Strategic Approach

This section sets out the spatial principles which provide a framework for the other policies in the Local Plan. This includes the identification of three Sub Areas based on local geography and settlement pattern, the establishment of a Settlement Hierarchy which categorises settlements by size and by the role it serves to local people, and the importance of Rural Sustainability which promotes rural vitality across the whole Plan Area.

Strategic Approach
## Spatial Principle SP1 - Sub Areas

The preferred Sub Area Spatial Principle reads

Spatial Principle SP1 - Sub Areas

Within the Plan Area, a different strategic approach will be taken for each of the following three broad sub areas

- **Central Richmondshire** is the area of greatest housing and economic growth, reflecting the location of the main towns of Richmond and Catterick Garrison, the scope for development and the scale of existing facilities and infrastructure.

  The Catterick Garrison Masterplan and subsequent supporting documents set out the specific plans and aspirations for that area.

- **Lower Wensleydale** is an area of modest growth, reflecting the location of Leyburn within the sub area, which has a substantial capability to support its rural hinterland. The scale of development in this sub area will also reflect its role in supporting and providing for the needs of the adjacent part of Richmondshire which lies within the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

- **North Richmondshire** is an area of more modest growth, reflecting its largely rural nature, the limited services available within its settlements and the need to resist development pressures from and support sustainable development strategies in neighbouring Tees Valley settlements particularly Darlington. The strategy in this area will be for a level of new housing development that meets local needs and assists in maintaining existing facilities and services, whilst decreasing pressures from cross-boundary commuting.

Figure 4 - Sub Areas
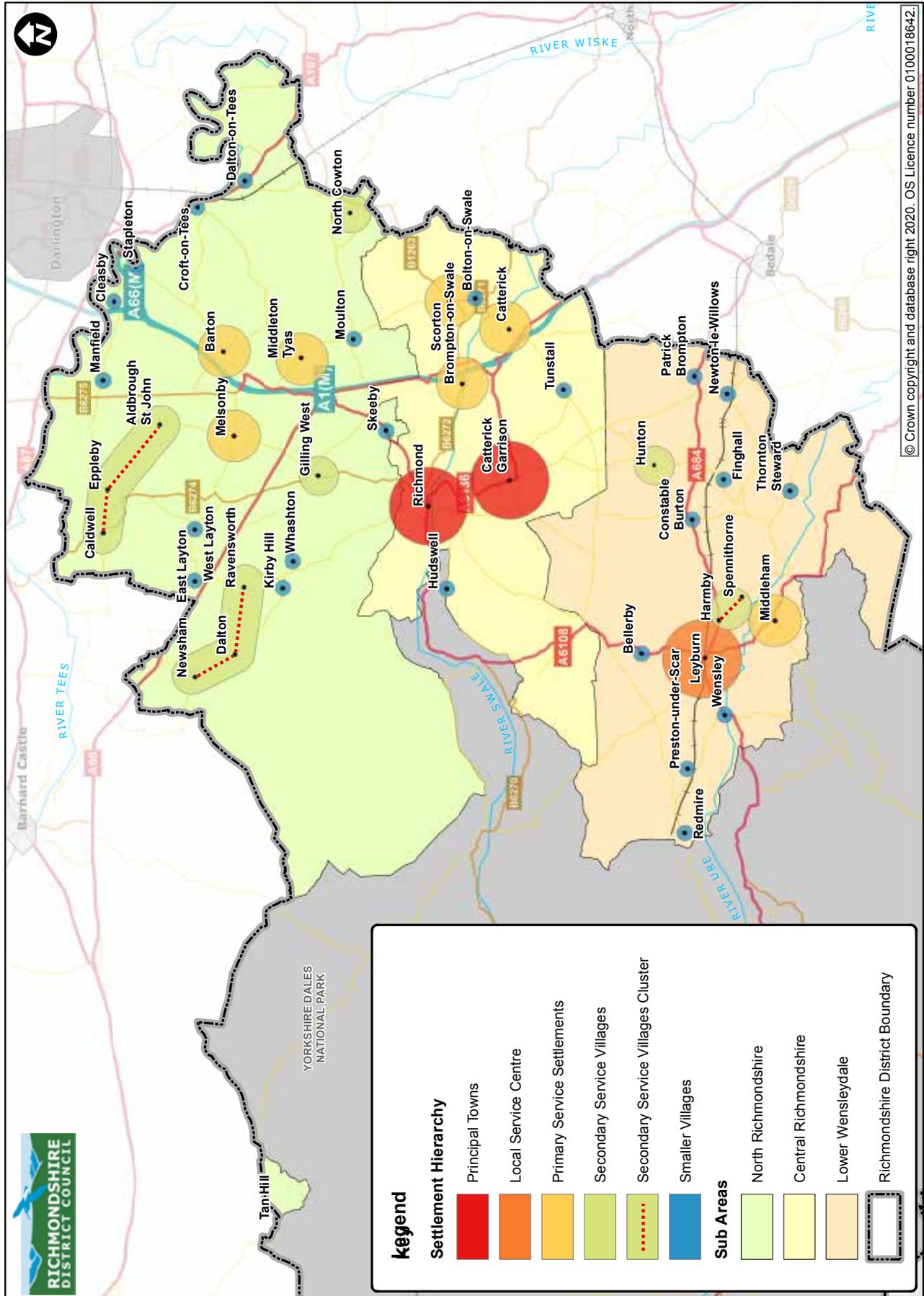
Justification

Sub Areas are at the heart of framing the strategy and policy framework to ensure that they reflect the locally distinctive nature and character of the different parts of the Local Plan Area as well as clearly set out what level of development is expected to happen in that area. Sub Areas provide the framework for policies on matters including affordable housing and housing mix to ensure policy requirements dovetail with local need evidence for that area, not just across the whole Plan Area.

The Plan Area is made up of many settlements that have developed over a long period and are reflective of the different landscape and built character of the area. Wensleydale, Swaledale and Teesdale give the basic framework for the local settlement pattern. Separated by upland areas, the dales give a strong east-west dimension to the local area. Leyburn and its neighbouring villages sit in Wensleydale, Richmond in Swaledale and the lower reaches of Teesdale form the northern boundary. The local road network also reflects this pattern, with the A6108 running through Richmond and into Swaledale, the A66 broadly following Teesdale and the A684 passing through Wensleydale. There are limited north-south connections between these routes apart from the A1(M), which runs through the Vale of Mowbray in the east of the Plan Area.

The Richmondshire Retail and Leisure Study (2019) shows the centres of preference for local people. These tend to conform to the traditional physical dales pattern, despite the strong influence of Darlington in the north and the growing influence of Catterick Garrison across the Plan Area. Together, Richmond and Catterick Garrison fulfil district centre roles, providing a range of services with a catchment that extends westwards into the remoter rural areas. Leyburn fulfils the local centre role set in its well-known high quality rural context. The northern part of the Plan Area is sparse and service provision is sought reflecting traditional patterns and proximity to the nearest centres such as Darlington, Barnard Castle and Richmond.

It is considered that the existing three sub areas identified in the current Local Plan Core Strategy in terms of characteristics are still relevant, broadly being reflective of the local geography, settlement pattern and relationship and sharing of services between settlements. These are

- Central Richmondshire - contains the traditional district centre, main centres of population, Catterick Garrison military facilities and areas for potential development.
- Lower Wensleydale - is the most discrete, with its very clear centre in Leyburn set in a remoter rural area of great quality extending from the upper dales in the west towards Bedale and the A1(M) in the east.
- North Richmondshire - is a predominantly rural landscape with distributed settlements, which look to the larger centres of Darlington, Barnard Castle or Richmond.

What you have told us?
National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 9 of the NPPF (2019) highlights that 'planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area'.

In addition, 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 housing, infrastructure (for example transport, telecommunications, flood risk, et cetera), community facilities and for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment' (paragraph 20).

Issues and Options Consultation

Numerous comments were received stating that Catterick Garrison is unique because of its military population and should be kept separate to ensure other areas with a different character are positively planned for.

Some respondents however suggested that the three sub area approach should be retained as this remains relevant to patterns of daily life within Richmondshire and that a single Central Richmondshire Sub Area reflects enables for the complementary relationship between the centres of Richmond and Catterick Garrison to be highlighted.

Alternatives Considered

Remove all Sub-Areas

An alternative option would be to remove all Sub-Areas. This is not considered an appropriate option as the defined sub areas are at the heart of framing the strategy and policies to ensure that they reflect the locally distinctive nature and character of the different parts of the Local Plan Area. If these were to be removed it would dilute the ability to ensure appropriate development and decisions are made in each individual area, given the varying characteristics across the three defined areas. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

The addition of a fourth sub area around the area defined in the Catterick Garrison Masterplan

Another alternative option would be to include an additional sub area around the Catterick Garrison area, as defined in the Catterick Garrison Masterplan. Support was evident in the Issues and Options consultation for the addition of a fourth sub area to cover the area defined within the Catterick Garrison Masterplan. However, on a wider and more spatial scale, the exclusion of Catterick Garrison from the Central Richmondshire Sub Area would separate and not necessarily reflect the complementary relationship between Richmond, Catterick Garrison and the other surrounding settlements within the currently defined area, which is a key objective of the Local Plan. It is considered that the Catterick Garrison Masterplan supporting the Central Richmondshire Spatial Strategy will provide the detail required to ensure the prosperous and sustainable growth of the Catterick Garrison, specifically catering for the requirements of the military in terms of growth and infrastructure. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

QUESTIONS

Do you agree with the preferred Sub Areas proposed?
Central Richmondshire, Lower Wensleydale, North Richmondshire

Are there any other considerations or options which should be taken into account?

Spatial Principle SP2 - Settlement Hierarchy

The preferred Spatial Principle SP2 for the proposed Settlement Hierarchy reads:

Spatial Policy SP2 - Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy is defined, reflecting their scale and capacity, to organise development and service provision in the Plan Area and improve links between the settlements in the hierarchy, particularly by public transport.

The levels of the hierarchy are

- **Principal Towns -** Catterick Garrison and Richmond

  Acting in a complementary manner to constitute the main focus in the Plan Area for housing, employment, shopping, leisure, education, health and cultural activities and facilities.

- **Local Service Centre -** Leyburn

  Serving the needs of the surrounding area, in particular providing appropriate levels of market and affordable housing, job opportunities and assisting in achieving long term economic and social sustainability.

- **Primary Service Villages**

  With key services to supplement those provided in the towns to help meet the needs of the dispersed rural communities.

  Central Richmondshire
  Brompton on Swale, Catterick Village, Scorton

  Lower Wensleydale
  Middleham

  North Richmondshire
  Barton, Melsonby, Middleton Tyas

- **Secondary Service Villages**

  Settlements with fewer services that support the needs and sustainability of rural communities.

  Lower Wensleydale
  Harmby - Spennithorne cluster, Hunton

  North Richmondshire
  Aldbrough-Caldwell-Eppleby cluster, Dalton-Newsham-Ravensworth cluster, Gilling West, North Cowton

- **Smaller Villages**

  Settlements with at least one facility or service that supports the needs and sustainability of rural communities.

  Central Richmondshire
  Bolton-on-Swale, Hudswell, Tunstall

  North Richmondshire
  Cleasby, Croft-on-Tees, Dalton-on-Tees, East & West Layton, Kirby Hill, Manfield, Moulton, Skeeby, Stapleton, Whashton

  Lower Wensleydale
  Bellerby, Constable Burton, Finghall, Newton-Le-Willows, Patrick Brompton, Preston-under-Scar, Redmire, Thornton Steward, Wensley

All other settlements not included above are considered to fall under 'Elsewhere' settlements

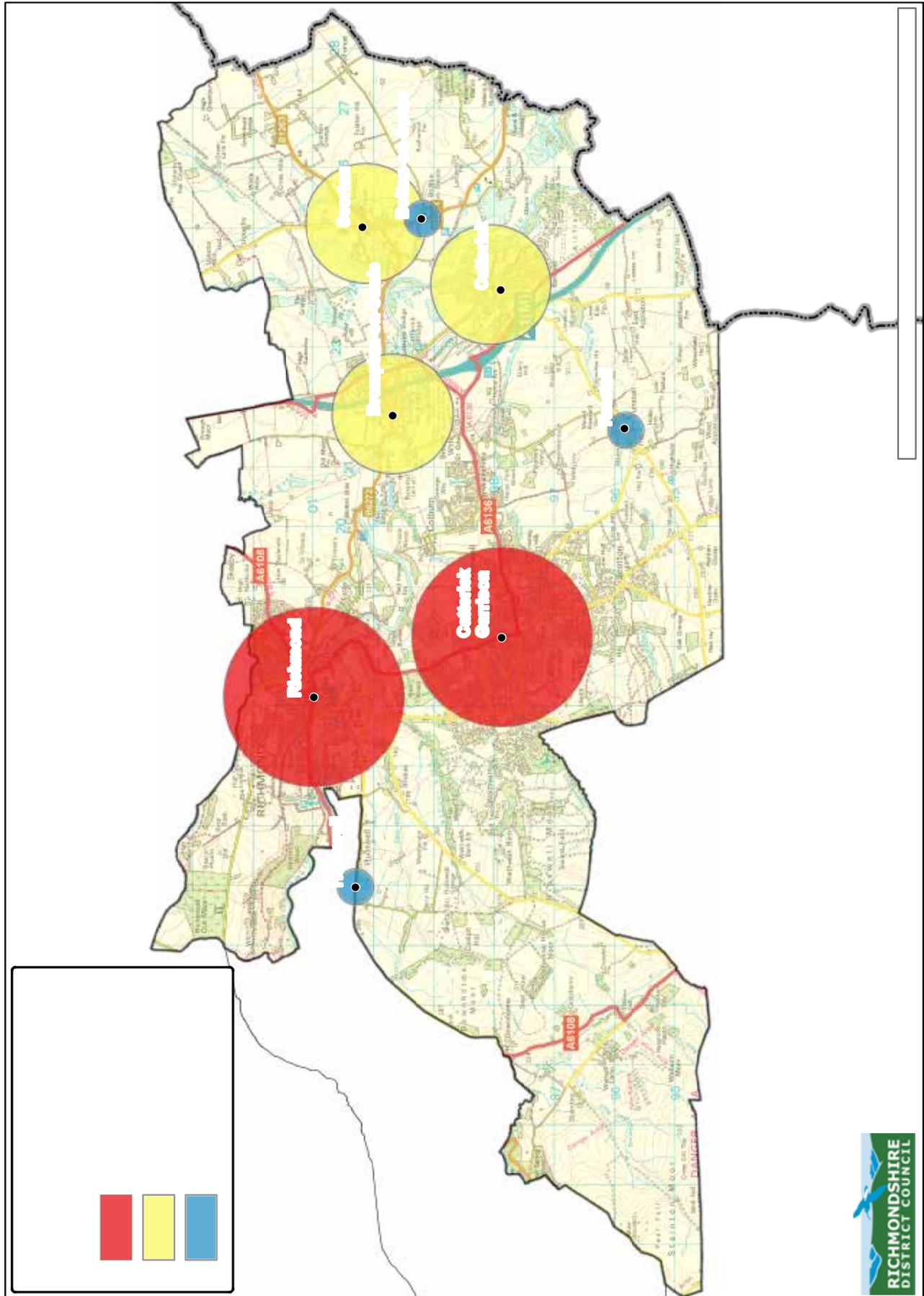## Figure 5 - Central Richmondshire Settlement Hierarchy

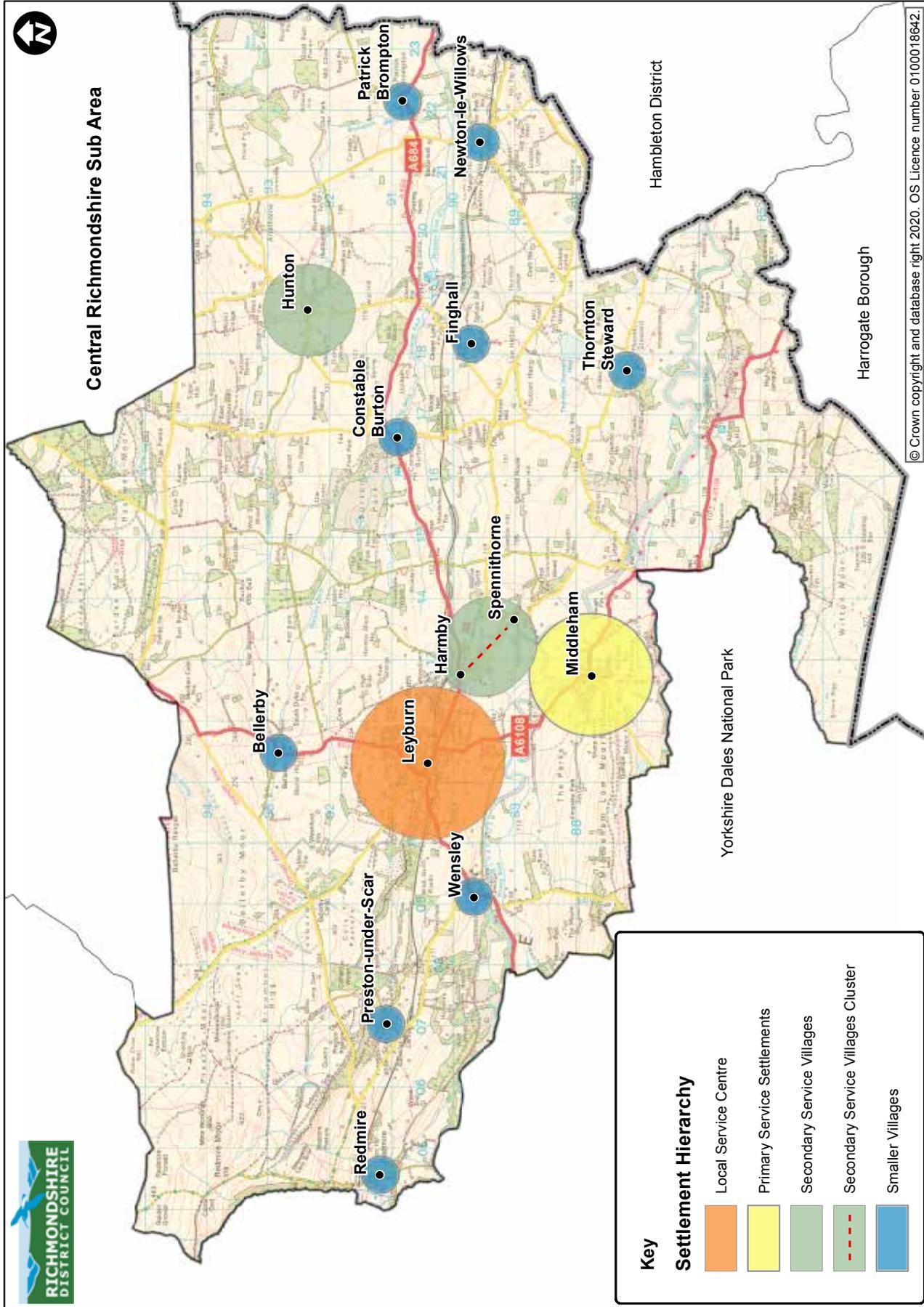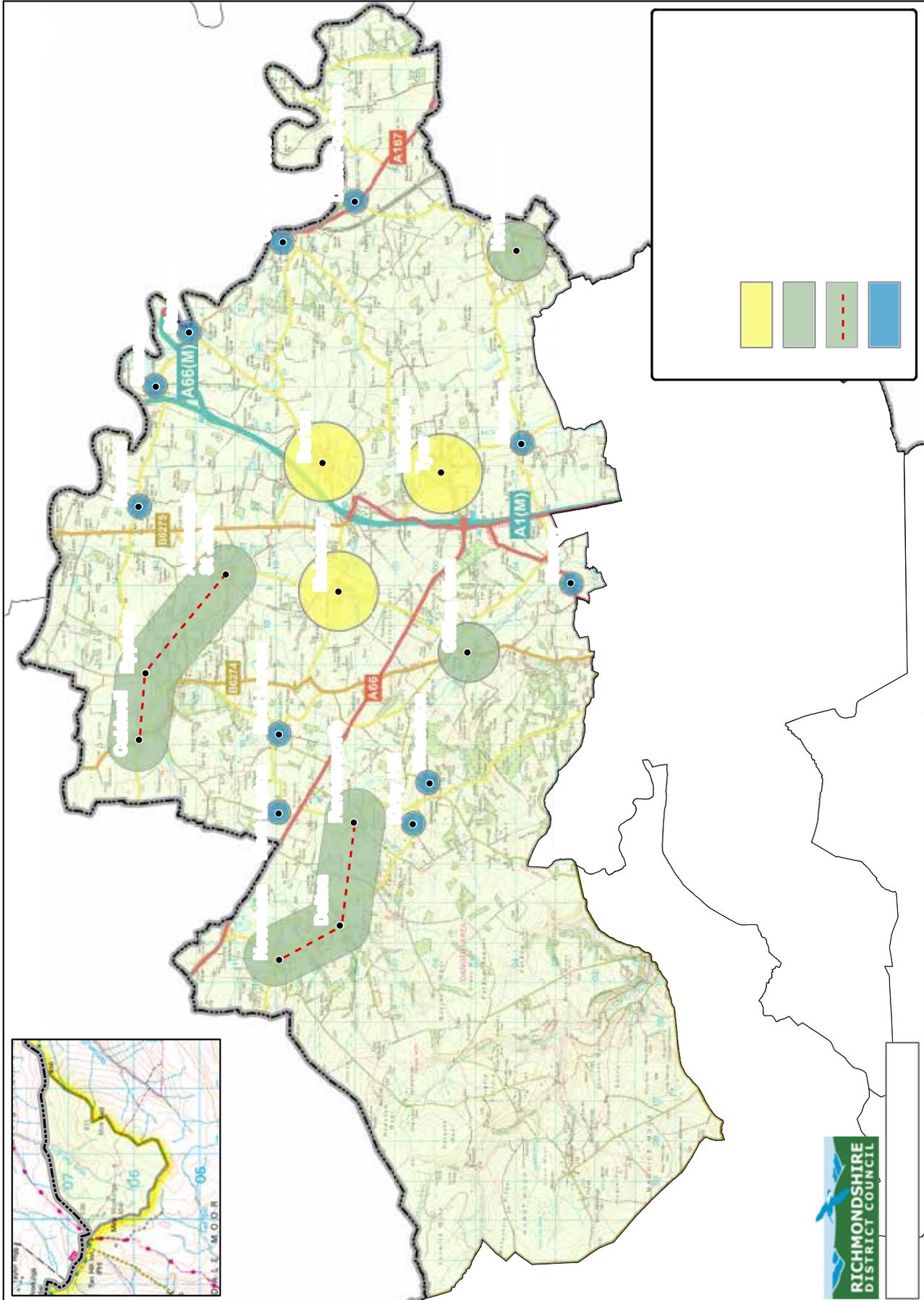# Figure 6 - Lower Wensleydale Settlement Hierarchy

Figure 7 - North Richmondshire Settlement Hierarchy

Justification

The current Local Plan Core Strategy supports thriving local communities by directing development to support the range of local services, facilities and employment opportunities, which should achieve a better balance between homes and jobs. Development is also directed away from the most sensitive environments including the functional floodplain and areas of biodiversity importance.

Overall, this preferred approach seeks to focus development on selected settlements where it can make the most positive benefit. The Settlement Hierarchy is built around the size of a settlement and the role it serves to local people.

The main towns in the Plan Area are linked to a network of smaller settlements. Major services such as health, employment or shopping are more likely to be found in these centres. A range of additional services are also found in smaller settlements further reducing the need to travel. There are several primary schools and village halls in the more remote parts of the Plan Area. This pattern of services and the links between settlements is at the heart of the settlement hierarchy. The Settlement Facilities Study (2020) captured a full picture of the provision of and access to facilities across the Plan Area and has informed the preferred Settlement Hierarchy, which will be used to organise future service provision and development.

Following the Issues and Options consultation and further analysis, it is proposed that an additional tier is added to the existing Settlement Hierarchy. The 'five tier approach', includes an additional tier of 'Smaller Villages', which helps to further distinguish villages from the smaller hamlets and isolated dwellings in the countryside where a limited level of development will be expected.

Furthermore, it is proposed that Finghall is removed from the cluster with Harmby and Spennithorne in Lower Wensleydale and added to the 'Smaller Villages' tier, reflecting its smaller scale and similarity with other settlements which are now identified as Smaller Villages.

In terms of the hierarchy, the five levels would be defined as

- Principal Towns
- Local Service Centres
- Primary Service Villages
- Secondary Service Villages
- Smaller Villages

Principal Towns

Principal Towns are identified as being the main local focus for housing and employment because they provide shopping, leisure, education, health, cultural activities and facilities. In addition, they are accessible from surrounding areas with public transport links to other centres and have viable town centres which contribute to overall local character.

The settlements that continue to be identified as best fulfilling this criteria are Richmond and Catterick Garrison (Hipswell, Scotton, Colburn and part of the parish of Brough with St Giles) which are considered to be the largest settlements with the most facilities.

Local Service Centre

The definition given to a Local Service Centre is that they are smaller than Principal Towns but remain important hubs for a range of local housing, employment and services.

On this basis, Leyburn continues to be identified as a Local Service Centre reflecting its role as an important service centre in Richmondshire. Although a small town in its own right, it is at the centre of rural communities extending into wider areas of Wensleydale and Swaledale including the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Primary Service Villages

Primary Service Villages are considered to provide services that supplement those found in larger towns and help meet needs in dispersed communities throughout the wider rural hinterland. A key principle, when looking at the scope for future development in these villages, was the maintenance of existing or new services. Primary Service Villages were identified from the Settlement Facilities Study (2020) as fulfilling the following criteria

- the availability of a good range of community facilities and services - a primary school, food shop, community hall and sport and recreation facilities
- their location throughout the sub area - seeking to ensure good access to local services
- public transport access to larger centres
- potential for some further development
- availability of local employment

The settlements that are still considered to best fulfil this criteria are

Lower Wensleydale
- Middleham

North Richmondshire
- Barton, Melsonby, Middleton Tyas

Central Richmondshire
- Brompton on Swale, Catterick Village, Scorton

Secondary Service Villages

Secondary Service Villages were considered to share some of the attributes of the Primary Service Villages but were smaller in size and with a lesser amount of facilities and services. The presence of these services suggested that clusters of neighbouring settlements share and support services between them.

The settlements considered to fulfil this criteria are

Lower Wensleydale
- Harmby-Spennithorne cluster, Hunton

North Richmondshire
- Aldbrough-Caldwell-Eppleby cluster, Dalton-Newsham-Ravensworth cluster, Gilling West, North Cowton

Smaller Villages

The criteria used to identify the Smaller Villages is that they form a settlement and provide at least one facility or service for example, a Pub or Village Hall or Church. These are generally the least sustainable settlements reflecting their smaller size and lack of a school and a broader range of facilities and services that would be found in higher order settlements. They are however more sizeable with some facilities and services when compared to other very small hamlets and barn conversions in the countryside. The settlements considered to fulfil this criteria are

Lower Wensleydale
- Bellerby, Constable Burton, Finghall, Newton-Le-Willows, Patrick Brompton, Preston-under-Scar, Redmire, Thornton Steward, Wensley

Central Richmondshire
- Bolton-on-Swale, Hudswell, Tunstall

North Richmondshire
- Cleasby, Croft-on-Tees, Dalton-on-Tees, East and West Layton, Kirby Hill, Manfield, Moulton, Skeeby, Stapleton, Whashton

All other settlements were not considered to fulfil the criteria for each of the five levels of the hierarchy and are identified as 'Elsewhere' settlements.

What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

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 a number of factors including housing, employment, transport, flood risk and community facilities (paragraph 20) as well as set out a 'clear starting point for any non-strategic policies that are needed' (paragraph 21).

Evidence Base

Settlement Facilities Study (2020)

The updated Settlement Facilities Study indicates that there have been a limited number of changes in the provision of facilities and services within settlements identified in the hierarchy which may question whether they still fulfil the criteria.

Issues and Options Consultation

Respondents indicated a general satisfaction with the current four tier hierarchy with 69% of responses agreeing with the current approach and 53% disagreeing with an additional tier to separate smaller villages from elsewhere hamlets, barn conversions and isolated dwellings in the countryside. Having carried out further analysis of the responses received, a high proportion of respondents were specifically supportive of particular settlements and their inclusion within the higher tiers of the hierarchy as opposed to being adverse to any changes to the lower tiers.

Those in support of an additional tier suggested that it would elevate smaller villages which offer a range of facilities up the hierarchy ensuring these services can be retained and it would also distinguish between smaller villages and hamlets. Others raised concerns that an additional tier would diminish the role and viability of larger settlements.

Alternatives Considered

No Settlement Hierarchy Policy

An alternative option would be to not identify a Settlement Hierarchy. This is not considered an appropriate option as this would effectively leave the market to determine where new development could take place which could in turn directly restrict people's ability to meet their housing needs broadly across the Plan Area and potentially undermine the broader longer-term sustainability of settlements where no development takes place or overwhelm services in some settlements which are most attractive for development. Having a Settlement Hierarchy provides a framework to the other policies within the Local Plan with regards to the scale and distribution of, for example, housing, economic development, facilities, services, and infrastructure, and so is considered an essential tool in ensuring all settlements develop in a sustainable way by taking account of their scale, role, and potential capacity for future growth. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

A Settlement Hierarchy which sets out Principal Towns, Local Service Centre, Primary Service Villages, Secondary Service Villages, Elsewhere Settlements

Another alternative option would be to continue with the same Settlement Hierarchy as defined in the current Local Plan Core Strategy. The current Settlement Hierarchy sets out Principal Towns, Local Service Centre, Primary Service Villages, Secondary Service Villages and Elsewhere Settlements, the only difference with the preferred option being it excludes the additional tier of Smaller Villages. This option is not considered appropriate as the inclusion of the additional Smaller Villages tier will ensure that the Local Plan can seek to support and maintain the provision of facilities and services along with the sustainability of the smallest settlements. This remains of vital importance to their existing and future residents and any potential impact on diminishing the role and viability of larger settlements could be prevented by allocating an appropriate percentage to these settlements through the Distribution of Housing policies (specifically H1 and H2). For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

A Settlement Hierarchy which identifies Catterick Garrison as a Principal Town, Richmond and Leyburn as Local Service Centres, as well as defines Primary Service Villages, Secondary Service Villages, Smaller Villages, Elsewhere Settlements

An alternative option would be to identify the same tiers as the preferred SP2 policy (including the additional Smaller Villages tier) but move Richmond down the hierarchy from a Principal Town to a Local Service Centre along with Leyburn. This option is not considered appropriate as it would diminish Richmond's role as a principal settlement in the Plan Area and would affect its ability to maintain this status and provision in the longer term. It is considered that Richmond would still meet the criteria for Principal Towns and so should remain in this tier. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

A Settlement Hierarchy based on Principal Towns, Local Service Centre, Primary Service Villages

Another alternative option would be to have a Settlement Hierarchy which identifies Principal Towns, Local Service Centre and Primary Service Villages. This would mean all other settlements below those identified as Primary Service Villages would not be categorised. This is not considered an appropriate option as it would only enable development across the larger settlements in the Plan Area to the detriment of smaller settlements. This option would directly restrict people's ability to meet their housing needs broadly across the Plan Area and potentially undermine the broader longer-term sustainability of the smaller settlements in terms of population and services. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

QUESTIONS

Do you agree with the preferred Settlement Hierarchy proposed?
Principal Towns, Local Service Centres, Primary Service Villages, Secondary Service Village, Smaller Villages, Elsewhere

Are there any other considerations or options which should be taken into account?

Spatial Principle SP3 - Rural Sustainability

The aim of this preferred Spatial Principle is to promote the rural vitality and quality of the whole Plan Area. Spatial Principles SP1 Sub Areas and SP2 Settlement Hierarchy set out the geographic and locational framework for development in the Plan Area, with this principle enforcing the importance of working towards the continued sustainability of rural communities.

The preferred Spatial Principle for Rural Sustainability reads

Spatial Principle SP3 - Rural Sustainability

Priority will be given to supporting the rural sustainability of the whole Plan Area, protecting and enhancing the environmental assets and character, and sustaining the social and economic fabric of its communities, by promoting

- A sustainable rural economy
- Social and economic regeneration
- Conservation or improvement of the rural environment
- Appropriate rural housing schemes to achieve sustainable communities
- The appropriate reuse of redundant buildings
- Renewable energy generation and measures to address climate change
- The retention and provision of sustainable infrastructure and facilities

Justification

Rural Sustainability is a key thread which runs through the currently adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2012-2028) and was developed originally to reflect the predominantly rural nature of the Plan Area and local concerns and priorities raised through consultations at that time. Of the circa 70 settlements in the Plan Area only the Parishes of Richmond, Catterick Garrison (Hipswell/Scotton/Colburn), Leyburn, Catterick Village and Brompton on Swale have more than 1,000 residents.

The Council continues to need to strike a balance between growth and protecting the countryside, with the general approach being to focus development in the more sustainable larger settlements to meet local needs. But, it also recognises that the countryside is a living, working place that also needs to adapt to economic change through appropriate diversification of traditional rural industries and the reuse of their buildings, which contribute to the character of the landscape.

What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

At the heart of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Framework states that 'planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area' (paragraph 9).

Paragraph 78 of the NPPF highlights the importance of maintaining and enhancing rural sustainability - 'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance of maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.'

Furthermore, NPPF (paragraph 83) supports a prosperous rural economy, which promotes the diversification of rural businesses, increasing provision of homes, ensuring that the community remains vital and thriving, enabling the retention and development of local services and facilities and access to them.

Issues and Options Consultation

The importance of rural sustainability was emphasised in the majority of responses, however there was a relatively even split as to whether respondents thought Rural Sustainability should still be included as a Spatial Principle or addressed through more detailed policies.

However overall a number of respondents did highlight the importance of rural sustainability and suggested that it should be a spatial principle and also emphasised in more detailed policies.

Alternatives Considered

No policy on promoting Rural Sustainability

An alternative option would be to have no policy promoting Rural Sustainability. This is not considered an appropriate option, with the preferred policy clearly identifying the key areas to be supported and enhanced through the plan period ensuring rural vitality and quality is achieved across the whole Plan Area. For these reasons, this option of having no policy on Rural Sustainability has been discounted.

A policy which promotes the rural sustainability of the area, prioritising the social and economic needs over protecting landscape character, natural and historic environment

Another option would be to have a policy which promotes the rural sustainability of the area, prioritising the social and economic needs over protecting landscape character, natural and historic environment. This option is not considered appropriate as it would put the landscape character, natural and historic environments all at risk of being negatively impacted on and permanently damaged by socially and economically driven development. This option would not achieve sustainable development and would be contrary to national policy. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

A policy which promotes the rural sustainability of the area, prioritising the protection of landscape character, natural and historic environment over social and economic needs

Another alternative option would be to have a policy which promotes the rural sustainability of the area, prioritising the protection of landscape character, natural and historic environment over social and economic needs. This option is not considered appropriate as it would stifle social and economic development which, in turn, would negatively impact on the social and economic sustainability of the rural parts of the Plan Area. This option would also be contrary to national policy. It is considered that the preferred SP3 policy achieves a balance between considering the social, economic and environmental needs of the rural parts of the Plan Area by allowing for social and economic needs to be met whilst also ensuring the landscape character, natural and historic environment is protected and maintained. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

QUESTIONS

Do you agree with the preferred approach to Rural Sustainability? *Balance social and economic needs with protecting landscape character, natural and historic environment*

Are there any other considerations or options which should be taken into account?