Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: Thursday 1st April 2010

Item: 6

Title: Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Derbyshire
Interim Progress Report for 2009/10

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Purpose of Report

To present Forum members with an update on progress towards delivery of Derbyshire's RoWIP during 2009/10.

A detailed monitoring report for 2009/10 will be presented to the June meeting of the LAFs.

Progress to March 2010

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

Aim 1 - Existing Network

- Aim 1a): BVPI 178 ease of use surveys produced an overall pass rate of 73.4%, exceeding the 2009/10 target of 72.5%. This was based on a 71.8% pass rate in May and 75% in November
- Aim 1a) i: We are on target to deliver extra resources for access work by the area ranger teams and volunteers within the service
- Aim 1a) ii: 420 roadside signposts were recorded as missing or damaged at the end of March 2009. Funding has now been received to install 345 of these in 2009/10. The remainder will be carried over to next year. Any bridleway signs being installed will be to the new design incorporating user symbols. A further 200 signposts have been reported to be missing or damaged
- Aim 1d) iii: The re-launch of the field path maintenance scheme has not been progressed and will be deferred to 2010/11
- Aim 1e) ii: We will have spent our allocation under the LTP scheme for 2009/10 and are hopeful that there will be a similar settlement for the final year of LTP2 in 2010/11. The future funding of LTP3 is uncertain but will be less than that for LTP2. We are working closely with the LTP team to ensure that the RoWIP is fully integrated into the production of the new document, including any consultations. We will also ensure that the LAFs are fully consulted

Aim 2 - Definitive Map and Statement
- Aim 2a) i and 2b) i: A total of 932km of paths have been digitised in the Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales and Chesterfield areas. This information has also been made available to view on line

Aim 3 - Connected, safe and accessible network
- Aims 3a) v: Legal paperwork and permissions are still required to install Long Horse bridge across the River Trent into Leicestershire and to construct the Greenway to Shardlow. It is hoped that these will be completed in time to start work on the ground this summer
- Aim 3a) iii Pennine Bridleway National Trail: A further creation agreement is due to be signed by the landowner, helping to complete the legal work for the section of the route between Monks Road, near Charlesworth and High Lane at Simmondley
- Aim 3b) v: An initial meeting has been arranged to look at access improvements for Coombs Moss, near Buxton
- Aim 3e) iii: We are on target to deliver 10km of new Greenways this year to add to the total for the Strategic Cycle Network. A new barge bridge has been installed on the Trent Valley Greenway at Attenborough
- Aim 3e) iii: A number of high profile Greenway schemes will come on line during 2010/11 and Greenways officer time is needed to project manage the final stages to construct them on the ground. A decision has been made to put the revision of the East Derbyshire Greenway strategy on hold for 6 months and to not progress bridleway dedications of existing greenways (both separate actions for this year) because of this

Aim 4 - Promotion and Publicity
- Aim 4a) Improved signage: we have been involved in a pilot project initiated by the LAA Transport Sub Group to look at how signage can encourage more people to walk or cycle. Tibshelf has been selected for the pilot due to its links with the Five Pits Trail and the rebuilding and relocating of the secondary school
- Aim 4b): We have made accessibility improvements at two of our countryside sites. At Shipley Country Park we have installed a new changing facility for adults (under the changing places project). Four all terrain mobility scooters have been purchased and will be available to hire from Easter onwards at Elvaston and Shipley Country Parks, Tapton Lock Visitor Centre on the Chesterfield Canal and Middleton Top Visitor Centre on the High Peak Trail near Wirksworth. It is also planned to make a scooter available at Fairholmes, Upper Derwent and at Hayfield Visitor Centre on the Sett Valley Trail
- Aim 4c) iii: We have held an initial meeting of the joint LAF sub group to look at developing Codes of Conduct for users of the

network. The notes from the meeting are included at the end of this report

- Aim 4c) v: We have been involved with a Walking for Health stakeholder group for the County to discuss how we can spread the message about healthy walking and how more use could be made of the resource that makes up the PRoW and Greenway network. The inventory of Walking for Health groups that we have helped to compile has identified 82 different groups across the county
- Aim 4c): We have supported a new audio trail at Shaw Wood, Alfreton, starting at the Leisure Centre which allows information to be downloaded from the internet onto mobile phones or MP3 players
- Aim 4e) iii: We have been progressing the horse riding information to be included on the County Council's website. This will be in the form of a map with additional information, including a suggested circular loop off the Pennine Bridleway near Rowarth (Aim 3a) iv)

Aim 5 - Greater community involvement
- Aim 5a) ii: A scheme in Hognaston has successfully concluded with the completion of a Parish Council let contract funded through the RoWIP. The scheme involved PRoW inspectors, community work parties and land owners. It was coordinated by countryside area staff who also installed and delivered ROW furniture to improve paths in the surrounding area
- Aim 5b) i: We have been continuing to encourage volunteers to help deliver access work

RoWIP delivery 2010/11
- We are in the process of drawing up a detailed work programme for 2010/11 which will be sent out to members of the LAF when completed

LAF Codes of Conduct Sub Group Meeting

Notes from meeting between members of the Peak District and Derby &
Derbyshire Local Access Forums

Wednesday 10th March 2010 at Shand House, Darley Dale

Attendance:

Peak District LAF: Henry Folkard (with apologies from Sue Fisher)
DADLAF: Joan Dryburgh, Richard Felton, Robert Bacon and Lyndsay Jones
Derbyshire County Council officers: Claire O'Reilly & Gill Millward
Peak District National Park Authority: Judy Merryfield

Purpose and content of meeting:

Both the County Council's RoWIP and the Peak District NPA's Recreation
Strategy have actions to look at Codes of Conduct to encourage responsible use
of the countryside. This meeting was to start to progress these actions with a
view to promoting the same information across Derbyshire and the whole of the
Peak District National Park area.

The meeting reviewed existing information relating to Codes of Conduct in
relation to different users of the countryside (except vehicle users since a code of
conduct has already been promoted for this group).

The main view was that the five sections of the existing Countryside Code say it
all and could be used as the basis for any information given out, maybe with
messages expressed differently (more thought provoking/ enabling/ welcoming/
fun) and adapted to fit Derbyshire's circumstances or specific sites. It would be
useful to add fire in as a sixth message.

Advice was given and opinions expressed as to what messages worked best in
different settings, including:

- Pictures worked better than words
- How information is displayed is equally important as its content
- Have positive messages not negative or instructions (good example
  quoted "who else is enjoying this trail?" instead of "respect other users")
- Keep signage on paths to a minimum to avoid clutter. Welcome boards
  useful at the start of trails
- Information is needed for a variety of purposes
- Need multi pronged approach to getting messages across to people. This
  ranges from a few bullet points in leaflets/events booklets or on
  interpretation boards to more detailed information distributed through
  Tourist Information Centres, gateway sites, cycle hire centres, cafes, livery
  yards, equipment suppliers or on web pages. Education role for walk
  leaders, user groups, community champions etc
- Messages should be given to all users at same time so they can see the
  full picture. Benefits of putting different codes in one leaflet

- Main potential issues relate to pedestrians and cyclists and where horses are involved. Use some form of audible warning
- Horses can be scared by people as much as people can be scared by horses
- A simple, visual message to all users such as 'Keep to the Left' could help on multi user trails
- Dogs are an issue especially in urban fringe areas. Moors for the Future and the Kennel Club have some good initiatives here

Actions arising from the meeting:

The following actions were agreed:

- Gill to investigate report that Natural England may be reviewing the Countryside Code
- Gill and Claire to write up basic notes from the meeting
- Judy and Claire to produce a list of when the Codes of Conduct information could be used by the County Council and National Park Authority (see section below on use of codes of conduct information)
- Henry will look at some alternative wording using the Countryside Code messages as the basis for the information, especially the section about respecting others
- Information for comment to be circulated by e mail and a decision taken as to whether a further meeting is needed or whether the follow up can be done by e mail

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Use of Codes of Conduct Information

A range of methods and media will be employed by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) to raise awareness among path users of standards of good practice/ Countryside Code. The focus will be on Tourist Information Centres, Visitor Centres, "gateway" sites, user groups, Community Champions. Where possible, wording will be positive rather than negative.

The approach will be multi-stranded:

Leaflets/ Written information

- Possible general leaflet/ poster for range of users (walkers, cyclists, horse riders) with bullet points and additional explanation, written in friendly and welcoming manner
- DCC and PDNPA websites to include the same Codes of Conduct messages
- Shortened version of agreed bullet points to be added to all leaflets/ written information produced by DCC, PDNPA (& partners?) about countryside access, visiting, events booklets, site information etc

Signs

- Welcome Boards at site entrances to contain small section with illustrated bullet points on conduct
- Directional signs on trails to be positive rather than negative, preferably symbols rather than text

Education

- Walk leaders/ rangers trained to include messages about appropriate behaviour when leading walks, rides
- Liaison with user groups/ community champions/ target groups to include messages about appropriate behaviour and dissemination of good practice