

**Response from Friends of the Dales to
Local Plan Consultation No. 6 – Land for Housing Development
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Local Plan 2023-2040
11 May 2023**

1. Headline Comment

Friends of the Dales has actively engaged in all previous five stages of the consultation on the new Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan 2023-2040, since the process began in December 2019.

Based on decades of research, we have concluded that no amount of new housing, affordable or otherwise, will keep our Dales communities alive – and will certainly do little to conserve and enhance the landscape – unless we spend at least an equal amount of energy, time and money on finding ways of bringing together businesses, councils and other partners to look across the national park and see how we can use our beautiful landscape to bring to this area jobs which are in tune with the Dales, not work against them.

We have consistently argued that the problems of rural populations cannot be resolved by focusing on one element alone. To be successful it is essential to prepare a joined-up approach to investing the limited and finite resources in rural infrastructure, health, education and housing. The most critical element should be investment in the creation of employment, without which there can be no sustainable solution. Piecemealing investment in individual components was never going to succeed. Plans so far do not include any thoughts on infrastructure, schools, shops, and most importantly jobs.

Unless there is strong joint action of the new North Yorkshire Council, Westmorland and Furness Council and the national park authority, together in a more joined-up way, we shall see the same negative results over the next twenty years as we have experienced over the last twenty. Fewer young people in the Dales, more older residents, schools and shops closing, more homes not permanently occupied.

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2. Comments drawn from our response to Consultation No. 5 Preferred Options

We made detailed responses to Consultation No. 5 Preferred Options, many of which are relevant to this subsequent consultation, which can be found here on our website - <https://friendsofthedales.org.uk/planning/planning-comments-2022-2023>.

This covered many important areas including housing sites and conditions on sale/occupancy but also other areas such the Sandford Principle, conversion of redundant farm buildings, and biodiversity net gain.

a) Targets

The target of 50 new dwellings per year, generating 850 dwellings between 2023 and 2040, should include **new build and conversions** per year.

Given that the Annual Monitoring Report (2021-2022) reports the target of 50 was comfortably exceeded (albeit following a number of under-target years), the cumulative target may be achieved before the end of the Local Plan period (2024), requiring the target to be amended downwards. We would like the Local Plan to include a statement as to over- or under-achievement of targets.

We recommend that the intention to deliver the majority of this target be amended to highlight delivery through the completion of sites with **existing planning consent**, and secondly through the development of allocated sites on the edge of larger settlements.

b) Impact on the setting of the National Park

We also recommend that any development that would adversely affect the setting of the National Park **should not be permitted**; if given permission then it should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the designated area.

c) Public transport links

As noted in our response to Consultation No. 5, we strongly support the obligation on development proposals that generate vehicle movements to contain adequate provision for connection for **public transport**. We have consulted with Dales & Bowland CIC, our subsidiary social enterprise, who have made the following general points about public transport and other factors that should influence the location and design of housing sites – comments below.

- Sites that would support the modal shift from private car to public transport, cycling and walking including footpaths and cycleways and speed restrictions
- Close to existing bus stops, bus routes, train stations, etc
- Financial support for the provision of new bus services and associated infrastructure and information as part of the development
- Sites designed for off-street parking of all cars within the curtilage of the site /properties – to prevent wider traffic and parking problems with on-street parking
- Charging points as norm
- Permeable solutions for driveways and other hard landscaping to manage surface water on site and avoid run off and problems on pavements and roadways

d) Residency and occupancy conditions

We are strongly supportive that all new housing will be restricted to principal residency only, and we suggest that it should be made clear that this is in perpetuity. We recommend that single plot sites and those with up to two new building dwellings within small settlements should be restricted to local occupancy and First Homes. We recommend that a clear and consistent definition for “principal residency” is used rather than unclear interchangeable terminology such as permanent occupancy, principal occupancy, continuous occupancy.

3. Comments on sites and allocations

Friends of the Dales is not in a position to comment in detail on all the 33 proposed sites. However, our overall comment is that sites must be small in scale; large scale allocations are inappropriate.

We have focused our attention on sites where bigger proposals have been put forward, and/or where we have been approached by residents and community groups with specific concerns. We have received a large number of statements from local residents and community groups in settlements with larger proposed schemes, including those impacting on Threshfield, Grassington, Embsay and Horton in Ribblesdale.

In general terms we support these statements and encourage the national park authority to carefully consider the concerns and suggestions from community stakeholders. We also support the response provided by Friends of the Lake District concerning sites within the Cumbria area of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

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