



Sustainable Transport Action Plan



2012 – 2017

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Introduction

The Sustainable Transport Action Plan (STAP) is a strategic document that outlines the Peak District National Park Authority's and partners aspirations for transport in the Peak District over the five year period from 2012 to 2017.

Relationship to Other Plans

The STAP is closely linked with a number of key strategic documents, principally the National Park Management Plan and Local Development Framework. The National Park Management Plan and Local Development Framework are statutory documents which influence all subordinate policies within the National Park, and thus provide the overarching strategy for this action plan. The National Park Management Plan coordinates the work of the National Park Authority and the many different partners to help achieve the purposes of the National Park. The STAP assists in delivering, and adds details to, the transport elements of the Management Plan.

The Core Strategy is the principal document of the Local Development Framework, and provides the spatial planning expression of the National Park Management Plan. Therefore, transport policies in the Local Development Framework address the land use planning elements of travel and transport. The STAP adds value to these policy areas, but has a greater focus on seeking to influence travel through behavioural change rather than through the planning system.

Furthermore, elements of the STAP also support the delivery of other Authority strategies, such as the Recreation Strategy and forthcoming Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Additionally, the STAP complements the Authority's Green Travel Plan, as some actions within the STAP will be available for Authority staff to use when they are travelling for business.

Scope of the Sustainable Transport Action Plan

This action plan outlines a high level ambition for travel to, within and from, the National Park, to provide a clear ambition of what we would like to achieve. However, we recognise that this ambition is long term, and as such will not be delivered overnight, particularly when all partners are being asked to make budget savings. Therefore, when the long term ambition is balanced with the practicable actions, we are able to deliver actions that work towards achieving the ambition. Further, it provides a framework to work within as and when opportunities arise, for example, if there is an opportunity to bid for grant funding to implement a specific action.

Background

Transport Context

The Peak District National Park is the fourth largest National Park in the United Kingdom. It is surrounded by large conurbations, such as Sheffield, Manchester and Derby, which increase cross-Park movements and commuting. There is one railway line within the National Park, which is the Hope Valley Line that runs between Manchester and Sheffield. This provides sustainable travel into and out of the National Park for both residents and visitors. Furthermore, although not within the National Park, the Derwent Valley line, which terminates at Matlock, and the Buxton line both act as access points for the National Park.

In terms of bus travel, there is a core network of routes, but unfortunately these have been declining in recent years due to reductions in budgets available to subsidise services. The latter has significantly impacted on weekend and bank holiday services, which are key times for leisure users to be visiting the National Park. The National Park contains 65 miles of traffic free cycle trails, along with a network of quiet lanes suitable for cycling. It has a population of 38,000 and receives more than 10.4 million visitors per year¹. As approximately 16 million people live within one hours travelling time of the National Park boundary², and given the rural nature of the location, it is perhaps not unsurprising that 85% of trips to the National Park are undertaken by private car³.

The geographical location of the National Park, combined with differing pressures from residents, businesses and visitors, creates a unique set of transport challenges for the National Park Authority and its partners to try and overcome.

The National Park Authority Role

The National Park Authority is not a highway authority and has no transport powers aside from those incorporated in our role as a planning authority and access powers. Nevertheless, the Authority is charged with pursuing our statutory purposes and duty, and has thus always maintained a more proactive position on transport through working in partnership, influencing and negotiating with those who do have the power to affect transport in the National Park and surrounding areas.



¹ 2009 STEAM data

² Peak District National Park Authority (2006) National Park Management Plan 2006-11

³ Peak District National Park Authority (2005). *Peak District Visitor Survey 2005*.

Development and Delivery of the STAP

The STAP has been developed through extensive discussion and consultation with partners representing local councils, transport operators, non-governmental organisations and individual interest groups. This has assisted in ensuring that the actions are realistic and deliverable, and that there is partner buy in for the action plan. The latter is of importance, as although the STAP has been written by the National Park Authority, a partnership approach to delivery is required for the majority of the actions. Therefore, the action plan will be implemented through partnership working, using financially sustainable mechanisms where possible. In brief, this means not focussing on subsidising services that will never be commercially viable, and therefore seeking new and innovative ways of working to encourage behavioural change to more sustainable modes of travel.

The STAP is not solely an infrastructure related plan, and in reality, is probably the opposite, as underpinning the majority of the ambition is behavioural change. The actions within this action plan aim to add value to the work already being undertaken by partners, and therefore not duplicate what is in Local Transport Plans and Service Plans. As an example, safety is a key priority for many highway authorities in the Peak District, however, this action plan aims to add value to existing safety work by minimising the impacts of safety infrastructure on the landscape and cultural heritage of the National Park. Therefore, in order to gain a holistic picture of transport work within the National Park, this action plan needs to be read alongside a number of other plans and strategies.

Although some actions will primarily have a visitor focus, many of these can also be of benefit to residents, as actions implemented to reduce the impact of visitor travel provide solutions and benefits to the wider communities of the National Park. More broadly, and as an underpinning theme to the plan, it is implicit that all of the actions will reduce carbon emissions, not only for the benefit of the Peak District, but as a part of a contribution towards national and international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of climate change.



Ambition:

“The National Park is known as a place you can easily and inexpensively travel to, within and from, without a car. Choice of travel options makes using public transport, walking and cycling more attractive and part of the National Park experience, and there is less reliance on the private car. Innovative travel solutions become part of the attraction of the National Park.

Transport infrastructure is at a minimum, sympathetically designed and there are no redundant structures. Therefore, the National Park is known as a place where transport infrastructure respects the environment and protects the valued characteristics, while promoting safety.”

This will be achieved by:

- Reducing the barriers to and enhancing use of public transport (including community transport).
- Making high quality non-car transport central to the experience of the visitor.
- Maximising integration between different modes of travel; walking, cycling, rail, bus and car.
- Raising awareness and confidence about using non-car modes and supporting behavioural change.
- Developing a strategic rights of way network into and within the National Park.
- Designing transport infrastructure (including road signs) that is sympathetic to the National Park.

The framework above applies to all of the National Park. However, local circumstances will determine which elements of the framework are more appropriate for a specific area.



Actions

A review of the actions in the STAP was undertaken during the summer of 2015, with the actions being updated accordingly. This was an opportune time to review the actions, as it is half way through the delivery time of the STAP, and we could take into account the outcomes of the National Park Management Plan travel summit that was convened earlier in the year.

- 1. Take opportunities to research, and if possible use existing mechanisms, to implement a ‘one-stop-shop’ website for sustainable travel (including purchasing travel and visitor attraction tickets) within the Greater Peak District.**

The website would enable travel information that can be found on many different websites to be integrated into one website that would have all the travel information you need on one website. It would also allow for links to key visitor information, for instance, accommodation and attractions. To be sustainable this would need to integrate with and complement other existing websites, and how the site is hosted would also need to be sustainable. The ability to purchase tickets for travel or visitor attractions is vital to ensure a seamless approach to sustainable travel and the visitor experience at the first point of contact. A later action would then be to develop an app to have the same information on phones. This action has synchronicity with the Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy.

- 2. Develop a National Park wide Transport Infrastructure Design Guide.**

Highway infrastructure can have a significant effect on the National Park’s landscapes. Roads, markings, signposts and speed cameras are all part of the modern highway network, yet they are not natural, and can look strikingly out of place in a natural landscape. In order to reduce the effects of infrastructure on the landscape, we would like to develop a Highway Infrastructure Design Guide that can be used by each highway authority across the National Park. The aim of the Design Guide is to develop a mutual understanding and develop solutions that satisfy the objectives and purposes of both the National Park Authority and the highway authority. It should be noted that road sign and infrastructure agreements already exist with some highway authorities, but for consistency, we would like to develop a Design Guide that would apply across the whole of the National Park.



3. Complete the White Peak Loop, so there is a loop of cycle trails including links to Buxton and Matlock

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.



Following the opening of the Monsal Trail tunnels in 2011 to create an 8.5 mile traffic free route between Bakewell and Wyedale, the National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council were successful in obtaining grant funding from the Department for Transport to extend the Monsal Trail eastwards towards Matlock. In addition funding was obtained to provide a link between Buxton and the High Peak Trail. Both schemes are key to the future delivery of a continuous the White Peak Loop, which remains a priority.



The completion of the two schemes is anticipated to have taken place by 2017/18. Securing additional funding lies within the remit of the Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy, and may require a commitment of officer time as and when further opportunities arise.

4. Further develop the Greentraveller sustainable visitor travel product to provide a high quality visitor travel experience.

Greentraveller were commissioned by the Peak District National Park Authority in 2015 to assist with the development of a new approach to improving sustainable visitor travel products in the Peak District. The National Park Authority will work with partners to establish the best approach for delivering the outcomes of this study.

5. Take opportunities to assist in developing low cost product interventions on existing bus services, for example, branding and livery, audio commentary and promotional materials.

The branding of existing bus services offers a cost effective way of raising the awareness and prestige of the offer. This approach has proved very successful in the National Park over recent years with the establishment of the TM Travel Peakline brand and the Dambusters service.

We will work with partners to deliver more branded services as and when opportunities arise.

Measures of Success

The following four strategic measures of success will be used as an overall indication of changes in travel and accessibility within the National Park. Data for these indicators is either already being collected, in the case of the National Park Management Plan 2006-11 indicators, or collection is about to begin, the case of the National Park Management Plan 2012-17 indicators.

- Increase the proportion of visitors who access the Authority's services using sustainable means (NPMP 2012-17).
- Overall satisfaction with the experience of visitors to the National Park (NPMP 2006-11 indicator).
- No more than a 2% increase in average daily traffic flows in the National Park (NPMP 2006-11).
- Access to services by public transport (NPMP 2006-11 indicator).

In addition to the above indicators, where appropriate, we will set measures of success for individual projects. These will be more specific to the impact we would like see for the project being delivered, and will therefore be more detailed in their nature.



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