

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: Saturday 18th September 2010

Item: 8

Title: DCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan
Interim Progress Report for 2010/11

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Purpose of Report

To present Forum members with an update on progress towards delivery of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) in 2010/11.

Progress to September 2010

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

Aim 1 - Existing Network

- Aim 1a): work is continuing with the BVPI 178 surveys. The May sample survey resulted in a 74.6% pass rate, which exceeds the end of year target of 72.5%. All aspects affecting ease of use produced good pass rates (between 88.9% and 99.6%). Although there was a very slight reduction in performance for roadside signposting and the condition of stiles, gates etc, other areas of work, such as bridges, waymarking, surface condition and the removal of obstructions improved on the same time last year, with more paths reinstated after ploughing and cropping. The second half of the survey will be carried out in November 2010.
- Aim 1a): the Rights of Way Charter, which provides a priority framework for responding to enquiries about the PRow network, was reported to the County Council's Cabinet meeting on 14 September for approval to consult with key countywide groups prior to finalising the document.
- Aim 1a) ii: work is underway to issue a contract for the 251 roadside signposts reported to be missing at the start of the financial year.
- Aim 1d) i: Annual vegetation clearance over the summer months was carried out on approximately 478 paths, totalling 119km.
- £624,000 of LTP funds have been allocated to be spent directly on PRow or RoWIP projects. This money was only approved at the end of July so work is still in progress to organise the works.

- In terms of external funding, although the options are more limited this year, grants have still been obtained from Natural England for Pennine Bridleway development and for Green Infrastructure projects in Erewash and South Derbyshire.

Aim 2 - Definitive Map and Statement

- Aim 2a) i: A further 277km of PRow have been accurately digitised for the Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales areas.
- Aim 2: four new officers have now been appointed (2 within Legal Services and 2 within the PRow Mapping team) to assist with updating the Definitive Map and Statement and dealing with the backlog of legal orders over the next two years.
- Aim 2c) i & ii: work has been progressing to categorise and assess the status of the backlog of legal orders in both departments.

Aim 3 - Connected, safe and accessible network

- Aim 3a) iii: Pennine Bridleway - DCC has completed the purchase of land at Gamesley Sidings to safeguard the route of the Pennine Bridleway and its intersection with the Trans Pennine Trail.
- Aim 3a) v: Midshires Way - work has started on site in order to validate the planning permission to replace Long Horse Bridge. However we are still awaiting a decision from British Waterways about whether the bridge will be installed this year. The section of the route between Hopwell and Dale is also progressing well.
- Aim 3 c) i & ii: Easy Access work - reviews have been carried out at all of the countryside sites where the mobility scooters are hired out with a view to identifying and carrying out access improvements.
- Aim 3e) iii: we are still on target to provide an extra 8km of new Greenways in 2010/11.
- Aim 3f): Motor vehicles in the countryside - £71,000 has been identified from LTP budgets to undertake capital maintenance works on 3 of the 'red' routes and consultation has been carried out on two permanent Traffic Regulation Orders all of which is in line with the 8 management plans completed in 2009/10.

Aim 4 - Promotion and Publicity

- We are in the process of producing a "highlights" report for wider circulation. This will summarise the main achievements described in the 2009/10 end of year monitoring report submitted to the June meeting of the LAFs and to our Cabinet Member in July.
- Aim 4a) v & 4 c) iii: Codes of Conduct - progress is being made with the joint sub group, particularly in terms of agreeing the design of signage to inform users about who can use different routes.

- Aim 4b): Website improvements - progress has been made to improve the information provided on the County Council's own website with new pages produced to promote horse riding and the hire of the tramper mobility scooters.
- Aim 4c) v: Healthy walking - several contacts have been made to help promote the PRow network as a resource and meetings held with Natural England's Walking for Health Co-ordinator and with the Active Derbyshire Partnership.
- Aim 4e) i: Promotion - the Countryside Service has attended several large shows and events this year with the aim of reaching significant numbers of people to promote Derbyshire's Countryside and the access network. These have included the Food and Drink Fair at Kedleston, Elvaston Castle 40th birthday event, Ashover Show and the Chatsworth Country Fair.

Aim 5 - Community Involvement in local rights of way

- Aim 5a): we have continued to progress work directly with Parish Councils in association with the Ranger Service and with Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire and Groundwork Creswell. We are currently pursuing rights of way improvement schemes in Bonsall, Whaley Bridge, Chinley, Chapel en le Frith, Marston Montgomery, Clay Cross, Clowne and Old Bolsover.
- Aim 5b): as in previous years we are continuing to generate a considerable amount of volunteer input to PRow and access work across the county.

Recommendation

That Members of the Forum note the interim progress report for delivering Derbyshire's RoWIP in 2010/11.