

Local Strategy Statement

February 2011



planourfuture

Local Development Framework Core Strategy



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Local Strategy Statement

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Richmondshire District Council is engaged in preparing its *Local Development Framework (LDF)*. Initial work has concentrated on preparing the LDF Core Strategy, which sets the long term spatial vision, and the strategic policies to deliver that vision. Public consultation was undertaken in June – July 2010 on the Preferred Strategy, which proposes the direction that the Core Strategy should take.
- 1.2 This work has been prepared under current legislation which requires that the LDF is in general conformity with the *Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)*, which in our case is the Yorkshire and Humber Plan, approved in May 2008. The RSS sets a regional and sub-regional context for the preparation of the LDF, including identifying the appropriate scale of housing for which provision should be made. However, recent developments have now made this position more complicated. In July 2010, the Secretary of State announced his intention to abolish the RSS level of guidance, and immediately revoked the current RSS. Subsequently, a legal challenge ruled that such revocation was unlawful. However, despite this, the Secretary of State has indicated that legislation will be introduced very rapidly to abolish the RSS – and the Localism Bill, published on 13th December, is intended to carry out this objective.
- 1.3 Whilst for the time being the RSS remains in place, it is clear that it will not do so for much longer. In this context, it is only sensible to progress the Richmondshire LDF on the basis that the RSS will be abolished, and thus that there will no longer be a requirement to be in conformity with the RSS – and that such a requirement will have been statutorily removed before the Core Strategy has progressed through the final stages to its formal adoption.

Task of this Statement

- 1.4 The Secretary of State's intention in abolishing the RSS is part of the Coalition Government's proposals to remove "top down" guidance, and encourage local decision making, consistent with the philosophy of "localism".
- 1.5 In some parts of the country, the relevant RSS has been seen as representing a challenge to local aspirations, for example in terms of driving unpopular high levels of development. Whilst that may be less of a concern in this area, removal of the direction provided by the Yorkshire and Humber RSS does mean that it is essential that the context for preparing our LDF is re-established. This report, termed the *Local Strategy Statement (LSS)*, is intended to be a means to that end. It seeks to redefine the context for preparing the LDF, and through consultation on this paper reach agreement on the way forward, without the direction of the RSS. This is probably the most difficult of problems now facing the progression of the Core Strategy, and the decision to prepare the LSS is a pragmatic solution, developed locally, not least given the expectation that further guidance is unlikely to be forthcoming.



- 1.6 Preparation of this LSS reflects guidance prepared by the Planning Officers' Society in October 2010¹. The Statement has the following parts:

Section 2: the national approach to development plans

– current guidance and future expectations for the development plan system, taking account of possible changes resulting from the Localism Bill

Section 3: Review of the relevance of the RSS for Richmondshire

– a review of the context provided by the RSS, in order to establish its relevance for Richmondshire, and thus help to re-establish the overall approach for the LDF area (excluding the scale of housing, covered in the next section), and understand how it relates to neighbouring areas

Section 4: the appropriate scale of housing

– perhaps the crucial area of RSS guidance, with its impending demise this section reviews the evidence and proposes the appropriate scale of housing (in fact proposing that housing provision remains at the level proposed in the RSS)

Section 5: the proposed Strategic Context – Richmondshire LDF context following RSS revocation

– this key section draws together a summary of the conclusions reached in Sections 3 and 4, to define the proposed strategic context for the Richmondshire LDF, on the basis that the RSS is revoked

Section 6: local boundary issues

– specific issues of relationship between the Richmondshire LDF area and those of adjacent LDFs

Section 7: proposed changes following recent consultation

– given the particular stage of preparation of the Richmondshire Core Strategy, several changes are now proposed as a result of reconsideration following the consultation recently been undertaken on the Preferred Strategy. Consultation on this Local Strategy Statement provides the opportunity to seek views on these, as well as on the new proposed strategic context.

Use of the Statement

- 1.7 Preparation of the LSS has the key objective of providing the basis for discussion within the plan area about the overall context for the preparation of the LDF, and the role of Richmondshire in its wider area. It will be particularly important also to use this Statement to engage in a dialogue with our neighbours, to seek to ensure that the LDF is consistent with their own strategies, and that all our plans, taken together, make coherent sense. It is hoped, in the context of the removal of RSS, that it might elicit a response perhaps in the form of a comparable statement in return. At this point, what is

¹ "Planning Post RSS revocation", Planning Officers' Society, October 2010 see: www.planningofficers.org.uk/downloads/pdf/Planning%20post%20RSS%20revocation_POS%20Advice%20note_Oct10.pdf



needed is a form of limited and rapid dialogue to replace the former lengthy rigour of top-down RSS preparation. It is hoped that consultation on this Statement will assist in re-defining the strategic context on which the submission Core Strategy will be based.

- 1.8 Views on this Statement are welcome from everyone. Comments are requested back by March 31st 2011, by writing or emailing to the contact below. Some Key Questions are identified in the relevant sections of the Statement, but please feel free to comment on any aspect. Please ask if you would like this document in a different format or language. Further information about the Richmondshire Local Development Framework can be found on our website: richmondshire.gov.uk.

tel: John Hiles 01748 827025

email: LDF@richmondshire.co.uk

web: richmondshire.gov.uk

write: Plan our Future, Richmondshire District Council
Swale House, Frenchgate, Richmond, DL10 4JE





2 The evolving national approach to development plans

- 2.1 The Coalition Government has indicated its intention to revise the development plan system, in particular by the proposals advanced under the Localism Bill, now being considered by Parliament. Whilst the full details and implications of the proposed future system remain to be worked out, it is clear that the underlying philosophy will be of local determination rather than “top down” national or regional decision-making. Consistent with this approach is that it will be for local authorities to develop plans which meet local needs and aspirations.
- 2.2 The Government’s advice published on these matters was contained in a Letter from the Chief Planning Officer dated 6th July 2010. This indicates that Local Planning Authorities should continue to develop LDF Core Strategies. It indicates that where authorities are currently bringing forward development plan documents (as is the case in Richmondshire), they should continue to do so, but that authorities “may decide to review and/or revise their emerging policies in the light of the revocation of Regional Strategies”. It indicates that where this is undertaken, the soundness requirements will still need to be met – in other words that any course of action will need to be underpinned by an appropriate evidence base. The letter also indicates that “there is no need to review the whole LDF, only those issues or policies which local authorities wish to revise”. As discussed previously, although the revocation of the RSS has now been overturned following legal challenge, it is sensible to continue to plan on the basis of the early abolition of the RSS – and thus this advice remains relevant.





- 2.3 As far as the critical issue of housing numbers is concerned, the advice indicates that “local authorities will be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their area, and identifying a long term supply of housing land without the burden of regional housing targets”. It also recognises that some authorities may wish to retain the targets set out in the RSS – but in any case, authorities should indicate their intentions quickly. The level of housing will still need to be justified, whether RSS-derived or not. From this it is clear that if the RSS numbers are to be retained, that justification cannot be derived simply from their inclusion in the RSS (which will no longer exist), but will have to be based upon the RSS supporting evidence, and more recent evidence – ie. from a conclusion that the target and strategic approach remains relevant despite its removal from the statutory document. Similar considerations apply should the Council wish to change to other numbers – evidence needs to support the conclusions.
- 2.4 It is also clear, and consistent with the localism philosophy, that further guidance is unlikely to be forthcoming, and authorities can no longer expect to be told how to do their planning. It will be for each authority to decide what it needs to do, and to get on with it. This Local Strategy Statement is designed as a pragmatic way forward in this context. It will maintain the development of the LDF, enabling much progress to continue to be made – until such time as the precise details of the future nature of the national development plan system become known. Current indications suggest that preparation of a strategic overview will remain an essential ingredient under the proposed plan-making reforms, for example to complement the development of possible Neighbourhood Plans. Furthermore, consistent with the localism philosophy, the Core Strategy being advanced for Richmondshire is deliberately designed to reflect and support the interests of each part of the plan area and each settlement.
- 2.5 Similarly important, continuing with preparation of the Core Strategy will ensure that the considerable work achieved to-date is not lost, and the commitment and investment of time and resources made by all those who have contributed to the previous stages involved in preparing the Core Strategy will not be wasted. Finally, of particular significance, by getting a much needed plan in place at the earliest opportunity, it should ensure that there is no gap in strategic thinking to guide development in the short term.



3 Review of the relevance of the RSS for Richmondshire

- 3.1 This section will respond to the expected future removal of the RSS – likely to have taken place with the passage of the Localism Bill through Parliament, before the Core Strategy reaches adoption – by assessing the relevance of the policy guidance contained in the RSS relating to Richmondshire, in order to help re-establish the local strategic context. In practice the RSS considered all the relevant strategic matters in detail, and its directions provided the policy context for the LDF. Consequently the pragmatic approach taken here will be to identify the full range of RSS guidance relevant to the Richmondshire LDF, and reach conclusions on whether its established policy context remains valid – and should thus be re-stated, or amended, in taking forward the “locally determined” LDF. In doing so, it will consider the appropriate strategic relationship between the LDF area and surrounding areas.
- 3.2 This section will address the general policy context, leaving the more detailed matters of re-establishing the appropriate scale of housing to the next section, and cover in turn:
- i. the sub-regional context: RSS Sub Areas
 - ii. settlement hierarchy
 - iii. rural sustainability
 - iv. the economy
 - v. climate change
 - vi. historical and environmental assets
 - vii. affordable housing

i. the sub-regional context: RSS Sub Areas

- 3.3 One of the most significant elements of the RSS has been the way it established a sub-regional context for each LDF in the region, in particular by its identification of Sub Areas. RSS sought to identify the common characteristics of different parts of the region, and assess how these parts interrelated, and should best relate in the future by setting a policy approach for each. Two Sub Areas were identified by the RSS which included parts of the Richmondshire LDF area: the Vales and Tees Links, and the Remoter Rural Sub Areas. The analysis suggested the following:

Vales & Tees Links

(which includes the Richmondshire Central and North Richmondshire areas, and the eastern part of Lower Wensleydale defined in the Preferred Strategy)

- the northern part of the Sub Area, including that within the Richmondshire LDF, is affected by development pressures from Tees Valley
- as far as the proposed strategic approach to development, a managed approach of relative restraint should be adopted to ensure an appropriate level of housing provision within the Sub Area, to support regeneration and growth in the Leeds and Tees Valley City Regions and reduce long distance commuting.



In particular, this would mean, restricting housing close to the Tees Valley that would be likely to encourage outward migration from places such as Darlington in order to support the regeneration of these places, and concentrating instead on smaller scale development related to the social and economic needs of local communities

- Richmond and Catterick Garrison (jointly considered as a Principal Town) should be a focus of development, and have an important role in providing a range of services, with a catchment extending into the adjacent Remoter Rural area
- concentrating growth in Garrison will reduce pressure on Richmond, necessary to protect its environment, not least because it is close to the North Pennines Dales and Meadows Special Area of Conservation.

Remoter Rural

(which includes the western portion of the Richmondshire Lower Wensleydale area, including Leyburn, defined in the Preferred Strategy)

- part of wider upland area, recognised for its environmental quality
- development expected to be limited as a consequence
- the role of Leyburn as an important Local Service Centre, serving a wider rural area, including parts of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, is recognised.

3.4 It should be noted that, consistent with this analysis, the RSS for the adjacent North East Region also identified Darlington's strong influence on Richmondshire, and its role and influence as a sub-regional centre over the plan area.

3.5 This analysis seems broadly correct, and has generally been supported throughout the preparation of the Richmondshire LDF. It has helped, and should continue to help, to define the context for our Sub Area approach developed in the Preferred Strategy (Policies CASS1, LWSS and NRSS). Thus its conclusions should remain key elements of the context, even without the RSS.





- 3.6 The roles of the centres will be picked up under the following discussion about the settlement hierarchy. The importance of protecting the environment of Richmond and adjacent areas is widely recognised – with consequent implications for the balance of development between the Garrison area and Richmond. However, developing a consistent and complementary relationship with adjacent areas is also of critical importance. Certainly it is necessary for the Richmondshire LDF to address the relationship between the plan area and the adjacent Tees Valley – and seek to respond to the development pressures which are likely to continue from that area, reflecting its focus on regeneration. Thus it is appropriate to continue to support adoption of a managed approach – of relative restraint with an emphasis on meeting local housing needs – to ensure an appropriate level of housing provision in the Richmondshire plan area, which seeks to restrict likely out-commuting to the Tees Valley in particular.

ii. the settlement hierarchy

- 3.7 The RSS identified a hierarchy of settlements at the regional scale, and promoted a distinct role and policy approach for each level in the hierarchy. Regional and Sub Regional towns occupied the higher levels, followed by Principal Towns (including Richmond and Catterick Garrison) and then below these, Local Service Centres (including Leyburn).
- 3.8 The policy approach towards the Principal Towns was identified as to encourage:
- their role as main local focus for housing and employment (and also shopping, leisure, education, health, cultural activities and facilities)
 - improved accessibility from surrounding areas
 - improved public transport links to other centres
 - enhanced vitality and viability of their town centres
 - achievement of high design standards – to protect local character
 - for Richmond and Catterick Garrison specifically ...
Garrison development (military and open market) should support delivery of a wide range of services and facilities, complementary to Richmond – in order to perform an enhanced Principal Town role together.
- 3.9 It is a matter of fact that the largest settlements, with the most facilities, in the plan area are Richmond and the Catterick Garrison area, followed by Leyburn. In terms of establishing the LDF's own hierarchy of settlements, there can be no doubt that these places should occupy the highest positions. As a result, and taking account of the special character of these places (which is an important concern advanced in the Preferred Strategy), and the need to achieve sustainable development, the policy approach towards these places proposed in the RSS must also remain valid – even without the direction of the RSS.
- 3.10 The RSS also advanced the idea of Richmond and Catterick Garrison “performing an enhanced Principal Town role together”. This has always seemed a difficult concept to reconcile – since they are distinct (although relatively close) places. It is not therefore proposed to continue this loose idea of designating Richmond and the Garrison as “joint principal towns”, but to designate each as a Principal Town in its own right.



However, they are clearly closely related, in terms of provision of services and impacts of developments in one on the other, and their future needs to be considered in these terms. The objective of achieving their complementary development would thus remain for the LDF to resolve, whether or not directed to do so by an RSS.

3.11 The RSS identified the appropriate policy approach to Local Service Centres, including Leyburn, as to encourage:

- provision of market and affordable housing (whilst safeguarding local character)
- provision of new job opportunities to address local needs
- provision of long term economic & social sustainability
- for Leyburn specifically ...
protection and enhancement as an attractive and vibrant place, with excellent environmental, economic and social resources.

3.12 All these considerations remain valid, without the RSS. They are matters which are clear local priorities, and which the Preferred Strategy seeks to address in its elaboration of the approach towards Leyburn and the wider Lower Wensleydale area.

iii. rural sustainability

3.13 Through its approach in the Vales and Tees Links and Remoter Rural policies (and consistent with the former Regional Economic Strategy), the RSS defined an approach to rural sustainability which sought to:

- control growth pressures to support the regeneration of the urban parts of the region and the adjoining region
- safeguard local quality of life, environmental values and characteristics
- promote diversification of the rural economy, with more self sufficiency, allowing people to live and work locally
- meet locally generated needs for both market and affordable housing
- promote renaissance of market towns, and rural cultural themes as economic drivers, particularly linked to tourism.

3.14 These considerations would clearly remain valid even without the RSS. Achieving rural sustainability is defined as a Strategic Principle and is further elaborated in the Preferred Strategy, since it reflects local concerns and priorities, evident through consultation responses.

iv. the economy

3.15 RSS sought to achieve a successful and competitive region, by means including:

- in rural areas, encouraging more diverse, competitive and successful economies, and access to economic opportunities
- providing job forecasts as a guide ... for Richmondshire: 150 jobs pa. growth (on a base of 21,230 in 2006)
- encouraging provision of sufficient land. For Richmondshire, as a local context rather than a direction, suggesting it might be appropriate to allocate an extra 10 ha to supplement the existing 50 ha – but the precise quantity indicating should be determined based on local information



- location: centres of Richmond and Catterick Garrison (Principal Towns) should be the focus of local services, including offices, retail, leisure and tourism
- for the Vales & Tees Links Sub Area:
 - developing a more robust and diverse economy (less dependent on agriculture) by supporting the roles of Principal Towns, building on Catterick Garrison growth, and the contribution of small scale economic uses;
 - controlling growth pressures and reducing out-commuting, supporting urban regeneration in the Tees Valley
 - providing employment opportunities to meet local needs
 - developing good transport links to Principal Towns
- for the Remoter Rural Sub Area:
 - fostering economic development which doesn't damage built and natural features
 - encouraging small scale creative, diverse and low impact enterprises, tourism and recreation
 - improving links between settlements and adjoining areas.



3.16 All these considerations will remain valid – even without specific direction from the RSS. The importance of seeking and supporting a more diverse rural economy is clearly a major local concern, which does not require external planning direction to prove its significance. The need to maximise the economic benefits of growth at Catterick Garrison, and achieve a sustainable local economy, will be important, whatever the scale of change turns out to be in the future, when the implications of expenditure restrictions and future military dispositions are finally resolved. The locational importance of the main settlements as a focus of local services, including offices, retail, leisure and tourism, is fully recognised in the settlement hierarchy being advanced in the Preferred Strategy, as discussed previously. Similarly, the aspects concerning the economic relationship with our neighbours are clearly to be supported, as debated in the Sub Areas discussion.



- 3.17 Unlike in the case of housing, where targets for provision were set by RSS, the employment figures were set out to provide a context or regional overview. In practice the forecasts of job growth are not inconsistent with local estimates, and the scale of additional land for employment purposes also is comparable with that calculated to meet local needs in the Preferred Strategy, which is based on more recent (and detailed) knowledge of land currently available. Thus the Preferred Strategy proposes that provision is made for a total of 70 ha of employment land in the plan period, of which 33 ha will require new sites to be identified.

v. climate change

- 3.18 Guidance on climate change contained in RSS encouraged plans to:
- promote a sustainable pattern of future development
 - require flood risk to be proactively managed, ensuring that development avoids higher risk areas
 - encourage greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced, and renewable energy sources maximised through:
 - energy efficient design and use of combined systems
 - large grid-connected renewable energy installations
 - use of decentralised renewable/low carbon energy in new developments
 - set specific targets for renewable energy capacity:
 - 209MW by 2010 and 428MW by 2021 of installed grid-connected renewable energy capacity in North Yorkshire (with indicative targets of 18MW and 39MW respectively for Richmondshire)
 - appropriate new developments to secure at least 10% of energy from relevant sources.
- 3.19 These considerations are again largely matters both directed by national policy, and locally recognised as important objectives in any case. Whether or not they can be achieved in the plan area (eg. large grid-connected renewable energy installations) will remain matters to be considered locally, taking account of local environmental conditions and opportunities. The targets for renewable energy in the RSS were derived from an independent study jointly commissioned by the North Yorkshire authorities, and remain valid estimates of the potential scope of energy capacity, taking North Yorkshire as a whole, and valid indicative targets for Richmondshire.

vi. historical and environmental assets

- 3.20 RSS encouraged plans to:
- identify potential conflict with important nature conservation interests, such as the Special Area of Conservation if development occurs around Richmond;
 - set general guidance on issues such as ...
 - green infrastructure
 - water quality
 - forestry, trees and woodlands
 - biodiversity
 - historic environment
 - landscape



3.21 The first of these concerns is indisputably of local importance, and would be addressed whether or not directed to do so by RSS. The second suggests little more than national guidance, and locally important considerations would require in any case. Given the critical importance of the conserving the high quality environment of the plan area, these are matters which are in any case being addressed by the LDF.

vii. affordable housing

3.22 RSS provided the following simple guidance on the provision of affordable housing:

- targets should be set in LDFs for the amount of affordable housing to be provided
- from available data, the proportion should be over 40% in the North Yorkshire Districts.

3.23 Setting of targets for affordable housing in LDFs is in fact a requirement of national policy, established in PPS3 (Housing) – but must in any case be an important element of our LDF, given the well known local significance of the issue. Local evidence provided by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, updated in 2008) confirms that local need for affordable housing is over 40%. The SHMA is currently being updated, and will provide further evidence to help establish the local percentage.





4 The appropriate scale of housing

- 4.1 This section addresses the following basic questions:
- is the RSS proposed level of provision (200 houses per year) for market housing still appropriate?
 - have the recession and public sector cuts altered the outlook?
 - how much growth should the Richmondshire plan area be seeking to accommodate?
 - what are the advantages or disadvantages of alternative scales of housing?
- 4.2 This discussion relates solely to the general market housing requirements in the plan area. The likely scale of housing providing for military personnel connected with future growth at Catterick Garrison is excluded from consideration here. Provision for military-related housing is dealt with in the LDF as a separate issue: it needs to be planned for flexibly, and account taken of revised expectations, and its likely long term nature. Whilst RSS indicated that the LDF would need to consider “in the region of 2,250 additional dwellings up to 2021” of MoD development, current estimates suggest that the figure is more likely to be in the range 890 – 1,400 houses. However, reflecting the national Defence and Security Review, an expectation remains that a substantial proportion of the Army in Germany will be brought home by 2015. Work undertaken locally by the Ministry of Defence (the Catterick Garrison Long Term Development Plan) indicates that space is available locally to accommodate a range of potential demands. This adds uncertainty but has the potential to impact on the overall capacity of the local area for development. Whatever the future scale of military housing at the Garrison, it will affect the opportunities for private sector housing, and will therefore be a key factor to take into account in developing the Area Action Plan covering this area (Preferred Strategy Policy CASS2).
- 4.3 When indicating his intention to rapidly abolish the RSS tier of guidance, the Secretary of State indicated that Authorities can as a result prepare plans based on a change from the RSS levels if they wish. But whether or not a change is proposed, he made clear that evidence for the intended approach will be necessary. National guidance, in the form of PPS3 (Housing) identifies the relevant factors to take into account (although obviously the requirement to conform to RSS requirements will need to be discounted from the PPS3 guidance). Key considerations are therefore:
- latest projections (particularly ONS population and CLG household forecasts)
 - relevant strategies of neighbours
 - evidence of current and future need and demand (the Strategic Housing Market Assessment – SHMA, and other housing evidence, such as data on completions, prices and affordability)
 - effects of the recession and public spending cuts, and general economic projections
 - the evidence base for the former RSS
 - availability of land (the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment – SHELAA, in the case of Richmondshire)
 - aspirations to achieve necessary levels of affordable housing
 - Sustainability Appraisal (including that undertaken for the RSS).



Population and household forecasts

- 4.4 In deciding the appropriate scale of housing required, the normal starting point – before policy considerations are taken into account – are national and sub-national projections of population growth and, derived from these, numbers of households. Population and household projections are revised on a regular basis by the Office of National Statistics and DCLG. These projections are based on changes in the population in the preceding five years and therefore tend to reflect preceding economic conditions. The regular revisions of the projections offer opportunities to review overall future requirements locally.
- 4.5 RSS was developed largely in the context of 2003 household projections produced by Central Government (CLG) – resulting in a housing requirement of 200 houses per annum over the whole plan period to 2026. Shortly after the RSS Examination, 2004–based projections became available. Their implications for the RSS were subject of a study which suggested a significant increase in the housing requirement for Richmondshire. Despite this, the Secretary of State proposed and consulted upon retaining the Richmondshire LDF requirement at 200 pa., and subsequently confirmed this in the eventually approved RSS. Although intervening household projections (2006 based) suggested a potential increased requirement for housing again (to around 400 pa), the very latest household projections (2008-based) suggest an initial view about the housing requirement which in fact is very similar to that contained in RSS – at around 250 pa.
- 4.6 How do we make sense of these different projections? The fundamental point to make is that all these projections are not assessments of housing need, nor, equally important, do they take account of future policies. They are in fact an indication of the likely increase in households given the continuation of recent demographic trends in the five years preceding the projection’s base-year. In interpreting them and relating them to future conditions it is important to assess these preceding trends and ask whether they can, or even should, continue.
- 4.7 The first important conclusion is therefore that in our current situation each of the projections from the 2003 to 2008 base years originate from different stages of recent economic conditions. Up until the 2006 base these reflect accelerating expansion. The 2008 projections are less expansive, but do not yet take full account of the recent (and continuing) economic recession.
- 4.8 Secondly, we need to understand the underlying demographic factors which are being modelled in these projections based on the preceding recorded trends. The main constituents of these recent trends comprise natural change (the net effects of trends in births and deaths), and net migration rates. The relative significance of these factors can best be seen by examining the components of the latest population projections shown in the Table 1.



Table 1: Richmondshire ONS 2008 - based population projections (thousands)

	2008	2026	Change up to 2026	
Total Population	51.4	59.4	Total	+8.0
Children (0-15)	9.3	10.0		0.7
Working Age (16-59/60)	31.9	33.4		1.5
Older People (60/65+)	10.1	16.0		5.9
<i>Made up of...</i>				
Natural Change				
Births			10.8	
Deaths			9.0	
		net		+1.8
Migration				
Internal to England		out	-49.6	
		in	+48.6	
		net		-1.0
International		in	+12.5	
		out	-5.4	
		net		+7.1
Total Components		net		+7.9

Notes:

1. figures do not sum because of rounding
2. net migration between other UK countries (Scotland, N. Ireland, Wales) is expected to be neutral

- 4.9 This table shows that the net effect of births and deaths (ie. natural change) represents a very small proportion of the expected growth in population – the majority of change being derived from migration, ie. from population moving into or out of the plan area. This is of course complicated, because over a 15 year period, births and deaths within those migrating will also be taking place. However, it is clear that for Richmondshire, the overall numbers involved in the migration flows are very substantial, particularly for moves internal to England – although in that case these movements are expected largely to cancel each other out. The scale of internal migration is large, but not particularly unusual for the wider area around Richmondshire.
- 4.10 The main influence of population growth is expected to be the net inward flow of 7,100 from international migration. Work undertaken by the Council suggests that this element of the forecast – the expected scale of future international movements – has been strongly influenced by the recent growth at Catterick Garrison army base including the location of Gurkha regiments and recruitment of personnel from Caribbean and Pacific countries. This has seen a sharp rise of people from these countries over the past five years. In reality, extrapolating from the evidence of the period 2003 – 2008 is unlikely to be a reliable basis, in Richmondshire’s case, for reaching conclusions about migration trends in the future period to 2026 – not least because military related movements are now expected to be much less. In the longer term, there is little economic opportunity for military personnel from abroad and their families to remain in the District, apart from military service and accommodation. They are, therefore, unlikely to impact on LDF provision.



- 4.11 All these figures must therefore be treated with substantial caution. It may well be that such international flows will not be repeated in the future, and that projections based on such a small population size, and one with such a large military population, are not reliable or robust. The Government itself indicates that Sub Regional household projections (including these for Richmondshire) are less robust than those at the regional level, particularly for those areas with relatively small numbers of households. Sub Regional household projections are given even less confidence, and are explicitly not deemed to be 'National Statistics'.
- 4.12 More significant perhaps than the "international" movements, are the movements within England. A number of factors are likely to be at work here, including:
- i. out-migration of young people to undertake higher education
 - ii. out-migration of those seeking employment, particularly locally (eg. to Tees Valley)
 - iii. in-migration of those seeking to live in Richmondshire, particularly for those looking to retire in the excellent local environment, or to find attractive place to live whilst commuting to work elsewhere.
- 4.13 In terms of a potential policy response to these factors, it is clear that, short of providing local higher education facilities (which is unlikely to happen), little real influence regarding the first factor – out-migration for educational reasons – can be exerted. Regarding the second factor, as far as employment is concerned, the Preferred Strategy seeks to provide local employment opportunities, but needs to be realistic about the scope to capture new development for the plan area. The Core Strategy needs to seek to make provision for jobs to match expected population trends, and to provide for rural sustainable job opportunities – but there must be a limited expectation that much can be done to reduce out-migration flows intended to find work opportunities. However, the third factor, concerning the scale of in-migration particularly for retirement purposes, is capable of being directly influenced by planning policies. Policy decisions about the scale of additional provision in the housing stock will increase or reduce the availability of housing likely to facilitate in-movements for retirement.
- 4.14 Responding to population or household forecasts by making equivalent housing provision is thus not simply making provision for locally generated needs, but is implicitly going to influence migration trends. In this context, setting the housing targets must thus be viewed as a policy decision, rather than an arithmetic calculation based on technical forecasts. The resolution of the housing requirements in the RSS tackled precisely these issues – with the outcome that the future housing requirement in Richmondshire did not attempt to meet all the potential call for housing from in-migration, reflecting at least in part conclusions about the desirability of growth in this rural area (for example about the extent of local environmental constraints, and the relationship with neighbouring strategies to regenerate urban areas) and the likely future capacity of the local economy. Without the RSS, it is necessary to disentangle any projections (past or anticipated) from policy – and determine the appropriate level to meet local needs, aspirations and capacity.



Other relevant factors

- 4.15 Beyond the starting point of population and household forecasts, we need to take into account a number of other influencing factors. As mentioned, all the currently available projections pre-date the recession – and of course the public sector cuts – and the likely effect of these factors need to be taken into account. Inevitably there will be a depression of likely demand – but how deep or of what duration is almost impossible to assess. However, perhaps more important is the recognition that based on past experience, the effect of the recession on migration (and thus demand for housing) is likely to be temporary.
- 4.16 The SHMA is currently being updated – and will in due course provide a further piece of evidence to illuminate housing needs and requirements. However the previous 2008 update estimates of future need and demand are consistent with the RSS 200 pa level – in other words the RSS level of change was considered to make adequate provision for local housing needs. In terms of affordability, whilst house price rises are now much lower than in the peak of 2002 – 2004, their continuing high level remains a major problem – but one that the SHMA (2008) assessed could be achieved by delivering an appropriate proportion of the RSS requirement. It is clear however that building more houses in itself would never provide a realistic solution to depressing house prices sufficiently to resolve the affordability problem.
- 4.17 Turning to house building rates, partly at least a reflection of both local demand and the local building industry’s capacity, recent house building rates have been consistently below the RSS requirement of 200 pa, and for the last couple of years have been clearly influenced by the recession:

2004/5.....	157
2005/6.....	256
2006/7.....	122
2007/8.....	193
2008/9.....	56
2009/10.....	40
Average 137 pa	

- 4.18 This level of building does not appear to have been significantly restrained by the extent of land deemed to be available for housing (given past levels of housing land availability) – and certainly this should not prove to be a constraint in the future. The SHELAA shows that potential capacity considerably exceeds likely need – for example there is an estimated total 13,692 dwellings capacity on land considered suitable for development in the SHELAA, against 3,773 dwellings capacity required in Preferred Strategy (based on the RSS 200 pa requirement).



- 4.19 In summary, the following key points stand out:
- the latest household projections (2008 based) suggest a housing requirement only slightly greater than that of the RSS
 - but past projections are not really assessments of need or demand – just estimates based on the continuation of past trends which reflect earlier boom conditions, or by locally unusual factors, such as the movement of military personnel and their families. Caution needs to be applied, including against future forecasts based on more recent recessionary times
 - past levels of building have been below the RSS requirement, even discounting the recent effects of the recession
 - the latest available published SHMA evidence suggests that local needs (particularly in terms of affordable housing), should be capable of being met within the RSS level of requirement
 - interpreting and making a policy response is ultimately a matter of judgement. The Government’s localism philosophy means that decisions can and should be made locally – to meet local demands, aspirations and potential, and reflecting the local evidence base.
- 4.20 One additional consideration, against those relevant at the time of the RSS, is that the Government has indicated that it plans to provide strong financial incentives for Authorities which support additional housing. Details of this are now emerging, although it may take some time to assess the full implications. It is intended that supporting additional housing would bring financial rewards which may be of benefit to the Council and to local communities. The scheme is intended to incentivise local authorities to increase housing supply by rewarding them with a New Homes Bonus, equal to the national average for the council tax band on each additional property and paid for the following six years as an unringfenced grant. There will be an enhancement for affordable homes. Local authorities can decide how to spend the funding in line with local community wishes, and thus spending may relate specifically to the new development or more widely to the local community. Similar considerations may apply to the Government’s proposed revised version of the Community Infrastructure Levy, which might also create local incentives for development.
- 4.21 Taking these considerations forward, the LDF needs to re-establish a level of housing change which is appropriate, ensuring that all the preceding considerations are taken into account. One simple and pragmatic way forward is to consider the advantages of alternative growth levels. A brief review of the implications of three alternatives is now undertaken, addressing remaining at the 200 pa level (the former RSS requirement), or reducing or increasing provision from this level.



Advantages/disadvantages of alternative growth levels

1. Remaining at 200 houses pa

For

- respects environmental constraints, and economic relationships with neighbours
- consistent with the approach taken in the adopted Core Strategies of neighbours
- supported by Sustainability Appraisal (for LDF, and as part of RSS)
- already canvassed with the public (it has not been seriously challenged), and with neighbours
- feasible in terms of SHELAA
- consistent with 2003, and close to the 2008 projections – both of which seem likely to reflect the most realistic future for the local area, and consistent with the economic forecasts on which RSS based
- can meet SHMA estimates of affordable housing & local housing needs.

Against

- requires significant growth somewhere – currently proposed in the Hipswell/Scotton/Colburn Area Action Plan area.

2. Reducing provision – eg. towards 0 pa

For

- less environmental pressure – and no need for major growth area
- reflects current low building rates.

Against

- no or reduced scope to meet SHMA estimates of affordable housing – or indeed to meet local housing needs of current population
- would need major public debate: would represent a major change likely to require reconsideration of the whole Preferred Strategy
- less or no revenue under Government's expected proposals
- adverse impact on the economic and social well-being of the plan area.

3. Increasing provision – eg. towards 400 pa

For

- full scope to meet SHMA estimates of affordable housing – and to meet local housing needs of current population
- would more than meet the latest projections of future need (but this would mean supporting substantial in-migration as a conscious policy)
- more revenue under Government's expected proposals.



Against

- considerable environmental pressures – adverse impact on the environment and the form and character of settlements
- no evidence of community support
- not consistent with a policy of concentrating on providing for local needs
- unlikely to alter the market sufficiently to increase affordability
- would open major and difficult to resolve debate on forecasts
- not likely to be consistent with neighbours: would lead to more commuting to Tees Valley, and hinder regeneration there
- major growth area(s) required – much more than proposed in Preferred Strategy, and could lead to potential infrastructure capacity problems
- much greater than past building rates required, suggesting potential housebuilding industry capacity problems
- would need complete re-consideration through public consultation
- unlikely to be favourably supported by Sustainability Appraisal.

Conclusions

- 4.21 Taking these comparative merits of different housing growth levels into account, and in the light of the preceding analysis, ***it is proposed to continue to develop the Richmondshire LDF based on average provision of 200 houses each year.*** This target would be subject to review to ensure it remained appropriate to local conditions and, for example, could respond to changes such as growth at Catterick Garrison and improvements to local infrastructure.
- 4.22 This appears the most reasonable approach, since it will meet our local requirements (but not necessarily those of others, through continuing levels of high in-migration), and is likely to be consistent with those of our neighbours. It is also likely to be a safer approach – in terms of reaching the easiest agreement (given consultation already undertaken, and the degrees of contention likely to be opened up if major debates about projections are facilitated). It is thus also likely to represent the quickest approach, which gives the greatest prospect of getting a much needed plan in place much sooner – a not inconsiderable benefit to take into account.



5 The proposed strategic context: Richmondshire LDF context following RSS revocation

- 5.1 It seems clear that in many parts of the country, the RSS guidance was not a matter of dispute, but provided a sensible context and resolution of relationships between local areas. This indeed seems to be the case for Richmondshire. However, establishing these relationships should logically be much more than a debate about housing numbers – it should reflect a much more comprehensive view of the plan area’s role in the wider world, and the way all aspects of its future should be shaped.
- 5.2 this principle of restraint will be reflected in a managed approach to ensure an appropriate level of housing and employment provision which will meet local social and economic needs, helps to reduce commuting out of the plan area and supports regeneration and growth in the Tees Valley (and to a lesser extent Leeds) City Regions. Consistent with this, housing provision will continue to be based on 200 dwellings per annum (ie. retaining the former RSS housing target). This will provide support for the rural economy and local social and community needs, including scope to provide for the identified need for affordable housing;

1. relative “restraint” in relation to overall change in Richmondshire, reflecting the needs of the area and its relative lack of potential for growth, taking into account the great concern to protect its high quality environment. This should ensure consistency in its relationships with its neighbours with similar or different objectives.
2. this principle of restraint will be reflected in a managed approach to ensure an appropriate level of housing and employment provision which helps to reduce commuting out of the plan area, and support regeneration and growth in the Tees Valley (and to a lesser extent Leeds) City Regions. Consistent with this, housing provision will continue to be based on 200 dwellings per annum (ie. retaining the former RSS housing target). This will provide support for the rural economy and local social and community needs, including scope to provide for the identified need for affordable housing.
3. development and provision of services will be concentrated in locations which reflect a defined sustainable settlement hierarchy. This hierarchy is headed by the settlements of Richmond and Catterick Garrison, where the LDF will seek to support their distinct roles in providing the main local focus for housing and employment (and also shopping, leisure, education, health, cultural activities and facilities), and will seek to encourage improvements in their accessibility from surrounding areas, and improved public transport links to other centres. Next in the hierarchy is Leyburn, which will be encouraged to fulfil its important service function to a wide rural area extending outside of the LDF plan area, including provision of market and affordable housing, and new job opportunities to address local needs. Important priorities for Leyburn will include its enhancement and protection as an attractive and vibrant place, with excellent environmental, economic and social resources serving the wider rural area.



4. the LDF will recognise that Richmond and Catterick Garrison are clearly closely related, in terms of provision of services and impacts of developments in one on the other, and planning for their future will be considered in these terms, with the objective of achieving complementary roles, provision of facilities and development. The balance of physical development will be concentrated in the Catterick Garrison area rather than in Richmond, in order to reduce pressure on Richmond, necessary because it has limited physical scope for expansion, and development would be likely to be more detrimental to important environmental assets such as the North Pennines Dales and Meadows Special Area of Conservation.
5. the LDF will seek to support rural sustainability, which will include:
 - i. safeguarding local quality of life, environmental values and characteristics
 - ii. encouraging a more diverse, competitive and successful economy, with access to economic opportunities and increased self sufficiency within the rural economy, in ways which should allow people to live and work locally
 - iii. meeting locally generated needs for both market and affordable housing, and supporting the social needs of rural communities
 - iv. promoting its rural cultural identity, including supporting the role of market towns and tourism
 - v. supporting communities to provide for their own needs.
6. priority will be given to protecting and conserving the rich variety of environmental and historic assets in the plan area, and mitigating and adapting to the prospects of climate change, including through measures which support the achievement of challenging levels of renewable energy provision and low carbon developments, together with other North Yorkshire partners.

5.3 Comments on these principles (and indeed all this Statement) are being sought from all those concerned in the future of the Richmondshire LDF plan area. Naturally this means all those resident or working in, or visiting, the area – but of particular importance will be seeking the comments, and hopefully support, from those neighbouring authorities who will be affected, and which are also responsible for preparing similar plans for their areas. It is hoped that the approach set out here, summarised in the previous paragraph, will be consistent and coherent with the strategies contained in the plans for the adjacent areas.

5.4 With the impending removal of the RSS level of guidance, it will be important to re-establish the role of Richmondshire in the wider area, consistent with that of its neighbours. A parallel rather than top-down planning approach must be the way forward, after removal of the RSS – not least because the coherence of the strategy proposed with those of its neighbours (and with those of its partners) will continue to be a key element of the soundness testing of plans when they reach Examination.

Key Question 1:

Q 5.5 Do you agree that the Strategic Context set out in paragraph 5.2 of this Section should guide the LDF?



6 Local boundary issues and relationships

- 6.1 This section considers important local relationships between the LDF area and parts of adjacent LDF areas, identifying local issues around the plan's boundary – taking the relationship of the plan area which each adjacent LDF area in turn.

i. Darlington and the Tees Valley authorities

- 6.2 The importance of the relationship between the strategy for the plan area and that for the adjacent Tees Valley has been stressed throughout this Statement. Darlington acts as a sub-regional centre for much of the plan area, providing retail and other services, and work for many residents. It is supported by a range of links including the A1, A66, A167 and B1263. Compatibility of strategies is an important objective, and the intent to pursue restraint in growth of housing and economic development in the Richmondshire plan area – to support the regeneration of Darlington and the rest of the Tees Valley – is a clear element of this relationship.

ii. Hambleton

- 6.3 There are many similarities in the plan areas of Hambleton and Richmondshire. The sub area and sustainable settlement hierarchy elements of the emerging Core Strategy for Richmondshire have distinct similarities with the approach taken in the adopted Hambleton Core Strategy, which in practical terms will facilitate the intended eventual merger of the plans for the two Districts. This means that the approach of concentrating development and supporting provision of services and facilities in the established settlement hierarchy (reflecting the definition of Principal Towns or Service Centres, followed by Primary and Secondary Villages) is in common between the two plans.





- 6.4 In practice, parts of the Richmondshire plan area are served by the Service Centres of Bedale and Northallerton in Hambleton District. The retention and improvement of transport links to those Centres will be important in terms of the accessibility of the LDF plan area's residents to facilities. Specifically this means that the Richmondshire LDF, and the partners in its delivery, will need to support:
- improvements to the A684, in particular recognising the importance of securing funding and implementation of the Bedale Bypass, located on the route which connects Leyburn with the A1
 - the operation of the tourism asset of the Wensleydale Railway, linking Leeming Bar (in Hambleton) with Redmire (in the Dales National Park) via Leyburn, and supporting its extension if possible eastwards to Northallerton and westwards to the Settle to Carlisle line.

iii. Harrogate

- 6.5 The Richmondshire LDF plan area shares a very short boundary with that of the adopted Harrogate LDF. The policies for the two plans are broadly consistent, particularly in terms of the approach to rural sustainability in their adjacent areas.

iv. Yorkshire Dales National Park

- 6.6 The relationship between the Dales National Park and adjacent areas was explored in the RSS Remoter Rural, and Vales and Tees Links, Sub Area strategies discussed in this Statement. The Richmondshire LDF's Preferred Strategy, reflecting this approach, recognises the important service function provided in particular by Leyburn and the Lower Wensleydale area to the settlements in the Upper Wensleydale part of the District, within the National Park, and similarly by Richmond to the adjacent parts of Swaledale, also part of the District, but located within the National Park. This relationship, which needs to be respected in the development of the Richmondshire LDF, includes provision of facilities and services supporting National Park communities, but also of nearby opportunities for work for Park residents.

v. Durham County

- 6.7 The Richmondshire LDF's North Richmondshire Sub Area shares a boundary with the area now to be covered by the LDF being prepared by Durham County. The town of Barnard Castle provides a range of service facilities accessible to many of the settlements in this LDF sub area, and support for transport links to this centre should be a component of the Richmondshire LDF.
- 6.8 In addition to these specific cross-boundary relationships, it will be important to address two other issues in the LDF which have a wider significance beyond its boundaries:

vi. A1 improvements

The relatively poor accessibility of the plan area's settlements to the A1 – despite it running through the eastern part of the District – is a very well known issue particularly at Catterick Bridge. Given the current and future restraints on public expenditure, it is now very unlikely that the upgrade of the A1 previously being planned will take place,



at least during the LDF plan period. In these circumstances, alternative approaches will need to be considered. Firstly, as a priority, the LDF and its partners will need to consider the scope to introduce less costly measures which can nonetheless help to address access and mitigate known safety issues along the A1 through the plan area. Secondly, access to and from the A1 will be a major issue in securing the proposed developments in the Hipswell/Scotton/Colburn Area Action Plan and also for neighbouring settlements. Alternative improved traffic arrangements may well need to be considered as part of the implementation of those proposals, and is indeed being examined within the current traffic modelling work associated with the assessment of the AAP development proposals and existing conditions in the area.

vii. the economic footprint of Catterick Garrison

- 6.9 The wide reaching economic implications of military activities and developments at Catterick Garrison have been widely studied. Although expectations are now that future growth may be more limited than previously expected, it is clear that the ramifications of any development within the main Garrison site, or the many subsidiary sites within the region, will extend at least to the neighbouring LDF areas – with implications in terms of potential demand for housing for military personnel, and of increased commuting to military base locations. The Council will work with neighbouring authorities to understand and respond to these implications.

Key Question 2:

Q 6.10 Are these local boundary issues and relationships correctly identified – and is the response appropriate?



7 Proposed changes following recent consultation

- 7.1 Given the particular stage of preparation of the Richmondshire Core Strategy, this section considers four areas where some elaboration and amendment is now proposed, as a result of reconsideration following consultation recently undertaken on the Preferred Strategy, and national developments intending to change the development plan system.

1. the need for a flexible and robust approach

- 7.2 It is clear from the effects of the recession, and the implementation of reductions in future public expenditure, that the future is likely to be even less certain than before. It is probable that the impact of these factors will mean that less change (rather than more) is likely. How the Plan should respond to this situation will need to be fully addressed within the submission Core Strategy. It will particularly impact on formulation of the AAP proposals, reflecting overall District-wide growth, but also the scale and timing of military growth. It will also need to be seen in the Plan's response to the prospects for an upgrade to the A1 – now much less likely, and a longer-term proposition. The objective will be to produce a strategy which is resilient to such changes, and which provides the appropriate direction whatever the scale of change. It is anticipated that the structure of the emerging Preferred Strategy does provide such a robust and resilient strategy – but it will be important to demonstrate this, and consider the practical means of responding to such changes, as the Core Strategy is progressed.

2. ensuring flexibility in the approach towards the smaller settlements

- 7.3 A number of comments have been received seeking greater flexibility in the approach towards the future of the smaller settlements – not identified within the Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy established by Preferred Strategy Spatial Principle SP1. Whilst this in part reflects a failure to explain adequately the intended approach to these settlements, the Government's emerging proposals in the Localism Bill now suggest additional ways in which this flexibility can be achieved – and thus elaboration in the emerging Core Strategy is proposed.
- 7.4 Whilst it is intended that most development (and support for the provision of facilities) will be directed towards the Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy set out in Spatial Principle SP1, and in terms of housing in the proportions indicated in Spatial Principle SP4, it is not intended to remove or reduce the scope for appropriate development in the other settlements. The potential for development in these places will be supported through the operation of:
- Policy CP3, which seeks to encourage rural sustainable development, specifically in terms of support for live-work units by conversion of existing buildings, and where in exceptional circumstances it would help to meet a local housing need – and would also support extension and replacement of existing dwellings



- Policy CP5B, which provides for 100% affordable housing schemes, to meet an identified specific local housing need that cannot be met in neighbouring settlements.

and under the emerging Government proposals, locally supported development being progressed by means of:

- a Neighbourhood Plan, produced in accordance with the new procedures by the local community itself, consistent with the strategic approach contained in the Core Strategy
- a Community Right to Build proposal, which similarly can be advanced provided it has the necessary degree of local support
- any other development which is fully in accordance with the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” which is a key ingredient in the Localism Bill proposals.

3. developing a clearer directional strategy for the Area Action Plan

7.5 Comments received relating to the practicality of the development proposals for the Hipswell/Scotton/Colburn area suggest that more specific guidance needs to be incorporated in the context for the development of the AAP, set out in Policy CASS2 in the Preferred Strategy, covering two particular aspects:

- the need to secure high quality development which helps to secure and shape the achievement of vibrant and cohesive communities
- the need to ensure an appropriate timing and sequence of development, which ensures that the initial focus is on developments close to and which support the Garrison Town Centre.





4. inclusion of policy guidance relating to the identification and early release of sites

- 7.6 It is clear that future uncertainties about the plan making system, and additional alternative ingredients, such as the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, may mean that there is a significant gap before the detailed designation of sites can be undertaken, and brought to formal adoption. Currently this is proposed to be by means of the preparation of a separate Development Plan Document, titled the Facilitating Development Document – but the timing and nature of preparation of this will no doubt be influenced by the emerging new Localism Bill proposals. In the meantime, it will be important for the Core Strategy to give as much guidance as possible to help assess the suitability of individual site proposals, and to help steer consideration of the best direction of growth around the main settlements. Responding to this, it is proposed to incorporate relevant site and location of development criteria in the submission Core Strategy. Proposals for these will be subject of further consultation, particularly with the communities likely to be affected.

Key Question 3:

Q 7.7 Do you agree with the changes proposed to the Preferred Core Strategy?

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Richmondshire District Council

Swale House, Frenchgate, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL10 4JE

Tel: 01748 827025 Fax: 01748 825071 Email: LDF@richmondshire.co.uk

www.richmondshire.gov.uk

