ACTIVE IN THE OUTDOORS
A Recreation Strategy and Action Plan for the Peak District National Park
2010-2020
Foreword

“Walking gets the feet moving, the blood moving, the mind moving. And movement is life”.
Carrie Latet

Health and vitality are important both for our national park landscape and for the people who live in and visit that landscape. Enshrined in the national parks’ legislation are the twin purposes – to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of our national parks. This Recreation Strategy sets out how we will help to achieve this balance.

Everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the Peak District National Park – one of our finest active living environments. Many organisations and communities provide facilities and opportunities for active recreation in the Peak District. From the popular climbing edges in the east to the reservoir valleys in the west, from the Tissington Trail in the south to the Trans Pennine Trail in the north, the Peak District National Park provides recreation opportunities for the thousands of people who live in and visit the National Park.

Our role as a National Park Authority is to work with others to co-ordinate that provision and manage recreation issues and demands on our landscapes. As a landowner we are responsible for recreation provision on our own land. As a National Park Authority we have a duty to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities and recognise the important contribution that recreation makes to the local rural economy.

The purpose of the Recreation Strategy is to review recreation provision, identify gaps and consider priorities for the future. Recreation is identified as a strategic priority in the National Park Management Plan and, together with our partners, we need to better define a strategic direction for recreation in the Peak District National Park that is based on research and evidence and clearly highlights areas of particular focus. Current issues confronting our society such as traffic congestion, air quality, widening participation and other quality of life issues, not least the impact of climate change, need to be addressed. National Parks are a national asset and can help to address these national issues. As a national park we also face a particular challenge to consider if and where additional and differing recreational demands can be accommodated and conflicts managed so that our well loved landscapes stay wild and tranquil.

The Recreation Strategy will focus on accessibility, recreational choices, quality experiences and facilities, and on development of focal points for activities. It will build on existing partnerships and develop new ones. It will monitor and evaluate trends in recreation activity and build up an evidence base in order to guide our policies.

Above all it will ensure that the Peak District National Park continues to enrich the lives of all who enjoy and cherish this special place.

Geoff Nickolds
Member Representative for Recreation

Pat Coleman
Chair of Member Scrutiny Panel for Recreation Strategy
Executive summary

This Recreation Strategy for the National Park builds on the outcome for recreation in the Peak District National Park Management Plan¹ – “by 2011 all people, especially those from disadvantaged communities, children and young people, and the elderly should:

• feel welcome in the National Park
• have the opportunity to participate in diverse recreational activities that enhance the quality of their lives.”

It will provide a strategic framework for the provision of recreation opportunities over the next 10 years. It aims to:

• Promote the health benefits of recreation
• Ensure all people have more opportunities to participate
• Promote more environmentally sustainable choices for recreation in response to climate change and other environmental challenges
• Raise awareness and understanding of the Peak District National Park, promoting it as a welcoming destination with diverse recreation opportunities for visitors and residents
• Work with partners to provide, manage and enhance a range of recreation opportunities appropriate to the special qualities of the National Park
• Increase community participation and volunteering to facilitate recreational enjoyment and benefit the environment and local economy

Part 1 of this strategy sets the context and presents the vision of how recreation in the National Park will be in 2020. It goes on to outline a range of outcomes, themes and headline actions.

Part 2 is a summary of recreation in the Peak District, including the key characteristics of the National Park, current recreation provision, benefits, trends, existing recreation management and headline findings based on evidence gained from research and data collection.

Part 3 describes in more detail the main themes which provide the framework for the strategy and highlights examples of good practice.

Part 4 sets out how the Peak District National Park Authority and partners will deliver enhanced provision for recreation and access across the Peak District. This is set out in a more detailed Action Plan at Appendix 1. The other appendices contain information on how the strategy was prepared; more background information and evidence and further case studies.
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Part 1: Introduction to the Strategy

“Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.” John Muir

1.1 Scope and purpose

The Peak District was the first national park to be established by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). The national park purposes, as defined in the 1995 Environment Act, are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage [of the national parks];
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public.

The Recreation Strategy interprets and adds detail to the Peak District National Park Management Plan, 2006-11, the key strategic policy document for the National Park which has been shared with and agreed by a wide range of partners. The recreation outcomes from the National Park Management Plan are:

“By 2011 all people, especially those from disadvantaged communities, children and young people, and the elderly should:

- feel welcome in the National Park
- have the opportunity to participate in diverse recreational activities that enhance the quality of their lives”

The Recreation Strategy also relates to other local, regional and national policies, guidance and strategies and relates to other national park plans and strategies (see Appendix 2 and Figure 1).

The purpose of the strategy is to review recreation provision in the National Park and provide a strategic framework for the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities over the next 10 years.

The focus of this strategy is the Peak District National Park but it acknowledges that important recreation resources exist outside the National Park. Where reference is made to the Peak District, this is in recognition of a larger geographical area which includes areas close to the National Park as well as the National Park itself.

Whilst there are many recreational pursuits undertaken in the Peak District this strategy focuses on those which are most appropriate to national park purposes. They all depend on the special characteristics of the area, namely:

- Outstanding natural beauty, character and diversity of the landscape
- Significant geological features
- Sense of wildness and remoteness
- Clean earth, air and water
- Importance of wildlife and the area’s unique biodiversity and cultural heritage

1.2 The context

The mainly upland area of the Peak District National Park lies at the southern end of the Pennines, surrounded by urban areas (Map 1). It includes distinct landscapes such as the Dark Peak characterised by large areas of moorland and blanket bog; the White Peak with its rolling limestone plateau and wooded dales, and the South West Peak with large areas of moorland and blanket bog, wooded cloughs and widespread areas of farmland.

The National Park’s Landscape Character Assessment further differentiates the Peak District into 8 landscape character areas as detailed in Appendix 3. Find out more at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/landscape (Map 9)

The Peak District’s diverse mosaic of landscapes supports a wealth of plants and animals, some of which can be found in few other places in the world. Over a third of the National Park is covered by nature conservation designations (see Map 2). Further details can be found at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/bap

As well as outstanding and varied landscape, the area has a wealth of cultural history stemming from over 10,000 years of human habitation. Find out more at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/chstrategy
Pick of the Peak – why the Peak District is brilliant for outdoor recreation

1. World class landscape
2. Accessible from nearby towns and cities
3. Diverse range of activities on offer all year round
4. A huge variety of walks
5. Rights of way and access land - the public now has right of access to one third of the Peak District National Park.
6. Trail network – ideal for walking, cycling and horse riding on former railway tracks
7. Climbing crags for the enthusiastic beginner through to the world-class athlete
8. Pot-holing is highly-popular – the Peak District is home to the highest natural cavern in the UK - Titan Cave, Castleton (141.5m, 464 ft), discovered by local pot-holers in 2000
9. One of England’s favoured locations for paragliding and hang gliding
10. Good network of clubs, societies and strong partnerships

(Sources: Outdoor Recreation in the Peak District – your chance to shape the future workshop 7 May 2008 and Parishes Day 13 September 2008)
1.3 Who is it for?

Whilst the production has been led by the Peak District National Park Authority, the strategy is for everyone who has an interest in recreation within the Peak District National Park, from those taking part, to landowners, organisations and businesses helping to deliver recreation services.

The involvement of many partners will influence the approach and priorities of the strategy, recognising that it must be flexible to accommodate new information and agendas in response to changing recreational activities and demands.

1.4 What is Recreation?

The term “recreation” describes the enjoyment of a wide range of leisure time pursuits, from extreme sports and outdoor activities to more gentle and relaxing pastimes; a breathing space for spiritual renewal in a busy world.

In a National Park setting, the emphasis is on quiet enjoyment to avoid or minimise disturbance to wildlife and other people, including farmers, residents and other recreationalists.

The wide variety of recreation activities available in the Peak District results from the diversity of landscapes in close proximity to each other: The gritstone edges and reservoirs of the Dark Peak and the caves and dales of the White Peak are significant attractions for people from many interests including:

- walking
- cycling and mountain biking
- climbing
- horse riding
- hang-gliding and paragliding (airsports)
- caving
- angling
- water sports
- study or enjoyment of heritage, culture, wildlife and landscape
- off-roading

A wide range of other activities take place in the National Park and new ones will develop over time. The National Park encourages enjoyment but where there is an impact on the environment or on other users or residents, for example, localised noise or erosion, this will be monitored and actively managed.

1.5 Themes, Outcomes and Actions – a Statement of Intent

How do we want recreation to be in the National Park in 2020?

The Peak District will be a welcoming place, providing good access for all and quality facilities. Everyone will have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from healthy outdoor experiences, contribute to the local economy and become more aware of the special qualities of the National Park. There will be a network of public transport routes linked to popular sites and any conflicts between recreation, residents and the management of the environment will be addressed. More people will have better information, a greater choice of activities, and more sustainable ways of enjoying them. The National Park will thrive because more people will both enjoy and care for it.

The Recreation Strategy flows from the vision for the National Park and shows the Authority’s commitment to improved provision for recreation and access across the National Park. It builds on the outcomes for recreation from the National Park Management Plan and acknowledges the over-riding guiding principle to sustain the special qualities of the National Park. The National Park has twin purposes of conservation and promotion which must be treated equally unless there is a conflict, when the Sandford Principle dictates that conservation takes precedence. It seeks to strike the right balance between promoting enjoyment and encouraging responsibility, so that the National Park is sustained for future generations to cherish.

The following pages are a statement of intent, showing the desired outcomes from the strategy and the actions which will achieve them. Six key themes (based on socio-economic drivers and described in more detail in Part 3), reflecting national agendas, provide the framework for the strategy. Each theme has an aim and an outcome stating how the strategy will make a difference and proposed actions to achieve the outcomes and to increase participation and enjoyment.

The Peak District National Park Authority and its partners will all work together to identify and facilitate new opportunities for outdoor recreation provision and management, including sharing of resources and coordinated approaches to external funding.
Aim: Promote the health benefits of recreation

Outcome: Increased participation in outdoor recreation that enhances overall health and wellbeing

**Actions A:**

1. Increase awareness, among target groups, of the health benefits of active recreation.

2. Promote the Peak District National Park as a destination for healthy recreation activities, recreation events and active holidays.

3. Develop and promote cycling, horse riding and walking routes linked to urban areas/public transport hubs.

4. Research and benchmark models of best practice for providing quality recreation opportunities that enhance health and well-being.

5. Building on N18, work with key partners to contribute to a better understanding of active recreation by National Park residents.
Aim: The Peak District National Park offers a diverse range of environmentally sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that are easily accessed and affordable.

Outcome: All people have more opportunities to participate.

Actions B:
1. Increase and promote sustainable and accessible services at gateways (e.g., Dovestones and Marsden).
2. Provide safe, clearly marked off-road trails at key access points to the National Park for people of all abilities to walk, run or ride.
3. Provide and promote recreation events suitable for a range of abilities linked to public transport.
4. Seek opportunities to extend water-based recreation activities appropriate to the special qualities of the National Park.
5. Encourage development of learning and recreational opportunities for children and young people.
### Theme 3 - Climate change and sustainability

**Aim:** Promote more environmentally sustainable options for recreation in response to climate change and other environmental challenges

**Outcome:** The open spaces of the Peak District National Park provide a wide range of recreational opportunities that can be enjoyed without compromising environmental values

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<td><strong>1.</strong> Develop and promote sustainable public transport links from surrounding urban centres, transport hubs and settlements in the National Park.</td>
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<td><strong>2.</strong> Identify and address potential impacts of climate change on recreation infrastructure and use sustainable development techniques for new or enhanced recreation facilities (e.g., emissions reductions, use of water, rate of soil erosion).</td>
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<td><strong>3.</strong> Promote sustainable travel choices (e.g., linked public transport routes, campaigns, offers and initiatives).</td>
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<td><strong>4.</strong> Identify opportunities to evaluate the potential impacts of recreation on the landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage and economic environment of the National Park.</td>
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<td><strong>5.</strong> Encourage the development of ‘green’ recreational products.</td>
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Aim: Raise awareness and understanding of the Peak District National Park, promoting it as a welcoming destination with diverse recreation opportunities for visitors and residents

Outcome: Visitors and residents will have a greater understanding of the National Park and its special qualities, leading to greater care and involvement

Actions D:

1. Promote positive messages about sustainable recreation and how to access the National Park safely and in a way which encourages people to make a positive contribution as part of their visit (eg purchasing locally or volunteering).

2. Encourage product/service providers to network and promote new recreation products including ‘packaged’ offers.

3. Establish and maintain a database of recreation opportunities and an evidence base of visitor profile, service uptake, etc.

4. Produce guidance for use of the National Park for recreation eg for large scale organised events, safety issues and links to services.

5. Contribute to interpretation relevant to recreation opportunities in the National Park.

6. Increase awareness of sustainable recreation opportunities to people from under-represented groups.
Aim: Work with partners to manage, enhance and develop a range of recreation opportunities appropriate to the special qualities of the National Park

Outcome: There will be a wide range of recreation opportunities based on quality facilities and services, appropriate to the identity of the Peak District National Park and which minimise potential impacts on landscape, land management and wildlife

Actions E:
1. Establish a Recreation Partnership and a Strategic Management Group of key recreation stakeholders to ensure strategic alignment of priorities and a partnership approach to improving provision and management of recreation opportunities.
2. Establish more mechanisms to positively manage recreation activities in relation to specific conservation aims and potential conflicts between different users.
3. Work with adjoining land managers to plan and manage the wider Eastern Peak District Moors on a landscape scale.
4. Establish partnership ‘task groups’ to explore potential for specific recreation activities eg water sports, horse riding, cycling.
5. Work with partners to implement integrated Rights of Way Improvement Plans and develop routes accessible to all where appropriate.
6. Manage access to open country and seek to improve access.
Theme 6 - Community participation, including volunteering

Aim: Increase community participation and volunteering to facilitate recreational enjoyment and benefit the environment and local economy

Outcome: Quality community-led recreation facilities and opportunities are provided

Actions F:
1. Develop a strategic approach to volunteering to encourage local people and visitors to make a personal contribution to the National Park.
2. Facilitate/support local communities in positively addressing recreation issues and explore opportunities linked to recreation and its management in the National Park.
3. Develop village trails linked to public transport and sustainable local businesses.
4. Identify and address the recreation needs of communities living in and close to the National Park.

Hayfield
Part 2: Recreation in the Peak District

“In this short span between my fingertips and the smooth edge and these tense feet cramped to the crystal ledge, I hold the life of a man.”
Geoffrey Winthrop Young

2.1 Recreation provision and participation patterns

The Peak District has a long association with outdoor recreation activities. In 1932 Kinder Scout was the site of a mass trespass that helped spark the ‘right to roam’ movement and eventually led to the 1949 National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act. Today the Peak District is renowned for the outdoor recreation opportunities it offers, notably:

- 202 square miles (524 km²) of Access Land
- 1,867 miles (3,005km) of public rights of way for walking, cycling and horse-riding
- 58 miles (93km) of dedicated off-road cycling trails based on former railway lines such as the High Peak and Tissington Trails
- National and local long distance trails for walking, cycling and horse riding - including the Pennine Way, Pennine Bridleway, Trans Pennine Trail, Limestone Way and Derwent Valley Heritage Way

This spectacular landscape in the heart of the country is justly famous for the wealth of recreation opportunities it offers. From trekking across rugged heather moorland to strolling round the pretty stone villages; from descending deep limestone caves to soaring on the thermals; from testing strength and agility climbing gritstone edges to casting a fishing line over some of the clearest rivers in the UK, the Peak District has something for everyone.

The wide range of activities and the large number and variety of users can result in intensive use of the landscape. Managing this impact on the environment to balance the needs of both recreation and conservation is at the heart of this strategy.

2.1.1 National recreation trends

Over the last 30 years recreation patterns in the UK have changed due to social, demographic and economic factors. Research - including that undertaken for Natural England in 2005 by the ‘Henley Centre’ - highlights factors affecting the provision of outdoor recreation in the next 15 years:

- The population is ageing but many people are more physically active later in life
- There has been a dramatic increase in car ownership and vehicle traffic
- UK is now a 24/7 society with a variety of work patterns resulting in recreation activities more evenly spread through the week
- Increased use of information technology, particularly the internet, provides greater information on leisure opportunities and leads to new activities such as geocaching
- Increasing national wealth and more spending on leisure has resulted in a significant increase in holidays and leisure pursuits by some
- Increased time spent indoors and the urbanisation of culture, especially among young people, results in less early association with the natural world than any previous generation
- Greater variety of leisure, recreation and holiday choices are available to more people, including exercise options at health clubs and indoor complexes
- Increased demand for organised events and more sophisticated information
- Decline in informal recreation activity like picnicking and increase in more active pursuits such as mountain biking
- New, adapted or revived activities eg Nordic walking and survival skills

Since this research, the UK and world economies have fallen into recession, reducing disposable income and adding further uncertainty to future predictions. However anecdotal evidence from 2008 and 2009 suggests an increase in people, especially families, camping in the National Park perhaps reflecting a demand for lower cost holidays.

The population of the UK is rising and the Office of National Statistics (2007) suggests the population will increase by 4.4% to 65 million by 2016.
The population of the UK is rising and the Office of National Statistics (2007) suggests the population will increase by 4.4% to 65 million by 2016.
2.1.2 Local recreation trends

Whilst the population of the National Park is only around 38,000, more than 16 million people (nearly 1/3 of the population of England) can drive to the National Park within an hour.

The 2005 England Leisure Visits Survey Report\(^1\) estimated 42.3 million visits to English National Parks, of which more than 10 million were to the Peak District. The 2008 online Recreation Survey\(^4\) carried out by the National Park Authority found that of current users, 6% expected to visit less in the next five years, 29% expected to visit more, and 65% would visit as much as before.

The National Park is highly accessible to surrounding conurbations. The 2005 Visitor Survey\(^5\) indicated that 40% of visitors came from Stockport/Sheffield postcode areas and a further 25% from Derby/Nottingham/Stoke-on-Trent/Oldham/Manchester postcode areas. There is also a high level of repeat visits – 92% based on this survey’s findings.

A summary of the research taken from the 2008 Recreation Survey\(^4\) and the Sport England Active People Survey\(^6\) results for Derbyshire highlights similar trends to national research:

- Increased participation in active recreation, such as mountain biking
- Increased demand for organised events such as charity and challenge events
- Walking and cycling are by far the most popular activities with more links to urban areas and good quality circular networks wanted
- Running, artistic pursuits and photography, 4x4 and trail biking, wildlife study and climbing are the next most popular activities
- Increasing 4x4 and trail bike activity can cause conflict with other users and damage to the environment
- Users are seeking more opportunities for cycling, horse-riding, canoeing and sailing
- Over three quarters of the local adult population do not exercise enough to benefit their health

2.1.3 Economic benefits of recreation

In 2005, an estimated 3.5 million overnight trips were made to Derbyshire and the Peak District and a third of the total visitor expenditure of £1.29 billion was from overnight visitors. Staying visitors spend on average over 5 times more than those day visitors who spent money.\(^7\) Increasing the economic value of tourism in the region by focusing on more overnight stays to increase value rather than volume is East Midland Tourism’s primary objective and an approach endorsed in the Peak District Sustainable Tourism Strategy. There is a need for low cost visitor accommodation in and around the Park.\(^5\)

Research in 2005 estimated that over half of all visitor spending was on sports activities – either ‘soft’ (eg walking, cycling etc) or ‘hard’ (eg climbing, paragliding, adventure sports etc).\(^8\) Defined this way many visitors do some sporting activity during their stay and significant numbers come specifically to take part in their chosen sporting activity. Equally there is anecdotal evidence of:

- a growing demand for activity breaks - where a number of active sports are offered as part of an organised package
- more people taking part in organized or competitive sporting or charity events

The Peak District is busiest in the summer but is popular all year round. This benefits the many small businesses which rely upon all year round income from recreation and tourism to remain viable. Where appropriate infrastructure exists, major outdoor activity events can bring economic benefits to the Peak District, whilst sporting events staged in surrounding urban areas can also benefit the area.
2.2 Maintaining satisfaction and meeting expectations

Whilst the vast majority of people\(^1\) (well over 90%) seem satisfied with their experience of the National Park the survey results indicated that there is scope for improvement: for example, the cleanliness of facilities. There can be some conflict between people pursuing different recreational activities and whilst most (80%) survey respondents had no particular suggestions to make, the Authority and partners will continue to work innovatively to achieve improvements.

2.3 Recreation activities

Enjoyment of the natural and cultural features of the National Park underpins all recreational activities. Walking provides the most obvious example of enjoyment of the environment by appreciation of traditional villages, cultural landscapes, sweeping moorland views, dramatic rock outcrops, orchids and cowslips on a dale side or the call of the curlew. The enjoyment of climbers at Stanage and the pleasure of fishing in White Peak rivers is undoubtedly enhanced by the magnificent settings and contact with nature.

The following summarises the most popular outdoor activities. (Map 4)

2.3.1 Walking

Perhaps best known as walking country, the Peak District offers a spectacular variety of scenery and routes to be explored ranging from challenging hikes to short strolls. There is an established network of public and concessory rights of way and substantial areas of access land (Map 3).

The highway authorities’ Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) set a programme of maintenance and enhancement to provide a network responsive to current user needs and requirements and targeting further links and routes. Partners’ resources are focused on managing pressure on well used routes such as the Pennine Way, Dovedale footpath and Mam Tor. New access points are created where needed, subject to landowner negotiation, to reach areas of access land provided under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000.

A number of organisations (eg National Park Authority, local authorities, water companies, National Trust, Wildlife Trusts) offer extensive programmes of guided walks to increase understanding and enjoyment of the National Park. They can provide a useful introduction for those new to walking and encourage further exploration. Private operators offer a wide range of guided walks, often with special themes or navigation training to enable independent walking.

The annual Peak District Walking Festival is now well established and includes a wide range of guided walks with local experts leading walks on themes such as food and drink, ghosts, heritage, geology - see www.visitpeakdistrict.com. The choice of activities on offer will be expanded, giving young and old, regular and new visitors the chance to try something new.

2.3.2 Cycling & mountain biking

The Peak District is popular for cycling, offering everything from quiet country lanes and traffic-free trails to challenging mountain biking terrain.

The Peak District’s dedicated off-road cycle trails network is ideal for family cycling and there are cycle hire centres offering bikes to suit all ages and abilities. Experienced mountain bikers enjoy the challenge of wild, remote moorland bridleways.

The Trans Pennine Trail passes through the north of the Peak District on its journey from Liverpool to Hull - see www.transpenninetrail.org.uk For touring cyclists the 335 mile (539km) Pennine Cycleway passes through the Peak District en-route from Derby to Berwick-on-Tweed as part of the National Cycle Network.
The Rights of Way Improvement Plans (and Greenways Strategies) for the National Park recognise that the bridleway network is generally more fragmented than that available for walkers, with less scope for off-road circular rides. The aim is to maintain existing routes and create a more integrated network of routes and bridleways suitable for a range of users. More circular routes and routes linked to urban areas and transport hubs are sought by providers and users. Linking routes to small scale local sustainable development such as accommodation, cafes, information and cycle hire or repair helps to sustain the local economy and enhance the visitor experience.

Mountain-biking has specific requirements of its own and it is recognised that the development of off-road routes and bridleways should include more challenging routes and a variety of terrain types suitable for the more experienced and energetic riders. Maintenance of the bridleway network should not lead to deterioration in the challenge offered, and the National Park Authority will continue to work with ‘Ride the Peak’ user group to identify ways to enhance the network of routes appropriately, and promote understanding and sustainable use.

In recent years the rapid increase in demand for mountain-biking nationally has been catered for by ‘trail centres’ offering purpose-built mountain-bike routes, cycle-friendly facilities, cycle hire and cafes. These centres have been mainly in forest sites in areas of the country which lend themselves to this scale of development. The Peak District already has many facilities for off-road cyclists, but trail centres have been successfully provided elsewhere and it is the expectation of users that there should be further provision of similar facilities to cater for demand.

A major injection of funding could open up wider opportunities. The development and delivery of parts or all of the Matlock-Buxton and Buxton-Ashbourne cycle trails will be an iconic project leading to the creation of a unique, high quality and wholly sustainable visitor attraction. It will provide a viable car-free alternative for the majority of our visitors who come from Derby/Nottingham, the Midlands and the South (via Matlock) and the North West (via Buxton). By creating an uninterrupted 26 km route - from Matlock Railway Station along the Derwent and Wye valleys to Bakewell, through the deeply incised and picturesque Wye Valley to Millers Dale and then on into Buxton - people would have cycling connected access to the National Park from public transport hubs, gateway towns and major visitor attractions.

### 2.3.3 Climbing

Easy access and two major rock types (gritstone and limestone) offer the climber a huge diversity of style, grade and landscape within the relatively compact geographical area of the National Park. The gritstone edges provide a world class attraction and are uniquely cherished by climbers. There is something for everyone on the major edges: the 3.7 miles (6km) of Stanage contains over a thousand routes across all grades. That variety extends across Froggatt and Curbar in the east of the National Park, to Cratcliffe in the centre and the Roaches in the west, whilst the high moorland crags of Kinder and Chew offer a sense of remoteness, timelessness and opportunity for exploration. There are major boulder climbing circuits at Stanage, Burbage, Robin Hood’s Stride and the Roaches. The limestone gorges of the White Peak offer a contrasting style of climbing, mainly mid to high grade routes on taller, steeper crags. In the last decade an increasing number of sport climbing venues (with fixed bolts) have been developed, some on natural crags but also in former quarries. These quarried sites are often sheltered and quick drying (eg Horseshoe at Stoney Middleton) and offer more routes in the easier grades.
Nearly all crags are situated in Sites of Special Scientific Interest which are managed primarily for their biodiversity. Many of these are also of interest for their cultural heritage significance such as old quarries, sometimes containing millstones and other features which should not be disturbed or damaged. A series of access arrangements with landowners such as Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, the National Trust and the National Park Authority, endorsed by Natural England, ensure there are very few problems on established routes. Occasional restrictions, eg for breeding birds, are always notified on site and are detailed along with location details on the British Mountaineering Council’s Regional Access Database (RAD) www.thebmc.co.uk/bmccrag/. Continued liaison should ensure ecological and cultural interests are safeguarded.

The BMC publishes a series of definitive guidebooks, and several selective guides are also available. By its very nature, climbing can be dangerous but for many, this adds to the experience and excitement with participants accepting the risks and taking responsibility for their own actions.

Fixed and mobile climbing walls provide an excellent and safe introduction to climbing as well as training opportunities in bad weather. Use of mobile walls in schools and villages helps ensure local young people have the chance to try an activity for which this area is justly famous.

This strategy aims to foster the good relationship and work in partnership to raise awareness of opportunities (especially to young people), increase understanding of impacts and improve opportunities when they arise.

### 2.3.4 Abseiling

Abseiling as part of the climbing of routes takes place on the climbing crags. However, for group use where abseiling is the main activity, man-made structures or fixed abseil points are preferable. Bridge 75 in Miller’s Dale is one site within the National Park where abseiling may take place subject to licence from the landowner, the Peak District National Park Authority. Similar arrangements with Derbyshire Dales District Council exist at High Tor, Matlock, just outside the National Park.

### 2.3.5 Horse riding

Horse riding is popular on the bridleways and country lanes throughout the Peak District with good opportunities for riding, hacking and trekking throughout the area. The bridleway network is more fragmented than the footpath network but some good public and concessionary routes exist and the trails provide safe off-road choices. The Rights of Way Improvement Plans aim to improve provision and dedication of routes suitable for bridleway users, improve links to enable more circular rides and to continue development of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail. Facilities are provided in some places for horse box parking and tethering (eg Hartington Station, Torside car park) and should be extended elsewhere. The Peak District National Park Authority and its partners, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and National Trust, will continue to work with horse riders to enhance the bridleway network on the Eastern Moors Estate. Growth in accommodation provision for riders and horses in connection with long distance trails such as the Pennine Bridleway and Trans Pennine Trail benefits the local economy.

### 2.3.6 Air sports

There are a number of suitable sites for hang gliding and paragliding, and one site for gliding. Landowner permission is required for launch sites so membership of a flying club is advisable. Management of air sports facilities aims to raise awareness among participants and reduce any local impacts of the activity on the quality of the National Park.
2.3.7 Caving

The Peak District has cave systems which are of international importance. The network of caving club hostels and bunkhouse accommodation ensures that the region is visited regularly by caving clubs from throughout the country and abroad, contributing year round to the local economy. The caves range from small caves and rock shelters close to the paths in the Dove and Manifold valleys (which can provide an introduction to caving, especially for children who enjoy exploring them) to major cave and mine systems requiring specialist knowledge and equipment. Access to caves and mines is dependent on landowner permission (generally negotiated by Derbyshire Caving Association).

A number of show caves open to the public (as at Castleton) can whet the appetite and engage new audiences. Outdoor activity centres offer tuition and access for supervised groups.

Titan Cave near Castleton has the deepest natural shaft in the UK - at 464ft (141.5m) it is higher than the London Eye. It was discovered by local cavers in 2000.

2.3.8 Angling

Coarse and game fishing is available in rivers, ponds and reservoirs throughout the Peak District, subject to a licence, day permit or membership of a local club.

Excellent fishing is available on rivers throughout the Peak District including the Dove, Wye, Derwent and Lathkill. Game fishing takes place on reservoirs eg Ladybower, Carsington and Ogston and some privately owned lakes. Fishing platforms for disabled anglers are provided in some places including Ladybower and Damflask Reservoirs.

There is scope to increase information about the opportunities available and to raise awareness of environmental and sustainability issues so that anglers can choose more sustainable options. There may be potential for negotiating further access through projects such as a fishing passport scheme for the River Dove, trialed in other areas of the country. Further opportunities for disabled anglers will be sought.

2.3.9 Water sports

Sailing, windsurfing and canoeing take place on a number of reservoirs in and around the edge of the National Park, notably Carsington, Tittesworth and Rudyard. A few reservoirs within the National Park such as Torside, Errwood, Dovestone and Winscar have clubs that offer water sports. The River Derwent at Matlock Bath supports a popular permanent canoe slalom course and a short stretch at Bamford provides local youngsters with a chance to try canoeing. There is a growing interest in open water swimming but swimming in reservoirs is strongly resisted by water companies due to health and safety reasons and management concerns.

There is limited river access within the National Park and currently few of the more than 50 reservoirs over 2 hectares in size cater for water sports.

The National Park Authority will work with the Environment Agency in developing its regional strategy for water-based recreation and continue to seek further opportunities with water companies and landowners. Any new infrastructure developments, such as a sailing club, would be subject to an environmental impact assessment as part of the planning process. Site requirements may dictate that the focus for new development is more likely to be outside the National Park.

2.3.10 Enjoyment of landscape, wildlife & cultural heritage

In addition to being at the heart of the more active recreational activities, enjoyment of natural and cultural features is in itself an important recreational pursuit. Enjoyment of wildlife, for example, is identified by recreational surveys as one of the most popular activities after walking and cycling. Sightseeing, visiting ancient monuments, bird watching, geological and archaeological exploration, visiting nature reserves, painting, poetry, picnicking and simply sitting and appreciating the landscape are all popular activities which enrich people’s lives and contribute to their health and sense of well-being. Focal points include prominent viewpoints such as gritstone edges, limestone dales, major archaeological sites, nature reserves, parkland and reservoir valleys.
2.3.11 Recreational vehicular use of unsurfaced highways

The Peak District is a popular destination for trail-bike riding and 4 wheel-drive use of the unsurfaced highway network. Some activity causes concern for farmers, residents and other recreation users about the effects both on public rights of way and off-road. The National Park Authority works in partnership with the Highway Authorities and the police to seek ways to positively manage the situation that:

- Are sustainable
- Minimise possible future and inappropriate development
- Recognise existing legal rights

Vehicular access is managed proactively in the context of the special qualities of the National Park, aiming to ensure that the National Park is not damaged for future generations. Where the valued characteristics of the National Park are threatened, conservation will take priority. Where there is legitimate recreational vehicular access the National Park Authority works to manage those routes in a sustainable way and implement controls as appropriate.

The National Park Authority and partners (including user groups) have formulated a strategy to:

- Manage the vehicular rights of way network with a view to minimising the impacts on natural beauty, wildlife, tranquillity and cultural heritage
- Ensure that where vehicular rights exist, routes are pro-actively managed, signed and widely recognised by all interested parties
- Address safety issues
- Promote a spirit of co-operation with motor-vehicle user groups to try to minimise damage and disturbance, and develop and apply voluntary codes of conduct as appropriate
- Consider the use of temporary or permanent Traffic Regulation Orders as appropriate
- Gather information regarding illegal motor vehicle activity and pass this to the police

(See also Stay on the Right Track and Operation Blackbrook case studies in 3.5)

2.3.12 Multi-activity centres

A number of well established licensed multi-activity centres within and close to the National Park offer instruction in outdoor activities and qualification courses, contribute to the local economy and encourage good practice. Some Youth Hostels run multi-activity courses which, together with the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme, introduce many young people to the excitement and enjoyment of outdoor recreation.

2.3.13 Wild camping

Wild camping is not formally provided for in the Peak District. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000, which governs the right of access to open country, permission from the landowner/tenant must be obtained before camping. Where permission is granted to camp on non recognised sites, strict guidelines to safeguard the environment apply. Generally camping is only permitted at designated campsites; bunkhouse or camping barn facilities offer an alternative low cost option (see www.yha.org.uk).

2.3.14 Large-scale organised events

The National Park Authority is contacted by the organisers of large-scale events seeking permission, advice on legal issues, particular routes or areas, landowner contacts, and areas of particular sensitivity. The number of applications is increasing slightly annually.

Organisers of most events are already aware of well-established guidelines promoted by the national governing bodies of sport and recreation. Other, smaller or informal events should follow good practice guidelines such as those detailed by the Best of Both Worlds www.bobw.co.uk and Institute of Fundraisers www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/bestpractice websites. On National Park Authority owned land, events will normally be permitted so long as they do not detract from the landscape/sense of wilderness, disturb or damage wildlife or ecology, cause disturbance to local residents or farmers, cause conflict with other users or increase recreational pressure on the area.

2.3.15 Other activities

Besides reinforcing the popularity of walking, National Park Visitor Surveys in 1998 and 2005 illustrate the range and diversity of other activities undertaken. These include:

- Orienteering
- Fell running
- Conservation volunteering
- Photography and artistic pursuits
- Shooting and other field sports

Where legitimate activities cause local disturbance or environmental damage they are managed in partnership with user groups and relevant authorities/agencies. A specific example is the management of recreational motor vehicle access to unsurfaced highways and ‘off-road’ activity in the National Park (‘Stay on the Right Track’ etc).
2.4 Attractions and facilities

The Peak District has a wide variety of attractions including heritage sites, country houses and parks, reservoirs and caverns. The two spa towns of Buxton and Matlock Bath, lying just outside the National Park, have been popular with visitors since Victorian times. Other surrounding Peak District towns such as Ashbourne, Matlock, Wirksworth, Holmfirth, Marsden and Leek offer a range of tourist amenities. Many of the Peak District villages have annual well-dressing ceremonies, festivals and events during the summer months. (Map 5)

Hotels, guest houses, B&Bs, holiday cottages, camping barns, bunkhouses, youth hostels, caravan and camp sites provide accommodation for all tastes and budgets. Locally produced foods, arts and crafts help create a special Peak District identity and sustain local producers; shops, farmers markets and events help in their promotion.

Recreation facilities are provided by many organisations, the key ones include:

- County, metropolitan, district, borough and parish councils
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Water companies
- National Trust
- Forestry Commission
- Private operators

Facilities include toilets, car parks, camping and caravan sites, cycle hire centres, picnic sites, visitor centres and information. (Map 6)

Formal sports facilities (including swimming pools at Bakewell and the highly valued open-air lido at Hathersage) within the National Park are generally provided by the district and parish councils, with school playing fields the responsibility of the Education Authorities. Local authorities, as part of their evidence base for preparing Local Development Frameworks, are taking a strategic view of the provision of green and open spaces for play, sport and recreation (Peak Region: Green Space, Sport & Recreation Strategy). The assessment of existing provision and consultation with local communities over supply and demand will enable a strategic approach to be taken to the provision of facilities such as parks and gardens, play areas and outdoor sports facilities (eg playing fields, sports pitches, golf courses, tennis courts, etc). The National Park Authority has a role as planning authority to enable appropriate developments to take place. It also assists local communities by giving advice on getting organised, finding funding and producing village plans (which may include sports facilities). Highway Authority Local Transport Plans include accessibility strategies which aim to increase access to a range of services (including sport and recreation). Improved access to education often includes Safer Routes to Schools which might improve cycling and walking access.

Outdoor activity centres, trekking stables, walking festivals, guided walks, workshops and courses in activities, arts and crafts all add to the recreation opportunity on offer. For more information visit www.peakdistrict.gov.uk and www.visitpeakdistrict.com

Traffic management schemes operate in popular areas such as the Upper Derwent and Goyt Valleys providing safe and pleasant traffic free environments for all at peak times. Peak Connections guides (www.visitpeakdistrict.com/peakconnections) encourage people to explore the Peak by bus or train with ideas for days out, places to visit and things to do. People arriving by bus can enjoy discounted entry to many attractions across the area. Map 7 shows the transport infrastructure.
Map 5: Heritage attractions in and around the Peak District National Park
Map 7: Transport infrastructure in and around the Peak District National Park

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The most popular areas of the Peak District National Park are:
- Bakewell with interesting buildings and a busy market
- Chatsworth, home of the Duke of Devonshire
- Dovedale, a spectacular limestone dale
- Hartington village
- Hope Valley and the village of Castleton
- Upper Derwent and the Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs

The National Park Authority provides facilities for visitors:
- Information Centres at Bakewell, Castleton, Edale and Upper Derwent.
- Ranger Service to provide help and information for visitors; help keep good relations with farmers and other local people; patrol access land and footpaths; and deal with stile repairs, moorland fires or mountain accidents
- Losehill Hall, the Peak District National Park Learning and Environmental Conference Centre, provides day visits and residential courses on many aspects of environmental education and training
- Car parks in villages and popular beauty spots, often with toilets
- Permanent trails on redundant railway lines, such as the Tissington Trail, for cycling, walking, riding
- Cycle Hire facilities at three centres

2.5 Recreation management

There have been many advances in recreation management in the Peak District from the first negotiated access agreements with landowners to investments in recreation opportunities, facilities, services and information. Over 90% of the land in the Peak District is privately owned (the National Park Authority owns about 4%) and the water companies, National Trust, Forestry Commission and private estates all have major landholdings (Map 8). Consequently many authorities, organisations and businesses are involved with the provision, management and promotion of recreation.

There are many good examples of partnership working exemplified by the case studies highlighted in this Strategy.

Case study: Peak District Local Access Forum (PDLAF)

In the 1980s the Peak District National Park Authority established the innovative Access Consultative Group – which led to Local Access Forums being set up across the country following the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). The country’s first Local Access Forum is a statutory body, appointed jointly by the Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council. It has a voluntary membership from a range of backgrounds to represent interests of active recreation, farming, conservation, rural business and local communities. The Forum offers advice to both the Peak District National Park Authority and highway authorities on a range of subjects, including access to open country, rights of way improvement plans, management of recreational motor vehicle activity and dogs in the countryside. The role of the Forum is essential to enhance access and accessibility to the National Park and to remove barriers to inclusion.

“The strength of the Local Access Forum lies in its diverse and informed membership,” says Andrew McCloy, PDLAF Chair. “We have a blend of knowledge and experience drawn from many different fields which allows us to offer balanced and independent advice to further access and recreation in the National Park.”
Part 3: Themes

“I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits unless I spend four hours a day at least – and it is commonly more than that – sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements.” Henry David Thoreau

The broad strategic context will guide the strategy and provide a framework within which it will be implemented. As referred to at 1.5, six main drivers for change or themes have been identified from national agendas:

- Healthy lifestyles
- Widening participation
- Climate change and sustainability
- Raising awareness and understanding
- Community participation, including volunteering
- Partnership working

3.1 Healthy lifestyles

Aim: Promote the health benefits of recreation

Outcome: Increased participation in outdoor recreation that enhances overall health and wellbeing

The physical and mental health of our communities is a key government and local priority. This is evident from the fact that all of the nine Local Strategic Partnerships in the East Midlands have adopted national performance targets to address these issues in their Local Area Agreements.

Health is one of the four main themes on which Natural England is campaigning and the work of the ‘Walking the Way to Health Initiative’ is an integral part of this campaign (www.whi.org.uk). Primary Care Trusts are encouraging people to do more to stay healthy or become healthy. District Councils and sports clubs play a vital role in providing facilities and encouraging participation in organised sporting activities.

Higher levels of clinical obesity are predicted across all age groups including young people. The social and economic costs of this are high with greater pressure on health and social services and increased absenteeism amongst the working age population. Enjoying being outdoors in the countryside reduces stress and anxiety and improves mental well-being. The feel-good factor cannot be underestimated and for some people the experience can be life changing.

Many people view the outdoors with apprehension due to unfamiliarity. Research from the Diversity Review 2005 suggests that children without experience of the natural world are less likely to appreciate it later in life. Moderate activities in the natural environment offer low cost, healthy opportunities to help people pursue a healthier lifestyle. The national parks are a fantastic resource for people of all ages.

Case study: Peak Park Leisure Walks

The Peak Park Leisure Walks initiative started in 1991 and was one of the first ‘walking for health’ schemes in England. It is a partnership between the Peak District National Park Ranger Service, Bakewell and Eyam Community Transport and Derbyshire Primary Care Trust.

Participants are referred to the scheme for a variety of reasons by community health professionals. Ten accessible walks per year are organised for up to 30 people and supported by rangers. Community Transport is used to take people to the walks; packed lunches and drinks are provided. The walks are always over-subscribed and a rota scheme has been introduced for participants.

A ‘next steps’ programme has been recently piloted where the more active and able participants from the leisure walk programme take part in mainstream walks of up to five miles, run as part of the Ranger Service guided walks programme. Participants are introduced to basic navigation skills to give them the knowledge and confidence to start to walk in the countryside on their own or in their own groups.

Chris Porter (National Park Authority Field Services) adds: “The Leisure Walks provide a very high level of support for people of all ages and abilities who are not able to access other walks or perhaps don’t have the confidence to go for a walk without support. The walks encourage people to adopt healthier lifestyles. Walking in this way benefits the participant’s fitness and mental health whilst giving the people from local communities the opportunity to enjoy visiting their National Park.”
and abilities and can be used to begin to promote physical activity, benefit mental health and improve quality of life.

Young people’s first visits to the National Park through both formal and informal education activity can remove the feeling of unfamiliarity and rebuild the broken link between many young people and the natural world. A school or group visit very often results in a subsequent family visit as the young person uses their new found confidence in the outdoors to introduce parents and friends to a new recreational experience. All school teachers’ notes now link education visits to the Peak District National Park with the healthy lifestyle agenda. Through Losehill Hall, the Authority is working closely with the Learning Outside the Classroom Council (www.lotc.org.uk) to support the ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes, in particular enjoying and achieving, staying safe and being healthy.

Further opportunities exist to work more closely with Derbyshire Sport (through the emerging Plan for Sport and Active Recreation in Derbyshire 2009-12), the National Health Service through Primary Care Trusts, Natural England and others, to access funding, influence how and where this is targeted and promote the health benefits of recreation in the National Park.

3.2 Widening participation

Aim: All people have more opportunities to participate

Outcome: The Peak District National Park offers a diverse range of quality recreation opportunities that are easily accessed and affordable

National parks are for all people to experience, learn about and enjoy. However, research for Defra’s Rural White Paper, 20009 indicated that particular groups are under-represented in the countryside. They include people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, young people, people with special needs and those living in deprived communities. Under-representation does not necessarily equate to social exclusion; many people have the opportunity for full access but may choose not to visit the countryside, many people remain active longer and are able to enjoy the countryside later in life.

The National Park is surrounded by urban areas with people of all ages, social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. The Government’s Diversity Review10 proposes new ways of working, both with the organisations providing outdoor recreation opportunities, and with the under-

Case study: Mosaic Partnership

Mosaic is a project that aims to develop long-term and direct engagement between people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and national parks.

The project has been running since 2001. In 2004 a second phase was set up involving the Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, North York Moors and Brecon Beacons national parks, the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) and the Youth Hostels Association (YHA). Funding has now been secured for a further phase of the project to recruit more community champions and to develop cluster groups in Derby, Sheffield and Tameside.

The partnership has led to -

- Help and encouragement to many people from BME communities to visit national parks for the first time and created links and built relationships between BME community leaders and national park authority staff
- Increased the understanding of BME needs when visiting national parks
- Helped more visitors feel welcome in national parks
- Raised interest in a greater involvement in decision making
- Promotion of the national parks as part of a shared cultural heritage, with good opportunities for physical recreation and spiritual renewal

The project identified opinion formers in BME communities and recruited them to become ‘community champions’. Their role has been to act as ambassadors for national parks, passing on information to people in their communities. They have also been on training and visits to gain the knowledge and skills to organise visits to national parks for other groups or individuals from their community. The champions have been enthusiastic about working with the National Park Authority as volunteers and now have some great ideas for promoting the National Park to a wide range of local communities.

“They [BME Communities] didn’t know anything about the National Park but they are now aware of the National Park.” (Community Champion, Peak District)
represented groups, so that the objective of increasing participation can be achieved. The National Park Authority and other organisations have begun to make good links and find ways for the National Park to benefit neighbouring communities (eg. Mosaic Partnership and the Sheffield BME Environment Network, SHEBEEN).

The National Park Authority’s People and Communities Strategy and Under-represented Groups Action Plan (2008) set corporate priorities and provide a basic framework for working with partners. By targeting information on the right social networks and organizing initial visits, the aim is to build peoples’ knowledge of what the National Park has to offer and confidence in using it responsibly. Working from this policy base and drawing on experience of successful projects, this Recreation Strategy will, through its Action Plan, contribute further to addressing issues of under-representation and social exclusion in the Peak District. Identification of ‘gateway sites’ which are mostly used as initial arrival points for less frequent visitors will provide a focus for future investment.

3.3 Climate change and sustainability

Aim: Promote more environmentally sustainable choices for recreation in response to climate change and other environmental challenges

Outcome: The open spaces of the Peak District National Park provide a wide range of recreational opportunities that do not compromise environmental values

Climate change is likely to have an impact on the biodiversity, cultural heritage, landscape, and social and economic fabric of the National Park. It is likely to result in changes to the flora and fauna of the Peak District. How to reduce the impact of recreation on the environment, adjust to climate change and what influences the climate may have on recreational behaviour are all key issues. Future investments in facilities need to take into account likely impacts of climate change.

Visits for recreation reflect the weather with many more visitors to the National Park during dry sunny weather in both summer and winter. Climate change could result in more fluctuation; wetter weather may discourage visitors whilst extreme heat and fire risk may prevent some visitors enjoying the National Park in the summer. Fluctuating water levels in rivers and reservoirs affect water based recreation activities and torrential downpours increase surface erosion of paths. Restricting recreational activities on rivers and lakes could impact on the local economy.

Increasing awareness of the possible environmental impacts associated with air travel, coupled with the economic recession, may lead to more people staying in Britain and making more use of the countryside closer to home for holidays and recreation. This could result in increased pressure on recreational facilities and natural features such as climbing crags and semi-natural habitats, potentially leading to increased erosion and disturbance to wildlife.

Accessing recreation in the National Park and the surrounding countryside poses a significant challenge to environmental sustainability for recreation. The National Park Authority, with other local authorities and organisations, has subsidised and promoted public transport as a means of accessing and getting around the Peak District and there have been modest successes such as the Sheffield - Stanage bus service. Yet for the vast majority of visitors, time, personal preferences, cost and convenience means that people still prefer to visit by private car (85% from the Peak District Visitor Survey). This coupled with seasonal and weekly patterns, together with multiple origins and destinations, poses a major challenge to the provision of a comprehensive public transport system covering the National Park.

The Peak District National Park Authority is now developing a Sustainable Transport Action Plan to address ways to reduce car-use and improve cycling, horse riding and walking links to urban areas. Partner bodies have similar plans and policies such as Local Transport Plans, Rights of Way Improvement Plans, Greenways Strategies.

Case study: Peak Connections

Peak Connections guides have been designed to encourage people to explore the Peak District by bus or train with lots of ideas for days out, places to visit and fun things to do – all with bus or train times. People arriving by bus can enjoy discounted entry to many attractions across the area by using a voucher printed in the leaflet and showing their bus ticket.

Visit [www.visitpeakdistrict.com/peakconnections](http://www.visitpeakdistrict.com/peakconnections) to view and download available guides; some are available as printed leaflets from local Tourist Information Centres.
and Accessibility Strategies. The National Park Authority’s Climate Change Action Plan for the Peak District identifies ways it can work in partnership to tackle climate change. Investment in sites with good walking, cycling or public transport links will help provide more sustainable gateway sites and opportunities for recreation close to where people live.

3.4 Raising awareness and understanding

Aim: Raise awareness and understanding of the Peak District National Park promoting it as a welcoming destination with diverse recreation opportunities for visitors and residents

Outcome: Visitors and residents will have a greater understanding of the National Park and its special qualities, leading to greater care and involvement

The Peak District National Park Authority, working with partners, has a major role to play in raising awareness of the environment and outdoor recreation opportunities for all.

Interpretation is the art of explaining what is significant about a place and helps people appreciate the cultural and natural heritage of the Peak District. Interpretative panels, publications and visitor centres represent one approach to interpretation. Recent interpretation projects have included work with communities who live within the Peak District, ‘face to face’ interpretation (eg guided walks), art projects, audio trails, podcasts, a Bluetooth trail and user-generated photo/video/MP3/comment sharing websites.

Under-represented groups clearly expressed a desire to enjoy the benefits of outdoor recreation, but had concerns about the lack of information in accessing the outdoors.10 The results of a Mosaic Champions communications workshop in the Peak District in June 2008 highlighted that information in a range of formats is important to ensure access for all.

The National Trust’s events programme offers an exciting and innovative range of learning activities for all to enjoy from their centres at Ilam Park and Longshaw. The Moorland Discovery Centre at Longshaw is a sustainably built lifelong learning centre which encourages groups of all ages to enjoy outdoor learning experiences. Seven miles from the centre of Sheffield, it specifically targets school children from disadvantaged areas of Sheffield and local community groups.

Losehill Hall, the Peak District National Park Learning and Environmental Conference Centre, provides high quality learning experiences, encouraging young people and adults to connect with, enjoy and explore the National Park through school visits, family and adult learning programmes and the Youth Ranger project.

The National Park Authority is producing a new framework for interpretation which will help to deliver consistent

Case study: Peak Experience

Ten themed ‘Peak Experience’ guides have been produced by the Peak District Interpretation Partnership to enhance people’s enjoyment of the Peak District and encourage visitors to stay a little longer. The award winning guides showcase the best of the Peak District’s natural and cultural heritage including wildlife, historic houses, water, film and literary locations, ancient monuments, churches, museums, industrial heritage and local food. The guides encourage people to get out and enjoy the Peak District while discovering its special qualities and also help to promote local places to stay, eat and drink.

Peak Experience has also piloted uses of new media to test the suitability of various applications to interpretation. These include a series of self-guided trails as downloadable PDFs, mp3 audio trails, a mobile phone tour, a Bluetooth wildlife guide and a user-generated website www.mypeakexperience.org.uk

Case study: National Trust Podcasts

The Interpretation Partnership has produced a series of Peak District podcasts to inform and enlighten. People can listen to them on their computer or iPod/mp3 player. They include a series of on the iconic Peak District moorland bird, the Red Grouse, through the trials and tribulations of the breeding season. Wardens, ecologists and countryside managers share their knowledge about this valuable species and explain how management for grouse has wider benefits for the moorland environment.

www.peakdistrict.nationaltrust.org.uk
messages across the whole National Park that will benefit visitors and residents alike. Closer working between partners including Destination Management Partnerships will encourage networking and packaged opportunities. Continuing dialogues with under represented groups is a priority. Providers need to consider who the interpretation is for so that the appropriate messages, style and media are used. Stimulating interest and inspiring new audiences is important, as well as identifying the barriers which prevent some people from participating and learning about the National Park.

3.5 Partnership working

Aim: Work with partners to manage, enhance and develop a range of recreation opportunities appropriate to the special qualities of the National Park

Outcome: There will be a wide range of recreation opportunities based on quality facilities and services, appropriate to the identity of the Peak District National Park

‘Partnerships are essential: in many cases they achieve more than individual organisations can achieve alone, creating the opportunity to pool resources, skills, powers and ideas.’

The majority of the National Park is privately owned with most recreation taking place ‘as of right’ or with landowner agreement. Partnership working coordinates recreation provision and enables joint promotion of opportunities for the benefit of visitors. There is scope for more partnerships and joint initiatives with the private sector such as accommodation and activity providers, outdoor retailers and facility operators. The National Park Authority has a long history of working in partnership to improve recreation opportunities and works closely with landowners and others in the sustainable management of recreation including activities on their own land. These include the National Trust, Forestry Commission, English Heritage, water companies, primary care trusts and local authorities. Good liaison and joint management with major landowners and others has resulted in many developments and improvements that would have been difficult to establish by individual organisations. New partnerships will be developed to deliver new initiatives.

Case study: Operation Blackbrook

Operation Blackbrook was launched in April 2007 in response to complaints from residents about noise and damage to routes caused by motorcycles and 4x4 vehicles. This had affected their quality of life when using the unsurfaced tracks, public footpaths and bridleways.

The Operation is a close working partnership between the National Park Authority, the police, user groups and Highway Authorities. Quarterly meetings with parish councils ensure information is exchanged. On-site operations take place most Sundays, as resources allow.

This multi-agency approach encourages participants to understand the effect their sport can have on people’s lives so that they may influence those who give a bad impression of the sport. At the same time it identifies legitimate unsurfaced roads and byways. The priority has been on improving information, with police enforcement used as a last resort.

Operation Blackbrook co-ordinator PC Kevin Lowe said: “These events enable us to talk to the drivers and bikers in a friendly way and give them the information they need to act responsibly. At the same time it lets local people know that we take this matter seriously and are working together to tackle issues that 4x4 or trail bike use might cause for them.”
A key partnership involves the management of the rights of way network in the National Park. There are seven different Highway Authorities responsible for protecting, maintaining and enforcing the use of public rights of way. They each have a duty to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan in consultation with the National Park Authority and joint accords/agreements are in place with Derbyshire County Council and Staffordshire County Council to facilitate day to day working arrangements. The Peak District National Park Authority also has a long-standing arrangement with Natural England and the relevant Highway Authorities over the management of the Pennine Way National Trail.

Partnerships with local authorities, health authorities, user groups, governing bodies for sport and recreation and communities are fundamental to the sharing of contacts, information and good practice, reinforcing national park messages at regional level, coordinating projects to deliver improvements and gaining the goodwill of users and the community. Partnerships can be particularly helpful when seeking a balance between conservation of the environment and the needs of different recreation users, whereby all parties are aware of all the issues. This can lead to a more helpful process in building consensus, so that the best outcome for all can be sought. There are many good examples of this positive management technique in the National Park including Stanage Forum, the Upper Derwent Valley partnership (see appendix 4), and the strategy to manage the Recreational Vehicular Use of Unsurfaced Highways (below).

For recreational vehicular use of the National Park, partnership working is vital to deliver a recognised, sustainable network of routes and to minimise the effects of illegal vehicular use. There are several key partners in this relationship including the Highway Authorities, user groups, police and local communities. This approach has led to significant improvements in the management of motor vehicle recreation in the Peak District. Complaints of nuisance motorcycles have decreased across all areas since the partnership was launched.

3.6 Community participation, including volunteering

Aim: Increase community participation and volunteering to facilitate recreational enjoyment and benefit the environment and local economy

Outcome: Quality community-led recreation facilities and opportunities are provided

The term “community” applies to both local residents and the wider community who live or work close to the National Park or visit for recreation. Raising awareness of recreation opportunities and engaging different communities can be achieved in a number of ways.

For example, the National Park Authority’s services play an important role in community liaison, operating in area teams to cover the whole of the National Park. Rangers and other field staff provide the interface between all

Case study: Stay on the Right Track

The National Park Authority promotes responsibility and good practice to motor vehicle users through face to face communication, printed literature and a dedicated website. A leaflet aimed at users endorses the responsible use of legally accessible routes and sets out the consequences of illegal use. It encourages users to join a responsible motor vehicle club or group such as the Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA) and to consult www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/vehicles and www.laragb.org for further advice and up-to-date information on the status and condition of routes.
Case study: Safer Communities Project

This project aims to show how taking part in sport and recreation activities can reduce anti-social behaviour. Funded by Sport England, Derby-based charity Sporting Futures and the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Community Safety Partnerships, this five-year project focuses on ten wards across the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales with high levels of anti-social behaviour and low participation rates in sport and recreation.

Diversionary activities form the focus of the project which aims to:

- Increase regular participation in sport and recreation by young people aged 8 – 16
- Increase the number and quality of opportunities for them to take part in sport
- Increase the number of active sports leaders
- Reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour by young people in target wards
- Reduce drug misuse among young people referred to the project

Sports Development Officer, Rob Wilks, of Derbyshire Dales District Council said: “Developing opportunities for local people, especially young people to participate in sport and recreational activities in our rural communities is so important both now and for the future. The Safer Communities through Sport programme does exactly that, and by working closely with local communities and partners such as the Peak District National Park Authority, the programme will continue to go from strength to strength”.

National Park aspirations (strategies) and delivery on the ground. Also part of the area teams and leading on community engagement, Live & Work Rural Programme (Village) Officers implement the National Park Authority’s community planning initiative. They harness the skills, energy, enthusiasm and knowledge of local residents. They also endeavour to support the valuable work done by parish councils and community groups helping them to highlight and tackle issues in their own villages. Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the sustainable management of the National Park. People are remaining active longer and often choose to pursue voluntary roles well after retirement. Outdoor conservation work supporting recreation projects gives volunteers an opportunity to learn new skills, benefit from physical exercise and enjoy a sense of achievement. Besides the Peak District National Park Authority, other organisations also work with volunteers in the countryside. Volunteer input is vital to all National Trust properties; Severn Trent Water and the RSPB provide volunteering roles for people seeking to educate and engage with the public as well as undertaking practical tasks. Natural England, the YHA and Wildlife Trusts also use volunteers to engage people in countryside management and gain support for their work. Independent groups also contribute - for example the valuable work done by Longstone Local History group at Fin Cop in 2009 to increase our knowledge and understanding of the historic environment.

In consultation with partners the National Park Authority is developing a Volunteer Strategy that will coordinate volunteer and community effort across the National Park. Further engagement with local communities will positively address recreation issues and explore new opportunities.
Part 4: Taking Action

“When I see an adult on a bicycle, I do not despair for the future of the human race”  H.G.Wells

4.1 Overall approach

From the evidence collected from research, survey and from those officers with many years working knowledge of the National Park, the findings suggest that the strategy should build upon the proven successes of the current approach to recreation management whilst focusing on the six socio-economic and environmental drivers for change (themes) described in section 3. The overall approach to the Strategy is threefold - incorporating spatial elements, focusing on individual activities and widening participation.

4.2 Spatial Approach

4.2.1 Landscape Character

The spatial distribution of recreation and supporting facilities complements the approach to development, land and transport management in the National Park Development Plan (Local Development Framework). The Peak District National Park Landscape Character Assessment recognises eight broad Landscape Character Areas which share a common identity. As well as providing a spatial framework for the Local Development Framework for planning purposes, this helps to inform the strategic development of recreation and access. By adopting a spatial approach, the demands of recreation and the conservation of highly sensitive environments can be delivered successfully together and an appropriate balance achieved.

Outdoor recreation activity is to a large extent dependent on the landscape; therefore it is proposed that future recreation planning should be based on the Landscape Character Areas defined in the Landscape Strategy. This means that appropriate activity will be encouraged and enhanced. The eight Landscape Character Areas are:

• Dark Peak
• Dark Peak Western Fringe
• Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe
• South West Peak
• White Peak
• Derwent Valley
• Eastern Moors
• Derbyshire Peak Fringe

These areas are illustrated in Map 9 and described in Appendix 3.

4.2.2 Gateways and active recreation hubs

The National Park Authority does not have a blank canvas when formulating a strategy for recreation. People visiting the Peak District naturally gravitate to those particular areas or attractions which most appeal to them. The facilities and infrastructure at these sites have developed over the years to cater for visitor needs and recreational demand and this Strategy recognises that they will continue to be popular for the foreseeable future.

The expression gateway is used in two ways:
• A settlement on the periphery of the National Park which may provide accommodation and other services to visitors, channel people through transport interchanges and visitor centres or contain local populations who use the National Park as their local greenspace. For example Leek, Matlock, Buxton, Glossop, Holmfirth, Sheffield and Ashbourne.
• A website, literature, poster, guided walk or talk that may form an individual’s first point of contact with the National Park and therefore guide them to visit and engage.

Further discussion will be needed with partners to prioritize and guide investment in recreation infrastructure at gateways. If there is a proven need and the opportunity arises to influence the location and investment in major new recreational facilities, there should be a presumption that the focus should be on gateways especially on the approaches to the National Park rather than in core areas. Gateways require high quality, robust facilities and information on sustainable means of accessing the National Park. They provide a good opportunity to introduce visitors to the range of recreation opportunities available.

A recreation hub is a place within the National Park that attracts large numbers of people to enjoy a wide range of recreational experiences. They may contain basic infrastructure such as small car parks, toilets, on-site visitor information and in some cases, cycle hire. They can be the stepping off point for wider exploration and enjoyment and are more likely to be used by those pursuing specific interests/activities, possibly on a regular basis, and are defined by good access to the active recreation infrastructure such as:
• Climbing edges, caves
• Bridleways for mountain biking, horse riding
• Cycling trails
• Water for angling, canoeing, sailing
• Network of walking routes

Active recreation hubs might include for example Fairholmes in the Upper Derwent Valley, Stanage Edge, Parsley Hay, Langsett, Dovestones, Macclesfield Forest and the Goyt Valley. Identifying these places helps ensure future investment in facilities is targeted at the most appropriate places, especially where they are most sustainable or can be made more so.

In essence, gateways and recreation hubs are focal points, which may require investment and management, but which also provide opportunities - to inspire, spread the word and increase peoples’ understanding and enjoyment of the National Park. The continued investment in priority gateways and recreation hubs is at the heart of this strategy. They will be used as a springboard for facilitating the recreational enjoyment of the National Park.

4.2.3 Investing in the future

The Local Development Framework provides the National Park Authority’s policies and guidance for meeting the environmental, economic and social aims for the future of the National Park where this affects the development of land. The preferred options include policies for visiting and enjoying the National Park which will contribute to achieving the spatial aims in the following ways:

In the Dark Peak, Eastern Moors and Moorland fringes, policy supports:
• provision of essential recreation facilities and infrastructure whilst safeguarding the quiet enjoyment of moorland and wilderness areas
• provision of facilities as a springboard for people to enjoy the National Park, in villages and key sites which have good access to resources such as climbing edges and mountain bike routes (recreation hubs)
• infrastructure investment which facilitates recreational use in areas such as Dovestones, Holmfirth and Penistone, which offer good connections to wild landscapes from the neighbouring urban areas of Oldham, Huddersfield and Sheffield.

In the White Peak and Derwent Valley, policy supports:
• development of infrastructure in locations such as Bakewell, Matlock and Ashbourne which attract large numbers of people and offer good access to a range of recreational opportunities, to help people begin to understand and enjoy the National Park
• provision of facilities in villages and key sites which are a focus for active recreation, such as the Hope Valley
• low-key facilities with limited signage and interpretation in areas which offer good connections to quiet landscapes from neighbouring urban areas.

In the South West Peak, policy seeks to:
• improve sustainable access and provide robust infrastructure in places used regularly for active recreation, such as Macclesfield Forest, the Goyt and Manifold Valleys
• encourage the provision of appropriate facilities, information and interpretation at gateway towns such as Buxton, Macclesfield and Leek.

Throughout the National Park, there will be support for the provision of recreation, environmental education and interpretation developments which encourage the sustainable development of the National Park, are based on its valued characteristics, are appropriate in scale and type and strengthen its recreation function for the benefit of communities within and surrounding it. The National Park Authority will also work with constituent and neighbouring authorities and organisations to improve provision in locations close to the National Park boundary.
4.3 Activity-led approach

The priority will be to consider each major recreational activity and to highlight particular issues such as lack of access or information, damage to the environment or conflict with other users. New activities will develop which may change the way people use the land in the future and which will be considered as they arise. Task groups of interested stakeholders will need to be established to determine the best approach within the context of a national park, recognising that some key users are traditionally hard to reach (e.g., mountain bikers) and will require different engagement techniques. It will be important to engage local communities in the management or development of recreation opportunities to ensure their needs are fully catered for.

4.4 Widening participation

The second purpose of national park designation is to provide opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the National Park. The National Park Authority does this through (a) interpretation and provision of information (to promote recreation opportunities, for health and wellbeing, interest in and enjoyment of the landscape and wildlife), (b) provision of quality facilities and services that enhance the recreation experience (e.g., visitor centres, cycle hire, guided walks, toilets, etc) and (c) providing inspiring learning opportunities through environmental education and professional development. Other agencies and organisations also play an important part - communicating opportunities to their members, consumers and service users; instructing individuals and groups in outdoor activities and developing or enhancing recreation facilities.

Better promotion of recreation opportunities and how to access them will benefit residents and visitors. Existing programmes will be built upon to increase awareness of recreation opportunities and understanding of the environment for local people. This includes working with all primary schools in the National Park to achieve at least stage 1 of the John Muir award, helping develop village trails, running family activity events during school holidays, Walking for Health schemes, and encouraging community volunteering in conservation work such as habitat restoration. National and local campaigns to promote health and wellbeing through outdoor activity will be supported and made locally relevant. Messages about sustainable access, personal responsibility and ways to reduce impact will help minimize potential conflict with the environment, other users and residents.

When enhancing recreation infrastructure, the National Park Authority and its partners will enable as many people as possible to gain access (e.g., by replacing stiles with gates whenever possible (subject to landowner agreement). Access opportunities for disabled people will also be enhanced by continuing improvements to information provision, using recognised guidelines and working with local disability organisations.

Working with partners at key sites the National Park Authority will focus on welcome, interpretation and quality of experience. The Mosaic Community Champion model will be expanded into target areas to highlight what there is to see and do in the Peak District and to support and organise visits for under-represented visitors such as Black Minority Ethnic groups (especially from Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean communities living in Derbyshire, Sheffield, Barnsley, Kirklees and Oldham). Information will be made available at locations relevant to the target groups and developed with Community Champions. The most deprived communities from the National Park’s catchment area (Derbyshire, Sheffield, Barnsley, Kirklees and Oldham)
Map 9: Peak District landscape character areas
which are currently under-represented will be offered opportunities to participate through activities as part of a wider partnership approach.

4.5 Providing sustainable choices

This strategy will help to provide a more coordinated approach to information provision by:
• highlighting the most appropriate activities and locations
• agreeing codes of behaviour
• promoting sustainable access
• suggesting ways of minimising the impact of recreation on the environment and other people.

A key focus should be to increase sustainable transport choices to the National Park to facilitate sustainable recreational use by a more diverse range of users. The integration of sustainable transport hubs and networks from the National Park fringe to promote and enhance access into the National Park by train or bus should be an essential element of this approach. Opportunities should be explored to link communities with their surroundings therefore engaging both local residents and visitors. Scope to further integrate local bus, community transport and train services should also be investigated, subject to other priorities in the Sustainable Transport Action Plan.

The Sustainable Transport Action Plan has two objectives with actions that will help provide sustainable choices. These are related to increasing the proportion of visitors who access and travel within the National Park using sustainable means, and ensuring there is a strategic network of well-maintained footways, cycle tracks and bridleways. The highway authorities will be key partners in the delivery of actions to achieve these objectives, some of which could be funded by their Local Transport Plans.

4.6 Summary

The provision of new opportunities must be set in the context of the National Park’s first purpose - to conserve and enhance the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage. Recreation developments should be located where they will not harm the special qualities of the National Park, where they can be appropriately accommodated or can actively manage a demand-led recreation activity. Where possible, any recreation development should seek to incorporate environmental enhancement measures which enrich the recreation experience and help mitigate for recreation impacts.

Although this strategy is for the National Park, the Peak District National Park Authority will continue to work with existing and new partners to consider recreation opportunities, facilities and infrastructure development close to the boundary of the National Park, eg with Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council in the Holme Valley or with Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, United Utilities, RSPB and others at Dovestone. The aim would be to facilitate enjoyment by managing recreation visits and activities, improve access for people living in neighbouring urban areas and increase understanding of National Park and environmental issues.

The quality of the landscape and range of recreation opportunities on offer attracts large numbers of visitors to some areas, eg Upper Derwent Valley, Castleton and Dovedale. Recreational management must ensure that the infrastructure at gateway sites is sufficiently robust to cater for demand. Landowners and managers need to raise users’ awareness of the impact of their visit and ways to reduce it.

A desire to widen the economic benefits of recreation by raising visitors’ awareness of what is available throughout the Peak District has been identified in workshops leading up to this strategy.

Suggestions included:
• focusing on ‘gateway’ sites on the edge of the National Park to provide appropriate information and easier access to local facilities
• improving links to surrounding rural and urban areas (these could include walking, cycling and horse riding links as well as better public transport)

In summary:
• Current level of provision for recreation and access varies across the National Park depending to a large extent on the landscape, with some parts offering better provision than others.
• The majority of appropriate recreational activities can be accommodated but in some instances there is insufficient provision to meet demand eg for water sports.
• The Public Rights of Way network is the most important element of most recreational activities so it is important to maintain it to a high standard and enhance where possible.
Levels of activity vary considerably across the area, with some places experiencing very high levels of usage, and other areas where activity is more dispersed.

Popular sites require increased investment to maintain and manage the infrastructure and meet visitor expectations. Increased information and interpretation to increase engagement with the National Park’s special qualities at these sites should lead to greater understanding, confidence and potential dispersal to explore other areas.

Increased dispersal could bring benefits to the local economy and reduce some of the potentially negative impacts of high visitor pressure.

4.7 Priorities for action and challenges for the future

The issues and challenges identified in the process of developing the strategy will guide the approach to future management of recreation in the Peak District National Park. Key priorities to be addressed in the detailed action plan at Appendix 1 will be:

- Promotion of active recreation and activity based tourism linked to landscape character and the special qualities of the Peak District eg Peak District Walking Festival 2010
- More/better liaison with representative organisations/groups - both users and providers - and community champions eg Setting up partnership groups to implement the strategy
- Joint initiatives with public and private sector partners eg Providing key messages at major attractions and private sector outlets
- Effective dissemination of information to target audiences eg Reciprocal use of websites
- Addressing climate change and promote sustainable transport initiatives and greener recreational infrastructure eg Develop new projects based on Peak Connections approach linked to market towns initiative
- Proactive management of recreational activities which undermine the National Park’s special qualities eg Building on successful projects like Stay on the Right Track
- Health initiatives based on active outdoor recreation eg Refreshing the Peak Park Leisure Walks programme
- Recreational initiatives which support the local economy and Peak District communities eg Work with local communities to develop their ideas
- Encouraging volunteering and local participation eg Setting up parish volunteer groups
- Sustaining a high standard of management and maintenance of rights of way and facilities eg Monitored annually using national standard

4.8 Looking forward

An annual Peak District Recreation Partnership of all stakeholders will raise awareness and discuss achievements during the previous year and proposals for the forthcoming year, as well as seek new ideas and partner roles. The Action Plan will be driven forward by a Strategic Management Group of key representatives of all major interests and linked to the Local Access Forum, and which will advise on the establishment and role of Task Groups. The Task Groups will address specific issues or topics (eg water based activities). The Recreation Strategy Team will co-ordinate the Partnership meeting, facilitate and support the Strategic Management Group and Task Groups, co-ordinate and help deliver actions, monitor progress against agreed targets and feed back data to the groups. It will develop and maintain recreation databases and other evidence.

The strategy is for 10 years and will be reviewed after five years in the light of evidence collected. The action plan will be reviewed annually. The full strategy and action plan is available in print from the Peak District National Park Authority (address at end) or from its website at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/recreation. Future action plans will be available on the website.
The purpose of this plan is to achieve our key outcomes for recreation in the Peak District National Park with a focus on a welcome to all to a special place and to quality facilities, accessed by sustainable means, and targeted at health and well being through interpretation and information. These priorities will be achieved particularly by influencing all those who help provide or take part in outdoor activity in the Peak District. It is intended to be a framework for the development of active recreation opportunities appropriate in a National Park and consistent with the conservation and enhancement purpose. It does not include every action for every agency but is designed to influence the delivery plans of many organisations. This co-ordinated approach will help to deliver maximum benefits for partners and recreation users.

The action plan sets out the aims, outcomes and outcome indicator for each of the six themes in the Recreation Strategy. Headline actions are listed for each theme with potential partners involved in delivery, the role of the National Park Authority, milestones and timescale in order to measure progress. The themes, outlined in more detail in Part 3 of the strategy, are interlinked and of equal importance. Each headline action is only listed once, although many of them relate to more than one theme. The outcome indicator(s) (which may be a National Indicator of performance) will be measured annually where possible. The action plan is cross-referenced to relevant actions within the National Park Management Plan Annual Monitoring Report and the Authority’s Performance Improvement Plan. It will be reviewed annually to update milestones and identify new actions and future action plans (from April 2011) will be available on the National Park Authority’s website.

The implementation of this action plan will be driven by a strategic management group supported by specific task groups. The National Park Authority will clarify and obtain baseline data for the agreed measures for use with future decision making. Progress on outcome indicators and targets will be maintained by the National Park Authority as co-ordinating body and will contain partners’ contributions to indicators where they can be collected.

It is intended that actions and milestones will become more specific following discussions with partners.

### Theme 1 – Healthy lifestyles

**Aim:** Promote the health benefits of recreation.

**Outcome:**

Increased participation in outdoor recreation that enhances overall health and wellbeing.

**Outcome indicator:**

Number of people participating in organised outdoor recreation activities within the National Park (walking, cycling, climbing, caving, horse riding, water sports, active volunteering).

**Baseline:**

Results from 2010/11 will form baseline.

**Target:**

Increase in number of people taking part year on year.

**Measure:**

Numbers collected from major partners’ organised provision (guided walks, health walks, cycle hire, camp sites, outdoor activity providers, trekking stables, water sports providers, active volunteer organisers).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Headline action</th>
<th>Key partners involved with delivery</th>
<th>PDNPA role</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Increase awareness, among target groups, of the health benefits of active recreation</td>
<td>Derbyshire Sport, Local authorities (initial focus on Derbyshire, Sheffield City and Kirklees councils), Primary Care Trusts, Natural England, representatives of target audiences, Age Concern, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust</td>
<td>Work with partners to promote health benefits of recreation to target groups</td>
<td>Key messages for target groups agreed and delivered by all partners as part of Communications Plan for Recreation Strategy</td>
<td>30/06/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Promote the Peak District National Park as a destination for healthy recreation activities, recreation events and active holidays</td>
<td>Destination Management Partnerships, Youth Hostels Association, National Trust, Derbyshire Sport, Local Authorities, activities providers</td>
<td>Work with Strategic Management Group to ensure partners promote the National Park as a destination for healthy recreation</td>
<td>Key messages agreed and delivered by all partners as part of Recreation Strategy Communications Plan</td>
<td>30/06/10</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contribute to strategies, policies and campaigns led by partners</td>
<td>Partners’ strategies, policies and campaigns promote health benefits of recreation in the National Park.</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Include messages about the health benefits of recreation in promoting services and in media campaigns/ press releases</td>
<td>Health messages incorporated in media campaigns and press releases</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Develop and promote cycling, horse riding and walking routes linked to urban areas/public transport hubs, particularly - a route between Buxton and Matlock - the East Peak fringe</td>
<td>Highway authorities, Local authorities, Cycling England, Sustrans, landowners, Cyclists’ Touring Club, Ride the Peak, Natural England, National Trust, Local Access Forum, British Horse Society</td>
<td>Work with Cycling England and other stakeholders to manage the cycling development project, Pedal Peak District</td>
<td>£1.5m infrastructure cycling development plan in place and groundworks begun</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide leadership to develop cycling in the National Park and links to neighbouring areas including contribution to development and delivery of action plan for the East Peak Innovation Partnership (LEADER)</td>
<td>Social marketing and audience development plan in place</td>
<td>1/04/10</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy and action plan for cycling developed for east Peak fringe including links to the National Park</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Research and benchmark models of best practice for providing quality recreation opportunities that enhance health and wellbeing</td>
<td>Local authorities, National Park Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Natural England, Countryside Research Network, Natural England, private sector providers</td>
<td>Provide research data to pool with other sources</td>
<td>Task Group agrees project brief to scope research work and explore potential for sharing and publicizing good practice</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>Building on NI8, work with key partners to contribute to a better understanding of active recreation by National Park residents*</td>
<td>County Sports Partnerships, local authorities, Sport England, Primary Care Trusts</td>
<td>Residents Survey</td>
<td>Residents participate in at least 30 minutes activity 3 or more times a week</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This data supplements the data collected by Sport England on the number of 16’s and over who participate in sport or active recreation for at least 30 minutes 3 or more times a week (National Indicator NI8). This is currently measured annually by the Active People Survey to give results at a national, regional and county level and biennially at a district level.
Theme 2 – Widening Participation

Aim: The Peak District National Park offers a diverse range of environmentally sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that are easily accessed and affordable.

Outcome: All people have more opportunities to participate.

Outcome indicator: Range of key recreation activities offered by all partners.

Baseline: Results from 2010/11 will form baseline.

Target: Increase in range of activities provided following Year 1 result.

Measure: Range of opportunities including gains and losses (eg walking, cycling, horse riding, climbing, caving, angling, water sports).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Headline action</th>
<th>Key partners involved with delivery</th>
<th>PDNPA role</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| B1  | Increase and promote sustainable and accessible services at gateways (eg Dovestones and Marsden) | Water companies, National Trust, Forestry Commission, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, local authorities, user groups, interest groups, voluntary sector | Work with partners on specific initiatives/plans to increase and promote accessible services at Dovestones, Marsden, Langsett | **Dovestones** – Joint working group has an agreed action plan for improved visitor information  
**Marsden** – Actions agreed with Kirklees MBC for delivery of taster sessions to moorland areas  
**Langsett** – Action plan agreed with Barnsley MBC and Yorkshire Water for increased use of Langsett Barn | 31/03/11 |
| B2  | Provide safe, clearly marked off-road trails at key access points to the National Park for people of all abilities to walk, run or ride | Highway authorities, landowners, private operators, Local Access Forum, Community Sports Networks, Natural England | Lead and co-ordinate cycling development project with partners | **Matlock-Buxton cycle project milestones for 2010/11 completed**  
Programme of other trail linking routes agreed (eg from Sheffield, Chesterfield, Penistone) and funding explored | 31/03/11 |
| B3  | Provide and promote recreation events suitable for a range of abilities linked to public transport | Destination Management Partnerships, Peak Connections, Passenger Integrated Transport Authorities, local authorities, local media, Age Concern | NPA contribution through ranger guided walks programme, village trails, walking festivals | DMPs provide coordinated programme of recreation events | 31/12/10 |
| B4  | Seek opportunities to extend water based recreation activities appropriate to the special qualities of the National Park | Water companies, Environment Agency, landowners, private operators, Institute for Outdoor Learning | Work with representative bodies and user groups to seek further water based recreation opportunities | New water based recreation opportunities identified through commissioned feasibility study or partner contribution | 31/03/11 |
| B5  | Encourage development of learning and recreational opportunities for children and young people | National Trust, Forestry Commission, Natural England, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, Derbyshire Sport, Institute for Outdoor Learning, Local authorities, outdoor activity centres, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme, Wildlife Trusts, Youth Hostels Association, private sector | Partners in seeking funding and delivery through South West Peak and Stoke-on-Trent Community & Education Partnership (RSPB, SMDC, Staffs Wildlife Trust)  
Develop partnerships to deliver Family Learning residential activities for under represented groups at Losehill that promote the National Park’s opportunities for recreation whilst developing the confidence of participants to enjoy the outdoors | Funding secured to deliver Access to Nature bid for £0.5m  
Work planned with partners through 2010/11  
3 Losehill Hall residential weekends for Sheffield young people to look at conflict resolution | 31/05/10  
31/03/11  
31/03/11 |
Theme 3 – Climate change and sustainability

Aim: Promote more environmentally sustainable options for recreation in response to climate change and other environmental challenges.

Outcome: The open spaces of the Peak District National Park provide a wide range of recreational opportunities that can be enjoyed without compromising environmental values.

Outcome indicator: 1. Percentage of people that access the National Park by sustainable means. 2. Total length of family and leisure cycleways*.

Baseline: 1. Visitor survey 2005 – 6% visitors accessed the National Park by sustainable means (foot, cycle, public transport). 2. 96km “off-road cycling trails” existing.

Target: 1. Increase by 0.5% a year. 2. Pedal Peak District will add 9.7km within NP by 2011.

Measure: 1. Access to the National Park measured as part of service user surveys. 2. Length of family and leisure cycleways* including new additions.

* Family and leisure cycleways are defined as predominately off-road or as part of a traffic management scheme and are measured within the National Park boundary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Headline action</th>
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<th>PDNPA role</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Develop and promote sustainable transport links from surrounding urban centres, transport hubs and settlements in the National Park</td>
<td>Peak Connections, Passenger Integrated Transport Authorities, Highway Authorities, Ramblers Association, Cyclists’ Touring Club, other interest groups</td>
<td>Develop and deliver Sustainable Transport Action Plan</td>
<td>“Pick &amp; Mix” project to deliver suite of user-friendly leaflets to encourage public transport for leisure and day to day living 31/03/11</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Influence Local Transport Plan 3 as it is developed</td>
<td>LTP3 incorporates sustainable travel modes to access the National Park 31/03/11</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Identify and address potential impacts of climate change on recreation infrastructure and use sustainable development techniques for new or enhanced recreation facilities (eg. emissions reductions, use of water, rate of soil erosion)</td>
<td>Local authorities, private sector partners eg Activities Peak District &amp; Derbyshire</td>
<td>Apply to Peak District National Park Authority properties/facilities and encourage partners to do so</td>
<td>Environmental improvement plans in place for all National Park Authority properties 31/12/10</td>
<td>31/12/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce carbon footprint of all NPA properties by 5% 31/03/11</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New recreation developments to employ sustainable development techniques Ongoing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Promote sustainable travel choices eg linked public transport routes, campaigns, offers and initiatives</td>
<td>Peak Connections, Sustainable Transport Action Plan stakeholders Parish councils, Passenger Transport Integrated Authorities, Peak District &amp; Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Partnership</td>
<td>Sustainable Transport Action Plan led by Peak District National Park Authority Support through Sustainable Development Fund</td>
<td>Number of new and improved promotions of sustainable transport through – High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership (4), Derwent Valley Community Rail Partnership (3), Peak Connections (8) Number of new and improved promotions of sustainable transport through – High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership (4), Derwent Valley Community Rail Partnership (3), Peak Connections (8) 31/03/11</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Establish sustainable transport based projects in Saddleworth and Staffordshire Moorlands 31/03/11</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Identify opportunities to evaluate the potential impacts of recreation on the landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage and economic environment of the National Park</td>
<td>Moors for the Future, research bodies, universities, landowners, National Trust, English Heritage, Natural England</td>
<td>Source funding and research skills to undertake work, support partner organisations</td>
<td>Funding achieved for research project or input to relevant partner projects 31/03/11</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Encourage the development of ‘green’ recreational products</td>
<td>All partners, private sector businesses, regional development agencies</td>
<td>Explore potential to include recreation businesses within Live &amp; Work Rural Programme</td>
<td>Environmental Quality Mark scheme for recreation businesses as part of Live &amp; Work Rural Programme 30/06/10</td>
<td>30/06/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 4 – Raising awareness and understanding

Aim: Raise awareness and understanding of the Peak District National Park, promoting it as a welcoming destination with diverse recreation opportunities for visitors and residents.

Outcome: Visitors and residents will have a greater understanding of the National Park and its special qualities, leading to greater care and involvement.

Outcome indicator: Average score (1-6) of how much people feel their understanding of what is special about the Peak District National Park has increased as a result of their recreation activity.


Target: 5.

Measure: NPA services measured at present; extend to other partners over time.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DI</td>
<td>Promote positive messages about sustainable recreation and how to access the National Park safely and in a way which encourages people to make a positive contribution as part of their visit (eg purchasing locally or volunteering)</td>
<td>All partners and stakeholders, Peak District Interpretation Partnership, local businesses, activity providers, media</td>
<td>Promote positive messages and ensure that all publicity material, information provision and marketing campaigns linked to the National Park reflect the range of recreation opportunities and the diversity of all users. Seek sponsorship</td>
<td>Communications Plan in place and agreed with partners. New Visitor Guide which incorporates improved information on how to access recreation opportunities, distributed through key community contacts, engagement projects and partners.</td>
<td>30/06/10 30/04/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref</td>
<td>Headline action</td>
<td>Key partners involved with delivery</td>
<td>PDNPA role</td>
<td>Milestones</td>
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<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Encourage product/service providers to network and promote new recreation products including 'packaged' offers</td>
<td>Destination Management Partnerships, Business Link, regional development agencies, recreation providers, Live &amp; Work Rural Programme</td>
<td>Liaise with networks to ensure National Park messages about recreation incorporated</td>
<td>Links with networks established and role identified</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Two emerging Live &amp; Work Rural projects underway</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Establish and maintain a database of recreation opportunities and an evidence base of visitor profile, service uptake, etc</td>
<td>All partners, user groups and private sector business representatives</td>
<td>Collate and update data including mapping existing actions.</td>
<td>Database and evidence base monitored and reviewed annually</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>Produce guidance for use of the National Park for recreation eg for large scale organised events, safety issues and links to services</td>
<td>Events organisers, user groups, landowners, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme, charities, Moorland Association, Moors for the Future, Association of National Park Authorities, Highway Authorities</td>
<td>Co-ordinate and produce web-based guidelines which can be linked to other websites</td>
<td>Guidance for large scale events agreed with partners, produced and promoted by NPA and partners</td>
<td>31/08/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
<td>Contribute to interpretation relevant to recreation opportunities in the National Park</td>
<td>Peak District Interpretation Partnership, partners</td>
<td>Input to Interpretation review</td>
<td>New Interpretation framework incorporates appropriate messages about sustainable recreation opportunities</td>
<td>31/03/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D6</td>
<td>Increase awareness of sustainable recreation opportunities to people from under-represented groups</td>
<td>Mosaic champions, Local authorities, community groups, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, National Trust, voluntary sector, Peak District Interpretation Partnership, Community Sports Networks, Local Access Forum, Friends of the Peak District</td>
<td>Deliver Working with People and Communities Strategy, Action Plan for Under-represented Groups</td>
<td>Build on current work with Community Champions to promote sustainable recreation in the National Park through innovative media and mechanisms such as accessibility videos at gateway sites and promotion at markets in target group catchment areas.</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Walking Festival launch event engages Community Champion groups</td>
<td>24/04/10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aim:</strong></td>
<td><em>Work with partners to manage, enhance and develop a range of recreation opportunities appropriate to the special qualities of the National Park.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome:</strong></td>
<td>Partners will together provide a wide range of recreation opportunities based on quality facilities and services, appropriate to the identity of the Peak District National Park and which minimise potential impacts on landscape, land management and wildlife.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome indicator:</strong></td>
<td>Proportion of Rights of Way network open and easy to use (NPMP indicator RP5).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Baseline:</strong></td>
<td>90% in 2008/09.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Target:</strong></td>
<td>90%.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Measure:</strong></td>
<td>Annual 5% survey of Rights of Way by National Park rangers.</td>
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<td>Ref</td>
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<td>Milestones</td>
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<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Establish a Recreation Partnership and Strategic Management Group of key recreation stakeholders to ensure strategic alignment of priorities and a partnership approach to improving provision and management of recreation opportunities</td>
<td>All partners/stakeholders including private sector business representatives</td>
<td>Establish, facilitate and run Recreation Partnership, Strategic Management Group and Task Groups</td>
<td>Recreation Partnership and Strategic Management Group established</td>
<td>30/04/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Establish more mechanisms to positively manage recreation activities in relation to specific conservation aims and potential conflicts between different users</td>
<td>User groups, representative organisations, Local Access Forum, landowners</td>
<td>Strategic Management Group to consider how to encourage responsible behaviour</td>
<td>Task groups established to resolve areas of recreation conflict</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Work with adjoining land managers to plan and manage the wider Eastern Peak District Moors on a landscape scale (Stanage, Burbage, Longshaw, Eastern Moors)</td>
<td>National Trust, RSPB, Sheffield City Council</td>
<td>Work with partners to develop joint working processes</td>
<td>Vision and structure for the partnership agreed and a process established to develop an area management plan</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Establish partnership ‘task groups’ to explore potential for specific recreation activities eg water sports, horse riding, cycling</td>
<td>Local Access Forum, user groups, representative organisations</td>
<td>Establish, facilitate and run task groups and liaise with landowners</td>
<td>New water based recreation opportunities identified and developed through commissioned feasibility study or partner contribution</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential to review recreation provision for cycling explored by Strategic Management Group</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>Work with partners to implement integrated Rights of Way Improvement Plans and develop routes accessible to all where appropriate</td>
<td>Highway authorities, access groups, Local Access Forum, Access Authorities, Natural England, disability groups</td>
<td>Maintain and enhance routes</td>
<td>At least 90% of network is open and easy to use</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify easy access routes and promote (including GIS database)</td>
<td>Easy access routes promoted on NPA and other partner websites</td>
<td>31/08/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Look for new links to rights of way network through agri-environment schemes</td>
<td>Increased access opportunities developed and promoted through agri-environment schemes</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>Manage access to open country and seek to improve access</td>
<td>Highway authorities, landowners, Local Access Forum</td>
<td>Manage access database, liaise landowners</td>
<td>All access land open and added to wherever possible</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 6 – Community participation, including volunteering

**Aim:** Increase community participation and volunteering to facilitate recreational enjoyment and benefit the environment and local economy.

**Outcome:** Quality community-led recreation facilities and opportunities are provided.

**Outcome indicator:**
1. Proportion of residents undertaking regular volunteering (National Park Management Plan Indicator PC4).
2. Proportion of residents who are happy with outdoor recreation opportunities available.

**Baseline:**
1. 47% (from 2009 Residents Survey).
2. 89% (from 2009 Residents Survey).

**Target:**
1. 50%.
2. 90%.

**Measure:** 1. and 2. Residents’ survey.

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Develop a strategic approach to volunteering to encourage local people and visitors to make a personal contribution to the National Park</td>
<td>National Trust, Groundwork, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Wildlife Trusts, Community Volunteer Service</td>
<td>Share good practice with partners</td>
<td>Business case produced by National Park Authority to establish current position and options for change</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Facilitate/support local communities in positively addressing recreation issues and explore opportunities linked to recreation and its management in the National Park</td>
<td>Parish councils, Rural Community Councils, Local Authorities, community groups</td>
<td>Facilitation work with local communities and possible grant provision through programmes such as Live &amp; Work Rural, Leader and Sustainable Development Fund</td>
<td>8 new community initiatives which include community recreation facilities and services</td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>Develop village trails linked to public transport and sustainable local businesses</td>
<td>Parish councils, Rural Community Councils, Local Authorities, Peak Connections, local community groups, local business networks</td>
<td>Facilitation and co-ordination</td>
<td>Village trail established in Tideswell</td>
<td>31/08/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>Identify and address the recreation needs of communities living in and close to the National Park</td>
<td>Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Derbyshire Sport, local community groups, Age Concern</td>
<td>Influence Community Strategies to ensure National Park outcomes for recreation are included</td>
<td>Community Strategies influenced to include recreation opportunities</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legal and policy context

When writing this strategy relevant national, regional and local policies and plans and any relevant legal requirements have been taken into account. For more information please refer to the websites listed.

National context

- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)
- Department of Environment Circular 12/96 [www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals)
- Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002) [www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals)
- Health Concordat (2005) [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

Regional context

- Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) – Regional Spatial Strategy governs all planning policy for the Peak District National Park [www.goem.gov.uk](http://www.goem.gov.uk)
- East Midlands Development Agency (emda) – for economic development in the Derbyshire part of the Peak District [www.emda.org.uk](http://www.emda.org.uk). Emda is the most relevant in terms of tourism, delivered through East Midlands Tourism (EMT) [www.eastmidlandstourism.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandstourism.co.uk). Areas with other government office regions are covered by Advantage West Midlands, Yorkshire Forward and Northwest Development Agency.
- Derbyshire Sport – the County Sports Partnership for much of the area. [www.derbyshiresport.co.uk](http://www.derbyshiresport.co.uk)

Local context

- Peak District National Park Local Development Framework (LDF) [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ldf)
- Peak District National Park Structure Plan (1994) [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk)
- Peak District National Park Local Plan (2001) [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk)
- Active Derbyshire Plan 2009-12 [www.derbyshiresport.co.uk](http://www.derbyshiresport.co.uk)

Natural England

The aims in this strategy are closely allied to those of Natural England’s Strategic Direction 2008-13 which has Outcome 2: “People are inspired to value and conserve the natural environment” and Outcome 3: “The use and management of the natural environment is more sustainable”. The objectives to deliver those outcomes relate to increasing outdoor participation of target groups (including children, those with physical or cultural barriers, and health walks programmes), increasing the number and diversity of people actively engaged in conserving and enhancing the natural environment and improving access to high quality natural environments (including to National Nature Reserves, trails, access land, local greenspace and using Environmental Stewardship to increase access to farmland). Natural England will work to increase understanding and produce evidence to support their strategic approaches and continue to work in partnership with many organisations to achieve their objectives. For more information see [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

In the Peak District, Natural England and the Peak District National Park Authority affirm the common vision for all national parks shared between Natural England and the English National Parks Authorities Association (ENPAA) in their Joint Action Plan:

“To ensure that the landscapes, wildlife, geodiversity and cultural heritage of English National Parks are conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit, well-being and enjoyment of present and future generations. We aspire for National Parks to be exemplars in sustainable development and so contribute to a better quality of life for all.”
Relationship to other strategies and plans

The recreation strategy is one of a number of strategies recently agreed or currently being developed by the PDNPA to underpin the Peak District National Park Management Plan (www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/npmp). These include the Sustainable Transport Action Plan, Sustainable Tourism Strategy, the Climate Change Action Plan and the Landscape Strategy. A Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Cultural Heritage Strategy are already in place, as is the Working with People and Communities Strategy and its related Action Plans to address target audiences of young people, local residents and under-represented groups. A Minerals Strategy is being developed. To be effective all of these documents must be linked and inter-related, sharing some common themes: protection of the environment; maximising accessibility, choice and diversity. As a result some actions appear in more than one strategy.

It is recognised that overlap exists between tourism and recreation. Much tourism is recreational in that a good proportion of tourism activity in the Peak District takes place during leisure time in natural settings. The PDNPA tries to influence tourism development to increase sustainability of visits. The vision for tourism in the Peak District is set out in the Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

All of the constituent local authorities that make up the National Park area produce strategies and action plans related to the countryside, recreation, sport, leisure, rights of way and greenways. Most have themes of improving health, increasing sustainability, enhancing opportunities and promotion, working in partnership and increasing community participation. Existing partnerships and consultation opportunities ensure close alignments of plans and more efficient delivery of actions.

The relationship to other strategies and plans is shown in Figure 1.

How the strategy was produced

The National Park Authority has a long history of working in partnership with others in recreation provision and management and some of the main partnership successes are illustrated as case studies throughout the strategy. The delivery of the vision and aims of this strategy and action plan will rely heavily on existing and new relationships.

Figure 1: How the Recreation Strategy links to other strategies and action plans

Peak District National Park Management Plan

Local Development Framework

Biodiversity Action Plan
Cultural Heritage Strategy
Working With People and Communities Strategy
Recreation Strategy
Landscape Strategy
Sustainable Tourism Strategy
Climate Change Action Plan
Sustainable Transport Action Plan

Off Road Vehicles Action Plan
Other Activities Action Plans

Local linkages eg
- Active Derbyshire 2009-2012
- DDDC Leisure Strategy
- BMBC Strategy for Sport and Active Recreation
- DDDC & HPBC Accessibility Strategy
- CCC Countryside Strategy 2005 - 2010
- HPBC Sport and Recreation Strategy
- SMDC Parks and Countryside Strategy
- ROWIPs and Greenways Strategies
- KMBC Strategy for Sport and Recreation
developed with the wide range of administrative, community and interest groups represented in the national park. The strategy has been produced in partnership with many stakeholders who will all have a role to play in achieving its aims. They include governing bodies for sport, recreation clubs, user groups, landowners, conservationists, local authorities, community and health representatives, and recreation providers and promoters. It includes input from the Peak District Local Access Forum (PDLAF); the stakeholders' workshop, the Members scrutiny team and preliminary consultations with a wide range of recreation providers and users.

An extensive list of interest groups and partners was compiled for consultation and liaison purposes. The process began with a workshop at Losehill Hall, the National Park Learning and Environmental Conference Centre, on 7 May 2008 when 58 interested stakeholders took part in discussions on how to improve recreation opportunities in the Peak District.

The Local Access Forum is fundamental to the development of recreation and access in the National Park. It has been kept informed of progress throughout and a sub-group helped to formulate the action plan.

Information was collated on existing sites, facilities and providers and for the first time current recreation provision in the Peak District has been mapped using a Geographical Information System (GIS). As well as the public rights of way network and access land, this includes:

- angling
- canoeing
- climbing crags
- caves with access
- hang gliding and paragliding sites
- horse riding stables
- water sports
- cycle hire
- outdoor activity centres
- bunkhouses, camping and caravanning sites
- orienteering courses
- heritage attractions
- main car parks

The information can be overlaid with information such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas for Conservation (SAC) and Landscape Character Areas to help identify where further opportunities might be located appropriately.

An online survey directed at existing users of the Peak District was carried out by consultants during late summer 2008 to find out what recreational activities people do now and how that might change in the future. This was supplemented by a desk study of existing research to understand why some groups appear to be under-represented as visitors.

Recreation was the subject of the annual PDNPA's Parishes Forum day in September 2008, where local people's views were sought on issues such as how to engage young people better in outdoor recreation and how parish councils could help deliver the strategy.

Anecdotal evidence has been collected from individuals working in the recreation sector, including the National Park Ranger service.

Peak District National Park Authority members were able to contribute their views at a workshop about the strategy in February 2009. Liaison and discussion with other local authority partners has continued throughout.

In September 2009, a Draft Recreation Strategy was circulated to a wide range of stakeholders and posted on the National Park Authority website. Of those who completed the online consultation questionnaire, 88.1% felt the draft strategy would help to increase opportunities for recreation, 77.6% thought it would increase enjoyment and 83.6% considered it would increase understanding of the special qualities of the National Park. The consultation sought views on the main themes and headline actions generating a wealth of constructive comment which is reflected in the final Strategy.

Although the PDNPA has a key role to play in developing and delivering this strategy and action plan, on-going and new partnership working is essential if the benefits of recreation are to be sustained and extended.
Appendix 3: Landscape Character Areas

Dark Peak

This mostly open moorland is wild, remote and tranquil, giving a sense of wilderness in a landscape with few signs of habitation. It includes the high gritstone plateau of the Peak District with Kinder Scout and Bleaklow its highest summits and rocky outcrops around its edges. Win Hill and Mam Tor are distinct features of the popular Edale valley.

Most of this area is Access Land where people can roam at will; it also includes the southern section of the Pennine Way from Edale and the central section of the Trans Pennine Trail coast to coast route. Much of the terrain is challenging. A number of climbing sites lie in the Dark Peak such as Laddow Rocks north of Crowden and disused quarries at Tintwistle. Some winters, ice-climbing takes place on the frozen Kinder Downfall. Longdendale and the Upper Derwent valley attract a wide range of recreation uses including walking and strolling, sailing and windsurfing, mountain biking, cycling and horse riding. There is a cycle hire centre at Fairholmes in the Upper Derwent and a trekking centre in the Edale valley. A number of outdoor pursuits centres lie within the Dark Peak.

Dark Peak Western Fringe

This area comprises the sloping and lower lying landscapes of the upper Goyt, Etherow and Tame river valleys to the west of the Dark Peak and encompasses a number of settlements including Glossop, Hayfield and Chapel-en-le-Frith.

There is a small amount of Access Land but this is mainly enclosed farmland with many paths and bridleways including the Pennine Bridleway and the Sett Valley Trail. There are a number of reservoirs offering fishing and water sports, several riding stables and two permanent orienteering sites. There is some local climbing on Combs Edge.
Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe

Lying to the east of the Dark Peak, this is an area of lower moorland slopes (often wooded), more enclosed farmland and large settlements (eg Penistone, Holmfirth and Stocksbridge) as well as smaller villages such as Ewden and Bradfield. There are a number of reservoirs, often surrounded by coniferous plantations.

Recreation provision in this area is focused on the reservoirs where a variety of water sports, fishing and walking is well catered for. A link for walkers, riders and cyclists from Langsett Reservoir to the Trans Pennine Trail has increased accessibility to this major route.

South West Peak

This is a diverse gritstone area of upland moorland and rolling hills stretching to the edges of Macclesfield and Leek. It includes tree lined watercourses, high rocky outcrops and reservoir valleys. There are scattered farms and small settlements as well as larger villages, some of which are popular for leisure and recreation (eg Longnor and Pott Shrigley).

The South West Peak includes areas of Access Land and the major recreation areas of the Goyt Valley, Macclesfield Forest, Tegg’s Nose, Lyme Park, Tittesworth Reservoir and the Roaches but otherwise recreational activity is relatively low key and dispersed. The Gritstone Trail and Cheshire Cycleway pass through the area, and the Manifold Track lies on its boundary with the White Peak. It encompasses the National Park Authority owned Warslow Moors estate, the rocky outcrops of Hen Cloud, Ramshaw Rocks and the Roaches (popular with climbers) and a large area of moorland used for military training (controlled access). Cycle hire is available at Waterhouses.
White Peak

An elevated, gently rolling limestone plateau dissected by deeply cut dales often associated with rivers (Manifold, Hamps, Dove, Lathkill, Wye and Derwent). There are many small villages and scattered farms and a distinctive pattern of dry stone walls enclosing small fields.

Whilst there is recreational activity throughout the area, most visitors head for the dales and popular towns and villages such as Bakewell, Hartington, Monyash, Buxton and Matlock Bath. There are a large number of caravan and camping sites which offer low-cost holiday accommodation. A number of trails run through the area including the High Peak and Tissington Trails (with cycle hire at Parsley Hay), the Monsal Trail and the Limestone Way. Horse riders can embark on the Pennine Bridleway stretching northwards from its start at Hartington Station on the High Peak Trail, where there is parking for horse-boxes and an enclosure for tacking up. There are a number of important limestone climbing and caving sites notably around Stoney Middleton.

Derwent Valley

Between the limestone plateau and the gritstone edges, the Derwent Valley Regional Character area covers the lower valley of the River Derwent and its tributaries (Rivers Wye and Noe). It includes the Hope Valley in the north and stretches south to Matlock. It includes three moorland outliers at Stanton Moor, Eyam Moor and Abney Moor.

The area is easily accessible from Sheffield and Chesterfield resulting in high visitor numbers. It benefits from good public transport links - railway stations in the Hope Valley stations and at Matlock and buses from Sheffield, Chesterfield and Derby. There are a number of recreation and leisure attractions including Chatsworth, Castleton and Hathersage. The popular walking and climbing edges of Froggatt, Curbar and Baslow lie close to the boundary between this area and Eastern Moors. The Derwent Valley Heritage Way is a footpath following the river from its source below Ladybower Dam to its junction with the River Trent at Shardlow near Derby.
Eastern Moors

This area encompasses moorland, slopes and cloughs and the gritstone edges of Stanage, Burbage, Gardom’s and Birchen. It is an accessible, attractive landscape with wide views (eg Surprise View) which can still retain a sense of remoteness.

Popular hubs of recreation activity include Stanage, the Burbage Valley and Longshaw, all in close proximity to Sheffield. Some good walking and cycling links from Sheffield provide sustainable access to this area.

Derbyshire Peak Fringe

Two separate areas – one east of the Eastern Moors on the National Park boundary and close to Chesterfield and south-west Sheffield; the other south of the White Peak between Parwich and Ashbourne. These are undulating, transitional landscapes of enclosed farmland with some woodland. The southern area includes the villages of Parwich, Tissington, Thorpe and Fenny Bentley and both areas have scattered farms.

Visitors are particularly drawn to Dovedale, Tissington, Ilam, Ashbourne and Linacre Reservoir. The southern end of the Tissington Trail runs through one of the areas with a cycle hire centre close to Ashbourne.
Annual 2-day guided walk for the Disabled Ramblers

This event has been run in the Peak District successfully for 10 years with good support from National Park and other Local Authority rangers. Most participants use battery powered mobility scooters to tackle routes of varying degrees of difficulty up to 10 miles long. A wide variety of routes have been enjoyed including full circuits of Dovestone Reservoir; Derwent and Howden Reservoirs, Carsington Reservoir; Damflask and Agden Reservoirs. Routes have incorporated the many trails in the National Park (High Peak and Tissington, Thornhill, Longdendale, Manifold) and on one occasion participants wore hard hats to enable a memorable trip through the closed tunnels of the Monsal Trail from Bakewell to Millers Dale. Other attractions have included a visit to Chatsworth grounds and gardens, a circuit of Macclesfield Forest and a trip onto the high moorland of Rowlee Pasture above the Woodlands Valley.

Working with such enthusiastic participants has increased our understanding of what disabled people can do. Their desire to take part in adventurous activities is not diminished by their lack of mobility. The group campaigns at a national level to create more opportunities for disabled people to enjoy the countryside.

Stanage Forum

The Stanage/North Lees Estate is owned and managed by the Peak District National Park Authority. The land is home to internationally rare heather moorland and blanket bog. The Estate receives over half a million visitors per year, who take part in a wide range of activities including walking, cycling, hang-gliding and paragliding, and bird watching. Stanage Edge is perhaps best known as an internationally important gritstone climbing edge.

In 2000, the authority wished to review the management plan for the estate. It was perceived that there were real conflicts between the various activities on the estate, and with its management for conservation and farming interests. A decision was taken to try a new approach to managing the land.

A website was established with an on-line discussion board to enable as wide a debate as possible. An open public meeting was held in August 2000, attended by over 70 people, to agree principles and a shared vision for the plan. A Steering Group of 17 people were elected to identify specific problems and then discuss them in technical groups. The aim was to build up a consensus and agreed solutions.

Over the next two years these volunteers produced the Stanage/North Lees Estate Management Plan which was completed in October 2002.

The work has enabled mutual understanding of conservation, farming and recreation issues to take place. This in turn has led to co-ordinated and agreed management of the land for the benefit of farmers, wildlife, local people, land managers, climbers and other visitors. Benefits have included a voluntary restriction on climbing near nesting ring ouzels; a bus from Sheffield partly subsidised by the British Mountaineering Council; improved walking routes and re-vegetation of eroded paths.

www.peakdistrict.org/index/looking-after/stanage.htm

Cycle Hire Facilities

A wide range of bikes including mountain bikes, tandems, trikes, hand-cranked tricycles, wheelchair cycles and mobility scooters can be hired from the Peak District National Park cycle hire centres. Friendly cycle hire staff help people of all abilities to enjoy their cycling experience of the National Park.

Robert Dallison, PDNPA Cycle Services Manager, adds: “We have cycles for all ages, sizes and abilities with access to some of the best traffic free trails in the country. Cycling is a fun, healthy way to see the wonderful scenery.”

You’re Welcome

A free 48-page ‘You’re Welcome’ booklet produced by the Moors for the Future Partnership and the Peak District National Park Authority is an invaluable guide for newcomers to the countryside as well as wheelchair users, families with small children and the elderly. It has detailed maps showing easy-access routes where unnecessary barriers like steps and stiles have been removed and smooth continuous surfaces provided. These include 15 miles of moorland footpaths where access has been recently improved.

Sites include beautiful places such as Surprise View (between Sheffield and Hathersage), Green Drive in the Burbage Valley, Curbar and Baslow Edges. In addition, an 18-mile circuit of Severn Trent Water’s Upper Derwent reservoirs can now be navigated without barriers, and work has been completed at United Utilities’ Dovestone Reservoir.
reservoir, Greenfield (near Oldham) on new footpath surfacing and three easy-access gates.

The booklet also identifies accessible car parks, children’s play areas, accessible toilets, public transport choices and scenic viewpoints as well as easy access routes in the White Peak, including the trails network. Alison Salmen, Hope Valley Access Group commented: “This guide helps people discover the many accessible places that the national park has to offer.”

Peak District National Park Conservation Volunteers

The Conservation Volunteers scheme was set up over 25 years ago and undertakes a variety of tasks throughout the whole of the national park; including habitat and woodland management, footpath repairs and the conservation of heritage structures. It reaches out to under-represented groups including young people and adults with special needs. It works with local authority youth services, the Groundwork Trust, the Home Farm Trust and other charities and organisations.

Volunteers can work either as an individual or part of an organised group such as scouts, youth clubs and Duke of Edinburgh award. Many groups stay at one of the two residential hostels at Marsh Farm in the Staffordshire Moorlands or Brunts Barn, near Grindleford.

Of the 569 projects in 2007/8, 62% of the 4,297 volunteers were either young people aged 21 and under or adults who had special needs. A significant proportion of the rest were adults aged 50+ who are retired or semi-retired. An analysis of volunteer postcodes indicates that a substantial proportion live in what are considered to be disadvantaged urban areas.

The ethos of the Conservation Volunteers is to provide participants with a positive, fun national park experience to take home.

Choi Junho, an international volunteer from South Korea, said: “It’s really nice to work in the countryside with people from all over the world. I’m very happy that we can help the rangers look after the national park. There are not very many opportunities to do this at home, but now that I have had this experience I am looking forward to finding similar projects in my own country.”

www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ppcv.html

The Peak District Northern Gateways Initiative

This is an exciting and innovative countryside project in Oldham and the Peak District National Park. The area has important peat and blanket bog protected under both UK and European law and is home to the Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway National Trails.

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and the Peak District National Park Authority have identified, through the Northern Gateways Initiative, several key routes which link the national trails with other established trails in the area. Branded as the Peak District Northern Gateway, a range of recreational experiences will be available from the Sunday afternoon family walk to long distance weekend horse riding or cycling breaks, set against the magnificent backdrop of the Peak District.

The hub of this initiative revolves around three existing popular ‘honey pot’ locations – the Friezeland Riding Arena, Brownhill Countryside Centre and Dovestone Reservoir. This initiative will:
- Develop way marking and route maps
- Improve the facilities and range of services on offer
- Reduce congestion in popular areas
- Attract visitors who have never been to the area before

The Peak District Northern Gateways Initiative is an excellent example of joint working to raise awareness of the global importance of the Dark Peak landscape, with outstanding opportunities to enjoy the special characteristics of this unique countryside in a sustainable way.

Access Passport

“Access Passport” is a short film showing how wheelchair users and people with other mobility problems can enjoy the Peak District. The film is presented by a former paralympian John Harris, 63, who explores the possibilities of what most wheelchair-users could achieve. John uses an adapted cycle along traffic-free trails at Parsley Hay, he rolls up to a cavern in Castleton and he joins young disabled people abseiling at Millers Dale. John said: “It gives people with a disability the opportunity to take part in activities they never would have had, and I was treated no different from anyone else. It was an unbelievable moment to see that river below. I want to do it again, even higher!”

“Access Passport” was produced by Axess Film (the UK’s only charitable film company) for the Peak District National Park Authority.

www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/accesspeak
Audio Trails

The Moors for the Future Audio Trails are pre-recorded guides that inform, educate and entertain. Easily downloaded onto MP3 players, iPods and mobile phones, the audio tours can be accessed and listened to at any time. They peel away the rich history of the Peak District moors with a mix of interviews, songs, poetry, music and sound effects.

Take a stroll with a Roman medic, an Anglo-Saxon thane and ‘Dambuster’ Guy Gibson on Win Hill, discover the struggle for access in Edale or take a walk with a Ranger in Marsden.

www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk

Ride the Peak

The growth of off-road cycling, and particularly mountain-biking, in the Peak District raises a number of management issues. One of the key problems for the PDNPA was the lack of a recognised user group to represent the interests of mountain-bikers, to engage in the processes of management. In 2007 a seminar was held at Losehill Hall, involving a wide range of mountain-bikers, including guide-book writers, cycle shop owners, riders and landowners to establish common aims and objectives. From this seminar, an action plan was developed. It aims to target promotion of active sports such as cycling and mountain biking, in suitable locations – a key action in the Peak District National Park Management Plan.

A working group known as ‘Ride the Peak’ has been established. The group’s aims are to maintain and enhance mountain-biking in the Peak District by:

- Developing the trail network (spreading the load)
- Highlighting and if necessary developing new facilities
- Create online information and a forum for discussing riding in the area
- Acting as a forum for discussion between mountain-bike riders, promoters, land owners, other user groups and local decision / policy makers in the Peak District.
- Linking with national mountain-bike projects and work, through close liaison with the International Mountain-Biking Association and other groups.

Limestone Way makeover

The Peak District National Park’s Countryside Maintenance Team spent the winter months improving the Limestone Way, partly funded by the Derbyshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The Limestone Way trail between Matlock and Castleton was set up in the 1980s, but no maintenance fund was put in place to look after it. Twenty five years later the very well used trail was, unsurprisingly, getting a bit the worse for wear. The ranger service carried out a survey of the entire route, developed a bid to the County Council and liaised with farmers to agree a planned programme of work.

The Countryside Maintenance Team set out to make the access easier along the whole route but wanted to ensure that the heritage squeeze stiles and features of the landscape were conserved and enhanced. Forty six new or replacement fingerposts now line the route.

Best of both worlds

Best of Both Worlds is a management approach which helps increase opportunities for the responsible pursuit of adventure activities, outdoor sports and recreation, such as canoeing, cycling, walking and climbing. At the same time, it is committed to conservation of the sensitive environments in which they take place. The web site contains advice and information to improve the understanding and knowledge of those using and managing the countryside so that they have a greater awareness of each other’s objectives and responsibilities and includes good practice guidelines for event organisers. www.bobw.co.uk

Upper Derwent Valley

A partnership between the National Park Authority, Severn Trent Water, National Trust, Forestry Commission, Derbyshire County Council, High Peak Borough Council and two parish councils has led to major achievements for recreation in the Upper Derwent Valley as a result of joint working over 25 years and has produced a wide range of benefits including:
• 6.5 miles of traffic-free roads with exceptions for access and disabled people
• A minibus service provided 100 days a year when the Fairholmes to King’s Tree road is closed
• Improved parking arrangements
• Connecting bus service from surrounding cities, towns and Bakewell railway station
• Many new and improved routes suitable for cycling, walking, horse riding and people with disabilities
• Extensive award winning efforts to diversify species and improve the shape of woodlands to enhance nature conservation and landscape interest

• Jointly-funded ecological, archaeological and visitor surveys of the area along with interpretation boards and leaflets
• Cycle hire facilities with a range of bikes and mobility scooters for all abilities
• Briefing centre to provide a base for the ranger services
• Visitor centre with small retail outlet and refreshment kiosk
• Guidelines and coordinated responses to proposed large scale events in the Valley

References

1. Peak District National Park Management Plan 2006 - 2011
2. Henley Centre Headlight Vision 2005, a report for Natural England’s outdoor recreation strategy
4. PDNPA - Recreation Survey, 2008
5. PDNPA - Peak District Visitor Survey, 2005
10. Countryside Agency Diversity Review 2005

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