

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: 22 March 2012

Item: 7

Title: Green Lanes Update

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Purpose of the Report

The report provides an update on the National Park Authority's progress with managing recreational motor vehicles in the National Park.

1) Strategy

Following an extended consultation, a revised strategy for the management of recreational motorised vehicles on unsealed highways and off-road was approved by the NPA in February 2012. A revised procedure for making Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) was also adopted in February 2012. These can be found at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/vehicles.

The strategy emphasises the need to protect the special qualities of the NP and that responsible and sustainable use and a partnership approach is inherent in doing this.

2) Action Plans

Plans have been produced identifying actions for 2012/13 covering the management of green lanes, controlling illegal use and communications. These plans are being reported to Audit Resources and Performance Committee (ARP) on 23 March 2012 (www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/committees).

In addition, action plans for the first 16 priority routes have been finalised following input from LAF members at a special meeting on the 1 March 2012. The notes of the meeting are attached in Appendix 1 and the route plans can be found at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/priorityroutes. Relevant Parish Councils have been sent details. These plans are accompanied by route management plans for the middle 8 routes. This format supersedes the previous joint NPA/DCC management plans. Route information will be updated from time to time, as required.

There will be a further report to ARP Committee in 12 months time evaluating progress and setting actions for 2013/14. Interim progress updates will be provided to the Forum.

3) Resources

In December 2011, further resources for a two year period were allocated by the Authority. The focus will be on progressing actions on priority routes. Initially the work has involved reporting on the consultation for the revised strategy and identifying issues, objectives and actions for this work.

4) Partnership Working

Regular liaison meetings will continue to take place with Highway Authorities and the Police. Work will also continue with vehicle user groups to raise awareness of issues and encourage compliance with codes of conduct. A paper is provided to this meeting on future proposals for the Green Lanes Forum, which represents a range of interests including user groups.

5) Proposed New Procedures for Traffic Orders

The Department of Transport is consulting on simplifying the processes for advertising and consulting on TROs. Specific requirements relating to the methods of publicising orders are proposed to be removed and consultation procedures will be amended to allow the flexibility to consult, in addition to the police, other local authorities for the area, and town or parish councils, only such bodies as are considered appropriate. The document does not make mention of NPAs and the associated legislation and guidance. Comments are being submitted to English National Parks Authorities Association (ENPAA) to form a joint response. The consultation can be found at www.dft.gov.uk/consultations. The deadline is 23 April 2012.

6) Other Matters

Works are being planned on 12 routes including the use of further volunteer working parties. Consideration is also being given to further use of volunteers in monitoring the condition of routes. DCC is carrying out work on 5 routes with the remainder being undertaken by the NPA using £30k provided by DCC for this purpose. This may include the use of temporary closure orders where appropriate.

DCC are progressing with consultations on potential TROs at 2 routes. Consultations have been identified for 7 routes by the NPA over the next 12 months. Voluntary restraint measures are being further considered at the Roych and Minninglow Lane.

The LAF vehicles sub-group are now considering the remaining 8 priority routes in Derbyshire. In addition, PDNPA Rangers have commenced work on the sustainability analysis of routes outside Derbyshire to identify routes requiring management input.

Derbyshire Police's Operation Blackbrook is continuing and a new monthly newsletter is planned to supplement the 'Staying on the Right Track' newsletter.

Recommendation

- 1. That the report be noted.**

Appendix 1 - Notes from Special LAF Meeting, 1 March 2012

Attendees:

Edwina Edwards, Jean Wharmby, Andrew McCloy, Terry Howard, Henry Folkard, Bob Berzins, James Kellie, Richard Entwistle, Charlotte Gilbert, Adge Last, Sue Weatherley, Gill Millward, Mike Rhodes, Rich Pett, Sue Smith

Apologies:

John Thompson, Dick Peart, Clare Griffin, Ally Turner, Jon Stewart, James Kellie, Ben Rayner

Purpose

Sue summarised the reason for the special meeting of the Forum as being to update and review the actions on the first 8 priority routes and to draw together the Forum's comments on the next (middle 8) priority routes.

Background

Many actions in the first 8 routes had been dependent on DCC's input and were now being reviewed with the NPA taking more of an initiative but still having regard to the underlying partnership.

A more robust strategy had been developed by a member working group with a focus on the NP's purposes and policies. There was a resolve to take formative action where consensual solutions were not possible and decisions were being reviewed in light of this.

The need for improved management on priority routes had resulted in additional resources being given to deliver the revised strategy on recreational motor vehicles. Action plans on implementing the strategy were being prepared for report to Authority members at Committee on 23 March 2012.

Discussion

Forum members considered that there was a need to focus more strongly on the purposes of the NP and the duty on others to have regard to this. Work may have been perceived previously to be orientated to vehicle users and to maintaining their rights instead of an overview of the needs of all users. In some cases, actions were considered to have eased motor vehicle access and with the consequence of making it more difficult for other users.

Members saw a need to include more about safety on shared routes. They also noted that, although the vehicle users had done a good job of communicating, the conduct of a few can affect everyone.

Parish Councils had been consulted on route information for the first 16 routes and were to be informed of the finalised action plans. Parish Councils would also be included in any formal consultations, together with other statutory consultees.

Reports

Draft action plans for the first 16 priority routes had been circulated showing issues, objectives, and past, present and future actions. Draft route summary reports were also provided showing details of use, condition and consultations. These latter reports take on some of the elements of the previous management plans but without the reliance for inputs from DCC.

Priority Routes

Long Causeway – The NPA has £15k from DCC to spend on minor repairs but Peak Horse Power have raised issues about the ridability of the route and this may affect these works. A volunteer working party of vehicle users is proposed to deal with drainage issues. Members expressed the views that the route is in a parlous state and not ridable by horses. There is a need to make reference to the SSSI and that this area is now part of the new Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area which incorporates access and recreational matters. There is a perception that it is a place for quiet enjoyment free from man-made intrusions. However, it is also an important route for vehicles. The management plans published in 2009 contained estimates for the works. These were significant. The voluntary one-way system lapsed because of a lack of support from Sheffield CC. There is a need to ensure judicious use of public funds. If current use is unsustainable then there's a duty to consider restraint measures.

Chapel Gate – The TRO is being well-respected. The six month standard consultation on the potential for making the experimental order permanent expired at the end of February. An interim monitoring report is being prepared. DCC are planning more works to resolve drainage issues and the impact on adjacent land. Members noted that there is a tendency for users, other than recreational vehicle users, to use desire paths rather than using the track in the cutting. Noise and tranquillity issues and impact on users are relevant as well as physical erosion.

Moorlands Lane – Use has dropped considerably. Repairs are proposed. DCC are clarifying the status/line of the route and the final restoration of the former mineral working is ongoing.

Washgates – Repairs partially completed. DCC are proposing a TRO with a width restriction. Members noted that the cultural heritage of the bridge is significant. Damage is also apparent from 2-wheeled vehicles. There is a need to ensure that access through the ford is prevented even though there is no legal right of way.

Shatton – The route is well-signed and repaired. Use has dropped.

School Lane – The route has been surfaced by DCC and overhanging trees have been cut back to improve visibility. Members reported that this was considered to be an inappropriate solution. The route constitutes a hazard when used by vehicles. There is the potential for traffic calming and barriers. A one-way up is safer for the school but not when egressing at the top of the lane. There is also a noise issue. There is a need to define what we mean by improving safety. The reasoning behind DCC's actions will be raised separately with DCC.

Bradley Lane – DCC's consultations on the status and traffic regulation are ongoing. Surfacing and vegetation removal is planned by DCC. Members considered the suitability of the surfacing for horses and raised concerns about how you maintain

value for a particular user group when maintenance has to be suitable for all existing users. Concern was also expressed about the increasing urbanisation of well-worn routes. The importance of the route as a circuit for horse riders was noted together with the impact on the local community. Safety is an issue. Advisory signage was recommended.

Brough Lane – DCC are planning repairs to the steep section. Members considered that safety was an issue on the steep section and that one solution could be to look at a potential adjacent footpath to address safety concerns at this location.

The Roych – Members reported back from their recent re-inspection. The one-way system appears to be working but has not alleviated the situation. The current use is unsustainable and there is deviation from the route. There is a duty to protect the significant investment in the route and to halt the rapid deterioration. Although this route is a national trail, horse riders can't use a section of it. Emphasis must be given to the use of the route. The least restrictive option has been monitored. Removing motor vehicles may not prevent all damage but will reduce the cumulative impact. The route needs to be repaired and restraint considered. Any reluctance in committing further monies to the maintenance of the route may be overcome by demonstrating that further damage on that scale will not occur.

Bamford Clough – Surfacing works are planned by DCC. The route was considered by members to be the most dangerous priority route due to the potential for loss of control. A one-way route going up would ensure that users are more in control and would tie-in with the hillclimbing events on this route. However this may not fully address the safety issue. There may be the potential for a parallel route in the adjacent field.

Brushfield-Upperdale – Surfacing is an issue. Displacement is taking place on the steep section by all users including agricultural. Investigate agricultural use.

Chertpit – A traffic order request has been submitted by Rocking the BOAT. Members considered that it was difficult to improve safety at the pinch point. They also felt that the route is becoming unsuitable for horseriders. Deterioration has taken place since the designation as a Byway Open to All Traffic. Use has doubled as a result of its profile being raised yet may subside when it is realised that the route is not challenging enough for vehicle users. The route is a convenient walking route from Great Longstone.

Black Harry Lane – The route has been resurfaced and advisory information provided under the Black Harry Trails project.

Monksdale – Need to clarify the extent of repairs to the surfacing. The legal status is unresolved although it is recognised that DCC have a number of priorities and it takes time.

Pindale – Fencing and signage has reduced use of the adjacent SSSI and SAM.

The Cop – Use has decreased. This route is also known as Dick Lane as referred to in the ecological survey report.