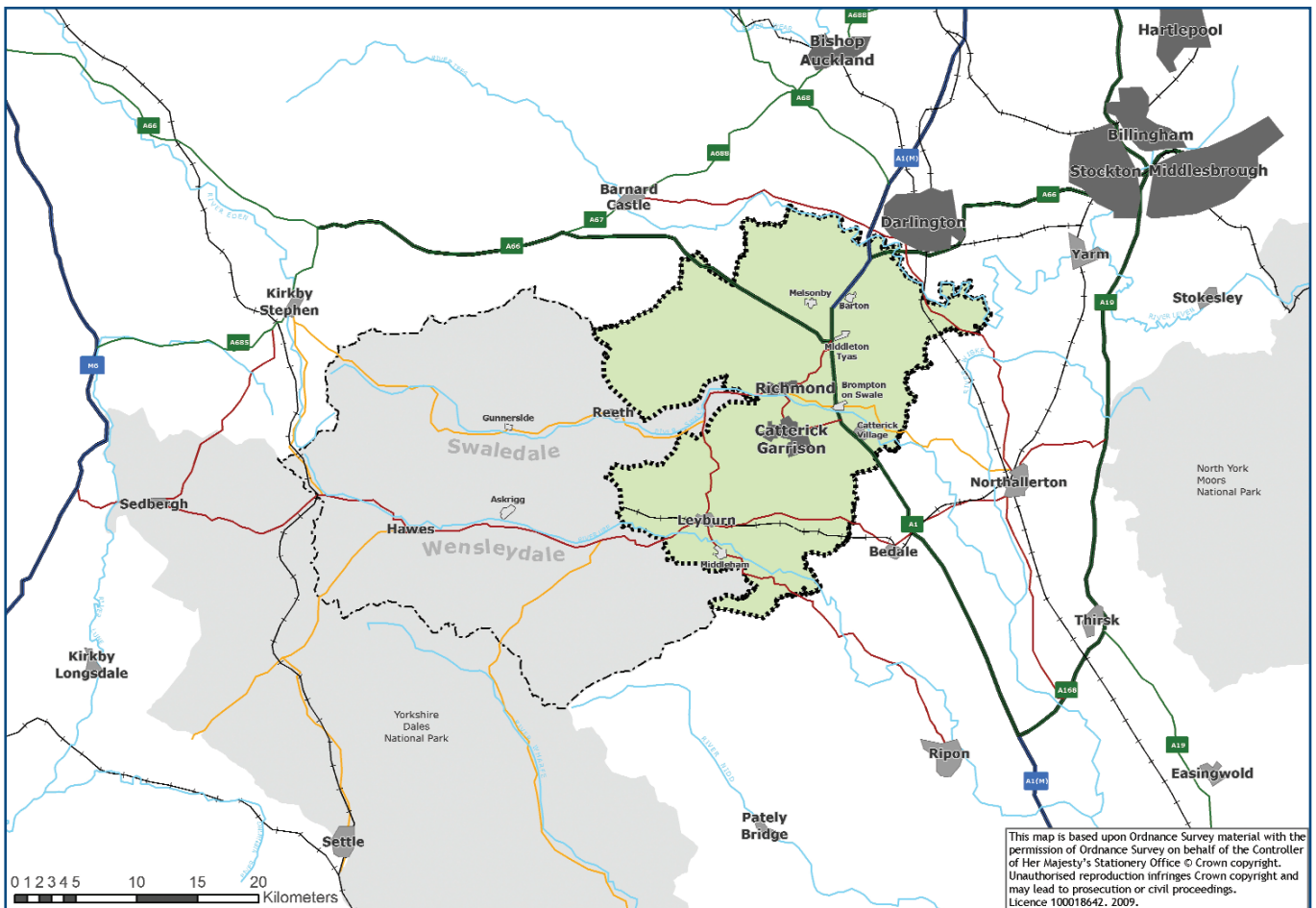




## Relationships with our neighbours

2.9 Richmondshire is not an island. The RSS sets out the regional policy context, and also provides a strong steer to the planning of the RSS sub-regions (Remote Rural and Vales & Tees Links) within which the LDF area of our District sits. Relationships with our immediate neighbours are important considerations in developing our view on a sustainable pattern of settlements within the Richmondshire LDF.

2.10 Many parts of the District look for their services and employment as much, or even more outside the District than they do within. Many parts of the District, particularly in the north, look to Darlington and the Tees Valley; equally there is a strong pull towards Northallerton to the east and south east. Outside the LDF area, half of the District lies within the National Park and there are key relationships especially between areas covered by the LDF and the neighbouring parts of the Park. The map below sets out Richmondshire's LDF area in its geographical context.





## 3. The Different Parts of Richmondshire

- 3.1 So, what are the places which make up our District? While there are similarities between all parts of Richmondshire, there are three broad areas which are suggested to have enough locally different characteristics to warrant separate consideration in the LDF. These flow from the nature of the places, employment or orientation within or without the District. It is proposed that these three areas form essential building blocks in developing the LDF.
- 3.2 The three areas are based on the areas now developed by the Council and our partners for corporate “area-based working” - but merging the area-working defined “Garrison” area with the rest of the “Centre” area to form a single Central area, which ensures that a clear focus is maintained on the joint Principal Town. These areas are shown on the following map:

- 3.3 The three Sub Areas comprise:

### Central

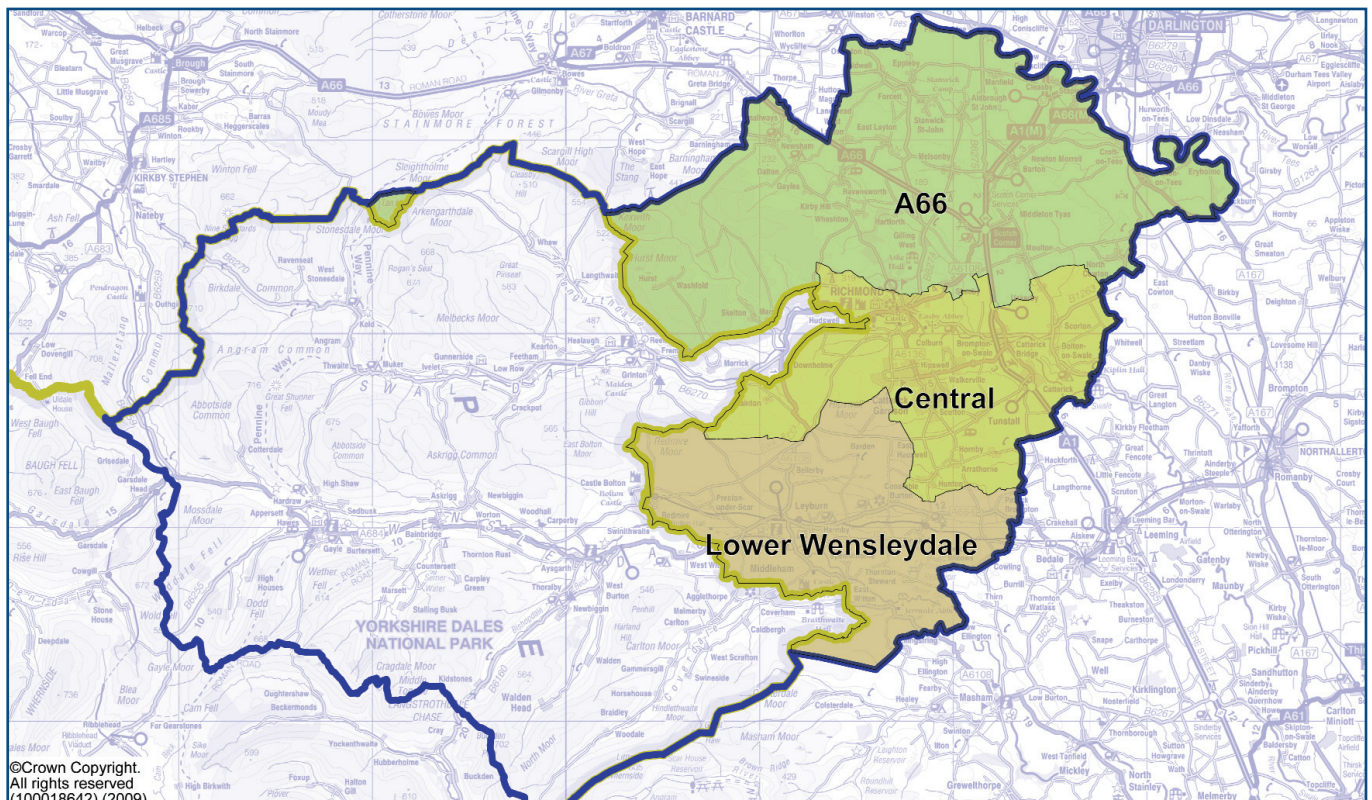
The principal service centre of Richmond and the Garrison and extending to the east to include the settlements around the A1, such as Brompton on Swale and Catterick Village.

### Lower Wensleydale

The extensive rural area of important landscape quality, adjoining the National Park, including the main settlements of Leyburn and Middleham.

### A66 North Richmondshire Area

The north eastern corner of the District, within the triangle formed by Richmond, Barnard Castle and Darlington. Adjacent to the Tees Valley city region, the area has a fairly remote rural character, with many small settlements, but lacking a clear centre, despite the major junction at Scotch Corner.



— National Park Boundary

— District Boundary



The remainder of the District is covered by the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The small isolated area in the North West of the District surrounds Tan Hill and is covered by the LDF.

Separate consultation papers have been prepared to:

- summarise the characteristics of each area
- identify the main issues facing that area in terms of problems, opportunities and decisions which need to be made, and
- seek views on the options which are available.

## Issue SC1 : Localities in the LDF Area

### SC1a

Do you consider that these 3 areas are a good starting point for developing our approach to spatial planning in the LDF area of Richmondshire.

### SC1b

Do they each represent areas with distinctive characters and identities, which should be reflected in the LDF strategy?

Please refer to the separate Sub Area papers, which look at each area and its issues in more detail.



## 4. The Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy

4.1 In the LDF we need to look at each of the settlements in the area covered by the plan and consider how they interact to provide services for local communities as well as an attractive environment in which to live. Developing a sustainable settlement hierarchy is likely to be the most efficient means of organising service provision and development within the District. It should help to achieve sustainable communities by:

- helping to improve access to a range of services and facilities by directing development according to the existing and potential service provision of settlements
- directing development to settlements where there is likely to be future demand and capacity for increased employment activity, which should achieve a better balance between homes and jobs
- directing development away from the most sensitive environments, including areas of biodiversity importance, by focusing development to selected settlements.

Our approach will be tested through a statutory sustainability appraisal

4.2 We have looked at the facilities and access to facilities in each of our towns and villages to help build our understanding of them now, and also to consider how to plan for their future. The relevant sections of this study are reproduced within the supporting profile for each area.

4.3 The upper levels of our settlement hierarchy are defined for us by the RSS, and supported by the Richmondshire Sustainable Community Strategy, which expresses the same aspirations. However,

the LDF Core Strategy needs to interpret the intentions of these strategies, to work out the local implications, and to ensure that their objectives are delivered. The levels of the proposed settlement hierarchy are:

- Richmond/Catterick Garrison - the joint Principal Town
- Leyburn - the Local Service Centre
- Settlements with a small range of services - Service Settlements
- the remaining settlements with few or no services.

These are outlined below in order to consider how they might relate in practice before they are applied to settlements in each of the three area papers.

### The Joint Principal Town of Richmond/Catterick Garrison

4.4 RSS Policy YH5 establishes the concept of the Principal Town. These towns are expected to be the main local focus for housing, employment, shopping, leisure, education, health and cultural activities and facilities. The Policy indicates that the roles of these towns as accessible and vibrant places to live, work and invest should be enhanced, and that Plans (including LDFs), strategies, investment decisions and programmes should:

- improve accessibility from surrounding areas and improve their function as hubs for transport services and interchange
- improve public transport links between Principal Towns and with Regional and Sub Regional Cities and Towns
- ensure that they provide the main focus for employment development in rural areas



- enhance the vitality and viability of town centres
- achieve a high standard of design that protects and enhances local settings, character, distinctiveness and heritage.

4.5 RSS Policy VTL1 (Vales & Tees Links sub area) indicates that the complementary roles of the area's Principal Towns, including Richmond/Catterick Garrison, should be developed to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability. The RSS concludes that further development in the Garrison area, both military and civilian is likely to support the delivery of a wider range of services and facilities in this area. This development should complement Richmond's range of services and facilities so that they perform an enhanced Principal Town role together.

4.6 Delivering this Principal Town role is clearly going to be one of the key tasks of the LDF for Richmondshire. The general issues we need to think about now are set out below and are developed in the paper on the Central area:

- the future of the Central Area as a whole, within which both Richmond and the Garrison are located
- the scope to achieve roles for Richmond and the Garrison which are complementary
- the means of securing the future sustainability of Richmond Town
- the context for development in the Garrison area, through the preparation of an Area Action Plan.

## Issue SC2 : The Joint Principal Town of Richmond/Catterick Garrison

### SC2a

How well do Richmond and Catterick Garrison currently fulfil their potential as a Principal Town?

### SC2b

What distinct roles could Richmond and the Garrison play for the whole of Richmondshire?

### SC2c

How can Richmond and the Garrison be developed so that they complement each other in an enhanced Principal Town role?

See the Central Area paper for further details on all these issues.

## Leyburn: The Local Service Centre

4.7 RSS Policy YH6 also establishes the concept of Local Service Centres, which should be protected and enhanced as attractive and vibrant places and communities, and which provide a quality of place and represent an excellent environmental, economic and social resource. Plans (including the LDF) should:

- achieve a high standard of design that protects and enhances settlement and landscape diversity and character
- support innovative means of accessing and delivering services
- retain and improve local services and facilities
- support economic diversification
- meet locally generated needs for both market and affordable housing.



- 4.8 Leyburn is identified as an example of a Local Service Centre in the RSS and the Richmondshire Sustainable Community. RSS Policy RR1 (Remoter Rural sub area) explains the intention to maintain the role of Local Service Centres to serve the needs of their sub areas, by:
- ensuring provision of an appropriate level of market and appropriate affordable housing (having regard to the need to safeguard local character)
  - ensuring provision of some new job opportunities to address local needs and
  - assisting in promoting long term economic and social sustainability.
- 4.9 In developing the LDF, the task is to consider how support can be given to Leyburn in performing this role, for example, by considering the need for and location of development in the town. The paper concerned with Lower Wensleydale looks at this in more detail.

### Issue SC3 : Leyburn, the local service centre

#### SC3a

How well does Leyburn fulfil the role of the Local Service Centre for Lower Wensleydale?

#### SC3b

How can Leyburn be supported in the future to better perform this role?

See the Lower Wensleydale paper for further details on these issues

## Service Settlements

- 4.10 It is up to the LDF to determine an appropriate approach to achieving a sustainable pattern of settlements that is generally consistent with RSS guidance. As indicated above, organising the provision of services and the location of development in a hierarchical manner is likely to be the most efficient and sustainable. This approach should maximise access to facilities, and minimise travel.
- 4.11 Continuing the hierarchy principle, we suggest a further tier of service settlements be identified. These should be promoted as a location for services to supplement those provided by the Joint Principal Towns and the Local Service Centre, and in particular to help meet the needs in dispersed rural communities throughout the District's sub-areas. These Service Settlements may include the smaller towns and larger villages in the District. The scope for development in these areas will need to be considered, but one of the key principles would be the objective of focusing of new, or maintenance of existing, levels of services, in partnership with other providers.
- 4.12 We have carried out a Settlement Facilities study (RDC 2009), which has identified the levels of services and access to them for all of the District's settlements covered by the LDF. The selection of appropriate Service Settlements is a matter for debate, and views are sought here both on the principle, and on potential candidate settlements. Service Settlements might be selected on a number of considerations, including:



- the availability of a good range of community facilities and services - for example a primary school, food shop, community hall and sport and recreation facilities
- their location throughout the sub-area (ie. seeking to ensure that all the sub-area is within good reach of services);
- good public transport access to higher order settlements (including outside the District), including in the early morning and late afternoon
- potential for some further development (and local support for such growth);
- availability of local employment.

## Issue SC4 : Service Settlements

### SC4a

Does the list in para. 4.11 set out the appropriate criteria for selecting Service Settlements? If not, what changes should be made?

### SC4b

Which settlements in each of the three sub-areas might best fulfil the role of a Service Settlement as a place to support the retention and enhancement of facilities capable of serving a wider neighbourhood outside of the main centres?

### SC4c

What should be the general approach towards designated Service Settlements in terms of provision of facilities or scale of new development?

See the separate sub-area papers for further details.

- 4.13 Potential candidates for designation as Service Villages are considered in the accompanying sub-area consultation papers

- for example Middleham, Barton, Melsonby, taking into account accessibility to facilities for people throughout each sub-area.

## Small Settlements

- 4.14 After the settlements identified in the preceding levels of the hierarchy are all the rest of Richmondshire's settlements in the LDF area. The Settlement Facilities Study (RDC 2009) indicates that most of these are small and have few if any services or facilities. The location and characteristics of these settlements are looked at in each of the three Sub Area papers.
- 4.15 Although the three Sub-Area consultation papers look at detailed local conditions, we need to think about a number of policy choices at the strategic level, including:
- is further development in the smaller settlements likely to be sustainable, since longer distance travel would be required to access services from these settlements or deliver services to them
  - what is the scope for development to make some of these small settlements more viable by better supporting local facilities and providing better living environments and more balanced communities?
- 4.16 There will be limited potential to provide for this development because of the relatively small scale of future growth in the District. The current RSS requirements are for only 200 houses per year and provision for military accommodation across the whole District. In these terms, supporting further development in the smaller settlements could well be described as spreading the jam too thinly, the jam in this case being new development opportunities and potential new facilities.



4.17 One possible modification to this, that is pertinent to a rural area like Richmondshire, is that some groups of the smaller settlements may well act as a cluster and share services between them. Examples of this may be the villages served by the remoter primary schools, including Spennithorne or Ravensworth. Another possibility may be around Aldborough, which has a GP practice. The question remains, just how feasible would it be to consider the development of these clusters of villages, when we are already starting with a very limited resource? The spatial dimension of this debate is contained within the LDF, but the wider issues of access to services for all communities belongs with the SCS.

### Issue SC5 : Shaping the future of small settlements

#### SC5a

What should be the general approach towards the lowest order settlements in terms of provision of facilities or new development?

#### SC5b

Is it sustainable to continue to allow development in these locations, where access to facilities locally or by travel to other settlements, is limited?

#### SC5c

Would allowing some limited development in these settlements make them more sustainable - eg. by making some facilities more viable - or would the scale of development be unlikely to make this realistic?

See the separate sub-area papers for further details.

4.18 One final means for considering development in small settlements is through exception sites. These by definition are not identified in any strategic planning process. National policy enables development to be considered at the edge of small settlements, if it can be demonstrated to meet local need and can supply exclusively affordable housing. The same issues affect exception site development as development in all small communities. It may meet an immediate need but this need may not remain for many reasons. The problems with access to services and facilities will remain unless development is of a sufficient scale to support new services.

### Issue SC6: Exceptional development in small settlements

#### SC6a

Would it be appropriate to allow some development in small villages, by exception to achieve particular local needs such as affordable housing, a better mix of housing, or employment for local residents?

#### SC6b

Or, would it be more sustainable to divert any such development to higher order settlements, meaning that local needs might be met a few miles away rather than in the settlement in question?





## The Structure of the Settlement Hierarchy

4.19 This paper has presented a settlement hierarchy and asked questions about how it can help make decisions about how sustainable communities can be achieved in Richmondshire and in its LDF area in particular. The detailed implications of this will be discussed in the three sub area papers that follow this one. However we need to check at this stage how well the general framework works to support a debate about how Richmondshire's communities engage with each other and where the centres of this activity are. This is at the heart of achieving sustainable communities and is particularly difficult in a rural area, where distance and access will remain fundamental challenges to all communities.

### Issue SC7: Settlement hierarchy levels

#### SC7a

How well do the 4 levels, Principal Town, Local Service Centre, Service Settlement and Smaller settlement, give a good basis to develop our approach to spatial planning in the LDF area of Richmondshire?

#### SC7b

How well do they each represent the functioning of different types of settlements and should be reflected in the LDF strategy?

#### SC7c

Should we allow for groups of communities of a similar level to be considered as clusters for which distinct policy approaches might be taken?

See the separate Sub Area papers for further details on the application of these four levels to specific settlements.

## Area Action Plan

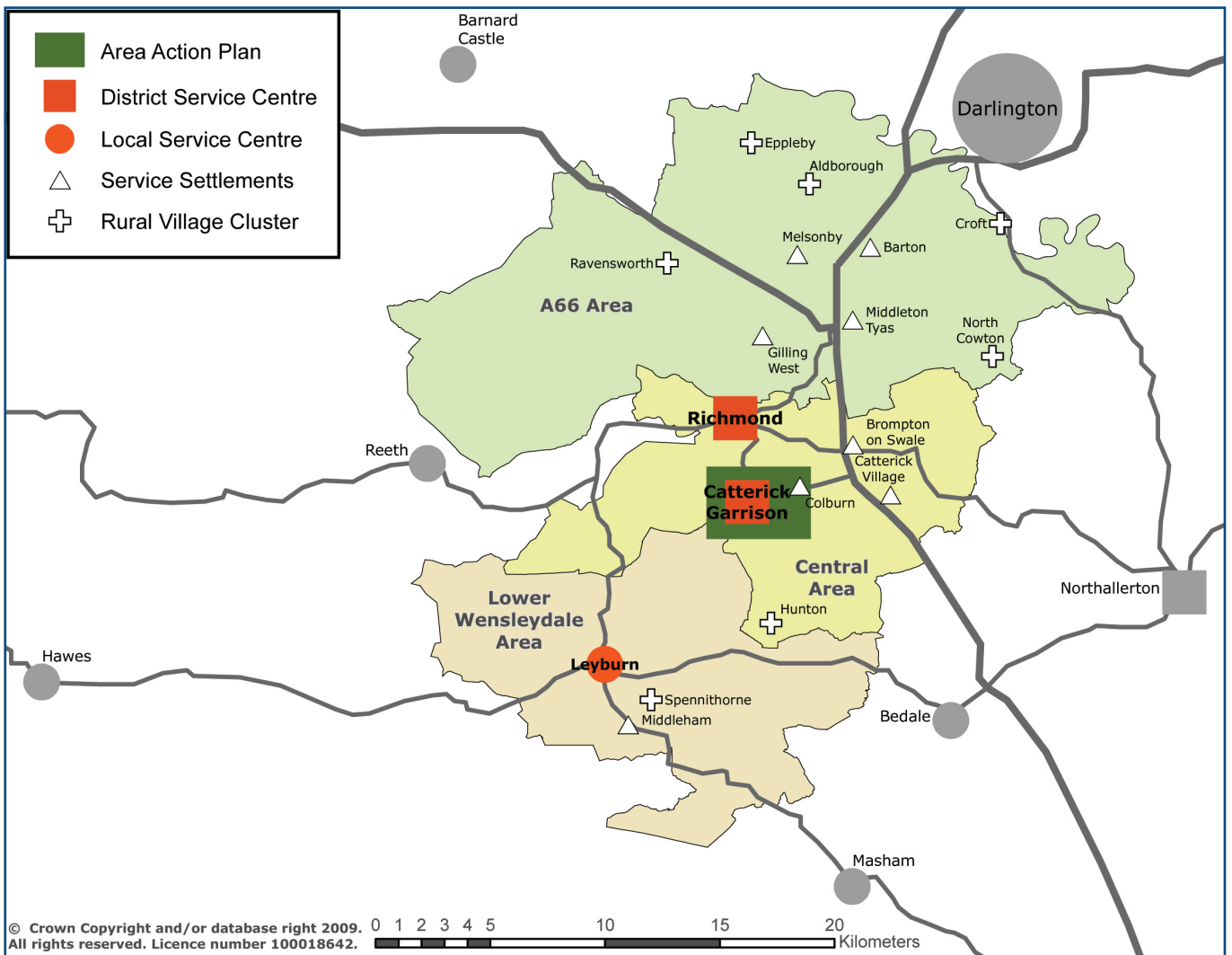
- 4.20 One final element of the settlement hierarchy needs to be introduced. In the earlier preparation of the Local Development Framework it was agreed that there should be a more detailed Area Action Plan (AAP) to help guide the complex issues arising from the potential for long term military growth at Catterick Garrison and its neighbouring communities.
- 4.21 The AAP will be a tool for planning and delivering development in the area where greatest change is expected. It provides detailed direction, shaping how an area will develop, dealing amongst other things with specific land allocations and detailed infrastructure planning. At the moment we need to set the context for the AAP in the LDF Core Strategy. The AAP will be a separate and more detailed document produced after the Core Strategy. This will be discussed in more detail in the Central Area paper.



## 5. Strategic Alternatives

5.1 Putting together these ingredients, the sub-areas and the emerging settlement hierarchy, the building blocks of the Core Strategy begin to become apparent. This enables a focus to be achieved on the issues which the Plan needs to address, to respond to the local character of our District.

5.2 These components can be shown diagrammatically. The Core Strategy will contain what is known as the Key Diagram - which is intended to illustrate the principles on which the LDF's Core Strategy will be based. An early version of the Key Diagram based on the content of this paper might look as follows:





5.3 The structure which has now been outlined in this paper allows us to move the debate on to consider a number of major strategic issues which the LDF will need to address, concerning:

- determining the most sustainable distribution of new development, including housing and employment
- achieving improved accessibility to facilities
- deciding priorities for new or enhanced facilities.

5.4 The appropriate strategic distribution of development will be strongly influenced by the concepts of the sustainable settlement hierarchy advanced here and the actual settlements selected, together with practical issues such as:

- the availability of potentially suitable development land in each of the selected settlements
- infrastructure capacity
- brownfield (ie previously developed land) opportunities
- environmental constraints
- opportunity constraints.

5.5 These issues will also be addressed in the other consultation papers, but some of the headline questions are identified here. These issues will be brought together in the final paper on the scale and distribution of development.

## Issue SC8 : Distributing development sustainably

### SC8a

What scope is there for further development, especially housing and employment, in Richmond, the Garrison area, Leyburn and the remaining settlements?

### SC8b

What priority should be given to securing new and enhanced facilities in each of the levels of the settlement hierarchy, and each of three identified Sub Areas of the District?

### SC8c

RSS guidance is clear that the main focus of development should be in the Joint Principal Town of Richmond and the Garrison area, but how large should the proportion be?

### SC8d

What is the most sustainable balance of development between Richmond/Catterick Garrison and the rest of the District - in terms of the three Sub Areas and the levels of the hierarchy which best matches availability and access to facilities against scope to develop?

See the paper on the Scale and distribution of development for a detailed look at these issues.



# Notes



# Notes



# Notes





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