Richmondshire District Council
Local Plan Core Strategy
Proposed Submission
August 2012
Representations Form

Please read the guidance notes before completing this form

This form comprises two parts:
Part A: Personal details
Part B: Your representation(s)

Both Part A and Part B of this form need to be completed in order for your representation(s) to be valid. Please complete a separate sheet (Part B) for each representation you wish to make. Further copies of this form can be downloaded from www.richmondshire.gov.uk/localplan.aspx . You do not need to fill out Part A for each representation, provided that all representations made are securely attached.

Your completed form must be returned to the following address to reach us no later than **4pm on Friday 14 September 2012:**

Planning Policy, Richmondshire District Council, Swale House, Frenchgate, Richmond, DL10 4JE

Alternatively, you can email: localplan@richmondshire.gov.uk and submit this form as an attachment.

Please note, all representations will be made available for public inspection on our website www.richmondshire.gov.uk/localplan.aspx with personal details (i.e. email address, telephone number and signature) removed.

Part A – Personal details

	Your Details	Agent's Details
Title	Mr	
First name	Craig	
Last name	Barnes	
Job title (if applicable)	Graduate Planner	
Work/organisation (if applicable)	Gladman Developments	
Address	Gladman House Alexandria Way Congleton Cheshire	
Postcode	CW12 1LB	
Telephone No.	01260 288885	
Email address	c.barnes@gladman.co.uk	

Part B - Your representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation.

Name/Organisation	Craig Barnes, Gladman Developments

Q1.To which part of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document does this representation relate? (Spatial Principle, Sub Area Strategy or Core Policy)	
Policy number (e.g. SP2, CRSS or CP8)	SP4
Page/paragraph number(s)	Pg 24

<u>Please note:</u> Your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to fully support/justify the representation and the suggested change, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations. <u>After this stage, further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he/she identifies for examination.</u>

Q2. Do you consider the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document is…?						
(a) Legally compliant	Yes		No		Don't Know	X
(b) Sound	Yes		No	X	Don't Know	
If you answered 'No' to (a) or (b) above, please continue to Q3, otherwise continue to Q5.						

Q3. Do you consider the Core Strategy is unsound because it is not: (please refer to the guidance notes)	
(a) Justified	X
(b) Effective	X
(c) Consistent with national policy	X
(d) Positively prepared	X

Please give details of why you consider the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document is not legally compliant or is unsound. Please be as precise as possible:

Policy SP4 sets the annual requirement of the Core Strategy at 180 dwellings per annum in Richmondshire. The latest evidence base was published in the 2011 North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Partnerships Strategic Housing Market Assessment (produced by GVA Grimley and published in November 2011), and identifies a need of 260 Affordable dwellings per annum over the next five years to meet the existing backlog (see page 117 appendix 4, NYSHP SHMA, GVA Grimley 2011).

The Richmondshire Scrutiny of Population Estimates and Projections (2012) is not based on the latest and most up to date evidence, as it uses the 2008 and 2006 ONS population projections.

The whole tone of the NPPF is centred on delivering sustainable development and there is a clear recognition that development means growth. In order to ensure that

this is delivered, the NPPF highlights that the supply of housing needs to be significantly boosted and that local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the **full, objectively assessed** needs for market and affordable housing in the housing area (§47 NPPF).

§158 of the NPPF goes on to state:

> *"Each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on **adequate up to date and relevant evidence**…Local planning authorities should ensure that their assessment of and strategies for housing , employment and other uses are integrated, and that they take full account of relevant market and economic signals."*

§159 of the NPPF states:

> *"Local planning authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. They should:*
>
> - *Prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their **full housing needs,** working with neighbouring authorities where housing markets cross administrative boundaries…"*

It is clear that housing requirement evidence base documents need to take full account of population and household projections produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) respectively and should take full account of migration and demographic change. However, these are not the only factors that should be taken into account when deriving the full housing requirement for an area and they should only be used to provide the starting point to ensuring that the Local Plan caters for housing demand and the scale of supply necessary to meet that demand (§159 NPPF).

It is clear throughout the NPPF that Local Plans should be predicated on a robust and clearly evidenced assessment of the **full** housing need of an area. In order to ensure that this is achieved many other factors need to be taken into account:

Household Formation Rates - It is clear in evidence collated by CLG in their 'Household Projections 2033 - England' document (2010) that average household formation rates have been declining since 2006 and are forecast to continue to decline. This needs to be factored into to the SHMA to ensure that it is based on the latest up-to date and statistically robust information.

Net Inward Migration – The NPPF states that SHMAs should meet household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change. It is essential therefore that migration is factored into the calculation of housing requirements for the area.

Backlog/Hidden Homeless – Many local authorities have consistently under-provided housing against targets set out in adopted Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). These documents were subject to significant scrutiny and were found to be based on robust evidence. Therefore, if local authorities have not provided sufficient homes to meet their RSS targets, then there is a need to ensure that their housing requirement in forthcoming Local Plans includes an element to address this backlog. The Inspector

at the recent Bath and North East Somerset Core Strategy Examination concluded that, if it is accepted that the past failure to deliver housing in the Local Plan period can be ignored then this would justify ignoring future failure to deliver which could be repeated in all subsequent reviews of the local plan. This approach would progressively depress the housing requirement, creating a self-fulfilling justification for less housing growth to be planned than is required. It is clear from this statement that the Inspectorate expects local authorities to address the backlog in the preparation of the new local plans.

This backlog could also be equated to the hidden homeless that the 'Delivering Stability: securing our future housing needs' report, Kate Barker (2004) described as "those people without self-contained accommodation". SHMAs should therefore make a clear assessment of the numbers of hidden homeless within their housing market areas using data such as local authority waiting lists, to ensure that this is factored into the revised housing requirement when reviewing the Local Plan.

Census 2011 – Preliminary results from the Census 2011 have recently been released by the ONS. These clearly show that the population of the country has not only risen in the last 10 years but an additional 476,000 people have been counted because of the previous under-estimation of international migration and shortfalls on 2001 Census day. There is therefore clearly a need to factor in a requirement for the additional population identified in Census 2011 into SHMAs.

Housing Vacancy Rates – The Home Builders Federation (HBF) stated that there is a need to provide not only the housing required for an area but also to allow for an additional 3% vacancy rate to ensure that everyone has a home and there is a healthy 'churn' in the housing market. SHMAs should therefore factor in an additional 3% to the housing requirement to take account of these vacancies.

Economic Factors – NPPF states that local authorities should ensure that their assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated and take full account of relevant market and economic signals (§158 NPPF). It is usual for Local Plans to set objectives that seek an increase in economic activity within the local authority area over the plan period and in order for this objective to be properly delivered; a suitable supply of housing is required. Therefore, up-to-date economic forecasts must be used to assess future job growth within the local authority and these should be fed into the housing requirement calculation to ensure that sufficient housing is provided to accommodate the future workforce. This calculation should be justified with a suitable and robust homes to job ratio.

Off-setting a falling working age population – In many local authority areas the population is ageing. Working populations are falling and as a result, employers have to look further afield for their workforce. This has the implication of increasing commuting levels which could lead to an unsustainable approach to the future development of the area. Therefore, the SHMA should factor in the need for the additional households that would be required to offset the loss of working age population. In addition, areas that have been traditionally attractive to an ageing population will continue to be so which will mean that a proportion of new housing will be inhabited by the non-working age population. Therefore, this should also be factored into the housing requirement calculation if the authority is seeking to

stabilise or increase the working age population.

Addressing Affordability – The provision of affordable housing is often one of the main priorities that local authorities seek to address through their Local Plan. I note that in the draft Core Strategy this aim is made clear as a Strategic Objective at paragraph 3.1.4 bullet point b. However, the only way to improve affordability is to provide housing. If SHMAs suggest that a certain level of affordable housing is required and the authority are not seeking to address that need in full through the Local Plan, then the only possible result is that the affordability gap will get worse. Local Plan housing requirements should therefore reflect the full need for affordable housing provision, as required by §47 of NPPF, if addressing affordability is to be achieved.

Duty to Cooperate – The Duty to Cooperate is a legal requirement placed on local authorities by the Localism Act 2011 (§110). It is a requirement for local authorities to work together on cross-boundary and strategic issues to ensure that these issues are co-ordinated and clearly reflected in Local Plans. Local Planning Authorities should therefore ensure that their SHMAs are prepared on a joint basis if housing market areas cross authority boundaries. These assessments should identify if neighbouring authorities are proposing to meet their full housing requirement within their own authority area and if not, what proportion will be expected to be delivered within their authority. Therefore, it is considered that the Local Plan should build into the housing requirement a factor to account for the possible non-delivery of housing in a neighbouring authority area.

Non-Delivery of Local Plan Allocations – Often, local plan allocations do not deliver the level of housing that was anticipated when they were allocated. This is demonstrated with the only remaining housing allocation from the Local Plan at Maythorne Farm, east of Leyburn, which is allocated for 90 units and assessed in the SHELAA as having a capacity for 60 units. It is anticipated that this situation will continue to occur throughout the life of each local plan and therefore, additional allocations should be made above and beyond the identified housing requirement to ensure that the **full** housing requirement is actually delivered. In fact, the Inspector at the Bath and North East Somerset Core Strategy Examination concluded in paragraph 7 that the authority should make “changes to the plan to fully accommodate the assessed needs and demands or evidence to demonstrate that doing so would result in adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits”. It is considered that this shows that the Inspectorate expect the housing requirement for an area to be met in full.

Phasing Policy – Phasing policies should not be utilised to arbitrarily stop development that is considered to be acceptable from coming forward. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in NPPF and Greg Clark makes it very clear in his Ministerial Foreword that “Development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay”. The only acceptable use of a phasing policy would be to regulate sites coming forward that rely on the delivery of a significant piece of infrastructure before they can be deemed to be acceptable. Therefore, phasing policies that determine when sites should come forward through the plan period

would be considered to be unsound set against this guidance. In fact, the delivery of appropriate and sustainable sites ahead of any phasing proposed would only benefit an area in terms of economic viability and boosting significantly the supply of housing.

The housing target proposed is also negative in its approach to fulfilling the needs of the local population. This negativity is highlighted in the Core Strategy at Paragraph 4.6.11 (also Pg 67) stating that "it is unlikely that new development will ever meet demand for affordable housing." Therefore it is more important than ever to set the most ambitious affordable housing targets possible, whilst maintaining the viability of local development". The SHLAA has assessed that there are sites available that could deliver 10,621 units in 0 – 15 years (708 dpa). With an affordable housing requirement of between 30% to 40% there are therefore sites available with the ability to deliver average of 212 to 283 dpa affordable dwellings. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states:

"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking:

*For **plan-making** this means that:*

- *local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;*
- *Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
    1. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
    2. *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."*

With the proposed housing requirement of 180 dpa not even meeting the evidenced affordable housing requirement of 260 dpa in the 2011 SHMA, the Core Strategy is 'planning to fail' and runs completely contrary to the requirements in paragraph 14 of the NPPF. The SHMA also states that average house prices in the district are up to 10x average income and have increased 128% since 2001. The continued under-provision of affordable properties will only serve to exacerbate existing problems.

Having regard to the examination of Local Plans, §182 of the NPPF sets 4 criteria for a plan to be found "sound". This includes a requirement for the plan to be 'consistent with national policy' and states that the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.

The emerging Core Strategy policies for housing growth must therefore be based on an up to date SHMA in order for the Core Strategy to be considered sound and in line with the NPPF. In consideration of this and the above, the proposed annual housing target does not adhere to national guidance and the Core Strategy is therefore un-sound.

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Q4. Please set out what change(s) you consider necessary to make the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified at Q3 where this relates to soundness. You need to say why this change will make the Core Strategy legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible:
For the reasons outlined above the emerging Core Strategy policies for housing growth must be based on an up to date SHMA in order for the Core Strategy to be considered sound and in line with the NPPF. In consideration of this and the above, the proposed annual housing target does not adhere to national guidance and the Core Strategy is therefore un-sound.
Q5. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document, please use the space below to set out your comments:
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

If your representation is seeking a change to the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination?	
No, I do not wish to participate at the oral examination	
Yes, I wish to participate at the oral examination	X

If you have selected 'No', your representation(s) will still be considered by the independent Planning Inspector by way of written representations.

If you wish to participate at the oral part of the examination, please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

If you wish to be notified of future stages of plan preparation, please tick the appropriate box(es) below.			
Submission for Examination	**X**	**Notify me by:** (please tick)	
Inspector's Report Publication	**X**	Post	

Adoption	**X**	Email	**X**

Please Note: The Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate at the oral part of the examination.

Signature:	Craig Barnes
Date:	12/09/2012