



Peak District Economic Development Needs Assessment

Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy
FINAL REPORT

Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of
Peak District National Park
Authority
October 2025

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Icenis Projects supported by Pegasus Group were commissioned by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) to research, prepare and present proportionate evidence to support the Authority's legal obligation to positively prepare a local plan in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 88 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy'; and to undertake an economic need/economic land assessment in line with Planning Practice Guidance, proportionate to national park purposes.

Local Economic Baseline

- 1.2 The Peak District National Park is a large rural area with outstanding natural beauty located in relatively close proximity to a number of major cities. These factors attract millions of visitors every year which has led to the tourism industry making up a significant portion of all employment in the area, with particularly high employment in the Food and beverage industry.
- 1.3 The total employment supported within the Park is estimated to be 18,500 jobs, of which around 3,000 are in Agriculture. Tourism, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Wholesale & Retail are the largest employment sectors. The highest business counts are in Tourism, Professional Services and Wholesale & Retail. Many jobs within these sectors - especially tourism and retail - are part-time and low-paid.
- 1.4 Despite growing popularity from all ages to visit the Peak District, the resident population is declining overall and ageing rapidly. This has meant that a large proportion of the resident population is economically inactive due to retirement.
- 1.5 Peak District residents have a higher-than-average skill level and a larger proportion of high-level occupations than average. This translates into high house prices and suggests a high level of out-commuting of

residents to nearby cities, however housing affordability poses an issue for people who live and work within the National Park.

Business and Stakeholder Perspectives

- 1.6 A survey of businesses, farmers, and land managers in the National Park explored views on investment, diversification, innovation, staffing, and demand for land or premises. This was supported by one-on-one engagement with stakeholders including estate agents, local businesses and representative organisations.
- 1.7 Business and stakeholder engagement consistently highlighted core barriers to growth: rising overhead costs and planning/development restrictions. A lack of affordable housing and poor public transport connectivity were cited as primary limiting factors for recruitment and staff retention.
- 1.8 Digital connectivity was also a concern and improving connectivity is seen as crucial for supporting existing businesses, attracting remote workers and encouraging innovation. Many existing business premises pre-date 1980, posing potential future compliance issues regarding energy efficiency.
- 1.9 A large proportion of farmers reported declining profitability and anticipate further decline. Diversification will therefore be essential to the survival of some businesses. However, planning restrictions are frequently cited as disproportionately burdensome for small-scale proposals, such as glamping pods or farm building conversions. The PDNPA will need to consider how planning policy can continue to support diversification.

Existing Employment Land Portfolio

- 1.10 A review of current employment land supply confirmed the value of safeguarding existing business land and premises to maintain a diverse portfolio – particularly in sustainable locations including Bakewell, the Hope Valley and Tideswell.

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- 1.11 It is recommended that all 14 sites currently safeguarded under Policy DME3 are retained, with four additional sites proposed for safeguarding. The PDNPA may also consider identifying other larger industrial units as new large-scale developments are unlikely to be viable or acceptable within the National Park.
- 1.12 Assessments identified approximately 1.8 hectares of development potential across five existing or proposed safeguarded sites, largely through the intensification of open storage or undeveloped land, which could contribute to meeting future employment needs without formal allocation.
- 1.13 Minor boundary adjustments were recommended for three sites to exclude recent residential or holiday developments.

Future Employment Land Needs

- 1.14 Based on employment land needs modelling, it is recommended that the PDNPA plan for a permissions-based need of 0.4 ha offices and 5.1 ha industrial land.
- 1.15 Demand for new employment space is evident, particularly for smaller industrial units - both premium and affordable – as well as a more limited demand for additional office space. However these trend-based ‘need’ figures exceed the supply identified in the supply assessment work. In part this reflects the fact that some former brownfield sites have now been redeveloped and there is a much more limited ready stock of brownfield land for intensification.
- 1.16 New employment development on entirely new sites is likely unviable due to high land and construction costs and low rental returns. The redevelopment / conversion of existing stock for new units, infill of sites and extension of existing buildings are likely to be the key sources of new units. It also remains important to safeguard existing employment sites (retaining the sites listed in currently adopted Police DME3, and four recommended additions) to prevent losses.

High street and retail matters

- 1.17 Retail uses are performing adequately and address local needs and there is no need to plan for any additional convenience or comparison floorspace.
- 1.18 To protect existing retail provision within town centres, a floorspace threshold should be introduced – 200sqm (net) when in the catchment of smaller centres and possibly 500sqm (net) if Bakewell is the only centre within the catchment.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Icen Projects Ltd supported by Pegasus Group have been appointed by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) to research, prepare and present proportionate evidence to support the Authority's legal obligation to positively prepare a local plan in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 88 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy'; and to undertake an economic need/economic land assessment in line with Planning Practice Guidance, proportionate to national park purposes.
- 2.2 Key issues for this commission to consider include:
- Show how, through planning policy and site safeguarding/allocation, the National Park Authority can support a prosperous rural economy and thriving and sustainable communities.
 - Describe the Peak District's economic structure and performance (business, farming, tourism and retail) and set out the economic needs assessment (proportionate to national park purposes.)
 - Include a business survey and liaison with local business groups (including but not limited to Business Peak District) to identify the current and future needs of businesses in the National Park.
 - Establish an employment land requirement and make recommendations regarding how (within a national park context) planning policy can respond positively to this need, including but not limited to:
 - i. a qualitative review of current safeguarded and non-safeguarded employment sites and their capacity to deliver additional employment space (including extensions) if required.

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- ii. how to make best use of the existing stock of buildings, including by mixed community/business uses.
 - iii. the switch to home working and implications for householder and design policies.
 - iv. the spatial focus of employment growth.
- Provide an overview of the changing land economy in the Peak District National Park to identify the current and future needs of land-based businesses (farmers and land managers/landowners), including recommendations on how they can be supported through planning policy within the context of a protected landscape. This should include, but not be limited to:
 - v. Existing and emerging markets for biodiversity, carbon and green energy
 - vi. Existing and emerging tourism markets
 - vii. Other forms of farm diversification.

2.3 In order to meet the objectives of the brief and wider policy requirements for the work, the following sections of the report and contents are provided:

- Policy context: a review of the relevant policy, evidence and strategy context.
- Local Economic baseline: a review of the Peak District economy, benchmarked against other areas using best data available.
- Business and stakeholder perspectives: drawing on surveys and direct engagement with a range of stakeholders.
- Existing employment land portfolio: summary review of the existing safeguarded and non-safeguarded sites, with detailed site reviewed appended.
- Future employment land needs: identification of future land requirements using planning practise guidance techniques.

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- High street and retail matters: consideration of the current retail offer and future needs and policy issues, including drawing on a 2025 shopper survey.
 - Rural economy issues: discussion and recommendations on a range of matter relevant to the Peak District economy.
 - Summary and conclusions.

3. Policy context

3.1 This section provides a summary of relevant policies and strategies to consider as part of undertaking this Peak District Economic Development Needs Assessment.

3.2 It is important to recognise that the Peak District National Park Authority's role is to deliver the 2 statutory purposes of national parks: to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding of special qualities. The Authority also has a statutory duty to foster its communities' economic and social well-being.

3.3 The **Environment Act, 1995** Section 62 states:

“A National Park authority.... shall seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park, but without incurring significant expenditure in doing so, and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of the National Park.”

3.4 The **English National Parks and Broads Vision and Circular 2010** sets out key points relevant to fostering and maintain thriving rural economic in the area. Relevant key points are detailed below:

- Emphasises the need to accommodate economic growth, development and investment, which is suited to rural areas.
- Supports development that broadens the economic base and diversifies local employment opportunities.
- Seeks to support high-value, knowledge-intensive jobs (especially to retain young people) and support business clusters to enable modern infrastructure and economic activity which is tied to recreation, tourism and local food processing.

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- Aims to tailor strategies for Parks to local economic conditions, with an aim to increase productivity and income.

3.5 The Circular identifies tourism as one of the main economic drivers of national park economies. It supports sustainable tourism as it ‘contributes to Park purposes, particularly that of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of Parks by the public.’ (Para 81). The Authority is advised to ‘help realise the positive contribution that sustainable tourism can make to the environment of the parks and to the wellbeing of park communities.’ (Para 82).

3.6 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** recognises that national parks have the highest status of protection in relation to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty. At para 189 it states that great weight should be given to this and the scale and extent of development should be limited.

3.7 The Authority is required to have a clear economic vision and strategy and have regard for economic strategies and other local policies.

3.8 The NPPF states in para 85, ‘Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.’

3.9 However this positive approach must operate within the context of the statutory purpose and duty of a national park.

3.10 To support a prosperous rural economy the NPPF at para 88 states planning policies should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings.

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- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
 - c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.
 - d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

3.11 The **PDNPA Local Plan** sets out spatial objectives and planning policies for business, farming, recreation and tourism, community services/facilities and minerals development.

3.12 The current local plan has spatial economic outcomes for the three landscape areas.

- White Peak and Derwent Valley – to support business start-ups, retain and enhance the role of Bakewell, protect employment sites in sustainable locations and consider redevelopment of lower quality employment sites in less sustainable locations.
- South Peak – to retain an appropriate range of employment sites in sustainable locations.
- Dark Peak and Moorland Fringes – no specific outcomes.

3.13 Across the National Park the Local Plan supports the following forms of business development:

- Within or on the edge of named settlements at a scale related to local needs (Core Strategy policies DS1 and E1)
- On previously developed land in sustainable locations to deliver enhancement (Core Strategy policy GSP2)
- On existing employment sites and safeguarded employment sites (Core Strategy policy E1)

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- In existing traditional, existing modern, or replacement buildings that are in; smaller settlements, farmsteads, groups of existing buildings in sustainable locations (Core Strategy policy DS1 and E2).

3.14 Development Management Policy DME3 lists the safeguarded employment sites and uses. These sites are safeguarded for what were B1, B2 and B8 uses but allow for some mixed-use development subject to evidence. Other employment/business policies focus on:

- change of use of non-safeguarded, unoccupied or under-occupied employment sites in DS1 settlements (DME4)
- Use Class B1 employment in the countryside outside DS1 settlements (DME5)
- Home working (DME6)
- Expansion of existing industrial and business development not involving farm diversification (DME7)
- Design, layout and neighbourliness of employment sites including haulage depots (DME8).

3.15 The way that the Park Authority supports the economy within a protected landscape is set out in **the Management Plan (NPMP)** notably objective 11: To promote a flourishing economy in accord with nature recovery and climate change mitigation. This seeks the following outcomes:

- Have enabled enhanced access to services, jobs and home working increasing premises that can access Superfast (>30Mbps) services from 82% to 84%
- Improving high-speed digital and mobile access to the hardest-to-reach properties through Project Gigabit, Shared Rural Network, voucher schemes and opportunities arising from future initiatives.

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- Improving connections to services through the National Park sustainable travel framework.
 - Encouraging environmentally and economically sustainable businesses in suitable locations where they can grow.
 - Offering housing opportunities that support a diverse workforce with the skills needed for local businesses and services.
 - Recognising the local mineral resource by enabling a sustainable level of mineral activity appropriate to our special landscape.

3.16 The outcomes are delivered through the following actions:

- TC.7 Grow and enhance environmentally and economically sustainable businesses through Local Plan policies that identify more places in sustainable locations where businesses can grow.
- TC.8 Grow and enhance environmentally and economically sustainable businesses by providing a diverse workforce through a sufficient supply of safe, energy efficient homes in a mixture of tenures.
- TC.9 Grow and enhance environmentally and economically sustainable mineral businesses through enabling a sustainable level of mineral activity appropriate to our special landscape.

3.17 In 2024 the Park Authority undertook a Local Plan '**Regulation 18 Issues and Options Consultation**'. The proposed Local Plan spatial objectives for housing sets out the indicative figures for housing provision. The plan supports building between 960 and 2,000 new homes by 2045 across the whole National Park or 48 to 100 dpa.

3.18 The draft rural economy spatial objectives for the new local plan that were consulted on in the Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation are:

- To support business development that conserves and enhances the Peak District's Special Qualities through:
 - farm diversification
 - the re-use of traditional buildings (heritage assets)
 - new development in or on the edge of key settlements.
- To support businesses that enhance Bakewell's role as an agricultural market town and tourist hub.
- To protect existing employment sites that are well-located, and enable them to expand.

3.19 The delivery of employment land in the National Park is guided by policy, not specific targets but understanding and addressing local economic needs remains important. The last comprehensive **Employment Land Review (ELR)** occurred in 2008, with the most recent business survey in 2005.

3.20 The 2008 ELR identified 15.94 hectares of existing employment land and projected a need for an additional 5 hectares (3.5ha for industrial use and 1.5ha for office space), which could potentially be met through expansion of existing sites or new office developments, such as in Bakewell.

3.21 Recent evidence concerning employment land and retail needs in the Peak District National Park and overlapping areas are detailed below:

- GL Hearn's 2016 **Bakewell Employment Land and Retail Review** (for PDNPA) identified a potential supply of 2.3ha against a need for 1.3ha of employment space in Bakewell (0.8ha for industrial, 0.5ha for office).

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- High Peak Borough Council's 2022 **Housing and Economic Land Needs Assessment** (by Lichfields) estimated a need for 3.4–4.5ha of new employment land within the National Park area, equating to 13.5% of the total requirement for High Peak Borough
 - Derbyshire Dales District Council's **Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment** (2021, updated 2023 by Icen) highlighted Bakewell's Riverside Business Park as a strategic growth site and identified six other safeguarded employment sites in the National Park part of Derbyshire Dales¹. The district-wide need was estimated at 12.7ha for 2017–40, revised up to 15–18ha (including the area that overlaps the National Park) due to ongoing industrial demand. The retail update found Bakewell, Tideswell, and Hathersage had no need for additional retail floorspace and that Bakewell's town centre remained healthy.
 - High Peak's 2022 retail and leisure study included Bakewell, Hathersage, and Castleton, noting significant local shopping activity in Hathersage and Castleton.
 - Demographics and Housing: PDNPA faces an ageing and declining population. Lichfields' **Population Projection Update and Housing Needs Assessment** (Dec 2023) modelled scenarios to counter this decline. The Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation proposed provision of 960–2000 homes by 2045 to sustain communities, the lower end of the range essentially seeking to bring population up to past levels.

3.22 There are a range of economic plans and strategies that are relevant and overlap with the park, considered below.

¹ Calver Works, Deepdale Business Park, Great Longstone Industrial Estate, Station Yard Hathersage, Hathersage Business Centre and Cartledge House Business Centre.

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- 3.23 The **Derbyshire Dales Economic Plan 2019-2033** prioritises a shift from creating jobs to driving productivity, bringing forward strategic growth sites, growing the proportion of mid-sized businesses and attracting higher-value investment.
- 3.24 Farming and agriculture are set out to be vital industries for both economic value and landscape maintenance within the Dales and Peak District. Both industries support supply chains and underpin the visitor economy.
- 3.25 There is collaboration with agencies to expand digital infrastructure, business support and branding.
- 3.26 Visitor economy projects are integral as they directly support tourism, infrastructure and business development through the Peak District, including many businesses based in the Dales.
- 3.27 The **High Peak Growth Strategy 2017** focuses on sustainable growth with a strong emphasis on encouraging investment and supporting business growth to stimulate the local economy. There is a joint focus on supporting a sustainable visitor economy that benefits local businesses whilst respecting the natural environment and community wellbeing. The importance of sustainable growth and supporting business growth and investment is set out across both the High Peak and the Peak District strategy.
- 3.28 The **Staffordshire Moorlands Growth Strategy (2018)** sets out a vision for vibrant communities, an independent sustainable economy and high quality of life. There is a strong focus on infrastructure for health, education and transport. Both the Peak District and Staffordshire Moorlands have a focus on the visitor economy through supporting growth of tourism, retail vibrancy and investment into heritage assets and creative industries.

4. Local Economic baseline

- 4.1 This section provides an overview of the Peak District National Park's economy in relation to the East Midlands and the country as a whole. It draws upon a wide range of data sources including notably from Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Spatial Portrait

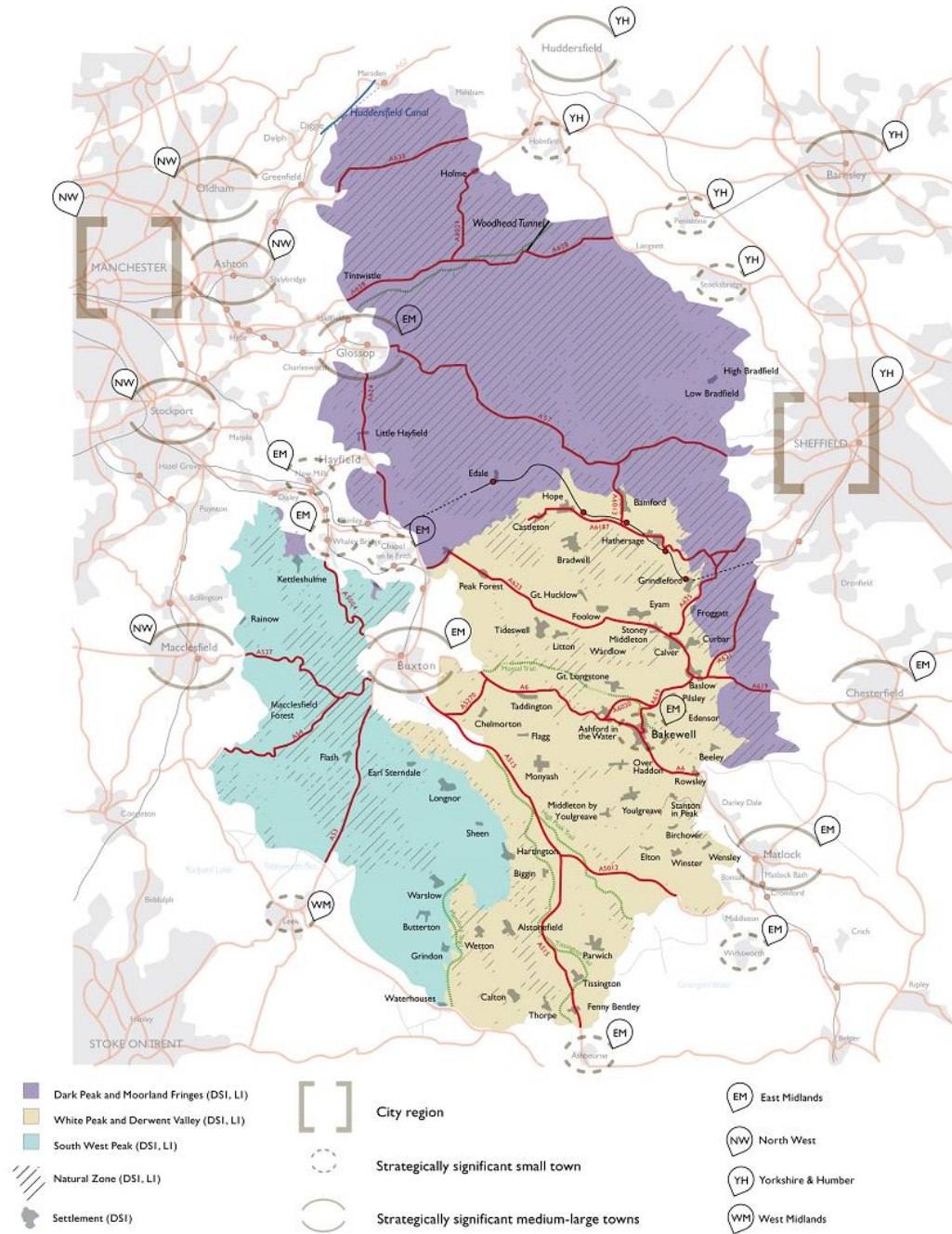
- 4.2 The Peak District is a designated National Park that covers 1,438km. It reaches into five counties: Derbyshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Yorkshire and Greater Manchester and has been named the most accessible National Park due to its proximity to the major cities of Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham and Derby, and an estimated 20 million people residing within 1 hours travel time.
- 4.3 The adopted Core Strategy sets out three distinct areas of the Peak District, as presented in Figure 3.1.
- 4.4 The most populated area is the White Peak and Derwent Valley. This includes the National Park's only market town of Bakewell, which has a population of approximately 4,300² according to ONS mid-year population estimates (2022). The town has a wider range of services and retail and business opportunities than anywhere else in the National Park and thus acts as a significant service hub for local residents, as well as serving as a significant visitor destination. Bakewell has a protected primary shopping area, with a range of independent and national brand stores along with cafes, pubs and

² ONS Mid-year population estimates, mid-2022. Derbyshire Dales LSOA 002A, 011A, 011B

charity shops. The town hosts a popular Monday street market and regular agricultural markets at the Agricultural Business Centre.

- 4.5 White Peak and Derwent Valley is also home to a number of other larger settlements including Hathersage, Tideswell, Hartington and Castleton. There are also numerous smaller villages.
- 4.6 By contrast, The Dark Peak describes the less populated upland moorland areas and their associated fringes and the South West Peak describes the sparsely populated mixed moorland and grassland landscapes of the south west of the National Park.

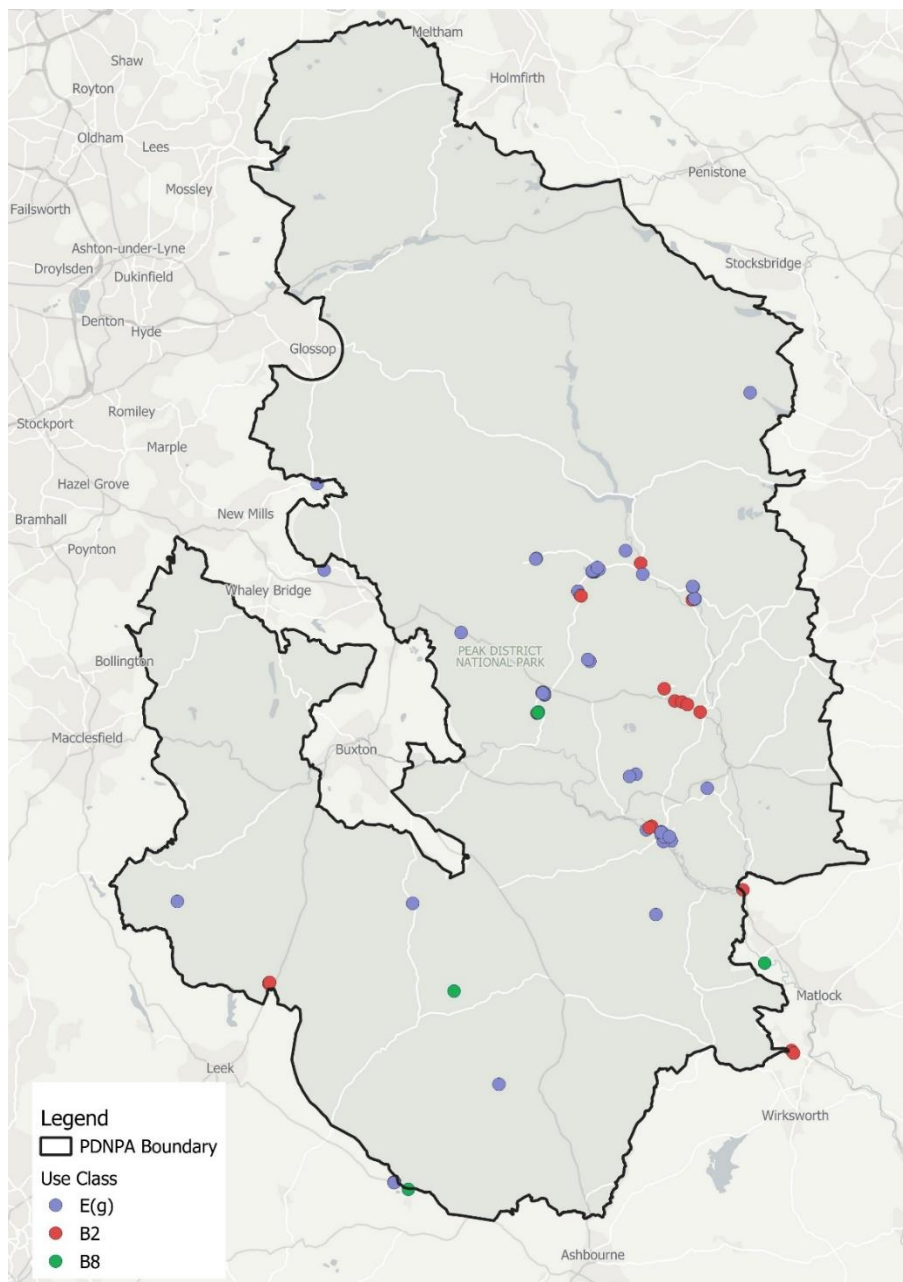
Figure 3.1 – Peak District Spatial Portrait



Source: Peak District National Park Local Development Framework. Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Adopted October 2011.

4.7 The map below shows the locations (rather than individual units) of commercial premises (E(g)/B2/B8 use classes) across the National Park. It is clear that the majority of commercial stock is located within the most densely populated White Peak and Derwent Valley area of the National Park. There are particular clusters of premises across the Hope Valley and in Bakewell, Tideswell and near Calver.

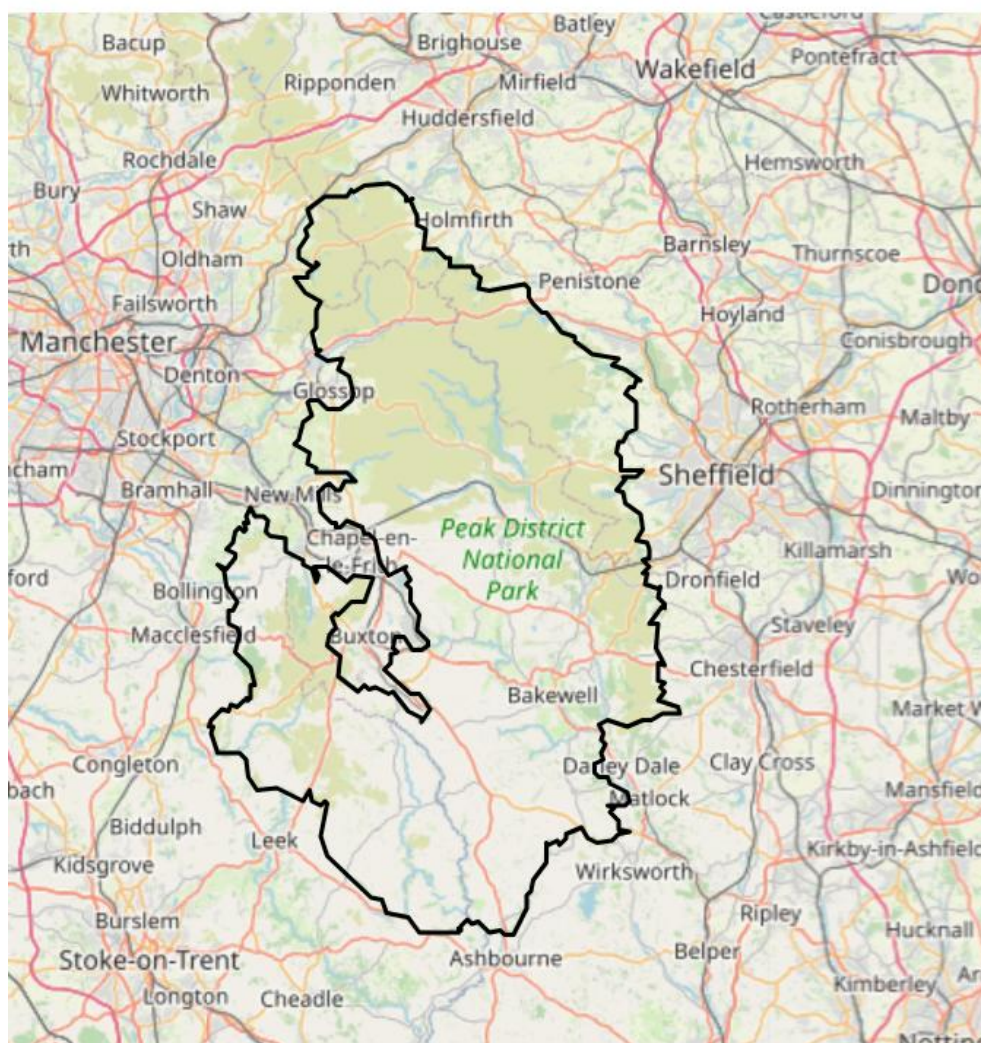
Figure 3.2 – Peak District Commercial Premises



Source: PDNPA

4.8 For the following economic baseline analysis throughout this Chapter, the Peak District National Park area has been used where possible. However, of the data used in this report, the Peak District National Park statistical geography is only provided in Census data. The ONS Census definition of the Peak District National Park area is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.3 – Peak District National Park Area Boundary

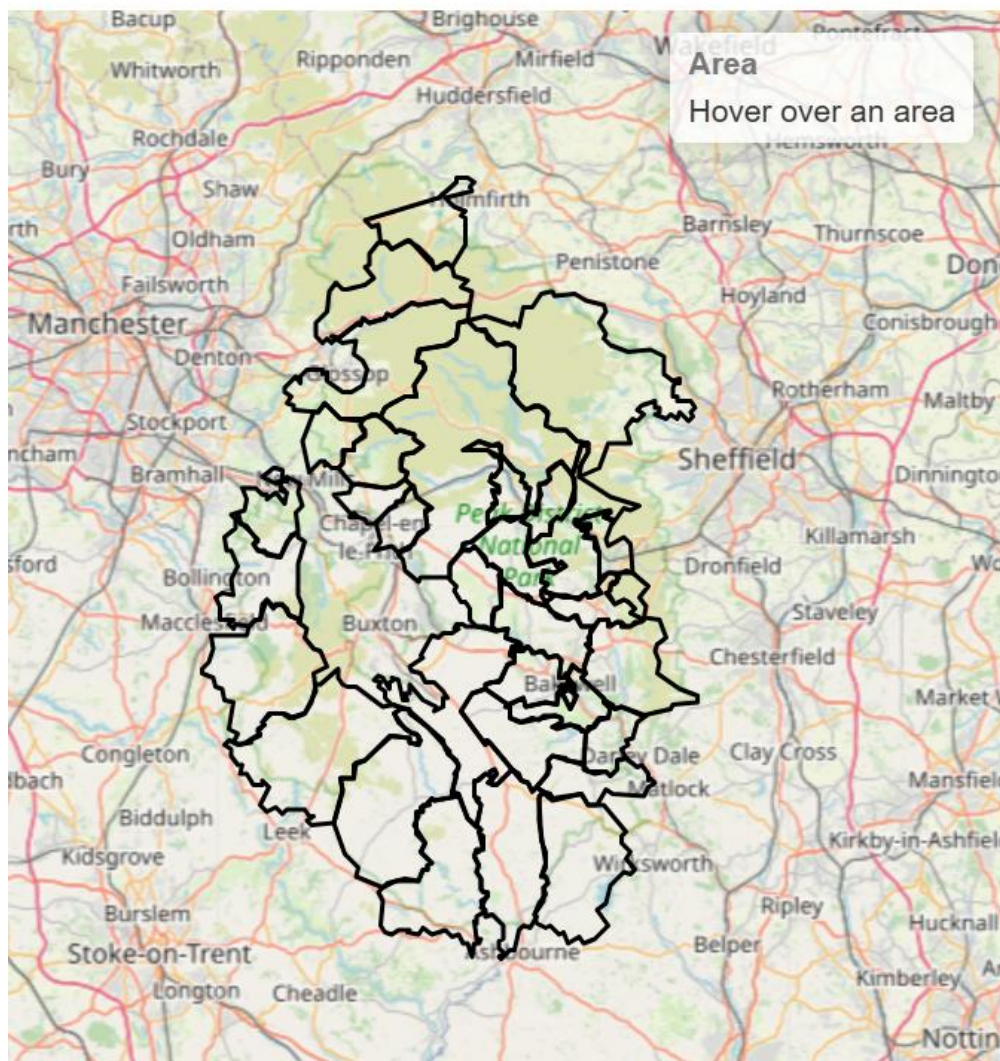


Source: ONS Census

4.9 The lowest level of geography that data can be broken down to is Output Areas. However, ONS sources do not usually provide the data to this level of geography. Therefore, we have taken the approach of using the most granular level of data available which is the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) in most cases and sometimes the Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA). These have been built up in a way

that best represents the National Park boundaries whilst avoiding the inclusion of major housing or employment areas, such as Buxton, which are not included within the National Park boundary. Therefore, the analysis in this report is a representative estimate of the Peak District economy. In some instances more specific adjustments have been made to the data to improve accuracy, as noted below.

Figure 3.4 – Peak District National Park LSOA Boundary



Source: ONS Census

Sectoral Profile of the Economy

4.10 There were around 15,458 jobs based in the Peak District National Park in 2023 according to the latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) data

(Business Register and Employment Survey, (BRES)). However these figures exclude non-VAT paying self-employed businesses (which could make up 5-10% of jobs) and Farm Agriculture (SIC subclass 01000) so employee counts are underestimated, particularly with Agriculture employment. The DEFRA Census 2024 states that there is a total Agricultural labour force in the Peak District of 3,032. On balance, the best estimate of total employment in the Peak District is around 18,500 jobs.

4.11 Table 3.1 shows the BRES ONS split of employees by sector compared to the two local authority districts that cover the largest areas of the National Park, the East Midlands, and England & Wales. The largest sectors of employment in the Peak District according to the BRES are:

- Hospitality – due to the attractiveness and accessibility of the Park to tourists.
- Manufacturing – including food, drink and craft-based industries.
- Wholesale & Retail – due to popularity with tourists for picturesque market towns with independent shopping.

4.12 Weighting has been applied to BRES data where necessary to account for skew caused by LSOA boundaries that fall outside of the National Park area and include large employment sites (for example at Chapel-en-le-Frith). Therefore, this data should be taken only as an estimated representation of the sectoral make-up of the Peak District National Park. As noted, these figures also exclude non-VAT paying self-employed businesses and Farm Agriculture (SIC subclass 01000) so some sector employee counts are underestimated, particularly with Agriculture employment.

4.13 The Hospitality sector makes up a notably higher percentage of the Peak District economy compared to the other comparators. Locally in High Peak and Derbyshire Dales local authority areas, the Manufacturing sector makes up a significantly higher percentage of the Peak District economy compared with nationally. This is still the case in

the National Park area but at a lower proportion due to major manufacturing employers sitting outside of the park boundary.

Table 4.1 Employment Jobs by Sector, Peak District National Park vs Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, East Midlands and England & Wales 2023

Industry	Employment Jobs	Peak District National Park (%)	Derbyshire Dales (%)	High Peak (%)	East Midlands (%)	England & Wales (%)
Hospitality	4,079	26%	15%	10%	7%	8%
Manufacturing	2,045	13%	15%	19%	12%	8%
Wholesale & Retail	1,931	12%	14%	15%	15%	14%
Education	1,115	7%	6%	10%	9%	9%
Health	1,077	7%	9%	13%	15%	14%
Prof, Sci & Tech	1,058	7%	7%	6%	7%	9%
Arts & Leisure	833	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Transport & storage	567	4%	3%	5%	7%	5%
Construction	530	3%	5%	4%	4%	5%
Business Admin & Support	463	3%	3%	4%	8%	9%
Property	456	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Other Services	441	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Mining etc.	360	2%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Info & Comms	266	2%	2%	2%	3%	5%
Agriculture etc.	88	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%
Public Admin & Defence	65	0%	9%	3%	4%	5%
Water, Waste & Utilities	54	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Financial & Insurance	30	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%
Total	15,458					

Source: Icen analysis of ONS Business Register and Employment Survey

4.14 To demonstrate a more accurate sector size comparison, the Peak District National Park has been compared to Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, the East Midlands, and England & Wales through the use of a

location quotient (LQ) (% employees in the Peak District divided by % employees across District/Region/England).

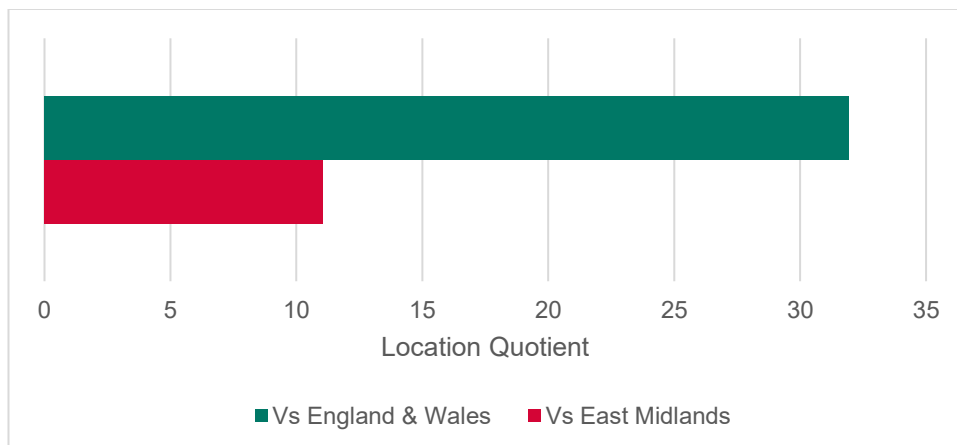
- 4.15 The following sectors make up a higher percentage of the Peak District economy compared to regionally and nationally: Mining; Hospitality; Arts & Leisure; Manufacturing; Other Services & Property.
- 4.16 To counteract skewing effects, mining has been excluded from Figure 3.3. Mining has been presented individually in Figure 3.4 below. Whilst mining only makes up 2% of all employees in the Peak District National Park (360 total jobs), this percentage is significantly higher than the proportion of mining employees seen regionally and nationally, equivalent to 11 times more than the proportion of employees regionally and 32 times more than the proportion of employees nationally.
- 4.17 Overall, typically office or lab-based sectors such as Professional, Scientific and Technical professions, Information & Communication and Business Administration have lower representation.
- 4.18 The Agriculture figures should be disregarded for reasons noted – agricultural employment is explored using an alternative data source (DEFRA Census 2024) later in this Chapter.

Figure 3.5 – Location Quotient of Employment in the Peak District Vs Region and England & Wales 2023



Source: IcenI analysis of ONS Business Register and Employment Survey

Figure 3.6 – Location Quotient of Employment in Mining in the Peak District Vs Region and England & Wales 2023



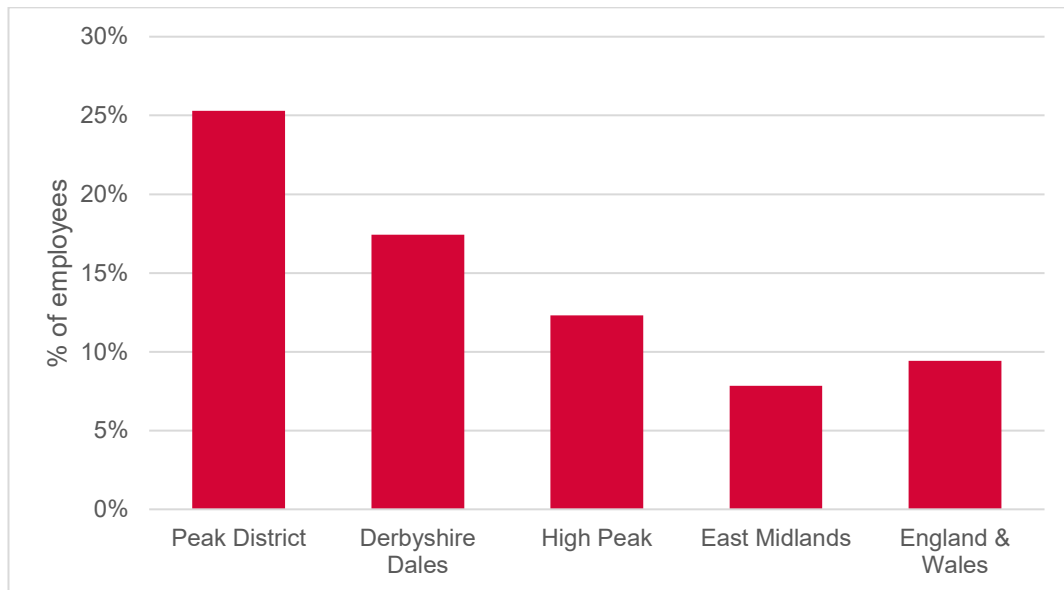
Source: IcenI analysis of ONS Business Register and Employment Survey

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- 4.19 There has been virtually no growth in BRES recorded employment in the Peak District National Park area since 2015. However, due to issues with LSOA boundary overlaps between National Park and non-National Park areas, this data should be treated with caution. Considering change in the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak areas, there has been growth in: Manufacturing, Transport & storage, Hospitality, ICT, Professional services and the Arts. There has been decline in Agriculture, Construction, Retail and Business admin.
- 4.20 Some sectors are considered in more detail below.

Tourism

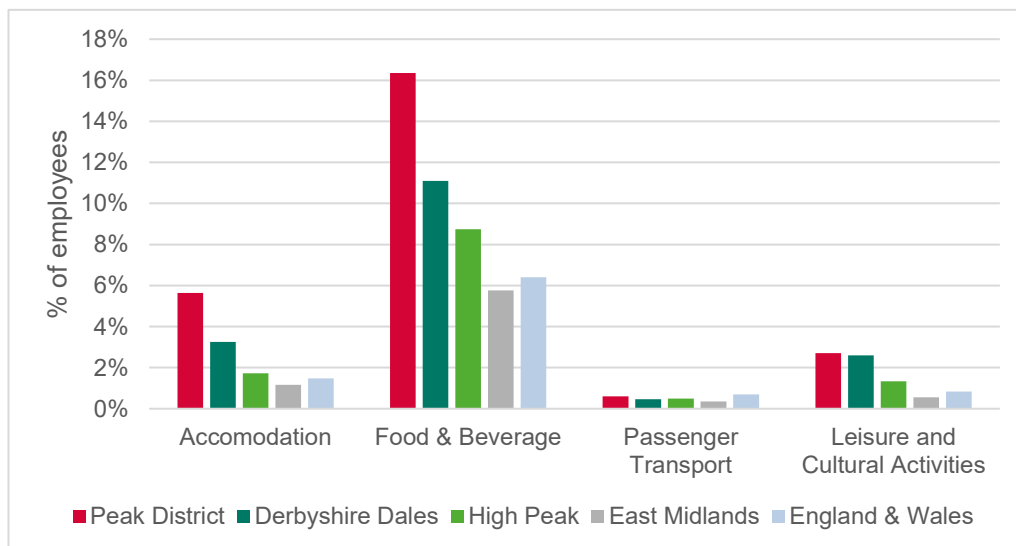
- 4.21 According to the most recent STEAM data from 2023, the Peak District and Derbyshire attract over 42 million visitors annually and generates £2.9 billion per year.
- 4.22 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes are a five-digit UK classification system used to classify businesses by their economic activity. By combining SIC codes to build a representative picture of the tourism industry in the Peak District, it is clear that tourism is a vital industry to the National Park. This data should be treated with some caution due to issues with the overlapping of LSOAs across National Park and non-National Park areas along the National Park boundary, as referred to previously, however it represents a good proxy. This data does not include sectoral weighting by LSOA which means that total employment is likely to be overestimated. According to this analysis, the tourism industry employs around 5,515 people which represents around 25% of all employees. This is higher than the wider local district areas of Derbyshire Dales and High Peak, where tourism accounts for 17% and 12% respectively, and is significantly higher than the regional (8%) and national (9%) average.

Figure 3.7 – Proportion of Employees in the Tourism Sector, 2023



Source: IcenI analysis of ONS Business Register and Employment Survey

Figure 3.8 – Proportion of Employees Across the Tourism Sector by Subsector, 2023



Source: IcenI analysis of ONS Business Register and Employment Survey

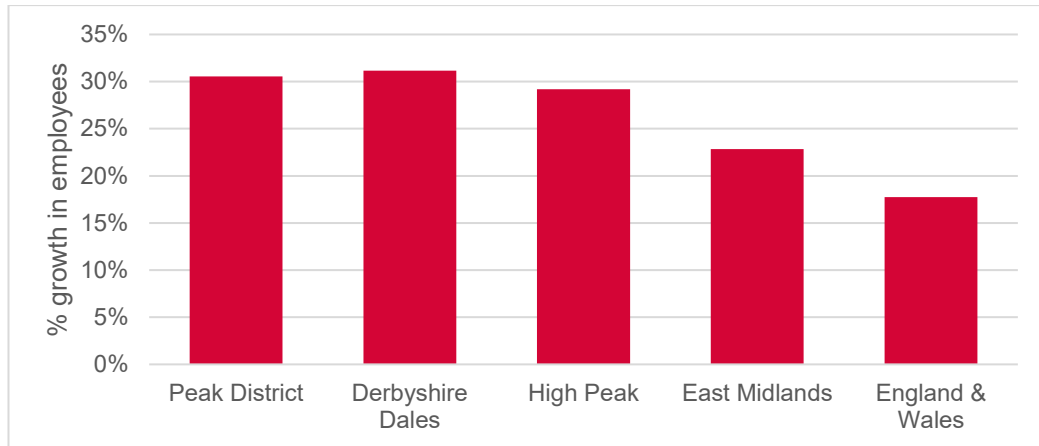
4.23 By breaking employment down into 4 subsectors of the tourism industry; Accommodation, Food & Beverage, Passenger Transport, and

Leisure & Cultural Activities; it becomes evident that most of the tourism employment is in the Food & Beverage sector at 16% of total employment. This is compared with 11% and 9% in Derbyshire Dales and High Peak, and just 6% on average both regionally and nationally. Specifically, 9% of all employment in the Peak District is in Public Houses and Bars and 6% is in Restaurants and Cafes. This highlights the importance of Bakewell which is the National Park's only market town, but also the role of other rural villages in supporting employment within pubs, cafés, tearooms and restaurants.

4.24 Accounting for 6% of all employment, Accommodation is also a large sector in comparison to regional and national averages of just 1%. 4% of all employment in the Peak District is in the Hotel industry. Leisure and Cultural Activities are also a specialism, accounting for 3% of all employment, and this is driven by activities classified under Historic and Visitor sites and Nature Reserve activities. These are likely to include activities such as walking trails, stately homes, reservoirs and viewpoints, as highlighted within the PSNP State of the Park Report (2021)³.

³ PSNP State of the Park Report. 2021. Available: <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/state-of-the-park-report>

Figure 3.9 – Growth in Tourism Employment, 2015-23



Source: Icen analysis of ONS Business Register and Employment Survey

- 4.25 The tourism industry has seen huge growth, including in local districts Derbyshire Dales and High Peak. The Peak District tourism employment has grown by 31% since 2015, despite growth of 23% in the East Midlands and just 18% in England and Wales.

Agriculture

- 4.26 Farming is known to be one of the Peak District’s key industries, with its largely rural landscape resulting in over 87% of the Peak District being farmed. As previously outlined, BRES data excludes farming agriculture employment from its data, so it is highly likely that the true picture of agriculture employment is not being picked up in the BRES data. In addition, BRES data does not capture non-VAT paying self-employed businesses which is likely to make up a large proportion of agricultural employment. DEFRA Census data provides a more reliable estimate of agricultural employment.

- 4.27 The most recent DEFRA Census provides agricultural employment statistics for 2024. The data shows that there is a total of 1,368 holdings in the PDNP area across 107,487 ha of land. This is the largest number

of holdings of all the National Parks in England. The average farm size has reduced from 89 ha in 2013 to 79 ha in 2024.

- 4.28 The DEFRA Census 2024 states that there is a total Agricultural labour force in the Peak District of 3,032, including both full, part-time and casual workers. This has reduced by 4% (-128 employees) since 2013.

Mining and Quarrying

- 4.29 According to the State of the Park Report, in 2019-20 there were 26 active quarry sites in the Peak District National Park, covering almost 900 hectares. These range from large limestone quarries to small building stone quarries.
- 4.30 Whilst Mining now only accounts for 360 jobs in the Peak District (2%), the proportion of jobs far outweighs the regional and national picture where Mining accounts for just 0.2% and 0.1% of employment respectively. However, there has been no job growth in this sector in the National Park area between 2015-2023.

Business Sizes, Formation and Survival

- 4.31 According to ONS IDBR data (2024), there are 8,075 businesses operating in the Peak District National Park. Table 3.2 shows the split of enterprises in the Peak District by size compared to Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, East Midlands and England & Wales. The split by enterprise size band shows that the Peak District has a slightly higher proportion of micro businesses than seen elsewhere and a lower proportion of small-large businesses.

Table 4.2 Split of Enterprises by Size, Peak District National Park vs Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, East Midlands and England & Wales 2024

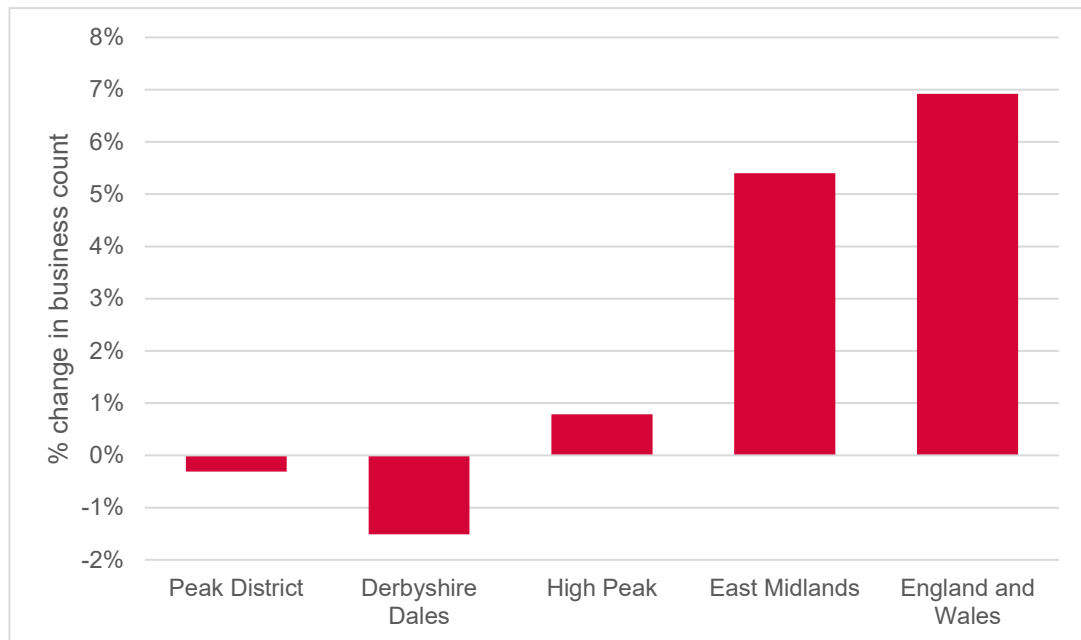
	Peak District National Park	Derbyshire Dales	High Peak	East Midlands	England & Wales
Total businesses	8,075	4,570	3,850	182,030	2.5 million
Micro (0 to 9 employees)	91.1%	89.8%	89.1%	88.9%	89.2%
Small (10 to 49)	7.7%	8.9%	9.4%	9.0%	8.7%
Medium-sized (50 to 249)	1.0%	1.1%	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%
Large (250+)	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%

Source: ONS UK Business Counts*

*MSOAs have been used to capture the PDNP area. Therefore, business counts should be interpreted with caution.

- 4.32 The Peak District has seen a slight drop in the number of businesses located in the National Park area between 2016-24, with a loss of 25 businesses, equivalent to -0.3%. This appears to be led by a 2% drop in the number of businesses in Derbyshire Dales, as High Peak has experienced slight business growth. This is in contrast to much more significant business growth across the East Midlands of 5% and nationally of 7%.

Figure 3.10 Change in Business Count 2016-24



Source: ONS UK Business Counts

- 4.33 Despite an overall reduction in the business count in the Peak District since 2016, the number of medium sized enterprises has grown by 25, representing a 45% increase.
- 4.34 The ONS IDBR data also records the number of enterprises by industry. For the Peak District National Park area, this has also been generated at MSOA level so should be analysed with caution due to likely overestimation in some sectors, particularly manufacturing. For example, High Peak MSOA 013 covers part of the National Park but also much of Chapel-en-le-Frith including industrial sites such as Walker Industrial Park. Another example is Derbyshire Dales MSOA 006 which extends across parts of the National Park, but also towns and villages outside of the National Park area including Cromford, Matlock Bath and Darley Bridge.
- 4.35 This data suggests that the PDNP area's largest sector by number of enterprises is Agriculture, which has 1,615 enterprises, equivalent to 20%. This is followed by Professional, Scientific and Technical (1,160

enterprises, 14%), Wholesale & Retail (970 enterprises, 12%) and Construction (835 enterprises, 10%).

Table 4.3 Enterprises by Industry, Peak District National Park vs Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, East Midlands and England & Wales 2024

Industry	Enterprise Count	Peak District National Park (%)	Derbyshire Dales (%)	High Peak (%)	East Midlands (%)	England & Wales (%)
Agriculture etc.	1,615	20%	19%	8%	6%	4%
Mining etc.	5	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Manufacturing	465	6%	6%	7%	6%	5%
Water, Waste & Utilities	20	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Construction	835	10%	11%	13%	14%	14%
Wholesale & Retail	970	12%	12%	15%	16%	15%
Transport & storage	230	3%	3%	3%	6%	4%
Hospitality	665	8%	9%	8%	6%	6%
Info & Comms	355	4%	4%	6%	5%	7%
Financial & Insurance	105	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%
Property	275	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Prof, Sci & Tech	1,160	14%	13%	15%	13%	16%
Business Admin & Support	490	6%	5%	7%	8%	9%
Public Admin & Defence	45	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Education	130	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Health	245	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Arts & Leisure	210	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Other Services	225	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Total	8,045					

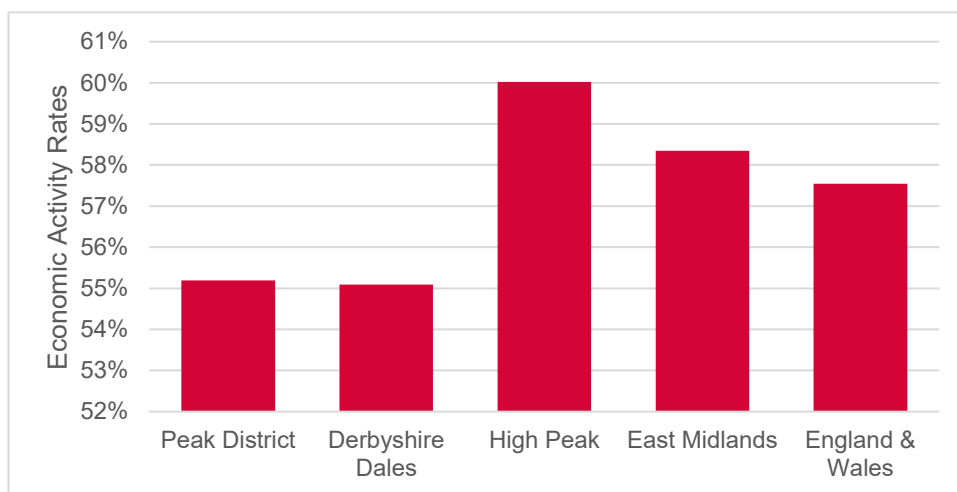
Source: ONS UK Business Counts*

*MSOAs have been used to capture the PDNP area. Therefore, business counts should be interpreted with caution.

Labour Market

- 4.36 A key measure of an area's labour force is the percentage of economically active people in the population. This is defined as those in employment plus those who are unemployed but seeking work.
- 4.37 For the following statistics on the labour force in the Peak District, Census 2021 data has been used as other sources do not provide data at National Park level.
- 4.38 The Peak District's economic activity rate falls below the East Midlands and the national figure at 55%. This is particularly low compared with High Peak where economic activity rates in 2021 were 60%.

Figure 3.11 Economic Activity Rate, 2021



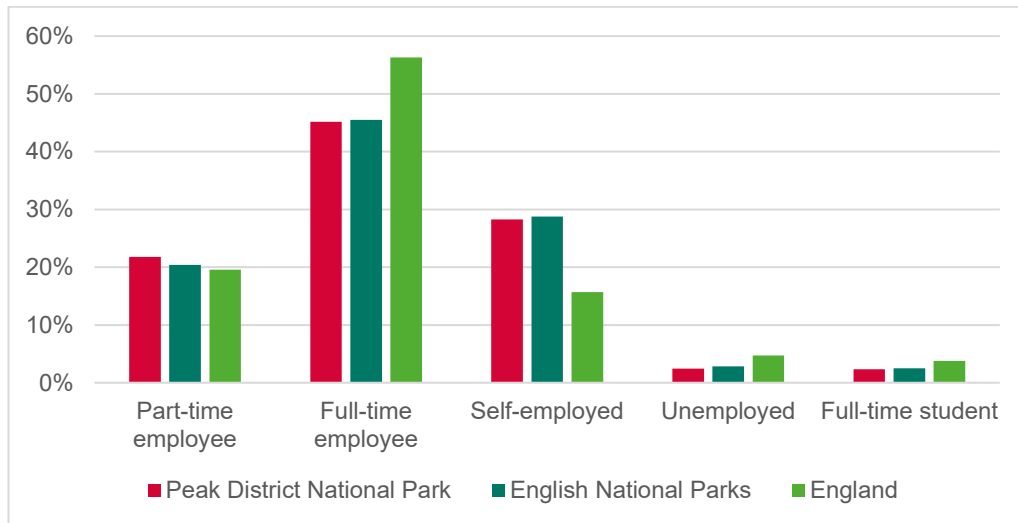
Source: ONS Census 2021

*Usual residents aged 16+. Excludes economically active full-time students

- 4.39 Out of an economically active resident population of 17,525 within the Peak District, 45.2% are employed in full-time positions, 7,919 in total. This is broadly the same proportion as the average for English national parks (45.5%), but considerably lower than England on average (56.3%).
- 4.40 The Peak District sees a slightly greater proportion of part-time employees than the national average at 21.8% compared to 19.6%.

4.41 A further 28.3% of the Peak District’s economically active residents are self-employed, in line with the English National Park average (28.8%), but nearly double the national level (15.7%).

Figure 3.12 Economically Active Residents by type



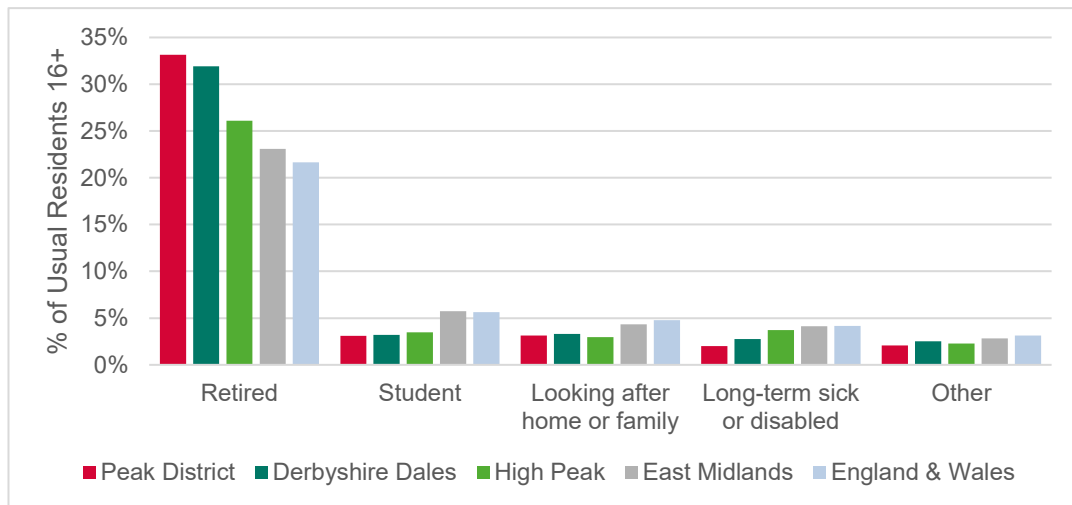
Source: ONS Census 2021

NB: Full-Time Students may also be in full-time or part-time employment

4.42 In terms of inactivity, the Peak District has a higher rate of people in retirement (33% of usual residents aged 16+) compared to the regional and national average. This is also higher than the local districts as a whole, despite them also being a popular residence for the retired population.

4.43 Other reasons for inactivity are being a student, looking after home or family and long-term sick or disabled. The Peak District sees a lower proportion of its residents reporting these reasons for inactivity compared to the regional or national average..

Figure 3.13 Reason for Inactivity, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

4.44 The unemployment rate is 1.4% in the Peak District which is a lower unemployment rate than comparator areas, and particularly than England & Wales (2.8%) for the period.

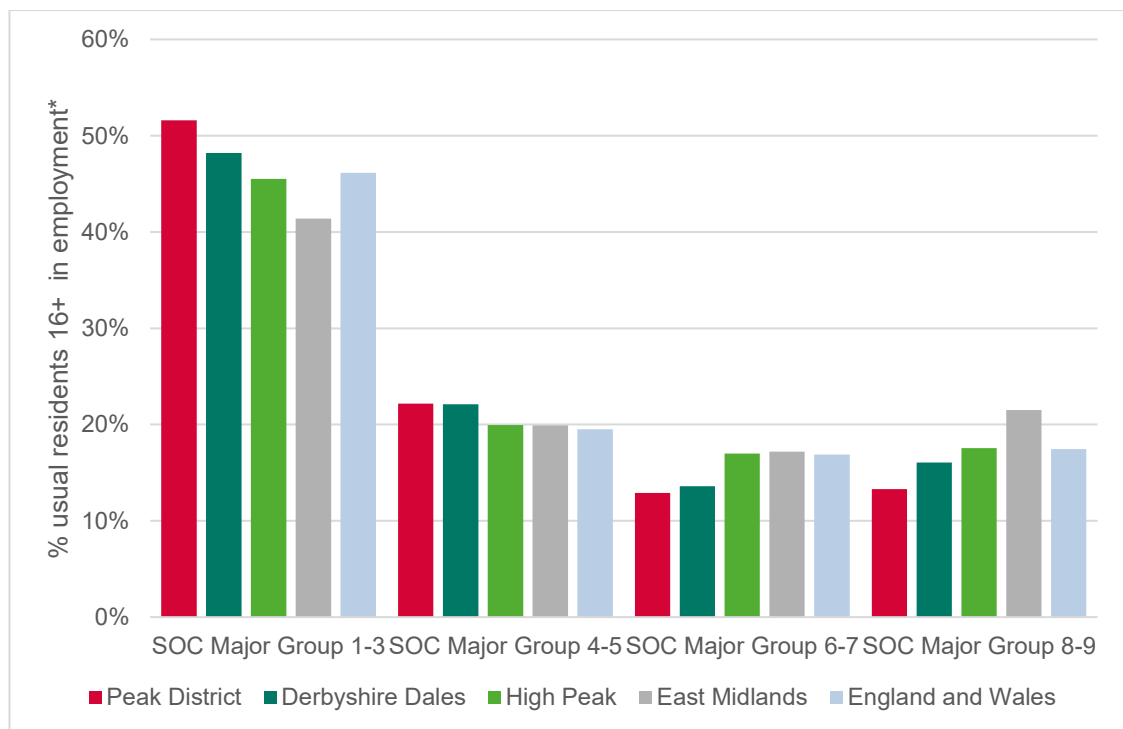
Occupations, Skills and Earnings

4.45 In terms of occupational groups, as the chart below reports, the Peak District (52%) has a significantly higher proportion of its population in the top three occupation groups (managers, professionals and technical roles) compared with the local (48% and 46%), regional (41%) and national averages (46%). These occupational groups are generally associated with the highest incomes. The Peak District also has a slightly higher proportion of the second level group of occupations (Admin; Secretarial; Skilled Trades) than comparators. This suggests that the Peak District is a desirable place to live for those working in high earning occupations.

4.46 The Peak District has a lower proportion of residents employed in the four lowest level occupation groups. This is in contrast to the regional picture where the lowest level of occupations take up a higher proportion of employment than nationally. The majority of jobs relating

to tourism and hospitality (which help to support the National Park’s second purpose) are likely to be classified within these four lowest level occupational groups (SOC Major Group 6-7 and 8-9). As identified later in this report through stakeholder engagement (Chapter 4), issues relating to housing affordability mean that many people within these lower occupational groups struggle to afford to live within the National Park and have to commute in from elsewhere. Many of these jobs are also likely to be part-time, which further exacerbates housing affordability issues.

Figure 3.14 Occupations⁴, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

*Usual residents aged 16+ in employment the week before the Census

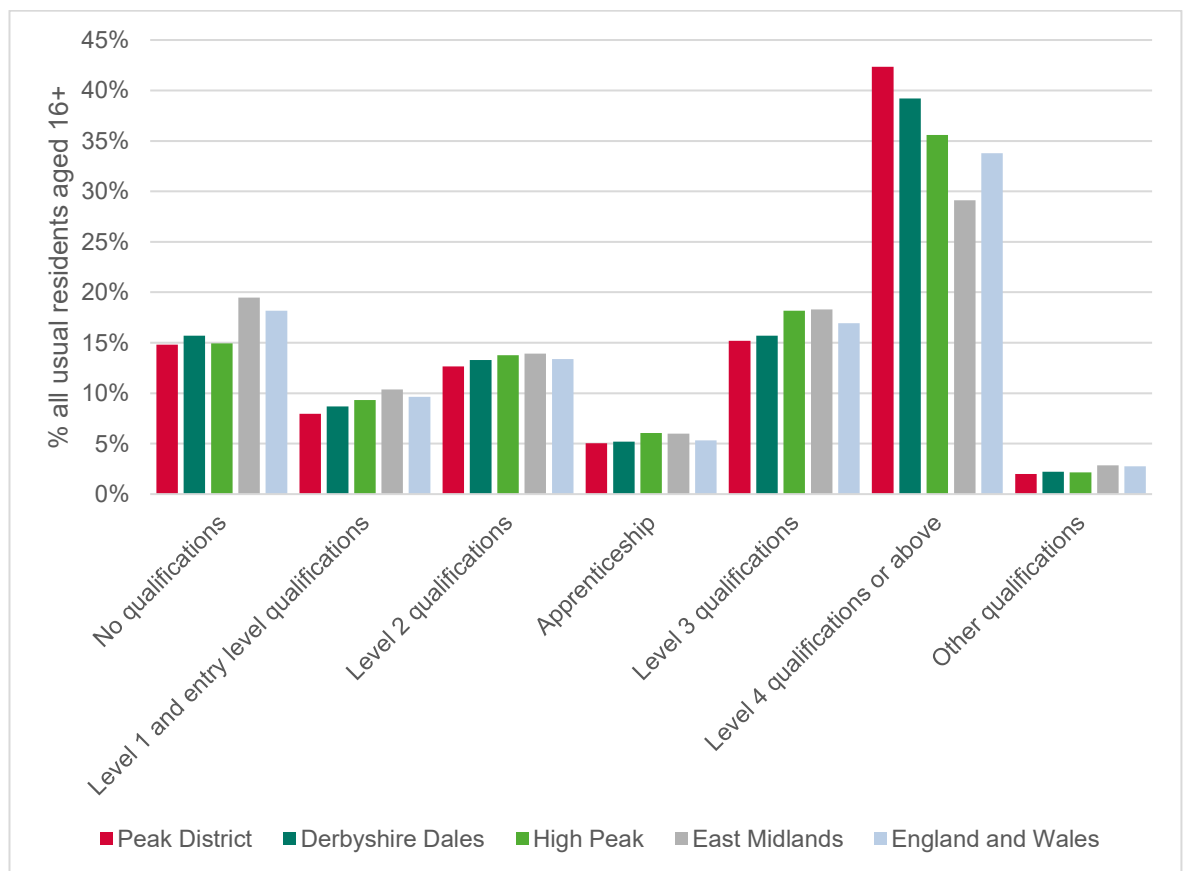
4.47 In terms of educational attainment, latest Census data reports that the Peak District’s working age population has a higher level of degree

⁴ 1 = Managers, Directors & Senior Officials, 2 = Professional Occupations, 3 = Associate Prof & Tech, 4 = Admin & Secretarial, 5 = Skilled Trades, 6 = Caring, Leisure and Other Services, 7 = Sales & Customer Services 8 = Process Plant & Machine Operatives, 9 = Elementary Occupations

educated workers (NVQ4+) than the wider comparator areas at 42% of usual residents aged 16+. This is higher than local districts Derbyshire Dales and High Peak, but the difference is particularly stark compared with the regional average where only 29% are educated to NVQ4+.

4.48 All other skill levels in the Peak District fall below the average proportions compared to comparators, with only 15% possessing no qualifications, compared with 19% across the East Midlands.

Figure 3.15 Qualifications, 2021



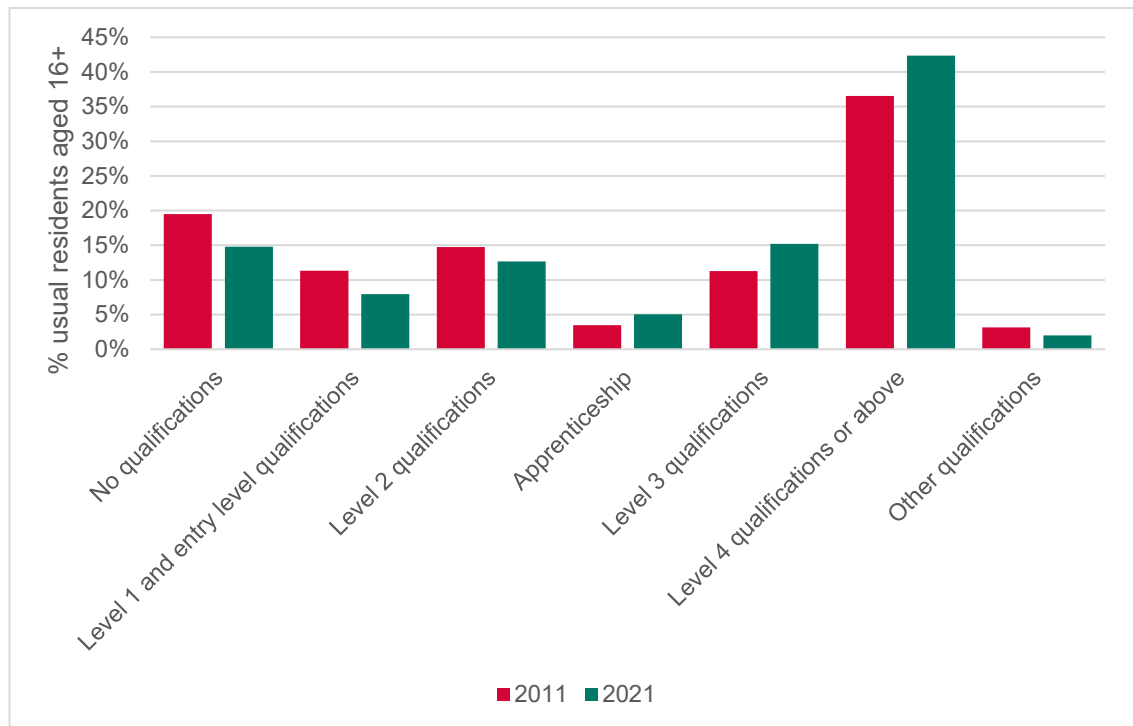
Source: ONS Census 2021

4.49 Despite there being almost 5,000 less residents in the Peak District qualified to the highest level of qualification Level 4+, the proportion of the population qualified to this level increased from 37% in the 2011 Census to 42% in 2021.

4.50 The proportion of those qualified to Level 3 and Apprenticeship also increased. The proportion qualified to Level 3 increased from 11% in

the 2011 Census to 15% in the 2021 Census. For Apprenticeship level, the proportion increased from 3% to 5% between the two censuses. The proportion of residents with no qualifications reduced from 19% to 15% over the 10-year period.

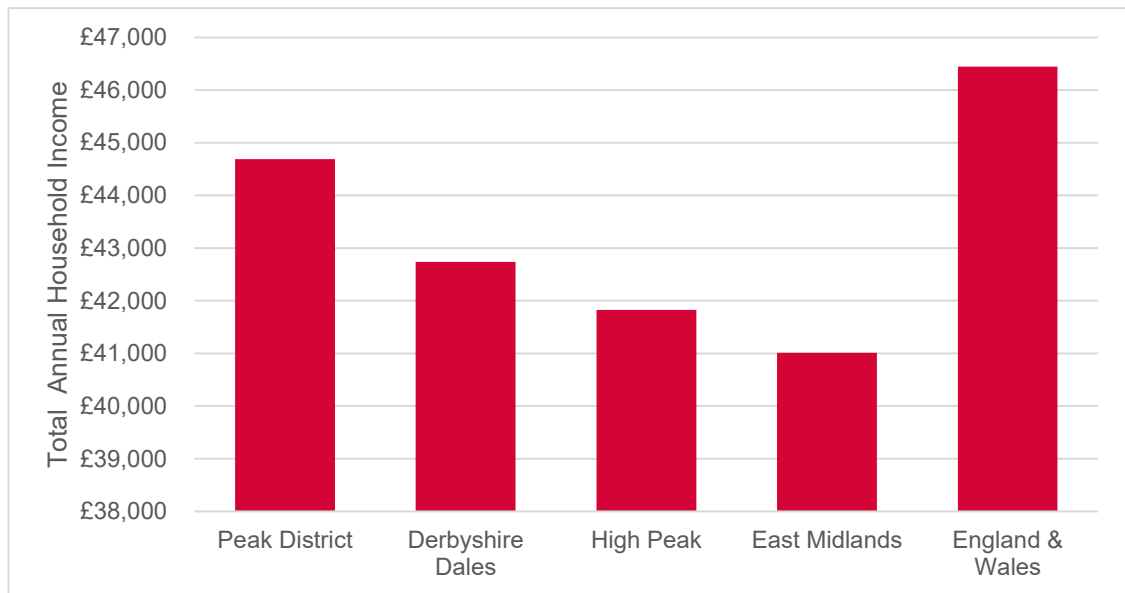
Figure 3.16 Change in Qualifications, 2011-21



Source: ONS Census 2011 & 2021

4.51 The most recent earning figures available at National Park level show that the Peak District has an average total annual household income of £44,688. This is higher than local districts Derbyshire Dales (£42,740) and High Peak (£41,827), and the regional average (£41,012). This aligns with the occupation data presented previously which shows a higher proportion of the resident population in highly skilled (and therefore generally higher paid) jobs compared to comparator areas. However, the average falls 4% short of the national average of £46,446.

Figure 3.17 Average Total Annual Household Income, 2020



Source: ONS Income Estimates for Small Areas, 2020

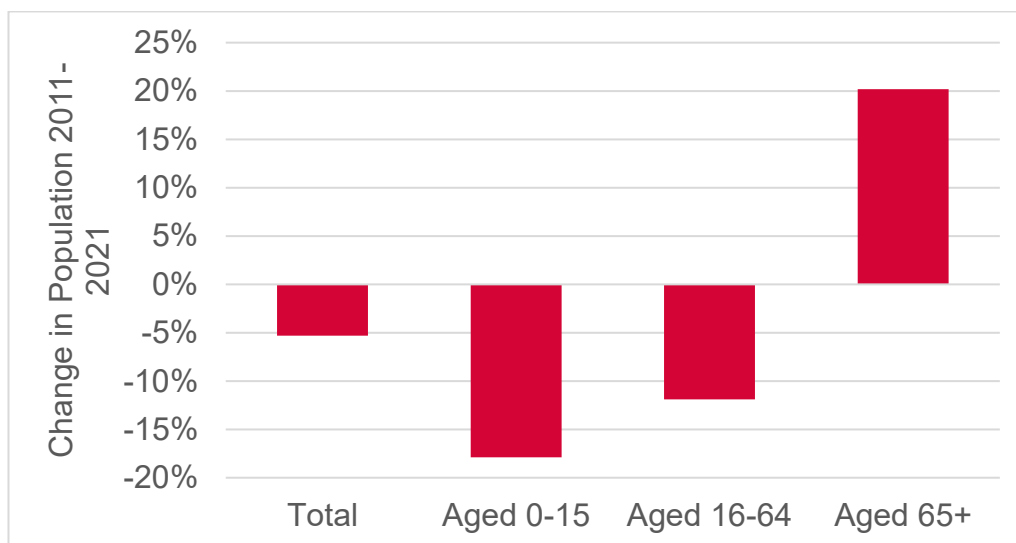
Population

4.52 In December 2023 Lichfields published a Peak District National Park Population Projection Update & Housing Needs Assessment, commissioned by the PDNPA. The report states that the Peak District has seen a declining population over the past ten years, with its population falling from 37,905 in the 2011 census to 35,897 in the 2021 census. This represents a decline of 2,008 or 5.3%.

4.53 when analysing the population change by age group, it is clear that the overall population decline has been led by a reduction in the working age population and younger people. The Lichfields report states that the number of working age (16-64 years) and younger people (Under 16 years) declined by 12% and 17.9% respectively between 2011 and 2021.

- 4.54 In fact, the only growth within the Peak District’s population has been in older age groups (65+ years) between 2011 and 2021 – increasing by 1,809 or 20%.
- 4.55 Any instances of population growth between 2011 and 2021 have been driven exclusively by net migration, with natural change consistently negative over the decade.

Figure 3.18 Peak District Population Change 2011-2021



Source: Census data as reported in Peak District National Park Population Projection Update & Housing Needs Assessment (December 2023)

- 4.56 Lichfields further identify a strong contrast between the population structure of England & Wales and of the Peak District National Park in 2021. There are proportionally far fewer residents under the age of 50 across all age cohorts than might be expected nationally, while the converse is true for over 50s.
- 4.57 The data clearly highlights that the Peak District has a rapidly ageing population that is not being matched by growth in new working age residents=.

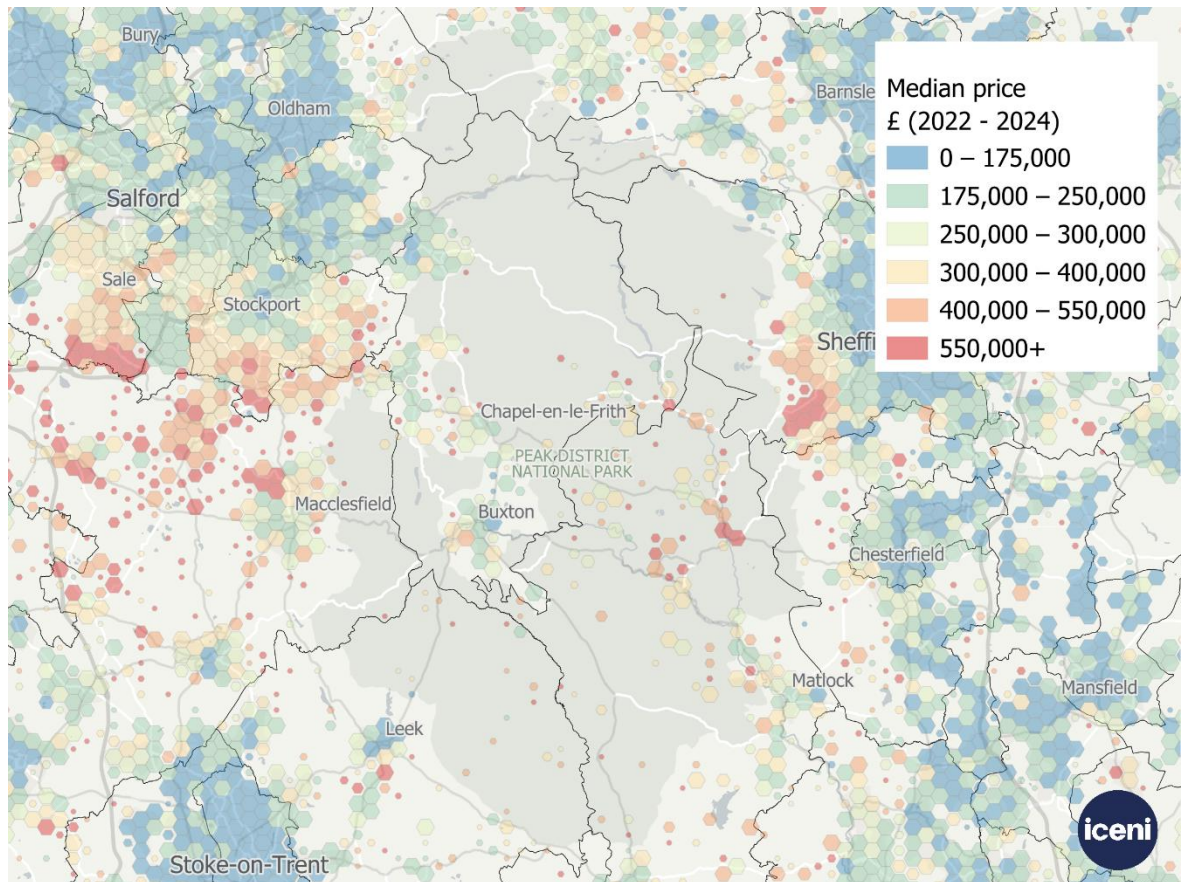
House Prices

4.58 The house price map in Figure 3.19 shows that a large proportion of the land area in the Peak District is not residential. However, where there are clusters of housing, the house prices are generally very high, with areas in the East of the National Park such as Ashford-in-the-Water, Bakewell and Baslow averaging at over £550,000.

This aligns with analysis undertaken by Lichfield's⁵ indicating that in many cases, house prices within the Peak District National Park attract a premium compared to district-wide average house prices. For example, the analysis found that the five-year average median house price (2019-2023) for Staffordshire Moorlands was £192,000 compared to £382,058 for the area of the district within the National Park.

⁵ Lichfields Briefing Note: Peak District National Park Authority: new standard methodology for calculating housing need. February 2025.

Figure 3.19 Peak District House Price Map, 2022-24



Source: IcenI Analysis of HM Land Registry Price Paid Data

Local Economic Baseline Summary

- 4.59 The Peak District National Park is a large rural area with outstanding natural beauty located in relatively close proximity to a number of major cities. These factors attract millions of visitors every year which has led to the tourism industry making up a significant portion of all employment in the area, with particularly high employment in the Food and beverage industry – many of these jobs are part-time and low paid in nature.
- 4.60 Tourism, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Wholesale & Retail are the largest employment sectors. Total employment estimates are for 18,500 jobs, of which around 3,000 are in Agriculture. The highest business counts are in Tourism, Professional Services and Wholesale & Retail.

Many jobs within these sectors – especially tourism and retail – are part-time and low-paid.

4.61 Despite growing popularity from all ages to visit the Peak District, the resident population is declining overall and ageing rapidly. This has meant that a large proportion of the resident population is economically inactive due to retirement.

4.62 The Peak District residents have a higher-than-average skill level and a larger proportion of high-level occupations than average. This translates into high house prices and suggests a high level of out-commuting of residents to nearby cities. Housing affordability poses an issue for people who live and work within the National Park.

5. Business and stakeholder perspectives

Business Survey

- 5.1 A survey was undertaken to understand the views of businesses, farmers and land managers within the National Park regarding issues such as current and future investment, diversification, innovation, staffing and demand for land or premises. The findings from the survey would be used to feed into recommendations for Local Plan policy development. Two surveys were developed: one survey was tailored towards farmers and land managers, whilst the other was suitable for all other businesses. Appendices A3 and A4 provide the full list of survey questions.
- 5.2 The surveys were live from 9th June-1st July 2025 and were publicised by the PDNPA via their website, email distribution, social media feeds and business newsletters. The Survey was open to businesses across all sectors and sizes who rent/own at least one business premises, or own/manage agricultural or other land. In total, 52 businesses (27 businesses and 25 farmers/land managers) completed the survey.

Survey for all Businesses (excluding farmers/land managers)

Introduction and Nature of Business

- 5.3 Businesses from a wide range of sectors took part in the survey, however the 'Accommodation and food services' sector had the greatest representation, followed by 'Mining and quarrying'. Nearly 80% of respondents consider their business operations to be related to the visitor/tourist economy. A large proportion (57%) of respondent businesses were well established, having been trading for over 10 years.

5.4 The majority (90%) of business respondents were micro businesses (1-10 employees) and all businesses were SMEs (<250 employees). This broadly aligns with the data presented in Chapter 3 sourced from the ONS UK Business Counts, which states that 91.1% of businesses within the Peak District National Park are micro businesses and 99.8% of businesses are SMEs. The table below provides a breakdown of employment by contract type:

Table 5.1 Breakdown of employment by contract type, Business Survey respondents

	Jobs Count	Proportion of total jobs
Full time	63	45%
Full time, seasonal	0	N/A
Part time	66	47%
Part time, seasonal	12	9%
Total	141	100%

Source: Icen analysis

NB: Figures may not sum due to rounding

5.5 The 26 respondents employed 141 staff members in total. Of these employees, a high proportion work part time (47%) with a further 9% working part-time but seasonally. 45% work full time. Census data shows that 33% of employees work part time, which implies that this survey sample has a greater proportion of part time workers – this is likely related to the large proportion of business respondents who identified their business operations as being related to the visitor/ tourism economy.

5.6 Of part time staff, 50% were reported as aged under 25 years, 20% were aged 26-45 years and 30% were aged 45+ years.

5.7 The table below reports the count of employees (full time and part time) in different salary bands. 30% of part time employees earn £5,000 or less. 41% of full-time employees earn £21,000-£30,000.

Table 5.2 Count of Part Time and Full Time Employees by Salary Band

	Part time	Full time
£5,000 or less	25	0
£5,000 - £10,000	10	0
£11,000 - £20,000	44	8
£21,000 - £30,000	2	23
£31,000 - £50,000	2	19
£51,000 - £100,000	0	6
£101,000 +	0	0
Total	83	56

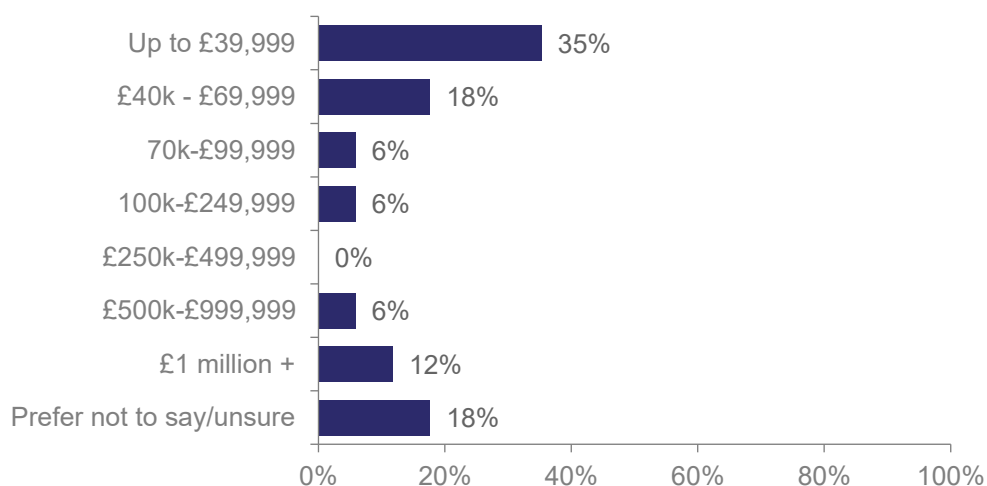
Source: Icen analysis

NB: Minor discrepancy in total jobs compared to earlier figures due to question response rates

Business Performance and Growth

- 5.8 The majority of respondents saw turnover of less than £40,000 in FY2024/25. This aligns with the general business demography represented in the survey which is largely micro businesses.

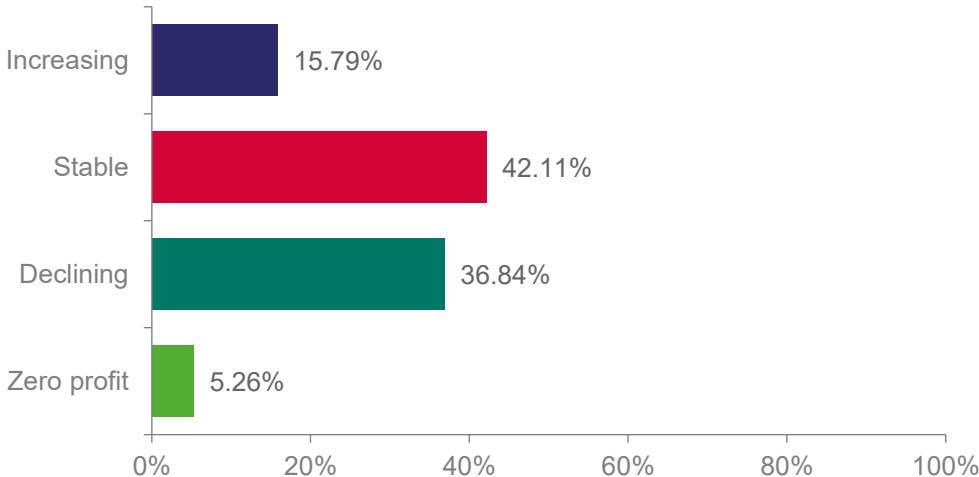
Figure 4.1 Reported business turnover of respondents



Source: Icen analysis

5.9 The majority of respondents described their business' profitability over the last five years as stable or declining (42% and 37% respectively).

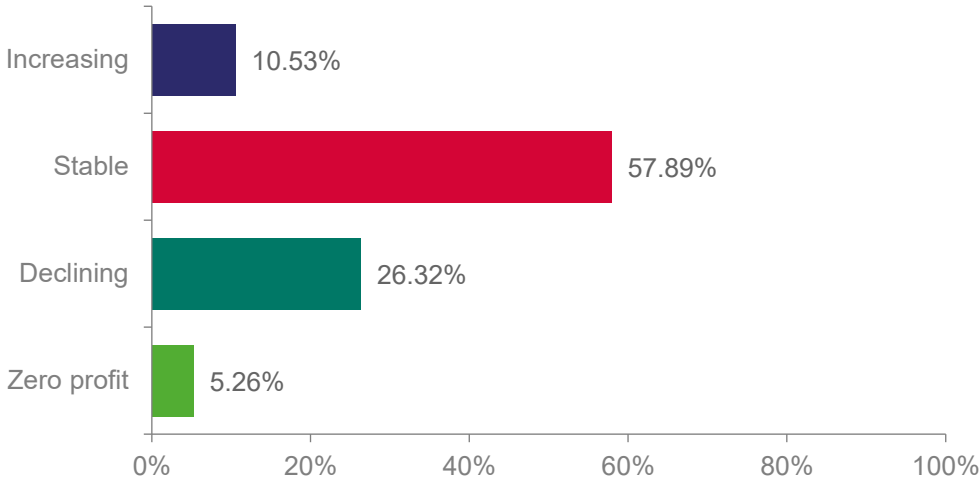
Figure 4.2 Responses to “How would you describe your business’ profitability over the last five years?”



Source: Icen analysis

Looking ahead, 58% of respondents anticipate their business' profitability to be stable over the next 5 years, whilst just over a quarter expect declining profitability.

Figure 4.3 Responses to “How do you anticipate your business’ profitability to be over the next five years?”



Source: Icen analysis

5.10 Over 80% of respondents stated that they experience seasonal demand for their goods or services, with low demand commonly reported through December-March.

5.11 Businesses were asked to select what they saw as the main barriers to growth for their business in the next two years. The most common response was rising overhead costs, followed by staff retention and recruitment and planning and development restrictions. Other comments included:

- Reduction in local facilities, e.g. bus routes, pubs, shops
- Imminent retirement
- Poor parking infrastructure
- COVID-19 impact on holiday let business

Staffing

5.12 The majority of businesses (nearly 50%) expect their staff numbers to remain the same over the next 3 years. Only 3 businesses expected their staff numbers to grow over the next three years, and the largest estimated growth was 4 employees (equivalent to 9% growth for this business).

5.13 On average, respondents reported that 50% of their staff who work in the Peak District National Park also live within the National Park. When asked how employees travel to work, the most common response was private car, followed by working from home/remote work.

5.14 25% of respondents reported that they have had issues in finding staff with the right skills locally, with 40% offering internal/external training opportunities for employees. One respondent within the accommodation and food sector noted that whilst part time hourly rates of pay are good, the seasonal/flexible nature of work is unattractive. Another respondent stated that they are unable to draw on employment pools in Derby or Manchester due to their commitment to sustainable travel and poor rail access. Similarly, another respondent noted that poor public transport connections place a physical barrier on recruitment – staff who don't own a car are unable to commute to the workplace.

Business Premises – Current and Future Needs

5.15 Nearly 50% of respondents have no current business premises (e.g. online businesses/working from home) and 32% occupy leisure/hospitality premises, with the majority having freehold ownership of their premises. The majority of respondents (73%) occupy small premises of 0-500 sqm and 73% of respondents also indicated that their premises was built before 1980. Many such properties may soon not meet Government's energy efficiency performance requirement, although these only affect leaseholders.

5.16 Regarding current premises, a large proportion of respondents stated that the quality of the existing environment, quality of premises and local amenity provision was very good, whereas public transport accessibility and infrastructure was rated very poor by 44% of business respondents.

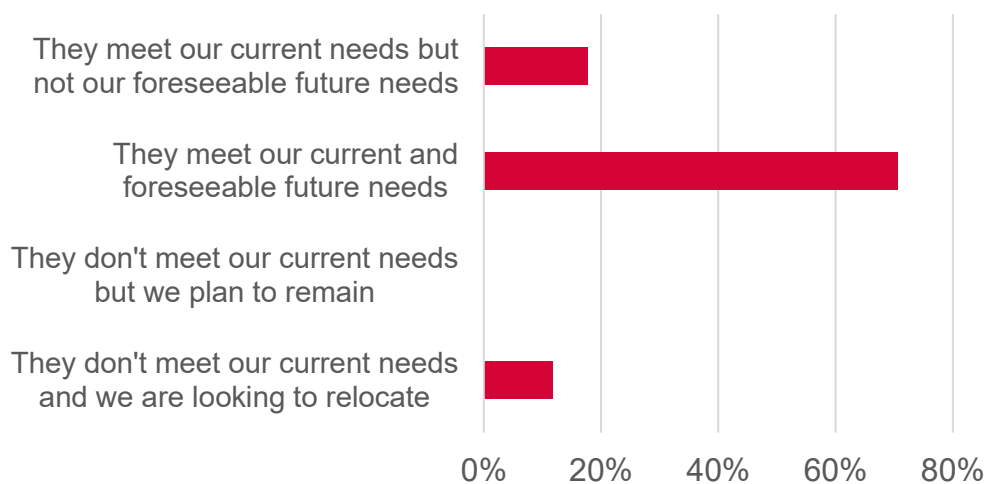
5.17 Over 85% of respondents stated that internet was critical or very important to the day-to-day operations of their business, however over a quarter of respondents stated that their current broadband connectivity/speed was poor or very poor.

5.18 Almost 70% of respondents stated that there was no potential to expand their premises at their current site. 19% stated that there is potential to

expand but they have no plans to do so, and 13% stated that there is potential to expand and they do have expansion plans.

5.19 To understand future needs, the survey asked respondents to select one of four statements that best reflected how adequate their current premises are for their needs. The Figure below lists these statements and shows the proportion of respondents who chose each option.

Figure 4.4 Responses to “Which of the following best reflects how adequate your current premises are for your needs?”



Source: Icení analysis

5.20 71% of respondents stated that their current premises meets their current and foreseeable future needs, while 18% stated that while their premises meets their current needs it does not meet their foreseeable future needs and 12% stated that their premises doesn't meet their current needs and they are looking to relocate.

5.21 Reasons for current premises not meeting future needs included that the current premises were too small to accommodate business growth, and that a home-based business required more space for stock. Planning restrictions were noted as a constraint in terms of preventing extension of current premises.

Relationship with the National Park

5.22 Businesses were asked a series of questions regarding their relationship with the National Park. The most common reason selected by respondents for their business being located within the National Park was the quality/attractiveness of the local landscape/environment. This was followed by responses indicating that the business was located within the National Park because this is close to where the respondent lives.

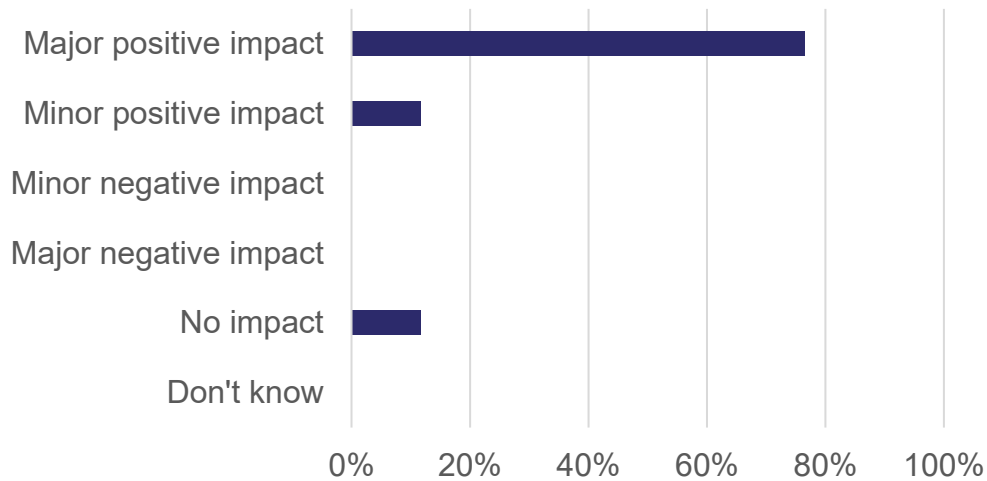
Table 5.3 Count of responses regarding reason for being located within the Peak District National Park Authority area

	Response s
Quality/attractiveness of the local landscape/environment	10
Close to where I live	7
Lifestyle	5
Availability of suitable premises	2
No choice, e.g. inherited/longstanding family business	2

Source: Icen analysis

5.23 Respondents were then asked what impact they feel that the quality of the landscape and the environment of the area has on the performance of their business. The vast majority (76%) stated that it has a major positive impact on their business performance.

Figure 4.5 Responses to “What impact do you feel the quality of the landscape and the environment of this area has on the performance of your business?”



Source: Icení analysis

5.24 When asked what positive effects a location within the National Park has on their business, the most common response related to attracting visitors and tourists which generates income. The second and third most common responses were that the National Park designation enhances the image of the business and the location can add value to produce or be used in marketing.

Innovation

5.25 Businesses were asked whether they had adopted any innovative practices or technologies in their operations over the past three years. Approximately 40% of respondents stated that they had, with examples including:

- Improved online presence and direct online booking system
- Website and growth of social media platforms
- New photography / other equipment
- Use of AI in drafting policies / job adverts

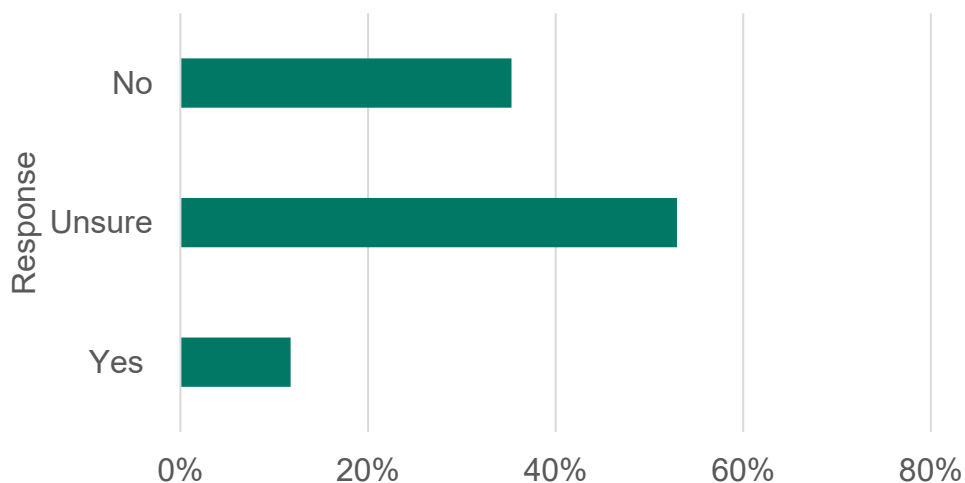
-
- New GPS technology
 - Use of phone apps
 - Move to using Airbnb platform for bookings

5.26 Businesses were asked what barriers they have encountered when trying to innovate. The top three responses were limited access to funding, planning consents and poor digital infrastructure.

5.27 The majority of respondents are not currently collaborating with other businesses/organisations/educational institutions on innovation-related projects.

5.28 Looking ahead, businesses were asked whether they were planning to adopt any innovative practices or technologies within the next 5 years. Only 12% of respondents reported that they were, with the majority being unsure.

Figure 4.6 Responses to “Are you planning to adopt any innovative practices or technologies in your operations within the next 5 years?”



Source: Icení analysis

Diversification

5.29 80% of respondents stated that they had not diversified their operations. The remaining 20% who had diversified identified the following ways in which they had done so:

- Photography commissions
- Productions of walks for tourism businesses and local accommodation providers
- E-commerce store

5.30 Respondents identified planning restrictions as a barrier to diversification. One respondent provided the example of applying for planning permission for glamping pods. The expense and time involved with the process of applying for permission was considered excessive compared with the small impact that the glamping pods would have.

5.31 Looking ahead, 40% of businesses stated that they would consider diversifying their operations in the future. Respondents noted barriers and challenges associated with doing this, which included:

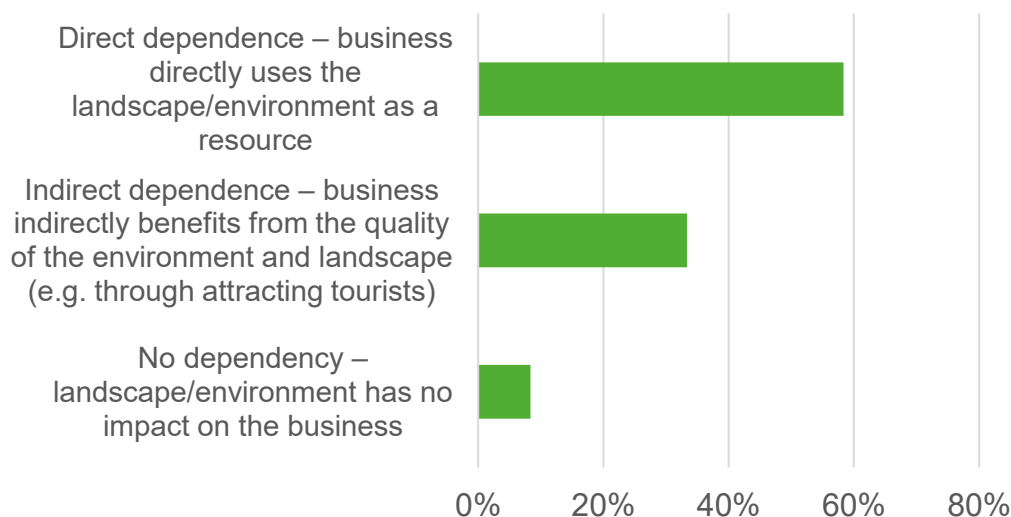
- Existing planning and regulation constraints
- Depressed national economy
- Insufficient qualified labour supply
- Age (looking to retire in near future)
- Difficulties with shipping goods – lack of pick-up stations
- Lack of accommodation for staff locally

Survey for Farmers and Land Managers

Introduction and Nature of Business

- 5.32 25 farmers/land managers responded to the survey. Of these, the majority were well-established, having been operating for over 10 years. The scale of respondent's operations varied substantially, with the quantum of land managed ranging from 5 acres to 9900 acres. The vast majority (75%) were freeholders of their land.
- 5.33 Respondents were asked to select the type of farming/land-based business that they operated. The most common response was sheep, followed by cattle and mixed.
- 5.34 The quality of the landscape and the environment of the National Park is evidently important for local farmers, with 58% stating that their business is directly dependent on the landscape and environment and 33% stating that they are indirectly dependent on it.

Figure 4.7 Responses to “How would you categorise the way your business depends on the quality of the landscape and the environment of the area?”



Source: Icení analysis

- 5.35 The majority (88%) of business respondents were micro businesses (1-10 employees) and all businesses were SMEs (<250 employees). The table below provides a breakdown of employment by contract type:

Table 5.4 Breakdown of employment by contract type, respondents to the Survey for Farmers and Land Managers

	Jobs Count	Proportion of total jobs
Full time	42	32%
Full time, seasonal	12	9%
Part time	36	28%
Part time, seasonal	40	31%
Total	130	100%

Source: IcenI analysis

NB: Figures may not sum due to rounding

- 5.36 The 25 respondents employed 130 staff members in total. Of these employees, a high proportion work either part time or part-time seasonally (59%). 32% work full time and 9% work full time but seasonally.
- 5.37 Of part time staff, 15% were reported as aged under 25 years, 49% were aged 26-45 years and 35% were aged 45+ years.
- 5.38 The table below reports the count of employees (full time and part time) in different salary bands. 70% of part time employees earn £5,000 or less. 47% of full-time employees earn £21,000-£30,000.

Table 5.5 Count of part-time and full-time employees by salary band

	Part-time	Full-time
£5,000 or less	53	4
£5,000 - £10,000	7	2
£11,000 - £20,000	10	6
£21,000 - £30,000	3	21
£31,000 - £50,000	1	12
£51,000 - £100,000	2	0
£101,000 +	0	0
Total	76	45

NB: Minor discrepancy in total jobs compared to earlier figures due to question response rates

Business Performance and Growth

- 5.39 57% of respondents reported turnover of less than £100,000 per annum. Over half of respondents expect their turnover to reduce in the next 2 years and 38% expect it to stay broadly the same. All but two respondents reported that they have either applied for, or are in receipt of, some form of agricultural grant scheme, with the Sustainable Farming Incentive being the most commonly reported scheme, followed by FiPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes).
- 5.40 Regarding profitability, over half of respondents described their business' profitability over the last 5 years as declining. Approx. 40% stated that their profitability was stable and 9% stated that they made zero profit. No respondents recorded increasing profitability over the last five years. Looking ahead, 61% anticipate their business' profitability to decline over the next 5 years, with only 4% anticipating increasing profitability.
- 5.41 Respondents were asked to select what they perceived as their main barriers to growth in the next two years. The most common selections were rising overhead costs, planning and development restrictions and business regulation. Other answers included old age preventing further development of the business and removal or reduction of government support.

5.42 57% of respondents stated that they experience seasonal demand for their goods/services – especially services relating to tourism with low demand experienced through November-February in particular.

Diversification

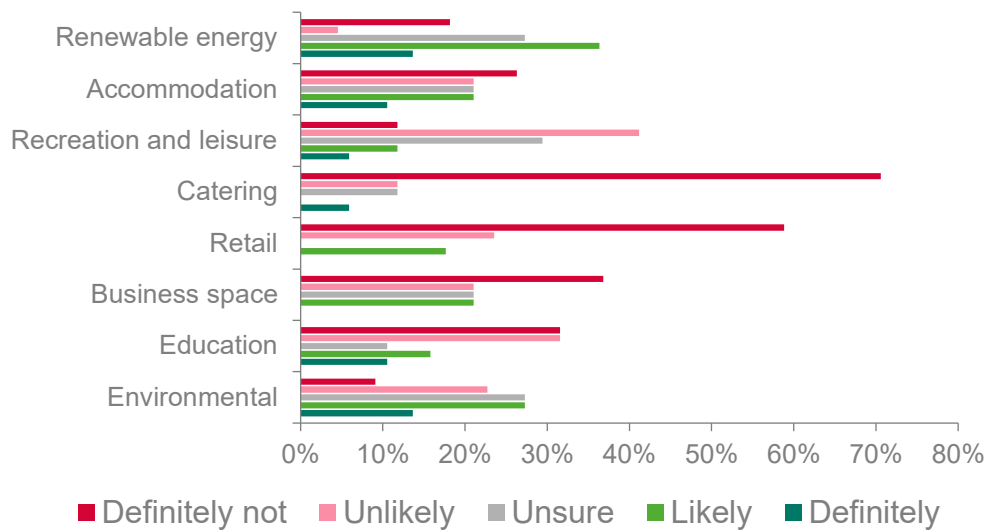
5.43 Over 60% of farmers/land managers stated that they had diversified their operations, with activities including:

- School visits
- Conversion of farm buildings into residential (long term lets)
- Accommodation for tourism including camping/glamping, holiday cottages/lets and caravan sites
- Car parking
- Clay pigeon shooting

5.44 Of those who have undertaken diversification, approx. 55% stated that it had been very or somewhat successful, whilst approx. 25% had experienced mixed results and 20% had found diversification to be unsuccessful. Difficulties including oversaturation of the tourism market, variable weather and difficulty finding cleaning staff were stated as challenges experienced with diversification.

5.45 50% of respondents stated that they would consider diversifying (or further diversifying) their operations in the future, with renewable energy and environmental related forms of diversification most likely to be considered.

Figure 4.8 Responses to “How likely would you be to consider any of the following forms of diversification?”



Source: IcenI analysis

Innovation

- 5.46 71% of respondents reported that they have not adopted any innovative practices or technologies into their operations in the last three years.
- 5.47 Limited access to funding and regulatory consents were the most commonly stated barriers to innovation. Some respondents noted no interest/requirement to innovate, including retirement plans in the near future.
- 5.48 Just 20% of respondents plan to implement any innovative practices or technologies within the next five years. These included:
- EID (electronic identification) readers for cattle – although concerns regarding broadband connectivity
 - Self-sufficiency regarding utilities
 - Grazing management
 - Parking payment technology / ticketing machines

Stakeholder engagement

- 5.49 To supplement the survey findings, Icen Projects also undertook 1:1 stakeholder engagement with key stakeholders including commercial agents, business representative organisations and local businesses. This section of the report explores the findings from these discussions.

Agent Engagement

- 5.50 Icen undertook engagement with Knight Frank, SMC Brownvickers and Commercial Property Partners in July 2025 to gain insight into the commercial property market (office, industrial and warehousing) within the National Park.

Industrial and Warehouse Market

- 5.51 Knight Frank and Commercial Property Partners are both agents for the recently developed Riverside Works development in Bakewell. Their insight regarding the level of demand witnessed for the new units provides a good indication of current levels of demand for high quality industrial spaces in Bakewell.
- 5.52 Riverside Works has seen the redevelopment of an ageing business park within an old mill complex to provide high-quality new industrial/warehouse/trade/office/retail accommodation. The commercial units at Riverside Works have been built in phases, with the first phase completed in 2023 and final units due to be complete by the end of 2025. Agents have described strong demand for the units so far, with 80-90% of the newly developed floorspace occupied. Approx. 40% of the space was pre let, generally to businesses who were previously occupying premises on the site prior to its redevelopment. The remaining 60% of space has been let to other occupiers who were not formerly located at the site. The majority of these were Derbyshire based businesses, with no inward investment from further afield.

-
- 5.53 One agent noted issues regarding viability, with rents that occupiers are willing to pay generally insufficient to support the development of new build small industrial units. Viability at Riverside Works has been aided by the fact that the landowners have owned the land for a significant amount of time. Rents achieved at Riverside Works have been around the £13-16 psft level. This sits above the average market asking rent per sqft for industrial units across the Peak District, which sits at £7.63 psqft according to CoStar data. It also sits above the regional and national averages of £7.85 and £9.59 psqft respectively. There has been sufficient demand for the units at this level of rent, despite some prospective tenants being priced out. Agents report that rental values have not priced any of the former occupants out of the site. A number of former tenants moved from the site because the redevelopment could not accommodate the type of space they required (e.g. open storage space), rather than being priced out.
- 5.54 Demand has been strongest for smaller units (1,000-1,200) sq ft, although there have also been a number of larger lettings including Huber UK Temperature Control Ltd and Holdsworth Chocolates occupying approx. 10-15,000 sqft each.
- 5.55 Findings from agent engagement regarding Riverside Works aligns with more general agent feedback regarding the industrial market within the Peak District National Park. It is reported that there is demand for further industrial space, especially for small units. Unit 11 at Deepdale Business Park (Bakewell) has been on the market since the end of 2024 offering fairly high-quality space at approx. £10 psqft. Whilst agents report some recent interest, the unit has seen less demand likely as it is a larger unit of 5-6,000 sqft. It is reported that there are not many smaller businesses who require this quantum of floorspace.
- 5.56 Riverside Works demonstrates that there is demand for brand new, high quality space within Bakewell. This supports occupiers who want more modern stock and are prepared to pay a more premium rent. However agents also report that there is definitely a market for more affordable

stock. There is a demand for a more affordable product and a trade-off between the quality of stock and its affordability which will suit different businesses as they progress through their life cycle. Many premises across the National Park are converted agriculture buildings – whilst these may not meet the requirements of those seeking premium space, they do have a role to play within the business ecosystem.

Office Market

- 5.57 Office demand is reported to be weaker in comparison to industrial space however still exists. Agents have seen interest for office space within the centre of Bakewell. There have been a number of recent office lettings in Bakewell at Riverside Works including to Taylor Emmet Solicitors and Huber UK Temperature Control Ltd, evidencing demand for good quality office space.
- 5.58 As with industrial properties, one agent noted that many office premises across the National Park are buildings converted from alternative uses and may not meet occupier needs. A recent example of this is Taylor Emmet Solicitors relocating from an older premises within Bakewell town centre to Riverside Works as the former office was not meeting their needs in part due to the layout of the older property in the town centre.

Wider Stakeholder Engagement

- 5.59 In addition to engagement with commercial agents, Icení engaged with Business Peak District, Visit Peak District, Buxton & Leek College and a number of local businesses to understand key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the local rural economy. The key messages from these discussions are summarised below.

5.60 Strengths

- **Social wellbeing** – The social wellbeing associated with having a business in rural areas doesn't get promoted widely enough - the value of the landscape.

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- **Tourism economy** – Strong tourism demand with good levels of occupancy in visitor accommodation in recent years post COVID-19 lockdowns.
 - **College education provision** – Presence of a number of colleges on the edge of the Peak District including Buxton & Leeke College. A good level of college education provision whereby prospective students have choice but there's not too much competition.
 - **Training opportunities** – Opportunities for students to engage in apprenticeships across the Peak District where there are pockets of employment (e.g. Bakewell) and at a range of hospitality businesses.
 - **Independent businesses and retailers** – Local centres such as Bakewell have a good range of independent businesses and retailers which make these centres unique and attractive to visitors, as well as providing services to local residents.

Weaknesses/Challenges

- **Transport connectivity** – public transport generally regarded as poor, with frequency and reliability of the bus network poor. Remote businesses in rural locations find it difficult to hire staff as employees would have to commute by car.
- **Digital connectivity** - numerous digital 'not spots'/'black spots'. Implications for the tourism economy – tourists generally keen to have connectivity. May pose barriers to working from home in some instances and reduce the attractiveness of the Peak District to 'digital nomads' who may be able to live in the Peak District and work entirely from home if connectivity were sufficient. Businesses also often complain about black spots – makes it difficult to do business.
- **Labour supply**
 - **Particular difficulty in attracting chefs** – many contributing factors including affordability issues with local housing and poor transport connections meaning people who don't own a car are unable to commute. Living in a rural location may be undesirable, especially for younger people - talent is often lost to cities. Is there a way to position the National Park to make it a more attractive place for younger people to live in?

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- **Retaining local skills** – Better promotion of rural careers to reduce the number of young people moving to cities such as Sheffield and Manchester.
 - **Capacity of local SMEs to train staff** – The majority of businesses within the Peak District National Park are SMEs. Buxton & Leek College highlight that small employers often do not have the capacity to assist in apprenticeship training and mentorship.
 - **Turnover within hospitality** – High turnover of staff within hospitality roles including chefs means that businesses are often unwilling to invest in training for their staff.
 - **Skills gaps** – Buxton & Leek college note that businesses report gaps in soft skills across all industries. These include communication skills, cognitive reasoning and punctuality.
 - **Business costs** – businesses that are located remotely in relation to main transport hubs incur additional costs – both directly and indirectly.
 - **Business performance** – many businesses reported to be ‘treading water’ and struggling to survive. This aligns with feedback from the business surveys which found that the majority of businesses have seen stable or declining profitability in recent years and expect profitability to remain stable or declining. There are reportedly a high number of businesses for sale.
 - **Lack of grow-on space** - Anecdotally, many businesses start in the Peak District but then have to move out of the National Park area e.g. to Chesterfield, Derby, Alfreton, South Yorkshire) when they require larger premises as there is a lack of good quality larger manufacturing and warehousing space.
 - **Demand for office space** - Office space noted to be more difficult to let out than industrial space.
 - **Population Density** – the low population density associated with the Peak District creates viability issues for the delivery of some services such as college courses which may require minimum student numbers to run and transport networks which require a minimum number of passengers to be viable.

Opportunities

-
- **Transport Innovation** – Innovative technologies such as hydrogen vehicles could offer new sustainable travel solutions.
 - **Diversification** – opportunities for farmers/land managers in particular to achieve a more stable and sustainable income via diversification of their operations.
 - **Business innovation** – Innovation such as generation of renewable energy to lower overheads and increase the sustainability (environment and financial) of businesses, including those operating from heritage buildings.
 - **Flexible space** - Flexible space such as the Peak District Business Hub at Aldern House in Bakewell (The Park Authority offices) is proving successful, and Hathersage Hall Business Centre in Hathersage reportedly continues to perform well. Outside the Park, Cromford Mills flexible space is popular. There may be further demand for such drop in / flexi workspace.

Threats

- **Business survival** - Any further increases to business costs, for example increased taxes, puts businesses at risk.
- **Restrictive planning policies**
 - **Heritage Buildings** – A large number of heritage buildings within the Peak District – costly to maintain the buildings and planning constraints make it difficult to introduce features such as renewable energy generation on site to lower overheads. This threatens the long-term viability of the upkeep of such buildings. It was suggested that other National Parks such as the Lake District have a different approach which is more supportive of interventions that will support the long-term viability of heritage assets.
 - **Diversification** – reports of farming/land-based community struggling to obtain planning permission to diversify their operations and supplement the income from their primary business, e.g. proposals for visitor accommodation such as shepherds' huts or farm building conversions.
 - **Expansion** – Planning constraints limiting the ability for local businesses to expand as they grow.
 - **Inward Investment** – Anecdotally, large investors are deterred to invest within the National Park or hesitant to invest in the area

again after experiences of lengthy planning application and appeal processes.

- **Encouraging innovation within rural businesses** – A challenge around how to encourage innovation within the Peak District within the context of a growing digital divide. First step would be to improve digital connectivity but also need to go beyond this.
- **Loss of independent businesses** - Wary of larger high street names taking retail spaces within the Peak District and displacing independent businesses. Concerned that this could lose some of the identity and character of the area's retail centres.
- **Further population decline** – poses a threat to businesses by further reducing the labour supply pool, as well as local demand. Poor housing affordability could contribute to this by displacing existing younger people from the area and reducing the appeal of the area for younger people to move into.

Summary and Conclusions: Business and Stakeholder Perspectives

- 5.1 Businesses reported that poor public transport connections and a lack of affordable housing have limited the labour supply pool and caused issues for recruitment of staff. Rising overhead costs and planning constraints were consistently cited as the main barriers to growth for both general businesses and farmers/land managers. **It is recommended that planning policy continues to be supportive of small-scale green energy generation for private use as a means of supporting local businesses to survive, as well as delivering environmental benefits.**
- 5.2 Farmers presented a fairly pessimistic view on profitability – agricultural diversification is one method to improve future profitability. Over 60% of farmers have already diversified their operations (e.g. school visits, converting building for residential or tourism use, car parking etc). Businesses across both surveys indicated they would consider future diversification, with farmers most likely considering renewable energy and environmental-related projects. **It is recommended that planning**

policy continues to be sufficiently supportive of the diversification of agriculture and other land-based business in order to ensure business survival, whilst recognising the wider Park landscape priorities.

- 5.3 Across both groups, only a relatively small proportion had implemented any innovative practises or technologies in the last three years. Limited access to funding and regulatory/planning consents were identified as primary barriers to innovation by both general businesses and farmers. **There is potential for enhanced signposting to business support.**
- 5.4 A large proportion of premises were built before 1980, potentially not meeting future energy efficiency requirements. **It is recommended that the PDNPA should support the redevelopment of existing sites for new stock - this may gain greater impetus with the implications of higher EPC rating requirements for commercial stock in the future.**
- 5.5 Poor broadband connectivity/speed was a notable concern, reported by over a quarter of businesses. **The PDNPA should be supportive of initiatives to improve broadband connectivity where this would benefit residents and businesses.**

Agent Engagement

- 5.6 There has been strong demand in recent years for new, high-quality industrial and office space, particularly smaller units (1,000-1,200 sq ft), as demonstrated by the Riverside Works development in Bakewell, which is 80-90% occupied.
- 5.7 Viability is generally a challenge for new-build small industrial units due to low rents compared to construction costs.
- 5.8 Demand also exists for more affordable, good-quality industrial stock – converted agricultural buildings play a role in meeting this need.
- 5.9 Demand for office space is weaker than industrial but still exists, particularly in Bakewell town centre.

Wider Stakeholder Engagement

5.10 Wider stakeholder engagement supplements the business survey findings by providing insights from discussions with key stakeholders including commercial agents, business representative organisations, and local businesses. Findings are summarised in the table below and feed into Chapter 8 – Rural Economy Issues.

Table 5.6 SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social wellbeing and value of the landscape • Strong tourist economy • College education provision • Training opportunities • Independent businesses and retailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport connectivity • Digital connectivity • Labour supply / skills gaps • Business costs • Business performance • Lack of grow-on space • Demand for office space • Population density
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport innovation • Diversification • Business innovation • Further drop-in / flexible space demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising business costs • Restrictive planning policies limiting diversification, expansion and inward investment. • Widening digital divide and lack of innovation • Loss of independent businesses • Further population decline and diminishing workforce • Business loss to areas outside of NP

Source: IcenI engagement

6. Existing employment land portfolio

6.1 In this section, we consider the current employment land supply. It sets out:

- Current Local Plan policy related to employment land provision. This is set out within Part 2 of the Local Plan for the Peak District National Park (Development Management Policies) which was adopted in May 2019.
- The methodology used to undertake the review of existing employment sites – both safeguarded and non-designated, the detailed findings of which are set out in Appendix A5A4; and then
- A summary of conclusions from the review, including recommendations on employment designations

6.2 The detailed review of existing safeguarded employment sites and non-designated employment sites is set out in Appendix A5A4.

Existing Employment Land Policy

6.3 Core Strategy policy E1D states that existing business land or buildings, particularly those which are of high quality and in a suitable location will be safeguarded for Use Class B.

6.4 Spatially, the Core Strategy states that employment sites will be protected in sustainable locations such as Bakewell, Tideswell and through the Hope Valley.

6.5 Policy DME3 provides policy regarding the safeguarding of employment sites. Sites are safeguarded for Class B1 (now E(g)), B2 or B8 industrial and employment uses unless the Development Plan and evidence of strategic need justifies mixed use development, in which case the predominant use(s) should remain in the B1, B2 or B8 use classes. The policy lists 14 sites which are safeguarded for employment:

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- Aston Industrial Estate
 - Bakewell, Deepdale Business Park
 - Bakewell, Riverside Business Park
 - Bakewell, Station Road
 - Bamford, Station Road
 - Bradwell, Newburgh site
 - Bradwell/Brough, Stretfield Mill
 - Brough, Vincent Works
 - Calver Slough Industrial Units
 - Great Hucklow Cartledge House Business Centre
 - Great Longstone Industrial Estate
 - Hathersage, Hall Farm
 - Hathersage, Station Yard
 - Tideswell, Whitecross Industrial Estate

Assessment Methodology

- 6.6 Icení undertook site assessments in June 2025 to review the employment land portfolio in the Borough. This included surveys of both safeguarded employment areas and a small number of non-designated employment areas identified by PDNPA.
- 6.7 Site surveys were undertaken using a methodology which draws on the Planning Practice Guidance. The site assessments addressed:
- The size, nature and intensity of use of the employment site including information on the nature and types of businesses and key occupiers and mix of uses;

-
- The site's accessibility including its location, accessibility by road, public transport accessibility, and internal access together with servicing arrangements for existing businesses;
 - The age, size and quality of existing buildings, including vacancy levels, the quality of the environment on-site and whether there are any physical constraints to the use of the land such as steep topography or adjacent uses;
 - Relevant planning history and extant applications, with consideration of any site-specific delivery barriers;
 - Adequacy of existing parking provision, including evidence of on-street parking and whether this inhibits goods vehicle access and circulation;
 - The site's attractiveness as a working environment including proximity to local services and amenities for employees, and open space;
 - The site's relationship with its immediate surroundings and whether there are any potential bad neighbour or adjacency issues.

6.8 These aspects are drawn together in assessing the site's overall suitability and market attractiveness, the appropriate mix of uses and any changes to site boundaries which would be appropriate to reflect the planning history and/or circumstances on the ground.

6.9 Where there was development potential on existing employment sites, such as evident vacant plots, or the potential for intensification of use, this was noted. Our assessment included consideration of the market attractiveness of available land, and any known factors which might impact on its deliverability to inform assessment of its contribution to the employment land supply position.

6.10 The assessment of sites has considered whether the designation of sites as safeguarded employment sites should be adjusted; as well as whether any adjustments to site boundaries is warranted. It has also considered their potential to accommodate additional development.

6.11 The full review of sites can be found in the Appendix A5A4 entitled Review of Existing Safeguarded and Non-Designated Employment Areas. The following section provides a summary of the findings of the site assessments.

Site Review Summary

6.12 Icen are of the view that safeguarding existing business land or buildings remains appropriate. Safeguarding enables the National Park to maintain a diverse portfolio of land/property for employment uses.

6.13 Icen recommend that the safeguarded employment sites listed under Policy DME3 in the existing Local Plan Part Two remain safeguarded. PDNPA additionally identified two further non-designated sites for assessment. It was concluded that both of these sites warrant protection via policy to safeguard them for employment uses. Further to this, Icen identified two additional sites (Verder Scientific and Bakewell, Off Mill Street) which are recommended for safeguarding. The rationale for this is set out in the table below.

Table 6.1 Employment Sites Recommended for Safeguarding

Site Name	Rationale for safeguarding
Aldern House , Bakewell	The site is occupied by PDNPA and acts as their Head Quarters. Changing working patterns since the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a substantial proportion of the space being let out including co-working and dedicated office space as part of the 'Peak District Business Hub'. The site provides good quality office space for small businesses in a sustainable location within Bakewell. It offers on-site car parking and is also well-served by public transport. It is recommended that the site should be safeguarded.

<p>Hope Valley Garden Centre, Hope</p>	<p>A significantly under-utilised site, with a large car parking area and portions of informal open storage. The site lies within Floodzone 3 and therefore is better suited to employment uses than residential. It is located sustainably in the Hope Valley, off the A6187 (Hope Road). The site is located within close proximity to Bamford train station and is adjacent to bus stops served by a number of routes. .</p>
<p>Verder Scientific Site, Hope</p>	<p>Two large industrial units occupied by Verder Scientific. It is recommended that the site is safeguarded given that the site provides larger scale industrial units which are uncommon within the Peak District National Park area. The units are within close vicinity of Aston industrial Estate which is currently safeguarded for employment uses and therefore the Aston IE boundary could be amended to include the Verder Scientific site.</p> <p>Whilst large scale development is generally inappropriate within the Peak District, the units already exist and it is therefore worthwhile protecting these units which provide suitable space for mid- sized/large manufacturing firms. PDNPA could consider whether there are further larger scale industrial units across the National Park which could warrant safeguarding to maintain a stock of larger premises, considering it is unlikely to be acceptable, nor viable to build new build large units within the National Park context.</p> <p>The site is well maintained, with plenty of parking provision and a good quality environment. It is located in a sustainable location within the Hope Valley in close proximity to Hope railway station and bus stops on Hope Road (A6187) served by multiple bus routes. There is also on-site car parking provision.</p>
<p>Bakewell, Off Mill Street</p>	<p>A good quality site located sustainably within Bakewell. Converted mill buildings, well occupied with occupiers including Milford Garage, MEM Fabrication, Spectra Racing, Milford Design Studio.</p>

6.14 The site assessments also considered whether adjustments to the current safeguarded employment site boundaries were necessary. Icení's recommendations are summarised in the table below.

Table 6.2 Site boundary change rationale

Site Name	Recommended Change to Boundary
Bradwell, Newburgh Works	It is recommended that the boundary is amended to exclude the recent residential development. The industrial unit should remain safeguarded – it provides modern, high quality employment space in a sustainable location within the Hope Valley.
Bakewell, Riverside Business Park (incl Lumford Mill)	It is recommended that the boundary is amended to remove the Riverside holiday cottages on the eastern edge of the site.
Bakewell, Deepdale Business Park	It is recommended that the boundary is amended to remove the currently undeveloped portion of land to the rear of the site which has now been permitted for holiday homes (APP/M9496/W/24/3354072).

6.15 The site assessments have then considered the potential to accommodate employment development on existing safeguarded sites. The site assessments have included an assessment of potential land availability within these areas. The development of these sites for employment uses is supported by existing policies and they do not therefore need to be allocated for development, but could contribute to meeting needs.

6.16 We consider that there could be development potential as follows:

Table 6.3 Sites with development potential

Site Name	Description	Site area (Ha)
Aston Industrial Estate	Potential for intensification of area currently used for open storage	0.3
Great Hucklow Cartledge House Business Centre	Small plot of undeveloped land on the southern side of the site	0.1

Great Longstone Industrial Estate	May be potential for intensification of car parking and/or open storage areas subject to needs	0.3
Hathersage, Hall Farm	No space for intensification within the site boundary. Plot of land to the rear of the site outside of the currently safeguarded area may provide opportunity for expansion. Would only be suitable for office space.	0.5
Hope Valley Garden Centre	Not currently a designated employment site. The car park/open storage area is under-utilised and could present an opportunity for intensification.	0.3
Tideswell, Whitecross Industrial Estate	<p>Land directly to the east of the site is informally being used for storage of HGVs by one of the businesses on the Industrial Estate. There are also a number of poorer quality agricultural barns. There may be an opportunity to expand the existing industrial estate onto this plot of land if suitable – however this has not been included within the quantitative supply.</p> <p>To note: permission has been granted for a convenience store on part of this land, to the south of the informal storage area referred to above.</p> <p>There may also be opportunity to support the renewal of areas of the existing estate that are aging and of particularly poor quality.</p>	0.0
Total		1.8

7. Future employment land needs

- 7.1 This section considers the future employment land needs for the PDNPA. It complies with the planning practices guidance on economic needs assessments but also recognises that National Park's have the highest status of protection in relation to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty within their boundaries.
- 7.2 The 2008 Employment Land Review requirements for 2008 to 2026 were 3.5 ha industrial space and 1.5 office space.
- 7.3 The study outlined that this need could be met across three sites: Lumford Mill/Riverside Business Park (5.0 ha), Newburgh Works, Bradwell (2.2 ha) and Ashford Road, Bakewell (1.1 ha). Riverside Business Park has since been built out, providing a mix of office and industrial units. The Newburgh Works site has recently been redeveloped into a predominantly residential development, with c. 0.3 ha land providing industrial premises.
- 7.4 The more recent published evidence from other authorities reports that:
- The 2022 High Peak Housing and Economic Land Needs Assessment set a growth figure of between 3.4 ha and 4.5 ha for the National Park component of High Peak only. The results appear relatively high considering the rural nature of the Park in the high Peak area. To produce need estimates at a sub-area level, it is understood that The model draws on BRES data to produce a split to apply to the baseline depending upon the current prevalence of jobs based in the National Park. There is a possibility that this may have led to some inaccuracies where statistical boundaries do not align perfectly with the National Park boundary – this can particularly present issues in areas such as Chapel-en-le-Frith which lie on the edge of the National Park. .
 - GL Hearn Bakewell Employment Land and Retail Review 2016 (ELRR) outlined a need for 1.3ha of employment land in Bakewell for the period 2014-2034. It was thought that 0.8ha of this would be industrial, with the remaining 0.5ha being office space.

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- The Derbyshire Dales Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2021 identified Bakewell's Riverside Business Park as a strategic growth site and 6 other employment sites within the National Park area of Derbyshire Dales that are safeguarded sites within the PDNPA Local Plan. It identified a (DDDC) district wide need for circa 12.7ha of employment land for the plan period 2017-40. This was updated in 2023 with a recommendation the 'council plan for the completions net of 15-16 ha and up to 18 ha (rounded) based on the 'new build' trend' as it identified a healthy demand in the industrial sector. Splits for the National Park were not provided.
 - The 2017 Staffordshire Moorland Employment Land Review (ELR) Update. The study recommendations relate to the part of the District that lies outwith the Peak District National Park. It states that the majority of industrial centres in Staffordshire Moorlands District are located outwith the National Park and the majority of jobs within the National Park area of the District are related to non-B class uses such as tourism and leisure which do not have a direct impact upon the requirement and supply of B class employment land. The study sets out a requirement for 13 ha to 27 ha of B class land up to 2031 or between 14 ha and 32 ha up to 2033.

7.5 The methods considered in this assessment are:

- Labour demand: using Experian jobs forecasts
- Labour supply: using housing and population forecasts
- Trends: using planning permissions

Labour demand

7.6 Labour demand models use forecasts for future jobs growth to consider the related employment land requirements. These can be useful in considering future jobs and needs, but assume that the two factors correlate which is not always the case.

7.7 It would not be proportionate in cost terms or material outcomes to forecast the 9 districts that PDNP covers. In the case of PDNP, the authorities with the greatest share of employment are Derbyshire Dales District Council and High Peak Borough Council (67% and 17% respectively, totalling 84% of Peak District National Park employment). Labour forecasts for these two districts have therefore been used.

Whilst 10% of PDNP employment is located within Staffordshire Moorlands, only a small proportion of these jobs are related to employment sectors (E(g)/B2/B8) and therefore it was not deemed proportionate to include the district within the modelling – this aligns with the conclusions of the Staffordshire Moorland Employment Land Review (2017) which did not determine any employment land requirement for the portion of the District within the National Park. Employment within the remainder of districts is negligible.

- 7.8 The jobs are converted to employment floorspace (offices and industrial / warehousing) by sharing the jobs to sectors, and converting sector jobs to full time equivalents and then floorspace and land ratios. The share in PDNPA is then extracted from the total outlook for the districts using jobs location weighting at LSOA level and then refined, derived from BRES using the method described in the baseline section. This differs from other authority's employment land work (Derbyshire Dales District Council/ High Peak Borough Council) due to a more fine grained analysis than general BRES splits at LSOA level.
- 7.9 The forecasts assume that growth follows the existing pattern of job locations, which in reality may not be the case, as more jobs might grow in the areas of the two districts outside of the Park. It is also important to note the forecasts are generic and not customised to local conditions.
- 7.10 The employment forecasts report notable growth in the Accommodation, Food & Recreation sector, and growth at lower levels in Professional Services, Public Services and Wholesale & Retail. The Manufacturing outlook is gradual decline, in line with UK prospects. In the case of the National Park, based on observations, the case for the decline of manufacturing is not convincing, with good business and stakeholder prospects reported.

Table 7.1 Forecast Employment Jobs by Broad Sector, Peak District National Park, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak (2024-2045)

Industry	High Peak	Derbyshire Dales	Peak District National Park (weighted)
Accommodation, Food & Recreation	0.42	1.80	0.93
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	0.00	0.10	0.00
Construction	0.12	0.22	0.61
Extraction & Mining	0.12	0.00	0.04
Finance & Insurance	-0.12	0.00	0.00
Information & communication	0.00	0.00	0.00
Manufacturing	-1.04	-0.20	-0.81
Professional & Other Private Services	0.76	0.54	0.51
Public Services	0.76	0.86	0.55
Transport & storage	0.54	-0.12	0.02
Utilities	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wholesale & Retail	0.42	0.12	0.00
Total	1.98	3.32	1.86

Source: Experian / BRES / IcenI

7.11 The jobs have been converted to full time equivalents using the latest BRES ratios on jobs to employment, and the jobs shared to sectors using IcenI's standard model. Discounts have been applied for typical UK home working with an additional further 50% home working discount applied to office -based sectors, considering the high levels of remote working within the PDNPA and reduced demand for premises.

7.12 Densities and plot ratios have converted the FTEs to floorspace using:

- Office: 12 sqm / FTE, plot ratio 0.5
- Industrial: 40 sqm / FTE, plot ratio 0.4
- Warehouse: 70 sqm / FTE, plot ratio 0.4

- 7.13 Some studies also make adjustments to reflect ‘replacement demand’ due to ageing stock or losses to residential. Given the limited data availability as well as limited stock levels this is not considered necessary in the PDNPA.
- 7.14 A buffer has been included, which supports increased market flexibility. This is equivalent to 2 years gross permissions (0.22 ha for offices and 0.57 ha for industrial + warehouse, divided equally).
- 7.15 The results are set out below.

Table 7.2 Forecast Employment Floorspace Peak District National Park (2024-2045)

Industry	SQM	Ha	Ha + buffer
Offices	1,300	0.2	0.4
Industrial	-3,000	-0.6	-0.3
Wareh'se	+2,900	0.6	0.9
Total	1,200	0.2	1.0

Source: Experian / BRES / Icen

Labour supply

- 7.16 Labour supply models consider the effect of population change on future employment space demand. Whilst this is a useful model to consider, labour availability is not usually a key indicator of demand, so should be treated with caution.
- 7.17 The labour supply models are derived from the Peak District National Park Population Projection Update & Housing Needs Assessment 2023. Two key inputs are considered, which align to the range considered in the Local Plan Review Issues and Options 2024:
- A scenario for an average of 48 dwellings per annum delivered every year to 2045, resulting in a net increase of 1,152 dwellings in total. This results in a significant increase in the population, of 1,731, as well as an increase in the number of jobs, of 623.
 - A scenario so that there is an average of 95 dpa delivered every year to 2045, resulting in a net increase of 2,280 dwellings in total.

This results in an increase in the population, of 4,247, as well as an increase in the number of jobs, of 1,950.

- 7.18 The above figures need to be considered in the context of recent population decline in the National Park as reported in the Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation 2024, a fall from 37,905 in 2011 to 35,897 in 2021 or 2,008 persons (5.3%) over the period. The number of working age residents living in the Peak District fell from 23,007 in 2011 to 20,259 in 2021, a fall of 2,748 or 12%.
- 7.19 In reality therefore, the labour supply position is much about replacing lost people and workers, rather than growth.
- 7.20 To consider the two jobs scenarios in terms of employment, the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak forecasts have been amalgamated and then scaled back to the Peak District scenarios, so that the sectoral change can be considered (both growth and decline). This has then been run through the same floorspace model as the labour demand inputs.

Table 7.3 Forecast Employment Floorspace Peak District National Park(2024-2045)

Industry	SQM		Ha		Ha + buffer	
	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi
Offices	1,000	3,100	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.9
Industrial	-3,600	-11,400	-0.7	-2.3	-0.4	-2.0
Wareh'se	4,200	13,200	0.8	2.6	1.1	2.9
Total	1,600	5,000	0.3	1.0	1.1	1.8

Source: Experian / BRES / Icen

- 7.21 Evidently the two different housing and population scenarios have quite different outcomes, although in reality the overall numbers are modest. The lower labour supply model does have outputs in line with the labour demand model.

Trend based

7.22 The Park Authority do not monitor employment completions. IcenI has considered data from the VOA and CoStar commercial databases, however this reports inconclusive and inconsistent trends which cannot be relied upon for projecting future needs.

7.23 IcenI has identified all recorded employment planning consents over the last 10 years. This reveals that effectively in all instances, new employment space has either been a change of use, extension of existing building or a redevelopment of an existing employment centre or development in an industrial area (e.g. quarry/plant). This includes the largest permission being 4,110 sqm of development at Riverside Business Park, which replaced the former mill buildings.

Table 7.4 Commercial Permissions 2015-2024 gross (sqm)

Row Labels	Change of Use	Extension	Development in existing industrial area	Re-development	Grand Total
B1	2,736	-	-	524	3,260
B1/B2/B8		-	-	4,110	4,110
B1a	2,318	27	-	-	2,344
B1c	772	-	989	-	1,761
B2	340	575	952	1,185	3,052
B8	246	905	880	477	2,508
Total	6,411	1,507	2,821	6,296	17,034

Source: Landstack / IcenI

7.24 The permitted gross floorspace for the last ten years is 17,034 sqm of B Class, or around 1,703 sqm per annum. This is the equivalent of 35,771 sqm over a 21 year plan period or 8.5 ha. Excluding change of use applications, this falls to 5.6 ha of delivered space, although almost all of this has been mixed B with offices all created through change of use. Excluding extensions reduces this further.

7.25 These lower end figures are approximately in line with the 2008 Employment Land review (which reported a 5 ha need), for an 18 year plan period, split around one third offices to two thirds industrial.

Table 7.5 Completions projected employment need 2024-45

Type	Source	Past rate, annualised	Future needs (sqm)	Future needs (ha)	Future needs (ha) + buffer
B1 / E(g) Mixed B / industrial	Change of Use, Past permission (redevelopments / industrial sites) + extensions	1,703	35,771	8.3	9.2
Mixed B / industrial	Permissions (redevelopments / industrial sites) + extensions	1,062	22,309	5.5	6.3
Mixed B / industrial	Permissions (redevelopments / industrial sites)	912	19,146	4.7	5.5

Source: Landstack / Icen

Summary and recommendations

7.26 This section has considered future employment needs using techniques compliant with the planning practice guidance and is summarised in the table below.

Table 7.6 Future employment needs models 2024-45

Model	Type	Offices	Mixed / Industrial
Labour demand	-	0.4	0.6
Labour supply	Low	0.4	0.7
	Hi	0.9	0.9
Trend	Change of Use, Permissions, Extensions	2.6	6.6
	Permissions, Extensions	0.5	5.9
	Permissions	0.4	5.1

Source: Icen / various

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- 7.27 The labour demand and supply models produce the lowest results. In reality future jobs forecasts and population change are likely to have a weak relationship with demand for premises. Over the last decade, the population has been declining, whereas demand has remained steady for new quality premises, including for example the well -received Riverside development.
- 7.28 The trend -based assessments provide for a more meaningful indication of market activity. These are gross figures, which means that there will be losses occurring at the same time of older premises, some to employment use and some to residential.
- 7.29 The overall employment future need is likely to align to the highest end of the trend projections, of around 2.6 ha offices and 6.6 ha industrial, being 8.9 ha overall. However it would not be reasonable for the authority to plan for new space associated with change of use or extensions, so the **space to plan for would align to the permissions -based element, being 0.4 ha offices and 5.1 ha industrial.**
- 7.30 There is clear evidence of demand for new employment space and this is reinforced by stakeholder engagement, which reports good demand for particularly smaller employment spaces both premium and affordable, as well as a more limited demand for additional office space. However these trend based 'need' figures exceed the supply identified in the supply assessment work in chapter 5. In part this reflects the fact that some former brownfield sites, such as Bakewell Riverside former mill, have now been redeveloped and there is a much more limited ready stock of brownfield land for intensification.
- 7.31 In terms of viability, it is unlikely that new employment units can be brought forward on 'new' sites due to the land costs, construction costs and relatively low rental values in the Park. As a result, the redevelopment / conversion of existing stock for new units, infill of sites and extension of existing buildings are likely to be the key sources of new units.

7.32 The Park Authority will need to balance potential demand for employment space of the future Plan period against wider Park management and landscape objectives.

8. High street and retail matters

- 8.1 This section considers the state of the retail offer in Bakewell, other top up shopping locations and the rural villages. It provides a consideration of future demand and management. It is not a full town centre assessment of the vitality and viability of Bakewell or other locations which was covered by the Bakewell Employment Land and Retail Review, 2016.
- 8.2 The Peak District's retail offer is comprised of smaller chain and independent village shops across a network of rural locations, with Bakewell providing a full town centre offer resident and visitor offer including Aldi and Co-op food retailing.
- 8.3 Bakewell is the only market town in the National Park. It has a diverse and attractive town centre, due to the mix of national retailers and small independent convenience shops, and many tourist-oriented shops offering gifts and higher quality niche shopping. It continues to function as a market town in its rural and agricultural role, hosting a regional agricultural business centre and a twice weekly animal market. It also hosts a popular shopping market on Mondays which attracts a significant number of people into the town. It is a tourist centre and a hub from which to explore other attractions.
- 8.4 Bakewell is supported by a network of smaller centres (identified in Core Strategy DS1). Many of these host local village shops which provide a valuable community service, particularly for the ageing population, given the rural nature of the National Park and its accessibility challenges.

National Retail outlook

- 8.5 The retail landscape has changed considerably in recent years, notably with increased online shopping, heightened during the pandemic. Post pandemic a 'new normal' has emerged with a mix of online and high

street retailing. The Peak District is not immune to the pressures faced in other locations and having an understanding of the retail offer and suitable policies in place to manage this is appropriate.

- 8.6 CoStar's July 2025 report notes that after a difficult 2024, with weaker sales and rising costs, there are signs of a tentative retail recovery emerging. National retail take-up rose to a five-and-a-half-year high at the start of 2025, with the amount of space leased in the past four quarters up 20% year-over-year. The national retail vacancy rate has stabilised. Despite a dip in May 2025, retail sales in the three months to May grew by 0.8%.
- 8.7 Experian's Retail Planner Briefing Note 22 sets out that looking ahead, spending growth over the course of 2025 will be constrained by a renewed increase in inflation, impacting on household budgets, as firms pass on rising costs related to an increase in NICs payment, the National Minimum Wage and business rates from April, as well as higher energy prices. For convenience goods the expectation is a modest recovery in 2025 with consumers being in a better position than they were. Comparison spending rose marginally in 2024, and growth is projected to accelerate modestly in 2025, as falling interest rates improve the affordability of replacement of white goods.
- 8.8 Although the recovery remains fragile the retail sector will likely have a better year in 2025 than in 2024.

Rural Retail Matters

- 8.9 Plunkett UK⁶ produced the Future of Rural Retail 2025 report⁷, reflecting growing concerns raised by community owned shops about the challenges they face. It notes that rural community shops play a critical role in safeguarding equitable access to essential retail and

⁶ Plunkett UK are a national charity with a vision for resilient, thriving and inclusive rural communities.

⁷ <https://plunkett.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Future-of-Rural-Retail-2025-Report.pdf>

having broader societal impact – but they must adapt to survive. There are supply challenges in accessing core products from large national wholesalers, alongside increasing cost pressures and ever-changing consumer behaviours, all of which mean rural retailers need to evolve, innovate and adapt.

8.10 The 2025 Rural Shop Report⁸ findings include nationwide:

- Rural shops provide secure, flexible jobs for over 178,000 people
- 40% of rural shops are the only convenience store in rural areas, with no other shops or businesses nearby
- Rural retailers have invested over £240m in their businesses over the last year to better serve their communities

8.11 The report highlights the unique challenges that rural retailers face compared to their more urban counterparts, including a lack of connectivity, issues with the cost and availability of deliveries, theft and other retail crime.

8.12 The report recognises that the UK's almost 19,000 rural shops are crucial to the communities that they serve, providing not just a wide range of products – often from small local suppliers - but also essential services like the Post Office, prescription collections and other banking services. Rural shops are increasingly acting as miniature high streets in their own right.

Retail function in the National Park

⁸ <https://cdn.acs.org.uk/public/ACS%20Rural%20Shop%20Report%202025.pdf>

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- 8.13 As noted above, the Park's retail provision is diverse, with Bakewell as the market town supported by (brand) top up locations at Hathersage, One Stop; Tideswell, Co-op; Bradwell, Co-op; Hope Spar; Co-op at Baslow; and Spar at Calver. In addition there are smaller top village shops (including) in Hartington, Linton, Winster, Great Longstone, Ashford in the Water, Monyash and Grindleford community shop.
- 8.14 The local village shops across the Park have an important role in serving the community and - as noted in the reports above - they are offer a range of essential community services. In reality, main shopping locations are largely outside of the Park (see survey below) which does not undermine the importance of local shops.

Bakewell town centre review

- 8.15 As set out in the adopted Core Strategy, Bakewell is diverse and attractive town centre, due to the mix of national retailers and small independent convenience and comparison shops, many tourist-oriented shops offering gifts and higher quality niche shopping, as well as a good pub and café offer. The varied offer caters for a range of budgets and contributes to an attractive overall proposition in a quality environment. There is a weekly Monday shoppers market and a twice weekly animal market.
- 8.16 Icen Projects visited Bakewell in June 2025 and acquired the latest Goad Centre Report from Experian (survey dated August 2024), to consider the current state of the town centre offer. Overall, the town centre performs well on a range of indicators. Key facts include:
- Vacancy rate of 8.88% in 2024 (compared with the UK 1414.1%) or 14 of 159159 units vacant. At 2025 this is estimated at 9 units vacant (from a 151 total, including those outside of the Experian Goad map) or 6%. This compares favourably to vacancy rates in Sheffield of 5% and Derby of 4%. The 2016 Derbyshire Dales Bakewell Employment Land and Retail Review highlighted a vacancy of 6% across 171 units.
 - At 2024, food and comparison shopping make up a greater portion of units compared to other UK centres, which has higher counts in

service type and vacancy. In particular, bakery and grocery as well as clothing, charity, gift and book / crafts perform strongly in Bakewell. Cafes / restaurants account for 27 outlets or 18%, which is broadly in line with the UK average (2024 data).

- 8.17 In terms of larger format convenience retail, Bakewell's Co-op on Granby Road of 1,540 sqm was joined in 2019 by Aldi, west of the town centre which extends to 1,254 sqm (1,788 sqm gross external). These provide the main convenience shopping locations in the National Park.
- 8.18 In addition to the larger format stores, there is a much wider variety of convenience offer. There are a number of shops in Bakewell town – deli's, pasty shop, bakeries, alcohol, and the Post Office has a large convenience section. They all contribute to the offer in Bakewell both for local residents and communities but also as part of the tourism offer.

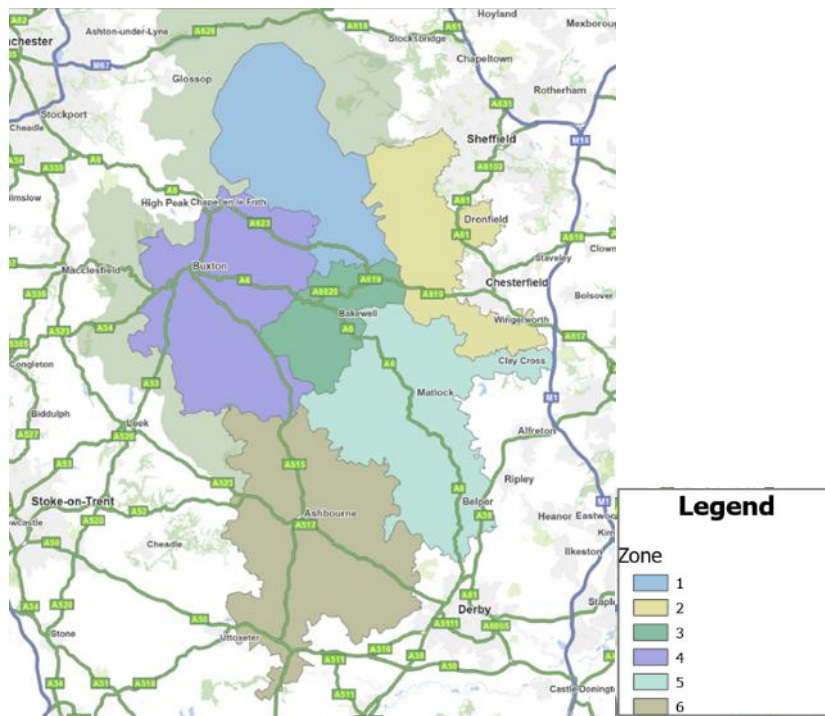
Bakewell shopping area boundary

- 8.19 During the visit to Bakewell, the primary shopping area boundary as set out on the Local Plan proposals map was assessed for suitability. Whilst there are residential elements in the town centre on Buxton Road and Bath Street, the overall pattern of retail and commerce indicates that the boundary is suitable and adequately identifies a contiguous retail frontage where town centre uses are concentrated.

Future needs shopper survey

- 8.20 The PDNPA has drawn on results of a 2025 household shopping survey commissioned by Derbyshire Dales District Council but covering key areas of the PDNPA including Bakewell. This was undertaken in April 2025 by NEMS Market Research and gathered information on current shopping patterns from 600 respondents across the survey area.
- 8.21 As can be seen by the chart below, all the Zones are in part located in the National Park.

Figure 72.1 Retail Survey Study Area



- 8.22 The main purpose of the household survey was to establish usage patterns for the following broad convenience, comparison and commercial leisure sectors.
- 8.23 In connection with main food and grocery shopping, respondents were also asked how they travelled to do their shopping and whether on their main food shopping trip they linked a trip with another activity such as going to the bank, post office, building society, getting petrol, shopping for other food items, shopping for non-food items or using leisure or other service.
- 8.24 Pulling the results of the shopper survey together, and assuming the results as a proxy for the National Park habits as a whole, Aldi in Bakewell was the most popular location for main food shopping commanding 14.5% of all trips within the survey. It was also the most visited store in both zone 1 (13%) and Zone 3 (47%). Many locations outside of the Park are also popular for main food shopping including Sainsbury's Ashbourne, Aldi Ashbourne, Sainsbury's Matlock, Aldi

Buxton, Morrisons Buxton, Tesco Sheffield – as well as around 10% online.

8.25 From a top up shopping perspective the Co-op in Bradwell was the most popular location in Zone 1 (25%) and the Co-op in Bakewell was the most popular location in Zone 3 (36%). These along with Aldi in Bakewell were the most popular top up locations as a whole for the survey area, but many other top up and village stores can be identified in the survey results across the Park, reflecting the importance of local stores on a day to day basis. Locations in Buxton, Matlock and Ashbourne are also popular (albeit the survey area extended beyond the Park boundary).

8.26 Respondents were asked where they purchase a range of non-food goods, which are covered in questions 6-14 of the shopper survey. The summary for Bakewell is provided below:

Table 8.1 Shopper survey results, : non -food goods,

Type	Bakewell
Clothing	3.8%
Furniture	1.5%
Household Textiles	1.3%
Electrical	0.2%
Books/DVDs	4.3%
DIY/Hardware	2.3%
Chemist Goods	16.8%
Jewellery	3%

Sports	0.3%
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Source: Household Survey

- 8.27 Overall, this shows that Bakewell does attract some, albeit limited comparison goods expenditure. However, it is probably not surprising that the surrounding larger centres such as Sheffield attract more comparison good shoppers.
- 8.28 From a convenience good perspective, the Aldi in Bakewell opened in 2019 and it has now established a strong convenience offer with a survey derived turnover in 2025 of £49.09m. This equates to a market share of 6.10% of total expenditure within the survey area. The Aldi is in Zone 5 and it draws most of its trade (£29.62m) from Zone 5. It is also trading in excess of its expected company average (circa £15m).
- 8.29 The Co-op in Bakewell performs reasonably well and is trading at around £13.87m, according to the current data. This is however slightly below its company average turnover level of £19m. This is not of concern, but probably reflects the distribution of trade between the Aldi and Co-op and how the shopper survey is constructed identifying main and top up shopping i.e. there is one option for each question. If there was a main and a second choice for each question the turnover of these stores would be much closer to one another and probably more reflective of their company average turnover levels.
- 8.30 Looking forward in terms of needs, based on a constant market share approach, the sales densities of existing floor space is increasing faster than the increase in population and expenditure. Unless considerable population change is anticipated for Bakewell, which it is not, there is highly unlikely to be any additional quantitative retail needs that need to be planned for across the plan period.
- 8.31 The position of no quantitative convenience need for other, smaller settlements is also the output of the data. The only situation that could

change this position would be a qualitative reason to enhance provision, but the scale and impact of this needs to be carefully considered.

- 8.32 In relation to comparison goods, Bakewell has a low market share of available comparison expenditure at 2.83% across the survey area (albeit this is wider than the National Park). However, this amounts to a turnover of £32.17m in 2025 and it is noted that this is significantly higher than the turnover (£13.63m) derived from the previous study.
- 8.33 The increase in centre turnover is welcomed and clearly supporting existing stores within the centre. To continue supporting town centre trade and turnover, increased trading density again outstrips the growth in population and expenditure. As such there is no need to plan for any additional comparison good floorspace moving forwards.

Policy matters

- 8.34 The NPPF directs that new main town centre uses should be directed to existing town centres, then edge of centre and only out of centre if no centre suitability sites are or will be available. Local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500m² of gross floorspace).
- 8.35 It is of note in the context of the above that a new 441 sqm Co-op was permitted on the edge of Tideswell in 2023 which has not been implemented but could replace the Co-op offer in the centre of Tideswell. A sequential test exercise was considered as part of the planning application statement for that proposal.
- 8.36 It is recommended that the Peak District National Park Authority consider a locally set threshold for future Class E (a) and (b) along with other town centre uses. In order to provide the justification and evidence for a suitable floorspace threshold, the following elements are usually considered:

- Development trends;

-
- Health of existing centres;
 - Existing town centre floorspace characteristics; and
 - Recent retail proposals

- 8.37 Clearly recent development trends and retail proposals are interlinked and PDNPA are aware that the recent trends have been with discounters such as Aldi (at circa 1,500-2,000sqm net), coupled with smaller convenience stores which fall below the 280sqm (net) Sunday Trading Threshold e.g. Co-op, Tideswell. Other trends to consider are the changes to commercial locations to include increasing amounts of main town centre floorspace, such as gyms, quasi retail uses and also microbreweries.
- 8.38 In PDNPA there is a difference in terms of the centres, with Bakewell clearly performing well and capable of withstanding the impact of the larger Aldi store at the time it was assessed. The Centre does not appear to have been notably affected by the Aldi, which has enhanced foodstore choice for the wider settlement and its catchment.
- 8.39 Bakewell also benefits from a wide choice of shops and services and many units contribute towards its health, along with its mix of national and local operators and also its wider mix of footplate store sizes. However, other the centres in the National Park are smaller in scale, have limited shops and services and also footplate units. Co-op in Tideswell, a typical – larger unit in the Park context, has an external building footprint of 480 sqm with a retail floor space of 279 sqm. These centres could not withstand impacts from larger store developments, indeed some may struggle to withstand the impact from smaller stores similar to those around the Sunday Trading Threshold.
- 8.40 In order to consider a proportionate approach to development in different situations, it is recommended that a two-tier approach is developed. The recommendation is that if an edge or out of centre retail proposal comes forward and its catchment includes any defined settlement in DS1 (or its equivalent replacement), except Bakewell, an impact assessment is prepared for schemes in excess of 200sqm (net).

8.41 In respect to edge and out of centre proposals, where Bakewell Primary Shopping Area is within the immediate catchment, it is recommended that the local floorspace threshold could be set at a different level. This reflects the health of Bakewell, its ability to withstand impacts, the likely trading turnover of the Co-op being the main foodstore in the centre and also the overall turnover of the centre. There is however a need to manage the 'creep' of town centre uses elsewhere. The threshold in this situation could be of the order of 500sqm (net). There may also be merit in setting this as a cumulative floorspace to cover a 'creep' effect to prevent multiple smaller proposals not triggering the need for an impact assessment.

8.42 For the avoidance of doubt, proposals which breach the above thresholds will require a thorough assessment of their impact on:

- existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
- local centre and/or high street vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the immediate centre and wider area, up to five years from the time the application is made.

9. Rural economy issues

- 9.1 This section brings together the analysis and findings presented throughout this report, considering some broad issues that are pertinent to the National Park's economy.

Diversification of agriculture and other land-based business

- 9.2 Farming is a key component of the Peak District economy, however the Business Survey indicated that a large proportion of farmers are anticipating their turnover to reduce in the next two years. Over half of the respondents stated that their profitability in the last five years has been declining and 61% expect decline in the next five years. Rising overhead costs were the most commonly stated barrier to future growth.
- 9.3 Diversification of agricultural/land-based businesses can help to sustain existing business by providing more predictable revenue streams. Over half of the farmers who responded to the business survey, who had already diversified, stated that it has been very or somewhat successful in terms of providing additional income. Examples of diversification initiatives included school visits, accommodation for tourism including camping/glamping, holiday cottages and caravan sites, car parking and leisure activities including clay pigeon shooting.
- 9.4 50% of farming/land-based businesses stated that they would consider diversifying (or further diversifying) their operations in the future, with renewable energy and environmental related forms of diversification most likely to be considered.
- 9.5 Findings from the business survey and wider stakeholder engagement identified that planning restrictions are seen as a major barrier to diversification. In some cases the resource involved in obtaining planning permission is seen as disproportionate to the benefit from the diversification activity. Obtaining permission, even for small scale

proposals such as Shepherds huts or conversion of existing farm buildings, was reported to be challenging.

- 9.6 Going forward, it is recommended that planning policy, whilst recognising the wider Park landscape priorities, is sufficiently supportive of the diversification of agriculture and other land-based business in order to ensure business survival.
- 9.7 The PDNPA could consider explicitly supporting small-scale renewable or low carbon energy schemes as a means to diversify, as the Lake District National Park have done within their Local Plan 2020-2035, Policy 19⁹.

Supporting tourism and recreation

- 9.8 The tourism sector supports a significant proportion of total employment within the Peak District, making it a key economic sector within the National Park's rural economy. The sector is integral to delivering the National Park purpose of promoting opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding of special qualities.
- 9.9 Over 80% of business survey respondents stated that they experience seasonal demand. For tourism to continue to support the local economy, there is a need to broaden the appeal of the tourism offer – especially during quieter times of the year. Broadening the range of accommodation and facilities can help to encourage longer stays and boost off-season tourism. There is an opportunity for low-impact, eco-friendly visitor lodging to be delivered to meet this need. However, stakeholder feedback suggests that some businesses find current planning policy too restrictive with regards to the conversion of existing buildings and new small scale visitor accommodation for example glamping pods or shepherds huts. It is recommended that policy

⁹ <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/planning/planningpolicies/local-plan/policies/policy-19-agricultural-and-land-based-rural-business-diversification>

regarding agricultural diversification continues to be supportive of small-scale visitor accommodation proposals.

- 9.10 The labour market was another common theme regarding challenges within the tourism sector. 25% of the respondents to the business survey reported that they have issues in recruiting staff with the right skills locally and stakeholder engagement suggested that there is a particular shortage of available, qualified chefs.
- 9.11 Multiple factors were identified as contributing towards labour supply issues, including public transport and affordable housing. Employers stated that poor public transport accessibility limits the labour supply pool as those without cars are unable to access some employment opportunities.
- 9.12 Through supporting affordable housing development, PDNPA could help to enable people to live and work within the National Park, increasing the labour supply pool. Stakeholders emphasised the need for a balance between visitor accommodation and long-term residential accommodation to ensure that businesses are able to recruit and remain viable.

Homeworking and remote working

- 9.13 The COVID-19 pandemic forced a home working culture that has had a long term impacted on working practices. Many organisations accept a part home work practice and others facilitate full remote working. Some employees or self employed have been able to relocate to locations offering a higher quality of life such as the Peak District, or acquire second homes for intermittent use. Home workers can be hard to capture in statistics as their primary place of work is recorded as the business registered location.
- 9.14 The Peak District is likely to have experienced an increase in those locating to the area to take advantage of quality of life and working

remotely. However this will be dependent on access to fast broadband and internet.

- 9.15 Feedback from stakeholder engagement regarding digital connectivity suggest that there are digital not spots/black spots in the Park. This will restrict the ability of the area in attracting 'digital nomads'. It will also have a detrimental effect on existing businesses.
- 9.16 In addition to the roll out of broadband, the adaptation of existing residences for home working through converting rooms to home office, or allowing where suitable garden rooms / appropriate extensions will also support the practice.
- 9.17 There has been positive demand for renting co-working office space in at the Peak District Business Hub, located within the Peak District National Park Authority's headquarters. This may reflect a number of factors, including that those using the Park as a base for remote work type employment also wish to be able to have some formal space away from home.

Spatial focus of employment growth

- 9.18 The majority of safeguarded employment sites are currently located across the Hope Valley, Tideswell and Bakewell as per the spatial objective of the Core Strategy.
- 9.19 Site assessments conclude that these sustainable locations should remain the focus of employment growth, given their population densities and accessibility via road/rail/bus. At present they offer a good variety of employment premises, predominantly aimed at SMEs. There is currently a variety of industrial space, varying in age and quality with some more affordable premises, as well as more modern new build units. There is also some good quality office provision including office components of Riverside Works, Deepdale Business Park and Hathersage Hall.

9.20 Whilst a number of potential opportunities for intensification and development are identified within safeguarded sites across the Hope Valley, site opportunities in Bakewell are very limited which places a constraint on growth.

Green energy

9.21 Green energy is energy that can be produced using a method, and from a source, that causes no harm to the natural environment – for example wind or solar energy. Businesses can adopt various green energy sources, with the dual benefit of reducing their environmental impact and also lowering overhead costs.

9.22 Stakeholder engagement suggests that green energy sources are a particularly important factor in enabling heritage buildings within the Peak District to remain viable and maintained, by reducing costly energy bills.

9.23 However, stakeholders expressed the view that there are significant challenges in obtaining planning permission for small scale green energy initiatives.

9.24 It is recommended that planning policy continues to be supportive of small-scale green energy generation for private use as a means of supporting local businesses to survive, as well as delivering environmental benefits.

Population and labour force

9.25 There are challenges in providing sufficient labour to meet business needs, partly due to the lack of affordable worker accommodation near employment areas. Survey results suggest notable in commuting of workers from outside of the park, and it is likely that population decrease will have exacerbated the issue. Delivering the Park's housing targets as set out in the emerging Plan will in part assist in stabilising the population and providing for some additional workforce, although the availability of labour is likely to be an ongoing concern.

Bringing forward space to support business needs

- 9.26 As identified in the previous section, and throughout evidence in this report, there is demand for employment space in the Park. this is largely focused at the smaller end of the end, sub 2,000 sqft, including both premium and affordable spaces. There is also ad hoc demand for slightly larger units.
- 9.27 There is a reduced stock of disused or significantly aged brownfield employment sites, which combined with high construction costs, means bringing forward additional space is likely to be more challenging than in the past. Taking into account the findings throughout this report and the purposes of the National Park, it is unlikely that new suitable greenfield sites will be identified, be available, suitable or viable. The emphasis on bringing forward new units will realistically be achieved through:
- Safeguarding employment sites to stem loss.
 - Supporting the redevelopment of existing sites for new stock. This may gain greater impetus with the implications of higher EPC rating requirements for commercial stock in the future.
 - Where suitable, considering extensions of existing units, and sites.
 - Where suitable and in sustainable locations, supporting the conversion of agricultural and other buildings that no longer meet modern agricultural practice requirements to employment spaces including work hubs and other forms of innovative shared and flexible workspace .

10. Summary and conclusions

10.1 This section provides a summary of the key messages from this work.

Economy

10.2 The Peak District National Park is a large but well-connected rural area renowned for its high-quality landscape. Tourism, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Wholesale & Retail are the largest employment sectors – these sectors are often associated with lower wages and part-time working. Total employment estimates are for 18,500 jobs, of which around 3,000 are in Agriculture. The highest business counts (rather than employment) are in Agriculture, Tourism, Professional Services and Wholesale & Retail.

10.3 The resident population has been declining and ageing. This has meant that a large proportion of the resident population is economically inactive due to retirement.

10.4 The Peak District residents overall have a higher-than-average skill level and a larger proportion of high-level occupations than average. This translates into high house prices and high levels out commuting of residents to nearby employment areas, combined with home working.

Business and Stakeholder Perspectives

Business Survey

10.5 Businesses reported that poor public transport connections and a lack of affordable housing have limited the labour supply pool and caused issues for recruitment of staff. Rising overhead costs and planning constraints were consistently cited as the main barriers to growth for both general businesses and farmers/land managers. **It is recommended that planning policy continues to be supportive of**

small-scale green energy generation for private use as a means of supporting local businesses to survive, as well as delivering environmental benefits.

- 10.6 Farmers presented a fairly pessimistic view on profitability – agricultural diversification is one method to improve future profitability. Over 60% of farmers have already diversified their operations (e.g. school visits, converting building for residential or tourism use, car parking etc). Businesses across both surveys indicated they would consider future diversification, with farmers most likely considering renewable energy and environmental-related projects. **It is recommended that planning policy continues to be sufficiently supportive of the diversification of agriculture and other land-based business in order to ensure business survival, whilst recognising the wider Park landscape priorities.**
- 10.7 Across both groups, only a relatively small proportion had implemented any innovative practises or technologies in the last three years. Limited access to funding and regulatory/planning consents were identified as primary barriers to innovation by both general businesses and farmers. **There is potential for enhanced signposting to business support.**
- 10.8 A large proportion of premises were built before 1980, potentially not meeting future energy efficiency requirements. **It is recommended that the PDNPA should support the redevelopment of existing sites for new stock - this may gain greater impetus with the implications of higher EPC rating requirements for commercial stock in the future.**
- 10.9 Poor broadband connectivity/speed was a notable concern, reported by over a quarter of businesses. **The PDNPA should be supportive of initiatives to improve broadband connectivity where this would benefit residents and businesses.**
- 10.10 Nearly 50% of general businesses operated without a physical premises and 73% occupied small units (0-500 sqm). A large proportion of premises were built before 1980, potentially not meeting future

energy efficiency requirements. Poor broadband connectivity/speed was a notable concern, reported by over a quarter of businesses.

Agent Engagement

- 10.11 There has been strong demand in recent years for new, high-quality industrial and office space, particularly smaller units (1,000-1,200 sq ft), as demonstrated by the Riverside Works development in Bakewell, which is 80-90% occupied.
- 10.12 Viability is generally a challenge for new-build small industrial units due to low rents compared to construction costs.
- 10.13 Demand also exists for more affordable, good-quality industrial stock – however converted agricultural buildings do not always meet modern business needs.
- 10.14 Demand for office space is weaker than industrial but still exists, particularly in Bakewell town centre.

Wider Stakeholder Engagement

Wider stakeholder engagement supplements the business survey findings by providing insights from discussions with key stakeholders including commercial agents, business representative organisations, and local businesses. Findings were categorised within a SWOT framework, as summarised in the table below.

Table 10.1 SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social wellbeing and value of the landscape • Strong tourist economy • College education provision • Training opportunities • Independent businesses and retailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport connectivity • Digital connectivity • Labour supply / skills gaps • Business costs • Business performance • Lack of grow-on space • Demand for office space • Population density
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport innovation • Diversification • Business innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising business costs • Restrictive planning policies limiting diversification, expansion and inward investment. • Widening digital divide and lack of innovation • Loss of independent businesses • Further population decline and diminishing workforce • Business loss to areas outside of NP

Source: IcenI engagement

Employment Land Need

- 10.15 Whilst labour demand and supply models have been considered, the overall employment land future need is likely to align to the higher end of the trend projections, of around 2.6 ha offices and 6.6 industrial, being 8.9 ha overall, derived from all permissions on extensions, change of use and new development. However it would not be reasonable for the authority to plan for new space associated with change of use or extensions, so it would be appropriate to plan for the new development permissions -based trend element, being 5.5 ha made up of 0.4 ha offices and 5.1 ha industrial.
- 10.16 There is clear evidence of demand for new employment space and this is reinforced by stakeholder engagement, which reports good demand for particularly smaller employment spaces both premium and affordable, as well as a more limited demand for additional office space. However these trend based 'need' figures exceed the supply identified in the supply assessment work in chapter 5. In part this reflects the fact that some former brownfield sites, such as Bakewell Riverside former mill, have now been redeveloped and there is a much more limited ready stock of brownfield land for intensification.
- 10.17 The Park Authority will need to balance potential demand for employment space of the future Plan period against wider Park management and landscape objectives.

Bringing Forward Space to Support Business Needs

- 10.18 There is demand for employment space in the Park. This is largely focused at the smaller end of the scale, sub 2,000 sqft, including both premium and affordable spaces. There is also ad hoc demand for slightly larger units.
- 10.19 There is a reduced stock of disused or significantly aged brownfield employment sites, which combined with high construction costs, means bringing forward additional space is likely to be more challenging than in

the past. It is unlikely that new suitable greenfield sites will be identified, be available, suitable or viable. The emphasis on bringing forward new units will realistically be achieved through:

- Continuing to safeguard the employment sites listed under Policy DME3 in the existing Local Plan Part Two, plus the additional sites identified in Table 5.1 of this report to stem loss. Furthermore, PDNPA could consider whether there are further larger scale industrial units across the National Park which could warrant safeguarding to maintain a stock of larger premises, considering it is unlikely to be acceptable, nor viable to build new build large units within the National Park context.
- Supporting the redevelopment of existing sites for new stock. This may gain greater impetus with the implications of higher EPC rating requirements for commercial stock in the future.
- Where suitable, considering extensions of existing units, and sites.
- Where suitable and in sustainable locations, supporting the conversion of agricultural and other buildings that no longer meet modern agricultural requirements to employment spaces including work hubs and other forms of innovative shared and flexible workspace.

Retail

- 10.20 The Peak District's retail offer is comprised over smaller chain and independent village shops across a network of rural locations, with Bakewell, the only market town, providing a full town centre offer including Aldi and Co-op food retailing.
- 10.21 The local village shops across the Park have an important role in serving the community and offer a range of essential community services.
- 10.22 Rural community shops face challenges in accessing core products from wholesalers, connectivity, increasing cost pressures and ever-changing consumer behaviours.

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- 10.23 Bakewell town centre is considered to be performing strongly. Vacancy rates of 9.5% in 2024 (compared with the UK 15.6%) have fallen to 6% in 2025, compared with the national rate of 3%.
- 10.24 The 2025 retail survey finds Aldi in Bakewell as a key main food shopping location, alongside locations outside of the Park and online services % online. The Co-op in Bradwell and Co-op / Aldi in Bakewell are the most popular top up shopping locations but many other top up and village stores can be identified in the survey results, reflecting the importance of local stores on a day to day basis.
- 10.25 Looking forwards, there is no quantitative need to plan for additional convenience or comparison floorspace across the PDNPA.
- 10.26 It is recommended that the Peak District National Park Authority introduce a locally set threshold for future Class E (a) and (b) and other town centre uses, with a threshold of 200 sqm (net) except for Bakewell which given the scale and health of the centre could have a higher threshold of 500sqm (net).

Key messages from this work

- Despite population decline and a reduced working age population, the Park's economy remains vibrant, with around 18,500 jobs notably in agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and retail.
- There are challenges to doing business in the Park, particularly in agriculture, with many business and farmers either stable or seeing decline. This partly relates to macro economic conditions but also to local challenges including access to workforce, broadband and connectivity. Diversification will be important for some businesses, including farming, and the Park Authority will need to consider the suitability of proposals in enabling this.
- There is demand for new business premises. With a reduced brownfield portfolio and viability challenges, the main forms of

new stock are likely to come through change of use, extensions, redevelopment of ageing stock and infill. This would include the conversion of some agricultural premises.

- Retail uses are performing adequately and address local needs and there is no need to plan for any additional convenience or comparison floorspace. To protect existing retail provision within town centres, a floorspace threshold should be introduced – 200sqm (net) when in the catchment of smaller centres and possibly 500sqm (net) if Bakewell is the only centre within the catchment.

A1. Derbyshire Dales Household Telephone Survey by Zone (undertaken in April 2025 by NEMS)

A2. Household Telephone Survey Area Map

A3. Business Survey for Farmers and Land Managers

A4. Survey for Businesses

**A5. Review of Existing Safeguarded and
Non-Designated Employment Areas**