

Peak District Local Access Forum

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Item: 9a

Title: Derbyshire County Council - Rights of Way Improvement Plan Monitoring Report for 2011/12

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Purpose of Report

To present Forum members with information about achievements in delivering the fifth annual work programme for the RoWIP in 2011/12.

RoWIP delivery in 2011/12

The following is a summary of performance in relation to each of the five RoWIP aims:

Aim 1: Ensure that the existing and future public rights of way network is open and available for use

- Aim 1a): **Existing network** - November's ease of use survey returned a pass rate of 79.4%, which combined with the results from the survey carried out in May (72.1%), has produced an overall pass rate of 75.7% for the year (the target was 72.5%).
- Aim 1a): **Signposting** - a contract was issued for the 219 roadside signposts known to be missing on 1 April 2011 to be purchased and installed on the network.
- Aim 1b): **Surface Improvements** - We have carried out £190,000 of capital surface improvements within the Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme including improvements to the Stockley Trail, Five Pits Trail, Chesterfield Canal, Cromford Canal and Matlock Footpath 19.
- Aim 1e): **Capital funding** - over £600,000 has been allocated to access work this year from the County Council's Local Transport Plan and general capital programmes. In addition the Countryside Service will have secured in excess of £178,000 of external funding towards access projects.

Aim 2: Provide an up to date and widely available Definitive Map and Statement

- Aim 2: the four officers appointed on a temporary basis to assist with updating the Definitive Map and Statement and deal with legal orders, have continued to contribute effectively in these areas of work.
- Aim 2a): **Definitive Map** - since April digitising has continued in the two remaining areas of the county. Derbyshire Dales and Chesterfield are both due to be completed by the end of March.

- Aim 2a): **Definitive Statement** - routes affected by legal orders in Amber Valley, Chesterfield and Derbyshire Dales have been researched, surveyed and the Definitive Statement updated.
- Aim 2b): **Digital Mapping** - public rights of way in the Borough of Amber Valley can now be viewed electronically on the County Council's website at <http://derbyshiremaps.derbyshire.gov.uk>
- Aim 2c): **Legal orders** - so far during 2011/12, 54 cases have been reported to committee, 24 progressed to order making stage, 22 orders have been confirmed and brought into effect and 8 referred to the Secretary of State for determination.

Aim 3: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network suitable for all users

- Aim 3a): **Bridleway network** - 13 routes which provide access for horse riders and cyclists have been added to the Definitive Map, totalling 10.3 km. The Peak District National Park Authority's Black Harry Trails Project, which was partly funded through the RoWIP, has also created opportunities for horse riding and mountain biking in the Longstone Edge area - mainly through improving existing routes, providing better signage, interpretation and promotion.
- Aim 3a): **Pennine Bridleway National Trail** - 3km of new route has been constructed on the ground in Glossop through Gamesley Sidings to Green Lane and also providing a link with the Trans Pennine Trail.
- Aim 3a): **Midshires Way** - two projects provide important new links: Long Horse Bridge and the Greenway link to Shardlow has been completed on the ground. It is available to walkers and cyclists with legal work being finalised to open it as a through route for horse riders in 2012. Work will soon be complete to open up a new 3.3km bridleway and Greenway link between Hopwell and Dale Abbey in Erewash.
- Aim 3b): **Additional Routes** - A new path has been built to link the village of Newton in Bolsover to the Silverhill and Five Pits Trails.
- Aim 3b): **Open Access Land** - The actions identified to improve opportunities to access open access land including improving access to Coombs Moss near Buxton and for a DADLAF sub group to look at opportunities around Matlock Moor have not been progressed due to other pressures on staff time.
- Aim 3c): **Easy Access** - Furniture improvements have been carried to allow better access for the Trampler mobility scooters at Tapton Lock and Shipley Country Park (new k barriers) and on the High Peak Trail (removal of gate fastenings). The RoWIP has contributed to the project being run by Bakewell Town Council to improve access to Scots Garden via the riverside footpath. The proposal to upgrade the Unstone Line in NE Derbyshire did not go ahead due to local opposition to the scheme.
- Aim 3c): **Path furniture** - a total of 100 new kissing gates, 50 pedestrian gates and 125 wicket gates have been purchased this year to improve access along several public footpaths.
- Aim 3c): **Improvements to existing promoted routes** - we have continued to improve furniture and signage on the Limestone Way south of Bonsall in partnership with Groundwork Derby & Derbyshire (see Aim 5a).

Work has also progressed to improve the route of the Archaeological Way between Poulter Country Park and the nearby railway station at Whaley Thorns.

- Aim 3d): **Safe Routes to Schools and Local Amenities** - Two schemes have been delivered - Footpath 37 at Hayfield has been surfaced and stiles replaced with gates to provide an all weather route between Little Hayfield and Hayfield avoiding the busy A624 Glossop Road. Bridleway 119 in Eckington has been surfaced to Greenway standard to provide a safe off road link between the schools in the area.
- Aim 3e): **Greenways** - the original target of 3km was increased to 15km with the opening of the Monsal Trail, but even this has been exceeded with 17km of new cycle network/Greenways completed during 2011/12 (Monsal Trail - delivered by the Peak District National Park Authority; sections of the Chesterfield Cycle Network alongside the A61; Peak Forest Tramway at Chinley; Shallcross Incline in Whaley Bridge; Newton Link; Pennine Bridleway National Trail through Gamesley Sidings; Long Horse Bridge to Shardlow and Archaeological Way in Bolsover). Work on the review of the East Derbyshire Greenway Strategy has not been completed due to the large number of Greenway schemes being prepared or implemented on the ground.
- Aim 3e): Despite the failure of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund bids to develop walking and cycling schemes in the Chesterfield area and between Matlock and Buxton earlier in the year, we are exploring alternative sources of funding through Sustrans to provide a cycle route to Chesterfield Station. We have also been working to progress a cycle route between Matlock and Oker, although this has been delayed and will not be built on the ground in 2011/12.
- Aim 3f): **Management of Motorised Vehicles** - Public consultation has been carried out on Derbyshire County Council's revised policy for the management of motorised vehicle use in the countryside. Works have taken place on Chapel Gate between Rushup Edge and Edale. The route is subject to an 18 month Experimental Traffic Order, prohibiting access by mechanically propelled vehicles with effect from 31 August 2011. Some funding has been given to the Peak District National Park Authority to carry out smaller scale improvements with volunteers on other routes in the National Park.

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

- Aim 4a): **Improved signage** - the RoWIP has funded improvements to signage along the High Peak Trail and Cromford Canal as well as on several promoted routes in the North area of the county and around Antony Gell School in Wirksworth.
- Aim 4b): **Easy access** - due to the success of the original scheme, six additional Trammer mobility scooters have been purchased for use around the county, bringing the total number available to ten. The trammers can now be hired at Tapton Lock, Middleton Top, Elvaston Castle, Shipley Country Park, Creswell Crags, High Peak Junction and Arkwright Mills at Cromford.

- Aim 4c): **Better information** - a new promotional banner has been produced to provide information about the Authority's countryside sites and Greenways. The Countryside Service web pages have been further improved and a new facebook and twitter page added to promote use of the countryside and countryside sites.
- Aim 4c): **Path Grading system** - No progress has been made on implementing a path grading system for individual routes, although this information is being collected on the survey forms.
- Aim 4d): **Leaflets** - the Cycle Derbyshire leaflet has been updated and both this and the Horse Ride leaflet have been reprinted. Both leaflets have continued to be very popular.
- Aim 4e): **Promotion** - the Countryside Service has attended several large shows and events this year with the aim of reaching significant numbers of people to promote Derbyshire's countryside and the access network. These have included the Food and Drink Fair at Hardwick, Ashover Show, Chatsworth Country Fair and the Woodland Festival at Elvaston Castle. We have also supported various Walking Festivals around the county and run our own events programme.
- Aim 4e): **Promoted routes** - the Erewash Valley Trail which provides a circular walking and cycling route on the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire border has been officially launched together with an associated leaflet. The County Council is a partner in this project.
- Aim 4e): **Motor vehicles** - the proposed web pages to provide information about recreational driving of vehicles in the countryside have been delayed pending the review of the policy (see Aim 3f).

Aim 5: Encourage greater community involvement in managing local rights of way

- Aim 5a): **Working with Local Councils** - The Countryside Service, either directly or through its partners, has been working actively with parish and town councils across the county to improve local path networks. A further 93 local councils are intending to utilise funding allocated under the Minor Maintenance Scheme for vegetation clearance, surface repairs and way marking of paths.
- Aim 5a): Work is continuing with Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire through a Service Level Agreement that has delivered projects in seven parishes (Bonsall, Whaley Bridge, Chinley, Buxworth & Brownside, Chapel en le Frith, Hayfield, Norbury & Roston and Winster) generating 249 volunteer work days in the first nine months of the year involving path surveys, furniture improvements, improved waymarking and vegetation clearance.
- Aim 5b): **Working with Volunteers and Local Groups** - Volunteers have been working on projects to help improve access to local rights of way through the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Peak Park Conservation Volunteers, Groundwork Creswell, Ramblers Association, Denby Footpaths Group and individuals carrying out path surveys.

Recommendation

That Forum members note the achievements in delivering the 5th annual work programme for Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2011/12.