

4 Market towns

This priority aim is to *“Support market towns as hubs for the rural economy and as centres, providing locally based employment opportunities”*.

This chapter provides a very brief overview of the sub region’s market towns. They play a crucial role within the rural areas of North Yorkshire and this single chapter can in no way do justice in capturing the evidence regarding the towns. It does however try to give a flavour and overview of some of the key issues.

4.1 Overview

The Yorkshire and Humber Rural Framework: supporting evidence (2006) reports that there is a need to support the region’s market towns as hubs for the rural economy and as service centres, providing local employment opportunities. The region’s market towns can and should play a key role in rural regeneration, particularly where they have a strong inter-relationship with the surrounding area. They provide (or have the potential to provide) the focal point for employment, services, shopping, cultural and community facilities, they serve as a hub for public transport, and they have the capacity to accommodate the growth that will contribute to sustainable rural communities. There is a need to ensure that the region’s market towns are places where people want and are able to live, work, invest and visit.

There are 28 market towns within the sub region of various sizes and roles. In addition there are a number of smaller towns or larger villages such as Reeth in Swaledale, Great Ayton in Hambleton that also act as hubs for key services. For the purposes of this report evidence, data and analysis has concentrated primarily on those towns that are part of the Renaissance Market Renaissance Towns (RMT) programme and / or were Market Town Initiative (MTI) towns.

It is however clear from the work undertaken on RMT and MTI and previous research that the traditional role and functions of many of North Yorkshires market towns has changed and is changing. A full understanding of these changes is important in determining future policy.

Figure 4-1 Market towns in North Yorkshire



Source: North Yorkshire Market Towns website

4.2 Supporting programmes and initiatives

The Renaissance Market Towns Programme (RMT)¹⁶ grew out of the lessons gained during the Market Towns Initiative and the experiences of the Urban Renaissance Programme. Launched in July 2002, the RMT is a pioneering long term plan to support sustainable rural towns in Yorkshire and Humber. It uses a strategy led approach as well as a desire to bring about a step change in aspirational thinking in market towns.

Yorkshire Forward states that the overall objective of the RMT is to generate sustainable development through a fully operational and sustainable “Town Team” whose role it is to drive the RMT process forward. Each team is primarily comprised of local people (e.g. residents, workers, businesses) who have an interest in creating and delivering a vision for the renaissance of their town over the next 25 years. Every RMT programme therefore has a town team that shapes the way that important transformational projects are delivered.

Prior to RMT a number of towns were prioritised under the Market Towns Initiative. In North Yorkshire these included:

- Malton / Norton
- Bentham
- Whitby
- Thirsk.

¹⁶ There is also an urban renaissance programme which is not covered here

Following MTI, the first round of RMTs were announced in 2003 and they have successfully moved through the planning and have now identified projects for development. In 2004 a second round of towns were added, with each producing a Business Plan to take their visions forward. The towns in the sub region are shown below. It should also be noted that Yorkshire Forward continues to work with these towns, e.g. in developing a Partnership Skills to build capacity and confidence within the teams enabling them to become self sufficient in delivering their visions. More detailed information on the Renaissance Market Towns Programme and the towns which are already involved can be found at www.rmtportal.com

- | 2003 | 2004 |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bedale• Helmsley / Kirbymoorside / Pickering• Northallerton• Richmond and Catterick Garrison• Settle• Skipton | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boroughbridge• Knaresborough |

The Renaissance Market Towns Review (Summer 2006) also highlights progress to date in each area. In addition the master plans and background research on each town can be accessed through the RMT portal. This can be found at www.rmtportal.com

4.3 Key statistics Employment and Business structure for the renaissance towns

There is a vast array of research, data and intelligence on market towns. In some respects therefore it may be an area where further work is required, particularly in bringing this data together and providing comparative information across all areas. Some of this was carried out within the work carried out by NYCC through the Regional Settlement Study which formed the basis for the policies contained in the Regional Spatial Strategy. This study, together with the data collected and key findings from the 2006 SEA is summarised below. For the purposes of this report information has been restricted to MTI and RMT towns, with the addition of Malton / Norton and Thirsk.

- Populations of the renaissance market towns in North Yorkshire vary, with the lowest in the region of 3,000 people, although the majority see in the region of 10,000-15,000 people. The notable exceptions are the larger "settlements" of Northallerton and Richmond and Catterick Garrison
- The information in the 2006 SEA with regard to population growth is to some degree incomplete, although a number appear to have grown in size over recent years
- Often the qualifications levels, e.g. to levels 2¹⁷ and 3, the performance is better than is seen regionally (with the table below producing an indexed comparison to the region which is set to equal 100 for such analysis). The sub region as a whole does however perform well in regard to educational attainment, although there are concerns for Boroughbridge and Skipton
- On the whole unemployment is relatively low, and although not shown below, there are however "local pockets" in some areas where the figures are higher.

¹⁷ Level 2 is 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalent and level 3 is more than one A level or equivalent

Table 4-1 Key statistics for market towns

Market town	Population	Population change	Achieved level 2	Achieved level 3	Unemployment claimant count **
Pickering	11,659	Increased	113.4	109.9	1.3% (2003)
Skipton	12,855	-	89.2	96.6	1.5% (2006)
Northallerton	23,000*	Increased	116.8	137.4	1.6% (2003)
Bedale	12,500*	Increased	116.8	137.4	1.0% (2003)
Thirsk	9,800*	-	103.5	100.0	<1% (2004)
Boroughbridge	2,878	-	99.0	71.4	0.7% (2001)
Knaresborough	14,962	-	105.1	123.4	"Extremely low"
Kirbymoorside	2,890	Increased	113.4	109.9	-
Helmsley	3,000*	-	113.4	109.9	1.6% (2001)
Malton and Norton	11,967	Forecast for low growth	101.5	108.9	1.8% (2006)
Richmond and Catterick Garrison	39,677**	Likely to see growth	115.6	120.2	"Below districts figure"

Source: 2006 SEA * estimate. ** 2001 figures are from the 2001 Census and due to the actual question asked, figures are always higher than claimant counts. – means no information was contained in the SEA

For the Renaissance Market Towns the 2006 SEA also contains some information in relation to employment and business structure. Some key extracts from this are:

- Northallerton – 20% of businesses (yet only 5% of employees) are agricultural. The wholesaling and retailing sector sees the highest proportion of employers, with food and drink also featuring. Public services account for nearly half of all jobs
- Bedale – most notable sectors are manufacturing and wholesale and retail (primarily food related)
- Kirbymoorside – anecdotally there appears to be a range of sectors, including manufacturing (primarily engineering related), agriculture and hospitality
- Pickering – personal service, wholesale and retail are key, with manufacturing, agriculture and hospitality also featuring
- Richmond and Catterick Garrison – unlike some other areas, Richmond doesn't appear to be dominated by one, or a small number of sectors. The barracks (where employment levels are often not sufficiently captured in some surveys) is also key
- Skipton - banking, finance and insurance, distribution and hotels and also public administration are prominent
- Malton and Norton – manufacturing (including food production), public administration and health and also distribution, health and restaurants feature
- Knaresborough – manufacturing
- Boroughbridge – retail and public services.

Whilst it is possible to consider the 2004 Indices of Deprivation in and around all market towns, much of this information is already documented in other chapters within the report. For this reason, it is not included here.

4.4 Regional spatial strategy and market towns

The Regional Spatial Strategy categorises towns based on whether they act as Principal and Local Service Centres. This sets out the future policy, role, function and scope for future development and growth.

Principle Service Centres are towns that fulfil a regionally significant role as service, employment and transport hubs for their surrounding areas and are also the focus for investment and service delivery. Local Service Centres are the smaller towns / larger villages within an important service / centre role. Although not the primary focus for

development, they have a role in meeting local housing needs and economic diversification needs.

Across North Yorkshire these are as follows:

Principal Service Centres include:

- Skipton
- Harrogate
- Selby
- Knaresborough
- Malton
- Richmond
- Northallerton
- Ripon
- Thirsk
- Whitby

Local Service Centres include:

- Catterick Garrison
- Bedale
- Masham
- Hawes
- Sedbergh
- Bentham
- Settle
- Grassington
- Pateley Bridge
- Helmsley
- Kirkbymoorside
- Pickering
- Easingwold
- Tadcaster
- Sherburn
- Boroughbridge.

The “designation” of these towns is important when looking at future growth and the roles of market towns in North Yorkshire. Support for market towns and service centres is also offered by Action for Market Towns, a pressure group representing town and parish councils, chambers of trade and other organisations, e.g. businesses with an interest in small towns. The group is devoted to promoting small towns and assisting in tackling the challenges faced. There are more than twenty such towns in the region that are members. Working with the group, Yorkshire Forward also created Yorkshire Action for Market Towns which is a regional support network, offering for example information and advice and help with accessing funding.

4.5 Conclusions and policy implications

Key conclusions include:

- Market towns have a crucial role to play as service hubs across North Yorkshire. There is a need however to build on the existing research through RMT, data and policies contained in the RSS, to identify more clearly the future role and function of the sub regions towns
- Market towns have seen many changes over the past few years and many are reliant on a low growth business base. They need to identify and build on their specific strengths and build sustainable economies for the future
- The expansion of Catterick Garrison will play a key role in the renaissance/future of the surrounding area
- Perhaps market towns should be the subject of further evidence gathering in order to provide a more comprehensive view of future needs and opportunities.