

# Achieving Sustainable Communities in the A66 North Richmondshire Area



**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.

John Hiles 01748 827025,  
Emma Lundberg 01748 827026

Email: [LDF@richmondshire.gov.uk](mailto:LDF@richmondshire.gov.uk)

Write LDF, Richmondshire District Council,  
Swale House, Frenchgate, Richmond, DL10 4JE

Richmondshire District Council Website:  
[www.richmondshire.gov.uk](http://www.richmondshire.gov.uk)



# Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Key features of the A66 North Richmondshire Area	2
3.	Influences	4
4.	Area wide issues for the A66 North Richmondshire Area	5
	Relating settlements and communities, the settlement hierarchy	5
5.	Service Settlements	7
6.	Small Settlements	10
7.	The A66 North Richmondshire Area in the wider context	12



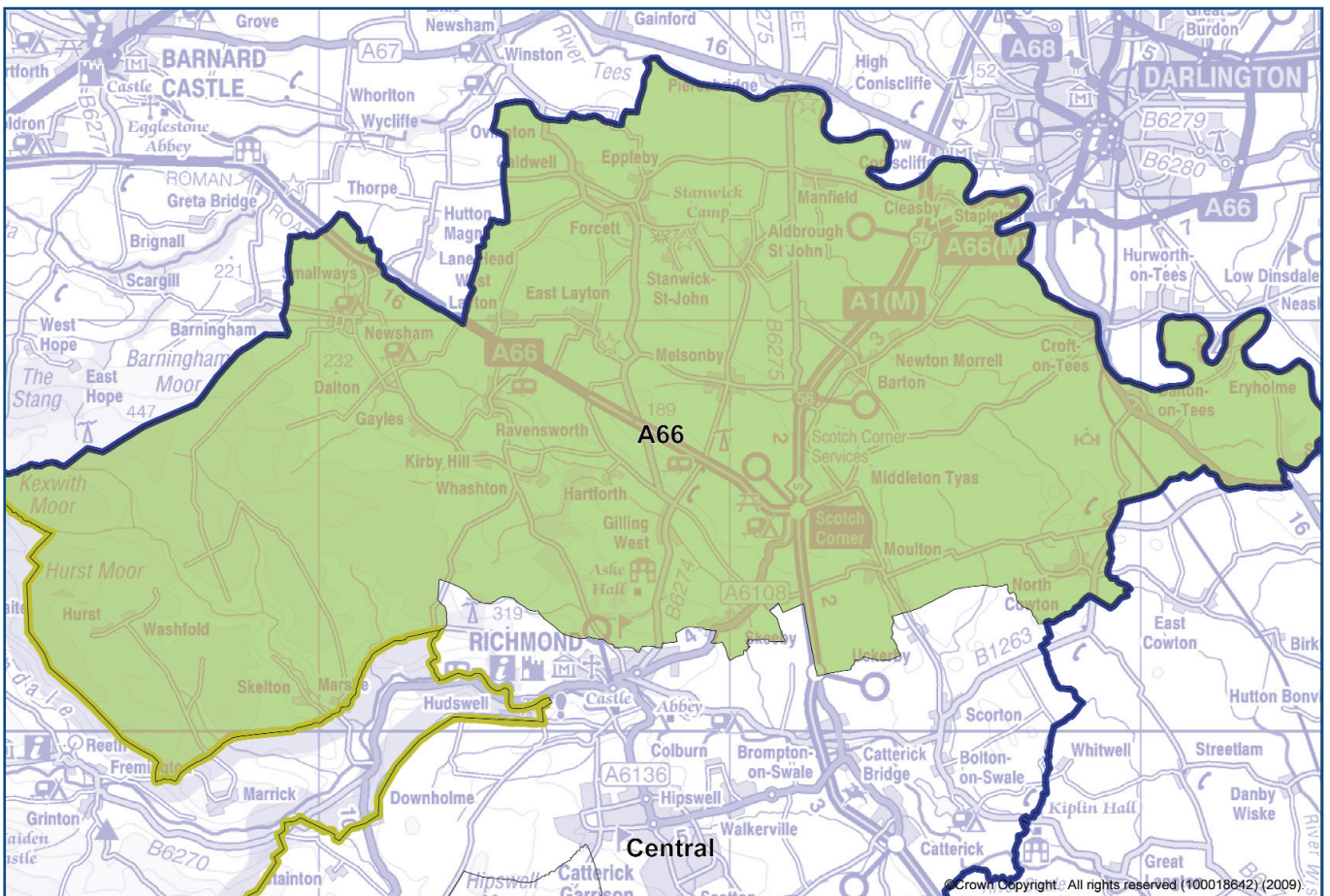
# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation paper, is one of a series. It aims to look in greater detail at the A66 North Richmondshire area to guide decisions about where services and facilities are located and where development can best be delivered to ensure the most sustainable future for local communities.
- 1.2 This area was introduced in the Achieving Sustainable Communities in Richmondshire paper, the first in the consultation paper series. This northern part of Richmondshire extends from the National Park boundary in the west to the outskirts of Darlington in the east. This is a rural area with a distinctive landscape. Although it has a small population, fundamental decisions

need to be made to determine how this area and the settlements in this area will feel, appear and function into the future.

- 1.3 This paper outlines our current understanding of the area as based on available evidence and consultation. It poses a series of questions about places within the area. It is primarily concerned with the:

- future of the A66 area as a whole
- need to balance the expectations of different settlements
- role of this area in relation to neighbouring areas.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved (100018842) (2009).

 National Park Boundary

 District Boundary



## 2. Key features of the A66 North Richmondshire Area

- 2.1 The A66 area sits in a triangle formed by Richmond, Barnard Castle and Darlington. The river Tees runs along a major part of its northern boundary and the landscape extends from the Tees Lowlands in the east to an extensive area of moorland in the west. The western part has a major military training area and borders the Yorkshire Dales National Park.
- 2.2 It has a fairly remote rural character. Agriculture is the dominant land use, but mineral extraction has also impacted on the local landscape, particularly at Forcett and Barton. Stanwick Camp is a major Iron Age site.
- 2.3 7,780 people live in this area. The age profile of the population is older than the District as a whole, and has been influenced by immigration from the Tees Valley and the loss of younger people through educational, work and housing opportunities.
- 2.4 The A1 and A66 trunk routes, converge at Scotch Corner in the middle of this area. The ease of communications provided by the A1, A66 and A167 place most of this area in the Darlington travel to work and housing market areas.
- 2.5 The largest settlements are Barton (900), Melsonby (750) and Middleton Tyas (590), but there is no clear local service centre for the whole area. Settlements in this area are more closely aligned to Tees Valley from Barnard Castle to Darlington along the A66, A1 and A167 routes. The Settlement Facilities study (RDC2009) shows that the four villages with the widest range of facilities can each offer only a single shop. But this area does have seven primary schools and fourteen village halls, which suggests a dispersed pattern of settlements in this area rather than an integrated network of rural communities.
- 2.6 Its rural attractiveness sustains a strong housing market that creates affordability issues and limits the available workforce. This housing market operates within the Darlington housing market. The Index of Multiple deprivation 2007 records the limited range of services and the difficulty of access to the housing market in this area. All wards are in the bottom quartile for access to services and barriers to housing and the most extreme is in the bottom 2 percent.
- 2.7 Employment within the area is predominantly agricultural. The tourism sector includes a number of high quality hotels and Croft circuit motor racing track. There has been further diversification with the development of the Aske Hall business units and other smaller units across the area which takes advantage of the area's good communications. This is likely to continue with the proposed development of the Scotch Corner business park.
- 2.8 The Plan our Future survey for the A66 Area collected information from people living in this area. Their responses reinforce the picture of this area as having dispersed settlements lacking in a local service centre. Poorer access within the area is balanced by easy access outside.



Respondents from one settlement sought improved community facilities to help improve community spirit. Respondents from another village were concerned with the problems caused by local flooding. Unlike other sparsely populated areas, respondents' list of issues for improvement did not highlight employment needs or affordable housing.

### **Issue NR1: The A66 North Richmondshire Area**

NR1a

Does the description above pick up the essential features of the area?

NR1b

Does the A66 area represent an area with distinct character and issues which should be reflected in the LDF strategy?



## 3. Influences

3.1 The following documents give general spatial policy guidance relevant to the A66 Area:

- Regional Spatial Strategy Yorkshire and Humber (RSS YH)
- Richmondshire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)
- Richmondshire District Council Corporate Plan

We need to build these into our discussion of this area to help create relevant policy for the future that is both generally compliant with national and regional drivers but also relevant to local conditions.

3.2 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.

3.3 The A66 Area sits within the “Vales and Tees Links” sub area established by the RSS. 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. This policy envisages a strategic pattern of development which:

- supports regeneration in the Tees Valley City region and reduce long distance commuting
- focuses development in Richmond and Catterick Garrison

- provides in Richmond, Catterick Garrison an appropriate scale of affordable and market housing and employment opportunities to meet local needs.

3.4 We also need to recognise the impact of spatial policies in neighbouring areas. The A66 area also borders the Tees Valley City Region of the North East Region and its direction is directly shaped by change in this neighbouring area. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East (RSS NE) sets out the general spatial policy for areas to the north of the A66 area and in particular expectations for growth in Darlington and Barnard Castle. Darlington’s strong influence on Richmondshire is identified as is the expectation for it to continue to develop as a sub-regional centre. Barnard Castle is identified as a Rural Service Centre serving a wide rural hinterland which extends beyond administrative area boundaries.

3.5 The current Richmondshire Sustainable Community Strategy seeks to:

“Support sparsely populated parts of the district to secure, and where appropriate enhance, the vitality and viability of rural communities in sustainable ways through low level growth, diversification, and enterprise to meet local needs, building on the area’s inherent strengths and character.”

3.6 The A66 area has been identified in the Richmondshire District Council Corporate Plan as a discrete area for the organisation of council services and strategy.





## 4. Area wide issues for the A66 North Richmondshire Area

- 4.1 A series of issues have been identified, following on from the key features outlined in section 2, and the influences described in section 3. The rural aspects of the A66 area bring with it a range of issues familiar across Richmondshire. At the heart of these issues is the need to balance a high quality living environment with the need to meet local needs in a fairly sparsely populated area.
- 4.2 But we need to think of these issues in relation to this area's context. Despite the position of Scotch Corner, the area lacks a clear focus and limited services are distributed across several villages. The nearness of Darlington, Barnard Castle and Richmond and the ease of access provide many people in this area with a wider range of choices for employment, services and education than exists within the area. But these opportunities often require access to private transport to exploit them. It also contributes to a strong housing market, which can exclude people with lower incomes from this area.
- 4.3 The following are suggested to be the main spatial issues for the A66 area, which the LDF should address:
- How can access to facilities across this area and to neighbouring areas be improved?
  - What is the network of communities in this area?
  - How does this area interact with neighbouring areas?
  - Should further local employment opportunities be provided in this area?

- Can this area's strong housing market be better balanced to enable more people the choice to live and work here?

### Issue NR2 : Area wide issues

#### NR2a

Do the issues in para 4.3 pick up the main challenges for the area?

#### NR2b

What other issues are there?

### Relating settlements and communities, the settlement hierarchy

- 4.4 We can use the settlement hierarchy proposed in the Sustainable Communities in Richmondshire Paper to help us address these issues by giving a framework to think about the role of settlements and how local communities relate to them to meet local needs. The principle of sustainability is built into this hierarchy. It seeks to ensure that services and facilities are as accessible as possible across the area. This is not the same as saying that everyone can or will have the same access to all services in the area. In a rural area, like this one, distance is an unavoidable fact of life. The size and spread of these settlements makes it difficult to provide many things, like shops and leisure facilities or workplaces, everywhere.



4.5 The list of settlements below shows the relatively large number of settlements in this area and also their population size. It is important that we think about the implications of this hierarchy in planning for the future to make sure we keep these settlements in an overall perspective. This is started below, together with options that have been considered in developing the hierarchy for this area.

4.6 The Settlement Facilities Study shows that none of these settlements delivers a full range of services that would be expected in higher order settlements in the hierarchy- the Principal Towns and Local Service Centre. The best served ones provide at best a single shop, to supplement a church, school and village hall. There are also other limited public services with a single GP surgery in one village and mobile library facilities.

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Parish</u>	<u>Population</u>
Barton	900	Dalton	170
Melsonby	750	Stanwick St. John	150
Middleton Tyas	590	Caldwell	140
Gilling with Hartforth and Sedbury	530	Forcett and Carkin	140
North Cowton	530	Cleasby	130
Croft on Tees	450	Whashton	130
Skeeby	380	Gayles	120
Aldbrough St John	340	Aske	110
Eppleby	300	Marske	110
Newsham	290	Eryholme	90
Manfield	270	East Layton	70
Ravensworth	270	Kirby Hill	60
Dalton on Tees	240	West Layton	40
Stapleton	220	Cliffe	30
Moulton	200	Newton Morrell	30



## 5. Service Settlements

- 5.1 The Achieving Sustainable Communities in Richmondshire paper introduced the idea of Service Settlements. Their selection is a matter for debate, and views are sought both on the principle and on potential candidate settlements. The selection of a Service Settlement might be based 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 spread throughout the sub-area aiming 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.
- 5.2 Service Settlements are important because they offer a range of basic services that are accessible from a small hinterland. They complement their local service centres and help distribute services over a wider area, which is particularly important in a rural area like ours.
- 5.3 It is important that the choices we make, both in selecting Service Settlements and helping to sustain them, ensure that they fit into the overall context of the District and their neighbours. For example, to what extent can housing need and choice be realistically met in each Service Settlement? The answer to this will depend on the character of each village, the availability of appropriate sites and access to relevant services like schools and work. It could be that some of these choices can be better met in larger centres.
- 5.4 The Settlement Facilities Study (RDC 2009) gives information on the services available in each settlement. The spread of existing services in this area across several settlements suggests that the choice of Service Settlement is complicated. The main candidates appear to be Middleton Tyas, Barton, Melsonby and Gilling West. But they are grouped closely together and are unlikely to relate strongly to more distant settlements. Middleton Tyas's position alongside Scotch Corner brings with it additional scope for change in relation to the proposed A1 upgrade.
- 5.5 Other settlements that could be considered are Ravensworth, Eppleby, Aldborough, Croft and North Cowton. All of these, bar Aldborough, have a primary school, which can be a strong driver for aspects of local community identity, but school catchment areas are small and not contiguous in some parts of this area. Aldborough is unusual in having a general practice surgery. But none offer the same range of services as the four mentioned in the previous paragraph. Croft is also closely related to a larger settlement in a neighbouring authority area, which provides a wider range of services.
- 5.6 The difficulty in identifying leading Service Settlements in this area may come from the proximity of much larger service centres in neighbouring areas. It may be that there has been limited need for any to develop further because need has been met elsewhere. If this is the case then it may be questionable whether any of the settlements in this area fulfil the role of Service Settlement for this area.



- 5.7 The map opposite shows these four villages in their local context. We need to consider the main constraints and the potential directions which might be considered for possible development.
- 5.8 One way out of the difficulty posed by none of the villages in this area standing out individually as clear Service Settlement candidates is to treat the four largest villages as a cluster for development purposes. In terms of general development policy we could expect most demand for growth in the A66 area to come from them. The purpose of this consultation document is to identify general directions for growth, which will be detailed through further consultation on later sections of the Local Development Framework.

### Issue NR3: Service Settlements

#### NR3a

How well do the villages of Middleton Tyas, Barton, Melsonby and Gilling West fulfil the role of Service Settlements in the A66 North Richmondshire Area, as places to support the retention and enhancement of facilities capable of serving a wider neighbourhood?

#### NR3b

Should we consider these villages as a cluster for development purposes?

#### NR3c

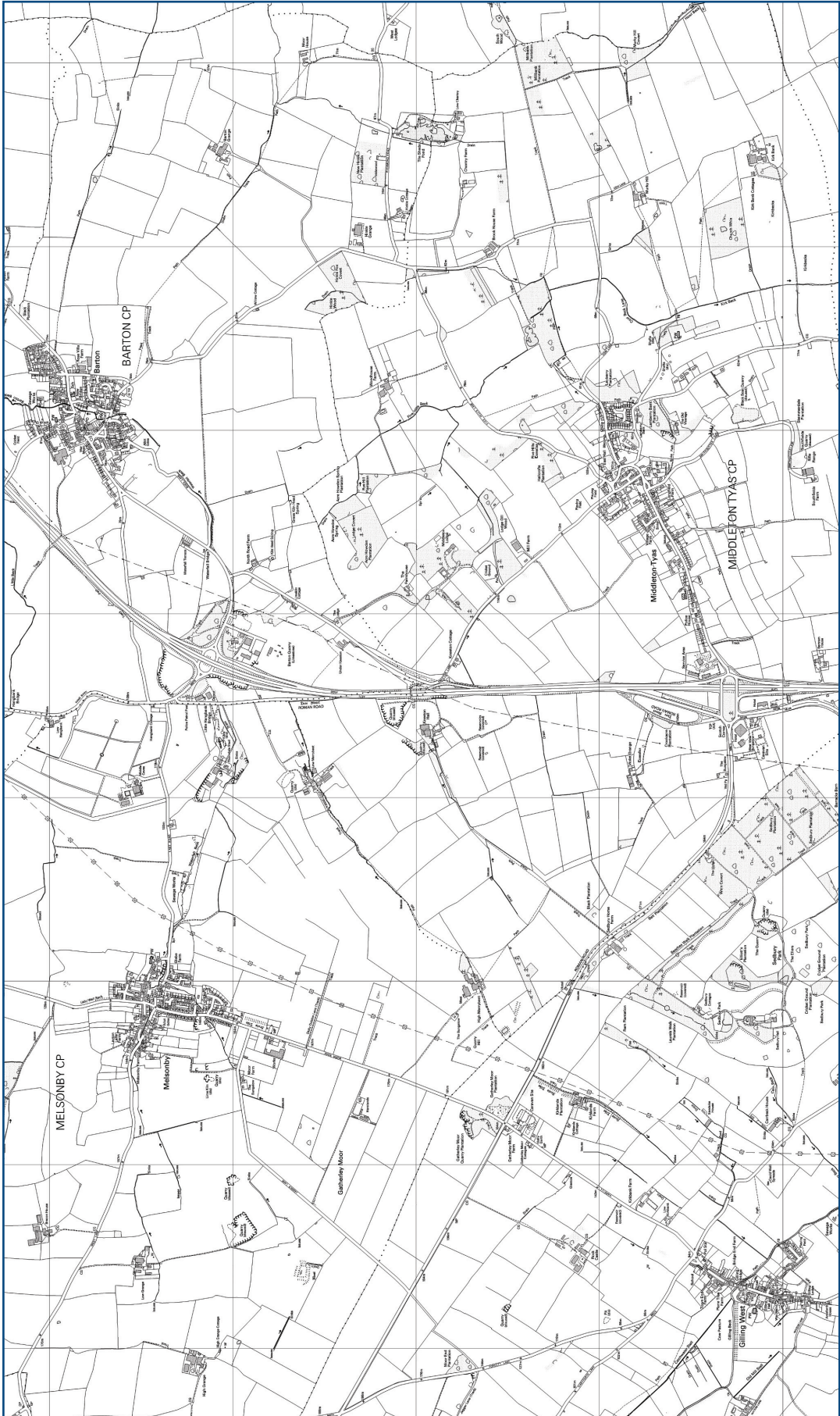
Should this list of Service Settlements be reconsidered?

#### NR3d

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

#### NR3e

Referring to the map above, what scope is there for Middleton Tyas, Barton, Melsonby and Gilling West to physically grow through new development?



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved (100018642) (2009).

## Service Settlements in North Richmondshire



## 6. Small Settlements

- 6.1 In the Service Settlement discussion we have thought about the case for making one or more of the larger settlements in this area a focus for the provision of very local services and potentially some development. So what of the remaining settlements in the A66 Area? We know, from the Settlement Facilities study that they have few facilities and are mainly places to live with a low level of local economic activity in, for example, agriculture. These settlements are not very isolated and the people living in them access services in the larger centres.
- 6.2 The presence of a primary school may create a more clustered community through its catchment area. In the A66 North Richmondshire area there are a number of such villages, but is there a realistic possibility of creating sustainable change amongst these villages? Paragraph 5.5 suggests that this is not straightforward in this area and catchment areas are basically administrative units that can change, as has been seen with the closures of Aldborough, Gilling West and Manfield schools.
- 6.3 The small size and spread of the remaining settlements in the A66 area may also require a similar approach to the larger ones. It is possible, from the local road network to suggest clusters of these smaller settlements. For example the northernmost settlements from Caldwell to Stapleton face towards Darlington. Similarly the settlements from Newsham to Hartforth are closely aligned to the A66 west of Scotch Corner.
- 6.4 The purpose of such clusters would be similar to that for the larger villages. They could be used to guide the general direction of growth across this area, which would be detailed through later consultation. In terms of general development policy this could mean allocating an amount of development across the villages in the cluster, but detailed allocations would need further work to determine what was feasible on the land available within each village of the cluster. At this level of the settlement hierarchy we should expect growth to be at a minimal level.

### Issue NR4 : Smaller Settlements

#### NR4a

Should all the small villages be treated equally- or is there an argument to separate out some, for example with some facilities, better accessibility, or greater potential- as a separate tier in the hierarchy, for which a distinct policy approach might be taken?

#### NR4b

Should we group the smaller settlements into geographical clusters and develop a policy approach for each cluster?

#### NR4c

What should be the general approach towards the small villages- in terms of provision of facilities or new development?



*continued*

NR4d

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

NR4e

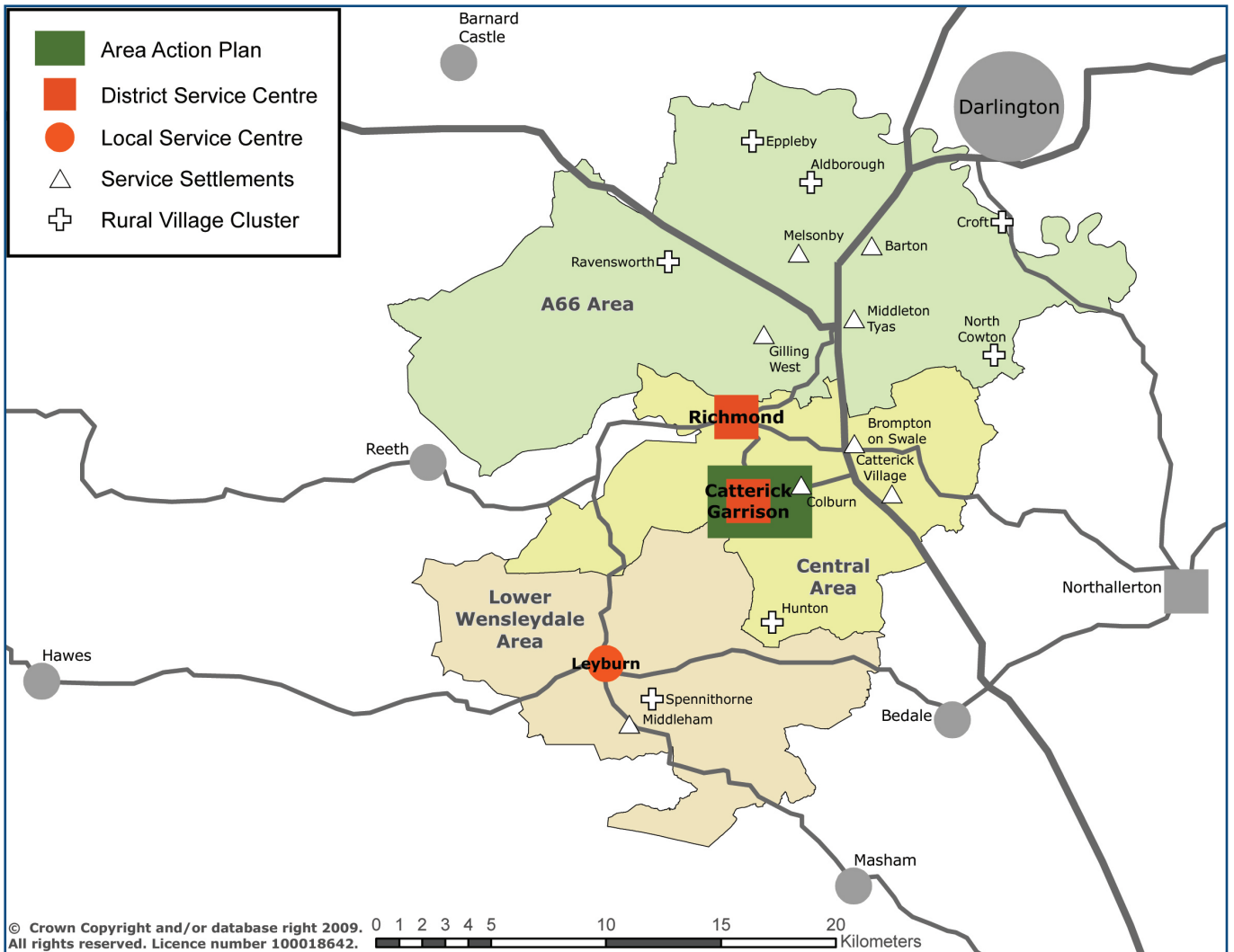
Would allowing some limited development in these settlements make them more sustainable by making some facilities more viable or would the scale of development be unlikely to make this realistic?



## 7. The A66 North Richmondshire Area in the wider context

7.1 This paper has concentrated on the A66 area and setting out its settlements in an order based on the extent to which they can meet local needs, how they relate to each other and their capacity to develop. But the A66 Area is not an island and we now have to return to the overall strategic context of the District in the LDF. The current status of our spatial debate is set out on the map below.

7.2 Is it realistic to expect solutions to all of the issues we have been looking at to be found within the area? For example secondary health care services are located outside of the area, as are major retail and leisure opportunities. Given what we know and expect for this area, how should we expect these needs to be met? Closer to home, should we seek to tackle affordable housing issues across all settlements or







seek to locate these homes closer to main service centres where access to services and facilities is much better?

- 7.3 It is particularly important that we do not lose sight of the neighbouring Tees Valley City Region and the role of Darlington in particular. Should we explore the complementary relationship between these two areas? In general policy terms it is expected that restraining growth in the Richmondshire, and the A66 area in particular should help support the expected growth in the centre of Darlington. But the A66 area has a number of assets, whose future needs to be carefully considered. These include Scotch Corner and developments like those at Aske Hall. These are well placed to support growth in Richmondshire, but to what extent?
- 7.4 We can only begin to look at this question now and will need to come back to it when we have also debated the Central and Lower Wensleydale areas. But at this stage it is reasonable to ask, in general terms about the general pattern of growth expected across the three sub areas covered by the Richmondshire LDF. This will be influenced by internal pressures, like the potential growth of Catterick Garrison and external pressures from the Tees Valley City region. Possible answers to these questions are developed in the consultation Paper on the Scale and Distribution of Development.

## Issue NR5 : Strategic Options

### NR5a

To what extent can the A66 North Richmondshire area change to meet local needs in the future?

### NR5b

To what extent could these needs be met outside of this area?

### NR5c

What is the most sustainable balance of development between the A66 North Richmondshire area and the rest of the District- in terms of the three Sub Areas and the levels of the hierarchy?

See the paper on the Scale and Distribution of Development for a detailed look at these issues.



# Notes





## Richmondshire District Council

Swale House, Frenchgate, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL10 4JE  
Tel: 01748 829100 Fax: 01748 825071 Email: [enquiries@richmondshire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@richmondshire.gov.uk)

