



Peak District Local Access Forum
c/o Peak District National Park Authority
Aldern House
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Derbyshire DE45 1AE

Jim Dixon
Chief Executive
Peak District National Park Authority
Aldern House
Bakewell
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17th April, 2013
by email

Dear Jim

Re: Peak District Pedal Peak Phase II bid

I am writing to provide the Peak District Local Access Forum's in principle support for investment in cycling in the Peak District through the Department for Transport's Linking Communities grant to support cycling in National Parks. This follows consultation with Aidge Last and Edwina Edwards of our LAF in the limited time available.

As you know, the Peak District Local Access Forum (PDLAF) is a statutory body, appointed jointly by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC). It covers the National Park area and the countryside of north-west Derbyshire around Buxton, New Mills and Glossop. Our role is to advise both the authorities on the improvement of public access and opportunities for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area.

More specifically, we support the aims and ambitions of the White Peak Loop, the Little Don link from north of Sheffield, the Staffordshire Moorlands link and the planned Cycle Hubs Development Fund to benefit small businesses and community organisations. These exciting plans will help to create a comprehensive network of cycle trails connecting surrounding towns and cities to the Peak District. Through the stakeholder consultation process, we are willing to work with officers at the Peak District National Park Authority to provide support to improve cycling and benefit sustainable travel in the Peak District and surrounding area.

We support the National Park Management Plan and Recreation Strategy for the Peak District - "Active in the Outdoors" and are always keen to see co-ordinated action and partnerships. In this case we see and welcome that you can realise action related to several key priority issues as follows if this bid is successful: National Park Management Plan - "the National Park will strengthen its role as a welcoming place and premier destination, synonymous with escape, adventure and enjoyment" (NPMP - W11). "Accessible and diverse recreation opportunities will be available for all, encouraging healthy living, enjoyment of the landscape and a sense of adventure." (NPMP W14).

The Recreation Strategy recognises the popularity of the Peak District for cycling, offering everything from quiet country lanes and traffic-free trails to challenging mountain bike terrain. The Strategy supports calls from providers and users for - "more circular routes and routes linked to urban areas and transport hubs. It recognises that 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."

The LAF has a diverse and informed membership with knowledge and experience drawn from many different fields allowing us to offer balanced and independent advice to further access and recreation in the National Park. These proposals are most welcome as they clearly link to the Strategic Plans for the Peak and cycling strategies existing or emerging from constituent authorities. It is also very much in line with the action through the workshops help at the Peak District Cycling Summit I attended in February on behalf of our LAF.

You previously indicated that you thought there was a distinctively positive role for the LAF in looking at the long-term and National Park wide picture for cycling development in a way that complements the rather more task-focussed approach the counties and the Authority must necessarily focus on. I think the experience of LAF members could help and advise on this and as details are developed, would be happy to encourage this from them. They will be pleased to see the tremendous scope for:

- Health and Social benefits to individuals and communities – it is proven that an active lifestyle improves health and wellbeing, and reduces the likelihood of serious illness and premature death. This in turn reduces pressure on the health service and improves workplace attendance.
- Economic benefits to communities – a new cycle link could provide exciting opportunities for new and existing businesses, generates spending in the local economy and supports jobs
- Environmental benefits - improvements to the public realm, less congestion and pollution

From the Forum's point of view, as you know, we have previously reviewed cycling opportunities and:

- Congratulated the Peak District NPA, Derbyshire CC, constituent Highway Authorities and partners for work done to date to improve cycling opportunities in the Peak District.
- Encouraged further work and initiatives to enable increased participation and enjoyment of the area by visitors and the local community and complete the Peak Circuit and facilitate wider use of the National Park in an active and sustainable way.
- Welcomed the opening of the tunnels on the Monsal Trail as an awesome achievement from a brilliant vision to a fantastic reality which is benefitting thousands of people's enjoyment and understanding of the National Park, and bringing tremendous and significant economic benefits to the area. Members of the 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.

- Derbyshire County Council's lead regarding the "White Peak Loop" including the Matlock/Buxton Cycle Ring and connections. 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.
- Asked the Peak District NPA through its Recreation and Transport Strategies and Action Plans to explore the scope for doing this working through partnership and external funding.
- Asked Forum members for future input which has been offered.

Members of the LAF will be delighted by this proactive approach having welcomed the excellent work done by the Authority to date and future plans, and knowing of other opportunities for the future after liaison with you and having heard of the approach of the Constituent Authorities and Sustrans in and around the Peak District.

Crucially for a major project like this, we know that the National Park Authority, Derbyshire County Council and other constituent authorities are excellent at working together, delivery of projects of this type to a high standard for all to enjoy and in the case of the Peak, successfully targeting and administering grant aid schemes.

I hope this letter of support is helpful and we look forward to hearing about the success of the bid. I would like to reiterate the enthusiasm of representatives of the LAF for this bid, and their willingness to offer advice and expertise as it progresses. We look forward to the success of the bid and to continue working together, assisted by the Linking Communities fund for cycling in National Parks, to improve sustainable and healthy travel options in the wider Peak District.

I have also asked the Secretaries of all relevant adjoining LAF's to write in support.

Yours sincerely

John

John Thompson
Vice Chair
Peak District Local Access Forum

| Copy to Edwina Edwards, Chair, Adge Last, all LAF members and Mike Rhodes,
Secretary
Gill Millward, Countryside Service, Derbyshire County Council)