

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

25 July 2006

NORTH YORKSHIRE SUB REGIONAL TOURISM REVIEW**Purpose of report**

To update members on progress in relation to the new Tourism agenda in North Yorkshire; and to inform members about the Tourism Action plan for the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Area Tourism Partnership (ATP)

Strategic Planning Framework

Information and recommendations contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework: -

- **National Park Management Plan**

UE4 Understanding and Enjoyment should spread beyond the NP boundary to regional, national and international audiences.

UE5 promoting understanding and enjoyment of the national park and its special qualities will be most successful when as many people as possible are involved.

UE6 more users do not have to mean more problems, increasing understanding of the national park encourages users to change how they act.

- **Best Value Performance Plan**

Provide accessible high quality information and services that stimulate interest, encourage responsible behaviour and so help as many people as possible to enjoy the special qualities of the national park

Sustainable Tourism is currently a priority B programme and the Joint Promotions Initiative (JPI) is an Authority approved partnership.

Background

At the Authority meeting in November 2005, members considered a paper, which highlighted the changes to the way in which tourism was to be managed in North Yorkshire (the sub region) These changes have come about as a result of a national review, which resulted in a government decision to give the Regional Development Agencies (RDA's) an increased responsibility for tourism. As a result Yorkshire Forward commissioned a programme of research and consultation which has led to the establishment of three Area Tourism Partnerships in the sub region. These ATP's are –

- York
- Moor and Coast
- Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate

The National Park Authority has been involved in a tourism partnership for a number of years, the Yorkshire Dales Joint Promotions Initiative (JPI) which members will be familiar with. The new ATP arrangements are a logical development of this partnership.

At their meeting in November 2005 the Authority considered an outline business plan for the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate ATP. The final version of this business plan was submitted to Yorkshire Forward for consideration in January 2006 and a draft contract agreeing the terms of the business plan was received in July 2006. This is currently being discussed, agreed and signed off on behalf of the partnership by the contracting Authority, Craven District Council.

In May 2006, following a recommendation by the Authority, Mr Macare was selected to represent the NPA on the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate ATP Board. At the first meeting of the board Mr Macare was elected as Chair and two private sector representatives were elected to share the Vice Chair position. These are Stuart Gill, Newby Hall and Chris Fowler, National Trust, Fountain Abbey.

In May 2006 a series of three workshops were held for tourism businesses and stakeholders to identify the priorities for the ATP and the tourism industry through to 2010.

Next Steps

The output of the workshops have been pulled together to form the draft 'Tourism Action Plan', which is attached as an appendix. This draft was considered by the Area Tourism Partnership Board in June 2006 a number of minor amendments have been made in light of this and a final version of the Plan will be submitted to Yorkshire Forward this month.

The issues identified in the Tourism Action Plan, are set out under the following main headings:-

- Business Engagement
- Product development
- Marketing
- Visitor Information
- Visitor Management
- Research and Data Intelligence

The first priorities for the Area Tourism Partnership are:

1. The development of strong and effective engagement with tourism businesses
2. The development and implementation of a marketing plan for the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate

This is a plan for the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate and not just for the Area Tourism Partnership, and as such it is intended that topic working groups will be formed to take on responsibility for certain areas within the action plan, thereby involving a wider range of people in specialist areas, and spreading the load. In this way it is hoped that there will be more opportunities for people to become involved with the Area Tourism Partnership.

Conclusion

The tourism action plan is a key document in providing the basis for partnership working. It will also provide the foundation for a programme of planned actions for the Area Tourism Partnership and will be used to attract additional investment from the private sector and funding bodies such as the Regional Development Agency.

The formation of the Area Tourism Partnership and the creation of the Tourism Action Plan, provides the National Park Authority with further opportunities to work with key regional influencers and will further develop the work of the Dales Tourism Forum and the Yorkshire Dales Joint Promotions Initiative in raising the profile of tourism in economic and environmental terms within the Yorkshire Dales.

RECOMMENDATION

That members note the Tourism Action Plan.

Julie Barker
Sustainable Tourism Manager

5th July 2006

Appendix – Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Tourism Action Plan (Draft)

*Previous papers -North Yorkshire Sub-Regional Tourism Review, NPA November 2005
North Yorkshire Sub-Regional Tourism Review, NPA March 2006*

YORKSHIRE DALES

&

HARROGATE

**TOURISM ACTION PLAN
(DRAFT)**

2006 – 2010

Prepared by the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Area Tourism Partnership

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Tourism Action Plan?

The purpose of the Action Plan is to identify the key themes and priorities for the management, development and marketing of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area as a quality visitor destination. The Action Plan, which has been prepared in consultation with the many public, private and voluntary sector organisations who are involved and contribute towards the creation and promotion of the tourism product, aims to bring together all current activity, future aspirations and priorities in order to determine the future direction of tourism across the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area. In addition to establishing the context for future growth and development, the Action Plan is about providing a catalyst for co-ordinating action in order to make the most of existing resources, attracting new investment and achieving better results.

1.2 Why is the Tourism Action Plan Important?

The Tourism Action Plan (TAP) is an important document in providing the basis for partnership working and seeks to build commitment to common priorities and an agreed programme of action.

The Action Plan looks to recognise and build on the strengths, opportunities and distinctiveness of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area. The rationale of the Action Plan is to:

- Identify and agree priorities for the development of the visitor economy of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area.
- Look at the development of the visitor economy of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area as a visitor destination.
- Assist the future development of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Area Tourism Partnership.
- Link activities at a local level with sub-regional, regional and national initiatives.

1.3 The Area Tourism Partnership and the tourism support structure

The responsibility for producing the Tourism Action Plan has been taken on by the newly formed Area Tourism Partnership (ATP) for the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate. A non-statutory, self-managing public and private sector partnership, the role of the Area Tourism Partnership is to provide an integrated approach to co-ordinate and drive forward the development of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area as a quality, sustainable tourism destination by enhancing the visitor experience and exceeding their expectations whilst maximising the economic contribution of tourism for the benefit of the community and the environment.

The Area Tourism Partnership builds on an excellent track record of partnership working led by the Dales Tourism Forum and the Yorkshire Dales Joint Promotions Initiative

(JPI). Formed in 1996, the Joint Promotions Initiative was a groundbreaking marketing initiative focused on promoting the Yorkshire Dales as a single geographical entity. The Joint Promotions Initiative has been frequently cited as a good example of local authorities working together and pooling resources to achieve a common objective.

Yorkshire Forward initiated a review of how tourism was supported across the region in response to being given strategic responsibility for tourism in April 2003.

The review concluded that there was widespread concern across the tourism industry that the current support structures were inadequate to deliver the services in terms of the support and promotion that the industry would like to see. In particular, concerns were raised regarding confusion over the roles of the currently established organisations and the belief that there was some duplication of activities. It was therefore recommended that in order to address these concerns a new, clearer structure for tourism in the region was needed:

- Yorkshire Forward to lead on the strategic development of tourism in the region.
- Yorkshire Tourist Board to have primary responsibility for national and international marketing campaigns to the leisure and business markets, development of the Yorkshire brand, research and intelligence, visitor information and e-business strategy.

The review also recommended that this new structure should be supported by sub-regional organisations (Area Tourism Partnerships) to undertake the role of:

- Facilitating and encouraging product development
- Encouraging high standards of visitor management
- Lead and co-ordinate promotion of their respective area/destination
- Promoting innovation and collaboration
- Engagement with the tourism industry
- Promoting quality – of product, service delivery and visitor experience

The Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Area Tourism Partnership was formed following extensive consultation with key players in the industry from both the private and public sector within the Districts of Craven and Richmondshire and Harrogate Borough. It was commonly agreed that the preferred option to lead the co-ordination and delivery of tourism services with the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area was through the development of the existing partnership approach by:

- Merging the successful and high profile Yorkshire Dales Joint Promotions Initiative and the Dales Tourism Forum
- Expand the role of the existing partnership to encompass the whole of Harrogate Borough
- Integrating more closely the activities of individual partners, and
- Involving the private sector in setting and delivering the tourism agenda.

An Executive Board, comprising of private and public sector members directs the Area Tourism Partnership. The Operational Working Group, which is made up of Tourism Officers from the local authority partners, including the Yorkshire Tourist Board is responsible for operational and day-to-day delivery matters supports the Executive Board.

The private sector will also be invited to become actively involved in the work of the Area Tourism Partnership through a series of “topic working groups” to look at specific areas of work contained in the Action Plan.

A vital component of the Area Tourism Partnership is the Delivery Hub, comprising of a Partnership Co-ordinator and other dedicated personnel, which, in addition to acting as a point of contact is responsible for the provision of services to the industry.

The Area Tourism Partnership as a whole is responsible for securing the delivery of the Tourism Action Plan.

The Area Tourism Partnership cannot, of course, deliver the whole Action Plan itself because it is concerned with actions of many organisations and businesses that make up the tourism sector. The Executive Board therefore trusts that the industry and other organisations will give their backing and active support for this, the first Tourism Action Plan as a blueprint for tourism development in the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area.

2. Strategic Context

The Tourism Action Plan does not stand-alone. It fits into a framework of strategy for the Yorkshire and Humber region and sub-region of York and North Yorkshire. The most important and relevant documents are as follows.

2.1 Regional Economic Strategy (RES)

The Regional Economic Strategy recognises that tourism is already a significant contributor to the region’s economy, but has the potential to achieve so much more. The Strategy also acknowledges that tourism is an essential ingredient of any renaissance visions and long-term development plans. Whilst tourism interventions are embedded across the Strategy, but in particular fits with the renaissance approach to transforming the region’s rural areas (Objective 6).

The Regional Economic Strategy provides the overall direction for tourism, which is fully detailed and actioned through the region’s “Strategic Framework for the Visitor Economy”. Together these address both organic growth of the existing tourism product as well as new product development.

2.2 Strategic Framework for the Visitor Economy

Produced by Yorkshire Forward, the Strategic Framework for the Visitor Economy sets a target for the region to increase the value of tourism earnings by 5% per annum (from £4.2 billion in 2003 to £5.9 billion by 2010). It sets objectives and targets for progress in a number of areas with specific roles for the Area Tourism Partnerships:

Priority	Role of the Area Tourism Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainable Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate principles of Sustainable Tourism into Tourism Action Plans and into visitor management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Innovation and Product Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting role to Yorkshire Forward and the Yorkshire Tourist Board, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality and Quality of Place to achieve increases in visitor satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor feedback from Visitor Satisfaction surveys and use to inform priorities for sub-regional investment planning process ▪ Promote adoption of quality assurance by all businesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business support and workforce skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting role to Business Link on business support, and to the Yorkshire Tourist Board on skills training

Priority	Role of the Area Tourism Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Information Base and Market Intelligence 	Work with the Yorkshire Tourist Board to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a region-wide visitor satisfaction survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visitor Information 	Work with the Yorkshire Tourist Board to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achieve DMS inter-operability across the region and with national platform ▪ Develop the e-commerce platform ▪ Agree appropriate telephone support service ▪ Implement regional tourism information strategy ▪ Agree data management protocols and manage data collection to agreed standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marketing 	Support the Yorkshire Tourist Board to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop the potential of the domestic market targeting high spending visitors ▪ Grow the contribution of business tourism, identifying gaps in provision and investment priorities ▪ Develop a portfolio of brands that are consistent with and support the regional image; engage stakeholders in application of these brands Support Yorkshire Forward and the Yorkshire Tourist Board to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop events as a generator of business and profile

2.3 **Bold Vision, Bright Future:** the Regional Marketing Strategy

Produced by the Yorkshire Tourist Board for the period 2006-2010, the Regional Marketing Strategy provides a framework for tourism marketing. The landscape of tourism promotion has changed markedly over the last 3 to 5 years as regional development agencies have assumed responsibilities and new destination management organisations at regional, sub-regional and city level have become active. Considerably more resources are now being deployed in destination marketing. The promotion of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate sits within a Yorkshire context with the Yorkshire Tourist Board having around £2.8 million to spend building the Yorkshire brand and marketing the region.

The key messages of the Regional Marketing Strategy are:

- Marketing spend must be targeted where it will achieve the best return on investment
- Development of a set of compelling and consistent destination brands with emotional appeal is essential; Yorkshire is the lead brand to be further strengthened, but a number of sub-regional brands that have positive recognition should also be developed further
- There will be high profile domestic leisure campaigns to strengthen awareness of both Yorkshire and other destination brands, and to develop themes attractive to target markets
- Day visit campaigns will be implemented at a sub-regional level
- A Customer Relationship Management and data strategy will be implemented at a regional level
- Customer fulfilment channels must be user-friendly and streamlined to allow the customer to make a booking in as few steps as possible from initial interest.
- Special interest and travel trade promotion will be undertaken at regional and sub-regional level as appropriate

2.4 Sub-Regional Investment Plan for York and North Yorkshire

The York and North Yorkshire Partnership is currently in the process of preparing for a new Sub-regional Investment Plan and has produced a Strategic Economic Assessment – First thoughts towards the new Sub-Regional Investment Plan. The emerging objectives are to:

- Foster economic diversification which does not damage the sub-region's built and natural features
- Encourage creative, diverse and low impact enterprises including new start-up businesses which provide employment opportunities and contribute to meeting local needs
- Help businesses to be competitive, skilled, innovative

On tourism the Strategic Economic Assessment sees the challenge to secure the future competitiveness of the industry and to determine the relationship between work on tourism and the development of culture as an economic driver.


2.5 The Cultural Prospectus for York and North Yorkshire

Prepared jointly by local authorities, the National Park Authorities and cultural agencies across the sub-region, the Cultural Prospectus for York and North Yorkshire identifies three 'transformational themes', which are recognised will have a major economic as well as cultural impact. The themes are:

- Festivals and Events – to increase visitor spend over 5 years by £10.5m per annum, support inward investment by improving the quality of life and transform the cultural brand of North Yorkshire.
- Heritage Landscapes – to change the face of the cultural offer using heritage, by building on existing excellent heritage assets, developing new attractions of

international standing, building cultural quarters to develop contemporary cultural and broaden market appeal

- Outdoor Adventure – developing cultural and environmental assets for sustainable outdoor recreation, improving the quality of provision and partnership working and addressing the obstacles to participation such as fragmented marketing, poor transport coordination and outdated facilities

The environments of the National Parks, coast and York are seen as great assets for promoting sustainable tourism opportunities across the North Yorkshire sub-region. Cycle tourism has been identified as a key economic opportunity for the sub-region and the **Cycle Tourism Strategy for North Yorkshire and York** will provide the catalyst for the Area Tourism Partnerships to capitalise on the opportunities presented and to work collectively across the sub-region to deliver the key actions in this Strategy. 

2.6 The Local Context

There are a number of local strategies and policy documents, which strongly feature tourism as a key economic driver, and therefore, are of relevance to the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Area Tourism Partnership and link with the key themes and priorities of the Area Tourism Plan. These documents include:

- Tourism Strategy for Craven
- Harrogate District Tourism Strategy
- Richmondshire Tourism Strategy
- The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Integrated Access Strategy

3. The Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Visitor Economy

3.1 Overview

Tourism is vital to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area, and is predicted to be the area's fastest growing industry over the next five years (to 2010).

Independent assessments on the value and volume of tourism activity within the Yorkshire Dales concluded that in 2004, the area attracted 1.4million staying visitors and an estimated 8.2million day leisure visitors. Collectively, these visitors spent £417million, supporting the employment of 10,500 people (STEAM Report 2004).

In 2003, the value of visitor spend in the Yorkshire Dales represented approximately 6.5% of tourism earnings in the Yorkshire region.

The tourism industry of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate comprises a diverse range of business types and sizes, which are either classified as being directly or indirectly dependent upon tourism and leisure activity, such as accommodation establishments, pubs and restaurants, retail establishments, service industries, petrol stations and transport operators. A high proportion of these businesses are independent small to medium-sized enterprises that, in isolation, have little profile in the market place.

Furthermore, all these businesses attract and benefit from visitor and resident spend, and form components of the Yorkshire Dales tourism product.

3.2 Reasons for Visiting

A recent survey conducted by the Yorkshire Tourist Board found that when asked to name their top tourist destination in Yorkshire for a weekend way, shortbreak or holiday, the Yorkshire Dales was the third most mentioned destination. Across the country, the Yorkshire Dales' principal competitors for top rural destination were the Lake District and the Peak District.

In order to understand why the Yorkshire Dales is the most popular rural destination in the region, we need to establish their attitudes and perceptions of the existing and non-visitors to the Yorkshire Dales.

3.2.1 Attitudes and Perceptions of the Yorkshire Dales:

Independent research conducted to gain an understanding of the attitudes towards and perceptions of the Yorkshire Dales amongst "existing visitors " and "non-visitors" found that nearly everybody had very positive perceptions of and strong emotional associations with the area.

The Yorkshire Dales was liked because it was seen as unspoilt, more so than other areas of the country. The scenery and landscape was believed to be some of the most diverse, beautiful and dramatic in the country, and therefore seen to be one of the unique features of the area.

The heritage and history of the Yorkshire Dales was also identified as being another key feature of the area which drew visitors back time and time again.

Respondents felt that one of the key strengths of the area was that it was so diverse in every way, ranging from activities available to the scenery and countryside. It was felt that the Yorkshire Dales catered for many different tastes and desires and as such, could appeal to a very wide audience.

Respondents talked positively about “the whole package” in that they could potter around in traditional unspoilt villages and market towns, or they could stay in cosy pubs and bed and breakfast or they could go for long, tough walks, or drive through fantastic countryside.

It was the scenery; “unspoiltness” and diversity of the Yorkshire Dales that visitors felt made the area stand out over and above other United Kingdom competitor destinations.

The Yorkshire Dales was felt to be a fantastic place to relax and get away from everything.

One of the major selling points of the area was considered to be “discovery”; visitors finding their favourite places within the Dales. This often involved finding a favourite “base” to return to again and again, and go looking for new “secrets” to discover each time they returned to the Dales.

Visitors said that they felt welcome to the area, and found the local people to be friendly and helpful. Many respondents felt that the friendliness of the people was one of the major attractions of the area.

3.2.2 Activities

The following table shows the type of activities undertaken by visitors during their stay in the Yorkshire Dales:

Activity	2004	2005
Sightseeing by Car	85%	82%
Sightseeing by foot	62%	65%
Eating Out	74%	77%
Visiting Events and Festivals	21%	25%
Shopping (Food and Drink)	67%	54%
Shopping (Souvenirs)	64%	58%
Walking casually	53%	66%
Hiking	11%	14%
Visiting Attractions	54%	57%
Excursions to Other Destinations	39%	45%
Cycling on the Road	2%	2%
Mountain Biking	1%	1%
Horse Riding	2%	2%
Other	10%	5%

Source: Yorkshire Dales Official Holiday Guide 2005 – Conversion Research

3.3 Value and Volume of Tourism

In terms of wealth, the tourism industry is a vital part of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate economy.

The following table summarises the value of spend in comparison to the volume by category of visitor.

	Total Spend		Visitor Numbers		Visitor Days	
	£000s	%	000's	%	000's	%
Serviced Accommodation	80,833	19.4	685	7.1	1,160	8.9
Self-Catering Accommodation	106,840	25.6	517	5.4	3,060	23.3
Staying with Friends and Relatives	22,235	5.3	192	2.0	699	5.3
Total – Staying Visitors	209,908	50.3	1,393	14.5	4,919	37.5
Day Visitor	207,028	49.4	8,194	85.5	8,194	62.5
TOTAL	416,936	100	9,587	100	13,113	100

Note: The above figures relate to the calendar year 2004

Source: Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM)

The above figures illustrate that whilst day visitors represent the greatest percentage of visitors to the Yorkshire Dales, their contribution to the economy is significantly lower compared to that of staying visitors.

The following table illustrates the average spend per aspect of a trip to the Yorkshire Dales followed by an average total spend per trip figure.

Expenditure per Group per Trip	Average				
	1999 £	2001 £	2003 £	2004 £	2005 £
Accommodation	188	172	161	149	174
Eating and Drinking	91	93	78	86	97
Entertainment and Attractions	33	35	35	77	44
Shopping	57	57	60	61	70
Transport	46	50	44	46	52
Total Spend per Trip	415	407	378	419	437

Note: Group means 2.5 adults

Source: Yorkshire Dales Official Holiday Guide 2005: Conversion Study Research

3.4 Employment

In 2004, it is estimated that tourism spend supported the equivalent of 4,288 full-time jobs. A breakdown of these jobs by activity is showed in the following table.

Activity	Full-time Equivalent Jobs
Direct Employment:	
Accommodation	4,224
Food and Drink	1,659
Entertainment and Attractions	752
Shopping	1,835
Transport	380
Total Direct Employment	8,851
Indirect Employment	1,662
Total	10,513

Source: Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM)

3.5 Geographical Area of Coverage

The Action Plan covers the area defined as the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate, which encompasses the complete Districts of Craven, Richmondshire and Harrogate Borough, plus those parts of South Lakeland and Eden, which lie east of the M6, A685 and south of the A66 and that part of Hambleton District, which lies to the west of the A1.

The defined area takes in the entire Yorkshire Dales National Park, the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and encompasses part of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding National Beauty.

4. Key Issues and Priorities

4.1 How the Priorities were identified

A series of three workshops were held in May 2006 for tourism businesses and stakeholders to identify and prioritise the actions that the new Tourism Partnership in particular, and the industry in general, needs to address so that the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area continues to be a successful destination for business and leisure tourism. This Action Plan is based on the priorities identified by the three industry workshops and on analysis undertaken by the local authority partners.

The issues and challenges facing the tourism industry in the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area over the period of the Action Plan have been analysed into six areas for action. These are:

- **Business Engagement**
- **Product Development**
- **Marketing**
- **Visitor Information**
- **Visitor Management**
- **Research and Data Intelligence**

For the Area Tourism Partnership itself there are two priority areas for the next three years. Firstly the development of **strong and effective engagement with tourism businesses** and secondly the **development and implementation of a marketing plan for the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate**.

It is the intention of the Area Tourism Partnership to establish 'topic working groups' to lead on specific areas of action identified in the Action Plan. In the first instance the priority will be to get a Marketing topic working group established to start preparing the marketing plan for 2008.

The private sector will also be invited to become actively involved in the work of the Area Tourism Partnership through a series of "topic working groups" to look at specific areas of work contained in the Action Plan.

4.2 Business Engagement

Businesses are at the front line in delivering products and experiences to visitors. The workshops identified the importance of engaging with businesses in order to achieve many of the necessary actions under product development, marketing, visitor information and research. A key area for the Area Tourism Partnership is therefore to establish effective two-way communications and gain the support and participation of tourism businesses.

The Joint Promotions Initiative had a good record of working with businesses in the Yorkshire Dales on marketing. In Harrogate the success of business tourism is in part due to good relationships with member businesses, the hotel sector in particular. Engagement however has tended to be focused primarily on promotion.

The Area Tourism Plan will develop an Engagement and Communications Strategy, fundamental to which will be the registration scheme for all businesses involved in the visitor economy. This will provide the database for the Area Tourism Partnership and will allow the Partnership to develop an efficient Customer Relationship Management system to track its communications, and to promote its portfolio of products and services to businesses.

The need for collaboration among businesses themselves came out strongly at all three workshops. So the Area Tourism Partnership will facilitate a programme of events to encourage networking and joint working. The aim will be for businesses to feel part of the new partnership and to identify opportunities to work together, share ideas, information and good practice.

Appropriate support and advice for tourism businesses, particularly smaller businesses, emerged as a real need. The Area Tourism Partnership will be a first point of help and be a source of knowledge – the keeper of the library of information and the signpost to other organisations and support. The Area Tourism Partnership can influence the help that is provided; specifically, businesses identified in the workshops the need for assistance to make a real improvement in customer care standards.

4.3 Marketing

The Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate is fortunate in having two strong brands with high awareness and appeal to visitors. However there is a new impetus behind the promotional efforts of other historically less-successful destinations while the competition arising from the growth in low cost airlines to domestic and overseas destinations, means that the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate cannot be complacent and assume visitors will simply continue to turn up.

Marketing and promotion is an area where the Area Tourism Partnership will be directly active. It will need to be smart in how it works with the Yorkshire Tourist Board, other partners and agencies with their large marketing spend and in how the Area Tourism Partnership deploys its more modest resources. Attention will need to be given to how the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate will be marketed to particular audiences, whether separately or as two propositions, how each can capitalise on association with the other, and how new tactics and media can be better utilised. The priority therefore is for the Area Tourism Partnership to **prepare a marketing plan** for 2008 onwards. (Because of lead in times 2007 will be a year of transition, and 2008 will be the first full year of implementation).

4.4 Product Development

The Yorkshire Dales has an outstanding natural environment. It is equally fortunate to have in the Dales towns and villages and Harrogate an appealing built environment. Product development therefore needs to be primarily aimed at what exists and present it better to the market. This will partly be about improving quality standards and focusing effort on quality products and services and partly about developing new 'packages' for the market. There was a consensus in the workshops about the need to recognise and celebrate excellence, both to acknowledge the efforts of those providing such a product or service and to motivate others by giving a clear message to the tourism industry that the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area must be about quality. One of the best ways of delivering this was thought to be an Awards Scheme, which could be used in promotion

to visitors reinforcing the quality image of the area as well as giving direct commercial benefits to the award winners.

It is a priority for tourism growth to be sustainable in the sense of being sympathetic to, and not conflicting with, the high quality environment of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate. This leads to two overarching principles for product development – it needs to be about **encouraging more spend and not about greater numbers** and there needs to be efforts to encourage the use of **public transport** (which links also to visitor management priorities).

4.5 Visitor Information

Providing the right information for visitors when they need it is a challenge for any destination. Tourist Information Centres (TICs) are the most visible part of tourism support and refer visitors directly to businesses. Not surprisingly many tourism businesses consider Tourist Information Centres to be the most important marketing tool an area can have. Tourist Information Centres however are costly in terms of staff and premises, and are less about attracting new business than looking after existing visitors (important though that is). It is clearly a priority to take a hard look at the cost, viability and operation of the Tourist Information Centre network across the area, especially in light of the new ways in which information can be provided.

Another priority is to develop use of the web, the destination management system, on-line booking, Customer Relationship Management and 24 hour access to information. Currently there are two Destination Management Systems (DMS) and on-line booking systems (Nexus and Integra) being used in the area. It is vital that there is absolute inter-operability between these systems. If this does not happen the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate will be placed at a significant disadvantage compared to other areas.

4.6 Visitor Management

For the purposes of this Action Plan we are defining Visitor Management as those things, which relate not only to how visitors use the area and its facilities, but also to the infrastructure which they use, and public realm investment and services provided by local authorities. In order to ensure sustainability, and avoid any detrimental impact on both the natural and built environment, it is important to address how visitors access and move around the area. The impact of tourist traffic on rural roads, small villages and busy towns needs to be considered and managed as well as it can be.

The quality of the public realm, including the care and maintenance of towns and villages, has an impact on the visitor experience, which is often under-estimated. Tourists are attracted to places, which are beautiful, well-kept and cared for, as well as having the right facilities. Quality of place is a key role for public sector and for local authorities in particular. In recognition of this Yorkshire Forward is encouraging local authorities to champion good practice in place management and the Area Tourism Partnership will advocate a planned approach to good quality visitor management.

4.7 Research and Data Intelligence

Good research and data is highly important to ensure that the Area Tourism Partnership and the tourism industry are taking the right direction to meet the needs of the market. A range of research and intelligence is already available from work done by the Joint

Promotions Initiative, the local authorities across the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area, and at regional level by Yorkshire Futures, the Yorkshire Tourist Board and Yorkshire Forward. Going forward the Yorkshire Tourist Board has a substantial resource deployed in research and data gathering, which will be valuable for the Area Tourism Partnership. This means that the local research required can be tailored to fill the particular gaps in knowledge. It is important firstly to establish exactly what research already exists and understand the Yorkshire Tourist Board's research programme. It is important also that research is focused on what we need to know in order to inform action rather than on that which is simply nice to know.

Different types of research are required. In the main these will be:

- Research to monitor and evaluate partnership activity – this will be a local responsibility
- Research to find things out about the product, the industry or the market – some of this may be undertaken regionally with more specific research needed to be commissioned by the Area Tourism Partnership
- Monitoring of the visitor numbers, spend and economic impact

A further requirement is dissemination of research and data. Much of the information gathered will be of interest to businesses; the challenge is to disseminate this research in ways and formats that are useful and accessible. Within the workshops the request for 'bite-sized' chunks was unanimous.

4.8 Resources and Sustainability

Yorkshire Forward has awarded the Area Tourism Partnership funding to cover its transitional and core operational costs from 2006 to March 2010. This award also provides funding for selected new areas of activity in respect of business engagement and research and data intelligence and will therefore be used to support the direct delivery of part of the Action Plan.

The Area Tourism Partnership also has available a core budget of £46,600 per annum provided by the local authority partners to fund agreed areas of actions contained in the Action Plan. The local authority partners will also support the delivery of the Action Plan through the investment they already make in areas such as visitor management, operation of Tourism Information Centres, marketing and product development, etc.

A major contributor to the delivery of the Action Plan will be the tourism industry itself, through investment in their individual businesses, marketing their own business/service, developing new products and services, acting as a point of contact for the visitor, etc.

A priority for the Area Tourism Partnership is therefore to identify and attract new investment to support the development and delivery of new products and contribute to the future activities of the Area Tourism Partnership, in order for the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate to achieve its ambition of being the top rural tourist destination in England.

5. Programme Summary



The Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Area Tourism Partnership can enable, facilitate and deliver a range of actions. Local authorities and tourism businesses will play an equally important role in ensuring the priority actions are delivered, and many of the actions identified will be led by others rather than by the Area Tourism Partnership. This table summarises the actions to be taken, starting with the two priority areas for the Area Tourism Partnership itself.

5.1. Highest Priority Actions


	Lead	Partners' Role
Business Engagement		
<p>Development of an Engagement and Communications Strategy to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment and operation of the Area Tourism Partnership registration scheme for businesses ▪ Use of the existing Yorkshire Dales Customer Relationship Management system ▪ Development of an events and networking programme to disseminate knowledge and provide opportunities for co-learning and collaboration ▪ Devise a programme of familiarisation trips to improve product knowledge of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area among businesses 	<p>Area Tourism Partnership</p>	<p>Businesses and local authorities to assist by providing data and with the organisation of events and familiarisation trips</p>
<p>Integrate business advice and support services which would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate advice and support for tourism businesses and specific help on business planning and investment funding ▪ Attracting and retaining staff and improving the image of careers in the tourism industry ▪ Skills training ▪ Developing and delivering customer care for tourism businesses building on 'Welcome Host' 	<p>Business Link</p> <p>Springboard/ YTB</p> <p>YTB</p> <p>YTB</p>	<p>Area Tourism Partnership to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a 'library' of tools and information for use by businesses ▪ Signpost - advice on who to talk to about what ▪ Advise on how to tap into what already exists

	Lead	Partners' Role
Marketing		
<p>Re-evaluate the Yorkshire Dales brand to incorporate the Harrogate brand, which will address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The relationship between the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate brands ▪ The image of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area ▪ How the Yorkshire Dales logo can best be used 	<p>Area Tourism Partnership</p>	
<p>Preparation of a Marketing Plan for 2008 to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion of locations within the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate brand area and how visitors can best be moved around ▪ How the image or images of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate should be communicated with consistent messages, look and feel across all marketing activity by the Area Tourism Partnership and others in the visitor economy and beyond (including an audit of what current marketing activity there is promoting the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate) ▪ Use of the Customer Relationship Management system, new media and the role of print ▪ Public Relations ▪ Link with marketing activities managed by the Yorkshire Tourist Board ▪ Approaches that best serve repeat visitors and best acquire new visitors ▪ Identify themes with most appeal to visitors ▪ Integration of environmental messages into marketing ▪ The role of local produce in supporting the marketing of the destination and vice versa 	<p>Area Tourism Partnership</p>	<p>Consultation with partners and stakeholders in preparation of the Marketing Plan</p>
<p>Delivery of 2006 and 2007 marketing activity</p>	<p>Area Tourism Partnership</p>	<p>Delivery of certain marketing activities as agreed within the existing Marketing Plans covering the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate.</p>






5. 2. Other Areas for Action

	Lead	Partners' Role
Product Development		
Carry out an audit of product development needs with reference to current and emerging market requirements and expectations	Area Tourism Partnership	
<p>Improve the provision and quality of the tourism product by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing a quality awards scheme recognising and promoting excellence  ▪ Promoting the use and value of quality assurance schemes ▪ Assessing the barriers to businesses participating in quality assurance schemes ▪ Increasing private investment in new attractions ▪ Improvements to existing attractions ▪ Development and investment in year round facilities and attractions ▪ Develop fully accessible, all purpose trails ▪ Delivery of the Cycle Strategy for North Yorkshire and York insofar as it relates to the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area 	<p>Area Tourism Partnership</p> <p>Attraction owners (public and private sector)</p> <p>Local authority </p>	<p>Area Tourism Partnership, local authorities and other agencies to support through studies, assistance with market research, signposting to grant-aid</p>
<p>Development of new high quality packages for the market (all of which will relate closely to the Marketing Plan), such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Culture and cultural events ▪ Outdoor activities ▪ Heritage and landscapes ▪ Itineraries and trails 	Area Tourism Partnership	Local authorities and private sector as the promoters of events etc and destination managers

	Lead	Partners' Role
Visitor Information		

<p>Development of an e-business Strategy, which will address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enabling inter-operability between the existing Destination Management and on-line booking systems (Nexus and Integra) ▪ Effective use of Customer Relationship Management systems ▪ Development of 24 hour access to information ▪ Development of web-based systems 	<p>Area Tourism Partnership</p>	<p>Local authorities are stakeholders in current ICT systems</p> <p>The Yorkshire Tourist Board is responsible for the achievement of inter-operability and the development of e-commerce platform</p>
<p>Development of a long-term Visitor Information Strategy which addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The requirements of visitors – what they need and when they need it ▪ An assessment of what visitor information already exists; any overlap and duplication; quality; and any gaps in provision ▪ How to achieve better co-ordination, consistency and quality control of information ▪ The role, cost and viability of Tourist Information Centres and tourist information points ▪ Use of 24 hour access to information ▪ The role of businesses as information points (linked to business engagement priority) 	<p>Area Tourism Partnership to co-ordinate review</p>	<p>Local authorities are the prime providers of visitor information and must participate in review;</p> <p>The Yorkshire Tourist Board is responsible for development of visitor contact centre provision</p>
<p>Development of an immediate Visitor Information Improvement Plan which will address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-ordination of service provision to ensure a consistent standard, quality and type of service across the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area ▪ Smarter provision of core support services 	<p>Area Tourism Partnership to co-ordinate</p>	<p>Local authorities are responsible from the management and operation of the Tourist Information Centre network.</p>

Visitor Management	Lead	Partners' Role
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<p>Establish a planned approach to good quality visitor management to cover: </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of parking ▪ Improvements to the use, provision and promotion of public transport ▪ Encouraging day visits by bus or train ▪ Signage into and around the area ▪ Pedestrian safety and comfort; linking areas within towns ▪ Development and improvement of the rights of way network, footpaths and trails ▪ Avoiding the urbanisation of villages ▪ Links from the airports 	<p>Local authorities</p>	<p>Area Tourism Partnership to act as a consultee and provide advice on good practice in place management</p> <p>Transport undertakers  funders to consider visitor requirements and promote/incentivise use of public transport</p>
<p>Encourage Improvements in infrastructure to achieve standards of excellence in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretation in town centres  ▪ Cleansing standards – litter bins, litter collection etc  ▪ Street furniture – seating areas etc ▪ Maintenance of public toilets ▪ Planting and floral displays  	<p>Local authorities</p>	

	Lead	Partners' Role
Research and Data		
<p>Region-wide research, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Volume and value of tourist activity ▪ Visitor satisfaction surveys ▪ Ensuring consistent and comparative data ▪ Market intelligence and trends 	<p>Yorkshire Tourist Board and Cumbria Tourist Board</p>	<p>Area Tourism Partnership, local authorities and operators/ businesses may want to buy into additional questions, such as visitor satisfaction surveys</p> <p>Yorkshire Futures is responsible for region-wide measures of economic impact</p>
<p>Research specifically for the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring and evaluation of marketing activity (linked to the effectiveness of the Marketing Plan) ▪ Trend data with regard to the volume and value of visitor activity ▪ Opportunities to convert business to leisure visitors ▪ Market research on current and new market requirements, motivations ▪ Ad-hoc research to inform the development of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area as a visitor destination ▪ Short-term trend and occupancy analysis for forecasting and tactical promotion 	<p>Area Tourism Partnership</p>	<p>The Yorkshire Tourist Board to consult the Area Tourism Partnership on its research programme to ensure complementarity of activity</p>
<p>Collection of data and dissemination of research findings and market intelligence to the tourism industry, which will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of research findings and data in easily accessible formats ▪ Establishment of systems for the collection and analysis of data from businesses 	<p>Area Tourism Partnership</p>	<p>Businesses to provide data input, such as participation of 'how's business' surveys; effectiveness of marketing campaigns, etc.</p>

5.3. Resource Development

	Lead	Partners' Role
Resources and sustainability		
Identify opportunities to attract new investment to support the development and delivery of new products and contribute to the future activities of the Area Tourism Partnership.	Area Tourism Partnership	Local authorities and other agencies to keep the Area Tourism Partnership informed of new and/or revisions to investment programmes.




6. Key Milestones

Delivery of the Action Plan will be monitored using the following milestones and target dates.

6.1 Highest Priority Actions

Priority Action	Milestone	Date to be Achieved
Business Engagement		
Development of an Engagement and Communications Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch of registration scheme for businesses 	October 2006
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achieve full operational functionality of the Yorkshire Dales Customer Relationship Management System 	March 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host a conference of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate tourism businesses 	March 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree programme of familiarisation trips to improve product knowledge of businesses 	January 2007
Integrated business advice and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Start populating the “library” of tools on the industry website (www.yorkshiredales.org/industry) 	December 2006
Marketing		
Re-evaluate the Yorkshire Dales brand to incorporate the Harrogate brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appointment of brand consultants to carryout evaluation 	September 2006
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completion of evaluation report and presentation of findings and recommendations 	January 2007
Preparation of a Marketing Plan for 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree remit and membership of the Marketing topic working group 	July 2006
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft Marketing Plan completed 	March 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalisation of Marketing Plan 	May 2007



6.2. Other Areas of Action

Priority Action	Milestone	Date to be Achieved
Product Development		
Carry out an audit of product development needs with reference to current and emerging market requirements and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree brief for the audit identifying its scope, methodology and resources needed. 	December 2006
Improve the provision and quality of the tourism product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete assessment of barriers to businesses participating in quality assurance schemes Agree remit and membership of Access and Rights of Way topic working group  	February 2007 September 2006
Visitor Information		
Development of an e-business Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of e-business consultant Receipt of initial findings and recommendations 	October 2006 December 2006
Development of a long-term Visitor Information Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of draft findings and recommendations 	September 2007
Development of an immediate Visitor Information Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree remit and membership of Information Centre topic working group Presentation of draft Improvement Plan 	September 2006 December 2006
Establish a planned approach to good quality visitor management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform the appropriate local authority departments about the Area Tourism Partnership  	September 2006 

Priority Action	Milestone	Date to be Achieved
Research and Data Intelligence		
Research specifically for the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish baseline data and mechanisms to monitor the achievement of the targets contained in the Action Plan 	July 2006
Collection of data and dissemination of research findings and market intelligence to the tourism industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of the type of data that needs collecting and disseminating ▪ Collection and dissemination system in operation 	<p>October 2006</p> <p>March 2007</p>

7. Performance Targets

The performance of the Area Tourism Partnership and the impact that the Action Plan has had upon raising the quality of the visitor experience and growing the contribution made by visitor activity to the economic, environmental and community well-being of the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate area will be assessed against the following targets:

- Increase the value of visitor spend by 2% per annum
- Increase the number of overnight stays to 1.6million over three years
- Increase the proportion of overnight stays as a proportion of all visits from 12% to 15% over three years
- 400 businesses participating in the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Registration Scheme in the first year
- 80% of eligible businesses participating in a quality assurance scheme
- 702 businesses assisted to improve their performance over three years
- Increase the number of businesses adopting the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate brand by 33% by the end of the first year
- Achieve 240,000 visits to www.yorkshiredales.org by the end of the first year
- Achieve an annual increase of 5% in the number of accommodation businesses making use of on-line booking facilities
- Increase the number of businesses implementing five environmental measures by 10% by the end of the first year 
- Increase the number of businesses participating in the Donate to the Dales scheme by 5% year on year 

Achievement of the above targets will be measured using a range of monitoring processes and analytical reports/studies, such as:

- Visitor surveys
- Economic impact assessments
- Consultation with the tourism industry and other stakeholders
- Databases