

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: 15 June 2017

Item: 11

Title: Access Update

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on issues related to access in the Peak District.

Miles without Stiles

Extensive accessibility training has taken place this year to provide for access needs. Staff and volunteers from teams including Rangers, Cycle Hire, Visitor Centres, Learning and Discovery, Peak Park Conservation Volunteers and Customer and Business Support have all taken part. This builds on our 'Organisation of the Year' award presented by Accessible Derbyshire.

We are now identifying suitable routes for promotion as Miles without Stiles. This includes auditing, consideration of route improvements, and the preparation of maps, route descriptions and other information. We will be asking for input from the LAF and accessibility groups to develop this further.

In addition, all 10 of the English National Park Authorities are developing their collective ambition to improve access and engagement with a vision to extend Miles without Stiles across all the National Parks (Appendix 1). The potential for partnership funding and other funding streams is being developed to enable this. National Parks Partnerships are also considering opportunities for corporate match funding.

Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership

Last year the Forum supported a Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Heritage Lottery Fund bid. The proposal was successful and the Partnership is now exploring the following:

- Access, physical provision and wider promotion
- Communications and engagement for the project
- Ecological networks and opportunity
- Archaeological overview and some specific survey projects
- Landowner liaison and engagement

In relation to the first item, the National Park Authority has submitted an expression of interest, as part of a consortium, to deliver an access statement of significance, to identify access and gateway facilities and for involvement of interested parties. This would then allow identification of visitor use, potential access improvements and visitor management. The work also provides for specific access projects including works at Langsett and Cut Gate and for discovering Lost Ways.

If we are successful in our bid we will be building on our existing engagement with the project area and all those involved with it to identify, develop and deliver access opportunities and an integrated approach. The Peak District and Sheffield LAFs will be particularly closely involved. A map of the project area is provided in Appendix 2.

Future of Farming

At the March meeting, Forum Members were notified that the effect of Brexit on farming is being considered by a National Parks England member-led working group to provide advice on strategic priorities, to ensure environmentally sustainable farming with public benefit, and for the pursuit of National Park purposes.

The policy discussion paper was sent to the Defra minister in May. Local and wider engagement is being developed and this final paper is circulated for information.

The National Park Authorities' Access Working Group have noted that the multiple benefits provided by access and education does not just cover access for educational purposes but access which provides links to and enhances the existing access and rights of way network.

Recommendation

- 1. That the report be noted.**