

Peak District Local Access Forum

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Item: 7

Title: Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Update

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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.

Progress to September 2016

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

Aim 1: Existing Public Rights of Way network

- **Path condition surveys** to assess the ease of use of the network are still continuing, with 25 new volunteers recently recruited to help with the surveys that take place in May and November. Last year's pass rate of 68.1% fell short of the annual target of 72.5%. The survey in May 2016 returned a 64.2% pass rate, with overall performance dependent on a second survey to be carried out in November
- Funding is available for a countywide **roadside signposting** programme in 2016/17
- Contracts have been set up for the purchase of supplies of gates to replace stiles in order to improve the quality of **path furniture** across the network
- **Surface improvements:** work is ongoing to deliver drainage and surface improvements funded through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme for several green lanes and public rights of way which have been prioritised as being in most need of repair or which benefit most users. Public consultations are currently underway for proposed repairs to Hurstclough Lane, Chapel Gate and Brampton Bridleway 73, as well as improvements to Crich FP42 which links to Whatstandwell Railway Station: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/have_your_say/consultation_search/allconsultations/default.asp

Aim 2: Definitive Map and Statement

- In terms of dealing with the **backlog of legal orders**, since the beginning of April 2016, 18 cases have been reported to committee, 6 progressed to order making stage and 8 orders have been brought into effect, including

the claimed footpath along Rowfields Lane in the Parish of Kniveton which was confirmed by the Secretary of State. Written representations are underway for 3 opposed orders, including Derby Lane at Monyash and public inquiries scheduled for a further 4 cases over the next 4 months. Officers have been involved in two public inquiries during September

- We have Cabinet Member approval for a 12 week consultation to scope public opinion for a Traffic Regulation Order on Jacobs Ladder (Stoney Middleton Byway Open to All Traffic No. 15). This follows requests from several organisations concerned about the narrow width of the track and vehicles travelling at speed
- A review of the charges associated with the promotion of Public Path Orders was considered by the County Council's Regulatory – Licensing and Appeals Committee on 12 September 2016
- We continue to keep the **digital mapping** of public rights of way up to date as further legal changes take place. This information can be viewed on-line through the Derbyshire Mapping Portal, where it is possible to see the different types of routes eg bridleways and byways, as well as the completed cycle network (Greenways)
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/partnerships/derbyshire_mapping_portal/

Aim 3: An improved network

- 13.75km of **new Greenway routes** were provided in 2015/16 by completing sections of the White Peak Loop and the Archaeological Way in the District of Bolsover. The construction of a 1.6km section of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail off Monks Road near Charlesworth was made possible with LTP funding and a £190,000 grant from Natural England
- Maintenance has continued on the **Pennine Bridleway** with additional funds of £25,000 awarded through the LTP in June to repair potholes on Highstool Lane, near Chelmorton. This is a heavily used section of the Trail which is also on the route of the promoted 'Eroica Britannia' cycle ride. A further £55,000 of LTP money will be used to resurface part of the High Peak Trail section of the Pennine Bridleway between Hopton Top and Longcliffe. Both projects are scheduled for the Autumn
- We have targeted 8km of new Greenways to be delivered in 2016/17, including further sections of the White Peak Loop and the Archaeological Way, along with Phase 3 of the Hipper Valley Greenway (Somersall Lane to Holymoorside) and the Hilton Greenway Spur in South Derbyshire. Projects completed so far this year include the Chesterfield Station Link, resurfacing of the Erewash Canal towpath between Awsworth Road and Potter Bridge and the Clowne connectivity scheme which provides easy access into the town centre and linear park via the Clowne Branch Line
- **Pedal Peak II** - Information is regularly updated on the County Council's website: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/pedalpeak with the quarterly newsletter currently being circulated to over 1,500 individuals. Progress with the White Peak Loop is as follows:

- **White Peak Loop West – Extending High Peak Trail into Buxton**
Blue and white ‘WPL’ cycle signs are now in place indicating the 6km section of the route from the top of the High Peak Trail along minor roads through Earl Sterndale and up to Dale Head Road. The new 3km off road section over Staker Hill and down into Harpur Hill is almost complete on the ground apart from the last 100 metres near the Parks Inn. This is subject to further negotiations and design work. It will be fully open to cyclists and pedestrians once the final link has been provided. For the time being, the onward route from Harpur Hill into Buxton will follow the on road section of the Sustrans promoted Pennine Cycleway (National Cycle Network Route 68)
- **White Peak Loop East – Extending the Monsal Trail into Matlock**
The 8km route between Matlock and Rowsley has attracted considerable local support and is proving to be extremely popular, but will not be formally opened or promoted until all the work is complete. The section between Rowsley and Churchtown is available for cyclists and walkers to use. Construction is still underway for the section linking Whitworth Park to Station Road in Darley Dale and should be finished towards the end of October. Although work is well advanced for the section between Old Road, Darley Dale and Matlock town centre, negotiations are still ongoing with the Rail Regulator over what is required for a rail crossing at the Matlock end. In the meantime this section will only be available as a through route for pedestrians. The remaining 4km section through the Haddon Estate is still at the landowner negotiation and design stage. DCC has allocated some LTP money to fully design this section, but additional funds will be needed for its construction. It will not be available on the ground for some time and we are investigating the feasibility of using an alternative off road route which avoids the A6 on a temporary basis
- The County Council has provided a response to the Department for Transport’s Draft **Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy** which was timed well with the recent publication of the Derbyshire Cycling Plan and ongoing development of the Council’s own Key Cycle Network
- We have contributed information about our current and future Greenway projects ready for when work commences on developing a new **Derbyshire Infrastructure Investment Plan** later in the year
- **Investment:** A total of £1,883,000 of capital funding has been secured through the Local Transport Capital Programme (LTP) for access related projects in 2016/17. Multi-user routes to benefit include the Pennine Bridleway National Trail, Clowne Branch Line, Chesterfield Station Link, Trans Pennine Trail, Sett Valley Trail, White Peak Loop and Archaeological Way, along with the Denby, Ironville, Hilton, Mickleover and Great Northern Greenways. The money will also enable work to continue through Service Level Agreements with the Peak District National Park Authority and

Groundwork Creswell, as well as helping to support our work with volunteers

- We are also exploring other **external sources of funding** – these include
 - A European Funding application to compile a Visitor Economy Destination Plan (Visit. Sleep. Cycle. Repeat project) for North Nottinghamshire and NE Derbyshire. This will also focus on targeted improvements to current cycling infrastructure to provide better connectivity between key tourism attractions across the area for visitors, as well as being a sustainable travel option for local people
 - A £1.3million revenue bid has also been submitted for funding from the Department for Transport's Access Fund. "Reaching Our Peak" aims to encourage more sustainable travel using bus services and the network of cycling and walking trails around the market towns of Buxton, Matlock, Bakewell, Chesterfield and Ashbourne. Further details of the bid are available here:
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/20160909%20Derbyshire%20CC%20Access%20Fund%20Application_tcm44-284111.pdf
 - A public consultation is underway to help strengthen future funding applications for the installation of two multi-user bridleway bridges linking Jacksdale and Codnor Park, Ironville
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/have_your_say/consultation_search/Consultation_search_index/bridleway_bridges_linking_jacksdale_and_codnor_park_ironville.asp

Aim 4: Promotion, understanding and use of the network

- Countryside Service staff were again involved in helping to support the **Eroica Britannia** cycling event back in June, with the High Peak Junction feeding station and Bakewell Festival stand
- The sixteenth **Derbyshire Woodland Festival** is being held at Elvaston Castle Country Park on 24 and 25 September, again with a DADLAF presence. This provides a good opportunity to promote the work of the Countryside Service/ Local Access Forum and highlight the access and outdoor recreation opportunities which Derbyshire has to offer. A smaller scale event is being held at Hayfield Countryside Centre on 2 October
- The **new Volunteering Guide** which will be made available to all our volunteers can be found in the related documents section of the Countryside volunteering webpages:
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/volunteering/default.asp
- Earlier in the year we received approval to enter into legal agreements with **British Canoeing** to enable/ promote greater canoe access to the Chesterfield and Cromford Canals operated by DCC's Countryside Service.

Aim 5: Greater community involvement

- We are preparing to carry out a six week public consultation on the draft Policy for **Working with Community Groups**. This was discussed with both Local Access Forums at an early stage back in December 2015. We

are intending to produce an on-line questionnaire, but in the meantime would welcome any comments on the document which is available here: [http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2016.09.13%20\(4c\)%20Countryside%20Service%20Policy_tcm44-283822.pdf](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2016.09.13%20(4c)%20Countryside%20Service%20Policy_tcm44-283822.pdf)

- Following on from the success of the Green Tonic Project, a **new Service Level Agreement** has been drawn up with Groundwork Creswell to deliver access improvements/ habitat work in 2016/17. The main focus is along the Clowne Branch Line and Pennine Bridleway National Trail, as well as public rights of way in South Derbyshire and the High Peak. There is also an emphasis on providing opportunities for community engagement which contribute to people's improved health and wellbeing
- **Volunteer contribution:** There were 4,816 volunteer days recorded in 2015/16 (exceeding the target of 3,000) with an estimated value of just over £1million. In the first quarter of 2016/17, volunteers have contributed 1,128 days which are estimated to be worth around £230,000

Restructuring of Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service

- The Cabinet report regarding the outcome of the public consultation on the future of Tapton Lock and Hayfield Visitor Centres can be viewed here – it seeks approval for alternative operating arrangements arising from this exercise: [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/\(7z\)%20Visitor%20Centres_tcm44-284064.pdf](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/(7z)%20Visitor%20Centres_tcm44-284064.pdf). In a second exempt report, Cabinet will be considering a revised proposal for the future redesign of the Countryside Service

Ten Year Review of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Work has continued towards the ten year review of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan due in 2017. As part of the review process, the County Council is required to make a new assessment of the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public, including those with a disability or limited mobility

It is our intention to work closely with both Local Access Forums during the review process, mainly through the joint RoWIP Sub Group, so we can draw on members' invaluable knowledge and expertise. The LAFs' input will be used to inform any public/stakeholder consultation which is undertaken

- An Accessibility Event took place on 18 March, organised by the Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum in conjunction with the County Council and Derby City Council. Several members of the Peak District LAF also attended the event. The aim was to explore some of the issues surrounding the accessibility of the rights of way and countryside access network, especially for less able users and highlight the benefits it can bring for people's health and wellbeing. Notes from the event will be published on the County Council's website
- A joint RoWIP Sub Group meeting with members of both Local Access Forums held in May will also help to inform the new assessment. This

focused on the needs of other users (walkers, equestrians, cyclists and motorised users, local residents and visitors to the area) to see if they have changed since the original RoWIP was produced in 2007. There was also discussion about wider issues relating to rights of way from landowners, nature conservation and tourism perspectives, as well as reference to the special qualities of the Peak District National Park. Notes of the meeting are available and any further comments from LAF members would be welcomed. A separate meeting was held with officers from the Peak District National Park Authority who were unable to attend the joint Sub Group

- A further meeting is planned for the Autumn to look at current route provision. This will involve assessing the Definitive Public Rights of Way Map, extent of open access land etc.

Recommendation

That Forum Members note this progress report for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.