

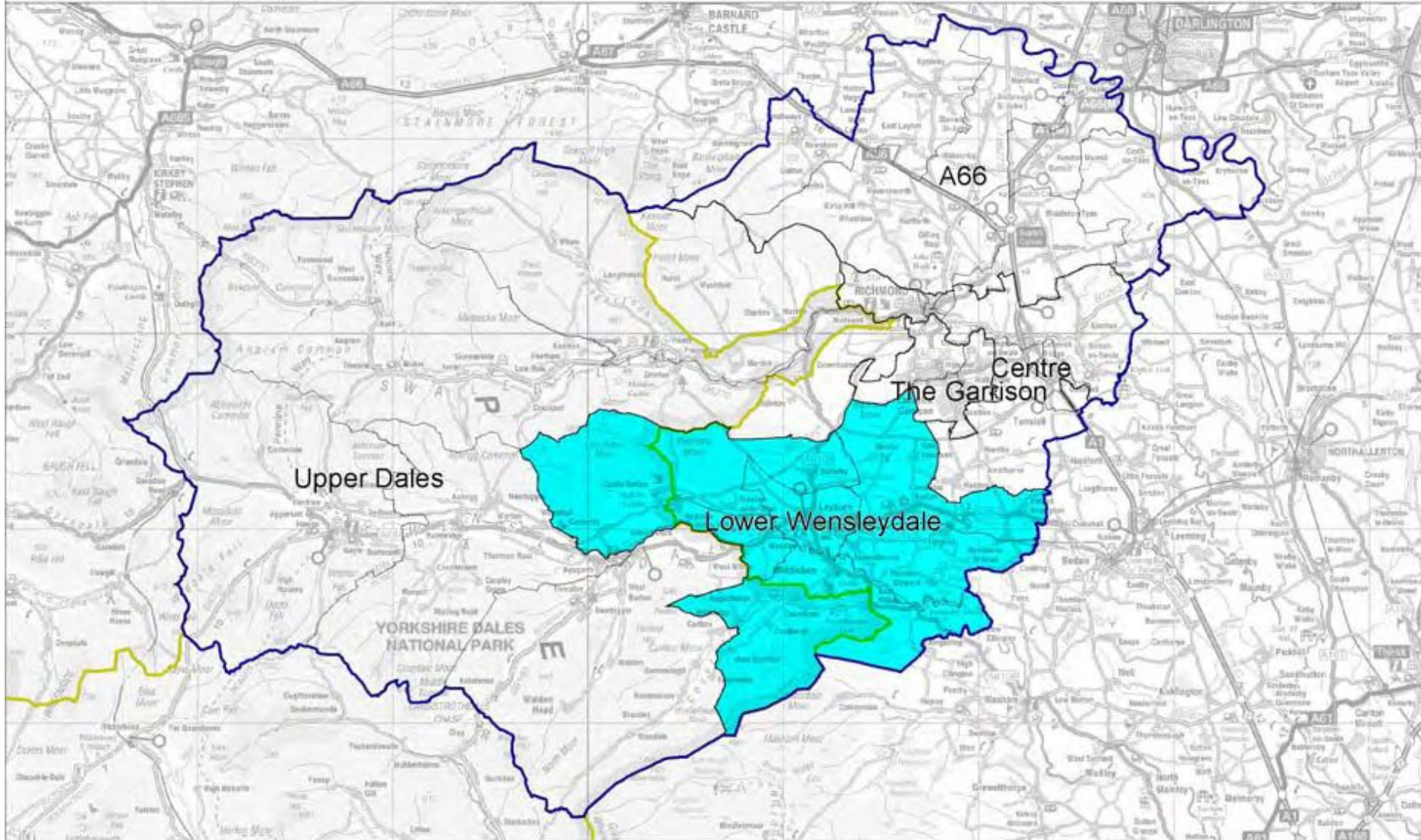
Lower Wensleydale Area Profile

- 2.1 **The Location** – The Low Wensleydale Area incorporates the four wards of Bolton Castle, Leyburn, Lower Wensleydale and Middleham.
- 2.2 **Summary Profile** - The two main settlements in Lower Wensleydale are Leyburn and Middleham (wards) which comprised populations of 2,211 and 1,302 respectively at the time of the 2001 Census. The area has an ageing population with the percentage of residents aged 0-15 and 16-49 being below the district, county and country levels. In common with many rural areas, there are issues in Lower Wensleydale over access to services. For example, residents who do not drive, or who have no access to personal transport, may struggle to attend James Cook Hospital in Middlesbrough – facing either a long journey by public transport or an expensive alternative, such as a taxi.
- 2.3 A high proportion of the working age population in Lower Wensleydale is economically active and unemployment levels are significantly lower than the national average. However, there has been an exodus of young people from the area, partially as a result of both a lack of affordable housing and of highly-paid employment. Tourism and personal services account for a significant proportion of jobs in the area, although a relatively high proportion of the workforce is self-employed, predominately in construction. Agriculture continues to be a dominant force on the landscape and in the economy, although employment in the sector is not especially significant.
- 2.4 In Middleham, the racehorse training sector accounts for the majority of employment. Another issue that may be of growing importance in Lower Wensleydale, as in many other rural areas offering a high quality lifestyle, is that of people working from home in knowledge-related activities such as media and computing. Whilst there is little data to describe the extent of this at present, such micro-businesses can be vital to maintaining the viability of local services and can bring extensive wealth into a remote location. For these businesses, the quality of communications is vital, including mobile phone coverage and the availability of high quality broadband.
- 2.5 The picture that emerges from the above analysis shows Lower Wensleydale to have some of the typical characteristics of a rural economy;
- An ageing population,
 - Significant outward commuting from the rural area, by mainly higher-skilled individuals,
 - A high proportion of low skills (and by implication low wages), especially in the towns,
 - Significant self-employment in agricultural services and construction, and
 - A high proportion of employment in tourism related activities, much of it part-time.
- 2.6 Hence the challenges for Lower Wensleydale include actions to;
- Retain and attract younger people,
 - To increase the value of the tourism sector by appealing to higher spending market segments,
 - To maintain competitiveness of the agricultural sector,
 - To boost entrepreneurship in higher-value services
 - To mitigate the effects of out-commuting and
 - To develop a culture of learning and up-skilling in the town.

Source: Miller Research

- 2.7 Further detailed analysis and profiling of the area can be sourced from;
- Ø A sustainable future for Lower Wensleydale – Leyburn Report (Miller Research 2009)
 - Ø A sustainable future for Lower Wensleydale – Middleham Report (Miller Research 2009)
 - Ø Lower Wensleydale Area Profile (Richmondshire District Council 2009)
 - Ø Lower Wensleydale Labour Market Area Profile (York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit 2010)

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