

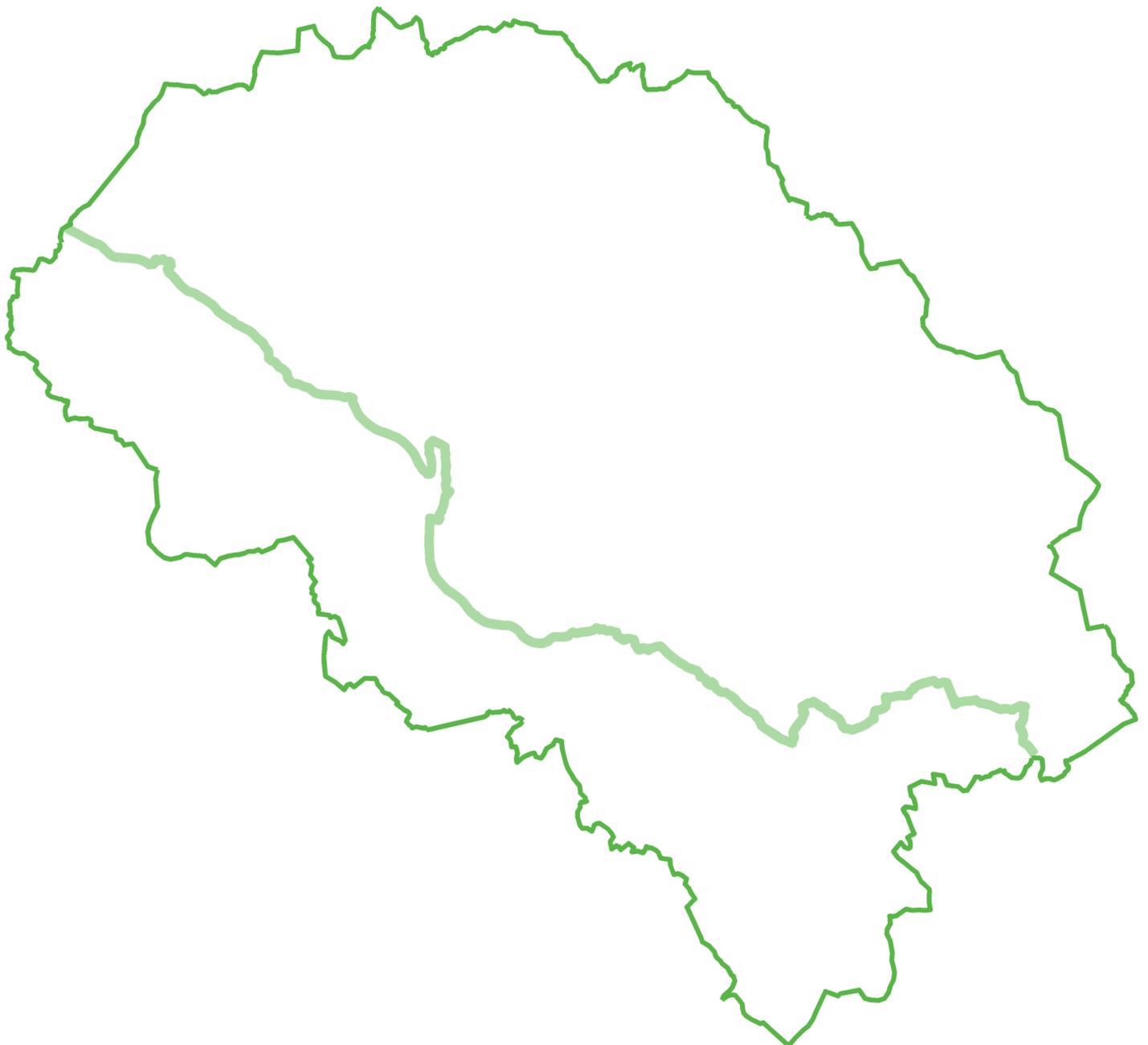


CRAVEN
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D I S T R I C T

Shaping a Spatial Strategy and Housing Figure

Discussion Paper

August 2012





This discussion paper is intended to help create two essential and important parts of the Council's new local plan, which is due for completion by the end of 2013. These are a "spatial strategy" and a "locally determined housing figure".

What is a spatial strategy?

"Spatial" comes from the word "space" and means "to do with where things are". "Strategy" means a long-term plan for success. Therefore, a spatial strategy might be described simply as a long-term plan for putting things in the right place.

The Council's current spatial strategy is contained within the old local plan adopted in 1999, and provides a set of broad principles to guide the location and scale of development outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

What is a locally determined housing figure?

This refers to the total number of new homes to be planned for in a local plan. At the moment, a figure is provided for us by the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and stands at an average of 250 dwellings per year up to 2026. However, the Government will be abolishing RSSs before the Council's new local plan is completed, so the Council needs to set its own locally determined housing figure instead. Such figures are always expressed as a minimum.

Why discuss these two things in particular?

Housing development is a big planning issue in Craven—perhaps the biggest—and many local communities, developers, businesses and organisations want to know how many new homes are going to be built and where. The answer to these key questions lies in a locally determined housing figure and a spatial strategy: the figure tells us how many and the strategy tells us where. In the new local plan, both will work together—along with allocations and policies—to ensure that a suitable number of new homes are built in suitable locations.

What are allocations and policies—how do they fit in?

"Allocation" is the process of earmarking individual parcels of land (or "sites") for housing development. This normally involves producing a map with all the allocated sites highlighted in a particular colour. Once a site is allocated for housing, its development becomes policy and is therefore acceptable in principle. The new local plan will need to allocate enough land to build 100% of the locally determined housing figure plus some additional land to act as a contingency, in case some allocated land isn't developed for whatever reason. "Policies" are written statements that govern the way development is carried out. So the new local plan may contain policies that govern housing development on sites that aren't allocated, which could include sites too small for allocation or larger windfall¹ sites.

How should we begin the discussion?

It makes sense to discuss the figure and strategy at the same time, but for the purposes of this paper it may help to tackle the question of "How many" first. For this, we need to refer to the best information we have on Craven's population and how it's changing, because population change—resulting from births, deaths and migration—is the main driving force behind the need to build more homes...

¹Windfall sites become available unexpectedly. They're not allocated, but are nevertheless suitable for development. The term "windfall" comes from a reference to ripe fruit that falls from a tree before it can be picked.

Population Change

The bar chart below shows information from our two planning studies² into population change, with the bars representing different “scenarios” or ways of estimating how many new homes Craven might need each year in the future. The figures are for the whole of Craven, including the national park.

Figure 1: Number of new homes needed per year in Craven (including the Yorkshire Dales National Park)

Scenario 7: Impact of Economic Change

470

Assumes jobs will grow in line with regional forecasts based on trends up to 2008, with houses built to accommodate working-age people moving into the district.

Scenario 6: SNPP

336

Sub-National Population Projections: A trend scenario based on historical information from 2004-2008. More up-to-date information is now available.

Scenario 5: CR 11 Year

208

Assumes houses will be built at the same rate as in the last 11 years (2001-2011), drawing-in households from outside the district.

Scenario 4: Migration-Led 9-Year

191

A trend scenario that uses historical information from a nine-year period (2001-2010) as a basis for predicting future migration.

Scenario 3: Migration-Led

182

A trend scenario that uses historical information from a five-year period (2006-2010) as a basis for predicting future migration.

Scenario 2: Migration-Led Revised

137

A trend scenario that uses historical information from a five-year period (2006-2010) as a basis for predicting future migration, plus revised population estimates.

Scenario 1: Natural Change

34

A hypothetical scenario that removes the effect of migration so that the effect of births and deaths can be seen.

Most realistic range

These four scenarios are likely to provide the most reliable estimates of how many new homes Craven might need in the future to house its changing population.

²Scenarios 2-6 come from the Craven District Population Estimates and Projections (March 2012) and Scenarios 1 & 7 come from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for North Yorkshire and York (December 2011).

What is the “most realistic range”?

Some of the scenarios in Figure 1 (opposite) are based on more reliable statistics and methods, so the estimates they provide could be described as the most realistic range of possibilities, when it comes to predicting Craven’s future population change and housing requirements. Scenarios 1, 6 & 7 (coloured yellow in the chart on the opposite page) aren’t within that range, because Scenario 1 is purely hypothetical and could never happen in reality (it would mean no-one moving into or out of Craven!); Scenario 6 is based on out-of-date and unreliable information that significantly overestimates international migration into Craven; and Scenario 7 is based on pre-recession economic trends, underestimates the role of commuting and overplays the link between new jobs and new houses in Craven.

So we should look for a housing figure within this range?

Yes, but we should bear a few things in mind whilst we’re looking. First, the figures are for the whole of Craven, so we need to take out the national park element. Second, the figures produced by each scenario are just different estimates and should not be treated as different options. Third, there is no single correct figure or right answer—we cannot say, for example, that a figure of 182 is right and a figure of 191 is wrong. What we need to do is understand the district’s housing requirements and then settle on a figure that’s suitable, feasible and works positively to address those requirements.

How do we do that?

Perhaps the simplest and most obvious way is to take the average figure from the most realistic range, which would give us a figure of **180** dwellings per year for the whole of Craven.

How would this figure work?

The completion of 180 new dwellings (minus the national park element) would be the minimum target for each year of the local plan period. Should the target be missed or exceeded in any year, the target for following years would need to be adjusted to reduce the shortfall or surplus. The local plan period will last for about 15 years, so we would be aiming for the completion of 2700 new dwellings (minus the national park element) at the end of that period.

That’s an idea of “how many”, but what about “where”?

We know from experience and from what people have told us³ that places in Craven aren’t all the same. Different parts of the district are subject to different outside influences, have different characteristics and need different things. This is backed up by planning studies, which provide evidence of different housing markets, job markets and travel patterns within the area⁴. Using this information we can roughly sketch-out three fairly distinct areas within Craven (outside the national park) where housing requirements are likely to be different. These are the northern area of the district, where High Bentham is the largest town and the influence of Lancaster is felt; the southern area, including Skipton and Cross Hills, which is well-connected to Bradford and Leeds; and the middle area, which is more remote from neighbouring cities and is centred around Settle.

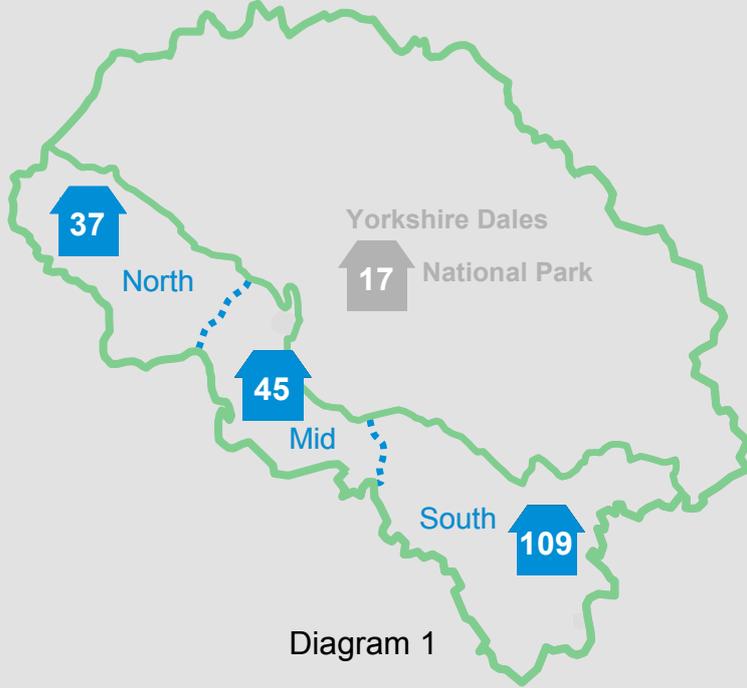
Two of our population scenarios from the “most realistic range” (see Figure 1, opposite) are based on statistics that can be broken down to electoral ward level (the constituencies used in local council elections), which means we can use them to see how population change and housing requirements might be different in the north, south and mid areas of the district and in the Craven part of the national park...

³Response to consultation on the Council’s Core Strategy Preferred Option (2007). ⁴Strategic Housing Market Assessment for North Yorkshire and York (2011); York and North Yorkshire Economic Assessment (2010).

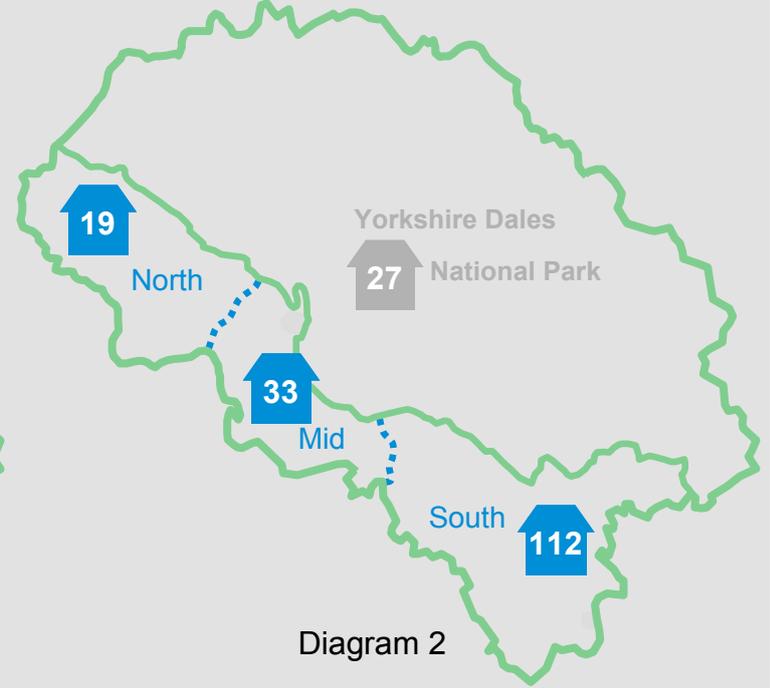
Housing Requirements Across Craven

Diagrams 1 & 2, below, show how housing requirements might vary across the north, south, mid and national park areas of Craven, according to the two population scenarios from Figure 1 that are based on ward-level statistics.

Scenario 5: CR 11 Year
(total of 208 dwellings per year)

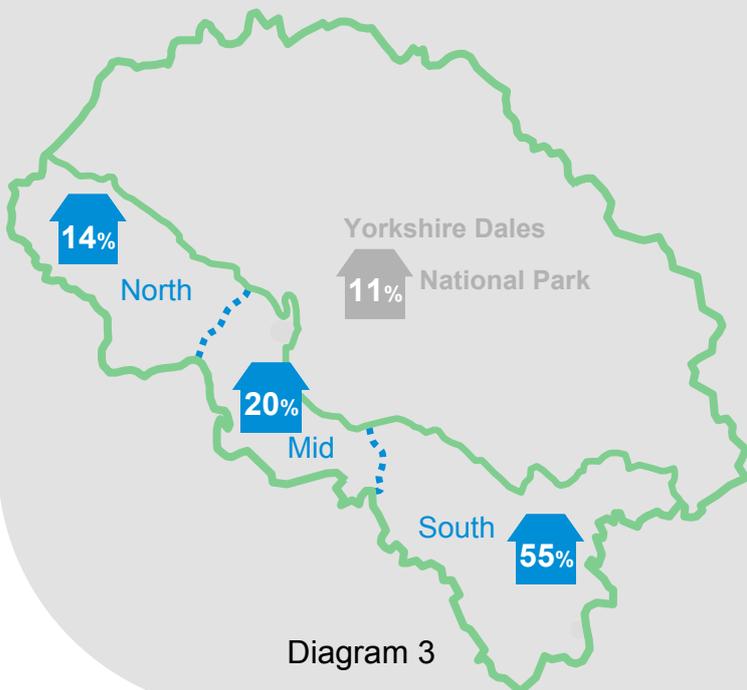


Scenario 4: Migration-Led 9-Year
(total of 191 dwellings per year)

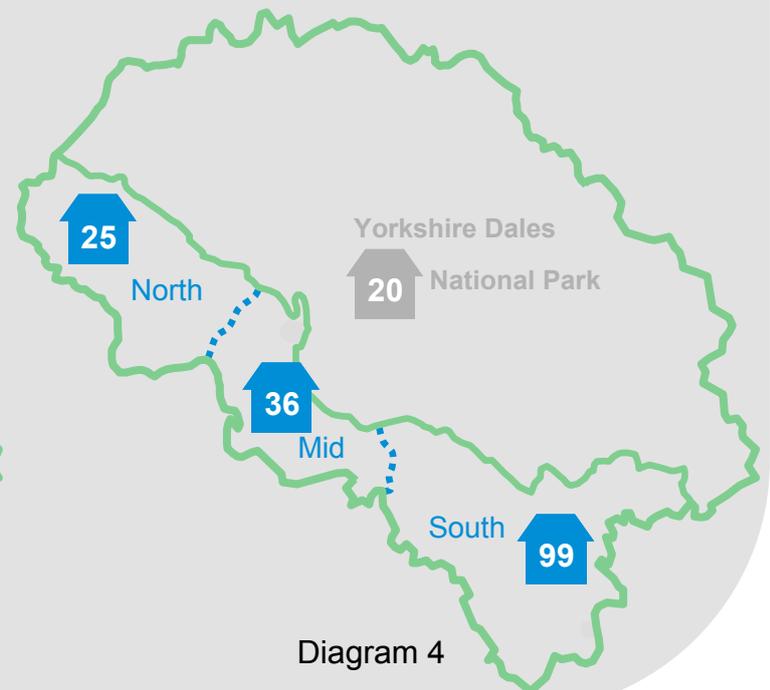


As we can see, both scenarios predict that housing requirements outside the national park will be greatest in the south and get less and less moving into mid and northern areas. If we average the figures in Diagrams 1 & 2, and work them out as percentages, we can get a picture of relative housing requirements across Craven (see Diagram 3, below); then we can apply those percentages to the housing figure of **180** dwellings per year to see how many dwellings might be needed each year, in different parts of Craven (see Diagram 4, below).

Housing Requirements Across Craven: Percentages



Housing Requirements Across Craven: Numbers of new dwellings per year



So we need to plan for 160 dwellings per year?

Yes—that’s what our best information is telling us: we need to plan for an average of 160 dwellings per year and complete 2400 new dwellings (outside the national park) by the end of the local plan period (15 years).

Can we use Diagram 4 as our spatial strategy?

Diagram 4 (opposite) is a good start, but in order to have a fully functioning spatial strategy we need to specify locations—within the south, north and mid areas of Craven—that are most suitable for the bulk of new housing development and therefore suitable to receive allocations.

Aren’t the main towns the most suitable locations?

Yes—broadly speaking it makes sense to direct new housing development to the larger settlements, where you’ll find most of the people, facilities and services already. In fact, in 2009, the Council agreed that kind of approach. After considering comments received during the Core Strategy Preferred Option consultation, the Council decided⁴ that the current RSS housing figure of 250 dwellings per year would be best distributed to Skipton, Glusburn/Cross Hills/Sutton, Settle/Giggleswick, High Bentham and a few other settlements— see Table 1, below.

Table 1:
Proposed
distribution of
RSS housing
figure (2009)

Location	Number of dwellings per year	% of total housing requirement
Skipton	100	40%
Glusburn/Cross Hills/Sutton	43 (42.5)	17%
Settle/Giggleswick	38 (37.5)	15%
High Bentham	33 (32.5)	13%
Rural settlements & countryside*	38 (37.5)	15%
Total:	250	100%

*Focusing on settlements with good access to the transport network, including Gargrave, Ingleton and other settlements within the Airedale Corridor.

Is this still the right approach for 2012 onwards?

Possibly, but first we need to check the proposed scale and distribution of development against our latest information on population change and housing requirements, which tells us that:

- ✓ Housing requirements are not as great as previously estimated, so the overall housing figure should be reduced from 250 to 160 dwellings per year;
- ✓ The distribution of new housing should be based on the individual requirements of the three sub-areas rather than the whole district.

On that basis, the approach to take us forward towards a new local plan might look something like this...

⁴By resolution of the Policy Committee on 10th June 2009; minuted under reference POL.205.

Towards a New Local Plan

Diagram 5, below, illustrates the scale and distribution of housing development that might be planned for in a new local plan; it takes the proposed distribution agreed in 2009 (see Table 1, above) and updates it with our latest information on population change and housing requirements across Craven.

Possible Spatial Strategy & Housing Figure:

Showing, for each sub-area, the number of dwellings to be built per year and the places where they would be built

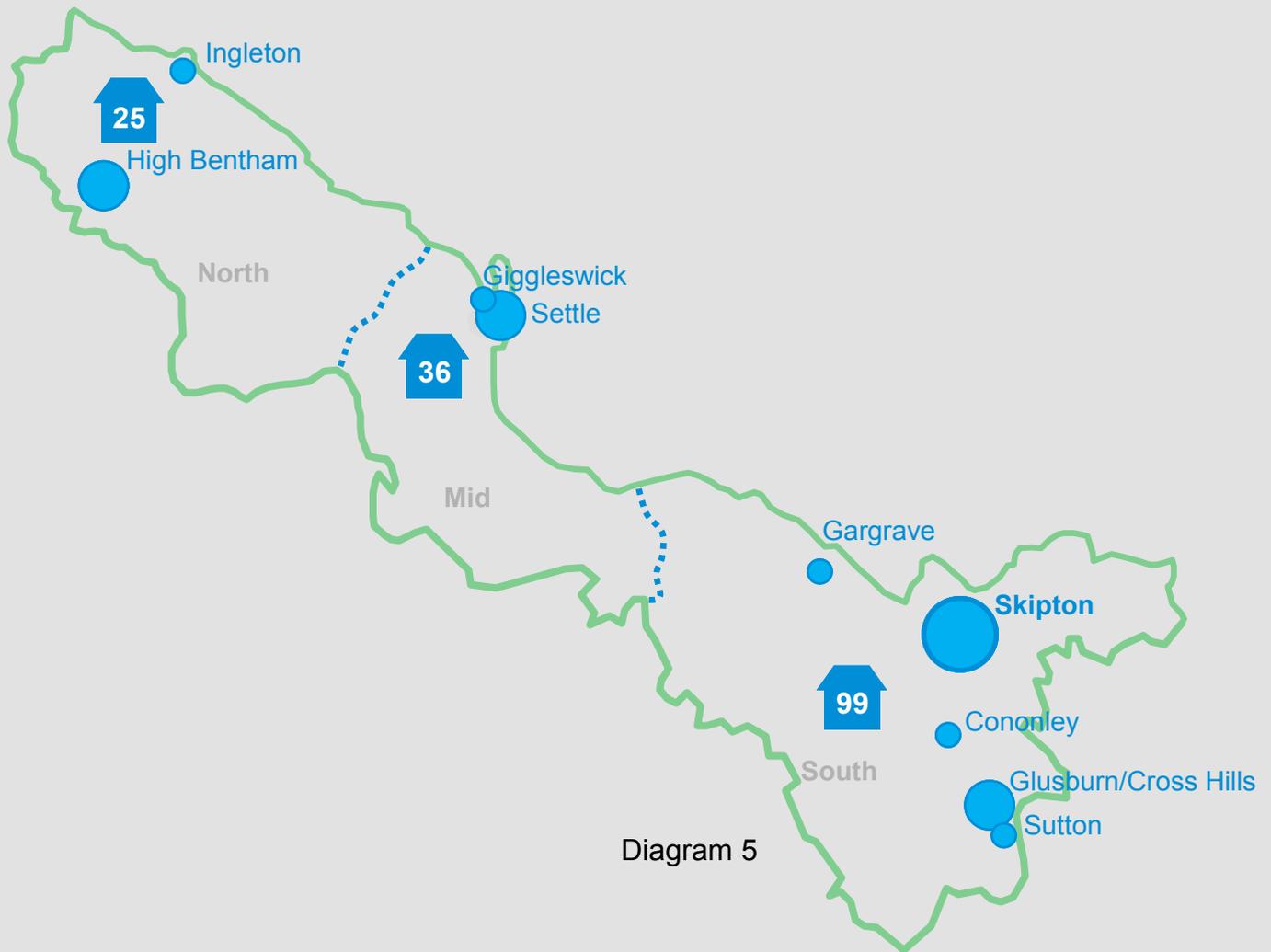


Table 2:
Possible future
distribution of
housing

Location	Sub-area	Number of dwellings per year	% of total housing requirement
Skipton Glusburn/Cross Hills/Sutton Gargrave Cononley	South	99	62%
Settle/Giggleswick	Mid	36	22%
High Bentham Ingleton	North	25	16%
Total:		160	100%

So how much housing would be built in each place?

Each sub-area has one or two larger settlements that contain most of the local population, facilities and services, and act as local centres of activity. They are High Bentham, in the north; Settle in the mid area; and Skipton and Cross Hills in the south⁵. Most of the housing needed in each sub-area is likely to be built in or adjoining these settlements, with much less being allocated to any smaller places in the same sub-area.

We wouldn't know the exact number of new homes to be built in each place until we're some way into the process of allocating sites for development. At this stage we can only say that allocated sites would be the best available for achieving "sustainable development"⁶ and that Settle, for example, would most likely be allocated somewhere close to 36 dwellings per year.

Won't our villages need some new housing, too?

Yes—broadly speaking most people seem to agree that village communities would benefit from some small-scale housing developments, especially at affordable prices and to cater for local needs³. However, allocating many small parcels of land, for relatively low numbers of dwellings, in a couple of dozen villages up and down the district, isn't necessarily the best or most feasible way of achieving this. Instead, the Council could concentrate on allocating larger sites of strategic importance in the main settlements, as illustrated in Diagram 5 opposite, and use policies to govern smaller housing developments in villages.

What would these policies say?

The policies could set the general rules for housing development in villages, including the location, type and size of site; the type and number of houses; and the "look and feel"⁷ of the development. Any proposal that follows those general rules could then be looked at in more detail to ensure its overall acceptability. Policies could also pave the way for proposals to come forward through Neighbourhood Planning⁸, where the local parish community has control over the development. In these ways, policies can be used to achieve the amount and type of development that village communities need and want (or at least don't object to) so that development can be seen as a positive benefit rather than a negative imposition.

Could allocations be seen in the same positive way?

Why not? The only real difference between development on strategic sites allocated by the Council and development in villages would be the *scale*, not the benefit or the quality or the acceptability. When allocating sites, the Council would need to work closely with the local town (or parish) council and local residents, to ensure that any development results in positive change. This would mean choosing the most favourable sites, requiring sustainable development, achieving the right look and feel, and creating a people-friendly pattern of buildings and green spaces.



⁵Settle and Cross Hills each form part of a bigger built-up area and some of their facilities and services are actually provided in adjoining settlements—that's why we sometimes refer to Settle/Giggleswick and Glusburn/Cross Hills/Sutton. This situation also exists to some extent in High and Low Bentham. ⁶*Sustainable* means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations; *Development* means growth (Greg Clark, Minister for Planning). ⁷A phrase first coined by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, in 2010. ⁸Visit www.cravendc.gov.uk/article/3110/Neighbourhood-Planning for more details.

Taking the Discussion Forward

As we said at the beginning, the purpose of this discussion paper is to help create a spatial strategy and a locally determined housing figure for the new local plan. We've put forward some ideas, but these aren't fixed and shouldn't be viewed as a *fait accompli*—they're intended to get the discussion going. By discussing ideas—ideally in a mixed group of people with different views and experiences—we can find points of agreement and work on points of disagreement, improving the ideas as we go and making progress together. This kind of practical problem-solving approach will help us find a solution that suits Craven and has broad support.

In order for the discussion to be realistic and effective, we need to set some ground rules. These are important because if we don't follow them our spatial strategy and housing figure will be judged “unsound” and we'll have to start again.⁹

① We can't ignore the evidence

If our views, opinions and ideas can't be backed up by adequate information—like our planning studies—they won't stand up to scrutiny and will, in all likelihood, be judged unsound.

② We can't ignore sustainability

Our spatial strategy and housing figure must help achieve sustainable development, so our ideas must pass the test of economic, environmental and social sustainability.¹⁰

③ We've got to listen to all points of view

People may have different views and priorities, but the economy, the environment and society are important to us all in some way. We need to listen to each other and make progress on all fronts.

④ We've got to agree

Without some kind of consensus it'll be difficult for anyone to achieve what they want to achieve, so we need a spatial strategy and housing figure that local people, businesses and developers are all reasonably happy with.

⁹A government Planning Inspector will hold an Examination in Public and may reject the local plan if it's found to be based on unsound evidence, procedures or public participation. ¹⁰Testing is done using “Sustainability Appraisal”, which is a method for assessing your options according to how well they would achieve sustainable development.

We're ready, so how shall we take the discussion forward?

Perhaps consider what you've read so far, on the number and distribution of new homes, and then try tackling the issues and questions below—think about how you might deal with them in a new local plan, using a spatial strategy, a locally determined housing figure, allocations and policies...

 Would a higher housing figure help create a more balanced population?

 Would the local economy benefit from a higher housing figure?

 Would a higher housing figure help provide a greater number of affordable homes?

As well as information on the number of new homes needed, our planning studies tell us how the make-up of Craven's population might change in the future, and suggest to us that there's likely to be:

- Slow, gradual, steady growth in the overall population
 - An increasing proportion of people over 65
 - A stable proportion of people between 45 and 65
- A decreasing proportion of people under 45, including children
 - A reduction in the average size of households
 - A shrinking labour-force
- Potential for higher housing numbers to create a more balanced population and a more stable labour-force
- Potential for lower housing numbers to bring population decline

 Is an ageing population a bad thing?

 Is migration and commuting in and out of Craven a bad thing or a strength?

 In the big scheme of things, how much can a local plan influence the economy and the affordability of housing?

 Has new development really been viewed as an imposition in the past and, if so, what would enable it to be viewed more positively in the future?

 Do people believe in sustainable development and, if not, what leaves them unconvinced?

If you'd like to read more information on the background to the population scenarios in this discussion paper, please have a look at its sister publication *Towards a Locally Determined Housing Target for the Craven District (outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park)*, which goes into more of the technical details.

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