

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: Thursday 14 March 2019

Item: 5

Title: Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Derbyshire – Update report

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Purpose of Report

To present Forum members with an update on progress towards delivery of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Progress to March 2019

Below is a summary of the main work in progress in relation to each of the five RoWIP aims:-

Aim 1: Existing Public Rights of Way network

- **Path condition surveys** to assess the ease of use of the network continued in 2018 and November's survey returned a 65.1% pass rate. Combined with May's result of 58.6%, this gives an overall figure of 61.7% for the year, falling short of the 72.5% target, but slightly up on last year's result of 61.2%. With the exception of paths reinstated after ploughing and cropping, all other aspects of the assessment (roadside signposting, waymarking, stiles and gates, bridges, obstructions and surface condition) showed an improvement. However, again because the methodology is based on the length of rights of way that are easy to use rather than the number, the effect of a small number of paths over 1km in length (37 out of 569) failing some aspect of the assessment is quite significant, especially in Amber Valley, Bolsover and the High Peak. If these paths had all passed, overall performance increases to 80.3% and the target would be met in all 8 districts, rather than just two.
- **Surface improvements:** Repairs are due to commence on Hurstclough Lane, near Bamford in July 2019 and expected to run for 6-7 weeks. Work should be starting on trial sections of Chapel Gate before the end of March with the aim of stabilising the ground. If this proves to be successful, work to improve drainage on top of the moor is expected to get underway in August 2019. We are currently seeking advice on how to proceed with the repairs to Bamford Clough, including the options for dealing with the electricity cable
- **Route Management:** A report on the County Council's proposal to make a Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting mechanically propelled vehicles from using Stoney Middleton Byway Open to All Traffic No.15, known as Jacobs Ladder, is due to be presented to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure in the next couple of months

Aim 2: Definitive Map and Statement

- In terms of dealing with the **backlog of legal orders**, since the beginning of December 2018, 12 cases have been reported to the Regulatory – Licensing and Appeals Committee and 8 orders have been made/advertised. Seven orders have been confirmed and brought into effect, resulting in the addition of a 1.7km footpath alongside the River Derwent in Belper, a 330m footpath off Green Lane at Killamarsh and the upgrading of two footpaths through Pleasley Vale to provide a 1.2km bridleway

Aim 3: An improved network

- **Pennine Bridleway National Trail:** Following on from the annual condition survey carried out last summer, work is underway to improve the drainage and surfacing of a 30m section of the route which is prone to flooding at Haydale near Wheston. Repairs are also being carried out on Chisworth Bridleway 10 (Robin Hood's Picking Rods) which forms part of the interim route for mountain bikers until the Trail is fully opened through Derbyshire. An Order diverting part of Hayfield Bridleway 53 onto the preferred route for the Pennine Bridleway was made by the County Council on 7 March and is currently out for consultation until 11 April 2019. All three schemes are being jointly funded by Derbyshire County Council and Natural England (through the Pennine National Trails Partnership). With regard to the development of the route, the outline application for the European Regional Development Fund (Priority Axis 6) to complete the missing sections of the Pennine Bridleway around Glossop has unfortunately been unsuccessful. Whilst this news is disappointing, we have suggested that officers meet with Natural England and the Pennine National Trails Partnership Manager in the near future to discuss the options for moving the project forward
- **Greenway Development:** Works have progressed well over the mild winter to transform the former railway through Clowne to a traffic free, multi-user Greenway and wildlife corridor.



Overgrowth and self-set vegetation which was blocking the route and degrading habitat has been removed throughout most of the 7.4km corridor. The rock walls in the cuttings through Clowne and Creswell have had the

large mature trees removed to improve safety and to promote the limestone rock flora and herb layers. Materials and soils have been moved around to form four new access ramps at Hoodcroft and Slayley Lane, as well as new means of access at North Road and Neale Street in Clowne. The track bed has been graded and a new sub base laid between Seymour and the former station site at Clowne. The project has received very positive feedback from members of the public

- **Investment:** Funding bids have been submitted for prioritised Rights of Way and multi-user Greenway/ Key Cycle Network connectivity schemes from within the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme for 2019/20. This is due to be considered by Cabinet in April and the outcome will be reported to the LAF meetings in June
- The final workshop for the **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan** for the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire (D2N2) area is due to take place in Nottingham on 18 April. The results of the prioritisation process will be presented to partners and key stakeholders, along with clarification of the timetable for producing the Plan
- As part of the review process for the Peak District National Park Authority's **Trails Management Plan** for the Monsal, Thornhill, Tissington and High Peak Trails, a meeting of various stakeholders and interested parties from the previous plan took place in December 2018. The aim of the meeting was to start reviewing the 2013/17 Trails Management Plan; agreeing a format for the Steering Group and looking forward to the next Plan. The meeting was attended by representatives from both the Peak District Local Access Forum and DCC's Countryside Service

Aim 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

- The County Council's **Countryside Destinations and Events Brochure** is being produced for 2019 and printed copies should be available for distribution before the end of March. The downloadable version is already LIVE and can be viewed on our website here: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/countrysideevents The brochure contains a range of countryside events and festivals for people to enjoy throughout the year. As well as promoting our Countryside Destinations and Visitor Centres, there is also information about volunteering opportunities, public transport and the network of Public Rights of Way and Greenways across the county which is available for people of all ages and abilities to explore
- The **Derbyshire Woodland Festival** is now in its 19th year and provides an opportunity to promote the work of the Countryside Service, as well as highlighting the access and outdoor recreation opportunities which the county has to offer. The event attracts an audience of around 10,000 visitors and is being held at Elvaston Castle Country Park on the 21 and 22 September 2019
- In 2019, there will be a small, one-off event of 500 riders to celebrate the sixth year of **Eroica Britannia**. The 65 mile ride is taking place on Sunday 18 August, starting and finishing in Bakewell

Aim 5: Greater community involvement

- **Volunteer contribution:** In the third quarter of 2018/19, volunteers working with or on behalf of the Countryside Service have contributed 413 days, estimated to be worth around £86,000
- **Groundwork Creswell** has continued to deliver a range of work on the network of paths and trails across the county through its existing Service Level Agreement, including the establishment of a new group of volunteers working on the Matlock to Rowsley section of the White Peak Loop.

Derbyshire Countryside Service Review

Derbyshire County Council has asked Mutual Ventures and their partners to conduct a review of its Countryside Service and to explore the best way of delivering services going forward. The Council will be considering the potential for suitable delivery mechanisms for the future sustainable provision of the Service. As part of this process, the Council wishes to take stock of the Service as part of its 'Enterprising Council' approach and to explore alternative delivery models which may help make the necessary revenue savings of £500,000 by 2020.

Several LAF members attended a workshop at County Hall on 6 March, along with representatives of other organisations/user groups to consider the following:-

- What services they expected the Countryside Service to deliver?
- What the Countryside Service does that they think works well?
- Which services could be improved and how they would want to see them improved?

A further workshop is due to be held in Derby on Friday 15 March.

Recommendation

That Forum Members note this progress report for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2018/19.