What might world-class visitor access & transport look like in popular Lake District valleys?

This document is based on work done in 2024-25 in three localities in the Lake District: Langdale, Hawkshead & Windermere west shore and Ullswater. It is a pulling-together of ideas to demonstrate the nature of issues and ideas that emerged from vision-led access and transport planning for popular rural destinations. It was part of a broader project led by Cumbria Tourism, funded by Westmorland and Furness Council's Climate & Nature Partnership Fund.

The ideas presented here are the results of applying the findings from a Churchill Fellowship *Decarbonising the whole visitor journey for rural destinations*[1] which led to a 6-component model[2]. The purpose of this document is to explore how these ideas play out in these three UK localities.

The ideas were used to have different types of conversations with local organisations and people – separate from the immediate, urgent or deliverable. They do not constitute proposals, though some of these ideas have been included or influenced the detailed valley action plans coordinated by Cumbria Tourism.

What would a really good visitor access & transport system look like for each of these areas that is

- ✓ Truly world class – based on best practice from elsewhere
- ✓ Distinctive – embedded in the specific characters of the locality
- ✓ Economically and environmentally sustainable
- ✓ Fair and providing access for all
- ✓ Marketable – comprising enviable destination marketing propositions
- ✓ Future-ready – to be resilient to changing visitor types and demands

If this area was in places like the Swiss or Austrian alps, what would its visitor access & transport system look and feel like?

If its world-class transport system was featured in the Sunday Times or New York Times weekend travel sections, what would it say?

Contents

[1] https://churchillfellowship.org/ideas-experts/fellows-directory/alistair-kirkbride/
[2] https://lowcarbondestinations.org/component-model-graphic/

Why? Purposes

A key purpose was to allow local partners to speculate on what is conceivable, explore ideas, dare to dream about "how things could be", and therefore understand better the implications of a different type of transport system. It was about opening opportunities for different types of conversations and about the places "trying on the clothes" of world class visitor access & transport to find out how places might look and feel, and to work out what emerge as popular ideas to be embedded in the more delivery-focussed valley action plans.

A second purpose was to allow us to understand better how longer-term ambitions relate back to shorter terms actions. This has been scrutinised to understand whether and how these are mutually supportive:

- What actions are required in the short-to-medium term to deliver longer-term ambitions (that might otherwise not be acknowledged)?
- Will existing planned actions deliver the longer-term vision or even compromise future ambition?

Two guiding ideas are backcasting and logic mapping (Figures 1 & 2).

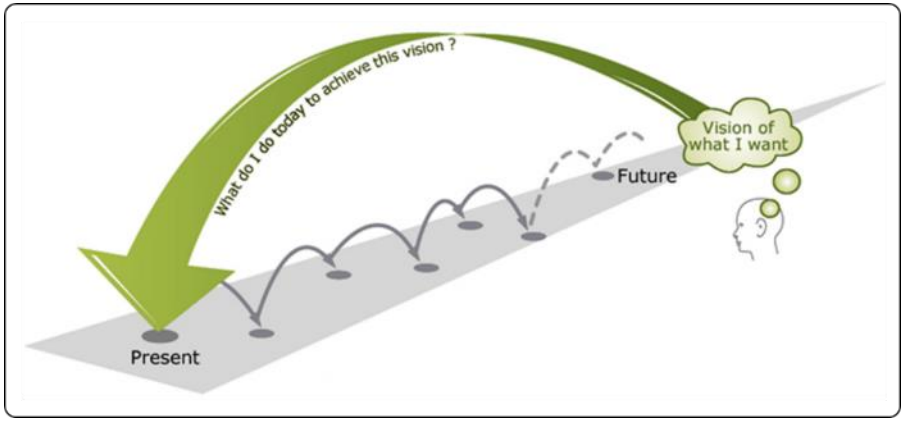


Figure 2: Backcasting means setting out the future vision first, then working backwards to identify the appropriate steps to get there. This makes sure that the first steps are focussed on the longer-term ambition as well as on immediate & urgent priorities.

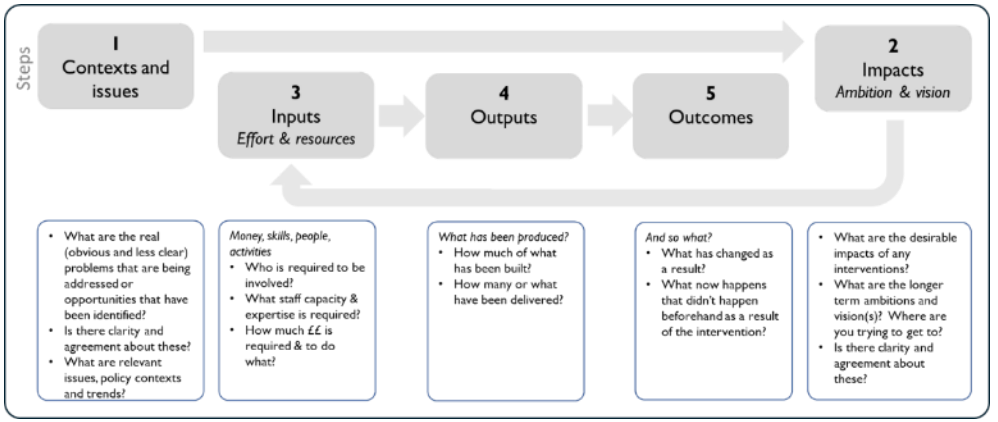


Figure 1: Logic mapping is a discipline used in transport planning that ensures that being clear on desirable impacts (step 2) leads action (step 3). This helps determine appropriate early-stage actions and investment priorities.

How?

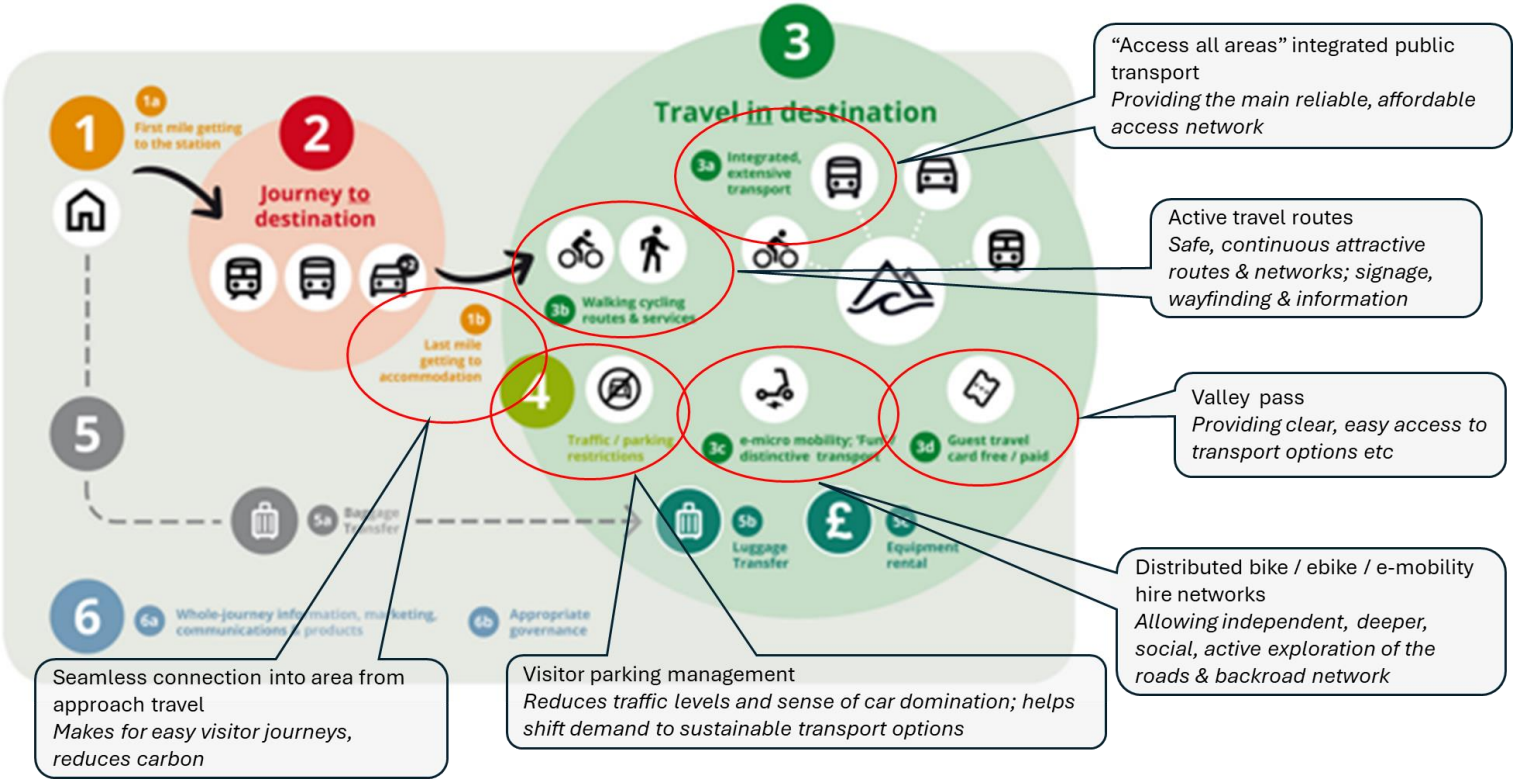
This work started from understanding the places themselves:

- ✓ What's distinctive about each locality?
  Classic Lake District craggy landscapes? Upland sheep farming heritage? Lakes with steamers? Dense networks of quiet lanes?...
- ✓ What are the patterns of movement demand?
  What are the main approaches to the area? Where do people go from and to once in the area?... regardless of how they currently make those journeys
- ✓ Where do people want to go or could they go if access was different?
- ✓ When do people visit?
  What does "seasonality" or "busyness" mean for this locality?
  How much busier are peak times compared to other times?

... then carefully identifying and applying the best ideas from elsewhere.

Here, we focussed on 6 main areas of transport as illustrated in the following graphic. This doesn't mean that the others are not important or that there are not other opportunities, but working on these gives a good flavour of what things could be like.

Whilst these are mainly presented separately, there are added benefits of them being considered together.

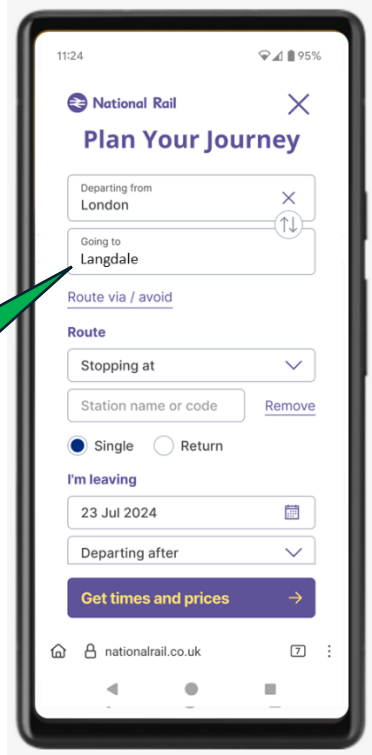


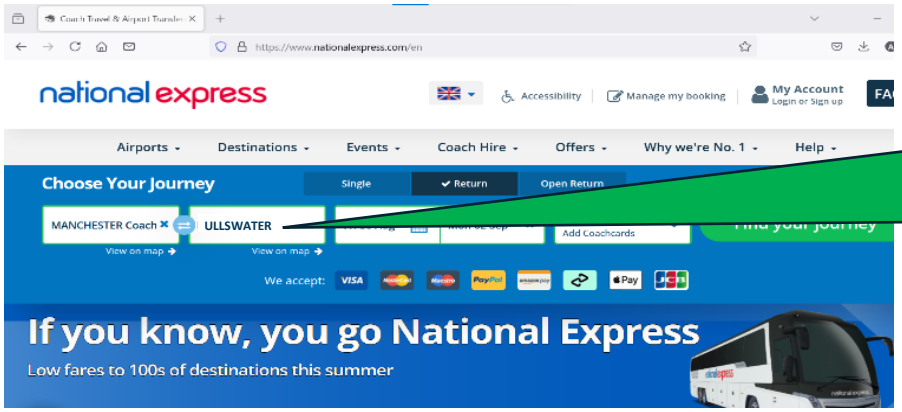
1b *Accessing each valley:* Remove barriers between approach & in-destination travel: integration & ticketing

Explorer car parks exist in some locations in the Lake District. These are designed as hubs from which it is made easy to explore the surrounding area without the need to use a car

Kewick is already a "virtual" train station. This means that it exists on the National Rail database, meaning it is possible to buy a rail ticket to Keswick – which integrates a rail ticket plus connecting bus journey

Adding (e.g.) "Langdale" to the National Rail database – to allow single ticket access by rail & bus into Langdale– would simplify approach ticketing





Through ticketing into each valley via scheduled long-distance coach services would provide lower-cost simplified whole-journey ticketing

Expand PlusBus destinations to include each valley as destinations.

PlusBus

alistair@lowcarbondestinations.org

3 Getting around

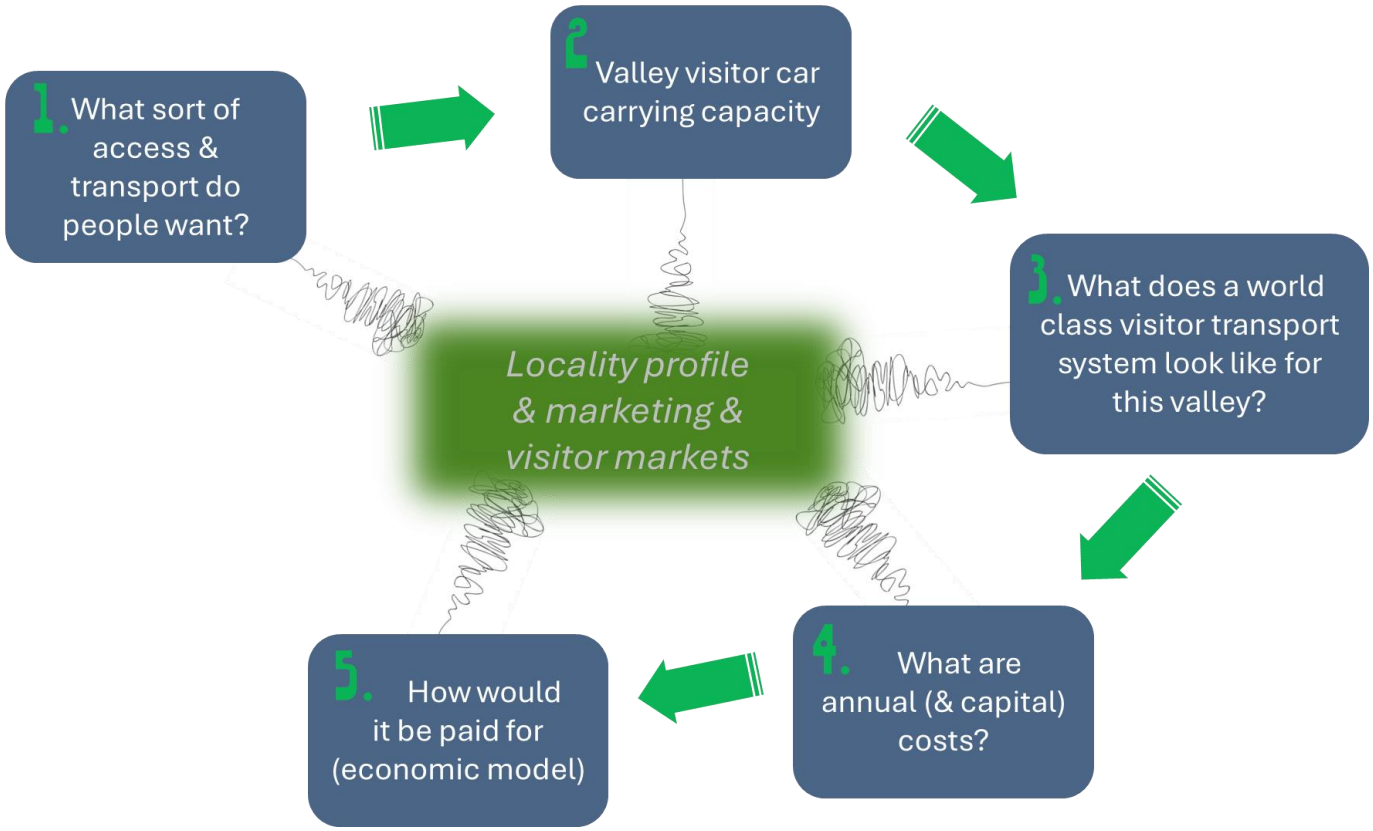
Once visitors have arrived, this Figure illustrates how we have framed what "world class" might look like *for this place*.

It's different to a standard approach to planning transport in that it is based on three broad alternative starting points:

- broad visitor appetites - rather than origin-destination demand
- the landscape itself – especially how many cars "fit" into that landscape and how this can be used to direct change that visitors want
- what world-class visitor transport systems might look like for here – i.e. how best-of-best practice translates to these places.

Only at this point are costs and economics considered.

This means that the conversation becomes more about whether the world-class system is desirable and hence how the economics could be made to work, not having ambitions constrained by limited budgets.

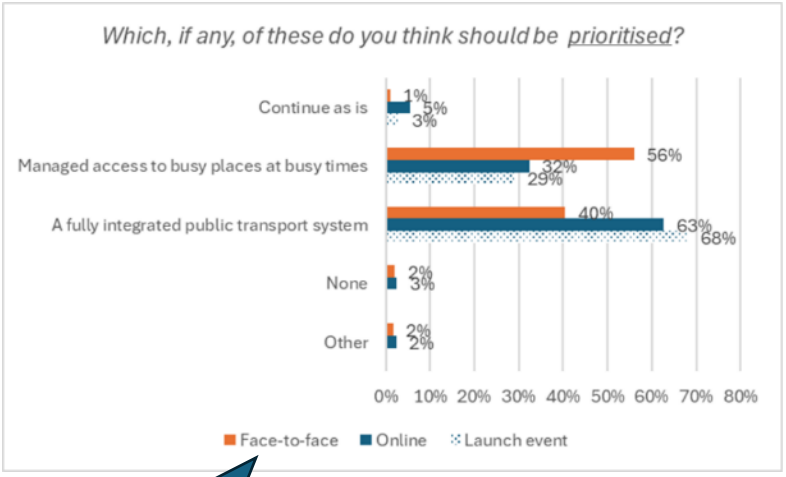


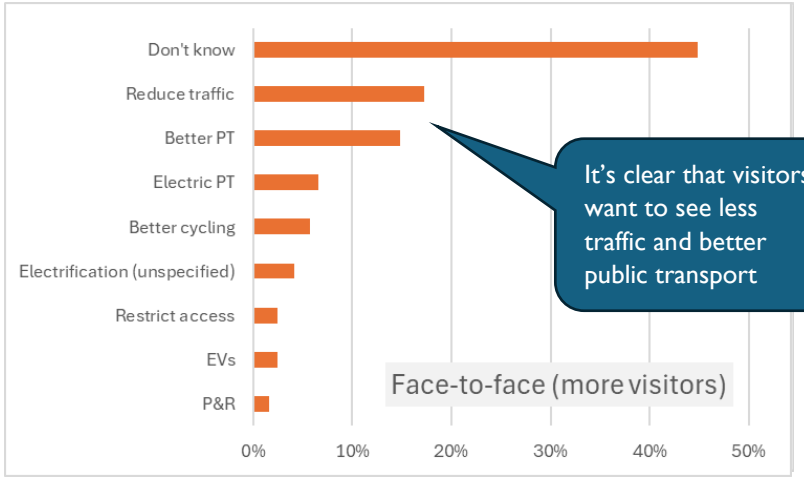
This is more like how the world-class systems overseas are designed and delivered; viability is not on a route-by-route basis, but on the value of the whole network & proposition(s).

The next few pages step through these components.

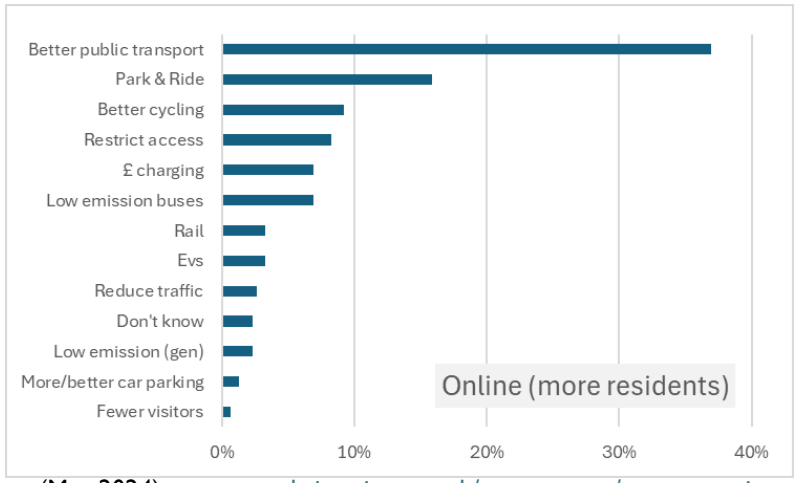
What sort of access & transport do people want?

Recent research in the Lake District looked specifically at appetites for change around access and transport among visitors and residents[3]. Using multiple methods, it revealed some clear messages about the changes that people would like to see in terms of how they get around





It's clear that visitors want to see less traffic and better public transport



- No-one wants the current system for access and transport to continue as it currently is
- Managed access at busy times is popular.
  Visitors (orange bars – visitors were the majority of face-to-face respondents) especially just want easy, good quality ways to get around
- These - together with high level for integrated public transport - give a strong mandate for ambitious, seasonal visitor transport systems that aren't car-based

[3] *Where do you want to get to? Public appetites for the future of the Lake District's transport system* (May 2024); www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/news-events/news-appetites-to-travel-differently-in-the-lake-district-where-do-you-want-to-go-reports-available-now-2024-05-15

Locality car "carrying capacity" (how many cars is too many?) and "busyness"

Excessive car volumes lead to parking issues plus higher traffic flows. A sense that a place is "too busy" often (but not always) relates to too many *cars* rather than too many *people*. Visitors want less traffic, and the roads in these areas with less traffic are attractive for car-free recreation. Residents want less congestion and more reliable journey times. Also, the dominant use of cars by visitors makes it difficult to create *viable* alternative transport services. The BBC article is all too typical of the problems of excess visitor car numbers in Langdale (and many similar places).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Warning over Bank Holiday parking chaos

WESTMORLAND AND FURNESS COUNCIL

Westmorland and Furness Council has already issued several parking tickets in Elterwater

Federica Bedendo

BBC News North East and Cumbria

5 May 2024

This leads to the challenge of how we decouple the volume of *people* (or even increase the volumes of visitors in some areas or at some times?) from the volume of *cars*?

Here, we attempt to use car parking data to consider "busyness" for each valley, and especially to see if it is possible to identify thresholds of visitor car volumes that lead to different visitor access management – i.e. formally identifying "peak" times.

The reasons for doing this for each valley are:

- To understand better how many days and which days might come into focus for different visitor access management
- To estimate the absolute numbers of visitors and visitor cars at different times of the year, and especially how many cars there are at the identified peak times of the year
- To understand the nature of "busyness" for each valley – do they have the same busyness characteristics?
- To get an idea of the scale of alternative transport services – both in terms of required capacity (numbers of seats) and when the capacity is needed.
- To better inform the scale of costs of enhanced transport services and how these costs might be found. For instance, we can start to explore the economics of bus services that might be delivered as part of a locality-scale "guest card", which might also include car parking and other discounts – but let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Differences in the characteristics of the three valleys means that the approach taken is slightly different for each one.

Langdale

	588 / 982		
Free	208	Verge	35
		On-road	56
		Layby	67
		Car park	50
Free/ restricted	113	Pub/café	96
		Shop	17
Paid	267		267
Pop-up	380		380

		With pop-up
Spaces for visitor cars	588	968
"Carrying capacity"	390	

From survey of all public car parking in the valley

Initial estimate based on existing pay & display plus other sites that do not cause problems.

Note that this doesn't compromise total revenues of the formalised car parks

In summary, these suggest that:

- At peak times, there are up to 982 legal parking spaces for visitors in Langdale
- Of these, 380 (39%) are in two pop-up car parks
- Of the remaining 588 spaces, (only) 267 (45%) are paid-for by users (45%).

We are suggesting that - from the parking data – about 390 visitor cars represent a good first estimate at "carrying capacity" for the valley. This would mean that if visitor cars were restricted to the paid-for car parks (i.e. no landowner loses revenue from formal car parks), then the "excess" visitors would travel in by other means. This gives a scale of visitor volumes on which to base alternative transport service volumes and economic models.

The data can also be used to suggest that when the valley is "full" (i.e. all legal visitor parking spaces taken), there are probably between 1470-2455 car based[4] visitors per day in the valley.

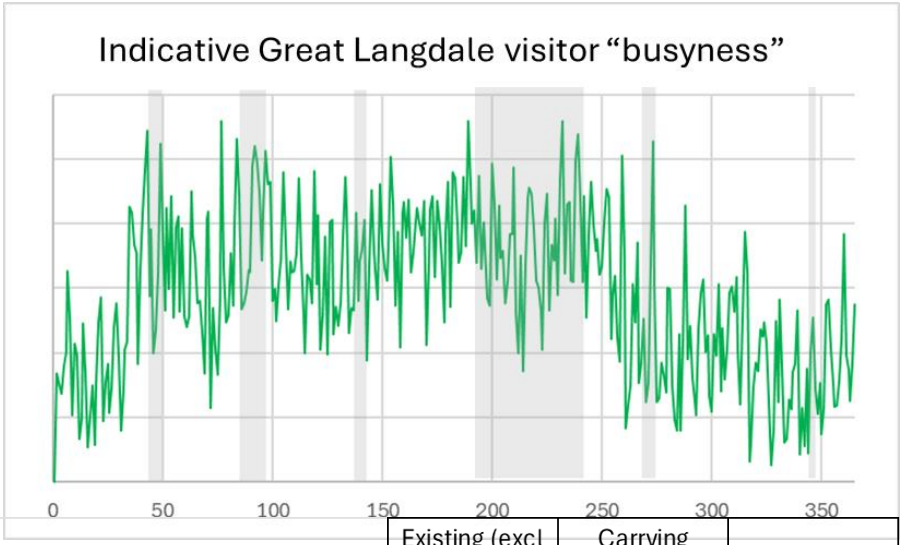
[4] The National Travel Survey for England (2023) suggests an overall car occupancy of about 1.7 people per car for leisure purposes, and 1.9 when "on holiday". Cumbria Tourism's research has shown that this can be up to 2.8. Here, we use 2.5.

But when <u>are</u> the busy days?

The chart indicates the daily visitor "busyness" for Great Langdale[5]. We don't have data for Little Langdale.

It is dominated by weekends, with a 9-month Feb-Oct "plateau"[6].

For the purposes of service design, "peak season" can be defined as all weekends and bank holidays between February & November = 77 days.



If we consider 390 visitor cars to be a reasonable number that "fit" within the valley, with a car occupancy estimate of 2.5[4], the Table indicates:

- Total car numbers in the valley over a year would be reduced from 208,019 to about 138,000, a reduction of 70,000 (34%)
- This translates to about 175,118 visitors.
  This means the number of people who we would be asking to travel without their car to visit Langdale. It also indicates the scale of demand for alternative services, on which service capacities and business models can be designed.

		Existing (excl pop-up)	Carrying capacity	Difference
	Visitor parking capacity	588	390	198
	Estimated annual parked cars	208,019	137,972	70,047
	Estimated annual car visitors 2.5	520,048	344,930	175,118

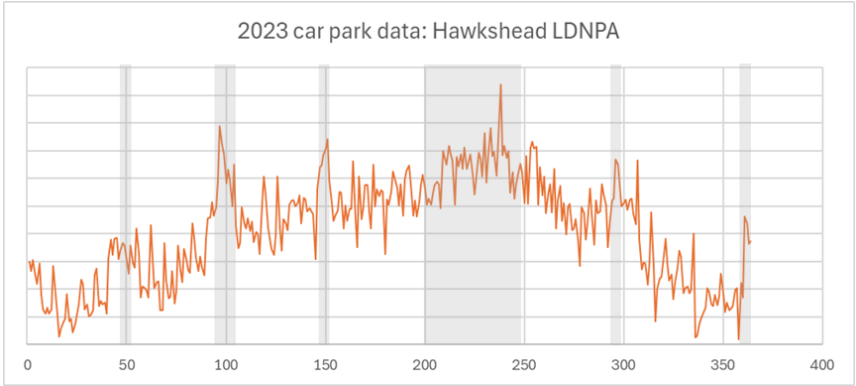
<u>How</u> this might be managed is explored after the Hawkshead and Ullswater parking & busyness sections.

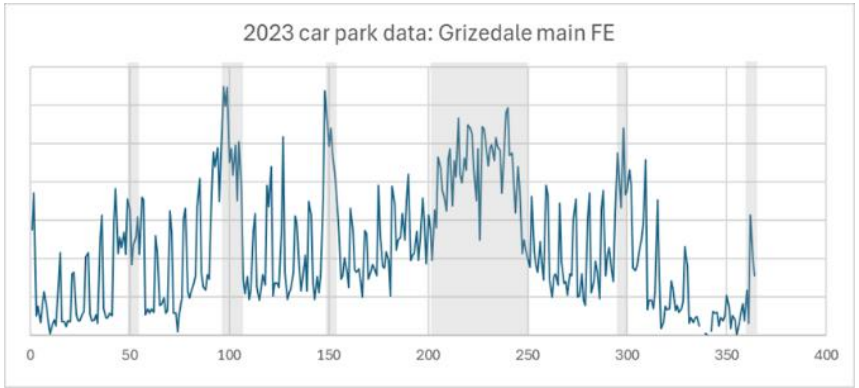
[5] This is based on daily car park totals for the LDNPA car park at New Dungeon Ghyll and the National Trust car parks at Stickle Ghyll and Elterwater. These are bulked and weighted for their relative size, although all follow similar patterns

[6] This is very different to – for example Hawkshead which is distinctly seasonal, or Pooley Bridge which is dominated by school holidays.

Hawkshead

This chart shows patterns of daily parking volumes for a whole year for the main Hawkshead car park. It is dominated by distinct seasonality with additional peaks during school holidays and weekends plus the "sawtooth" weekend cycle.

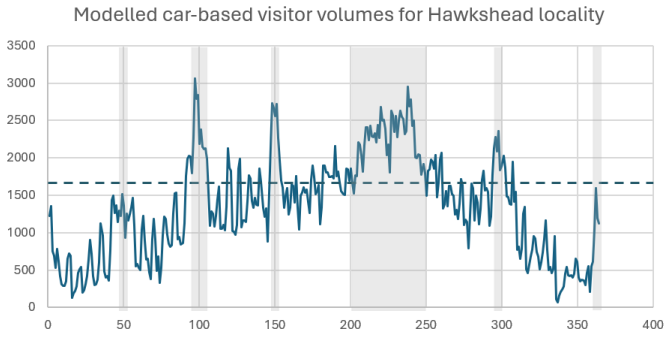




This chart shows the daily volumes of cars for Grizedale. It is characterised by:

- Significant peaks during school holidays
- Weekend "sawtooth" peaks throughout the year
- Less seasonality compared to Hawkshead

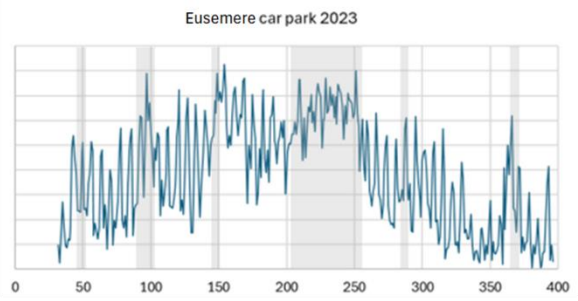
These two car parks represent about 59% of the total visitor car parking in the locality; we estimate there to be about 917 legal visitor parking places from a survey of all car parks across the whole locality. The chart provides an estimation of the fluctuations in total car-based visitor volumes by day over a year. It does this by (i) combining and weighting the daily car data from the Grizedale and Hawkshead car parks – to provide an overall pattern of daily fluctuations, (ii) scaling this up using the total car parking volumes in the locality (917) and (iii) multiplying the values by 2.5 – a reasonable estimate of car occupancy[7]. This also suggests a total of about 490,000 car-based visitors per year to the Hawkshead locality. The dotted line represents a threshold set to capture the distinct peaks (>1,700 visitors per day), mainly explained by four school holidays (Easter, summer half-term, summer and autumn half term).

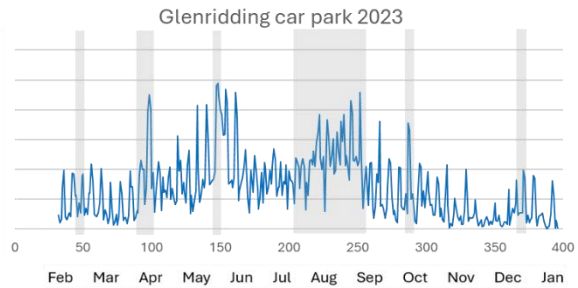


There are about 116 days above the threshold; the above-threshold visitors represent about 10% of the total annual visitor volumes, equating to about 50,000 visitors. This is modest threshold, but one that currently makes sense regarding the current patterns of "busyness"

[7] The National Travel Survey for England (2023) suggests an overall car occupancy of about 1.7 people per car for leisure purposes, and 1.9 when "on holiday". Cumbria Tourism's research has shown that this can be up to 2.8. Here, we use 2.5.

Ullswater





- These charts show "busyness" throughout the year at Eusemere (Pooley Bridge) and Glenridding car parks. Both of these are used almost exclusively by visitors or residents for leisure purposes.
- They both show distinct "sawtooth" weekend peaks all year round.
- Eusemere suggests that Pooley Bridge also gets busy during weekdays in school holidays, especially in summer.
- Glenridding is generally less busy outside Easter, summer half-term and summer holidays.

Total	Car park			Layby	Verge	On-road
	Paid	*Free*	*Pub/café?*			
912	622	20	40	177	16	37
	68%	2%	4%	19%	2%	4%

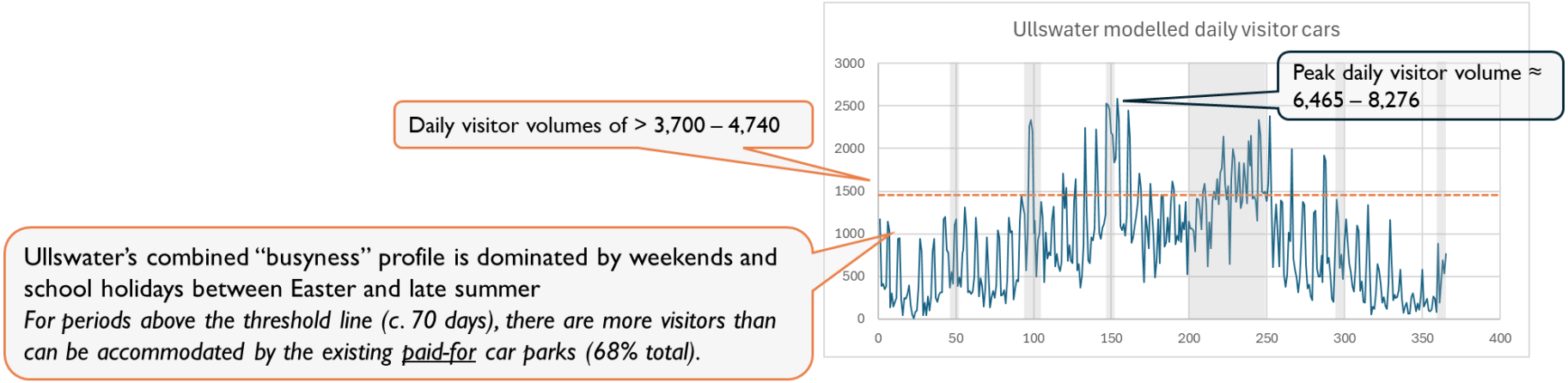
The table summarises the total amount of car parking available to visitors in the Ullswater valley. Note that this does not include informal parking in the Lowther valley (see map on p27). The information is from official data of formal car park capacities (e.g. from the LDNPA[8], Visit Cumbria[9] and Parkopedia[10] sites) coupled with on-the-ground surveys. The on-the-ground surveys were used to estimate capacities of other car parks (pubs etc) plus verges and laybys where there was clear evidence that they were used for occasional car parking. It does not include car parking at visitor accommodation; the purpose for doing this is about cars used by visitors for getting to places in the locality – i.e. journeys that might be shiftable to other modes, hence car parking at destinations.

The data suggest that about 68% of all car parking is paid for. That means that - in principle – the volume of cars at peak times could be reduced to this amount without any car parking provider losing revenue – if the outcome is to help deliver the desire for traffic reduction stated by visitors and residents. This would require complementary parking management which would be implemented progressively over time (see *Visitor car parking in a world class destination?* on p15) – i.e. gradual withdrawal of informal car parking. Note that this doesn't equate to an intention to reduce visitor *volumes*, but provides a scale for considering changes to broader visitor access management.

The chart below is an estimate of the fluctuations of *total* car numbers; it does this by weighting and bulking together the available daily car parking "busyness" data (from paid car parks), then scales these up to the *total* number of car parking spaces (912) available to visitors (including informal and free car parks). It indicates what a 68% threshold look like across the year; *we are suggesting here that this represents an initial estimate of what "too busy" (relating to cars, not visitors) might be like.*

[8] https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/today#295213
[9] E.g. https://www.visitlakedistrict.com/explore/travel/glencoyne-car-park-national-trust-ullswater-p1403421
[10] https://en.parkopedia.co.uk/parking/ullswater/

This threshold means the volume of visitor cars that can be accommodated if all paid-for car parks are at capacity, and visitor car parking was not allowed elsewhere. Note that it also indicates the daily volumes of car-based visitors to the valley.



This suggests that there are about 70 days (those above the threshold) that are mainly during the Easter, summer half-term and summer holidays - when visitor volumes exceed the capacity of the formal, paid-for car parks. This equates to a total of about 103,000 cars which translates to 257,500 – 329,600 visitors (= 2.5 – 3.2 visitors per car). Whilst this could be used as an argument for more car parks, it is considered here as a starting point for *reducing* overall car parking in a way that doesn't have an impact on car park revenues through the development of an appropriate scale of attractive, integrated alternative visitor transport options.

This suggests that could be a market of about 300,000 visitors for alternative visitor access services over about 70 peak days of the year where different visitor access management would be in operation.

How to manage visitor access in the valleys

It is fairly common in larger national parks in the USA for there to be different access arrangements in peak season compared to the rest of the year.

In Yosemite[11], for instance, visitor car access is restricted at different times of the year as indicated in the graphic (from 2023). Visitors can pre-book access and extensive frequent shuttle buses from entry points are laid on to provide access. How this works is reviewed yearly[12].

Closer to home, at Pen y Pass, Yr Wyddfa (Snowdonia), after Covid re-openings: the car park at the pass was made available for pre-booking only with daily charges increased to £18, a pop-up park & ride scheme was established at the foot of the pass near Llanberis village with whole-day parking charged at £5 and the Sherpa shuttle service via the P&R site enhanced to a 15-minute frequency at peak time with a £3 return fare[13],[14]

The Lake District valleys are different to Yosemite as they are a living and working landscape so there would need to be car access for residents and businesses.

However, in order to reduce traffic and help make alternative services more extensive and cost-effective, visitor car volumes *could* be capped based on the evidence set out on the previous pages by implementing car park pre-booking with enhanced shuttle services. This could be done over the number of days identified, but for simple and effective visitor comms & marketing, a strategy might be for weekends, bank holidays and school holidays between Easter and October half-term. The information and marketing would be clear about this "season". With the enhanced services plus associated products (e.g. guest cards), information & marketing would be positive and attractive – about ease of (managed) access - *not* about restrictions.

[11] https://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/reservations.htm. Emerging Yosemite visitor access management plan at https://www.nps.gov/yose/getinvolved/visitoraccessmanagement.htm

[12] A video on the February 2024 public meeting is available at https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=8E1E4FC9-A64F-4F98-9AE5-C0FCEEE15E3C

[13] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-60089285

[14] We try out a park and ride bus to see if it helps avoid Eryri traffic mayhem. Is this an alternative to driving in tourist-clogged national park? Daily Post, April 7, 2024; https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/try-out-park-ride-bus-28942294

3 Access all areas: integrated bus networks

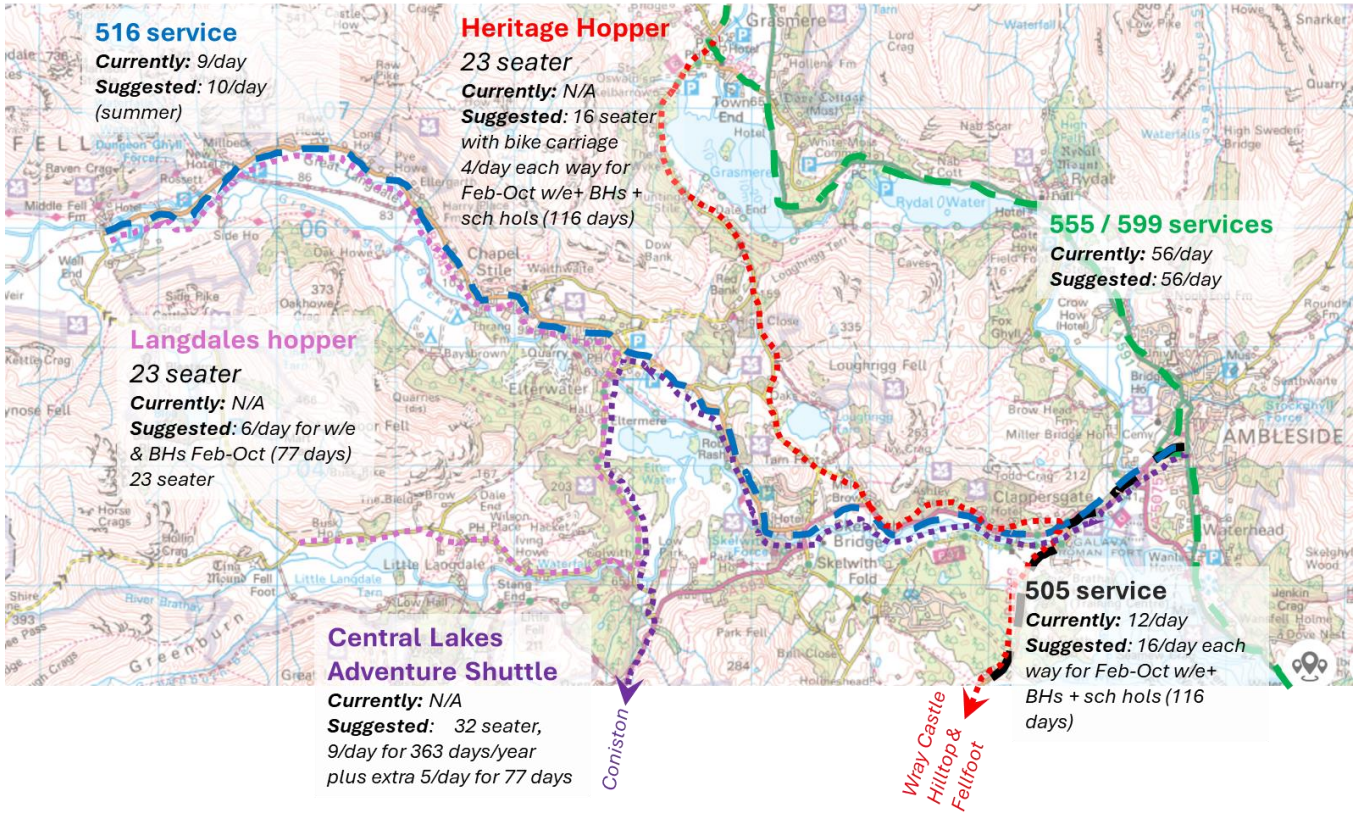
*So what **might** world-class services look like for peak season days in these valleys?*

The following pages set out what world class public transport, active travel and e-mobility networks might look like or be approached

Langdale bus network

The map shows:

- A network of integrated bus services that would provide about the right scale of volumes of services to cater for the suggested enhanced volumes of visitors. This is about 3x the existing summer capacity.
- Visitors would also travel on foot, bike and e-micro-mobility
- Three new services are suggested:
  - The "Heritage Hopper" – linking mainly National Trust Heritage sites to allow for park-once heritage days out
  - Central Lakes Adventure Shuttle – linking Ambleside-Elterwater-Coniston
  - Langdales Hopper – providing access to Little Langdale and increasing frequency in Great Langdale.
- These services are partly dependent on strategic changes to car parking as set out later in this document.



How much might these enhancements cost and who would pay?

The total cost of the bus *enhancements* is estimated at £306,320 per year[15].

	People	Costs	
Total annual costs :		**£ 306,320**	
Total new capacity:	224,131		
		Cost per...	
 Total visitors:	520,048	£ 0.59	➡ If **all** visitors pa
"Excess" visitors:	175,118	£ 1.75	➡ Per visitor beyond CC
 Carrying capacity cars:	137,972	£ 2.22	➡ **All** CC parked cars
"Excess" cars:	70,047	£ 4.37	➡ Group cost for non-car access pass

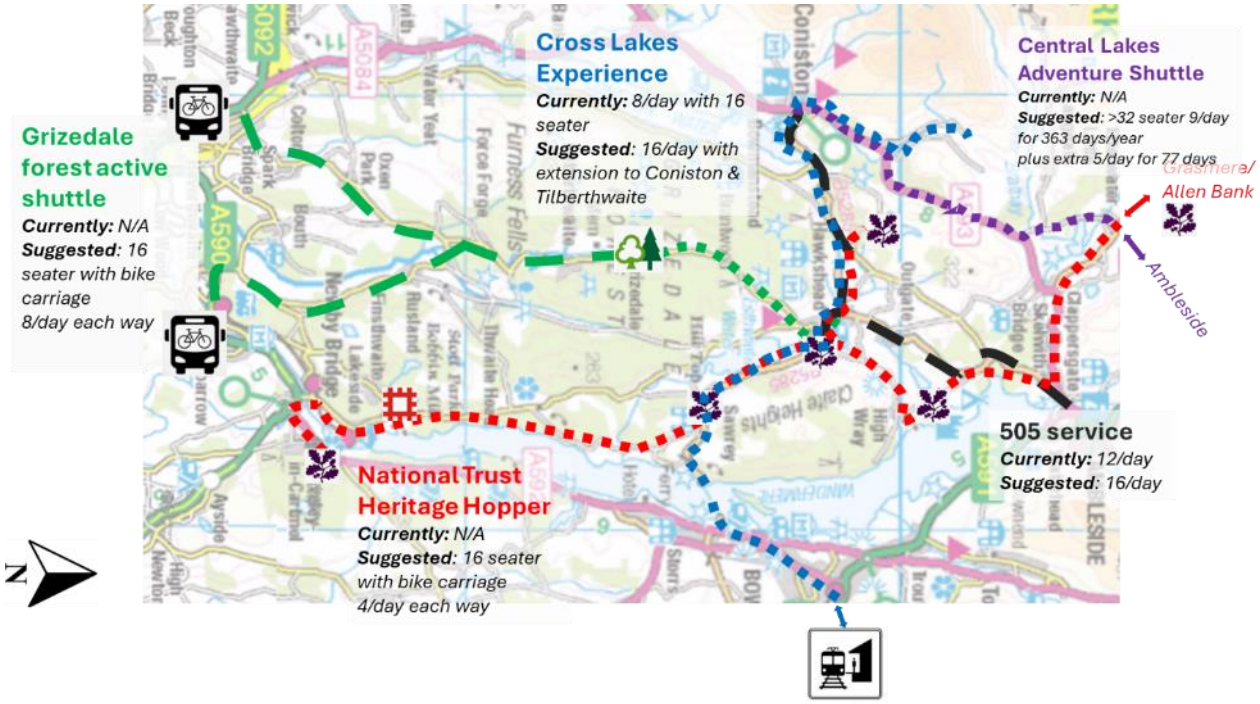
The table shows the implications of finding these costs through different ways of charging – from a 59p per person charge on all visitors (year-round – not just at peak season) through to per car group beyond the carrying capacity of £4.37 – i.e. the charge on a car that is not able to access the area in peak season. These are merely to illustrate the rough scale of the costs of enhancing the bus network to something that could be seen as world-class.

[15] Based on contracted costs at typical day rates currently used for seasonal visitor services in the Lake District. It is acknowledged that for the scale of these enhancements, dedicated buses may need to be acquired hence the costs would therefore be different, but we use these here to give an idea of scale of costs.

Hawkshead bus network

The map shows:

- A network of integrated bus services that would provide about the right scale of volumes of services to cater for the suggested enhanced volumes of visitors.
- Visitors would also travel on foot, by bike or boat
- Two new services:
  - The "Heritage Hopper" – linking mainly National Trust Heritage sites to allow for park-once heritage days out
  - Grizedale shuttle – providing access from the south to capture growing Barrow & Ulverston markets. Timings would need further consideration once the nature of these demands were better known.



The Central Lakes Adventure shuttle is mainly linked to pending developments at Elterwater Quarry.

These provide a total new capacity of about 290,000 seats over the season.

These extra services are partly dependent on strategic changes to car parking across the locality as set out later in this document.

How much might these enhancements cost and who would pay?

The total cost of the bus enhancements is estimated at £143,056 per year[15].

The table shows the implications of finding these costs through different ways of charging – from a 29p per person charge on all visitors (year-round – not just at peak season) through to per "excess" visitor car of £8.64 – i.e. the charge on a car that is not able to access the area in peak season. These are merely to illustrate the rough scale of the costs of enhancing the bus network to something that could be seen as world-class.

		People	Cost	
	Total annual costs :		**£ 143,056**	
	Total minus local contributions:			
	Total new capacity:	291,156		
			Cost per...	
	All visitors:	493,328	£ 0.29	➡ **All** visitors
	All visitor (busy times)	246,823	£ 0.58	➡ Peak-season visitor
	"Excess" visitors:	49,623	£ 2.20	➡ Excess peak visitors
	All visitor cars:	164,443	£ 0.87	➡ **All** parked cars
	Visitor cars (peak):	82,274	£ 1.74	➡ **All** peak parked cars
	"Excess" cars:	16,541	£ 8.64	➡ Non-car group

PARKING SURCHARGE?

These tables illustrate the idea of distributing the costs of enhanced bus services across different types of surcharge on car parking. The basic ideas behind this are:

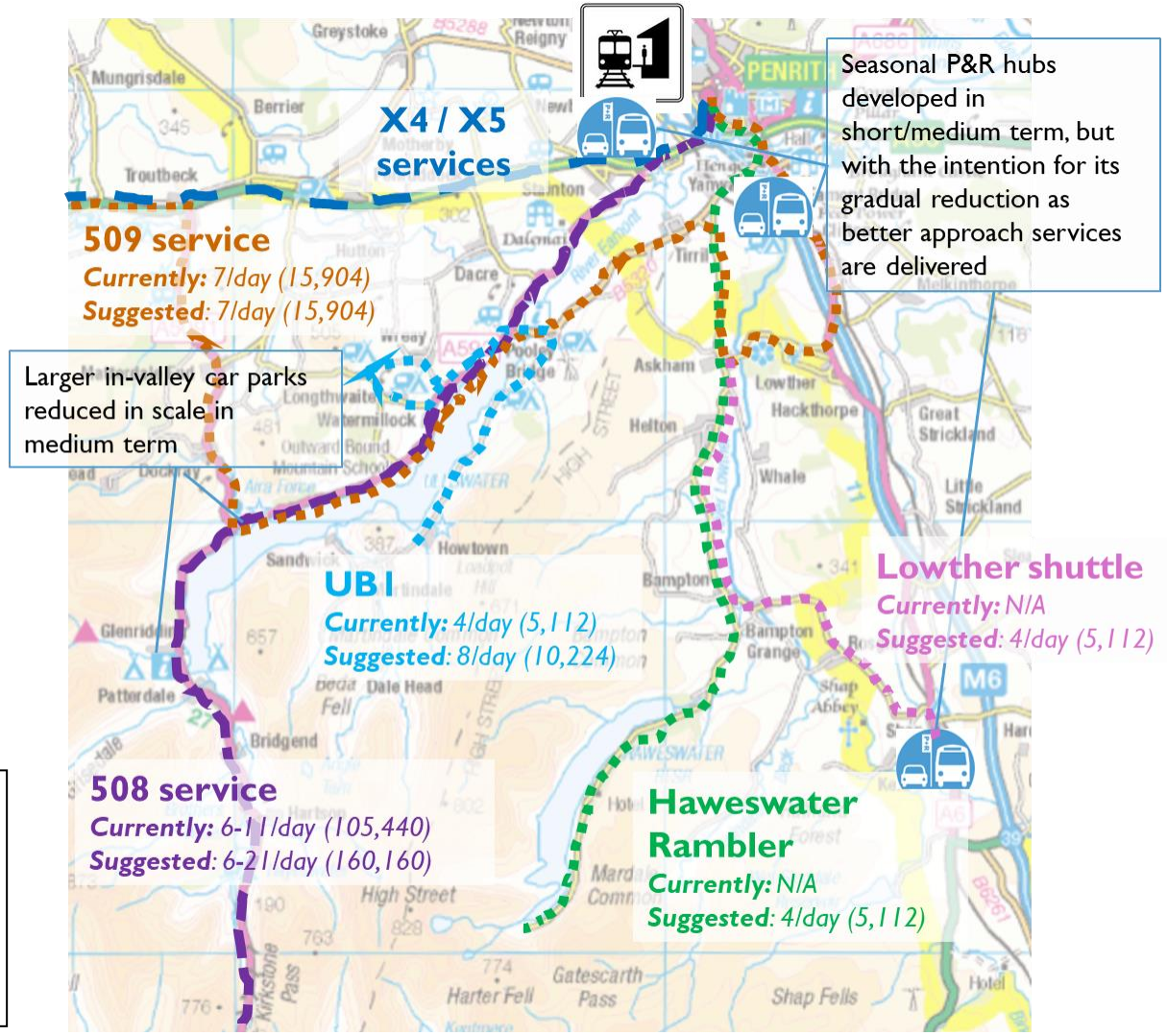
- It redistributes revenues from the more problematic modes (visitor cars) to sustainable modes (buses), and this would be a key element of messaging.
- It would be easier to implement than a road-user charge, assuming that free & fly parking (for visitors) is restricted and enforced
- It opens opportunities to consider how access is charged for. Car-based visitors already pay for (car based) access via a parking charge; the surcharge can be seen as broadening this to represent a more comprehensive access fee that includes (free) access to buses. This develops the "explorer car park" idea (p4)
- This revenue stream has the potential to significantly reduce the cost or make free bus access to people choosing not to arrive by car.

Ullswater & Lowther bus network

The map shows:

- A network of integrated bus services that would provide about the right scale of volumes of services to cater for the suggested enhanced volumes of visitors.
- Visitors would also travel on foot, by bike or boat
- Two suggested services are new: The "Haweswater Rambler" provides access along the Lowther valley to the head of Haweswater, with possible access into Swindale and Naddle reserves
  The "Lowther Shuttle" provides access into the area via Shap and J39 of the M6. This would relieve pressure on J40 and Pooley Bridge as well as opening better access to the eastern areas.
- These services are partly dependent on strategic changes to car parking as set out later in this document.

- ➲ *Total current capacity of all bus + annual users of Steamers ≈ 525,000 ≈ 51-66% of all visitors*
- ➲ *Expanded capacity ≈ 600,000 ≈ 59-75% of all visitors*
- ➲ *Estimated cost for enhancements (contracted): £142,000*



3b Active travel & e-mobility networks

World class active travel involves

i. networks of safe, connected routes that go from and to where people want to go,
ii. comprehensive, well-designed signage and waymarking (real and virtual),
iii. networks of bikes, ebikes and other e-mobility to provide wheels for people of all abilities and
iv. associated support services such as servicing, guiding and advice.

The LDNPA is currently (2024/25) leading on strategy planning active travel networks in these valleys[16]

e-mobility means the availability of e-assisted ways of making journeys – including

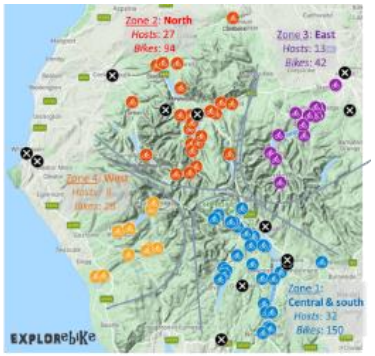
- rental from hubs of ebikes, e-trikes or e-quads
- networks across an area allowing ebikes to be picked up somewhere and dropped off somewhere else.

Ebikes are available for rent at locations in the three valleys, and it is also possible to pre-book ebikes to be dropped off at visitor accommodation. Trampers – ruggedised mobility scooters – are available at a few locations in the Lake District.

Wayfinding hub (Seefeld, Austria); locally distinctive markers (Ullswater)

Trampers at Tarn Hows

CTRL + click for Twizy video

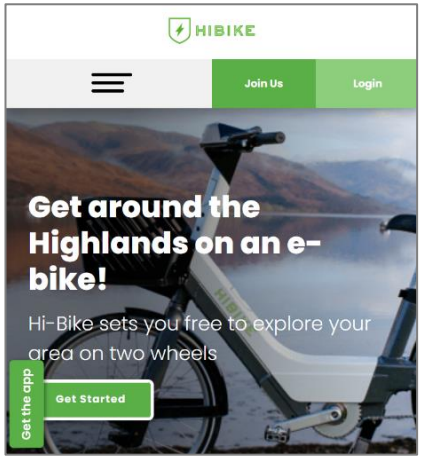


- A costed Lake District-wide ebike rental network was developed following a summer 2019 pilot, but was not developed due to Covid (£80k - £114k / year for 107-324 ebikes; 2019 costs)
- Formal costings for a 50 ebike point-to-point / docking scheme were provided by an operator in 2020 (c. £191k/year in 2024)

[16] https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/smarter-travel/active-travel/developing-active-travel-routes

Some examples of e-mobility

In the Gran Paridis region of the Italian alps "*66 electric pedal assisted bicycles available in 11 docking points in 8 station locations within the Municipalities of Cogne, Introd, Rhêmes-Notre-Dame, Rhêmes-Saint-Georges and Valsavarenche*" https://www.grand-paradis.it/en/services/bike-sharing-r%C3%AAve-grand-paradis



https://hi-bike.co.uk/

In Werfenweng (Salzburger Alps, Austria) 12 different types of e-mobility – branded as "fun mobility – are available for visitors via the Werfenweng card www.werfenweng.eu/en/holiday/werfenweng-card/fun-mobility/

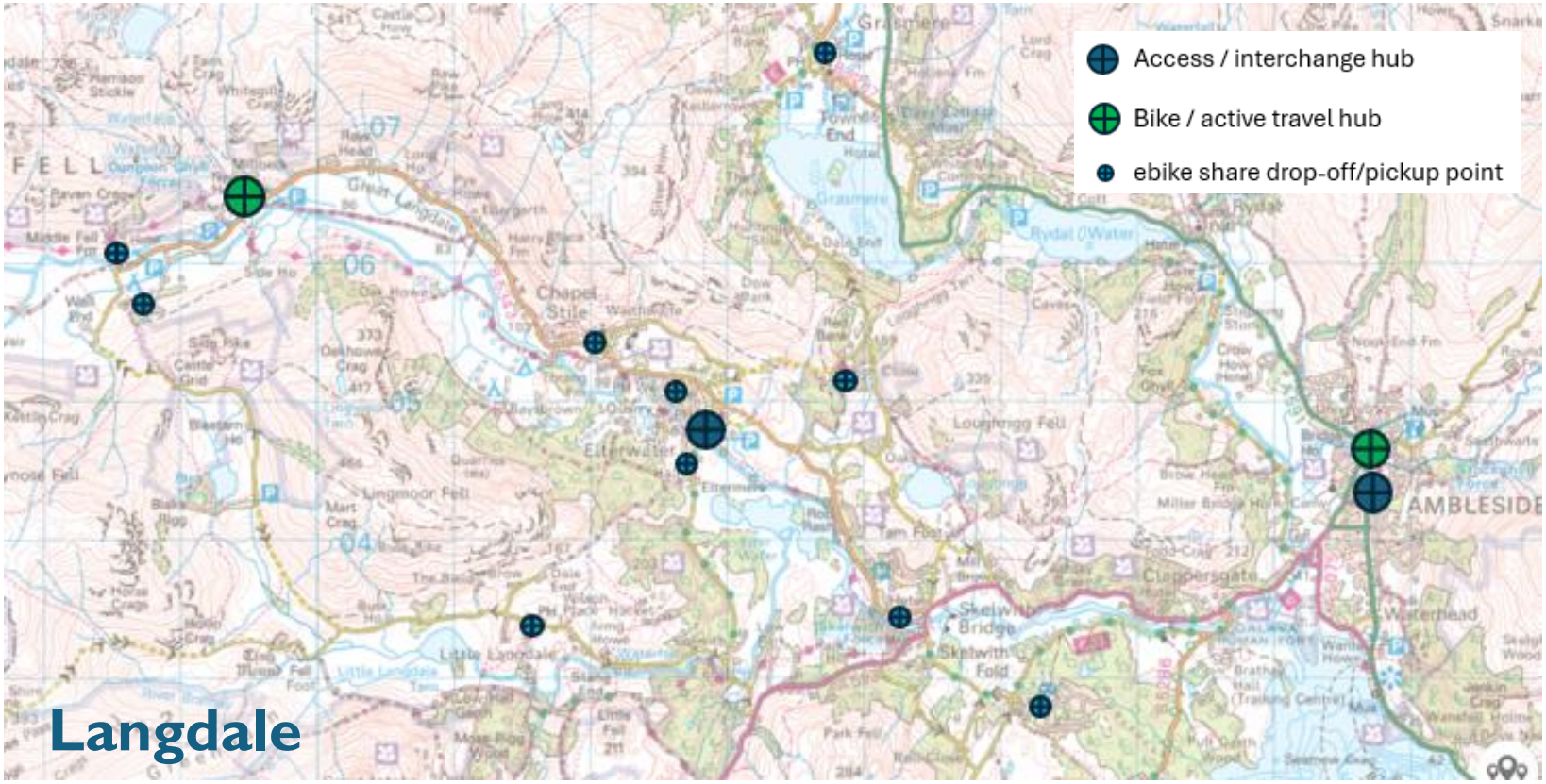
3b *So what might a e-mobility network look like in these valleys?*

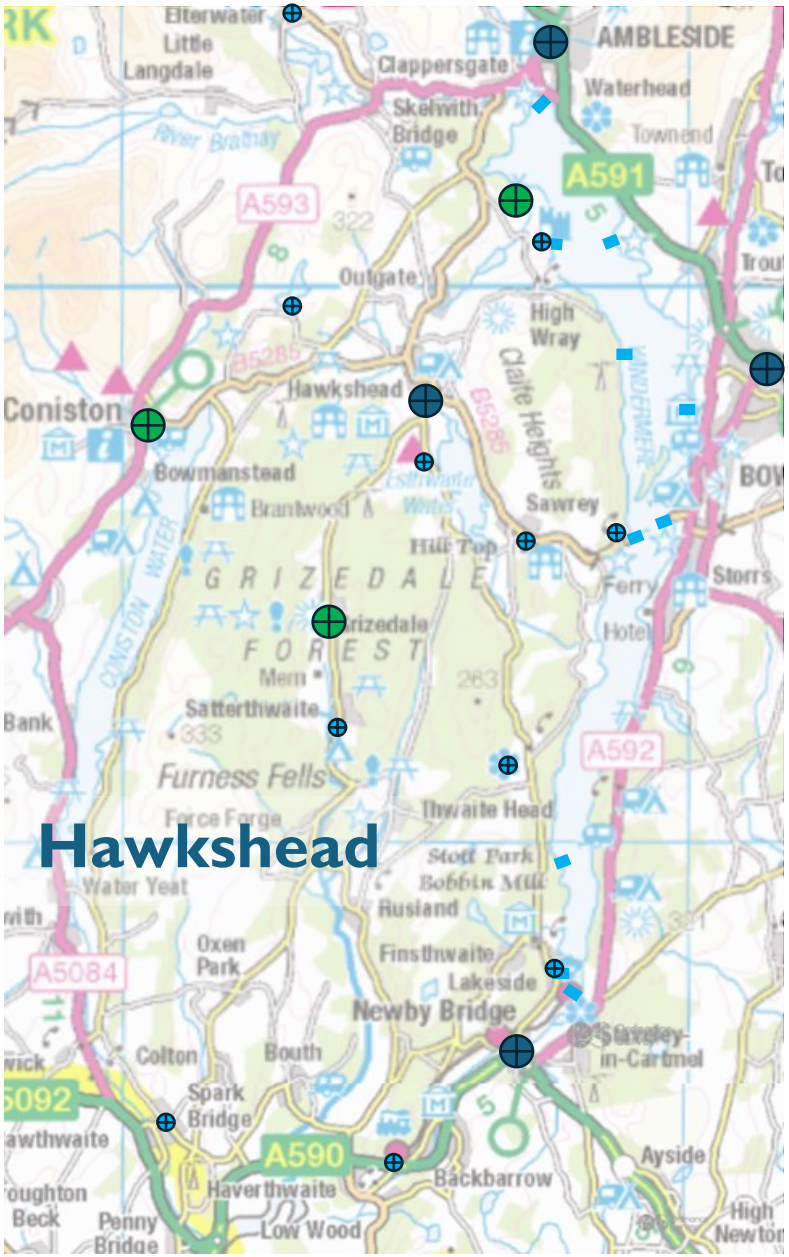
These would allow access to bikes, ebikes and other e-mobility so that they become part of how visitors get around the area as well as providing stand-alone experiences..

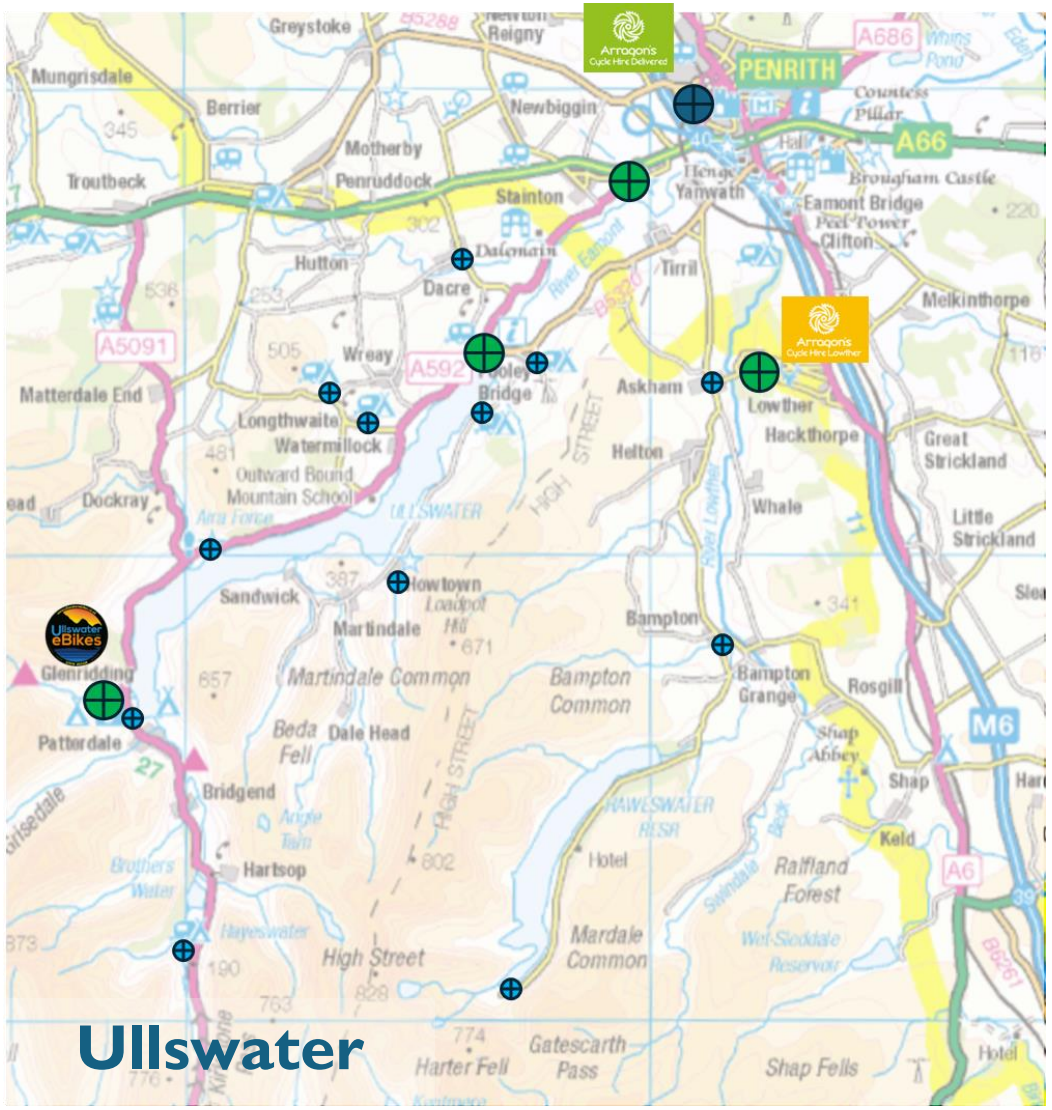
1. ½ day – day rental from hire centres at bike hubs
2. Ebike delivery to accommodation

Plus

3. Point-to-point ebike share scheme (c.f. Cogne) *for point-to-point journey making*
4. E-trike / quadricycle rental available from key hubs

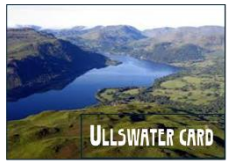






alistair@lowcarbondestinations.org

3d Guest Travel Cards



In many popular rural visitor destinations overseas, some form of free or paid-for guest card that provides access to the local transport system[17] is becoming a norm. The main benefits are

- simplicity for visitors – making accessing transport easy, taking away a sense of the unknown & (price) risk of using public transport and so contributing to great experiences,
- creating diverse marketable "products" for visitor businesses and for use in broader destination marketing;
- together, these creating a more meaningful sense of welcome[18] and different type of "social contract" between the destination and its visitors.

By focussing on experience and welcome (rather than "transport"), it opens new avenues for changing visitor travel behaviours.

So what might a world-class Guest Travel Card look like for these valleys?

The valleys' visitor travel services – beyond the private car – might comprise more extensive bus networks, various forms of bike & ebike rental plus more innovative e-micro-mobility networks; together, these would provide varied ways of making journeys, exploring and having experiences that usefully blur the boundary between "transport" and experience. Each of these deliver different types of experience, are attractive differently across the variety of visitor types and are costed differently per "unit" of travel. The architecture of any guest travel card needs to (i) acknowledge these differences, (ii) acknowledge that the majority of visitors currently arrive in a private car and (iii) be designed to deliver on the agreed ambitions for the destination – less traffic, better experiences etc. Several models of guest card exist, but two are briefly set out below to illustrate how they might work.

1. Explorer pass. (day)

This would build on the idea of "Explorer car parks" that exist in some Lake District locations. It would involve bundling onward travel options with a parking fee, such as

- bronze –bus access
- silver - bus access + Steamers/bike hire % discount
- gold - Pre-buy/book transport + attractions with discounts.

2. Travel points pass

This is a multi-mode (bus, boat, bike + 🅿) pass where each mode is charged by points-per-mode based on their unit cost – similar to the Werfenweng Card. It essentially provides a pay-as-you-go travel card.

As a PAYG card, it could be topped up and used over multiple visits for returning visitors. Value could be added that is linked to an overall level of discount (c.f. German BahnCard) such as £50 = 50 points (at cost; benefit is integration), £100 = 125 points (20% discount), £200 = 300 points (33% discount)

Mode	Unit	£/points
bus	*1 journey*	2.5
Steamer	*1 unit journey*	10
ebikeshare	*30 mins*	2
ebike hire	*1/2 day*	25
emobility hire	*1/2 day*	25
car parking	*hour*	2
	day	8
	4 days with key drop	15
		89.5

[17] More explanation and examples at https://lowcarbondestinations.org/six-components-detail/#guest-travel-card

[18] This blog http://lowcarbondestinations.org/so-whats-the-snag/ describes a personal experience of Saas Fee's SaastalCard

4 Visitor car parking in a world class destination?

Many aspects of an ambition for the locality are linked to car parking – both existing and future capacities and locations. Discussion of car parking – and any changes – is often highly contentious, whether these are for more car parking or restrictions.
Whilst the scale and patterns of car parking reflect demand (of visitor access by car), they also "lock in" car-based tourism. Here, we take a longer-term look at the issues to try to work out how car parking might look as part of world-class quality visitor access & transport,with some indications as to how any transition might be made.

1. Existing car parking capacities and locations

Over the past century as private car use proliferated, space was identified locally to take the pressure off cars being parked on roadsides or other "spare" pieces of land. This was a reasonable response to a practical problem.
The car-driving public's expectation to park at a destination meant that easy access and well-signed car parks became the norm[19,20]. This has led to car parks being at the specific points of attraction within a destination. This presents problems at busy periods including:

- Levels of approach traffic that are seen as inappropriate to the – often small – local road network, compromising the use of these roads for active travel (walking, cycling, wheelchair & pushchair use) – either use of the road or crossing (busy) roads
- It creates a sense of traffic-related "busyness" and threat that is incompatible with the sense of the destination
- Too much demand for existing parking supply. This leads to fly parking[21] and the demand for more car parking locally – either as permanent car parks[22] or pop-ups[23] – which can exacerbate the other problems of peak car volumes.

2. The role of car parking in a world-class visitor destination?

Instead of considering changes to existing car parking, let's first consider what role car parking might have in a locality that offers world-class sustainable visitor access and transport. For this area, this would probably mean:

[19] For instance, the parking symbol is shown on Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 (Explorer) and 1:50,000 (Landranger) maps (but not infrastructure for bus use such as interchanges or bus stops)
[20] Online car parking portals are widespread such as https://www.parkopedia.com/ as well as destination-based directories such as https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/plan-your-visit/getting-to-the-lake-district/today#295213
[21] Such as described here https://cumbriacrack.com/2024/06/18/illegal-and-bad-parking-targeted-in-lake-district-trial/
[22] "Village car park plans refused despite 'need'", https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0q0djg5g00o 6th December, 2024
[23] https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/planning/planning_necessary/gettingplanningadvice/planningguides/temporary-uses-including-pop-up-camping-and-car-parks

- Significantly less visitor car parking in the central areas that are accessed by circuitous journeys on smaller roads – to reduce traffic on roads within the locality, and (visitor) traffic free areas – such as valley heads. This would be enabled by appropriate scales of alternative transport services
- Access by car would be layered by need: ensuring car access for residents/businesses/services (though better public transport should also reduce this demand), visitors with limited or restricted mobility and then visitors/leisure if capacity could be configured that did not create problems.
- There would be widespread awareness of "peak" and "off-peak" visitor access arrangements[11].
  This means that the number of visitor cars would be capped – through parking pre-reservation – to the "carrying capacity" of the localities, and that the complementary ways of accessing and exploring the area would be at volumes, frequencies and quality of integration that enable world class mobility.

It is notable that whilst many European competitor destinations demonstrate elements of world-class visitor transport, there were few lessons regarding car parking. Indeed, whilst many Swiss destinations are car-free, this is almost always associated with colossal parking garages on their margins, often comprising up to several thousand dedicated spaces for a single valley[24]. In many other places, car parking was often free out of the villages, leading to familiar problems of over-sized car parks, induced traffic and fly-parking.

A core idea suggested here is that at peak times, visitor car parking should be restricted to existing formal paid car parks plus at visitor accommodation. This means that informal roadside car parking would not be allowed and this would need strict enforcement (c.f. Pen y Pass[13]).

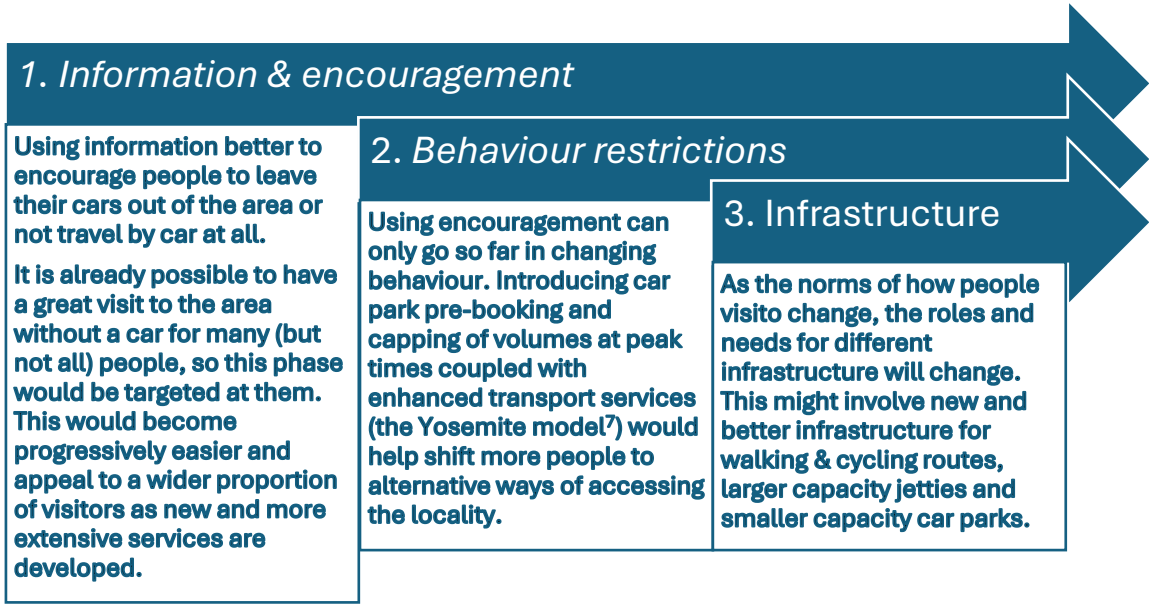
Access into the valleys is mainly via a few key hubs (Ambleside & Elterwater for Langdale, Ambleside, Bowness/ferry, Newby Bridge, Coniston for Hawkshead and Pooley Bridge / Kirkstone Pass for Ullswater. As world-class destinations, most visitors would approach the area without a car – because there is sufficient capacity, variety and quality of services that integrate longer-distance approach travel and more local travel. At peak season, a proportion of day visitors would be starting their visit in or near to the Lake District, so the challenge is to link in-county with in-valley transport systems and ticketing.

3. *How to get from where we are to parking in a world-class visitor destination?*

   The transition from existing parking arrangements to those compatible with a world-class ambition requires shared ambition among a wide range of partners coupled with strategy for change.

   From the point of view of changing visitor behaviour, the "choice architecture" would involve a deliberately phased shift:

[24] The implications are described at https://lowcarbondestinations.org/six-components-detail/#traffic-parking and some examples are shown at https://lowcarbondestinations.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Swiss-gateway-car-parks.jpg



None of these three parts on their own would lead to a world-class destination; it is the progressive development of high-quality transport services coupled with withdrawal of "easy" car access that will lead to meaningful change. Whilst the idea of restrictions may case nervousness:

- The progressive changes and integration between parts reduces the risk of having negative impacts on visitor volumes
- The quality of the access and transport system being produced will lead to people wanting to come back, provide new opportunities for differentiating the marketing of the locality and open new markets who are not car dependent – such as young urban adults[25].

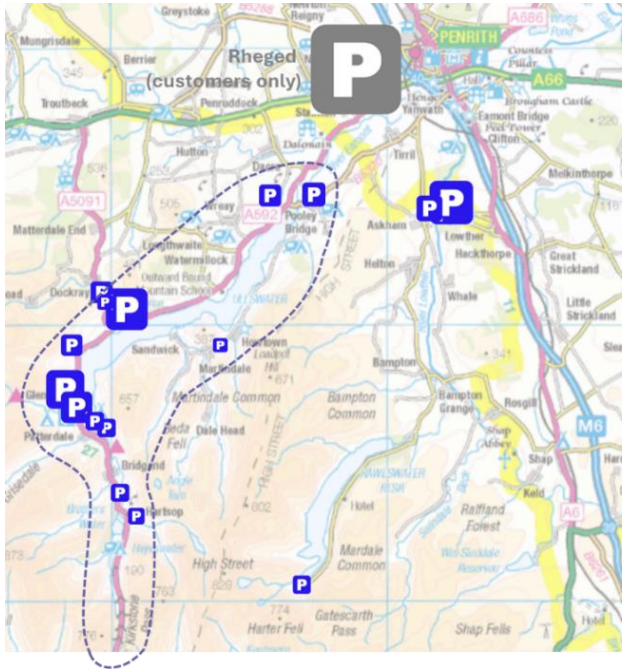
[25] https://lowcarbondestinations.org/whats-the-problem/#future-visitor

Longer term strategy to changes in car parking in Ullswater & Lowther

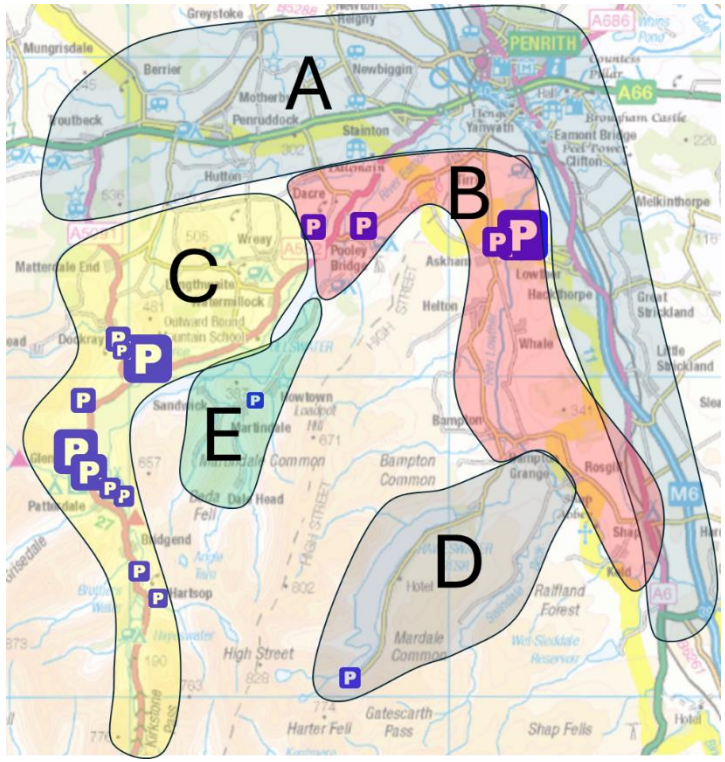
Because of SITU's work to develop ambitions for sustainable transport in the Ullswater valley, it provided an opportunity to explore in more detail a longer term strategic plan for how to approach change in car parking in the valley so that it aligns better with the transport ambitions.

1. *Existing car parking capacities and locations*

   The map on the right shows the existing formal car parking in the locality. The informal car parking (layby, verge & on-road) included in the table on P7 is in the area indicated by the blue dotted line.



2. *Zoning of car parking*



The map to the left interprets the area in terms of three types of zone with regard to visitor access and car parking These are mainly defined by local geography (valley & road layout) coupled with the nature, volume and density of visitor accommodation, attractions and less tangible sense of place.

➲ Zone A represents a "gateway" zone – where visitors swap from their approach travel into the destination's visitor mobility system.
This involves the rail station, interchange from long distance scheduled coach services, M6 junctions 39 (Shap for the eastern valleys and reserves) and 40 (Penrith) and park & ride locations.

➲ Zones B & C act as transport corridors and where visitor car access would be capped and restricted in busy seasons (c.f. Yosemite[11]). It is assumed that staying visitors would be able to access accommodation by car, but would then use the local mobility system by default unless they pre-reserved other in-destination parking. It is likely that scheme ideas such as "swap your car keys for the Ullswater pass" would be developed.

➲ Zones D & E represent "sanctuary" zones. These would be managed as (visitor) car-free, calm, safe areas

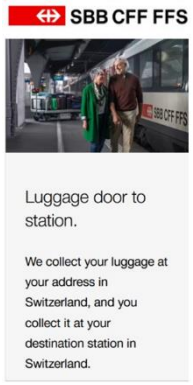
3. *What might the transition might look like?* (based on the graphic on p26)

Phase	Car parking	Complementary interventions & actions
1 ***Use marketing & information to change parking behaviour***	• Direct approaching visitors to easier-to-access car parking • Identify pop-up P&R locations in Zone A (& B?) &/or for e.g. 3 year planning permissions	• Continue existing PT enhancements with visitor business under-writing • Explore Ullswater pass based on existing services as both a car park ticket add-on (c.f. Explorer-type pass) and via ccommodation providers.
2 ***Changes to existing car parking***	Levy • Develop and agree ringfenced levy for all P&D car parking (c. 50p per car) to provide stable revenue stream for enhanced sustainable transport • Staged levy rates for Zones A (20p?), B/C (50p?) and D/E (£1?) • Develop clear comms strategy Park & Ride Identify locations for short-term seasonal pop-up P&R sites in Zones A & B to reduce pressure in other zones and to react to impact of zonal levy differences • Identify and prepare for route clearway(s) & enforcement of informal car parking	• Develop new governance structures to manage finances • Develop future lost parking revenue reimbursement formula and timescale • Expand further visitor bus services (timings, network) • Ensure Zone A & B car parks linked by bus services • Design & pilot parking + access (bus/boat/bike) pass • Information & marketing campaign
3 ***Shift car parking volumes***	• Introduce compulsory car parking pre-booking for peak season (Zones B, C, D, E) • Increase temporary P&R car parking capacities in Zones A • Cap parking volumes in Zones C, D & E • Landowners of car parks in Zone C to consider alternative uses for car park volume that will become redundant	• Increase capacity on existing bus services as required • Review routings and/or new services to link P&R to valleys • Actively develop bike/ebike/e-micromobility service networks • Implement lost parking revenue reimbursement formula
4 ***Infrastructure changes***	Reduce car park sizes in Zone C Phase out temporary car parks / P&R in Zone B Review and rationalise P&R car parks (volumes, locations) in Zone A	

And what else?

Changing how visitors travel involves more than the suggestions made above. The graphic below outlines briefly other interventions that together help change not only how visitors travel, but the quality of the overall visitor experience. Further description and explanation f each, and examples from overseas and the UK are available via https://lowcarbondestinations.org/component-model-graphic/

How visitors travel *to* the destination is a strong influence on how they travel around. This is also the largest contributor to carbon emissions.
New capacity – such as schedule coach and rideshare – needs developing.



The necessity to carry baggage is a big reason for people choosing to drive for their breaks and holidays. Baggage transfer services from home to the destination and around the destination reduce the number of reasons to take a car

Great transport systems need associated information and marketing. This is not only for functional transport reasons , but to enable visitors to feel welcome and great about how they get around. It also becomes a key part of how the profile of how the destination is marketed.

In places with world-class integrated visitor transport (across modes, operators and with non-transport services), governance is different to how it is currently in the UK. This is identified as an issue requiring further consideration

People move around whilst on holiday, and often want to use equipment (camping gear, bikes, paddleboards etc). In-destination luggage transfer and local rental services go some way to reduce the need for people to have to bring their own equipment, and open opportunities for experiences for those who do not own their own gear.

Places of the future?

Langdale

How will it operate over the year? How will it function?

Langdale would have two distinct visitor "seasons"

- Winter as now but with slightly higher frequency bus services + Central Lakes Adventure service; use of Langdale Card to integrate and access transport services
- Weekends Feb-November - outside winter: norm would be Langdale Card to access transport services; any car parking pre-booked only

What will it feel like? What will visitor experiences be like?

- Calm, with convivial "hubbub" around cafes, pubs etc
- Destination for self-led & supported adventure & outdoor activities; visitors will feel encouraged and supported to explore
- Open & permeable to people getting around under their own steam & 1-way activities (using shuttles etc)
- There will be a sense of a contract between the place and the visitor

What will it be like as a resident?

- Uncongested
- Residents and businesses would be able to go about their day-to-day activities without disruption
- The more extensive public transport network provide opportunities for people to access employment (into / out of the valley), for younger people to be more independent and for people to live without *having* to own a car

What will be new businesses or activities?

- Local bike/emobility rental & support services; guiding; luggage transfer; transfer services from gateways; café/information services/expansion at hubs ("waiting services")

Hawkshead & Windermere West Shore of the future

How will it operate over the year? How will it function?

- The locality would have two distinct visitor "seasons"
- Winter would be largely as now but with slightly higher frequency bus services, accessed by many via the the Hawkshead Guestcard
- Summer season = Easter – Oct: school holidays + weekends + bank holidays

What will it feel like? What will visitor experiences be like?

- It will feel like a coherent area with a wide variety of attractions – lake, heritage, adrenaline, quiet enjoyment; it will feel easy for visitors to access the type of experience they specifically seek or piece together a variety of experiences.
- The complexity of the geography will be simplified to visitors by clear and extensive integrated bus & shuttle routes linking to lake travel with an overlay of access by cycling, emobility and walking through linked networks of off-road routes and quiet lanes.
- It will feel accessible and permeable without a car: key hubs and attractions will be linked by services frequent enough to allow for multi-destination day itineraries

What will it be like as a resident?

- Uncongested
- Residents and businesses would be able to go about their day-to-day activities without disruption
- The more extensive public transport network provide opportunities for people to access employment (into / out of the valley), for younger people to be more independent and for people to live without having to own a car

What will be new businesses or activities?

- Local bike/emobility rental & support services; guiding; luggage transfer; transfer services from gateways; café/information services/expansion at hubs ("waiting services")

Ullswater & Lowther of the future

How will it operate over the year? How will it function?

- Access by public transport will be good all year on main corridors, but be enhanced by services linking visitor accommodation and destinations at the busy times from February to November
- Services & marketing will by default combine approach & in-valley travel by sustainable modes
- In the busy seasons
    - the norm would be use of the UllswaterCard to access buses, boats and bikes.
    - visitors who want to arrive by car will need to pre-book car parking in formal car parks or use sustainable transport

What will it feel like? What will visitor experiences be like?

- It will feel
    - like a coherent area with a wide variety of attractions – lake, heritage, fells, quiet enjoyment
    - easy for visitors to access the type of experience they specifically seek or piece together a variety of experiences.
    - accessible and permeable without a car: key hubs and attractions will be linked by services frequent enough to allow for multi-destination day itineraries; places off the main corridors will feel accessible, secure in the knowledge that it's possible to get there and back again
- The main corridor(s) will have less traffic - feel less like "traffic canyons" – allowing more walking and cycling along them.
- Hubs (Pooley Bridge, Glenridding) will have a calm-hubbub – streetscapes not dominated by cars revealing the local built heritage
- Gateways will have a sense of near-arrival, providing clear orientation and an anticipation of "diving in" to the destination

What will it be like as a resident?

- Residents and businesses would be able to go about their day-to-day activities without disruption
- The more extensive public transport network provide opportunities for people to access employment (into / out of the valley), for younger people to be more independent and for people to live without having to own a car