

Peak District Local Access Forum

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Item: 10

Title: Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Outline Work Programme for 2017/18

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Purpose of Report

To present Forum members with an outline of the annual work programme for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) during 2017/18.

Background

The annual work programmes identify how the Authority intends to progress delivery of the RoWIP in each year.

The Economy, Transport and Communities Department Highways and Transport capital programmes for 2017/18 were approved by Cabinet on 4 April 2017. This funding helps considerably with RoWIP delivery and further details can be viewed here - see agenda item 7:

http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2017-04-04%20Service%20Plan%20Appendices_tcm44-290925.pdf

It should, however, be noted that following the recent restructuring of the Countryside Service, including the Public Rights of Way team, the staff reductions will have a significant impact on what can realistically be achieved.

Outline RoWIP Work Programme for 2017/18

The report highlights the key areas of work which will form the focus for delivery under each of the five RoWIP aims.

This year will see work continuing on the ten year review of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan due to be completed by November 2017. Efforts will concentrate on making a new assessment of the needs of different users and the extent to which the existing local rights of way network meets those needs.

It is our intention to continue to work closely with both Local Access Forums, mainly through the joint RoWIP sub group, so we can draw on members' invaluable knowledge and expertise which will be used to inform any wider public/ stakeholder consultation.

We will also be exploring links with other new and emerging plans and strategies, such as those associated with the Derbyshire Cycling Plan eg Key Cycle Network and the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy/ Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

Aim 1: Ensure that the Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use

- Existing network: continue to carry out path condition surveys to report on the ease of use of the network. Target of 72.5% in 2017/18
- Signposting: replace and repair roadside signposts recorded as missing or defective as resources allow, with details of destinations and distances where appropriate
- Path furniture: improve the quality of path furniture across the network, including the provision of more gates to replace stiles
- Surface improvements: £300,000 secured through the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme (LTP) to deliver surfacing and drainage works on public rights of way and routes identified in the Green Lane Action Plan which have been prioritised as being in most need of repair or which benefit most users
- Implement a programme of seasonal surface vegetation clearance

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

- Legal status: continue to work with Legal Services to process the backlog of legal orders and report progress on a quarterly basis
- Definitive Map and Statement: keep digital mapping up to date as further legal changes take place

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

- Bridleway routes: progress the dedication of sections of the Great Northern Greenway in Erewash as public bridleway
- Pennine Bridleway National Trail Development: produce a funding plan/ delivery strategy for completion of the remaining sections of the route between Monks Road, near Charlesworth and Glossop Road in Gamesley
- Pennine Bridleway Maintenance: carry out routine surface/ furniture maintenance and implement repairs at The Roych using funding provided by Natural England and Derbyshire County Council
- Connected routes: work with partners, including user groups and both Local Access Forums to create new bridleway links eg onto the Monsal and High Peak Trails and to "plug" other gaps in the network
- Planning process: actively seek and monitor developer contributions available for multi-user trails/Greenways, including ensuring that all current and future projects are recognised in the revised Derbyshire Infrastructure Investment Plan

- High Speed Rail HS2: continue with preparatory work to safeguard existing Greenways and maximise opportunities for future route development, as well as identifying preferred options for the associated National Cycleway
- Open access land: work with both Local Access Forums to improve access provision and signage on open access land around the Buxton and Matlock areas
- Greenway strategies: combine the three existing Greenway Strategies into one countywide document with sections on each District/Borough
- Greenway development: deliver 8km of new Greenways in 2017/18 and continue to work on other Greenway/ cycling projects, including the Archaeological Way in Bolsover, Clowne and Little Eaton Branch Lines, Leabrooks Railway, Phase 3 of the Hipper Valley Greenway between Somersall Lane and Holymoorside, the Brassington Link on to the High Peak Trail, Hilton Greenway Spur in South Derbyshire and Five Pits Trail Link to Corbriggs car park at Grassmoor in NE Derbyshire
- White Peak Loop: continue to prepare and deliver further sections of the route between Matlock and Buxton using funding provided in the LTP
- Greenway maintenance: carry out improvements costing £200,000 on sections of the Sett Valley Trail, High Peak Trail, Shallcross Incline and Mickleover Greenway
- Easy access routes: work with both Local Access Forums to identify suitable routes and carry out small scale improvements
- Safer network: two schemes identified at a cost of £100,000 to improve a footpath in North Wingfield which provides direct access to the local primary school and construct a new shared pedestrian / cycle link alongside Furnace Hillock Way which will help improve connectivity between the Five Pits Trail and the new Avenue major development site near Wingerworth
- Investment: £1,290,000 has been directly allocated to Rights of Way and Access Projects within the 2017/18 LTP Capital Programme. We will continue to bid for further funding from the LTP, as well as exploring other external funding sources

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

- Signage: review existing provision and produce internal design guide for use on trails/Greenways, including messages for responsible use
- Healthy Lifestyles: assist with delivery of the 2016 – 2021 Active Derbyshire Plan, including promotion of the access network for healthy/active living, as well as liaising with Public Health and Walking for Health Officers
- Work with other partners such as Peak District National Park Authority, National Trust, Moors for the Future, National Forest, Visit Peak District and Derbyshire to promote wider access opportunities which benefit tourism and the local economy
- Visitor Economy: produce final Destination Plan for the *Visit. Sleep. Cycle. Repeat* project in the 'borderlands' of North Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) Growth Programme. This is based on a

consortium approach to developing green infrastructure, tourism promotion, economic regeneration and improving the connectivity of heritage attractions in the area, looking in particular at cycling and walking provision

- Attend events such as Eroica Britannia (16-18 June) and the Woodland Festival (23-24 September) to promote the work of the Countryside Service/ Local Access Forums and highlight the access and outdoor recreation opportunities which Derbyshire has to offer
- Derbyshire Cycling Plan – Infrastructure and Connectivity: continue to play an active role in the development of a Key Cycle Network across the county and associated Local Infrastructure Plans
- Cycle Derbyshire: update web based mapping and information, with a view to a possible future reprint of the leaflet
- Volunteering opportunities: keep the countryside volunteering webpage up to date and under review
- Easy access: follow up on suggestions from the DADLAF Accessibility Event for improving the provision of information eg use of video footage, better interactive mapping, links to other websites

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

- Finalise and seek Cabinet approval for the new Countryside Service Volunteer Policy for Working with Community Groups
- Continue to provide support for voluntary groups as resources allow
- Monitor outcomes of Service Level Agreement with Groundwork Creswell (extended for a further 12 months) to work with volunteers in delivering access/ habitat improvements, which also contribute to people's health and wellbeing. This will be mainly focused on the Pennine Bridleway National Trail and Clowne Branch Line, as well as public rights of way in South Derbyshire and the High Peak, along with support for the newly formed Friends of Heage and Nether Heage
- Monitor outcomes of existing Service Level Agreement with the Peak District National Park Authority which delivers a variety of repairs and improvements across the public rights of way network
- Distribute funding available to enable local councils, community groups and volunteers to carry out improvements to local rights of way
- Volunteer contribution: coordinate and collate the number of volunteer days spent on countryside and access related projects – target of 3,000 volunteer days in 2017/18
- Work with landowners/managers/Local Access Forums to raise awareness of shared responsibilities in relation to public rights of way eg with regard to livestock, ploughing and cropping through press releases and guidance notes

Recommendation

That Forum Members note the key areas of work which will form the basis for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2017/18.