

## Peak District Local Access Forum

**Date:** Thursday 9 March 2017

**Item:** 10

**Title:** Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Update

**Author:** Gill Millward, Countryside Access Improvement Officer,  
Derbyshire County Council

### 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 2017

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 2016. November's survey returned a 69.8% pass rate. Combined with May's result of 64.2%, this gives an overall figure of 67.1% for the year, falling short of the 72.5% target. 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 failing some aspect of the assessment is quite significant, especially in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales. If these paths had all passed, it would increase the pass rate for November to 82.2%, raising the overall performance for the year to 73.6%. When comparing the overall results with those for 2015, there is a slight reduction in performance for roadside signposting and surface condition, with a more marked decline for waymarking and the proportion of paths reinstated after ploughing, but all other areas (stiles and gates, bridges and removal of obstructions) show an improvement
- **Funding bids** have been submitted for prioritised Rights of Way and multi-user Greenway/ cycling connectivity schemes from within the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme for 2017/18. The programme is due to be considered by Cabinet on 4 April 2017 and the outcome will be reported to the LAF meeting in June
- **Surface improvements:** The drainage and surface improvements proposed for Chapel Gate, Bamford Clough, Hurstclough Lane and Brampton Bridleway 73, will be progressed when staffing resources within the Rights of Way team permit

#### Aim 2: Definitive Map and Statement

- In terms of dealing with the **backlog of legal orders**, since the beginning of December 2016, 9 cases have been reported to committee and 3 orders

have been confirmed and brought into effect by the County Council. During this period decisions have been issued by the Planning Inspectorate for a further five cases, including bridleways at Brushfield, Monksdale and Marsh Green near Ashover, along with a Byway Open to All Traffic at Duffield Bank, Makeney

### **Aim 3: An improved network**

- We are working with the Pennine National Trails Partnership Manager on a strategy and funding plan for the completion of the remaining sections of the **Pennine Bridleway National Trail** around Glossop
- **Greenway development:** Work is continuing to progress several Greenway projects, including the Clowne and Little Eaton Branch Lines, the Archaeological Way, routes across the former Arkwright Opencast Coal Site and The Avenue site near Wingerworth. As far as the White Peak Loop is concerned, since the last newsletter was published in December, the following progress has been made:
  - **White Peak Loop East - Matlock to Rowsley:** Phase 1 between Matlock and Old Road, Darley Dale is not yet available for cyclists due to delays in getting formal approvals from the Rail Regulator for the link across the railway line opposite the Arc Leisure Centre at the Matlock end. Phase 2 through Whitworth Park between Station Road and Church Road, Darley Dale was completed just before Christmas opening up a 4km section between Darley Dale and Rowsley, which has received a tremendous response from the public. As far as its legal status is concerned, the majority of the route between Matlock and Rowsley is in public ownership – the initial proposal is to create a 3m wide public footpath with permissive cycle rights which can be made more permanent at a later stage using a Cycle Track Act Order
  - **White Peak Loop East - Rowsley to Bakewell:** Design on this section is still on hold while negotiations continue with relevant landowners
  - **White Peak Loop West - Harpur Hill:** Discussions have been taking place with owners of the Parks Inn over the remaining 150m of trail down into Harpur Hill. As a result a planning application was submitted to High Peak Borough Council at the end of February to vary this section of the route (Application number: HPK/2017/0064). Depending on the outcome of the planning application, funding should be in place to complete this section of the route during summer 2017. Letters have been distributed to local residents to keep them informed of developments.

### **Aim 4: Promotion, understanding and use of the network**

- Cycling continues to make the headlines with two major events planned as part of the **Summer of Cycling Programme** in recognition of the benefits they bring to the local economy. In 2017, Derbyshire will host a full stage of the Women's Tour of Britain, along with Eroica Britannia which is relocating to a new venue at Friden Grange, Newhaven

- During February/ March, members of the Derbyshire Citizens' Panel are being asked to complete a questionnaire on several topics, including the **Derbyshire Cycling Plan**
- The latest news and progress on The **Derbyshire Cycling Plan** can be found here: [www.derbyshiresport.co.uk/latest-news-and-progress-on-the](http://www.derbyshiresport.co.uk/latest-news-and-progress-on-the) with details of training to help more disabled people get cycling
- Other events which help to encourage people to get out and about and enjoy the fantastic network of paths and trails which Derbyshire has to offer include the Chesterfield Area Walking Festival which takes place between 6 and 14 May 2017 <http://www.chesterfieldwalkingfestival.co.uk/>
- The County Council's **Countryside Destinations and Events Brochure** is being produced for 2017 and should be available for distribution by the third week in March. 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
- During 2017, we hope there will be opportunities for both Local Access Forums to work together to promote **easy access** and the availability of accessible routes

#### **Aim 5: Greater community involvement**

- We are in the process of amending the draft Policy for **Working with Community Groups** before it is presented to Cabinet for approval later in the year
- **Volunteer contribution:** In the third quarter of 2016/17, volunteers working with the Countryside Service have contributed 937 days, up on Quarter 2 and estimated to be worth around £191,000
- Our **Countryside Officer for volunteering and community engagement** has supported the invaluable contributions which several groups have continued to make in respect of our countryside sites and rights of way network. These have included the Friends of Aston Brickyard, Friends of Ripley Greenway, the Derbyshire Dales and Erewash Ramblers and the work which is being achieved through the Service Level Agreement with Groundwork in various parts of the county. One particular task, involving vegetation clearance on a bridleway in South Wingfield, saw members of the Amber Valley Ramblers group share their skills with volunteers from the British Horse Society and the Matlock and District Bridleway Action Group (MADBAG). The day was a great opportunity for walkers and horse riders to gain a better understanding of each other's countryside and access needs.

#### **Recommendation**

That Forum Members note this progress report for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2016/17.