

Challenges



This section sets out the local context for Richmondshire in terms of its population, economy and environment. It identifies and sets out the Strategic Challenges and Opportunities that the Local Plan should seek to address.

Richmondshire's Challenges

Location

The Richmondshire Plan Area, as illustrated in Figure 1, is situated in the east of the district and lies outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It stretches from the Tees Valley and Vale of Mowbray lowlands in the east, through the Pennine fringe into Lower Swaledale and Wensleydale in the northern Yorkshire Dales. It also includes a small remote outlying area around Tan Hill.

The Plan Area sits within a wider geographic context bordering Darlington in the Tees Valley and the deeply rural Yorkshire and Durham Dales and rural lowlands. Darlington acts as a sub-regional centre for much of the Plan Area population, providing retail and other services, and employment. It is linked by several roads, including the upgraded A1(M), A66, A167 and B1263.

The Richmondshire and Hambleton Plan Areas share many similarities, reflected in shared transport links between towns and villages. The A684 runs through Wensleydale to Bedale and the upgraded A1(M) at Leeming Bar. The Wensleydale Railway currently links Leeming Bar with Redmire via Leyburn.

The towns of Catterick Garrison, Richmond and Leyburn provide important services and employment opportunities across this wide area and to the settlements within the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Barnard Castle in County Durham provides a similar role for small settlements in the north of the Plan Area. The short boundary with Harrogate runs through a remote rural area in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Settlements

Richmond is an award-winning historic market town positioned on the steep slopes of the Swale Valley. Historically it has been the main administrative and service centre for the district. Its significance remains but, with the post-war growth of the military base at Catterick Garrison and neighbouring settlements, it is no longer as dominant as it once was and it has lost out to the growth in Darlington and other larger centres.

A large part of the town and its immediate surroundings have been designated as Conservation Areas. Richmond Castle and its dramatic setting, together with the outstanding built heritage of the town centre is a major tourism draw along with the large cobbled Market Place reputed to be the largest horseshoe market square in England.

Hipswell, Scotton and Colburn - including the main Catterick Garrison military site - are generally known as Catterick Garrison. This masks a complicated area that has evolved through the growth of military facilities, which have coalesced with the villages.

Here, a modern town centre has now been created which provides a range of retail and leisure

facilities serving residents of the whole of Richmondshire and beyond. This has reduced reliance on neighbouring centres outside the district, such as Darlington, for shopping and leisure. This began with the building of a large superstore, Leisure Centre and more recently the Princes Gate development containing numerous national chain shops, restaurants and a cinema.

Although there is a strong military character to this area it is not exclusive and there are now large areas of open market housing following the disposal of military accommodation and development on former military land. Colburn is the largest domestic settlement offering a range of housing and other services and has been the main focus for growth in recent years.

A number of employment locations have been developed mainly in Colburn including Walkerville Industrial Estate and Colburn Business Park, reflecting its proximity to the A1(M). Access to the A1(M) has been improved significantly following the creation of the new Catterick Central Junction as part of the recent A1 upgrade to motorway standard.

The area has grown around the A6136 which has recently been upgraded to ensure the additional development outlined in the current Local Plan Core Strategy (2012-2028) could be accommodated. A further Catterick Garrison Strategic Transport Assessment (2020) has been carried out which has identified the junctions along the A6136 which require upgrading to accommodate the additional traffic expected to be generated as a result of the further development set out in this Local Plan.

Leyburn is the main town serving a wide rural catchment area covering Lower Wensleydale and Upper Swaledale. It is a market town serving the local agricultural economy and is also an important tourist centre. The town sits at a crossroads and operates as a hub for public transport in the area. Its connections favour east-west travel along Wensleydale towards Bedale and Northallerton.

There are over 70 villages which vary in size considerably and are distributed across this large rural area.

Population

The population of the Plan Area is estimated to be 46,854 (ONS, 2018), which is 88% of the district total.

The age profile of Richmondshire is skewed by the large military population, particularly by the number of young adults (aged 20-34) associated with the army at Catterick Garrison.

Figure 3 (Richmondshire SHMA Demographics January 2017) compares Richmondshire's age profile to the county, region, and England profiles. Richmondshire has a younger age profile than North Yorkshire in total, with more similarity with the more youthful age profiles of the Yorkshire and Humber region and England as a whole because of the Armed Forces population.

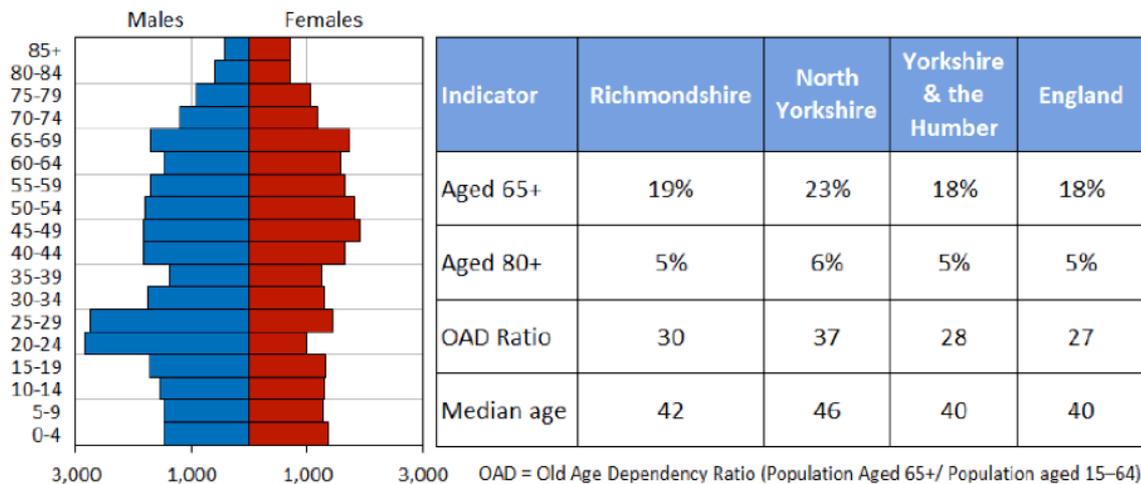


Figure 3 - Richmondshire Age Profile

Richmondshire has an Old Age Dependency ratio of 30, compared to a national average of 27 for England, 46 for North Yorkshire and 40 for the Yorkshire and Humber region. This means that the 65+ population of Richmondshire is equivalent to 30% of the 15-64 age-group population, compared to 27% across England in aggregate, 46% in North Yorkshire and 40% in the region. However, the local impact of ageing will mean that the older population in Richmondshire is dependent on a much smaller younger population if the communal military population is removed from this equation.

The Plan Area can expect an increase in its age profile as the ‘baby boom’ generation reaches retirement age during the reviewed plan period to 2039.

Two thirds of this population live in the seven largest settlements, with estimated populations of Catterick Garrison 16,630, Richmond 8,450, Catterick Village (including Marne Barracks) 3,320, Leyburn 2,230 and Brompton on Swale 1,730 (NYCC, 2016).

95% of the local population is white, which is greater than regional and national levels.

Housing

There are about 19,350 (MHCLG, 2018) dwellings in the Plan Area, of which around 2% are second homes, 0.6% are holiday homes and around 3% are vacant properties.

63% of dwellings in the Plan Area are owner occupied, 15% are privately rented, 12% are social rented or shared ownership and the remaining 10% are Service Families Accommodation.

There are two distinct housing market areas in Richmondshire. The central and northern parts of the Plan Area fall mainly into the Darlington and the Tees Valley area. The remaining, predominantly rural area, participates in much wider high value and leisure markets characterised by affluent commuters, quality of life, second and holiday homes. In-migration and rural attractiveness are strong drivers of the housing market in the Plan Area.

The ratio of median house price to median gross annual earnings in Richmondshire is 7.31 (ONS, 2018). This is lower than the neighbouring North Yorkshire areas but significantly higher than the neighbouring Tees Valley areas.

The Richmondshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2019) confirms the ongoing affordable housing issue. It calculates a net annual imbalance of 58 affordable dwellings each year across the Richmondshire Plan Area.

The SHMA suggests that the affordable housing tenure split starting point should be 50% affordable rent and 50% intermediate tenure, acknowledging the importance of intermediate home ownership products.

The median gross annual income of £27,378 in the district is a barrier to owner-occupation for many families (SHMA, 2019).

The median house price is £200,000 and requires a household income of £51,428 to purchase (assuming a 10% deposit and 3.5x income multiple is required for mortgage).

The private rented sector makes up 15% of the total dwellings. Median rents have remained fairly stable over the period 2010-2018 rising from £546 to £576. Social housing waiting lists accounted for 1.4% of households.

Military

There are two substantial military sites in the Plan Area. The Catterick Garrison main site has grown within the parishes of Hipswell, Scotton and Colburn since it was established in 1915, while Marne Barracks is at Catterick Village by the A1 (M).

The military population is currently estimated to be in the order of 12,000 (comprising 7,000 personnel and 5,000 dependants), which is over a quarter of the Plan Area population. In addition to this there are a further 3,000 personnel transient through the Garrison annually, predominantly associated with the Infantry Training Centre

The Ministry of Defence has recently announced its intention to increase the military presence at Catterick Garrison which will be home to two newly created Strike Brigades. This is expected to result in an additional 5,092 military service personnel and dependents being based there by 2039. This will comprise in the region of 3,500 service personnel plus 1,592 dependents.

It is anticipated that the additional military personnel will arrive in two tranches with around 2,750 between 2020-2027 and the remaining 750 between 2030-2031.

The development of the Catterick Garrison town centre including the redevelopment of Shute Road and improvements made to the connections between various parts of the town centre assists in meeting aspirations to make Catterick Garrison a modern and attractive location for service personnel and their families.

Economy

Richmondshire's working age population, including the military, is around 33,000, of which 69% are economically active and in employment, however this is lower than regional and national levels of 77% and 79% respectively (ONS annual population survey, 2019).

The claimant rates for employment related benefits remain well below national (2.9%) and regional levels (3.3%) at 1.3% (ONS Claimant count, 2019).

Richmondshire's resident full time average gross weekly earnings (£519) are lower than regional and national weekly earnings (NOMIS, 2019).

There were 18,000 employee jobs in Richmondshire in 2018 and 20,000 jobs including those self-employed (PAYE registered) and both figures do not include military personnel (ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, 2018) - 59% are full time and 41% are part time. The proportion of part time is higher than regional and national averages.

Over the period 2009-2018 five sectors of the economy in Richmondshire have seen a significant expansion of over 250 jobs. These were Accommodation and Food Services (1,250), Professional, Scientific and Technical (550), Transport and Storage (300), Property (300), Construction (250) and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (250). Three sectors which have seen a significant contraction of over 250 jobs were Health (-500), Manufacturing (-250) and Business Administration and Support (-250) (ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, 2018).

The key economic sectors employing the highest proportion of people in Richmondshire remain as Accommodation and Food Services (17.5%), Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (12.5%) and Retail (9%) (ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, 2018). This demonstrates the service and land based nature of the Richmondshire economy and its reliance on tourism with visitors coming to enjoy Richmondshire's cultural, historical and natural environment including making use of its extensive Public Rights of Way Network.

The resident workforce occupy about 70% of local jobs, in Catterick Garrison this figure rises to 85%, because of military accommodation (2011 Census).

Micro scale businesses (0-9 employees) account for 86% and 90% of local business units and enterprises respectively, compared with 82% and 88% across Yorkshire and Humber (IDBR (ONS), 2019).

Full planning permission has been granted for a Designer Retail Outlet at Scotch Corner. This project will provide in the order of 250,000 sqft retail space and support over 700 gross direct jobs once fully occupied. 'Work commenced on site in spring 2020.

Middleham, in Lower Wensleydale, remains an important centre for the horse racing industry.

The Employment Land Review Update (2019) indicates in the preferred high economic growth scenario that overall employment is projected to expand by a total of 2,559 jobs over the Local Plan period from 2018 to 2039 - this is equivalent to an annual average growth rate of 151 jobs. The sectors of the economy it indicates the highest overall increase in the number of jobs will take place are Accommodation and Food Services (1,014) - Wholesale and Retail sectors (609) and the Public Administration and Defence and Health sectors (527) excluding military personnel. The only sector it projects that will have a significant contraction of over 250 jobs is Manufacturing (-260).

Transport and Accessibility

Transport and accessibility in the Plan Area reflects the housing market areas. The north eastern area facing the Tees Valley is close to the national road network via the A1(M) and A66. The main strategic road (A1(M)) junctions in the Plan Area are Scotch Corner to the north of Richmond (A6108) and Catterick Central along the A6136 to Hipswell, Scotton and Colburn. The Leeming Bar motorway junction, located in Hambleton District, provides access into Wensleydale along the A684 to Leyburn and into the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The A1 motorway upgrade between Leeming Bar and Barton has significantly improved access to existing employment and residential areas. The new Catterick Central junction has substantially improved access to the Plan Area and particularly Catterick Garrison. The A684 Bedale bypass has also improved access to Leyburn and Lower Wensleydale.

The proposed upgrading of the A66 to dual carriageway is likely to significantly improve safety and access to the North Richmondshire villages located along it and reduce east/west journey times.

The road junctions along the A6136, which were identified as near to or approaching capacity in the Catterick Garrison Strategic Transport Assessment (2011), have now been upgraded to enable future development. The Catterick Garrison Strategic Transport Assessment (2020) has been carried out to consider the capacity of junctions and has identified further upgrades that will be necessary to support the review of the Local Plan.

Richmond and Catterick Garrison have regular bus services that connect them to Darlington. Whilst there has been a reduction in frequency of services, Leyburn continues to act as a hub for local bus services through Wensleydale and across to Richmond. The most rural parts of the Plan Area have more limited public transport services, now largely provided by the community and volunteers whose frequency depends on how near they are to the main routes through the area.

Mainline and local train services can be reached at Darlington and Northallerton. The Wensleydale Railway is a tourist railway operating between Leeming Bar and Redmire via Leyburn and aims to re-establish links to the mainline at Northallerton.

Accessibility reduces the further you move away from the main corridors and into the more rural areas. Although the most rural wards in the Plan Area are among the least deprived in the country, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2019) places them in the country's most deprived areas when measured by the limited access to services and the housing market alone.

The extensive Public Rights of Way (PROW) network within the Richmondshire Plan Area is also vital in providing non-motorised (pedestrian, cycling and equestrian) linkages between communities both within and between towns and villages. The PROW network is particularly vital for access in areas with limited public transport, provides access to enjoy the natural and historic environment and landscape and offers opportunities to the local population to improve health and wellbeing.

Whilst there is already an extensive PROW network there are still opportunities for this to be enhanced to improve access to town centres, facilities and services. Catterick Garrison has an extensive cycle and footpath network but the Catterick Garrison Masterplan will identify further areas where this can be improved and enhanced to improve accessibility and its usability.

Environment and Climate Change

The Plan Area lies to the east of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, with the lower stretches of the Swale and Ure valleys forming natural extensions of this nationally designated landscape area. The Nidderdale and North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) extend from the south and north-west into small parts of the Plan Area.

Given its location and as described in the Richmondshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019), the Plan Area is a transitional landscape with an incredibly diverse and varied landscape character, starting from the moors and moor fringes in the west through its dales and narrow valley to its broad valleys and vales in the east. This wide variation ensures many identifiable landscapes with their own distinctive qualities and character. Many areas have a local landscape importance, particularly around the historic settlements and sites. The present landscape has been influenced by several country estates. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is the largest single landowner and operates training estates over very substantial areas of moorland.

The Plan Area is rich in its green infrastructure, encompassing extensive habitats, major landscape features such as river corridors and flood meadows, along with wide green corridors and ecological networks. The Tees, Swale and Ure river corridors are important wildlife habitats providing valuable wildlife movement corridors linking the lowlands in the east to the higher ground in the west. The upland moorland areas are equally as important in supporting locally rich biodiversity and priority species.

Numerous areas, sites and other features provide a network of nature conservation resources spread across the Plan Area. There are eleven Sites of Special Scientific Interest, along with around 150 local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, including Foxglove Covert, an important Local Nature Reserve in the Catterick Garrison military estate.

Within and adjoining the west of the Plan Area, the North Pennines Dales Meadows, are designated as a Special Area of Conservation and this overlaps in part with the North Pennine Moors Special Protection Area which is a habitat to rare and vulnerable birdlife. Both of these areas are of European importance.

There are significant blocks of woodland across the west of the Plan Area, including pockets of ancient and semi-natural woodland around the river valleys of the Swale and Ure. Plantation woodland is characteristic of the moorland areas. Ancient woodland is more associated with the river and tributary valleys. Hanging woodlands are a key characteristic of the river valleys with the Lower Swaledale area to the west of Richmond being a particularly good example of this supporting the largest area of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland within the Plan Area and the whole of Richmondshire.

The Plan Area is etched with the visible imprint of the past. It is rich in prehistoric sites such as Stanwick Fortifications, Scots Dyke and Romano-British archaeology. There are a number of medieval sites including the remains of shrunken and deserted villages including field (ridge and furrow) systems, the dominant and well preserved fortifications at Middleham and Richmond, monastic houses such as Jervaulx and Easby Abbeys, historic parklands and wooded estates all of which contribute to a strong sense of history.

There are over 1,200 recorded sites of archaeological importance identified across the Plan Area by the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record maintained by North Yorkshire County Council including archaeologically sensitive areas in and around the historic cores of Richmond and Middleham. There are also a number of Roman military remains along the line of Dere Street, now the A1(M), including Bainesse Roman roadside settlement and Anglican cemetery and Cataractonium Roman forts and town.

There are 41 designated Conservation Areas in 38 settlements, and over 1,200 listed buildings and structures with seven on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register (2019). In addition to formally recognised built heritage, there are many other buildings and features of genuine quality which enrich the urban and rural environments that give the Plan Area its local distinctiveness. Scots Dyke is a nationally important linear earthwork running through the Plan Area and along the eastern edge of Richmond, in particular.

There is an extensive network of 690km of public footpaths, bridleways, and restricted byways within Richmondshire as a whole, providing access within and between towns and villages, in addition to alongside rivers, through woodlands, on moorland, and giving access to dramatic countryside leading into the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

There is very little contaminated land and air quality is good with no Air Quality Management Areas within the Plan Area. Large parts of the Plan Area provide important sources of groundwater.

The River Swale and River Tees floodplains limit development, particularly in lowland areas and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2019) has been completed to identify areas at the highest risk of flooding and which act as the functional floodplain. Flood alleviation schemes have recently been implemented on Brough Beck near to Catterick Village and within Gilling West. The River Ure floodplain does not pass through any settlements in the Plan Area. Risk to surface water flooding is prevalent across much of the Plan Area with some settlements, particularly those on the moor fringes, prone to surface water flooding which has become more frequent with the increasing number of weather events.

In the area east of the A1 (M) and north of the A66 the district has potentially viable commercial wind energy resources.

The following preferred Key Strategic Issues and Opportunities have been identified

Key Strategic Issues and Opportunities

The assessment of the Plan Area identifies a number of local challenges for a future development strategy, including:

- 1. Achieving rural sustainability, whilst retaining local character**
- 2. Developing a complementary relationship between town centres in Richmond and Catterick Garrison, and Scotch Corner Designer Outlet**
- 3. Supporting the integration of communities in the wider Catterick Garrison area through the development of a joint Masterplan**
- 4. Securing wider local benefits from a sustained and increased military presence through improvements to the range of facilities and services in the town centre**
- 5. Improving and maintaining access to facilities, services and infrastructure across the Plan Area**
- 6. Dealing with the poor housing mix and lack of access to a wider range of types and tenures including affordable housing**
- 7. Promoting a more diverse economy with a wider range of employment opportunities and wages**
- 8. Developing the quality and type of tourism offer**
- 9. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment and built heritage**
- 10. Protecting and enhancing the natural environment**
- 11. Mitigating and adapting to climate change**
- 12. Complementing neighbouring areas and supporting communities in the Yorkshire Dales National Park**
- 13. Addressing the decline and ageing population particularly prevalent in the rural parts of the Plan Area**
- 14. Securing wider local economic and employment benefits of an upgraded Strategic Road Network (A1(M) and A66)**
- 15. Maintaining and enhancing the health and wellbeing of the population**
- 16. Promoting high quality design and place-making to enhance the quality of the built environment**

Justification

The consideration of the Richmondshire Plan Area's context in terms of its population, economy and environment for example enables the challenges and opportunities facing Richmondshire to be identified. These will be what the revised Local Plan will need to address.

The preferred Strategic Issues and Opportunities have evolved from the Key Strategic Issues within the currently adopted Local Plan Core Strategy 2012-2028 and have been amended where necessary to reflect the changing local context, characteristics, challenges and ambitions until 2039.

We have reviewed the responses received as part of the initial Issues and Options consultation and we have further revised the preferred Key Strategic Issues and Opportunities taking into account the comments received.

Alternatives Considered

No appropriate alternatives were considered necessary as all the relevant Strategic Issues and Opportunities have been identified.

QUESTIONS

Do you agree with the preferred Strategic Issues proposed?

Are there any other Strategic Issues you feel should be included?

