

# PARISH INFORMATION FROM YDNPA: FEBRUARY 2018

## Second homes and Council Tax

### Background

1. After growing steadily since 1971, the last Census revealed that the population of the National Park has stalled, and may well be starting to shrink.
2. The National Park has:
  - a. a disproportionately elderly population with 26% of residents aged 65 or over (national average = 16%), while only 15% are aged 16 or under;
  - b. an acute shortage of people of working age. Only 23% of the population is aged 18-44, compared to the national average of 37%.
3. The average house price in the National Park is £265,000 but in some parts this rises to £353,000. Prices have been steadily increasing and are now back on a par with pre-2008 levels.
4. In common with other remote rural areas, the National Park has continued to lose shops and schools in recent years. The impact of public spending cuts has led to a reduction in public services or moved the burden of their delivery to charitable and voluntary sectors.
5. Despite full employment, there is a wide discrepancy in wage levels. Employment remains disproportionately reliant on agriculture and tourism.
6. These are challenging and complex issues. There are many factors that have contributed to this situation, and tackling them will require action on a range of fronts.

### Under-occupied properties

7. The total number of 'under-occupied' properties (second homes and holiday lets) has increased significantly since 2001 and now accounts for 22% of the housing stock in the pre-August 2016 National Park area. The proportion is lower in the new area of the National Park (ranging from 9% to 19%).
8. Almost half (1,442 properties; 11%) are registered as second homes. The figures are: Richmondshire - 647; Craven – 418; South Lakeland – 231; Eden – 138; Lancaster - 8.
9. The number of second homes is much higher inside the National Park than outside. As a comparison, the figure for Richmondshire outside of the National Park is less than 2%.
10. There are parishes within the National Park (e.g. Arkengarthdale; Muker) where the proportion of second homes alone is over 25%.

11. Over the period of the last Census (2001-2011), an average of 60 new dwellings were built each year but an average of 90 houses per year were being turned into second homes or holiday lets.
12. Second homes are spread across all Council Tax bands but are most common in Band C and D.
13. A number of studies have been done on the impact of second homes on the viability of local communities, including:
  - [Holiday Homes and Sustainable Communities in South Lakeland – A case for change.](#) (Centrifuge Consulting) *paper starts at page 59 of these cabinet papers.*
  - [Review of 2nd home data and assessment of the effects 2<sup>nd</sup> homes are having on Rural Communities.](#) (SLDC, Eden DC, Cumbria Rural Housing Trust, and Lake District NPA)

### **The proposed response**

14. Discussions amongst the District Councils have indicated a potential desire to work with each other and the National Park Authority to develop a more joined-up approach to socio-economic development across the National Park, with the overall aim being:

***To halt and then reverse the decline in the number of younger people (18-44 year olds) in the National Park.***

15. A detailed 5-year programme of activity is still being developed but currently includes proposals to:
  - a. create at least 325 new dwellings in a range of tenures - affordable, self-build, local occupancy, open market etc;
  - b. work with 10 Parish Councils on specific local initiatives to attract younger people to live in that parish;
  - c. increase the number and quality of jobs;
  - d. deliver at least one key economic regeneration project in Craven, Richmondshire and South Lakeland, on sites already allocated for employment use;
  - e. accelerate the roll-out of hyper-fast and super-fast broadband so that it is available in all service centres and service villages;
  - f. market the area as a place for people of working age to move to.

## **The specific proposal on Second Homes**

16. As one part of the above initiative, there is also a proposal to attempt to address the issue of second homes. The exact proposal is for:

***The local authorities within the Yorkshire Dales National Park, and the National Park Authority itself, to hold discussions with Government on the options available for increasing Council Tax for second homes within the boundary of the National Park.***

17. The proposal came out of discussions amongst the local District Councils, including the Leaders of Richmondshire, Craven and South Lakeland District Councils, who strongly support this approach. However, all made clear that they would not want to pursue this idea if the National Park Authority was not open to it. The Authority, therefore, took something formally to its Board (on 19 December). South Lakeland District Council are already committed to work with partners over the high levels of second home ownership in the District, and the other authorities are now seeking a similar commitment.

18. At this stage, the authorities are seeking to discuss options with Government for the powers to increase Council tax on second homes. Any proposal will only progress further if Government is supportive of the principle.