



Natural Environment



This suite of Natural Environment policies seeks to protect and enhance important biodiversity and geodiversity sites, maintain and enhance the landscape character of Richmondshire, protect and improve green infrastructure, water quality and local green spaces.





Natural Environment

Policy NE1 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

This policy sets out the positive approach the Council will adopt to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity and identify the sites which are protected and important for biodiversity and geodiversity in the Plan Area.

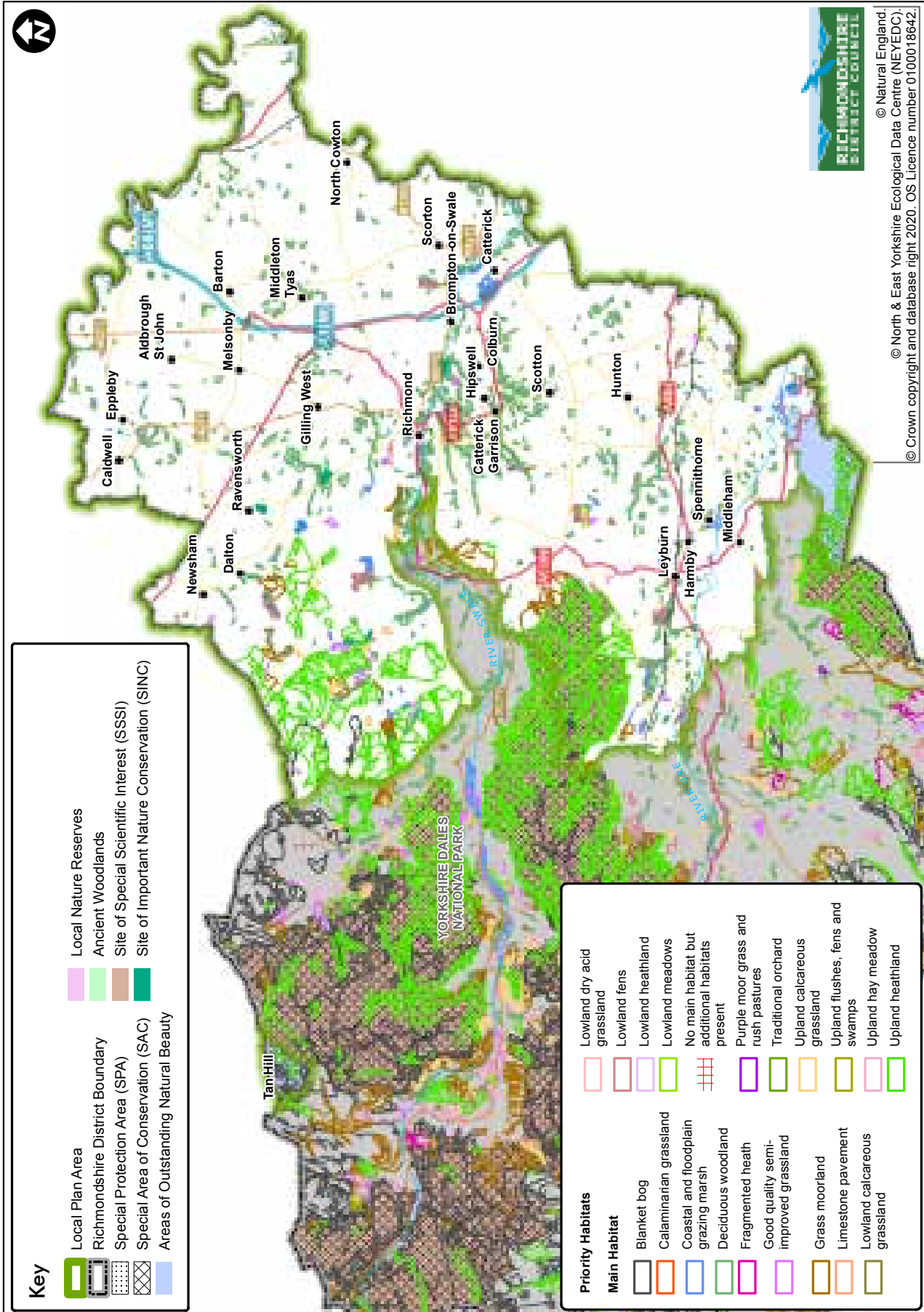
The preferred policy reads

Policy NE1 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

1. Development or other initiatives will be supported where they
 - a) protect, conserve, and enhance the significance of the Plan Area's designated or undesignated environmental assets, including features of ecological and geological interest
 - b) provide net gains in biodiversity
 - c) maximise opportunities to strengthen the integrity and resilience of habitats, species and wildlife connections
 - d) restore and re-create priority habitats and other natural habitats within the development site
 - e) are consistent with the principles of an asset's proper management
 - f) do not cause a detrimental impact upon the significance of a natural asset.
2. When considering matters affecting biodiversity and geodiversity assets, the following key sites, habitats and species should be given regard commensurate with their status, in accordance with international or national legislation, and appropriate weight given to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks
 - Internationally Designated Sites
 - Nationally Designated Sites
 - Locally Designated Sites
 - Locally Important Sites, Habitats and Species
3. Proposals that will affect sites or species will only be permitted where an appraisal has been submitted which considers all alternative sites and demonstrates that significant harm can be avoided. Where avoidance of adverse impacts is not possible, necessary mitigation must be provided to address any potential harmful implications of development. Where adequate mitigation measures are not possible, compensatory measures will be required.



Figure 16 - Natural Environment - Plan Area



Key

- Local Plan Area
- Richmondshire District Boundary
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Local Nature Reserves
- Ancient Woodlands
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Site of Important Nature Conservation (SINC)

Priority Habitats

Blanket bog	Lowland dry acid grassland
Calaminarian grassland	Lowland fens
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	Lowland heathland
Deciduous woodland	Lowland meadows
Fragmented heath	No main habitat but additional habitats present
Good quality semi-improved grassland	Purple moor grass and rush pastures
Grass moorland	Traditional orchard
Limestone pavement	Upland calcareous grassland
Lowland calcareous grassland	Upland flushes, fens and swamps
	Upland hay meadow
	Upland heathland



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Figure 17 - Natural Environment - Central Richmondshire

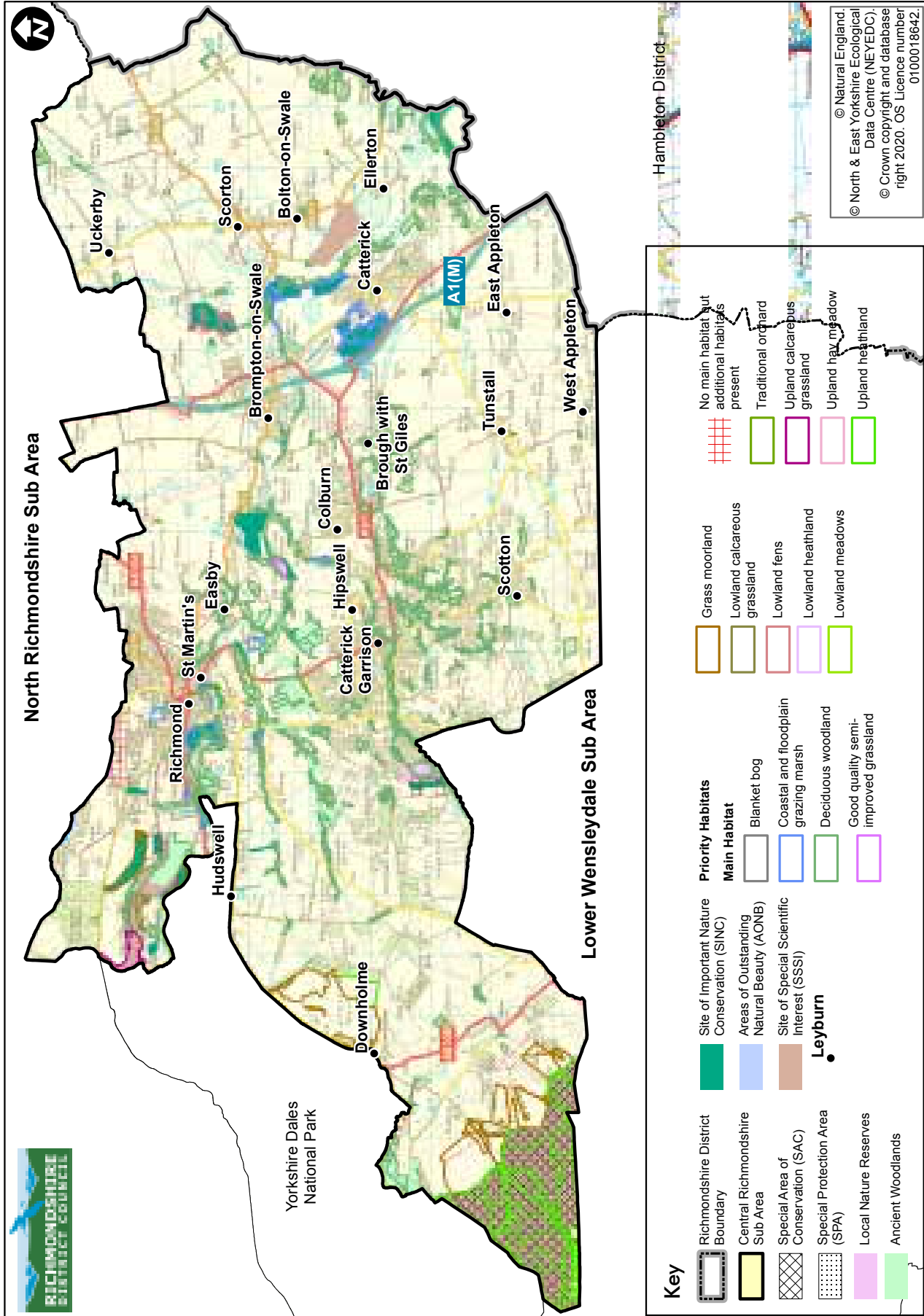




Figure 18 - Natural Environment - Lower Wensleydale

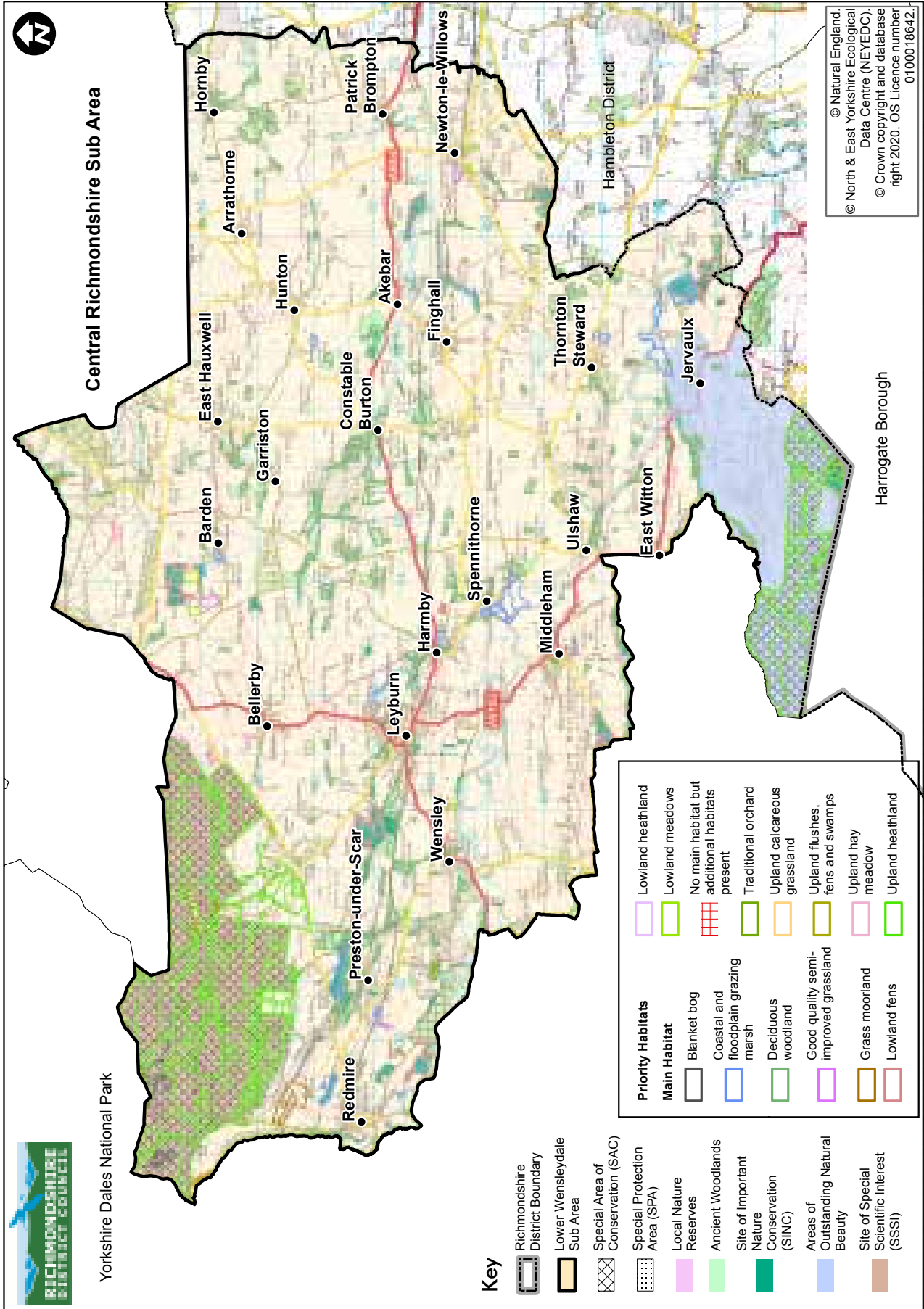
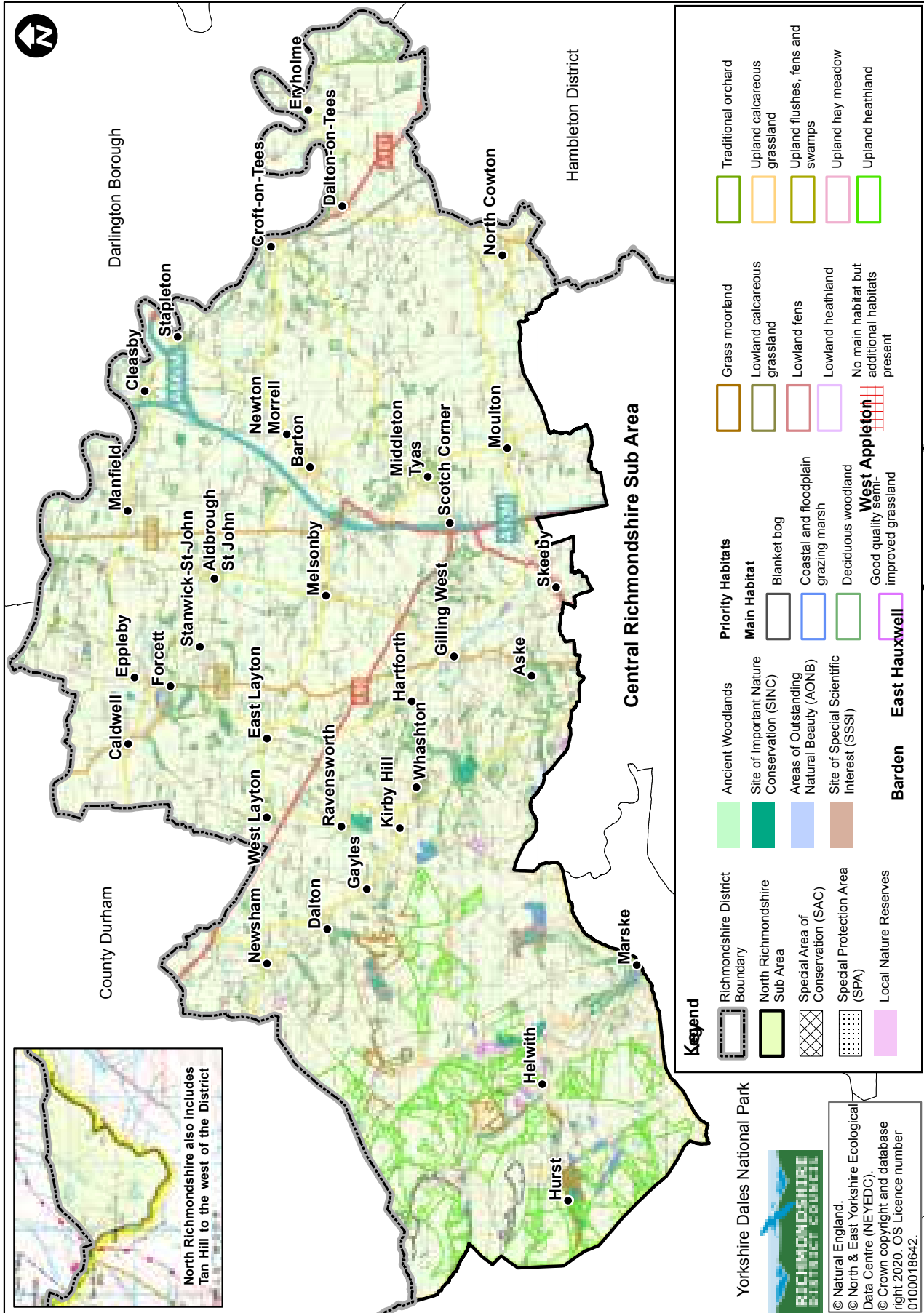




Figure 19 - Natural Environment - North Richmondshire





Justification

One of the main objectives of national policy is to conserve and enhance the natural environment. Biodiversity and Geodiversity form important components of the natural environment, and so this preferred policy aims to protect, conserve, and enhance the significance of the Plan Area's designated or undesignated environmental assets including features of ecological and geological interest.

It is important that developments maximise opportunities to strengthen the integrity and resilience of habitats, species and wildlife connections/corridors, and where possible and appropriate, restore and re-create priority habitats and other natural habitats on site. It is essential that developments do not cause a detrimental impact on the significance of a natural asset and that proposals or initiatives for the improvement of assets adopt proper and appropriate management practices. Development will be supported where it includes a net gain in biodiversity (and avoids a net loss). With regards to part two of the preferred policy, the key sites, habitats and species include

Internationally Designated Sites

- European Natura 2000 sites of the North Pennines Dales Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the North Pennine Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and SAC

Nationally Designated Sites

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Locally Designated Sites

- Local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- The Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve

Locally Important Sites, Habitats and Species

- The Tees, Swale and Ure river corridors
- The upland areas of Kexwith Moor, Holgate Moor, Holgate Pasture, Hurst Moor, Marrick Moor, Redmire Moor, Preston Moor, Stainton Moor and Bellerby Moor.
- The network of nature conservation resources including ancient and broadleaved woodland, semi-improved grassland, flushes and marshy grassland, ponds and open water, hedgerows, cliffs and rock faces.
- priority habitats - woodland, lowland wood pasture, parkland and veteran trees, upland hay meadow, flood plain grassland, upland calcareous grassland, species rich grassland, upland heathland and blanket bog, moorland edge, fen, reedbed, flowing water and standing water
- priority species - otter, water vole, bats, black grouse and curlew.

Regard to biodiversity and geodiversity assets should be given which is commensurate with their status as defined in international and/or national legislation. Appropriate weight should also be given to the asset's importance and the contribution that it makes to wider ecological networks.



As part of the application process, proposals which affect sites, habitats and species will be required to submit an appraisal which considers all alternative sites, demonstrating that the proposed site is the most suitable in ensuring no significant harm is caused by the development. Planning permission should be refused for development that is likely to have an adverse effect, or result in the deterioration of a natural asset, unless the need for, and the benefits of, the development clearly outweighs the loss. Where this is the case and the avoidance of any adverse impacts is not possible and the development cannot be reasonably located on an alternative site, necessary mitigation must be provided to address any potential harmful implications of development. Adequate mitigation measures include avoiding and minimising the impact of the development and fully restoring biodiversity on-site as part of the development proposal. Where adequate mitigation measures are not possible, compensatory measures will be required. If it is not possible to fully restore biodiversity on-site then it may be necessary to provide compensation off-site, for example through biodiversity offsetting. This should, however, be the last resort.

The Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment (HRA) (2021) has been undertaken at this stage to ascertain whether any European sites (and their features and conservation objectives) might be affected by the proposed preferred policies and development. The screening assessment has 'highlighted that likely significant effects in combination could not be ruled out in terms of recreational pressure on components of the North Pennine Moors SPA/SAC. Furthermore, likely significant effects from recreational pressure both alone and in-combination could not be ruled out on the North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC. In addition, likely significant effects could not be ruled out in combination in terms of the impact on mobile species (golden plover) on the North Pennine Moors SPA/SAC. Likely significant effects from air pollution could also not be ruled out on the North Pennine Moors SPA/SAC, North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC and Ox Close SAC' (page 38). The assessment concludes that an appropriate assessment will be required to ascertain if adverse effects on the integrity of the European sites could arise. The appropriate assessment will be completed and form part of a revised edition of the HRA, with preferred policies and development amended accordingly to reflect any findings. The revised edition of the HRA will be made available at the Submission consultation stage and form part of the overall evidence base of the Local Plan review.



What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that 'To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

Issues and Options Consultation

No representations were made which specifically relate to this preferred policy.

Alternatives Considered

No local policy on Biodiversity and Geodiversity

An alternative option would be to have no Local Plan policy on Biodiversity and Geodiversity and rely on national policy. This is not considered an appropriate option as only relying on national policy does not allow for a locally tailored approach to be set in protecting, conserving, and enhancing the significance of the Plan Area's designated or undesignated environmental assets. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

A policy which sets out a more restrictive approach to development affecting biodiversity and geodiversity assets and sets a higher net gains requirement

Another alternative option would be to adopt a policy which sets out a more restrictive approach to development affecting biodiversity and geodiversity assets as well as sets a higher net gains requirement. This is not considered an appropriate option as this could overly restrict where development could take place and be burdensome in terms of mitigation requirements. It is considered that the preferred policy sets out a locally focused approach and strategy which, at the forefront, protects and enhances biodiversity and geodiversity but also enables development to be brought forward where it can be adequately justified. Also, it is considered that adopting a higher net gains requirement than that consistent with national policy would be unjustified and potentially deem otherwise acceptable development inappropriate. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.



QUESTIONS

Do you agree to preferred policy NE1 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity?

If not, do you agree with the general approach to policy NE1 but have any suggested changes?

Please provide any further comments.



Policy NE2 - Landscape Character

This policy sets out the Council's ambition to maintain and enhance the landscape character of Richmondshire.

The preferred policy reads

Policy NE2 - Landscape Character

1. The landscape character of the Plan Area will be maintained, enhanced and, where appropriate, restored to ensure a sustainable future for the natural environment.
2. Proposals for development should respect the landscape character of Richmondshire and not harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or setting of a settlement. Development will be permitted where
 - a) it conserves and/or enhances the existing landscape setting
 - b) any visual impact of the development is minimised through high quality design (in accordance with Policy D1), materials, scale and siting
 - c) the design of the development limits the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and areas of nature conservation
 - d) it maintains the aesthetic and biodiversity qualities of the natural and man-made heritage within the landscape
3. The character, identity and coalescence of individual settlements is protected by preventing development in the following Settlement Gaps
 - a) Leyburn - Harmby
 - b) Spennithorne - Harmby
 - c) Colburn
 - d) Scorton - Bolton-on-Swale
4. Where a proposal is likely to have an adverse impact on the landscape, an independent landscape assessment should be submitted. The assessment should be informed by the Richmondshire Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study (2019), or any successor documents.
5. Within the Nidderdale and the North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which cover parts of East Witton and Muker Parishes respectively, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape.



Figure 20 - Leyburn/Harmby Settlement Gap Boundary

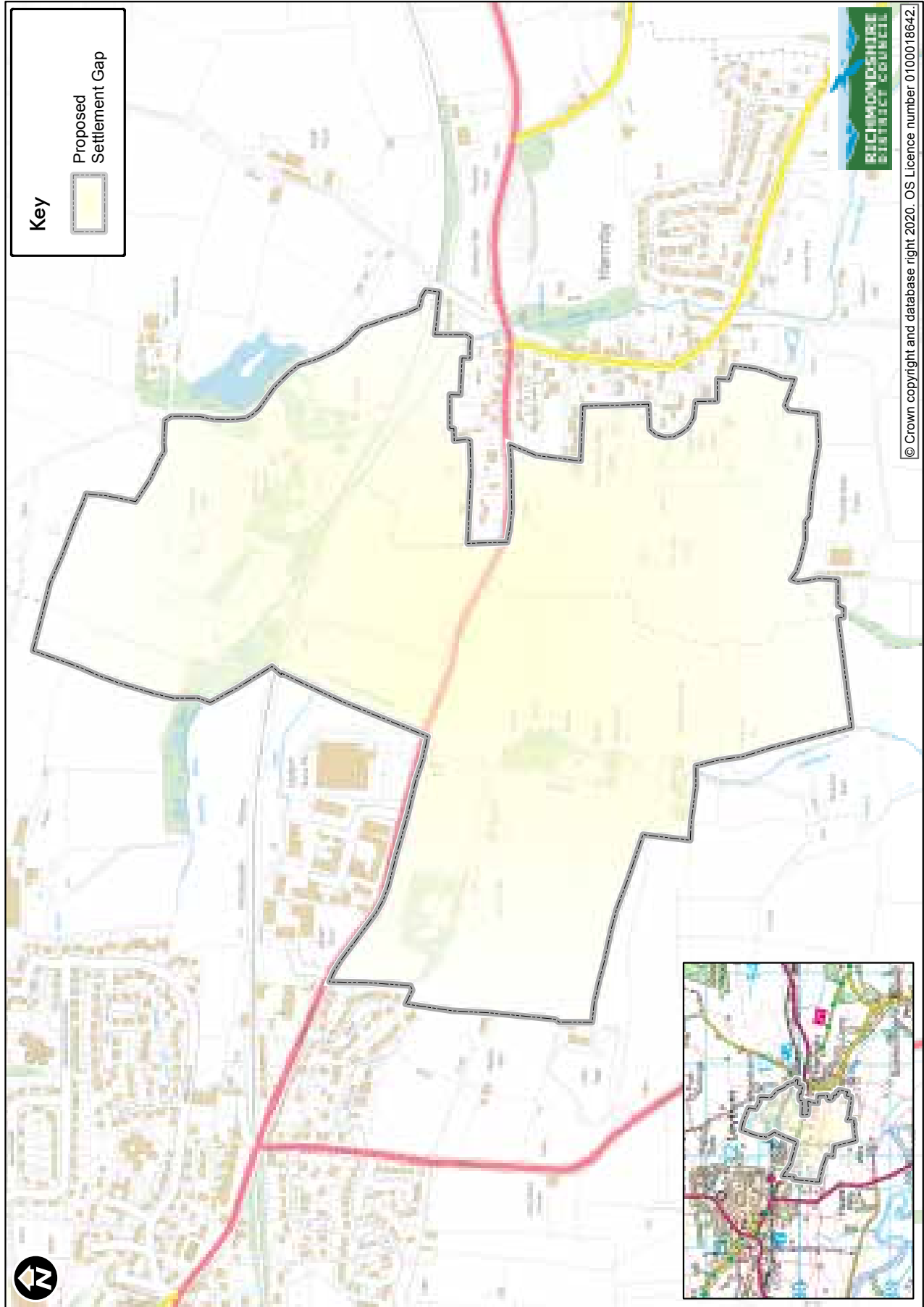




Figure 21 - Spennithorne/Harmby Settlement Gap Boundary

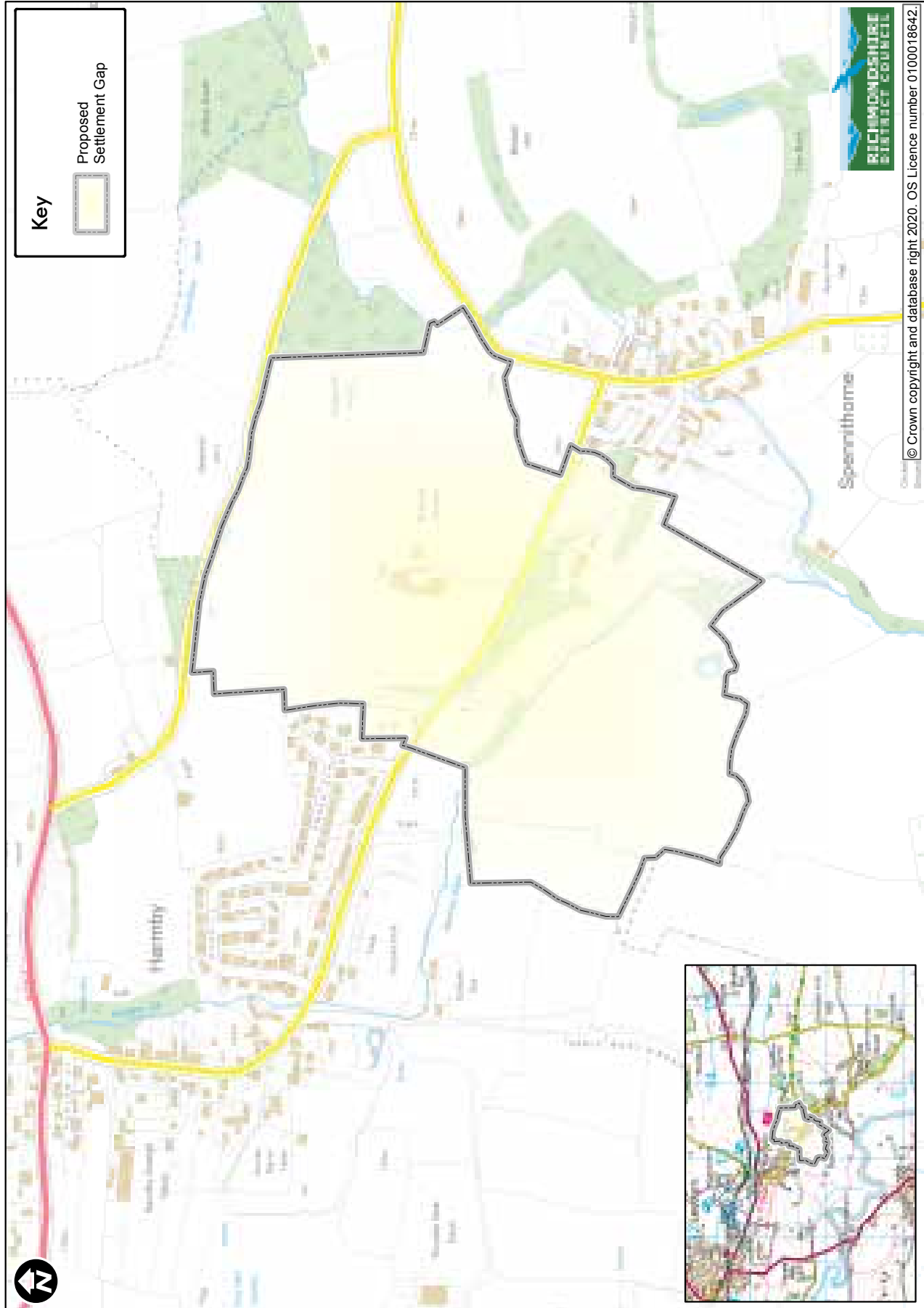




Figure 22 - Colburn Settlement Gap Boundary

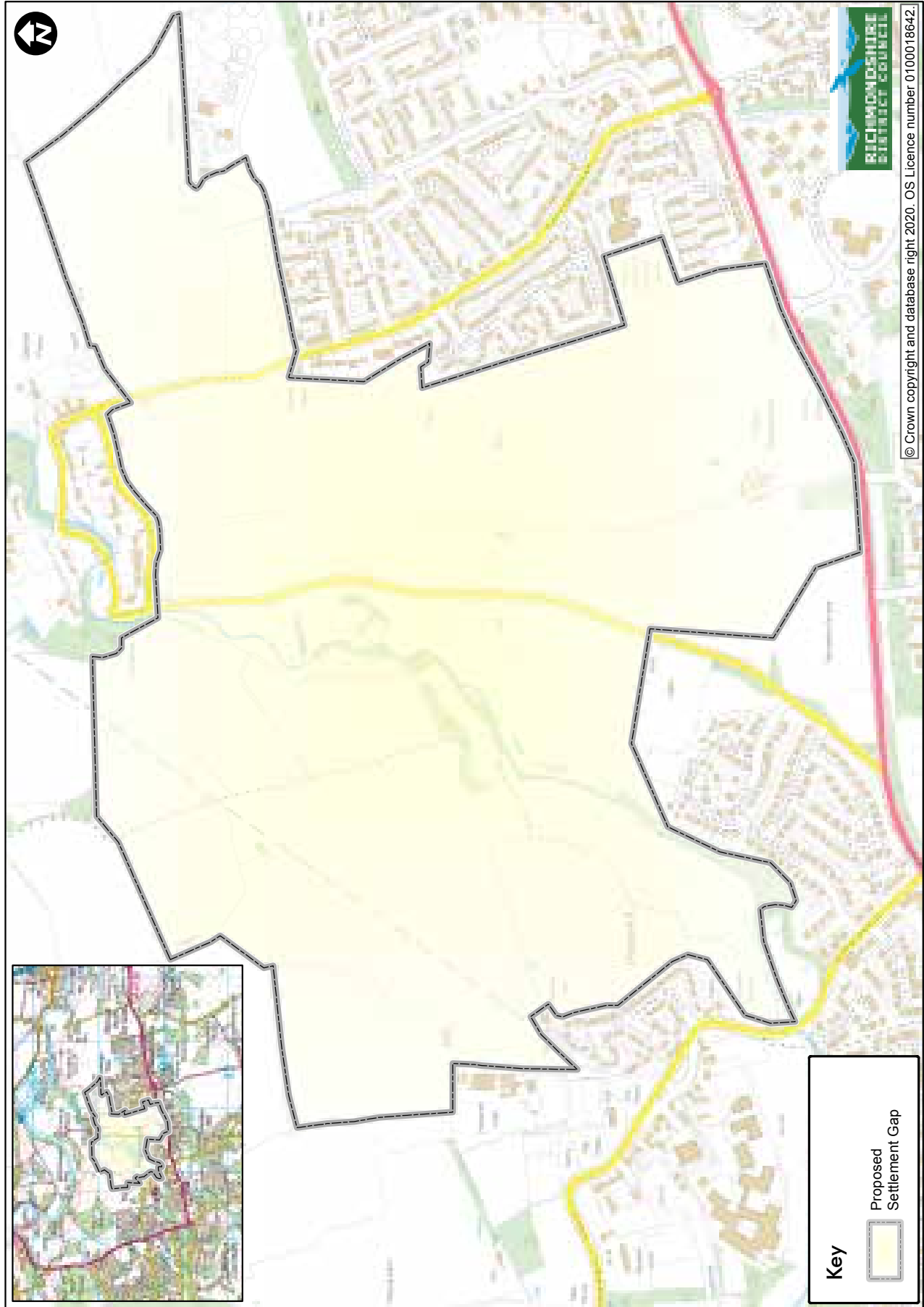
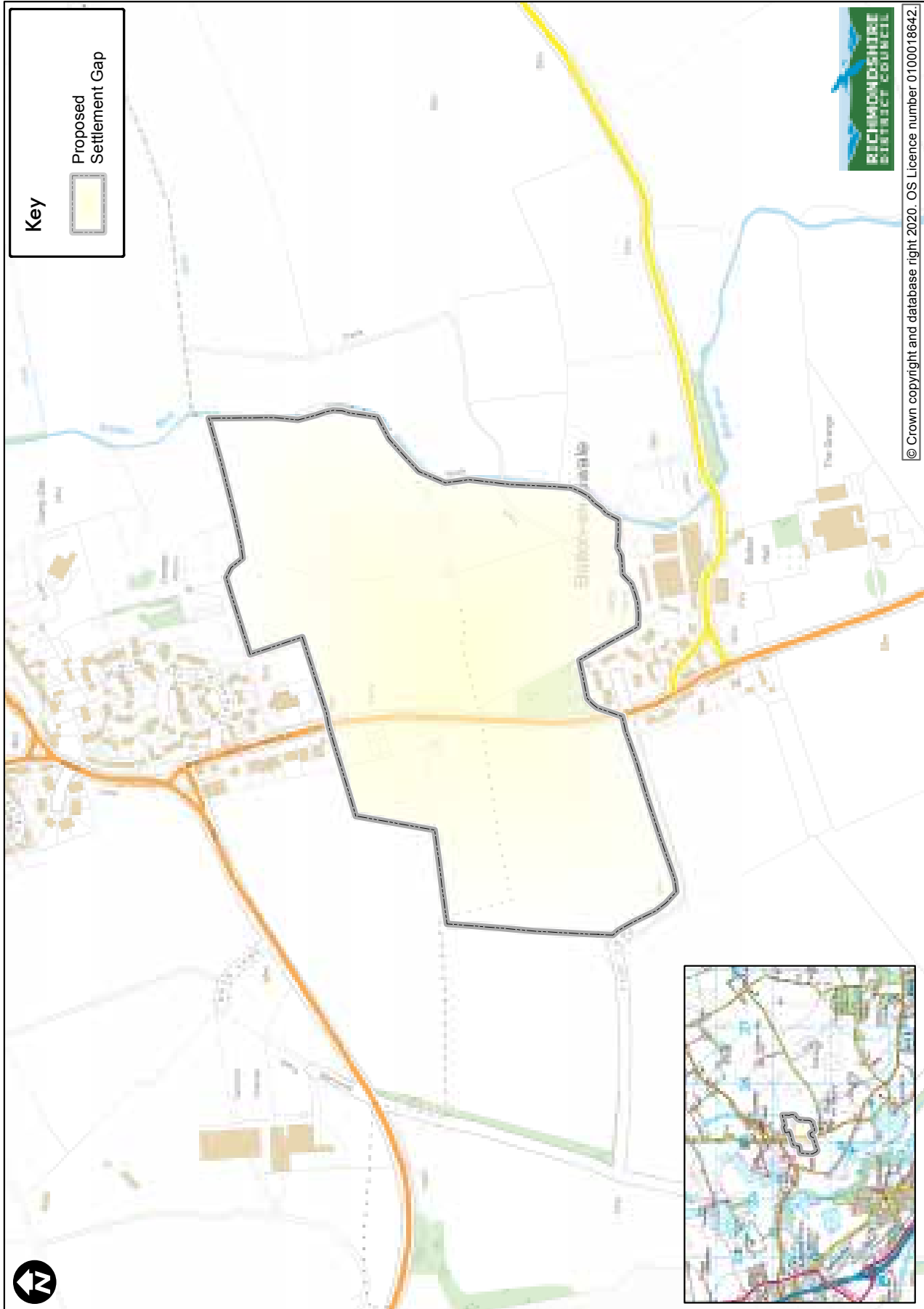




Figure 23 - Scorton/Bolton-on-Swale Settlement Gap Boundary





Justification

The landscape of Richmondshire is profoundly rural in character and characterised by both upland and lowland landscapes that contribute to a variety of qualities and key characteristics across the Plan Area. It is therefore of vital importance that the landscape character and distinct qualities are maintained, enhanced and, where appropriate, restored.

Development proposals should respect the landscape character and not seek to harm the character and appearance of local and wider landscapes or cause a detrimental impact on the setting of settlements. Part two of the preferred policy sets out clear criteria for which proposals should consider and incorporate into the design of a development. As well as the criteria, it is important that development proposals also take account of the other policies within the Local Plan where relevant and appropriate.

The Richmondshire Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study (2019) provide an in-depth understanding of the Plan Area's landscapes. In particular, the Landscape Character Assessment identifies, maps and describes the patterns, features and elements of the various landscape character types and areas that contribute to defining local distinctiveness. The Landscape Sensitivity Study draws on this assessment and identifies the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated in specific locations without compromising landscape character. As part of the Landscape Sensitivity Study the settlement gaps of Leyburn/Harmby (Figure 20), Spennithorne/Harmby (Figure 21), Colburn (Figure 22) and Scorton/Bolton-on-Swale (Figure 23) are identified and it is recommended that development in these areas is prevented to ensure the character, identity and coalescence of the individual settlements is protected.

Both the Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study should be referred to in all proposals affecting landscape character, with their intention to assist in informing judgements and decisions concerning the management of landscape change. Where proposals are likely to have an adverse impact on the landscape, an independent landscape assessment should be submitted by a suitably qualified expert to support the application, with the assessment informed by the Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study.

Within the Nidderdale and the North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape.

What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'



Issues and Options Consultation

No representations were made which specifically relate to this preferred policy.

Alternatives Considered

No policy on Landscape Character

An alternative option would be to have no Local Plan policy on Landscape Character and rely on national policy. This option would also not identify settlement gaps as recommended by the Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study. This is not considered an appropriate option because the landscape character of Richmondshire is unique and so only relying on national policy does not allow for a locally tailored approach to be set in maintaining and enhancing the landscape character. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

A policy which sets out a more restrictive local approach to protecting and enhancing valued landscapes including identifying further settlement gaps and areas of landscape constraint

Another alternative option would be to adopt a policy which sets out a more restrictive approach to protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, including identifying further settlement gaps and areas of landscape constraint. This is not considered an appropriate option as adopting a more restrictive approach as well as identifying more settlement gaps and constraint areas would overly restrict where development could otherwise take place. It is considered that the preferred policy provides a locally tailored approach which seeks to maintain and enhance landscape character as well as enable development to come forward where it is deemed acceptable and meets the requirements of the policy. The settlement gaps identified by the Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study are considered appropriate, with no other gaps identified for as to needing such protection at this time. For these reasons, this option of a more restrictive policy has been discounted.



QUESTIONS

Do you agree to preferred policy NE2 - Landscape Character?

If not, do you agree with the general approach but have any suggested changes?

Do you agree with the principle and identification of Settlement Gaps?

If not, do you agree with the general approach but have any suggested changes?

Please provide any further comments.



Policy NE3 - Green Infrastructure

This policy sets out the positive approach the Council will take towards Green Infrastructure. The preferred policy reads

Policy NE3 - Green Infrastructure

1. The green infrastructure network of the Plan Area will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced to provide a high quality, accessible, diverse and well-connected network of green space to meet the needs of the community, businesses and visitors.
2. Development proposals should
 - a. enhance existing green infrastructure features and provide a landscaping scheme which appropriately transitions the development with adjoining land
 - b. include tree-lined streets, verges and green spaces
 - c. enhance or create links between the site and the strategic green infrastructure corridors or parts of the key green infrastructure network, where the site is in close proximity
 - d. take opportunities to protect and enhance the public right of way network, avoiding unnecessary diversions.
3. Where relevant, development proposals should refer to, and take into account, the identified Catterick Garrison and Richmond Green Infrastructure Corridors.



Figure 24 - Catterick Garrison Green Infrastructure Corridor

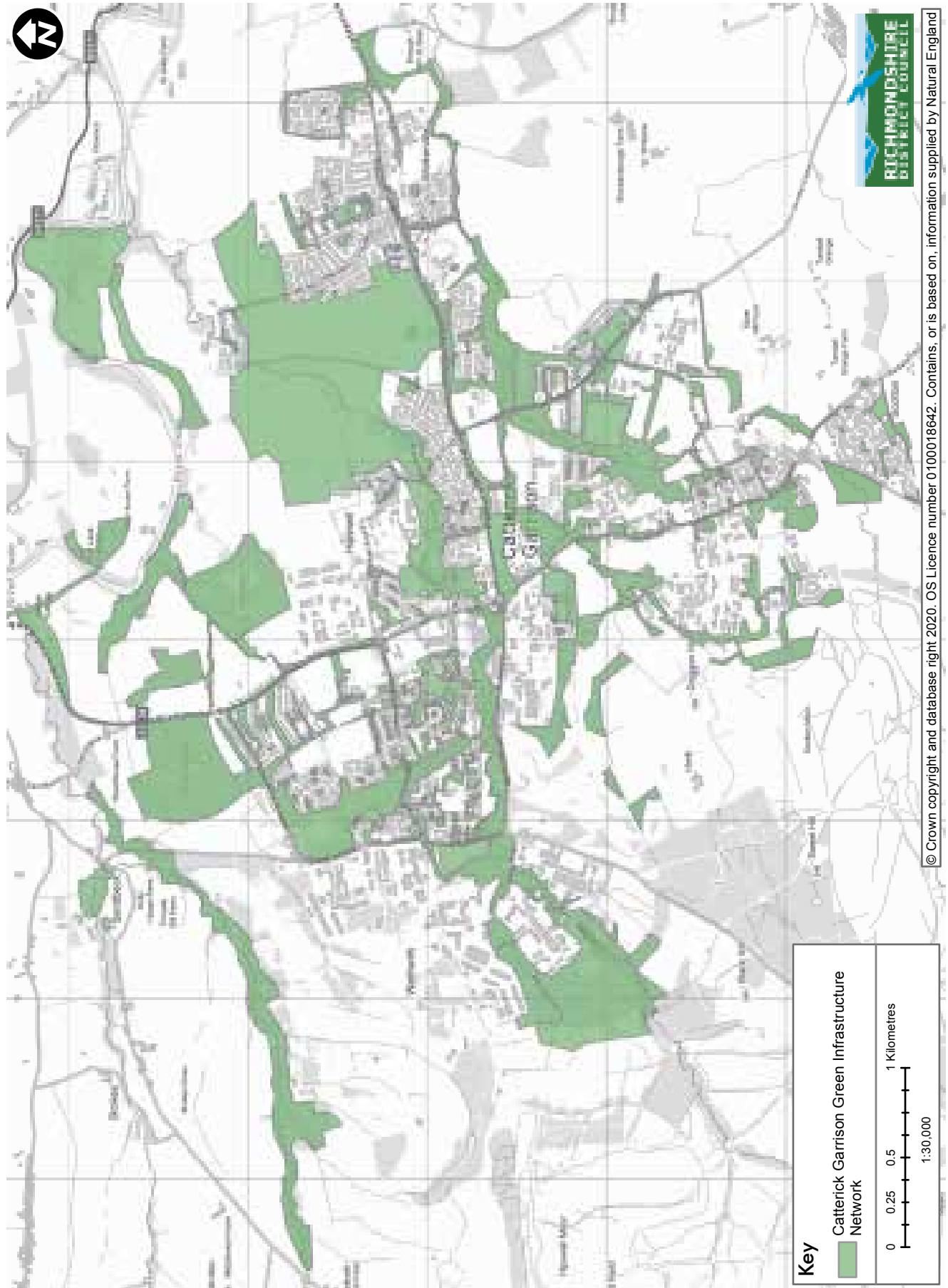
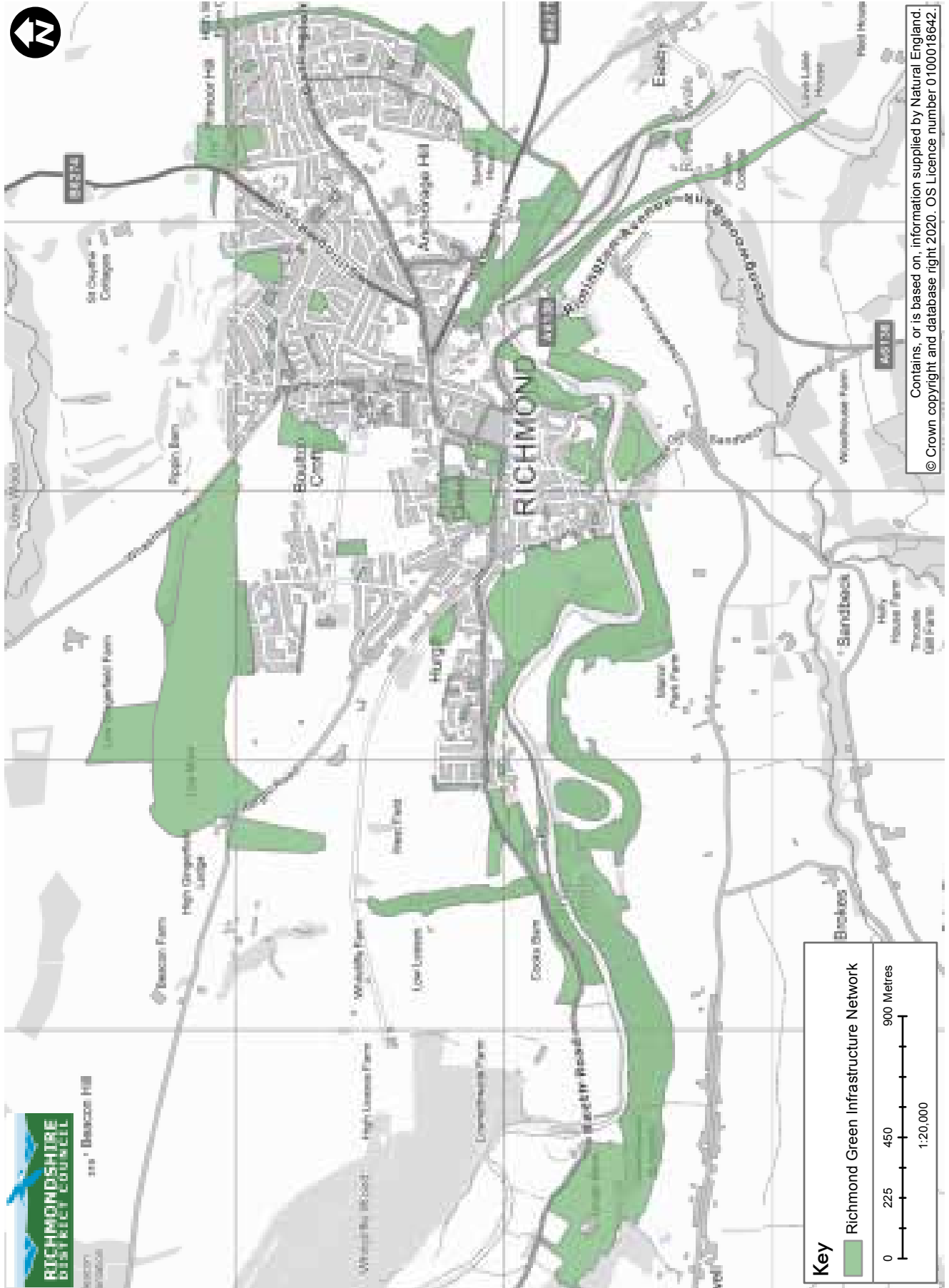




Figure 25 - Richmond Green Infrastructure Corridor





Justification

Green infrastructure is an important element of sustainable communities. Establishing the strategic and locally important elements of the plan area's rich green infrastructure will be an important responsibility of the Plan.

Green infrastructure works at different levels so that in the wider countryside it is often viewed at a larger scale, encompassing large country estates or parks, extensive habitats, major landscape features such as river corridors and flood meadows, landscapes, along with the identification of wide green corridors and ecological networks.

The strategic green infrastructure corridors identified by Natural England within the Plan Area are along the River Ure, the Swale Valley, the Tees Valley, the Skeeby - Newsham corridor, the Ravensworth - Forcett - Cliffe corridor, the Scorton - Croft corridor and the Catterick Village - Leyburn corridor.

The green infrastructure network includes

- i. playing fields, outdoor sports facilities, play parks and amenity green space
- ii. the Coast to Coast walk and views from it
- iii. corridors of green space, recreation areas and trees which flow through urban areas (particularly Catterick Garrison and Leyburn)
- iv. the gap between the settlements of Leyburn and Harmby, and the agricultural countryside between Colburn Town, Colburn Village and Hipswell
- v. village greens and common land
- vi. allotments, cemeteries, churchyards and civic spaces
- vii. woodlands, scrubland, grassland, wetland, running water, wasteland, open land and parks and gardens, river banks, cycleways and the Public Rights of Way network
- viii. sites important for biodiversity and geodiversity

The preferred policy also aims to protect and enhance the green infrastructure network of the Plan Area. The preferred policy sets out clear criteria for which development proposals should consider and incorporate. This includes enhancing existing green infrastructure corridors and creating links between green corridors.

Catterick Garrison is particularly notable for its green infrastructure, which is made up of corridors of open spaces, recreation areas and trees flowing through the urban area to compliment the regionally important corridors identified by Natural England. The agricultural countryside north of Catterick Road between Colburn Town, Colburn Village and Hipswell contributes to the overall openness of Catterick Garrison and acts as a buffer to the old village of Colburn and the landscape assets north of the River Swale. In Richmond, The Batts and Round Howe to the west of the town are particularly important in creating and forming a significant part of the overall green corridor.

As a result of this, Green Infrastructure Corridors have been identified in both Catterick Garrison and Richmond as part of this preferred policy (Figures 24 and 25 respectively).



What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 171 of the NPPF states that 'plans should

- a) distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites
- b) allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework
- c) take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure
- d) plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries'.

Issues and Options Consultation

No representations were made which specifically relate to this preferred policy.

Alternatives Considered

No policy on Green Infrastructure

An alternative option would be to have no Local Plan policy on Green Infrastructure. This is not considered an appropriate option and that the policy clearly sets out the approach to be taken to the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure sites and identified corridors. Furthermore, the inclusion of this policy ensures consistency with national policy. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

A policy which sets out a more restrictive local approach to protecting the green infrastructure network, including increased requirements to enhance it

Another alternative option would be to adopt a policy which sets out a more restrictive approach to protecting green infrastructure. As part of this option there would also be increased requirements placed on proposals for enhancing green infrastructure. This is not considered an appropriate option as this could overly restrict where development could take place and be burdensome in terms of requirements for enhancing green infrastructure. It is considered that the preferred policy sets out a locally focused approach which seeks to protect and enhance green infrastructure but also enables development to be brought forward. Furthermore, it is considered the criteria within the preferred policy for enhancing green infrastructure is clear and robust, with any further requirements being unjustified and overly restrictive, potentially deeming what would otherwise be acceptable development inappropriate. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.



QUESTIONS

Do you agree to preferred policy NE3 - Green Infrastructure?

If not, do you agree with the general approach to policy NE3 but have any suggested changes?

Please provide any further comments.



Policy NE4 - Water Quality

This policy sets out the approach the Council will take towards proposals for the protection and improvement of the quality of water.

The preferred policy reads

Policy NE4 - Water Quality

1. **Proposals should conserve natural resources, including by avoiding an increase in flood risk and allowing for the natural drainage of surface water. Landscape features such as water courses should be enhanced to increase wildlife connections and biodiversity. Development should be laid out in a manner which enables watercourses to be accessed for maintenance.**
2. **Development will be permitted where**
 - a. **The proposed development will be served by a sufficient supply of water, appropriate sewerage infrastructure and that there is sufficient sewage treatment capacity to ensure that there is no deterioration of water quality**
 - b. **Watercourses are not built on or culverted unless it is essential as the only means of facilitating access**
 - c. **The quality or quantity of surface or ground water is not prejudiced**
 - d. **It does not have an adverse impact on water dependent biodiversity sites (see Policy NE1).**
3. **The development of specific sites, particularly those in Catterick Garrison, will need to consider and consult on improvements to the mains water infrastructure in order to accommodate planned growth.**

Justification

This preferred policy sets out how all new development should strive to protect and improve the quality of water bodies and ecological systems in and adjacent to the Plan Area. Proposals should have regard to the actions and objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and appropriate River Basin Management Plans.

The WFD seeks to achieve a good status for all ground and surface waters (rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal) by assessment of the biological, physical and chemical status. The WFD introduced River Basin Districts, which often traverse local authority areas, but are managed by River Basin Management Plans. The majority of Richmondshire is in the Humber River Basin District and areas north of the A66 or Scotch Corner are in the Northumbria River Basin District. The WFDs purpose is to provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment, by setting out baseline classifications, statutory objectives and a programme of measures.

Where appropriate and relevant, developments should refer to Policy I2 (Infrastructure Delivery Plan) in relation to water infrastructure improvements.



What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that 'strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for ... infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)'.

Paragraph 149 highlights that 'plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure'.

Furthermore, paragraph 170 states that 'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ... preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans'.

Issues and Options Consultation

Suggestions were made to include water quality in the strategic objectives.

Alternatives Considered

No policy on Water Quality

An alternative option would be to have no Local Plan policy on Water Quality. This is not considered an appropriate option, with the preferred policy looking to ensure development protects and improves the quality of water bodies and ecological systems in and adjacent to the Plan Area. Furthermore, the inclusion of this preferred policy ensures consistency with the requirements as set out in national policy. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.



QUESTIONS

Do you agree to preferred policy NE4 - Water Quality?

If not, do you agree with the general approach to policy NE4 but have any suggested changes?

Please provide any further comments.



Policy NE5 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

The Richmondshire Plan Area contains a vast number of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland all of which contribute to the enjoyment of and shape the character of the overall area, as well as provide key habitats and networks for biodiversity. This preferred policy sets out the positive approach the Council will take towards proposals for preserving and enhancing existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands as well as encouraging new development to maximise opportunities for further provision.

The preferred policy reads

Policy NE5 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

1. Existing Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

- a) Development proposals must seek to protect, conserve and enhance any existing tree, hedge, hedgerow or woodland of value that would be affected by it.
- b) Development proposals including infrastructure provision that result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and ancient, veteran or notable trees (irreplaceable habitats) will be refused permission unless there are wholly exceptional reasons where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
- c) Development proposals including infrastructure provision that result in the loss, threat or damage to any tree (including those covered by a Tree Preservation Order), woodland, hedge or hedgerow of amenity, wildlife/nature conservation, historic, cultural, productive or landscape value or contribute to the setting and/or character of a settlement will only be supported in circumstances where
 - i. There are clear and demonstrable reasons why removal is essential to aid the delivery of the development
 - ii. An appropriate replanting scheme is agreed with the Council that maintains and enhance local distinctiveness, supports biodiversity and is suitable for its location (for example, distance to buildings). It should include new large and suitable native trees as part of the landscaping scheme and result in an improvement and enhancement of the tree canopy cover
 - iii. If the provision of replacement trees is not possible on-site or provision elsewhere will result in greater amenity, landscape or biodiversity value compensatory planting, equivalent to the public value of the trees to be removed, should be provided and agreed off-site
 - iv. A sustainable tree management programme is in place in order to ensure any new trees, hedgerows or woodland provided either on or off site are established or replaced if they fail to establish



2. New Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

- a) New developments are encouraged to maximise opportunities to incorporate the provision of new trees, hedgerows and woodland within the landscaping throughout the overall development where feasible. The new planting should ensure that
 - i. Local distinctiveness is maintained and/or enhanced
 - ii. Priority is given to the planting of native species which support biodiversity and maximise habitat opportunities for wildlife
 - iii. It seeks to link up with existing green infrastructure networks and wildlife corridors and seek to fill any gaps in the network
 - iv. It is the appropriate type for the location, including distance to buildings considering root spread
 - v. Trees, hedgerows or woodland are planted at an appropriate time of the year to enable their establishment with the minimum of aftercare
 - vi. A sustainable tree management programme is in place in order to ensure any new trees, hedgerows or woodland provided either on or off site are established or replaced if they fail to establish.
- b) Proposals for the planting of woodland, copses, linear belts and the reinstatement or creation of hedgerows will be supported and encouraged, to increase tree cover across the plan area.

Justification

Trees, woodlands, hedges and hedgerows form an integral part of the landscape character of Richmondshire and provide important habitats for a range of species, provide shelter, help reduce noise and atmospheric pollution and also store carbon dioxide, helping to mitigate against climate change. A hedge is generally found within a settlement and often has an amenity or ornamental role whereas a hedgerow is more commonly found in a rural setting, although some old hedgerows remain within settlements and often provide field boundaries and may comprise a range of native species. Woodlands add to the character and quality of the local environment, offering what can be irreplaceable habitat in terms of historic value (for example ancient woodlands, ancient or veteran trees). Furthermore, woodlands offer green networks for biodiversity as well as recreational opportunities to support health and wellbeing.

It is essential that the presence of existing trees be considered at an early stage in the development process and that where appropriate, provision is made for new tree planting. Whilst trees can be seen as a constraint, with sympathetic design they can enhance a development. Some specific trees or groups of trees are of particular value such that their removal would have a significant impact upon the local environment and its enjoyment by the public. Where they are potentially under threat, the Council will make Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) to protect them. Equal consideration will be given to hedgerows that provide a significant contribution which are classed as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (as amended).



The Council will encourage proposals which seek to increase the planting of trees, woodland and hedgerows particularly in built up areas and on the edges of settlements, where this will contribute to the enhancement of landscape character, amenity, recreation, health and welfare of residents, biodiversity, geological and historical conservation, ecosystem services, tourism and the economic development of the Plan Area.

A Tree Survey should be submitted as part of an application which would affect any tree(s), hedgerow or woodland and this should be carried out by a suitably qualified expert.

What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 175c of the NPPF states that 'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists'.

The NPPF further clarifies that wholly exceptional reasons include 'for example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Work Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat' (Footnote 58).

Issues and Options Consultation

Natural England commented that 'where a plan area contains irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodland and veteran trees, there should be appropriate policies to ensure their protection. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced standing advice on ancient woodland and veteran trees'.

Alternatives Considered

No policy on Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

An alternative policy option would be to have no policy on Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows and rely on national policy. This is not considered an appropriate option as the preferred sets a locally tailored approach which seeks to preserve and enhance existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands as well as encourage new development to maximise opportunities for further provision. For these reasons, this option of no policy has been discounted.

A policy which sets out a more restrictive approach to protecting existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands, with specific requirements to provide new provision as part of all developments

Another alternative option would be to adopt a policy which sets out a more restrictive approach to protecting existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands. This option would also set out specific requirements for the provision of new trees, hedgerows and woodlands as part of all new developments. This is not considered an appropriate option as this could overly restrict where development could take place and be burdensome in terms of requiring all new developments to provide new trees, hedgerows and woodlands. The preferred policy sets out a clear and locally tailored approach which seeks to protect and enhance existing provision as well as encourage the planting of new trees, hedgerows, and woodlands as part of a development. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.



QUESTIONS

**Do you agree to preferred policy NE5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland?
If not, do you agree with the general approach to policy NE5 but have any suggested changes?**

Please provide any further comments.



Policy NE6 - Local Green Spaces

National policy allows for land to be designated as Local Green Space to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. The preferred policy reads

Policy NE6 - Local Green Spaces

1. Proposals which would result in the whole or partial loss and/or degradation of a designated Local Green Space will not be supported, unless very special circumstances are fully evidenced and justified in accordance with national planning policy.
2. Where a site has been specifically designated for a particular reason, the designation will not preclude development which is operationally required to retain or enhance such value.

Justification

A consultation was held between May and July in 2019 which invited submissions for land to be considered for and designated as local green spaces. A total of 121 areas of land were submitted as part of the process and 77 met the criteria to be designated as Local Green Space.

As part of this Preferred Options consultation, there is further opportunity to submit sites to be considered for designation as a local green space. The application form and details for submitting can be found on our website. It is essential that a map clearly outlining the site for consideration is attached to all submissions in order for the application to be processed. The Local Green Spaces Designation Recommendations Report (2019) contains further information on the criteria used to assess sites and it is recommended that this document is referred to when preparing a submission to avoid any duplication of submissions.

The sites which have been identified as to meet the criteria of a designated Local Green Space are outlined below

Site Ref	Settlement	Site Name
1027	Brompton on Swale	Green space in the centre of Brompton Park
1028	Brompton on Swale	Brompton Court central green space opposite 59 to 61 Brompton Court also land between 47 Brompton Court and Bridge Road
1031	Brompton on Swale	Community Sports Field
1032	Brompton on Swale	Recreational Ground East of Augustus Gardens, access from the end of Stephenson Road
1033	Brompton on Swale	Riverside walk woodland East and North of the River Swale
1006	Brough St Giles	Land to the rear of Petrol Station and Lidl
1011	Catterick Village	Catterick Village Playing Pitches
1016	Catterick Village	Arena View Play Park
1023	Colburn	Woodland surrounding The Chase and Marne Grange Housing Developments (same as 1037)



Site Ref	Settlement	Site Name
1036	Colburn	Colburndale, The Old Pipework Factory
1037	Colburn	Woodland Area surrounding The Chase and Marne Grange Housing Developments (same as 1023)
1038	Colburn	Piper Hill open grassed area
1042	Colburn	Green areas within Forest Drive estate
1043	Colburn	Grassed area at the junction of Forest Drive and Peppermint Drive
1045	Colburn	Grass area at Colville Crescent
1046	Colburn	Grass patches Constantine Ave, to the rear of the Primary School
1047	Colburn	Old recreation grounds, grassed area at Carlton Road and Cleveland Road
1048	Colburn	Old recreation grounds, grassed area between Castleton Road and Horne Road
1049	Colburn	Old recreation grounds, land north west of Somme Barracks
1005/1012	Croft-on-Tees	Land to the south of Primary School and north of Richmond Road
1116	Hunton	Playpark and recreation area in the centre of the village, south west of Hunton Village Hall
1025	Leyburn	Chapel Flatts field and Shawl Fields
1119	Middleham	Triangular green space open space south west of 9 St Alkelda's Road
1120	Middleham	Grassed area at Park Lane
1121	Middleton Tyas	School Bank
1126	Middleton Tyas	Recreation ground and play area
1009	Newton-le-Willows	Land adjacent to Ivy Crescent and Station Road
1052	Preston Under Scar	Playground, centre of Preston Under Scar
1054	Preston Under Scar	The Village Green, east of Light Lane at junction in road
1058	Preston Under Scar	Spring Wood, west of Preston Under Scar
1059	Preston Under Scar	The Garth, south of Spring Cottage
1061	Preston Under Scar	The Stanney, north of housing
1022	Redmire	Village Green, Quoits Pitch
1003 / 1080	Richmond	The Green (same as 1080)
1015 / 1021 / 1110	Richmond	Clink Bank Woods, North of the River Swale (same as 1021 and 1110)
1063	Richmond	Burgage Pasture, The Old Racecourse
1066	Richmond	Woodland east of High Garth and South of Green Howards Road
1069	Richmond	Allotment gardens at Westfields
1071	Richmond	Allotment gardens at Coronation Place
1072	Richmond	Coronation Place play park
1073	Richmond	Childrens play area and green space, north of Reeth Road and west of Covent Close
1074	Richmond	Allotment gardens at Reeth Road
1076	Richmond	Land along the south of River Swale, including Richmond Football Ground



Site Ref	Settlement	Site Name
1078	Richmond	Ronaldshay Park, Cricket Field and Bowling Club
1079	Richmond	Friary Gardens and surrounding area
1081	Richmond	Play park, Riverside Road
1082	Richmond	The Batts and Gas Holder Gardens
1083	Richmond	Woodland and Recreational Ground, north of Green Howards Road, west of Swalegate
1085	Richmond	Green space at junction of Cut Purse Lane and High Riding
1086	Richmond	Green space north of Cut Purse Lane, south east of 13 and 15 Cut Purse Lane
1087	Richmond	Playground at Norman Close
1088	Richmond	Green space at junction of Seagrim Crescent and Chestnut Close
1089	Richmond	Green space along Seagrim Crescent, south of Nursing Home
1090	Richmond	Green space along the South of Lyons Road
1091	Richmond	Green space at corner of Conan Gardens and Pikepurse Lane
1092	Richmond	The Ghyll
1094	Richmond	Green spaces at centre of Earl Edwin Drive
1096	Richmond	Privately owned Allotments in vicinity of Gilling Road, Fontenay Ave and Darlington Road
1097	Richmond	Cross Lanes Recreation area
1098	Richmond	Grassed areas at entrance to Olliver Road
1099	Richmond	Green space at Pinder Close
1100	Richmond	Scots Dyke
1101	Richmond	Land south of Whitefield
1102	Richmond	Green spaces at bottom of St. Nicholas Drive, north of Monument Fields
1103	Richmond	Green space at junction of St Nicholas Drive and Charles Court
1104	Richmond	Green space at St Trinians Close
1105	Richmond	Green space at The Meadows, Whitefields
1106	Richmond	Green Space south of White Rose Crescent
1108	Richmond	Pilmoor Hill with Oliver Duckett folly
1109	Richmond	Footpath and fields leading to Easby Abbey including playing field (Drummer Boy walk side) and old Railway Line walk side
1113	Richmond	Green spaces at Alexandra Way and Olav Road
1019	Scorton	Grass Triange, Hospital Road
1034	Scotton	Recreational Ground, Sports Court and Green Space south of the Village Hall and Scotton Social Club
1035	Scotton	Allotment Gardens and Green Space west of the Village Hall and Car Park
1004	Spennithorne	Green space at Thorney Meadows



What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

The designation of land as Local Green Space gives communities the opportunity to identify and protect green areas of particular importance, subject to meeting a set of criteria. The NPPF states that 'Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period' (paragraph 99).

Specifically, NPPF (paragraph 100) outlines that 'green space should only be designated where it is

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land'.

Furthermore, policies which manage development within a Local Green Space should be consistent in approach with those for Green Belts (paragraph 101).

Issues and Options Consultation

No representations were made which specifically relate to this preferred policy.

Alternatives Considered

No policy on Local Green Space

An alternative option would be to have no Local Plan policy on Local Green Space. This is not considered an appropriate option as the preferred policy clearly outlines the protection awarded to designated local green spaces and ensures consistency with national policy. For these reasons, this option of having no policy has been discounted.



QUESTIONS

Do you agree to preferred policy NE6 - Local Green Spaces?

If not, do you agree with the general approach but have any suggested changes?

Do you agree with the identification and designation of sites listed as local green space?

If not, do you agree with the general approach but have any suggested changes?

Please provide any further comments.