

Peak District Local Access Forum

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Item: 9

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

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Purpose of Report

To present Forum members with an update on progress towards delivery of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) in 2009/10.

Progress to September 2009

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

Aim 1 - Existing Network:

- Aim 1a): we are continuing with the BVPI surveys. The May sample survey resulted in a 71.8% pass rate, which is below the end of year target of 72.5%. All aspects of rights of way which affect their ease of use for members of the public produced good pass rates, varying between 83.8% and 98%. Areas of work, such as bridges, waymarking and roadside signposting continued to show improvement on the same time last year. The survey also showed that a greater proportion of paths were reinstated after ploughing and cropping. This reflects the high priority that continues to be given to ensuring that the existing public rights of way network is open and available for use. Results have varied across the different districts, with Chesterfield, High Peak, Amber Valley and Bolsover doing particularly well. In other areas the effect of longer paths failing the assessment has been quite significant, reducing the pass rate by as much as 30%. The second half of the survey is due to be carried out in November 2009.
- Aim 1a): unforeseen pressures on the Rights of Way revenue budget have meant that we have had to shelve plans to issue a roadside signposting contract this year. However we have been reviewing the design of our metal signposts to include information about who is entitled to use each route and the RoWIP LTP capital improvement budget will continue to fund new signposts

with details of destinations or distance, or that are linked to wider improvement schemes (also links to Aim 4a).

- Aim 1b): the PRow inspectors have organised the following significant repairs and improvements in the first quarter: South Normanton 10 – boardwalk to avoid pond, Tissington 15 – drainage and resurfacing works, Hognaston - installation of a boardwalk, Ripley 81 – drainage and surfacing.
- Aim 1b): under the LTP capital maintenance budget, two paths will be improved this year: the Renishaw section of the Beighton- Staveley section of the Trans Pennine Trail will be brought up to modern Greenway standards and Bridleway 147 in Eckington will have a major drainage/surface improvement scheme carried out.
- Aim 1e): Creswell Heritage Trust has secured £89,000 of external funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the development of the Derbyshire Magnesian Limestone Landscape Partnership Project. The Greenway programme in Bolsover stands to benefit considerably from continued involvement in this project.

Aim 2 - Definitive Map and Statement:

- Aim 2: work is continuing to digitise the rights of way network in the Borough of Amber Valley and make this information available on line, before moving onto the Derbyshire Dales area. Progress is slower than hoped due to staff being required to work on other projects and recent vacancies within the mapping team.

Aim 3 - Connected, safe and accessible network

- Aim 3a): another creation agreement has been signed and an area of land purchased to help further the development of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail through Glossop. Traffic signals have also been provided to help walkers, horse riders and cyclists negotiate Tintwistle Bridge on New Road more safely.
- Aim 3a): concessionary routes have been created through Riddings Wood near Ironville, providing 483m of new bridleway and 345m of new footpath. Other plans are in place to improve the concessionary bridleway through Holmewood this year and work has begun on rebuilding and resurfacing Mapperley Bridleway within Shipley Country Park.
- Aims 3a) & 3b): a public inquiry was held in relation to the compulsory purchase order to acquire the land to develop a Greenway link to Long Horse Bridge on the route of the Midshires Way. If the verdict is favourable for the county council the new Greenway and bridge replacement should happen this year.
- Aim 3b): we are on target to deliver a new concessionary bridleway link onto the Monsal Trail at Great Longstone in conjunction with the Peak District National Park Rangers.

- Aim 3c): during September, the PRow Inspectors are concentrating efforts on targeting stiles and gates in disrepair.
- Aim 3c): the RoWIP improvement budget has funded two significant schemes in Derbyshire Dales: to provide an improved off road, all-weather route between the villages of Elton and Winstar (as requested by several local people during the initial RoWIP consultations) and to widen and surface an important path in Doveridge linking local housing estates to the school and to an area of open space owned by the Parish Council.
- Aim 3d): under the routes to schools programme, the resurfacing of Wirksworth Footpath 39 has provided an improved link between the secondary and junior schools.
- Aim 3e): we have completed the initial consultation to review the maps in the East Derbyshire Greenway strategy and are currently going through the responses with a view to producing a draft report by the end of 2009. In New Mills, a new ramp has been constructed to bypass a flight of steps, extending the Sett Valley Trail into the Torrs Millennium Park and adding 0.3km to the Greenway network. We are still on target to provide an extra 10km of new Greenways in 2009/10.

Aim 4 - Promotion and Publicity

- We are in the process of producing a “highlights” report for wider circulation. This will summarise the main achievements described in the 2008/09 end of year monitoring report submitted to the June meeting of the LAF.
- Aim 4a): there is no progress to date on actions relating to improving signage and access to open access land. It is still hoped that some work can be carried out later this year.
- Aims 4b) & 4c): there has been no progress in terms of improving the information provided on the County Council’s own website as there are still problems with the development of this site. However, we have established links to the PRow information from the National Forest website and are looking at providing information about wider countryside access opportunities targeted at different users on the Derbyshire Sport website.
- Aim 4c): several large scale events have taken place on the Greenways and rights of way network around the county over the summer months including the White Peak Marathon, Wirksworth Incline Race, Endurance horse and pony ride all on or around the High Peak Trail and Hayfield May Day celebrations. The third Peak District’s Historic Border Country Walking Festival attracted over 800 walkers with some travelling from as far away as London and Dundee.

- Aim 4c): for cyclists we have organised the Wheels in Motion cycling day at Langley Mill Junior School as part of the Heart & Sole Group which around 75 people attended. We also contributed to National Bike Week in June with two events in our Countryside events programme. A Cycling for Health initiative is taking place at Shipley Country Park on Saturdays in October. This is organised by a cycling and green travel social enterprise organisation called Choose Cycling.
- Aim 4c): Natural England and DCC teamed up to give a group of young people from Amber Valley the opportunity to experience horse riding for the first time. This included a full day's visit to a local trekking centre and the chance to ride and cycle on a section of the Pennine Bridleway near Hartington.
- Aim 4c): there is an action in the RoWIP for 2009/10 to 'Launch Codes of Conduct for all users in the county and raise awareness with land managers and user groups'. We would like the two LAFs in the county to consider taking the lead on pulling the information together and promoting this action, as we feel that they are ideally placed to provide the necessary knowledge and expertise.

Aim 5 - Community Involvement in local rights of way

- Aim 5a): we have continued to progress work directly with Parish Councils in association with DCC's Ranger Service. We are currently pursuing rights of way improvement schemes in conjunction with Shirebrook, Hognaston, Idridgehay, Winster, Taddington and Ashover Parish Councils.
- Aim 5a): the work being carried out by Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire to deliver work with Parish Councils and volunteers in Derbyshire Dales and the High Peak has been stalled. Discussions are still progressing, but it has not yet been possible to re-negotiate a Service Level Agreement that gives the County Council sufficient value for money.
- Aim 5b): as in previous years we are continuing to generate a considerable amount of volunteer input to PRow and access work across the county.

Recommendation

That members of the Forum note the interim progress report for delivering Derbyshire's RoWIP in 2009/10.