

Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need

Facts, figures, trends

- The majority of the area is classified as ‘sparse’ by Defra because of its distance to services and very low population density. There are 9.22 hectares of land for every resident compared to the average for England of only 0.25 hectares per person. The population of 23,637 is dispersed across 100 villages and numerous smaller settlements¹.
- After growing steadily since 1971, the population of the pre-1st August National Park appears to have stabilised and may be starting to shrink following a trend apparent across other upland areas of northern England². However, the population in the new area of the National Park near the M6 corridor, appears stable or is growing slightly³.
- There is a severe imbalance between the proportions of people aged over 65 (26%) and the proportion aged under 15 (15%)². This is forecast to widen further and will require more commuting into the Park from elsewhere, to maintain existing jobs and services.
- Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live is 10 percentage points higher than the English average, at around 90% of all residents⁴. 91% of residents feel that the Park “is a special place”⁵. The people in the Craven area rate their “personal well-being” as 8.5 out of 10 with people in the Richmondshire area rating it as 8.2⁶
- 84% of residents consider themselves to be in good or very good health. This is slightly higher than the average for England of 81%. Communities are resilient and have a high participation in voluntary and self help activities.
- The average house price in the National Park is £253,000. In the highest value parts of the Park, this rises to £332,000. Prices are steadily increasing and are now on a par with pre-2008 (economic downturn) levels.
- The quality of life for residents is generally good with low unemployment, high skills, low crime and better than average health. Deprivation, other than in terms of access to affordable housing and healthcare services, is low⁷.
- The National Park has excess infrastructure capacity in some key areas e.g. vacant school places, under-occupied housing stock, General Health Practice capacity, under-used traditional buildings, uncongested roads, rail passenger capacity, bus capacity, etc.⁸

¹ ONS 2012 + YDNPA estimate of 3,876 residents in the new area of the National Park

² ONS 2012

³ [Cumbria Intelligence Observatory](#); NYCC (2014)

⁴ NYCC; STREAM CLG Place survey 2008 and YDNPA residents survey 2009

⁵ Residents Survey, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (2009)

⁶ [Personal well-being in the UK: April 2016 to March 2017](#), Office for National Statistics (2017)

⁷ [Index of multiple deprivation](#)

⁸ [Yorkshire Dales Local plan Infrastructure Assessment](#) (2015)

- Objectively assessed housing need is between 32 and 38 dwellings per annum⁹. Since 2010 housing completions have averaged 33 dwellings per year. The new areas of the National Park do not have a separate housing target or a requirement to maintain their own 5-year supply. New homes and new permissions in those areas are counted against the wider district requirement.
- Housing is very expensive in relation to average household incomes (around 8 times average income)¹⁰.
- The number of second and holiday homes has increased since 2001 and now accounts for 22% of stock in the 2015 Local plan area². There are dense pockets of second and holiday homes which affect seasonal vitality of some settlements¹¹. The proportion is lower in the new area of the National Park area - ranging from 9% to 19%.
- Across large swathes of the Park 25% of households are in 'fuel poverty'¹². In the new area of the National Park fuel poverty runs at between 12% and 18%. The English average is 11%. Mains gas is available in Sedbergh, Grassington and parts of the new area of the National Park. Much of the housing stock pre-dates 1910 and has solid walls and poor levels of insulation. Housing is often expensive to heat and can be difficult to insulate retrospectively. The National Park generally lacks smaller, modern, affordable-to-heat homes with modern amenities. Much of the existing stock is significantly under-occupied.
- There are 4 'local service centres' within the Park – Sedbergh, Grassington, Hawes and Reeth – and 49 villages with a basic level of services, such as a school, pub, shop or meeting place. There are two secondary schools (at Sedbergh and Threshfield) and a large private school (Sedbergh).
- In common with other remote rural areas, the National Park has continued to lose shops and schools in recent years.
- The Settle-Carlisle railway through the middle of the Park provides access to large towns and cities with a full range of services.
- The National Park does not contain any acute medical care facilities or further educational establishments. Many residents have to travel an hour or longer to reach hospital services or higher education colleges. There are no large supermarkets or significant retail centres.
- There are fifteen larger settlements close to the Park boundary: Addingham, Appleby, Catterick Garrison, Gargrave, Giggleswick, Hellifield, Ilkley, Ingleton, Kirkby Lonsdale, Kirkby Stephen, Leyburn, Pately Bridge, Richmond, Settle, and Skipton. These are important centres for jobs and services for communities in the Park. Most are planned to grow over the next 10 years.
- Broadband provision, whilst extremely fast in some areas, is poor in others. Mobile phone reception and data signals are patchy across the Park.
- There are public or community transport services in most villages but outside the larger centres it is not a quality service.

⁹ [Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan examination - report of Findings \(2016\)](#)

¹⁰ *Housing need, land supply and housing target*, (2015)

¹¹ *North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment*, North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Partnership (2011)

¹² Defined as spending more than 10% of household income on heating

- There are localised and seasonal car parking issues in some villages. The strategic highway network encircles the National Park but does not enter it. Road congestion is not normally a problem but travel times can be long.
- The National Park's communities are vulnerable to some aspects of climate change, notably flooding of roads and damage to bridges.
- There is one adopted Neighbourhood Plan in the upper Eden area of the new National Park (Mallerstang). Another Neighbourhood Plan is being progressed in Gargrave Parish.

Policy Context

[National Planning Policy Framework](#), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) - sets out the Government's planning policies for sustainable land use development.

[York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Spatial Plan](#), - a 40-year growth plan for the sub-region. Major growth will be located outside the National Park. The Spatial Plan sets out the sub-regional role of the park in terms of its contribution to natural capital; regional place makers/assets; links to adjoining areas, health & recreational resource; sustainable tourism; upland/natural flood management; local needs; long term sustainability of the communities and special qualities.

[Yorkshire Dales Local Plan 2015 - 2030](#) (2016) - guides future development decisions in the former National Park area. The new area of the National Park is covered by existing Local Plans – the emerging Eden Local Plan (2017) and the adopted Core Strategies in South Lakeland (2010) and Lancaster (2008).

[Moving Cumbria Forward – Cumbria Transport Plan Strategy 2011-2026](#) and [North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2016](#) - set out what the County Councils and their partners intend to do to address transport related issues faced by people who live in, work in, and visit Cumbria and North Yorkshire.

[Yorkshire Dales Leader Strategy 2015](#) - the Yorkshire Dales LEADER Programme will distribute £2.2 million for rural projects benefiting communities in the National Park, Nidderdale AONB and some areas on the periphery. Part of the Cumbria Fells and Dales Leader area is also within the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

[North Yorkshire and Cumbria LEP](#), strategies recognise the national draw of the Parks and that access to them is a key driver to people wanting to live in the area. No large scale proposals in the National Park. Instead, emphasis is on business support, skills and infrastructure; digital connectivity; support for higher-spending tourism; business growth hubs, food services and connectivity via M6, A1M.

[English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010, Defra \(2010\)](#) – sets out national Government Policy for National Parks, including the need to foster and maintain vibrant, healthy and productive, living and working communities.

Neighbouring local plans and council plans, - Richmondshire adopted a new Local Plan in 2014. Other neighbouring planning and housing authorities are in the process of preparing their local plans and reviewing their housing and land targets. All plans are pursuing sustainable growth in conformity with the NPPF.

Key Issues

- Despite full employment, wages are low. There is a need to widen the range of business and support training, apprenticeships and learning. Capacity for growth exists on sites next to existing business, brownfield land, and through higher levels of home working. The planned growth of settlements on the edge of the Park will benefit communities living inside by widening job opportunities and improving services.
- The National Park has capacity to absorb more people and more development. Indeed the population needs to stabilise or grow in order to sustain existing infrastructure and help deliver new services. That depends on attracting people and businesses to move into the area. How can the five district councils, three county councils and the national park authority work together to create a coordinated approach?
- The trend for fewer children living in the Park is starting to undermine key services such as local primary schools. How do we promote it as a place to attract younger working age households to move here?
- The heavily skewed age distribution will require more elderly support services. How do we provide more appropriate accommodation, care and support needs. Can we adapt existing facilities to the needs of an aging population?
- New housing is needed to meet the projected growth in smaller households, increase the supply of affordable housing, widen the range of stock with modern amenities and attract new 'low impact' businesses with high quality jobs.
- The impact of public spending cuts and the slack economy is reducing public services or moving the burden of their delivery into the charitable and voluntary sectors. How can local communities better support themselves? How do we help keep communities vibrant? How can we support community control of local services where they want it e.g. libraries, community led housing, heritage, wildlife, access, planning, utilities, etc.
- How can we get hyperfast broadband into more properties? Reliance on broadband communication becomes even more important when other services are declining. How can we extend mobile phone coverage and data services across the Park?
- How can we hold onto existing services such as health, education retail and meeting places and support innovative new provision?
- How can we support public transport? How can we minimise the effects of quarry road haulage on resident communities? How can we improve highway safety and the impacts of traffic on residential amenity? Are there practical solutions to help overcome the seasonal and localised traffic and parking problems in some villages?
- How can we support the reopening of the Wensleydale Railway as a corridor for public transport and economic activity? How can we support the continued viability of the Settle Carlisle railway?
- National policy requires Local Plans to steer development away from flood risk areas and to slow surface water run-off from new development to reduce downstream flooding. How can we maintain the resilience of local communities to the impacts of flooding and other potential climate change impacts?
- Shows, events and festivals are an important part of Dales life. How can their long-term viability be improved?
- How can we get more innovative, interesting and low cost housing designs that will also enhance the existing qualities of the National Park?