



# **Review of the Impact of Tourism on the Craven District**

**Report of the Select Committee Working Group**

**Report to Policy Committee on 4 October 2022**

## **1.0 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 Following Select Committee's meeting on 23 June 2021 where they reviewed their work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year, the Chair suggested that the Committee could look at the impact of tourism on rural communities, specifically in relation to high levels of visitor traffic. It was felt that this would help to understand how stakeholders such as Parish Councils, The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA), Welcome to Yorkshire (WtY) and the emergency services are dealing with the issue. The Covid pandemic has seen a significant increase in visitor numbers in some parts of the Craven district and Members were keen to find out how this was being managed and the impact it has on local communities.
- 1.2 It was agreed to establish a working group to undertake an in-depth review. The aim of the review was to make an assessment of impact and where appropriate, make recommendations on a number of key areas.
- 1.3 The review was conducted over 6 working group sessions, which took place between October 2021 and February 2022 where we received a range of evidence both written and verbal. Evidence was provided by Parish Councils and Parish Meetings, Town Councils, WtY, YDNPA, emergency services and local businesses. The information provided was interesting and valuable and we would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and expertise to support this review.
- 1.4 This report includes a number of recommendations, which outline our expectations regarding a number of improvement measures. We hope that our findings provide a clear summary of areas that require focus and action. Ongoing monitoring of the progress of the recommendations will be undertaken by the Select Committee during the course of the municipal year.
- 1.5 Select Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in this review.

Councillor David Staveley,  
Chair of Select Committee

## **2.0 The Review**

- 2.1 The working group agreed which stakeholders to invite and asked them to provide first-hand experiences of how tourism affects local communities and how these impacts can be managed. Members wanted to hear about both the positive and negative aspects. This would make the review fair, open and transparent, ensuring that fully informed recommendations were being made.
- 2.2 To encourage participation from parishes, who ultimately are affected mostly by tourists, an “Impact of Tourism on the Craven District” questionnaire was circulated to each Parish Council and Parish Meeting (Appendix 2). In total, 73 questionnaires were emailed and posted, and a total of 22 responses were received. A summary report was circulated to the Working Group (Appendix 3).

Key positive impacts identified were:

- Visitors contribute to the local economy
- Financial benefits for local farmers and food producers
- Jobs created
- Local communities are proud to show off the area to the rest of the country/world
- Craven is promoted as a desirable area to visit

Key negative impacts identified focussed on:

- Traffic (parking, congestion, speeding)
- Litter
- Anti-social behaviour (noise)
- Wear and tear on facilities and stakeholders not contributing to their upkeep
- Housing shortage for local people
- Perceived pressure on emergency services

- 2.3 A series of working group meetings were held over Zoom. Speakers provided a range of data, shared information and provided first-hand experiences. Members asked a variety of questions to fully understand the negative and positive impacts. The final working group meeting with Council Services reflected the key issues that had already been raised.

### **2.3.1 Working Group Session 1 and 5– Parish Councils, Parish Meetings and Town Council**

- Visitor numbers have risen significantly during the pandemic and whilst many businesses have benefitted financially, this is not the case for everyone.
- Whilst it is seen as positive that the Craven District is promoted to tourists, not all villages have the infrastructure to manage high numbers (parking, litter bins).
- Some campsites have grown significantly to what they have been? given permission for, yet their financial contribution to the community doesn't appear to reflect this.
- Some villages are left with the responsibility of the upkeep of equipment (playground equipment, playing fields).

- The ratio between holiday lets and residents in some villages is as high as a 50/50 split, so local people are being pushed out of the property market. There is a risk of village community life breaking up – unaffordable housing could lead to schools and shops closing and older people being “left behind”.
- Staffing vacancies in the local hospitality sector can partly be due to the lack of affordable accommodation so local residents are being forced to move out of the area.
- Better public transport infrastructures could help alleviate parking and traffic issues.
- The influx of visitors, especially at large events such as the 3 Peaks Challenge creates significant issues around parking, noise, litter etc, and there doesn't appear to be any co-ordination between organisers and the YDNPA to mitigate the negative impacts.

### **2.3.2 Working Group Session two – Welcome to Yorkshire (WtY)**

- Whilst WtY has a positive relationship with CDC, the Council has not engaged with them as much as other local authorities have.
- They offer a range of support and small businesses can pay as little as £50 to promote themselves on WtY's website. Take-up amongst Craven businesses is low.
- WtY is moving away from Destination Marketing and focussing on Destination Management and promoting the Countryside Code. There is a 3-point Covid recovery plan: “Growth of overnight stays”, “Industry expertise” and “Leadership and ideas”.
- Members felt that WtY should increase engagement with parishes.

\*the meeting took place before WtY went into administration.

### **2.3.3 Working Group Session three -Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA)**

- Lockdown saw an influx in visitors, and between June-November 2021 over 25% of visitors were first timers. It is too early to say if this will translate into visitor spend, as businesses were closed.
- There has been a more diverse demographic of visitor which reflects the national population – younger, Black and Minority Ethnic, families.
- YDNPA continued to provide services during lockdown when visitor centres were closed. This included meeting and greeting and promoting the Countryside Code. Local volunteers also assisted.
- Overcrowded YDNPA carparks often means that visitors park in areas that negatively affected local residents' daily life. It was agreed that the YDNPA has a duty of care to residents to preserve their environment and maintain their quality of life.
- YDNPA's no bin policy generates excess litter in some areas and parishes have had to either provide bins at their own expense or rely on volunteers to litterpick.
- Members requested that YDNPA engage with both residents and parishes. It was agreed that the YDNPA has a duty of care to residents to preserve their environment and maintain their quality of life.

### **2.3.4 Working Group Session four – Emergency Services (Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service)**

- It is the responsibility of event organisers to complete and pay for adequate health and safety risk assessments, which should include provision of onsite private staff.

However, it was acknowledged that these were not always robust enough, especially for large scale events.

- In Upper Wharfedale, a multi-agency working group has been established to address potential problems, formulate a response, and assess the impact. It's proven to be a successful partnership model of helping to find solutions to ongoing problems.
- Members expressed concern that emergency services were being called out to incidents caused by visitors (moorland fires, drug/alcohol incidents, walkers falling etc), which impacts on the level of service available to residents.
- Although it was acknowledged that in some cases, response rates may be slower due to "tourist callouts", Members were reassured that calls were assessed and prioritised according to those most in need.

### **2.3.5 Working Group Session five - Council Services**

- CDC received Covid funding to recruit additional Cleaner Neighbourhood Officers to engage with residents and visitors throughout the Summer of 2021. This successfully led to a reduction in litter and dog fouling. Funding has now stopped.
- There are approximately 800 properties which are defined as second homes in Craven and applications for business rates have increased by 61% from 2018. Other parts of the country e.g. Cornwall are looking to increase Council Tax charges for second homes. CDC does not have the powers to increase Council Tax, but this is something the new unitary council could explore.
- Parishes can apply to Ward Member Grants for items such as traffic cones and signs to deter visitors from on street parking. Organisations such as Community First Yorkshire can award bigger grants.
- CDC manage pay and display carparks and free carparks. NYCC have responsibility for on street parking and issuing fixed penalties. CDC have looked at introducing pay and displays in smaller villages, but some Members and parishes objected.
- It was acknowledged that improving public transport provision was a key factor. CDC can only play a lobbying role with bus services, and whilst the Council has more influence with rail networks, it is a very lengthy process that involves numerous partners, so progress is slow.
- With Welcome to Yorkshire moving into administration, it is anticipated that a new organisation will be established to promote tourism in the region. CDC wish to work closely with them.
- The multi-agency Safety Advisory Group has no enforcement powers but will advise on risk assessments and license applications for events being held in the area.

## **3.0 National Parks**

3.1 4 National Parks were contacted to ask how they have managed the impact of tourists, specifically since the start of the pandemic. We received 2 responses:

- There has been an increase in visitor numbers after lockdown which led to issues around litter, fly-camping, fires, BBQs, wild swimming and an increase in emergency services callouts.
- Visitors' cars sometimes obstructed emergency vehicles, buses, farm vehicles and residents.
- Volunteers act as park rangers.

- Social media campaigns and onsite signage (e.g. anti-litter campaigns and Countryside Code messages) have little positive impact. Signage is often removed or vandalised.
- Successful partnership with stakeholders was deemed beneficial.
- Circulate parish bulletins/updates.
- Produce multi-lingual signage had limited impact.
- Often receive donations from events to maintain the upkeep of the parks.

## 4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 4.1 After listening to how communities, stakeholders and support services manage tourism in the Craven District, the Select Committee recognise that tourism impacts some parishes both positively and negatively. The recommendations below identify a way forward to address the issues that have been highlighted.
- 4.2 **Recommendation 1:** To encourage Local Planning/Rating Authorities to consider in their future planning the impact of tourism on local infrastructures and communities in terms of viability and sustainability. To lobby central government where appropriate.
- 4.3 **Recommendation 2:** To request that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority review their no litter bins policy. This has a negative impact across the Dales and an adverse effect on parishes who have to provide extra litter bin capacity and recruit volunteers to mitigate the impact the policy has on their community.
- 4.4 **Recommendation 3:** To recommend a joint approach by all stakeholders to address the impact of parking in honeypot destinations by looking at improved traffic management. To include Highways, Yorkshire Dales National Park Planning Policy, Parish Councils, Economic Development, and the Police/PFCC in these discussions.
- 4.5 **Recommendation 4:** For Safety Advisory Group members to continue to consider their individual legislative powers, which help to control or mitigate large scale events.
- 4.6 **Recommendation 5:** For Democratic Services to circulate information on how a multi-agency partnership approach can be used to look at community issues, and as a model to address the negative impact that tourism has on residents.
- 4.7 **Recommendation 6:** For CDC to call upon the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to improve their engagement, communication, liaison and support with Parish Councils and communities who are negatively affected by their promotion activities. For example, intense visitor numbers at honeypot and other popular destinations, and large scale outdoor events.
- 4.8 **Recommendation 7:** For CDC to request greater on-site management by Yorkshire Dales National Park officers e.g. park rangers, to manage the large numbers of visitors at outdoor events and during key times when numbers are particularly high.
- 4.9 **Recommendation 8:** To request that Business Support promote where possible, the recommendations of this report to stakeholders (e.g. business sector, charity sector, event organisers).

4.10 **Recommendation 9:** For CDC to hand over to the new unitary authority the work that is already being done to promote greener travel plans and sustainable travel in the district. To continue to lobby for better public transport networks within the district.

## **5.0 Monitoring arrangements**

5.1 Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Select Committee's recommendations will apply.

5.2 The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a response to the recommendations.

5.3 Following this the Select Committee will determine any further monitoring that is required. This will be in addition to the standard bi-annual monitoring of all Select Committee recommendations.

## **6.0 Reports and Publications Submitted / Considered**

6.1 The following information was submitted / considered by the Select Committee Working Group:

- Written submissions from 8 Parishes and 1 Town Council
- 22 Parish responses to Impact of Tourism Survey
- Written evidence from Peak District National Park and Dartmoor National Park
- Written evidence from 1 long established local business

## **7.0 Dates of Meetings**

7.1 The following meetings of the Select Committee Working Group took place:

- 13 October 2021 and 12 January 2022 – Parishes and Skipton Town Council
- 20 October 2021 - Welcome to Yorkshire
- 17 November 2021 – Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
- 22 December 2021 -Emergency Services
- 16 February 2022 – Council Services

7.2 The following Officers attended meetings of the Select Committee Working Group:

- Alice Fox, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager
- David Smith, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer