

**Ryedale**  
**Destination Development Plan**

**February 2020**

**Developed by Susan Briggs/The Tourism Network  
on behalf of**

**RYEDALE  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**



## 1. Introduction

This Destination Development Plan was commissioned by Ryedale District Council (RDC). A new Economic Development team is now in place at the Council, covering arts and events, business support infrastructure and tourism across the District. This Plan is part of broader strategic work and will feed into the Ryedale Visitor Strategy.

This Destination Development Plan is intended for use by RDC, Ryedale businesses and collaborative partners inside and outside Ryedale.

The key purpose of this Plan is to identify activities which can be undertaken in the short to medium term to increase the *value* of the visitor economy within Ryedale.

It is intended that the majority of the activities within this Plan should be completed within two years, with most undertaken over the next eighteen months. These are foundation activities, upon which further work will build.

## 2. Current value and volume of tourism in Ryedale

RDC recently commissioned a report '*The Economic Impact of Tourism on Ryedale 2018*'. Full details of the available research can be found on [www.ryedale.gov.uk/tourism](http://www.ryedale.gov.uk/tourism).

The following figures are key regarding visitor spend:

- 5.59 million trips were undertaken to Ryedale. Of these, 5.2 million were day trips, and 0.39 million were overnight visits.
- Accommodation occupancy levels were quite low: 51%.
- £134 million was spent by overnight visitors.
- Taking account of the multiplier effect, £318.4 million was spent in the local area.

A key priority for this Plan is to increase the **value** of tourism in Ryedale. This will be achieved by increasing the proportion of staying visitors, improving year-round occupancy levels in existing Ryedale accommodation. More staying visitors will have benefits for all visitor-facing businesses and increase spend through more attraction visits, activities undertaken, and spend on food, drink, shopping and other leisure activities.

The economic impact of an increase in overnight visitors would be considerable. It is reasonable to set a target of a 5% increase in the value of overnight visitors over the next three years. This would generate around £6.7 million additional revenue.

VisitBritain estimates that for additional revenue of £56,000 an additional job is created. On the basis of an increase of £6.7 million, 124 new jobs would be created.

The relatively modest target of a 5% increase in the value of staying visitors takes account of the fact that it can take several years to change perceptions and visit habits within an area.



It takes time to raise the profile of a destination, to create demand and ensure tourism products are relevant to a changing market place.

To achieve this target, there is a pressing need to undertake many foundation activities, outlined in this Plan. Once these are in place and collaborations are more established, it would be reasonable to expect to escalate progress and set more ambitious growth targets.

### 3. Trends in tourism

Activities within this Plan should be set within the context of current trends including:

- Increased awareness of the environment, concerns about climate change and consideration of the impact of visitors on local areas. ‘Flight-shaming’ in some countries such as in Scandinavia has led to a reduction in holidays overseas and growth in staycations and holidays in countries accessible by train.
- Increased interest in local distinctiveness (the special features and sense of place that mark out one place from another), which can be harnessed to slow down visitors, encourage them to explore each place in more detail and to stay longer, being more mindful of their impact on the host community.
- Visitors increasingly look for more in-depth experiences, opportunities to learn something different and get under the skin of a destination. Experiences are a good way to differentiate one destination from another, provide unique selling points and increase visitor spend.
- Loss of status for ‘official’ channels, official guide books and information in favour of peer-peer recommendations and user-generated online content.
- Authenticity is important. In a world full of homogenised high streets and mass production, visitors enjoy feeling more in touch with a destination, meeting real people and getting better insights into the places they visit. They need help to find and uncover these elements.
- Increased interest in well-being tourism (sometimes called ‘wellness’), mindfulness, opportunities to step back from the world and refresh through nature.
- Increased interest in outdoor challenges and active short breaks, often in small social groups. There has been a significant increase in participation levels in extreme events such as triathlons.
- Huge trend toward online bookings, particularly using agents like Booking.com. There is also a trend toward more last-minute bookings.
- More values-driven decisions about spend e.g. does it support small businesses? What is the host business’ attitude toward the environment?

- People seeking a sense of community and emotional connection – this has partly contributed to the incredible rise of Airbnb, as visitors seek an ‘insider’s view’ of a destination.
- There is an increased demand for niche visits, sometimes study visits, when participants have an opportunity to feel more part of a community or to learn lessons that can be used elsewhere. Examples of this might be volunteering on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, or studying the Slowing the Flow project in Pickering.

Recommended actions to take advantage of these trends:

- Make greater use of local distinctiveness in all marketing and product development activities
- Support businesses to develop experiences that relate to these trends
- Create curated content and social media posts that encourage more user-generated content and peer-peer recommendations

#### 4. Strategic principles

Recommended activities within the Action Plan are underpinned by these strategic principles:

- Form partnerships and collaborate to maximize use of resources & create more sustainable activity.
- Focus on activities to attract more staying visitors for maximum economic benefit, helping accommodation providers to work with attractions, activity providers, food and drink and retail businesses to offer more reasons to visit and stay longer.
- Promote the assets and brands that make the most sense to visitors. Use the attractors that work and which have larger budgets (e.g. North York Moors National Park & York) as the locator brands, and the locations and attractions within Ryedale which have the greatest resonance to attract more staying visitors. Lesser known destinations can then be developed using a themed approach.
- Support product development to enhance Ryedale’s tourism assets & attract visitors through key themes.
- Support businesses to undertake their own direct & collaborative promotional activities.

#### 5. The ‘Ryedale’ product

Some destinations fit comfortably under a single geographic umbrella and can be developed and promoted within that context. Others, like Ryedale, need to take a multi-pronged approach.

Ryedale is an administrative area and is not a recognised destination for visitors compared to its neighbours.



For this reason, it is strongly recommended that the lead promotional angle should not be 'Ryedale' per se, but its constituent parts:

- The three main market towns – Helmsley, Pickering and Malton - are key to tourism in Ryedale. Each has their own character and reputation, which can be further enhanced by additional activity and collaboration. Kirkbymoorside and Norton-on-Derwent have potential to act as additional centres, using a thematic approach.
- In addition to the market towns, Ryedale has many attractive rural villages, beautiful landscapes, woodlands and other attractions. Most of Ryedale's rural product fits within three established areas: North York Moors National Park, Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding National Beauty, and the Yorkshire Wolds. There are opportunities to develop collaborations to raise the profile of each of these areas. York offers additional context.
- The Ryedale product also fits within a number of themes, such as cycling, walking, food & drink, heritage or antiques. These are discussed in more detail below.

## 6. Promotional themes

Promotional themes offer a useful way to link together tourism products and promote well-known aspects of Ryedale alongside lesser known locations. Themes can be used to attract more off-peak business, and to create 'hooks' for social media and public relations activities. They can be used to attract visitors who may not have considered coming to Ryedale but who have a special interest they'd like to pursue.

Themes can be used as a foundation for collaborative activity, bringing together different businesses with a common interest, so they all benefit by targeting similar visitors. Promotional activities can be more cost-effective, particularly using social media, PR and direct mail, because there's a strong word of mouth effect from people with shared interests.

We looked at the overall Ryedale product and discussed key themes during the consultation workshops. These themes are outlined below. A traditional approach is to simply list the products under each theme and then present them to potential visitors using a leaflet or website, but that passive approach is less likely to generate ongoing benefits. It will be more effective to bring interested businesses and partners together to create longer term collaborations with themed cluster groups.

**For each theme, it will be necessary to:**

- Conduct a full product audit to ascertain the scope for each theme (some of this will be achieved through desk research building on previous work).
- Consider what information already exists about that theme? What gaps in provision are there? How easy is it for visitors and accommodation providers (since they will be able to promote themes to their guests) to find information and plan visits around that theme?

- Consider what is the market for that theme? Are they likely to book or get their information through any particular channels, such as specialist tour operators, websites, clubs and societies? How are they most likely to be influenced? When do they make their decisions? What does the themed cluster group need to do to increase that market?
- Identify what product development is necessary to enhance that theme? For example, does the cluster group need to work with an operator or guide to make the theme more apparent? Would it be useful to co-organise an event around that theme? What work needs to be undertaken to bring different elements and products together to make the theme more attractive and easier to book? How can accommodation providers use the theme to develop off-peak business?

It is recommended that for each theme, an informal cluster group is brought together to discuss these areas and agree an action plan.

For each of the themes, the Ryedale Tourism Officer will act as a co-ordinator and catalyst, working with tourism providers and other partners. Members of the cluster group will need to take on some of the activities, for mutual benefit.

The following is intended as guidance rather than a prescriptive method of approach, since it is important for each cluster group to have ownership of their theme. The approach is likely to vary for each theme.

Once the specific approach and action plan has been identified for each of these themes, there will be more opportunities for targeted and collaborative social media and PR activity.

Given the modest budgets and officer time available, it would be difficult to develop and promote all these themes at once. A phased approach will be necessary, acting as a catalyst on one theme before moving on to the next.

### **Walking**

With over 1400 miles of paths and tracks to explore, this is a useful unifying theme whether for longer distance walkers (Cleveland Way, Ebor Way, Yorkshire Wolds Way), those who want to explore a town trail or enjoy a shorter walk around some of Ryedale's attractive villages, perhaps focused around a café or pub in order to increase visitor spend.

Key partners for this theme will include the North York Moors National Park, National Trails Officer and Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Activities may include identifying locations where short walks could be created to increase interest in an area and lead visitors to villages or market towns to increase spend, or enhancing current information provision. Where walks and routes already exist, work could focus on ensuring they are well represented on partners' websites and encouraging accommodation providers to feature local walks.

### **Cycling and mountain biking**

This is already a strong theme with numerous providers and known locations. The market for e-bikes is growing, offering opportunities to broaden the appeal of cycling.



It would make sense to partner with the North York Moors National Park on cycling and mountain biking since they have done so much work in this area, most recently working on a cycling-friendly scheme, charter, and development of new routes. Some Ryedale businesses already participate in this and there is scope for further inclusion, particularly as there is no membership fee. The NYMNP activity includes significant support to help businesses provide suitable facilities, understand the market and collaborate with each other.

Promotional work will also involve Welcome to Yorkshire and Scarborough Borough Council. Work on this theme may take the form of more networking, support for businesses to co-promote and partner with other agencies and groups working to develop cycling tourism. Product development and marketing work might focus more on e-bikes to broaden the market for cycling tourism.

New opportunities may be presented through the proposed Malton to Pickering cycle route and North York Moors Cycleway. Further links can be made to the Cycle England project, and Ryedale Cycling Forum.

### Outdoor activities

In addition to walking and cycling, Ryedale has good horse-riding and golf products. Work is needed to assess whether these should be primary or support themes. It would be useful to enhance collaboration between golf clubs to encourage longer visits and link in accommodation providers with appropriate facilities to help increase overnight stays.

Looking at less developed themes such as horse-riding and golf, the first step for this theme will be to look at the products already available and meet with interested parties to discuss possible promotional activities. How can different providers be brought together? What opportunities might there be to create new collaborations, or are there existing activities which would benefit from more support?

### Food & Drink

This could stand alone as a theme, or be incorporated into other activity to increase spend. There are several possible angles for development of the food and drink theme, some of which could be undertaken together. For example:

- Building on the work already undertaken on TasteoftheNorthYorkMoors.com and VisitMalton to highlight good local food via the web and PR activities.
- Make food and drink part of local promotional activity, for example, developing walking routes into and out of villages and towns which start or end with a drink or meal.
- Create more collaborative marketing opportunities to showcase food and drink outlets in the market towns, encouraging visitors to dwell longer.
- Identify opportunities to highlight tours, talks, markets and other experiences such as farm tours, tasting events, chocolate-making workshops, and bakery lessons.

- Support accommodation providers to use these activities as part of their off-peak marketing activities to attract new visitors.

### Arts and crafts

There are several related elements within this theme:

- opportunities to see and buy art and craft from galleries
- meet artists and makers and watch them create their work
- workshops where participants can learn new skills

This theme is good for off-peak business, but needs some work to gather together the product and make it more obvious to visitors. Product development may be necessary to take advantage of the growing market for creative breaks.

The first step will be to undertake a full product audit and meet with interested parties to identify opportunities, and identify linkages with the Ryedale Cultural Action Plan.

There may also be opportunities to use arts and cultural events and activities to animate market towns, particularly in the evening. During the course of the consultation, several businesses mentioned the role of music events in attracting visitors, particularly to those in Dalby Forest.

### History and Heritage

This may be sometimes combined with arts and crafts, and should also incorporate antiques as this is a strength for the market towns. There are several sub-themes within 'heritage', for example antique hunting, or ancient abbeys, or more family-friendly activity, using heritage attractions and museums as a hook. This theme also links to the Ryedale Cultural Action Plan.

Traditional tourism marketing already makes good use of this theme, yet there are opportunities to develop it further, using more contemporary approaches and creating more interactive experiences. A theme like antiques may require work to identify the providers, and undertake some product development work such as collaborating with a Blue Badge Guide to create antiques tours, and then decide on promotional angles.

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway will be an important element, and useful to link together destinations and other partners. It may be possible to use literary connections such as Dickens in Malton to enhance this theme.

### Nature and outdoors

Given some of the external trends discussed at the beginning of this report, this theme is likely to grow in importance. It can also encompass dark skies and nature photography, a strong niche. It's important to make this theme accessible by identifying operators who can bring it alive to people who might not be used to visiting the countryside, and to create more nature experiences. Some of these might also be retreat-oriented. There appears to be a growing market for residential wildlife tourism, which could be a useful trigger for out of season visits.

The starting point for this theme should be to explore opportunities with the North York Moors National Park and Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty since nature and the outdoors underpins so much of their activity.

### **Screen tourism**

This can be a powerful motivator for visitors who want to see the places that have featured in or acted as settings in films and television programmes. The impact of screen tourism can last for decades after the first appearance, as evidenced by the influence of *Brideshead Revisited* at Castle Howard and *Heartbeat* at Goathland. Television programmes can also act as an interest trigger for key themes. For example, series such as the *Antiques Road Show* or the *Repair Shop* can be used as the hook for themed promotion.

The Tourism Network will shortly be offering marketing workshops to help businesses and destinations benefit from screen tourism, drawing on other work by Screen Yorkshire.

### **Planning themed product development and promotional activity**

Once initial cluster group meetings have taken place and foundation work has been undertaken, RDC will be able to plan a calendar of Ryedale themed activity, alternating focus on different themes through the year, working with other partners where possible.

This would mean that RDC acts as a catalyst for the development and promotion of each theme but does not necessarily undertake all the work. This approach will avoid duplication, make better use of the knowledge of the businesses within each theme and play to key strengths.

Work will also be necessary to identify where there are linkages between themes, to use the themed approach to ensure all areas of Ryedale are covered, and to help accommodation providers make full use of the themes in their own promotional activity, particularly in off-peak marketing.

## **7. Events and Festivals**

A variety of events and festivals already take place in Ryedale, ranging from small local events to major concerts and cultural events, and sporting challenges. Visitors love the serendipity of happening upon a local event such as an agricultural show but can also be attracted to stay longer if they are aware of more major events and festivals.

Events provide a useful trigger for visits and keep the product fresh and interesting, engaging new and repeat visitors. There are opportunities to make more of existing events and to attract more staying visitors. Events can also be used to attract visitors outside the main season, increasing year-round occupancy. The themed cluster groups may be able to help identify additional events that already exist, or new event opportunities, which could be used to raise awareness of some promotional themes.

Some accommodation providers say they are not aware of all the events that take place so they are unable to use them in their own marketing. Some event organisers have commented that they find it

onerous to have to input event details in such a wide variety of websites and information channels and would welcome a more effective system.

An important first step will be to list all Ryedale events and make the information available to all event organisers and accommodation providers to enhance collaboration. This will make it easier to identify quieter times when there may be scope for new events, and to identify if any themes are missing, and what new types of event might be added.

## 8. Tackling seasonality

'Off-peak' means different things to different businesses. For some it is the winter months, for others there is an unwelcome gap in April/May or on a particular day of the month or time of the day. Some businesses report that there is also a need to develop more of a night-time economy in the market towns.

The action plan suggests some activities to help overcome some of these issues. The key activity will be the use of themes and events to give more tangible reasons to visit off-peak and to help target specific markets more pro-actively.

There have been some suggestions that there is little to do in the market towns in the evening. This may be more of a perception than a reality, but it still needs to be addressed. It would be a good idea to make local accommodation providers more aware of evening events and activities to they can pass on this information to visitors. Visitors will appreciate recommendations for good local pubs and community events.

## 9. The market for visitors to Ryedale

Visitor research gives an indication of the spending power, home town and age profile of visitors but it's more productive to focus on the mind-set and motivation of visitors. This makes it easier to create more targeted marketing messages and give stronger reasons to visit.

Key motivations for visitors to Ryedale that can be used in marketing activity:

- Wanting to retreat from the bustle of the everyday world to somewhere gentler and calmer, to feel better and more refreshed
- Spending time together and exploring together – strong market for multi-generational visits, celebrations and gatherings of friends and family
- Interest in one of the themes – need to tailor messages for each one
- En route to the coast, York or NYMNP – need to convert to longer stays in Ryedale
- Purpose-driven – to visit an event, shop, or see a key attraction

There are some important sub-markets, such as visitors with motivations listed above, who also seek dog-friendly facilities.

There's a need to develop more information about the mind-set of visitors, the barriers and opportunities to convince. During the consultation phase of the development of this Plan, some respondents have asked for access to more research and better footfall data in the market towns.

### Group visitors

Ryedale has some excellent attractions that could attract more group visitors. There is a perception that group travel is low value because of the discounts offered but this is not strictly true. With an ageing population and growing number of people who enjoy the social benefits of travel but don't wish to drive themselves, small group outings are popular.

There are other benefits to attracting groups:

- It's relatively easy to market to groups: one key contact makes the bookings and has multiple purchasing power, often repeating successful visits with different groups.
- They pre-book, making operational planning easier – and still visit, regardless of the weather.
- They generally travel by coach, which may be more environmentally-friendly than multiple car journeys.
- If given reasons to do so, groups are often prepared to visit outside peak visitor periods.
- Visitor spend can be increased through secondary spend on food, drink, and shopping.

It is harder to attract more staying groups because Ryedale lacks a significant level of group accommodation but there are nonetheless opportunities to work with the travel trade to attract day visitors using the market towns as a base. To do this it will be necessary to provide the right facilities such as coach parking, appropriate information for the travel trade and group organisers, and to target them through publications such as Group Travel Organiser.

In recent years there has been good growth in smaller groups and tailor-made tours, such as those using smaller coaches and minibuses. Businesses such as Grand Yorkshire, BOBH and Mountain Goat already feature Ryedale so there may be opportunities to develop more collaborations. These businesses operate out of York and provide a car-free option for some visitors. It would also be good to work with local Blue Badge Guides on group tourism.

There will be opportunities to collaborate with VisitYork and Scarborough Borough Council on group travel promotions since they have both expressed interest in this sector. There is particular interest both from potential visitors and attractions in developing group travel to historic houses, castles, abbeys and gardens, and using a screen tourism theme.

### International visitors

Visitors from overseas tend to stay longer and be higher spending than domestic visitors but are not as easy to reach. Castle Howard has been particularly successful in attracting Chinese visitors,

however this does not necessarily mean those same visitors will go on to visit other Ryedale locations.

Recent projects funded by the Discover England Fund and developed by the North York Moors National Park may have led to increases in visitors from overseas. Some of this work is ongoing. The main focus is now on near European visitors. Ryedale may benefit from additional overseas visitors but given the limited budgets available, overseas marketing is not a priority for RDC. Overseas marketing requires significant resources and so collaborations with VisitYork, Welcome to Yorkshire and VisitBritain/VisitEngland will be more cost-effective.

## 10. Collaborations and partnerships

RDC will need to work with a number of partners to achieve the actions in this Plan, as well as working directly with Ryedale businesses:

- North York Moors National Park Authority & North York Moors Tourism Network
- Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Scarborough Borough Council
- Visit York
- Organisations representing the market towns
- East Riding County Council and Visit Hull & East Yorkshire for the Yorkshire Wolds, and the East Yorkshire Local Food Network
- Welcome to Yorkshire
- Tourism Association North Yorkshire

RDC has already started to hold discussions with these organisations, to discuss the activities identified in this Plan and agree next steps.

### Work with individual market towns

The Ryedale market towns each have their own character and selling points. In order to encourage more movement between them it's important to create stronger identities and local distinctiveness to differentiate them and show visitors (and locals) what they each have to offer.

Much of the current market town promotion focuses on the town centres. Marketing the surrounding area will enhance the offer, increase spend and length of stay, particularly if promotion of accommodation is included.

**Pickering** promotes itself as 'Gateway to the North York Moors, Yorkshire Forests & Coast' which gives a rationale for using it as a base but there is a danger that visitors will see it as the place from which they should go elsewhere instead of as a destination in its own right. The North Yorkshire Moors Railway station is part of its gateway role but also attractive in its own right.

Pickering could enhance its reputation by making more of Beck Isle Museum ('the treasure house of Ryedale' is intriguing), the Saxon church and 15<sup>th</sup> century wall paintings and as a hub for performing arts. It would be good to find ways to convey this information more concisely and visually. In addition to its history and the railway, Pickering makes a good base for outdoor exploration.



**Malton** differentiates itself as ‘Yorkshire’s Food Capital’, with a number of flagship events. Food tours and experiences add to the draw as they give visitors the impression of a vibrant town with plenty to do. Businesses without a food angle may feel they fall outside this selling point. It would be good to use the arts as an additional draw. There are opportunities to highlight Norton-on-Derwent, particularly with the development of the Woodham Stone Collection and through walks and cycle routes.

During the consultation for this Plan, we received comments from several businesses who said they would value more networking and promotional opportunities focused on non-food and drink businesses.

In addition to its retail and food offerings, **Helmsley** is able to attract visitors thanks to the numerous attractions such as the Helmsley Walled Garden, Castle, Rievaulx Abbey, National Centre for Birds of Prey, and Duncombe Park. These attractions are the ingredients that visitors expect to see in the ‘ideal’ English market town – castle, park, abbey, garden, creating the essence of England within a small geographic area. The forthcoming film, Secret Garden, is likely to act as an additional draw.

In the search for authenticity and constancy, **Kirkbymoorside** has the potential to attract visitors with an interest in arts and antiques thanks to the auctioneers and businesses like Bils and Rye, and the nearby Ryedale Folk Museum.

All the market towns have a good selection of independent shops, cafes and pubs. When promoting these, more detail is needed to make the benefits more tangible, with more explanations and recommendations.

During the consultation for this Plan, strengths and key selling points for each area were suggested. These have been added to <https://www.northyorkmoorstourism.com/rdc.html> with an opportunity for anyone to continue the conversation and add more details. Some responses were particularly detailed, hence the difference in detail for each destination.

### Approach for market town and village promotion

A partnership approach is recommended, working with existing channels and organisations. Each of the market towns has its own existing promotional activity including a town leaflet or map, website and social media channels.

RDC will be able to offer support with the development of curated content and promotional activity. This could involve:

- Bringing attractions, activity providers and accommodation providers together to enhance collaboration and networking opportunities
- Developing themed activity
- Providing images, social media and PR support.

Each destination will need to develop:



- A clear and distinct description of the destination, demonstrating its strengths and differentiators and top ten (or five or fifteen...) experiences to be enjoyed in that location
- Location information, showing linkages between places to visit, experiences, walks, and suggested itineraries
- Key events listing
- Improved information about public transport provision

Where the activity focus is on a particular market town, efforts should be made to also showcase surrounding villages.

### Accommodation

If Ryedale is to attract more staying visitors, it is important to raise the profile of accommodation in the area. To do this, we need to showcase the range of good quality accommodation and make it easier for visitors to find accommodation. An audit of accommodation should be carried out. Discussions with strategic partners will be needed to determine the best ways to display the wide choice of accommodation within Ryedale and to make it easier for visitors to find and book directly. This could be as simple as a shared, customised Google map showing all accommodation.

Targeted support is needed to help accommodation providers use the proposed themes in their own promotional activity, to increase occupancy and improve off-peak marketing. Better links are needed to bring accommodation, activities and attractions together.

## 11. Product development

Ryedale has an excellent range of beautiful landscapes, interesting and unique attractions, high quality accommodation and wide range of activities. As the list of themes indicates, there are many reasons to visit. Product development activities can help to enhance the offering, make it more apparent and easier for visitors to enjoy.

The themed activity will help to identify new opportunities and product development needs, whether these are gaps in the product, or ways to enhance the existing products on offer.

Product development can further enhance the Ryedale offering through:

- Product enhancements, which could include upgrades or adaptation to appeal to a wider market or to meet changing market needs, such as offering secure bike storage to cyclists.
- Collaborations and packages, bringing businesses together to work on key themes or in geographic areas, making it easier for visitors to spend longer in Ryedale.
- New products and experiences, such as a farm offering farm tours or food tastings. The themed activity may identify opportunities for new events.
- Suggested itineraries that showcase different aspects of Ryedale, link places together, and create demand for longer stays in the area

Ryedale District Council is already working on two enhancement projects:

### **Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

RDC are keen to support Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure within the District to facilitate low emission travel between the market towns and their environs.

It is anticipated that EVCP's will be installed in long stay council-owned car parks in Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside and Pickering to complement existing EV units in Malton and Norton-on-Derwent.

### **Free Public Wi-Fi in Ryedale's Market Towns**

A scheme to develop free public Wi-Fi across the market towns is being explored to improve digital connectivity for visitors, residents and businesses whilst encouraging promotion of each towns key attractions and events via an individually branded town centre portal landing page.

## **12. Marketing**

The collaborative approach identified in this Plan is designed to make best use of limited resources, avoid duplication and play to the different strengths of partners. RDC will act as a catalyst and co-ordinator of some product development and marketing activities but will not necessarily lead or undertake all activities.

### **Web marketing**

RDC have already indicated that they do not wish to develop their own visitor website. This would take time to establish, duplicate some of the current offering by other partners and would go against the current trend of visitors turning away from official sources of information.

Rather than establishing a new site, RDC will develop and curate appropriate content, whether about key locations or themes, and provide this for use:

- By partner organisations such as North York Moors National Park, Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Scarborough Borough Council, or Welcome to Yorkshire
- By market towns and other organisations
- By individual Ryedale businesses
- As part of broader PR and marketing activity

This curated content is likely to supplement existing information, provide more actionable experiences and reasons to visit Ryedale.

It could for example include themed information focusing on a given topic, or be a series of themed itineraries to encourage longer stays and wider exploration. This information would be copyright-free and available for adaptation to fit a number of purposes.

### **Social media**

Social media has become an essential part of tourism promotion. RDC will need to create a social



media promotional calendar, identifying key messages to be shared by RDC and all participating organisations and businesses. It will develop its own social media channels (predominantly Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) to support other promotional activity.

### Print material

At this stage, we are not proposing any additional print material. Individual businesses and associations may wish to develop their own promotional literature. The annual Literature Exchange at Eden Camp will be supported to make it easier for Ryedale businesses to share information. RDC may help to refresh some of the existing town trails and leaflets.

### PR activities

Targeted approaches will be needed to promote each of the themes via the media, preferably using the services of a PR professional, working in collaboration with other partners such as North York Moors National Park, and Scarborough Borough Council to avoid duplication and make better use of resources. This activity will be clarified after meetings with each of the proposed partners and work on the themes. There will be opportunities to also feed in stories to Welcome to Yorkshire's PR team.

## 13. Business support

This Plan identifies themes and opportunities that require a collaborative partnership approach. Tourism businesses will play an important role. RDC's role will be as catalyst, co-ordinator and supporter. It will need to provide business support services to enhance all activities:

- Undertake, commission and co-ordinate market research and intelligence, and make it available to businesses
- Bring together businesses under themes and geography – creating the cluster groups
- Provide support to market town organisations to help them offer more area and themed information
- Signposting to advice, funding and support for product development
- Provide appropriate resources such images, copy, themed information and itineraries for use by Ryedale businesses
- Support relevant organisations to offer networking and business advice

Business support has been a fundamental element in the development of the North York Moors Tourism Network over the last eight years. During this time, we have found a need for the following types of business support, and would expect to find similar needs in Ryedale:

- A small amount of initial advice for start-up businesses. Much of this is already available through other agencies, online and the banks.

- General signposting to information, often regarding legislation such as the need for music licenses or health and safety advice. This is usually provided by local authorities or VisitEngland.
- Small number of questions (and complaints) relating to planning issues.
- The majority of requests for support are either questions relating to industry issues (the key one is online booking for accommodation providers, with discussions about high commission rates or best agency for x) or most frequently relating to marketing.

Businesses ask for help to find new routes to market, to understand the different roles of various promotional channels, support with social media, and specific issues such as how to get more direct bookings or develop more off-peak trade. The [North York Moors Tourism Network](#) offers practical, free/low cost support for all tourism marketing needs, either in live or virtual workshops, blogs and advisory articles, one-to-one and through the [Tourism Network online community](#). This support can be easily extended to all businesses in Ryedale.

The [www.ryedale.gov.uk/tourism](http://www.ryedale.gov.uk/tourism) page is a useful support tool, signposting to other information and advice.

Once the themed cluster groups have met and developed their action plans, it will be possible to develop more business support, focusing on product development.

## 14. Visitor management and quality issues

This Draft Destination Plan focuses on the need to increase the value of tourism to Ryedale. While they may not have a direct impact on visitor spend, there are some issues to consider, which contribute to the overall satisfaction levels of visitors and the overall contribution tourism can make to the local economy.

### Quality of the tourism product and excellent customer care

Visitors will only return and recommend Ryedale to others if they enjoy their visit. In previous years accommodation providers were encouraged to participate in quality inspection schemes but these have been superseded by online review sites such as TripAdvisor.

A useful side effect of review sites and social media is that market forces and word of mouth now showcase good quality tourism products and lower quality products are less likely to survive. It may be worth offering business support in customer care to ensure a high quality visitor experience across Ryedale.

Quality in Tourism are now promoting their entry-level accreditation [Safe, Clean and Legal](#) which can help to raise awareness of the key legislation and the standards expected by today's visitors and key.

### Accessibility

There is demand for more accessible facilities and for better information about which facilities are available to visitors with different needs. Not all businesses are aware of their responsibilities in this

area so there is a need to signpost to appropriate advice and support. It would be helpful to undertake broader access audits in key visitor locations, and to make these widely available.

[Accessible Derbyshire](#) is an excellent example of information provision and services to enhance the visitor experience for disabled people.

### **The impact of visitors on the environment**

We need to be mindful of the need to encourage more sustainable travel, and to take care of the very environment that attracts visitors. Some destinations are now starting to step back from promotional activities that encourage more visitors, in favour of those that either focus on visitor spend instead, or which stimulate particular visitor behaviour.

Many tourism businesses are already aware of their responsibilities to the environment, and starting to put in place measures to reduce the burden. Some would benefit from additional advice and support to do so. The public are increasingly interested in spending time in nature. There is an opportunity to showcase local distinctiveness and use it to attract visitors who are more likely to care for the places they visit.

### **Signage**

While some of it is outside the remit of RDC, issues relating to signage were mentioned during the consultation. It would be helpful to clarify what improvements to signage inside and en route to Ryedale might be possible.

### **Public transport**

The need to encourage greater use of public transport, and to significantly improve provision of public transport has been a recurrent issue during the consultation for this Plan. Several people expressed concerns over availability of taxis and evening transport.

There are opportunities to work with the rail operator TransPennine Express and the regional Coastliner bus service to help attractions and facilities along their routes to benefit from these services.

Where good public transport exists, there is a need for greater awareness, to make it easier for the public to become more aware of routes and the advantages of using them. It would be helpful if all businesses could link to sites such as [this comprehensive overview of all options](#) from the North York Moors National Park.

It may also be worth looking at examples from elsewhere such as the Little White Bus community transport scheme in Upper Wensleydale, based at Hawes.

<b>ACTION PLAN</b>			
<b>NB: This plan is intended to evolve as each stage of foundation activity is completed. Additional details will need to be added after cluster meetings looking at each promotional theme.</b>			
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>BY</b>	<b>BUDGET REQUIRED</b>
<b>Strategic Approach</b>			
Agree visitor targets, strategic priorities and next steps for the Ryedale Visitor Strategy	Complete	RDC, tourism businesses	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
<b>Promotional themes</b>			
For each theme, identify key players & arrange cluster meeting or virtual network, using the template in the Appendix	By end March	RDC to lead, with participation by tourism businesses & key partners	Possible room hire – up to £50 per venue + RDC Tourism Officer time
Using the responses to the above, draw up an action plan – incorporating marketing and product development activities – for each theme, with agreed actions by RDC, businesses & other partners. Agree when each plan will be reviewed and updated.	By end March	RDC to lead, with key partners	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Plan a calendar of Ryedale themed activity & communicate plans to businesses	By end April	RDC, with key partners	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Agree what collaborative PR activity will be undertaken to promote the themes.	Agree by end April, contract agreed agency	RDC to lead – look at collaboration with NYMNP to maximise	£2000 per theme + RDC Tourism Officer

	May	resources	time
<b>Markets and market intelligence</b>			
Agree market mind-sets (after work on themes) & continue to build market intelligence & visitor profile.	By end April	RDC, with key partners	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time and support from key businesses
Assess annually to identify trends & communicate to businesses	Jan 2021	RDC, NYMTN	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Encourage all accommodation providers to participate in the occupancy survey	Ongoing	RDC, NYMNP, SBC, NYMTN	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
<b>Group visits</b>			
Identify attractions and accommodation, and parking facilities suitable for group visits.	Sept	RDC lead	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Bring together businesses, attractions and those interested in developing group business.  What product development is necessary? Can group tours be created with local Blue Badge Guides? Which operators already bring groups to Ryedale – are there opportunities for further collaboration?	Sept/Oct	RDC with local guides, group operators, attractions & other businesses, VisitYork = Group Travel Working Group	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Assuming sufficient interest from businesses, create travel trade manual with information for group organisers and tour operators	Oct	RDC & working group	£1000 + RDC Tourism Officer time

Build database of operators and group travel organisers and identify promotional opportunities	Oct	RDC & working group	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Identify and agree other promotional activities e.g. direct mail, PR, possible attendance at group travel exhibitions	Nov	RDC & working group	£1000 + RDC Tourism Officer time
<b>Events</b>			
Consider if there is a way for RDC to collate events information or what data gathering facilities already exist for events	Ongoing	RDC	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Make a shared calendar of all Ryedale events available to all event organisers & accommodation providers	Ongoing	RDC	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Identify any key social media, PR and other promotional opportunities from events, taking a collaborative approach.	Ongoing	RDC to lead, with support from tourism sector	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Identify the Ryedale events most likely to attract out of area visitors, and ensure accommodation and other local businesses receive advance details for their own promotional use to attract more staying visitors	Ongoing	RDC to lead, with support from tourism sector	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Identify any gaps in the promotional calendar, either by theme or time of year.	March	RDC	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
After completion of the cluster group meetings, add plans for any new events.	April	RDC	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
<b>Tackling seasonality</b>			

Identify the key seasonality challenges in Ryedale. Is there a particular month or time which it would be practicable to use as a target for easing seasonality with collaborative themed approach?	April	RDC, using research from partners	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Using the calendar of themed activity, identify strong year-round reasons to visit Ryedale, and ensure businesses have sufficient information for them to use these in their own marketing	April/May	RDC	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Provide appropriate out-of-season imagery for use by partners and businesses e.g. indoor shots, cosy fires in pubs etc	Ongoing	RDC/local photographers /NYMNP/other partners	£ 2500
Run marketing workshop to help business overcome peaks & troughs of seasonality in their business	Oct	(The Tourism Network has an off-the-shelf workshop covering this topic)	£250 inc venue hire
<b>Collaborations and partnerships</b>			
Hold discussions with each of the identified partners to agree actions in this Plan and next steps	March for initial activity then ongoing	RDC, HHAONB, NYMNP, SBC, VY, WTY, NYMTN	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Agree programme of support for market towns: determine key selling points to be used, any image gaps, themes to be used, curated content to be provided such as local itineraries, opportunities to speak to members at meetings	March then ongoing review of activity	RDC + each market town organisation	£2000 per location + RDC Tourism Officer time
<b>Accommodation</b>			
Conduct a desk audit of all available accommodation	March	RDC/NYMTN	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
As part of the overall business support programme (see section), determine the information provision that accommodation providers will find most useful	Feb	NYMTN & RDC & NYMNP	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer

to offer more year-round reasons to visit			time
Identify any barriers to more staying visitors. For example, group tour operators such as Large Outdoors say the lack of twin rooms prevents them from using most accommodation (can be easily remedied with lock-beds)	Ongoing	RDC lead	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Determine whether there is a way to provide a full accommodation listing (not necessarily online booking) on an existing website as a reference point for visitors, partners and journalists	February	RDC & Partners	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Consider creation of a familiarisation programme to offer attraction visits to enhance product knowledge and pass information on to guests	Oct	RDC lead with support from key partners	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
<b>Product development</b>			
Identify product development needs and activities. Create full action plan for product development after completion of the promotional themes work.	April – May	RDC – there may be linkages to work by NYMNP & NYMTN	Budget to be determine d against specific priorities
<b>Marketing</b>			
Agree information and curated content needs with partners to enhance their websites. Are there likely to be any gaps in provision of web-based information without Ryedale's own website? How can these be overcome?	March/ April	RDC & partners	£ budget to be allocated to wider PR activity
Create content plan for RDC social media activity, building on action plan for each theme	April	RDC & cluster groups	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Promote and support the Eden Camp Literature Exchange	March	RDC, NYMTN	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time

Consider using the services of a PR professional, focusing on thematic approach to target media	May	RDC	£budget to be identified against final action plan priorities
Provide support to visiting journalists, influencers and location scouts to help them feature Ryedale products	Ongoing	RDC & partners	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Plan calendar of content, building upon themed activities and needs of market town organisations. For utilisation by NYMNPA, SBC and WTY	June	RDC	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Develop a programme of industry communications, to offer product updates, triggers for activity and updates on partnership activity	June	RDC & NYMTN	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
<b>Business support</b>			
Continue to develop the database of Ryedale businesses for direct communication	Ongoing	RDC, NYMTN	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Using the North York Moors Tourism Network as a foundation, build the Ryedale section of the network, providing information and services tailored to the needs of the area's businesses, with a programme of meetings and events.	Ongoing	SBC/NYMTN, RDC	£ budget to be identified if additional business support events are required
Continue to build resources e.g. image library & signpost to suitable advice & support e.g. on funding	Ongoing	RDC	£photography budget + RDC Tourism Officer

			time
Create a monthly support newsletter for businesses, offering them advice information about events, reminders of key themes, and signpost to other information	Ongoing from March	RDC	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
Create a timed programme for provision of curated content to businesses & ensure they understand how it can be used	June	RDC/NYMTN	£PR budget + RDC Tourism Officer time
Work with businesses on product development and collaborations, following the themed activity. Identify any gaps in product, particularly as a result of current trends. How can these opportunities be exploited?	Depends on outcome of cluster group action plans	RDC lead with key industry partners	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>			
Determine how and when the tourism activity will be evaluated, and new plans draw up	Jan 2020 & Jan 2021	RDC	£0 + RDC Tourism Officer time