

Peak District Local Access Forum (LAF)

Date: 14 June 2012

Item: 7

Title: Towards a Cycling Strategy and Action Plan for the area in and Around the Peak District

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Background

This paper is a review which follows on from a brief discussion at LAF on 22 March and me consulting those who expressed an interest within LAF as well as Officers of the Peak District NPA, two Highway Authorities (Derbyshire and Staffordshire) and other interests. LAF was asked at Recreation Strategy and Sustainable Transport meetings if it could help by looking what is already available (e.g. Highway Authority Greenways Strategies and Rights of Way Improvement Plans). Several LAF members kindly agreed to be contacts on this ahead of reporting back to LAF.

There is relevant background from Peak District Strategies and Action Plans in Annex A, the Peak District Cycling Development Plans in Annex B, Derbyshire Greenways Strategy in Annex C and really helpful Consultation replies received in Annex D which are worthy of being taken into account as this work hopefully proceeds further. There are also three plans being Outreach potential, Peak Cycle Route and Cycle Derbyshire (in and outside the Peak District).

Context

The Peak District Local Access Forum is a statutory body, appointed jointly by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC), as the advisory body on access and recreation matters in the Peak District, including north - west Derbyshire around Buxton, New Mills and Glossop outside the National Park.

The Long Term Vision for the Peak District Cycling Project was that it:

- Lays the foundation for a much more sustainable transport programme - visitors arrive by public transport and use bicycles to explore
- Improved connections to the market towns neighbouring the National Park, villages and attractions adjoining the route
- Behavioural change becomes more apparent as cycling becomes a widespread and accepted alternative to some car journeys
- An exemplar project to roll out to other National Parks

This comprehensive document will hopefully provide relevant information and justification to build on the wonderful work done on the Monsal Trail and related cycling project and continue towards achieving that Vision for all to enjoy.

Recommendations

1. That the Local Access Forum congratulates the Peak District NPA and constituent Highway Authorities and Partners for work done to date to improve Cycling opportunities in the Peak District.
 2. That we encourage use of this document, research and consultations to date as the basis for producing a Peak District Cycling Strategy in line with the Peak District Recreation Strategy, National Park Management Plan and Sustainable Transport Action Plan and form input to Highway Authorities Rights of Way Improvement Plans to enable increased participation and enjoyment of the area by visitors and the local community.
 3. That the Peak District NPA be asked to explore the scope for doing this working through partnership and external funding with further input as required by this Forum.
 4. That Members of this Forum advise if and how they may be able to assist in development of this Strategy and identifying route opportunities.
 5. That Matt Easter of Sustrans be invited to attend a future LAF meeting to talk about their plans and suggestions for future Cycling improvements in line with the joint accord they have with the Peak.
- Review of Current Action

1. The Peak District vision is to maintain and develop a cycling network and to promote "More people cycling more safely, more often." They will be maintaining the web site www.pedalpeakdistrict.co.uk and social marketing activity via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#). They have worked with Visit Peak District to map 9 circular cycling routes and publish them in an excellent new guide with web pages on www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes
2. The Buxton to Bakewell route is part of a wider project proposal (see Annex B and the related Cycle Route circuit plan) for a longer route linking Buxton and Matlock via the Monsal Trail and High Peak Trails, together with a link between the High Peak and Tissington Trails and Buxton. The overall aim of the project is for the Peak District NPA to use their existing contact with leisure cyclists who visit the Peak District to encourage them to adopt healthier lifestyles and also to create a continuous cycle trail from Matlock to Buxton, to link that trail to the wider cycling infrastructure and rights of way network around the National Park and to develop utility cycling in the Peak District. A key objective of the project is to provide a continuous cycling trail that will link the two key rail-heads of Buxton and Matlock in the Peak District thus widening access to cycling in the Peak. The Matlock/Buxton Cycle Ring and Connections Project was sadly unsuccessful in getting Sustainable Transport funding, but should continue to be supported and encouraged.
3. Efforts are continuing to try and complete the Pedal Peak District Project, so there is a loop of cycle trails, including links to Buxton and Matlock, and creating a more sustainable way for visitors to enter the National Park. The planning application for a link from Bakewell (Combs Road Viaduct) to Rowsley was withdrawn in May, but new proposals are likely to be put forward. Derbyshire County Council are involved in discussions regarding promotion of a Matlock to Oker and Rowsley cycle route. (see consultation responses in Annex D)
4. The Peak District NPA through Carol Parsons, are also helping to promote the electric bicycle network. Please help promote it - this is only its 2nd year and will be critical as its not well established yet - it is a fantastic initiative which benefits disadvantaged people as electric bikes are a good way for less able people to join others on a ride. www.electricbicyclenetwork.com/
5. National Park Trails Management Plan - after a number of steering group workshops an agreed vision, aims, objectives and priorities have emerged. Abi Ball is now working on a draft which will then be consulted on again, hopefully this month. Charlotte Gilbert is the LAF representative. Sustrans have asked the Group to include better access to the trails as a key objective which apparently they have. It would be a good topic for a future LAF meeting.
6. After contacting Gill Millward and Wayne Bexton at Derbyshire County Council, the Cycle Derbyshire leaflet is attached and I have referred to the West Derbyshire and High Peak Greenway Strategy (see summary in Annex C) which includes the Peak - <http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/greenways/default.asp>
7. Staffordshire County Council through Mark Evans has advised what they have been doing (see Annex D). The County Council has also published its own set of cycle maps covering the whole of Staffordshire. One such map covers the whole of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area (which incorporates the South West quarter of the Peak Park), and is available in paper form as well as being available on the County Council's web site at www.staffordshire.gov.uk (listed under Transport and then Cycling Maps).
8. I have not contacted the other constituent Highway Authorities at this stage.
9. There is also a new Sustrans South Yorkshire and Peak District route map now which is available to buy.
10. I have only contacted Staffordshire of the other highway authorities covering the Peak so far and helpful information from Mark Evans of the Authority is in Annex D.

Scope for Action

11. It seems to me that it is a good time to look at a possible Cycling Strategy and Development Plan, linked to horse riding as well, in and around the Peak District. I say this because:
 - Cycling is high on political agendas at present. There needs to be more on work with communities to get people cycling, as well as for leisure cyclists.
 - The Peak District NPA and Derbyshire C.C. have excellent records and staff who have successfully developed new cycling opportunities and are believed to be keen to achieve more in line with their strategic plans and priorities.
 - In the Peak District's case, the second and equal purpose of national parks is that people can enjoy the National Park and understand what makes it a special place. Many different groups enjoy the National Park in many different ways, including walking, cycling and horse riding. There is a shift in emphasis from passive to active recreation provision for visitors and local residents, pursuing, in addition to walking, a targeted promotion of active sports such as cycling, mountain biking, and canoeing in suitable locations and subject to appropriate controls.
 - It is also linked in with the Recreation Strategy, the Sustainable Transport Action Plan, (which we commented on and for which we need to ensure there is a mechanism to follow progress and support delivery).
 - There is also an emerging Trails Management Plan and efforts to deliver remaining elements of the Project to link the Monsal Trail to Buxton and Matlock rail heads and complete circuits including the Tissington and High Peak Trails.
 - With Derbyshire C.C, it is through its development of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for the next 5 years and the Greenway Strategy which also covers the Derbyshire part of the Peak. There is no Greenway strategy in Staffordshire, but a lot is happening (see Mark Evan's note in Annex D).
 - All the other 5 Highway Authorities covering the Peak (Kirklees, Barnsley, Sheffield, Cheshire East and Oldham), are reviewing their Rights of Way Improvement Plans. I don't know if they have Greenways Strategy's like Derbyshire.
 - A Task Team on Cycling Development was planned for the Peak as an action from the Recreation Strategy and the National Park Management Plan. However, I gather sadly, that is no longer the case with budget and staff cuts. It would be great if resources could be allocated in future.

Conclusion and Questions

12. At this stage, I am putting this draft paper to LAF colleagues for consideration and agreement about appropriate further action and I have framed recommendations with that in mind. I welcome and greatly value the considered consultation replies I have received which convince me there is strong desire, enthusiasm and support for further work and improvements. I hope this work so far will help as a basis for encouraging that to happen.
 - Can any of you help to take it forward further?
 - Is there scope for external help to develop this Strategy and Action Plan - e.g. for example Grants, Constituent Authorities, Partnership(s), Sustrans and Universities?
 - Can we ensure it can link in with the important need to look at strategic horse riding route improvements as well in line with previous views within this Local Access Forum?
 - As well as the Peak District NPA and Derbyshire CC whom we advise, would it be helpful to share this with adjoining Highway Authorities and LAF's to see if that helps highlight wider possibilities?
 - When will the Trails Management Plan be available and could we have a presentation and discussion?
 - Should we say more about Cycle Hire (Existing and Future Opportunities)?
 - Is a Code of Practice needed for Cyclists, or is local information and signage on Trails working?
 - Crucially, can the various strategies be coordinated and complementary - cycling crosses over from pure recreation into trails management, climate change, asset management (e.g. long term future of Miller's Dale), transport, tourism, economy, etc, not to mention wider subject areas of even more interest to our partners, such as health?

Why is the Peak District is brilliant for Outdoor Recreation? (with my additions in brackets)

- 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. (It is a trusted and safe resource).
 - 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)
(There is also a network of developing accommodation providers supportive of the needs of cyclists, horse riders, canoeists etc).

Opportunities for Recreation and Enjoyment

The Peak District is renowned for the outdoor recreation opportunities it offers, notably:

- 202 square miles (524 km²) of Access Land
- 1,866 miles (3,005km) of public rights of way for walking, cycling and horse-riding. Of these 339 miles (546 kms) are Unclassified Roads, 182 miles (293 kms) are public bridleways, 19 miles (30 kms) are Byways Open to All Traffic (all 3 categories can be used for walking, horse riding and cycling), and 1,326 miles (2136 kms) are Public Footpaths. There are also 130 miles (210 kms) of concessionary paths, but I don't know what proportion of those are for 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

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
- Car parks in villages and popular beauty spots, often with toilets
- Permanent trails on redundant railway lines, such as the Tissington Trail, High Peak Trail and the Monsal Trail for cycling, walking, riding
- Cycle Hire facilities at three centres - Mapleton Lane (Ashbourne), Parsley Hay & Fairholmes

National Park Management Plan Themes and Outcomes

An inspiring Peak District where all are welcome to discover, enjoy, understand and value the special qualities of the National Park; a place where people can develop a sense of adventure and belonging, and play a part in its sustainable future. All people, especially those from disadvantaged communities, children and young people, and the elderly should feel welcome in the National Park and have the opportunity to participate in diverse recreational activities that enhance the quality of their lives.

W11: The national park will strengthen its role as a welcoming place and premier destination, synonymous with escape, adventure and enjoyment.

W12: The Peak District will be an unrivalled setting for opportunities which will enable people to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the place, and which will instil a desire to contribute to the conservation, community and economy of the National Park

W14: Accessible and diverse recreation opportunities will be available for all, encouraging healthy living, enjoyment of the landscape and a sense of adventure

TV3: Residents will have sustainable access to local services and employment

The delivery plan for the five years (2012 – 2017) is being developed as a website to allow it to be updated annually and make important links and connections with data and information.

Recreation Strategy – “Active in the Outdoors”

The Recreation Strategy for the National Park builds on the outcome for recreation in the Peak District National Park Management Plan and provides 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

Recreation Management (2.5)

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. 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 the Recreation Strategy. This Local Access Forum is one example. A key partnership also 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

Local Recreation Trends (2.1.2)

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 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 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 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 and the Sport England Active People Survey 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

Economic Benefits of Recreation (2.1.3)

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. 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. 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). 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.

(As an added point, there is the potentially huge reduction in long term costs to the health service of having a physically active population. The improvement and management of trails and on and off road routes is critical in the encouragement of physical activity both for leisure and active travel purposes)

Cycling and mountain biking (2.3.2)

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 (some of this has happened, but more is needed). 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.

(Sustrans supports this and feel we need to find a way of gaining broader public support-sometimes if not presented well, cycle ways can receive more local opposition than support).

Recreation Strategy Priority Outcomes – Headlines with more on baseline information, Targets, Measures and key partners involved with the National Park Authority in delivery on the website

Theme 1 - Healthy Lifestyles

Action A1: Provide information, especially to target groups, of the health benefits of active recreation (includes continued implementation of cycle marketing campaign through newsletters, social media and support to Pedal Ready to deliver training)

Action A2: Promote the Peak District Action A3: Develop and promote cycling, horse riding and walking routes linked to urban areas/public transport hubs.

Action A3: Develop Cycling, horse riding and walking routes linked to urban areas/public transport hubs *(includes Strategy and action plan for cycling developed for east Peak fringe, including links to the National Park - Cycle Penistone, and Programme of trail linking routes and Greenways - eg from Sheffield, Buxton, Chesterfield, Eastern Moors and Penistone- and to seek funding opportunities)*

Theme 2 - Widening Participation

Action B2: Provide recreation events suitable for a range of abilities linked to public transport

Former Action B2 was: 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. **(Why was this seemingly deleted?)**

Theme 3: Climate Change and Sustainability

Action C1: Develop sustainable transport links from surrounding urban centre, transport hubs and settlements in the National Park *(includes new links developed and routes extended)*

Theme 4: Raise Awareness & Understanding

Action D2: Establish and maintain a database of recreation opportunities and an evidence base of visitor profile, service uptake, etc.

(Should we be saying something about greater liaison with local communities, schools and businesses to support more people to choose to cycle to work, school etc more often?)

Theme 5: Partnership Working

Action E1: 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. *(Happening with meetings twice yearly and LAF represented)*

E4. Work with partners to implement integrated Rights of Way Improvement Plans and develop routes accessible to all where appropriate.

Previous E4: Establish partnership 'task groups' to explore potential for specific recreation activities eg water sports, horse riding, cycling. *(Sadly this has been cut due to lack of staff resources, but it would be invaluable if this could be re-instated in relation to developing a Cycling Strategy and Action Plan as a link to A3 above)*

Theme 6: Community Participation, including Volunteering

Actions F:

F3. Develop village information (formerly read trails) linked to public transport and sustainable local businesses.

F4. Identify and address the recreation needs of communities living in and close to the National Park.

Taking Action

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. *(Need hubs in Matlock, Bakewell, Buxton for example, where people can securely store bikes, get repairs done, link with other forms of transport etc. Need to investigate whether bike hire from hubs is a possibility, potentially sold with visitor packages etc.)*

Investing in the future

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

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

(Promote local routes, the use of which can benefit local people's health. Referrals from doctors on to walking and cycling groups, provision of led rides etc.)

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

Research and benchmark models of best practice for providing quality recreation opportunities that enhance health and wellbeing

Work with Strategic Management Group to ensure partners promote the National Park as a destination for healthy recreation

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)

Releases £1.5m infrastructure cycling development plan in place and groundworks now complete

Social marketing and audience development plan in place

Strategy and action plan for cycling developed for east Peak fringe including links to the National Park (Hipper Valley in Derbyshire CC Greenway Strategy)

Work with partners to implement integrated Rights of Way Improvement Plans and develop routes accessible to all where appropriate

(There really needs to be a co-ordinated group that prioritises projects, works up costed route briefs and can plan work on fund raising etc.)

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 guidebook 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.

(Is this Group active and who runs it?)

White Peak Cycle Routes

These routes offer 70 miles of relaxing cycling in the spectacular limestone countryside of the White Peak. Much of the network is traffic-free, based on disused railway lines which have been restored for cyclists, walkers and horse riders by the Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire and Staffordshire county councils. Other sections follow "green lanes" and minor roads. New links have recently been added to the network. A leaflet has been produced to promote the routes, as well as providing details of local accommodation and catering businesses in the area.

www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/trailsleaflet.pdf

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

Monsal Trail and the Buxton - Matlock/Buxton Cycle Ring and Connections Project (See Annex B and the Peak Cycle Route Plan) - in supporting the unsuccessful bid for government funding by Derbyshire C.C. I wrote advising the Department for Transport that :

"Members of the Local Access Forum have been delighted to see already the number and variety of users and their obvious enjoyment on cycle, foot, horse, mobility scooter and family's with children and push chairs discovering previously hidden views from on high into the valleys. It is particularly encouraging through the Pedal Peak District project that many new riders have started cycling helping them to enjoy the area, get fit and healthy.

As part of the social marketing element of the project Pedal Peak District interacted with over 3,500 people at 108 cycle training sessions, led rides, outreach and bike maintenance courses between April 2010 and 31 March 2011.

The Local Access Forum considers this to be an inspirational and exciting Project. At our meeting on 16 June, 2011 the work done to date through partnership was warmly welcomed and the current Matlock/Buxton Cycle Ring and connections plans were strongly supported

The Forum feels the proposals will be fantastic as a means of enabling completion of circuits building on the excellent linear trails, widening and increasing participation and encouraging new users, enjoyment of wonderful countryside with connections to railheads at Buxton and Matlock and huge benefits to tourism and the economy in the area.

We feel there may also be scope for volunteering to help in delivery. Crucially for a major project like this, we know that the County Council and National Park Authority are excellent at delivery of projects of this type to a high standard for all to enjoy"

(Although the bid failed to attract the funding, our support can be used at appropriate times in future)

Regarding usage, Tim Nicholson at the Peak says there have been some problems with equipment and software, but on the 31st December 2011, the counter at Hassop recorded the 50,000th cyclist in either direction since the Trail opened in May (an average of 226 cycles per day). Pedal Peak District worked with nearly 4,000 people at cycling training, rides and bike maintenance course events between April 2010 and March 2011. Case studies from some of the people involved showing how they have progressed since to Project began in April can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/user/pedalpeakdistrict>.

The National Park Authority agreed funding for Carol Parsons to continue to work on Pedal Peak District for another year for one day a week. She is continuing to promote cycling, albeit on a more limited basis.

Sustainable Transport Action Plan - extracts re short term actions over 2 years

Develop a plan for a strategic cycle network for the Peak District.

The Peak District has been noted as one of the best places for recreational cycling in the United Kingdom. The National Park contains 65 miles of traffic free cycle trails, along with a network of quiet lanes suitable for cycling. We are keen to develop this network further for the benefit of both visitors and residents, along with the wider economy, environment and health and wellbeing of individuals. Although this action is named as a cycle network, it would benefit other users, such as walkers, as many routes would be multi-user. This strategic action has the following sub-actions:

a) **Develop a plan for a strategic cycle network within the Peak District**, including linking to surrounding urban areas and hubs. The plan would seek to fill in the gaps where an existing cycle route stops and then re-starts, and also look for links that do not exist, particularly to enable the surrounding areas to access the National Park sustainably. It would enable funding opportunities to be taken advantage of as and when they become available. This action would require a significant amount of officer time to implement, therefore, the action would need to be part of the 2013/14 or beyond service plan. It does not require any budget, as the action is to develop a plan, not implement proposals within the plan. However, external budget (whether from partners or grant funding) will be needed to implement the plan.

b) **Complete the Pedal Peak District Project / White Peak Loop**, so there is a loop of cycle trails, including links to Buxton and Matlock, and creating a more sustainable way for visitors to enter the National Park. The opening of the Monsal Trail tunnels in 2011 created an 8.5 mile traffic free route between Bakewell and Wyedale, 3 miles south of Buxton. The completion of the 'loop' is a sensible objective, however, the priority for intervention is the eastern side, linking Buxton and Matlock via Bakewell, and the immediate action is focussed upon the Woo Dale / Wye Dale section, to provide a link to Buxton.

This action is contained within the National Park Authority's Policy Service Service Plan for 2012/13, and as such there is already a commitment of officer time. There is no funding allocated to this action, and it is unlikely that the Authority would be asked to contribute any.

c) Work with bus operators so they can carry bikes on buses

Very few buses that operate within the Peak District can carry bikes. In other popular visitor destinations, buses capable of carrying bikes and other leisure equipment are more common. As a recognised national cycling destination, it would be desirable to have a bus network that could carry bikes, with the ability of serving trails which are predominantly accessed by car. Although we can start this sub action in the medium term, delivery will not be until the long term as it requires new buses or trailers being purchased.

This action would require a significant amount of officer time to implement, therefore, the action would need to be part of the 2014/15 or beyond service plan. There is no funding allocated to this action, and it is unlikely that the Authority would be asked to contribute any.

d) Influence the next rail stock so they are more able to carry bikes on rail routes into and across the National Park.

This action aims to enable more cyclists to access the National Park with their bikes by public transport, rather than 'driving and riding'. Although we can start this sub action in the medium term, delivery will not be until the long term as it requires new infrastructure.

This action would require officer time to implement, therefore, the action would need to be part of the 2014/15 or beyond service plan. There is no funding allocated to this action, and it is unlikely that the Authority would be asked to contribute any.

e) **Carry out a desk top study into cycle hire at hubs and interchange points** within the Peak District. This action seeks to examine whether it would be beneficial to have cycle hire at places like railway stations to encourage people to cycle when they enter the National Park. This would be learning from other National Parks and rural areas and taking forward relevant elements of that scheme into a desk top study to ascertain if it is viable in the Peak District.

This action would require a significant amount of officer time to implement, therefore, the action would need to be part of the 2014/15 or beyond service plan. There is no funding allocated to this action, as a desk top study primarily requires officer time. Any actions as a result of the desk top study would need to be financed in the future.

The Project included opening up and lighting the tunnels on the Monsal Trail which was recognised at an opening event in May 2011. The following extracts from a report to the Services Committee in November, 2009 show what it was aiming to achieve.

The project has real potential to fulfil many National Park Management Plan and National Park Authority corporate outcomes, particularly:

Outcome 4 – Climate Change and Natural Resources – climate change is being addressed and the natural resources of the National Park are being managed sustainably so that we:

- Reduce our adverse impact on climate change, and future generations are better able to manage, mitigate and adjust to the changes
- Are better placed to hand on a diverse, healthy and resilient natural environment to future generations

Outcome 6 – Traffic, Travel and Accessibility – that transport infrastructure and services have been improved to:

- Increase the proportion of visitors using methods of travel other than private cars
- Reduce the adverse environmental impacts of travel on the special qualities of the National Park
- Enable more sustainable travel patterns that lead to a reduction in the levels of carbon dioxide ...

Outcome 7 – Recreation and Tourism – there is increased participation in recreation opportunities in the PDNP amongst target groups so that they:

- Feel welcome in the National Park
- Have the opportunity to participate in diverse recreational opportunities that enhance the quality of their lives

... and that the sustainability of tourism experiences is increased especially resulting from ...

- A wider range of tourism products based on, and compatible with, the special qualities of the National Park

Outcome 8 – Understanding the National Park – there is increased understanding of the special qualities of the PDNP amongst target groups so that they:

- Understand why it is a special place
- Have the opportunity to make a personal contribution to sustainable management of the NP

The project would also contribute to the Recreation Strategy, the Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Sustainable Transport Action Plan (in draft) and the Climate Change Action Plan.

Background

The project essentially comprises two main elements: (a) the capital infrastructure works (approximately 75-80% of the £2.25M grant), and (b) a social marketing project (the remaining approximately 25% of the grant).

Proposals

The basis for the proposed cycling development project in the Peak District concerns the following key points:

- Unique accessibility to large urban areas in the north and midlands
- Strong traditions of effective and innovative access provision
- Clear commitment to using the National Park to promote more sustainable lifestyles
- Existing expertise in cycling provision and the ability to move quickly to achieve more
- Good gateway towns and transport hubs on which to build connections
- Strong partnerships and effective relations with e.g. main councils, landowners, funding bodies, transport agencies and recreation partners

The strategic weaknesses that the project would address are:

- Lack of connections between urban areas, gateway towns, transport hubs and cycling infrastructure
- Insufficient has been done to promote cycling as a practicable way of accessing the National Park, Gateway towns, transport hubs and routes that connect directly into urban areas
- Insufficient has been done to use leisure cycling experiences to promote more widespread cycling and hence healthier lifestyles, more sustainable living and overall reductions in CO₂ emissions.
- Insufficient has been done to promote and provide for specialist cycling interests – staying visitors, long-distance cycling, older/disabled/younger cyclists, events and festivals and cycle-related businesses

The overall aim of the project would be to use our existing contact with leisure cyclists who visit the Peak District to encourage them to adopt healthier lifestyles and also to create a continuous cycle trail from Matlock to Buxton, to link that trail to the wider cycling infrastructure and rights of way network around the National Park and to develop utility cycling in the Peak District.

In particular the project will:

- Address sustainable lifestyles by increasing the uptake of cycling for health and well being
- Reduce the environmental impact of recreation
- Creating an iconic and high-quality visitor experience that links related offers such as cycle hire and Peak District products
- Creates links between the trail and surrounding urban areas, and between the trail and other routes in and around the National Park
- Promote understanding of the special qualities of the National Park

Specific planned project outputs include:

- A complete functional cycle trail between the rail heads of Buxton and Matlock with scope for marketing cycling in the Peak to an even wider audience, establishing rail and cycle travel 'packages' and enhancing the sustainable travel options for visitors
- A complete cycle trail linking the existing Monsal, High Peak and Tissington Trails

- The opening of tunnels along the Monsal Trail, adding further to the ‘wow factor’ that cyclists can experience along the length of the trail
- Transformation of a currently disjointed route, only open in parts to cyclists and less experienced walkers
- Reopening of 4 tunnels (each around 400m long) which have been closed to the public since the railway closed in the late 1960s
- Potential for some 800,000 users on the Monsal and Tissington Trails (this figure is based on projections of survey data relating to these Trails)
- Linking Bakewell and other settlements to the trails, together with 11 nature reserves in the Wye Valley Special Area of Conservation, the highest designation of nature conservation
- A link to the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site and the proposed exemplar gateway visitor centre at Cromford
- Stimulation of cycling support services (storage, hire and servicing) in the Peak District, particularly in Buxton and Matlock
- An even stronger case and increased likelihood for further investment in the infrastructure from other sources of funding (for example: aggregates levy, lottery funding) on the basis that this would be one of the top cycling routes in an English National Park
- Increased access to cycling via rail routes and a wider cycle network in the Peak District will provide a more marketable ‘product’, attract more users and enable more data to be captured in relation to behaviour changes
- An enhanced social marketing programme, capitalising on the expanded infrastructure, cycling opportunities and greater scope for connection with other cycling programmes
- Greater involvement by, for example, the private sector in marketing the ‘offer’, especially to families, other ‘occasional’ cyclists and new users (on the basis that all the routes would be accessible to utility cyclists, for example through the Destination Management Partnership)

Introduction

Derbyshire County Council has undertaken a study to outline proposals to develop a strategic network of multi-user routes, or *Greenways*, for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those with mobility difficulties, across the geographical area of West Derbyshire. *Greenway* development is seen as a valuable asset that cuts across many disciplines and meets many of the current targets and policy initiatives supported by Central Government. *Greenways* improve accessibility to facilities, services, schools, work, places of interest and to the countryside. It provides alternative transport choices and links communities together to reduce isolation and promote independence and well being. Additional benefits are linked to the creation of new tourism based infrastructure to promote economic growth and sustainable development. In the West of the County this will provide particular benefits to business potential within the Peak District National Park.

Purpose of strategy

This strategy extends the area of study of the East Derbyshire *Greenway* Strategy and the South Derbyshire *Greenway* Strategy. It will form a strand of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and will inform the Local Transport Plan 2006/11 by extending the Derbyshire Cycle Network throughout the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Districts.

Research undertaken

A desktop study of the area, site investigations and consultations with relevant key stakeholders and access providers were carried out to contribute the information necessary to identify the resulting proposed routes.

Analysis and Conclusions

The analysis showed that the study was generally met with enthusiasm and a great deal of support for the development of a *Greenway* network in the West area of Derbyshire. Many routes were proposed by individuals, Local Authorities and corporate bodies that will further support existing or proposed strategies, plans and policies generated by the consulted organisations. *West Derbyshire and High Peak Greenway Strategy - Executive Summary*

The Vision

The long term vision for the area is to develop a network of multi-user traffic-free *Greenways* across Derbyshire Dales and the High Peak to provide long distance, middle distance and shorter circuits that interconnect with each other and the existing highway network. The routes will connect people and places to enhance recreational and utilitarian journeys, on high quality and attractive pathways.

The Strategy

The Strategy identifies 122 km of existing *Greenways* and 123 km of *Greenways* that could be developed in future should opportunities present themselves.

The consultation responses I have received are much appreciated and should be considered and used in further work. I have put my overall response in each case in bold in brackets at the end of each one. I have run out of time to do a major re-write at this stage, but the material is there for the future.

Peak District LAF Members who asked to be involved and have responded

Terry Howard

I recognise the amount of work you have put in and would not want to alter it apart from adding a few comments. As you know at one of our LAF meetings, I expressed certain reservations and concerns about cycling in the Peaks. They are certainly not anti-cycling but are precautionary. Cycling is increasing in popularity and so is its technological development to the extent that it can be a "challenge and adrenalin" sport. Cycling is more than just going for a "family day ride with the kids" on the Monsal Trail. It can be "downhill racing" in woodland and on moorland. Many such trails have recently been developed and promoted widely, not always with appropriate permission. They include footpaths and open access land. One of the latest "crazes" is rock or boulder jumping.

What I am getting at is there are various forms of cycling from fairly passive riding to very challenging some of which can and does have a negative environmental effect on where the activity is taking place. Also such activities are spreading onto public footpaths and access land where only access by foot is permitted. Added to this is the occasional, but irresponsible behaviour of some cyclists on what are shared routes. I believe there is a need for a code of practice for cyclists, not unlike the country code for walkers, which clearly explains rights and responsibilities. It is right to promote cycling but for the right reasons and to be able to "accommodate" it without compromising the environment and other uses.

(Helpful comments and think about messages/"Code" especially initially re Trails Management Plan?)

Sue Weatherley

Ideas.

A lot of work has already been done and the various documents contain lots of good ideas. In fact I don't think I would add anything, but suggest a different approach making cyclists the starting point:

- What do first time cyclists need? (The lets try something new market)
- What do families need?
- What do those with some kind of disability/difficulty in using ordinary bikes need?
- What do competent cyclists who want to go beyond the trails need?
- What do cycle tourers need?
- What do mountain bikers need?

Celebrate the network that already exists from the cities/towns/railway stations into the Park and look for opportunities to enhance and develop this. The existing network does give us a lot to celebrate. I am always telling folks that you can start from Parsley Hay and go anywhere- a few miles down the trail and back, a circuit to Hartington for a cafe/pub or off to Scotland, Land's End, Portsmouth, Holyhead etc etc (and the reverse, of course, you can get to Parsley Hay from anywhere)

Points

1. Cycling is no longer just one activity. There are many different kinds of activity and we need to recognise this. The extreme mountain bikers are not really interested in the Monsal Trail etc. We need to recognise the various activities within cycling- mountain biking technical routes, mountain biking endurance events, off road riding routes, long distance touring, family activities, beginners commuters etc.
2. There is a need within all these to allow for personal development, to encourage beginners to develop and become more confident and independent. There is a continuum starting with family rides along the trails for

3. short distances to cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats (stopping at Parsley Hay en route) to extreme technical mountain biking. I think it is important to build in the idea of self-development into all the thinking round the strategy, after all the Park is an inspiring place....
4. Specific mountain bike courses really need special resources. A lot has been done in Scotland on this and as far as the Peak District is concerned it may be that opportunities are limited as this kind of activity is not really suitable on shared use paths on safety grounds. Use of Forestry areas and special facilities or reclaimed quarry sites?
5. Maybe we should acknowledge that some activities will not be considered as priorities- they may be best done outside the National Park
6. Any strategy must allow for opportunistic development within the broad framework.

(Very helpful approach which is worth considering as work is taken forward, and agree need to be able to accommodate opportunism)

Andrew McCloy

Your notes pull together various strands very well. As someone who has also had an input into the draft NP Sustainable Transport Action Plan I can report that Members feel strongly that the Authority needs to take a positive and far-sighted approach to cycling development in the NP, but that our various strategies need to be coordinated and complementary - cycling crosses over from pure recreation into trails management, climate change, asset management (eg long term future of Miller's Dale), transport, tourism, economy, etc, not to mention wider subject areas of even more interest to our partners, such as health.

Also, I have a personal and business interest in the wider subject via the cycling website I co-run. You may be interested to glance at my latest blog on the very subject of cycling development in the Peak District at peakdistrictcycleways.co.uk/blog/

(I have looked at Andrew's blog which is excellent. That web link is very useful and I agree it is essential for there to be an integrated approach on this and to recognise the "cross overs" he mentions)

Clare Griffin

I think it's a terrific document, well done. My comments:

Re extending the trail network to meet the railheads at Buxton and Matlock. I think this would encourage people who don't currently cycle in the park to come and try it (fitting nicely with Sue W's comment about 'what do first time cyclists need'). You could include a link in this section to section 5e of the Peak District Sustainable Transport Action Plan - if hire bikes were to be made available at rail stations in the future it would encourage people who don't currently cycle (perhaps because they don't have their own bikes, or because of the difficulty in carrying bikes on trains) to come to the park. Hire bikes at rail heads would also be attractive for people who aren't primarily interested in cycling but might hire one to get to interesting walking areas. The idea is becoming more widespread - I note that Manchester Piccadilly station has recently installed a 'bike dock' full of rental bikes, so the idea has extended beyond London.

Opening up the Monsal Tunnels last year was a brilliant start and I think the further expansion of the network will encourage timid cyclists like me and those with young families to enjoy the park more, knowing that there are many miles of traffic-free routes available. The idea of reducing speed limits suggested in the Sustainable Transport Action Plan will also encourage cyclists of this sort.

In 'Cycling and Mountain Biking' - you address the specific needs of mountain bikers for more adventurous terrain and note the success of purpose built trail centres in other areas and the expectation of users that more should be developed in the peaks. I think this is a great idea: the mountain bike centres I've visited at 7 Stanes in Dumfries and Galloway and Coed Llandegla in Wales are always really busy at weekends so there is definitely an unmet need. I agree with Terry's comments about the need to avoid conflict with other users on shared routes, concerns about misuse due to lack of understanding (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/news/repair-illegal-damage-roddebury-hillfort/>) and the need to introduce a cycling 'code of conduct'.

Perhaps we could work towards creating some mountain bike only routes, to avoid problems while still allowing adventure-seekers to have a good day out. I think there are some routes like this in Macclesfield Forest already (I agree that forest areas lend themselves to this sort of thing nicely, which sadly we're a bit short of in the peaks compared to Wales!).

(Again, most helpful and can reflect this as work goes forward)

Charlotte Gilbert

As ever a brilliant vision bringing all the threads together; so many times these interconnecting strategies offer so much but the specifics need to be teased out. All of what you say is also applicable to horse riders and on their behalf I thank you. I do feel we are at the stage when we need to take the ideas formed in the strategies and make them happen. I think cyclists and horse riders share many of the same goals and we should look to a greater involvement in driving these strategies forward together.

(Point re Horse riding agreed and referred to early in the report in line with previous views of Forum Members)

Peak District National Park Authority Officers

Judy Gould - Recreation Strategy Manager

I've now had a chance to look at your well researched proposal and can answer your questions.

The outcomes you have quoted are from the first Recreation Strategy action plan; the current action plan, 2011-13 (available on our website although I've attached the word doc version for you), has a reduced number of actions, recognizing our and partners' reduced resources (loss of 1.5 posts in recreation strategy work so currently 4.5 FTE plus Carol's extra day a week to continue marketing cycling activities). A cycling task group does not feature in our action plan or Policy Service plan, although I understand from Emily that the draft STAP does include looking at a cycling strategy. **(Noted and amended, I hope correctly)**

Carol Parsons attends DCC cycling liaison meetings which help co-ordinate policy and activity but we recognize this tends to be ad hoc depending on opportunities. We also work with NT and RSPB over bridleway developments on Eastern Moors estate (Mike) and Andy and I have discussed some possible links to trails (Manifold, HP & Tissington) which would improve bridleway circuits which I've to progress. **(Very helpful and welcome)**

It would be great to see how all relevant Highway Authorities ROWIPs and Greenway Strategies interlinked, and to see priorities for the PD mapped (especially links to the PD). If the STAP gets approval later in the year and includes a cycling strategy, maybe this is the place to do it? If any LAF members have the time and inclination to make a start on this it could be very helpful. **(Start made and asking what other help LAF members maybe able to offer)**

Carol Parsons

Questions such as those raised by Ken Parker can be raised through the DCC external cycle liaison group meetings held every 6 months. These are chaired by Jim Seymour at DCC and many local group representatives attend. Perhaps Ken or someone from Matlock CC would like to be represented? In any case I would suggest he contacts Jim Seymour in order to be kept informed of local cycling developments jim.seymour@derbyshire.gov.uk **(I have copied Jim Seymour in, but no response to date)** A top level group has recently been convened by Jim Seymour to discuss progressing Peak District Trails Loop. Jim Dixon represents the PDNPA on that group, so although progress will be incremental and is subject to funding, it is definitely high up the agenda. **(Welcome)**

Abi Ball - Land Agent

Thanks for copying me into this. I've read through your draft document and agree that It does seem like a very good time to pull together a Cycling Strategy for the Peak District, to co-ordinate all of the different strands of activity that are currently taking place. From the Trails Management Plan perspective, I am currently locked away(!), preparing the first draft and I am as you say, hoping to be able to consult the Steering Group again towards the end of June.

From the public consultation exercise we did, there is a tremendous desire for improved connectivity between trails and towns, and the wider rights of way network, and so strategies such as the *Greenways Strategy* are very important. The two principle messages seem to be the need to encourage respect amongst users, and the need to provide better connectivity of routes. A *Cycling Strategy* would to my mind, help support the effort to further develop the White Peak Loop.

(Helpful for LAF to see the Draft Management Plan and a presentation on it - Charlotte is our representative)

Mark Evans - Transport Policy Officer, Integrated Transport & Planning, Staffordshire County Council

Overall, your paper appears to be very thorough and covers a great deal of relevant ground. You asked what work the County Council was doing on Cycling.

For your information, I worked closely in 2011 with Carol Parsons at visit peak district to develop a series of cycle journeys as part of the Pedal the Peak campaign. Staffordshire helped develop two routes, namely the routes titled 'Roaches and Reservoirs' and 'Hills, Dales and Trails'.

The County Council has also published its own set of cycle maps covering the whole of Staffordshire. One such map covers the whole of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area (which incorporates the SW quarter of the Peak Park) and is available in paper form as well as being available on the County Council's web site at www.staffordshire.gov.uk (listed under Transport and then Cycling Maps). **(Referred to in the report now)**

Whilst acknowledging that the Staffordshire Moorlands map was not developed directly with the Peak Park, I made sure it was extended eastwards to include cycle trails and other useful cycle information to clearly show cycle links into Derbyshire and the Peak.

More recently, the County Council has published its Spring/Summer Out & About guide on what to do in and around Staffordshire. This 52-page newspaper style guide covers various attraction within the Staffordshire Peak District and for the first time, includes an advert promoting cycling and our cycle maps.

You mention that cycling is high on the political agenda. Whilst cycle facilities continue to be developed and promoted here in Staffordshire, we cannot claim that cycling is high on our local political agenda.

You refer to Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIP). Here in Staffordshire, we published our RoWIP back in 2008 and we are required by law to review and amend, if necessary the plan within 10 years of publication. There are no plans at the moment to amend our current plan. I can also confirm that Staffordshire has no *Greenway Strategies* within the Staffordshire Peak. Staffordshire's RoWIP can be found on our website at <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/RightsOfWay/plan/rowplan.aspx>

Finally I'd like to point out that Staffordshire currently only has one direct cycle link into the Peak Park, namely the Manifold Valley Trail which starts at Waterhouse and continues to Hulme End whereby it is then signed via on and off-road routes to link into Hartington which then gives access to the Tissington Trail. Our draft cycle strategy (currently awaiting approval before publication) states that we will concentrate our limited resources on completing the National Cycle Network in Staffordshire and then on filling in strategic missing links in our current local cycle network. The delivery of any future cycle schemes in the Staffordshire Peak would be dependent upon external funding availability as this would increase the potential to attract extremely limited internal resources.

(Useful to maintain liaison and see the Draft Cycling Strategy)

Wayne Bexton - *Greenways & Countryside Officer, Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service* in response to comments from **Ken Parker** as a former Director at the Peak and Matlock Tuesday Cyclist Group. (Ken's points are in normal type and Wayne's responses in May are in bold italics below - Ken had from me the position statements from Wayne which were welcomed):

1. Not enough emphasis has been placed on the local benefits of the links proposed. For Oaker and Snittterton the project has been put forward simply to connect up the loop for visitors - so naturally the local people fear being overwhelmed by unruly cyclists (most unlikely to be the reality but it's an understandable reaction).

Yet a traffic-free all-weather path across the fields and alongside the river from Oaker to Matlock would be a fantastic local benefit too - teaching local children to cycle, pushing a pram into Matlock for shopping, taking granny for a walk. None of this seems to be being put forward in support of the proposal.

(All the localised benefits have been put forward in the planning application and in the numerous levels of consultation that were carried out).

2. Given that any proposal is likely to generate opposition, the relevant Authorities need to have the courage of their convictions and, while taking objections seriously, they need to weigh up the validity of the objections against the benefits of the proposal. The authorities seemed to give up at the first sign of hostility in the case of the Matlock-Darley Bridge link planning application which was submitted by DCC in early 2012, but now seems to have been withdrawn (see 3!).

(The Matlock to Oker route was initially consulted on in 2007 via the West Derbyshire and High Peak Greenway Strategy process. At this time South Darley Parish wrote in support of the proposal. The route was subsequently included within the Derbyshire Dales District Council Local Plan detail, as a priority for upgrade. This was consulted on locally in excess of three times.

(The planning application for the Matlock to Oker route has NOT been withdrawn. A decision is due at the end of May and contractors are in place for a physical start on the ground in June).

3. Considered negotiations are vital to minimise objections and produce the best scheme. The belief in Snitterton and Oker is that DCC tried to bulldoze an inappropriate scheme through with no advance discussion with owners affected (that may or may not be true, but it's the local perception). DCC declined to attend the public meeting the Parish Council organised which just added to the hostility (and if the perceptions were incorrect the opportunity to put the record straight was missed). There are local supporters of the proposal but they will inevitably keep quiet in this situation.

(As detailed in point 1, an extensive consultation process was carried out. Indeed the Derwent Valley Trust who developed the Heritage Way assisted with landowner contact. DCC did NOT decline the offer of attending meetings. I have attended two meetings with the Parish Council and several with the landowners involved).

4. Designs appropriate to the location need to be adopted. The Oaker - Matlock scheme was (according to the local story), 3 metres hard surfacing, removal of existing stiles, grubbing out of a hedge and altogether a highly engineered scheme. All that is really necessary is a 1.5 metre hard surface. The stiles etc could have been left and a self-closing 1.2metre gate installed alongside. The hedge removal was un-necessary. A more environmentally sensitive solution is not just desirable in itself, it would have removed one element of the local hostility and been much cheaper too.

(The route design was sympathetic to the location. Arboriculture, Ecological and Heritage Surveys have all been completed. No stiles or squeeze stones were earmarked for removal, with new access furniture just sitting adjacent. No hedges were to be removed. I'm keen to understand where this total fabrication has come from?!!)

5. Who is leading and where is the money coming from? The key responsibilities seem to be with PDNPA, DCC and the two District Councils. The loop seems to have policy level and politician support of all four Authorities. If that is true it needs to be translated into implementation. But making it happen seems to have been left to a newly formed charity (who made the planning applications for the links around Buxton and the Bakewell - Rowsley extension of the Monsal Trail). Assuming approvals eventually are forthcoming who will implement? ...and where is the money? Who will maintain the various sections of the completed loop?

(The County Council is committed to staged delivery of the Greenway Strategy. This includes the Matlock to Buxton route. Funding is available for the Matlock to Oker section and beyond this funds will be sought. It's our policy to formerly dedicate greenway routes, although Peak Cycle Links are developing concessionary sections only).

(I must stress my concern with a lot of the misconceptions with Ken's comments. I hope my responses are useful)

Ken Parker has offered to be a point of contact re the Strategy as it goes forward. He is on kenparker@uwclub.net He has since provided me a contact at Matlock Cycling Club (MCC). It is Richard Thoday who is a member of the committee at MCC and also a member of the core group at Derwent Valley Cycleway Group. His number is 01629 582300 and e-mail rthoday@uwclub.net

(Overall, helpful to air and share these points and hear from Wayne what is happening. Ken Parker & Richard Thoday are there for future contact)

Sustrans - Matthew Easter

Please find the attached where I have made a few comments in red. **(I have taken most of them on board in the re-draft)** I also attach a copy of the recently drafted sustainable travel action plan (STAP) consultation document with the comments I sent with it in italics below this email-not sure if they are helpful at all. **(Noted, but had made a response on the STAP for LAF)** I'm not sure I fully understand the purpose of your document, but its certainly fully comprehensive. I would support the development of a more coherent cycling strategy for the Peak District split into network improvements, promoting travel behaviour change, leisure routes/trails and tourism opportunities, the needs of local communities re active travel etc. I'm a bit unclear about how all the various plans link together and how as a promoter of cycling I keep influencing things through this heirarchy of plans. **(Explained to Matthew it is a basis for further work, hopefully by the Peak with others)**

From a Sustrans perspective we want to see further commitment to the development of access onto the trails so wholeheartedly support the Peak Cycle Links loop route. I think that more should also be done to encourage local communities to walk and cycle as part of the journey to school or work etc. There doesn't seem to be too much offered by way of cycle training, travel planning etc. **(Again one which might be worth adding for the future)**

I will be interested to see how the development of the sustainable transport action plan progresses. There are some commitments in this plan, but it won't be delivered unless a coherent group is allowed to steer progress and support the actions. For example, Sustrans does still receive funding periodically from the DFT and I would love to be able to say immediately if asked, these are the top three fully worked up schemes where there are gaps in the network, ideally where permissions have been granted and that I know the PNDP and its partners back these scemes as those to prioritise. I'm not sure I can do this now, though it maybe because I have been less involved in the Peak District until recently. **(Useful point and justification for having a Strategy and Plans worked up)**

Sustrans is obviously always keen to expand the NCN and gain further support from local volunteers to do so and we would hope that all stretches of new route can be adopted as NCN.

If you need any more information, please let me know. **(Useful to have along to a future LAF meeting to do a presentation and question and answer)**

Note sent to Jim Dixon as Chief Executive of the Peak District National Park Authority

I am dropping you a note now to ask:

- Whether you have any thoughts to add to what I have done so far?, and
- If you feel there is any scope within the Authority at some point to take this further with perhaps partnership input and external funding? I say that recognising that resources for delivery of the various inter-related strategies are less than when they were first drafted.
- Is there any approach to other interests you could make to help with an important area of work referred to in both the Sustainable Transport Action Plan and the excellent Recreation Strategy? I am sure Edwina and I would be happy to write in support if that would help.

I look forward to hearing from you before I do any more work on this please. I have copied colleagues in for information, including Geoff Nickolds as Member Representative for Recreation and a former LAF Member.

(I know Jim is very busy, but I hope to hear from him before the LAF meeting so I can relay his thoughts)