

ACTIVE IN THE OUTDOORS

A Recreation Strategy for the Peak District National Park
2010 - 2020

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Foreword

“Walking gets the feet moving, the blood moving, the mind moving. And movement is life”.

Carrie Latet

Health and vitality are important both for our national park landscape and for the people who live in and visit that landscape. Enshrined in the national parks' legislation are the twin purposes – to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of our national parks. This Recreation Strategy sets out how we will help to achieve this balance.

Everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the Peak District National Park – one of our finest active living environments. Many organisations and communities provide facilities and opportunities for active recreation in the Peak District. From the popular climbing edges in the east to the reservoir valleys in the west, from the Tissington Trail in the south to the Trans Pennine Trail in the north, the Peak District National Park provides recreation opportunities for the thousands of people who live in and visit the National Park.

Our role as a National Park Authority is to work with others to co-ordinate that provision and manage recreation issues and demands on our landscapes. As a landowner we are responsible for recreation provision on our own land. As a National Park Authority we have a duty to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities and recognise the important contribution that recreation makes to the local rural economy.

The purpose of the Recreation Strategy is to review recreation provision, identify gaps and consider priorities for the future. Recreation is identified as a strategic priority in the National Park Management Plan and, together with our partners, we need to better define a strategic direction for recreation in the Peak District National Park that is based on research and evidence and clearly highlights areas of particular focus. Current issues confronting our society such as traffic congestion, air quality, widening participation and other quality of life issues, not least the impact of climate change, need to be addressed. National Parks are a national asset and can help to address these national issues. As a national park we also face a particular challenge to consider if additional and differing recreational demands can be accommodated and conflicts managed so that our well loved landscapes stay wild and tranquil.

The Recreation Strategy will focus on accessibility, recreational choices, quality experiences and facilities, and on development of focal points for activities. It will build on existing partnerships and develop new ones. It will monitor and evaluate trends in recreation activity and build up an evidence base in order to guide our policies.

Above all it will ensure that the Peak District National Park continues to enrich the lives of all who enjoy and cherish this special place.

Geoff Nicholds
Member Representative for Recreation



Pat Coleman
Chair of Member Scrutiny Panel for Recreation Strategy



Executive summary

This Recreation Strategy for the National Park builds on the outcome for recreation in the Peak District National Park Management Plan¹ – “by 2011 all people, especially those from disadvantaged communities, children and young people, and the elderly should:

- feel welcome in the National Park
- have the opportunity to participate in diverse recreational activities that enhance the quality of their lives.”

It will provide a strategic framework for the provision of recreation opportunities over the next 10 years. It aims to:

- Promote the health benefits of recreation
- All people have more opportunities to participate
- Promote more environmentally sustainable choices for recreation in response to climate change and other environmental challenges
- Raise awareness and understanding of the Peak District National Park, promoting it as a welcoming destination with diverse recreation opportunities for visitors and residents
- Work with partners to manage, enhance and develop a range of recreation opportunities appropriate to the special qualities of the National Park
- Increase community participation and volunteering to facilitate recreational enjoyment and benefit the environment and local economy

Part 1 of this strategy sets the context and presents the vision of how recreation in the National Park will be in 2020. It goes on to outline a range of outcomes, themes and headline actions.

Part 2 is a summary of recreation in the Peak District, including the key characteristics of the National Park, current recreation provision, benefits, trends, existing recreation management and headline findings based on evidence gained from research and data collection.

Part 3 describes in more detail the main themes which provide the framework for the strategy and highlights examples of good practice.

Part 4 sets out how the Peak District National Park Authority and partners will deliver enhanced provision for recreation and access across the Peak District. This is set out in a more detailed Action Plan at Appendix 1. The other appendices contain information on how the strategy was prepared; more background information and evidence and further case studies.

Comments are welcome on this draft at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/recreation or in writing to **Peak District National Park Authority, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1AE** by 25 September 2009.

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Part I: Introduction to the Strategy

“Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.” John Muir

1.1 Scope and purpose

The Peak District was the first national park to be established by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). The national park purposes, as defined in the 1995 Environment Act, are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage [of the national parks];
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public.

The Recreation Strategy interprets and adds detail to the Peak District National Park Management Plan, 2006-11, the key strategic policy document for the National Park which has been shared with and agreed by a wide range of partners. The recreation outcomes from the National Park Management Plan are:

“By 2011 all people, especially those from disadvantaged communities, children and young people, and the elderly should:

- feel welcome in the National Park
- have the opportunity to participate in diverse recreational activities that enhance the quality of their lives”

The Recreation Strategy also relates to other local, regional and national policies, guidance and strategies and relates to other national park plans and strategies (see Appendix 2 and Figure 1).

The purpose of the strategy is to review recreation provision in the National Park and provide a strategic framework for the provision of recreation opportunities over the next 10 years.

The focus of this strategy is the Peak District National Park but it acknowledges that important recreation resources exist outside the National Park. Where reference is made to the Peak District, this is in recognition of a larger geographical area which includes areas close to the National Park as well as the National Park itself.

Whilst there are many recreational pursuits undertaken in the Peak

District this strategy focuses on those which are most appropriate to national park purposes. They all depend on the special characteristics of the area, namely:

- Outstanding natural beauty and character of the landscape
- Significant geological features
- Sense of wildness and remoteness
- Clean earth, air and water
- Importance of wildlife and the area’s unique biodiversity and cultural heritage

Our national parks are part of a global family of more than 6,000 similarly protected areas, which cover an area of approximately 1 million km²

1.2 The context

The mainly upland area of the Peak District National Park lies at the southern end of the Pennines, surrounded by urban areas (Map 1). It includes distinct landscapes such as the Dark Peak characterised by large areas of moorland and blanket bog; the White Peak with its rolling limestone plateau and wooded dales, and the South West Peak with large areas of moorland and blanket bog, wooded cloughs and widespread areas of farmland.

The National Park’s Landscape Character Assessment further differentiates the Peak District into landscape character areas as detailed in Appendix 3. Find out more at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/lca (Map 9)

The Peak District’s diverse mosaic of landscapes supports a wealth of plants and animals, some of which can be found in few other places in the world. Over a third of the National Park is covered by nature conservation designations (see Map 2). Further details can be found at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/bap

As well as outstanding and varied landscape, the area has a wealth of cultural history stemming from over 10,000 years of human habitation. Find out more at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/chstrategy

Most visitors come from Derbyshire (14%), South Yorkshire (13%), Cheshire (12%) and the other counties that are partly within the National Park

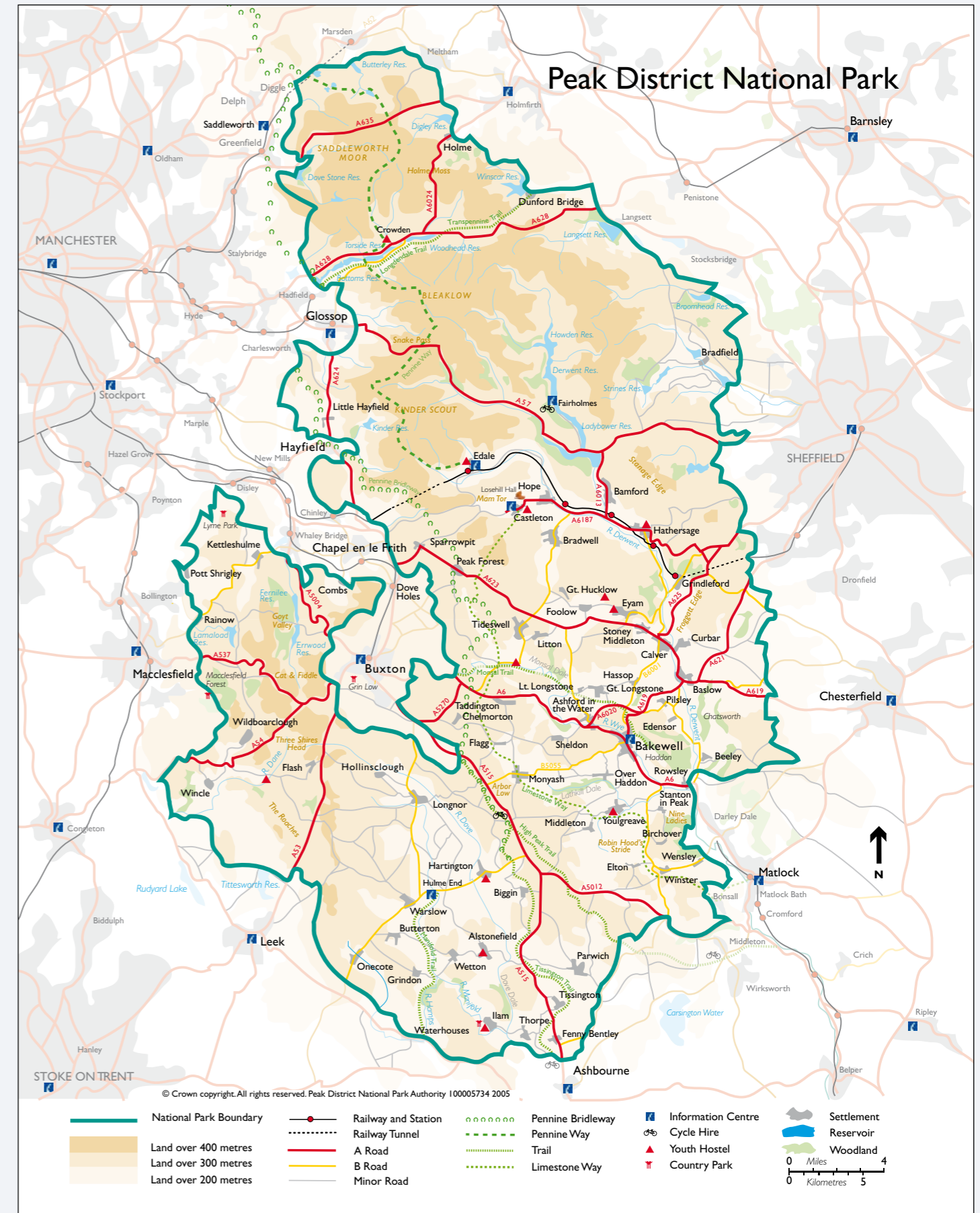
Pick of the Peak – why the Peak District is brilliant for outdoor recreation

1. Climbing crags for the enthusiastic beginner through to the world-class athlete
2. Pot-holing is highly-popular – the Peak District is home to the highest natural cavern in the UK - Titan Cave, Castleton (141.5m, 464 ft), discovered by local pot-holers in 2000
3. A huge variety of walks
4. Trail network – ideal for walking and cycling on former railway tracks
5. Rights of way and access land - the public now has right of access to one third of the Peak District National Park.
6. One of England's favoured locations for paragliding and hang gliding
7. Accessible from nearby towns and cities
8. World class landscape
9. Good network of clubs, societies and strong partnerships
10. Diverse range of activities on offer all year round

(Sources: Outdoor Recreation in the Peak District – your chance to shape the future workshop 7 May 2008 and Parishes Day 13 September 2008)



Map I: Location





The Peak District National Park covers 555 sq miles or 1,438 sq km - that's about the size of Greater London or 144,000 football pitches!

1.3 Who is it for?

Whilst the production has been led by the Peak District National Park Authority, the strategy is for everyone who has an interest in recreation within the Peak District National Park, from those taking part, to landowners, organisations and businesses helping to deliver recreation services.

The involvement of many partners will influence the approach and priorities of the strategy, recognising that it must be flexible to accommodate new information and agendas in response to changing recreational activities and demands.

1.4 What is Recreation?

The term "recreation" is used to describe a wide variety of active pursuits which take place during leisure time. The dramatic and varied landscapes of the National Park provide the inspiration and natural resources for a wide range of outdoor recreation activities, including:

- walking
- cycling
- climbing
- horse riding
- hang-gliding and paragliding
- caving
- angling
- water sports
- study or enjoyment of heritage, culture, wildlife and landscape

A wide range of other activities take place in the National Park and new ones will no doubt develop over time. The National Park can absorb many people and activities but

where there is an impact on the environment, for example, localised noise or erosion, this will be monitored and actively managed.

1.5 Themes, Outcomes and Actions – a Statement of Intent

How do we want recreation to be in the National Park in 2020?

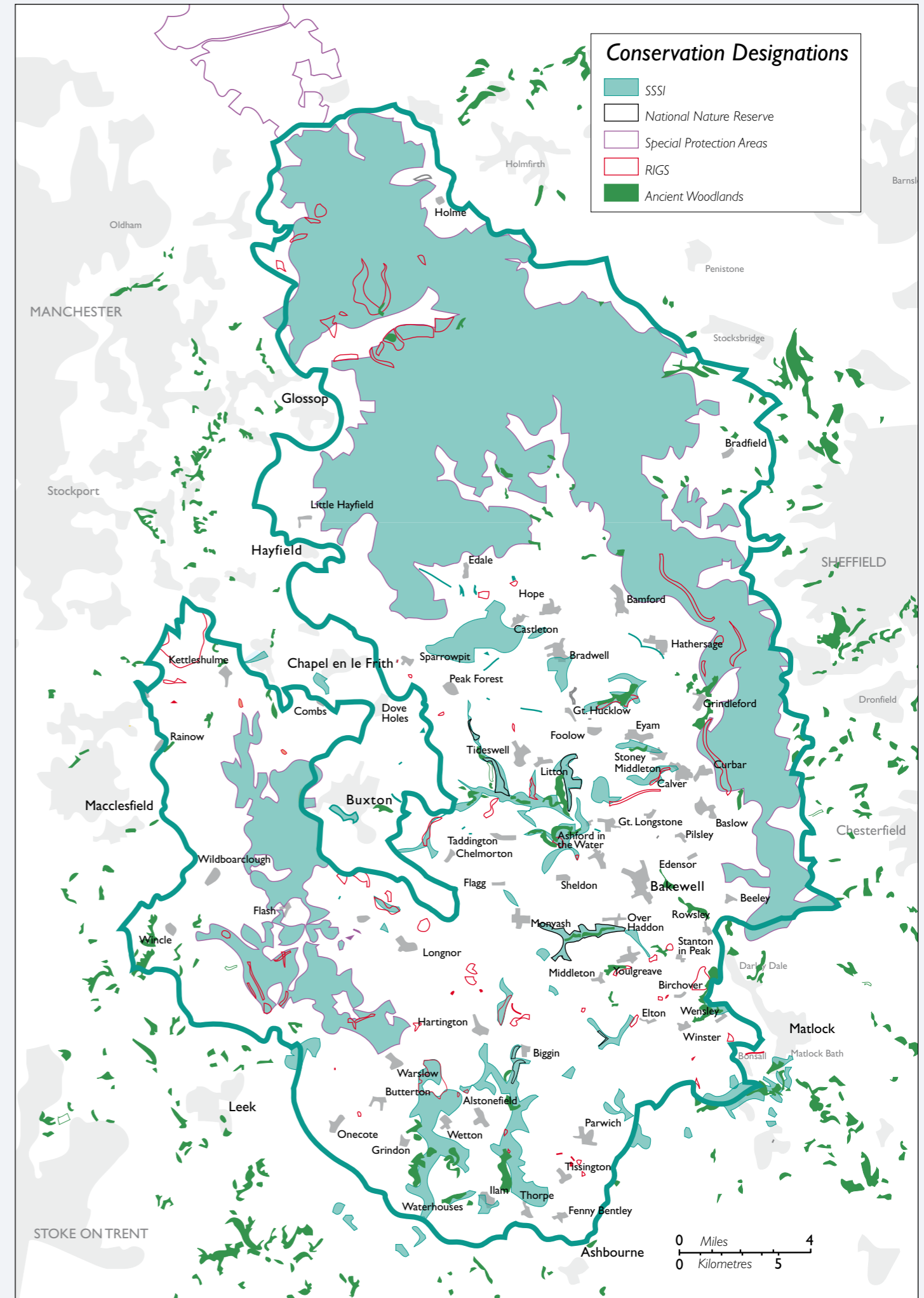
The Peak District will be a welcoming place, providing good access for all and quality facilities. Everyone will have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from healthy outdoor experiences, contribute to the local economy and become more aware of the special qualities of the National Park. There will be a network of public transport routes linked to popular sites and any conflicts between recreation, residents and the management of the environment will be addressed. More people will have better information, a greater choice of activities, and more sustainable ways of enjoying them. The National Park will thrive because more people will both enjoy and care for it.

The Recreation Strategy flows from the vision for the National Park and shows the Authority's commitment to improved provision for recreation and access across the National Park. It builds on the outcomes for recreation from the National Park Management Plan and acknowledges the over-riding guiding principle to sustain the special qualities of the National Park. The National Park has twin purposes of conservation and promotion which must be treated equally unless there is a conflict, when the Sandford Principle dictates that conservation takes precedence. It seeks to strike the right balance between promoting enjoyment and encouraging responsibility, so that the National Park is sustained for future generations to cherish.

The following pages are a statement of intent, showing the desired outcomes from the strategy and the actions which will achieve them. Six key themes (based on socio-economic drivers and described in more detail in Part 3), reflecting national agendas, provide the framework for the strategy. Each theme has an aim and an outcome stating how the strategy will make a difference and proposed actions to achieve the outcomes and to increase participation and enjoyment.

The Peak District National Park Authority and its partners will all work together to identify and develop new opportunities for recreation provision and management, including sharing of resources and co-ordinated approaches to external funding.

Map 2: Conservation designations



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Theme 1 - Healthy lifestyles

Aim: Promote the health benefits of recreation

Outcome: Increased participation in outdoor recreation that enhances overall health and wellbeing

Actions A:

1. Increase awareness, among target audiences, of the health benefits of active recreation.
2. Promote the Peak District National Park as a destination for healthy recreation activities, recreation events and active holidays.

3. Develop and promote cycling and walking routes linked to urban areas.
4. Research and benchmark models of best practice for providing quality recreation opportunities that enhance health and well-being.



Theme 2 - Widening participation

Aim: All people have more opportunities to participate

Outcome: The Peak District National Park offers a diverse range of quality recreation opportunities that are easily accessed and affordable

Actions B:

1. Promote recreation opportunities and enhance access to these by people from under-represented groups.
2. Increase accessibility and promote services at key 'gateway sites' and facilities (eg Dovestones and Fairholmes).

3. Provide safe, clearly marked off-road trails at key access points to the National Park for people of all abilities to walk, run or ride.
4. Promote recreation events suitable for a range of abilities linked to public transport.
5. Promote development of educational and recreational opportunities for children and young people.



Theme 3 - Climate change and sustainability

Aim: Promote more environmentally sustainable choices for recreation in response to climate change and other environmental challenges

Outcome: The open spaces of the Peak District National Park provide a wide range of recreational opportunities that do not compromise environmental values

Actions C:

1. Develop and promote public transport links from surrounding urban centres, transport hubs and settlements in the National Park.
2. Develop a high quality cycle network, particularly a route between Buxton and Matlock and between Buxton and Ashbourne adding to the existing High Peak and Tissington Trails network.
3. Develop facilities and services at key sites in or close to the National Park that are most accessible by public transport, cycling or walking.
4. Address potential impacts of climate change and use sustainable development techniques for new or enhanced recreation facilities (eg emissions reductions, use of water, rate of soil erosion).
5. Promote sustainable travel choices eg linked public transport routes, campaigns, offers and initiatives.
6. Identify opportunities to evaluate the potential impacts of recreation on the landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage and economic environment of the National Park.
7. Work with partners to encourage the development of 'green' recreational products linked to sustainable transport.

Theme 4 - Raising awareness and understanding

Aim: Raise awareness and understanding of the Peak District National Park, promoting it as a welcoming destination with diverse recreation opportunities for visitors and residents

Outcome: Visitors and residents will have a greater understanding of the National Park and its special qualities, leading to greater care and involvement

Actions D:

1. Promote positive messages about sustainable recreation and how to access the National Park safely and in a way which encourages people to make a positive contribution as part of their visit (eg purchasing locally or volunteering).

2. Encourage product/service providers to network and promote new recreation products including 'packaged' offers.
3. Establish and maintain a database of recreation opportunities and an evidence base of visitor profile, service uptake, etc.
4. Produce guidance for use of the National Park for recreation eg for large scale organised events, safety issues and links to services.

Theme 5 - Partnership working



Aim: Work with partners to manage, enhance and develop a range of recreation opportunities appropriate to the special qualities of the National Park

Outcome: There will be a wide range of recreation opportunities based on quality facilities and services, appropriate to the character of the Peak District National Park

Actions E:

1. Establish a Recreation Partnership and Implementation Group of key recreation stakeholders to ensure strategic alignment of priorities and a partnership approach to improving provision and management of recreation opportunities.
2. Establish mechanisms to positively manage recreation activities in relation to specific conservation aims and potential conflicts between different users.
3. Develop a strategic approach to the provision of facilities such as toilets and car parks.
4. Establish partnership 'task groups' to explore potential for specific recreation activities eg water sports, horse riding, cycling.
5. Work with partners to implement integrated Rights of Way Improvement Plans and develop routes accessible to all.
6. Manage access to open country.

Theme 6 - Community participation, including volunteering



Aim: Increase community participation and volunteering to facilitate recreational enjoyment and benefit the environment and local economy

Outcome: Quality community-led recreation facilities and opportunities are provided

Actions F:

1. Develop a volunteer strategy for the National Park to encourage local people and visitors to make a personal contribution to the National Park.
2. Facilitate/support local communities in positively addressing recreation issues and explore opportunities linked to recreation and its management in the National Park.
3. Develop village trails linked to public transport and sustainable local businesses.
4. Identify and address the recreation needs of communities living in and close to the National Park.

Part 2: Recreation in the Peak District

“In this short span between my fingertips and the smooth edge and these tense feet cramped to the crystal ledge, I hold the life of a man.”
Geoffrey Winthrop Young



2.1 Recreation provision and participation patterns

The Peak District has a long association with outdoor recreation activities. In 1932 Kinder Scout was the site of a mass trespass that helped spark the ‘right to roam’ movement and eventually led to the 1949 National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act. Today the Peak District is renowned for the outdoor recreation opportunities it offers, notably:

- 202 square miles (524 km²) of Access Land
- 1,867 miles (3,005km) of public rights of way for walking, cycling and horse-riding
- 58 miles (93km) of dedicated off-road cycling trails based on former railway lines such as the High Peak and Tissington Trails
- National and local long distance trails for walking, cycling and horse riding - including the Pennine Way, Pennine Bridleway, Trans Pennine Trail, Limestone Way and Derwent Valley Heritage Way

This spectacular landscape in the heart of the country is justly famous for the wealth of recreation opportunities it offers. From trekking across rugged heather moorland to strolling round the pretty stone villages; from descending deep limestone caves to soaring on the thermals; from testing your strength and agility climbing gritstone edges to casting your fishing line over some of the clearest rivers

in the UK, the Peak District has something for everyone.

2.1.1 National recreation trends

Over the last 30 years recreation patterns in the UK have changed due to social, demographic and economic factors. Research - including that undertaken for Natural England in 2005 by the ‘Henley Centre’² - highlights factors affecting the provision of outdoor recreation in the next 15 years:

- The population is ageing but many people are more physically active later in life
- There has been a dramatic increase in car ownership and vehicle traffic
- UK is now a 24/7 society with a variety of work patterns resulting in recreation activities more evenly spread through the week
- Increased use of information technology, particularly the internet, provides greater information on leisure opportunities
- Increasing national wealth and more spending on leisure has resulted in a significant increase in holidays and leisure pursuits by some
- Increased time spent indoors and the urbanisation of culture, especially among young people, results in less early association with the natural world than any previous generation
- Greater variety of leisure, recreation and holiday choices are available to more people, including exercise options at health clubs and indoor complexes
- Increased demand for organised events and more sophisticated information
- Decline in informal recreation activity like picnicking and increase in more active pursuits such as mountain biking
- New or adapted activities eg Nordic walking and survival skills

Since this research, the UK and world economies have fallen into recession, reducing disposable income and adding further uncertainty to future predictions. However anecdotal evidence from 2008 and 2009 suggests an increase in people, especially families, camping in the National Park perhaps reflecting a demand for lower cost holidays.

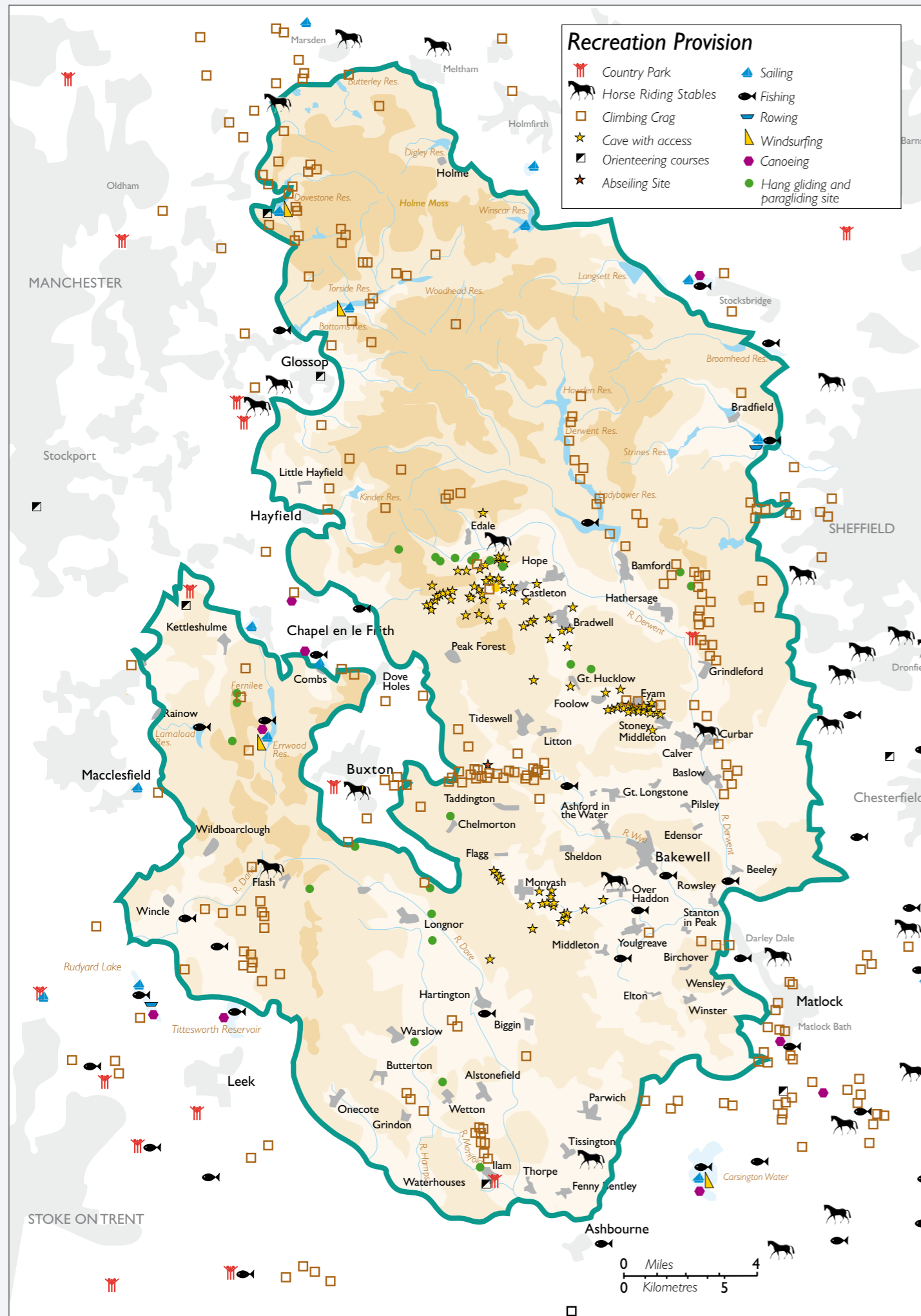
The population of the UK is rising and the Office of National Statistics (2007) suggests the population will increase by 4.4% to 65 million by 2016

Map 3: Access and Rights of Way



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Map 4: Recreation provision



2.1.2 Local recreation trends

Whilst the population of the National Park is only around 38,000, more than 16 million people (nearly 1/3 of the population of England) live within 1 hours' travel time.

The 2005 England Leisure Visits Survey Report³ estimated 42.3 million visits to English National Parks, of which more than 10 million were to the Peak District. The 2008 on-line Recreation Survey⁴ carried out by the National Park Authority found that of current users, 6% expected to visit less in the next five years, 29% expected to visit more, and 65% would visit as much as before.

The 2005 Visitor Survey⁵ found that the largest proportions of day respondents came from postcodes that cover the National Park (Sheffield, Stockport and Derby) followed by Nottingham and Oldham, with more people visiting from the postcode areas closest to the National Park. Staying respondents visiting the Peak District National Park came from all over England, Wales and Scotland.

A summary of the research taken from the 2008 Recreation Survey⁴ and the Sport England Active People Survey⁶ results for Derbyshire highlights similar trends to national research:

- Increased participation in active recreation, such as mountain biking
- Increased demand for organised events such as charity and challenge events
- Walking and cycling are by far the most popular activities with more links to urban areas and good quality circular networks wanted
- Running, artistic pursuits and photography, 4x4 and trail biking, wildlife study and climbing are the next most popular activities
- Increasing 4x4 and trail bike activity can cause conflict with other users and damage to the environment

- Users are seeking more opportunities for cycling, horse-riding, canoeing and sailing
- Over three quarters of the local adult population do not exercise enough to benefit their health

2.1.3 Economic benefits of recreation

In 2005, an estimated 3.5 million overnight trips were made to Derbyshire and the Peak District and a third of the total visitor expenditure of £1.29 billion was from overnight visitors. Staying visitors spend on average over 5 times more than those day visitors who spent money.⁷ Increasing the economic value of tourism in the region by focusing on more overnight stays to increase value rather than volume is East Midland Tourism's primary objective and an approach endorsed in the Peak District Sustainable Tourism Strategy. There is a need for low cost visitor accommodation in and around the Park.⁵

Over half of all visitor spending is estimated to be on sports activities - either 'soft' (eg walking, cycling etc) or 'hard' (eg climbing, paragliding, adventure sports etc).⁸ Defined this way many visitors do some sporting activity during their stay and significant numbers come specifically to take part in their chosen sporting activity. Equally there is anecdotal evidence of:

- a growing demand for activity breaks - where a number of active sports are offered as part of an organised package
- more people taking part in organized or competitive sporting or charity events

Recreation and tourism in the Peak District is moving towards an all year round activity and is less susceptible to the seasonal variations seen in some other areas.

2.2 Maintaining satisfaction and meeting expectations

Whilst the vast majority of people⁴ (well over 90%) seem satisfied with their experience of the National Park the survey results indicated that there is scope for improvement: for example, the cleanliness of facilities. There can be some conflict between people pursuing different recreational activities and whilst most (80%) survey respondents had no particular suggestions to make, the Authority and partners will continue to work innovatively to achieve improvements.

2.3 Recreation activities

The following summarises the most popular activities. (Map 4)

2.3.1 Walking

Perhaps best known as walking country, the Peak District offers a spectacular variety of scenery and routes to be explored ranging from challenging hikes to short strolls. There is an established network of public and concessionary rights of way and substantial areas of access land (Map 3).

The highway authorities' Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) set a programme of maintenance and enhancement to provide a network responsive to current user needs and requirements and targeting further links and routes. Partners' resources are focused on managing pressure on well used routes such as the Pennine Way, Dovedale footpath and Mam Tor. New access points are created where needed, subject to landowner negotiation, to reach areas of access land provided under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000.

The annual Peak District Walking Festival is now well established and includes a wide range of guided walks with local experts leading walks on themes such as food and drink, ghosts, heritage, geology - see www.visitpeakdistrict.com. The choice of activities on offer will be expanded in 2010 to produce the first Peak District Great Outdoors Festival, giving young and old, regular and new visitors the chance to try something new.

2.3.2 Cycling & mountain biking

The Peak District is popular for cycling, offering everything from quiet country lanes and traffic-free trails to challenging mountain biking terrain.



The Peak District's dedicated off-road cycle trails network is ideal for family cycling and there are cycle hire centres offering bikes to suit all ages and abilities. Experienced mountain bikers enjoy the challenge of wild, remote moorland bridleways. The Trans Pennine Trail passes through the north of the Peak District on its journey from Liverpool to Hull - see www.transpenninetrail.org.uk. For touring cyclists the 335 mile (539km) Pennine Cycleway passes through the Peak District en-route from Derby to Berwick on Tweed.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plans (and Greenways Strategies) for the National Park recognise that the bridleway network is generally more fragmented than that available for walkers, with less scope for off-road circular rides. The aim is to maintain existing routes, make them easier to use and create a more integrated network of routes and bridleways suitable for a range of uses. More circular routes and routes linked to urban areas and transport hubs are sought by providers and users. 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.

A major injection of funding could open up wider opportunities. The development and delivery of parts or all of the Matlock-Buxton and Buxton-Ashbourne cycle trails would be an iconic project leading to the creation of a unique, high quality and wholly sustainable visitor attraction. It would provide a viable car-free alternative for the majority of our visitors who come from Derby/ Nottingham, the Midlands and the South (via Matlock) and the North West (via Buxton). By creating



an uninterrupted 26 km route - from Matlock Railway Station along the Derwent and Wye valleys to Bakewell, through the deeply incised and picturesque Wye Valley to Millers Dale and then on into Buxton - people would have cycling connected access to the National Park from public transport hubs, gateway towns and major visitor attractions.

2.3.3 Climbing

The Peak District is one of the world's top climbing areas - offering many world class routes. The internationally important Stanage Edge is 3.7 miles (6km) long and very popular due to its easy access and close proximity to Sheffield. As well as gritstone edges and outcrops there are many steep limestone crags both natural and a result of past quarrying activity to test the most adventurous spirits. In recent years the associated sport of bouldering has become increasingly popular;



this entails climbing short routes (often boulders) without the use of ropes but usually with a foam mat to land on. Bouldering provides mental and physical challenge and often leads to climbing longer routes with ropes and other supportive aids.

Fixed and mobile climbing walls provide an excellent and safe introduction to climbing as well as training opportunities in bad weather. Use of mobile walls in schools and villages helps ensure local young people have the chance to try an activity for which this area is justly famous.

Local issues such as avoidance of disturbance to breeding birds are addressed through partnership working between Natural England, the British Mountaineering Council, the Peak District National Park Authority and other user groups.

This strategy aims to foster the good relationship and work in partnership to raise awareness of opportunities (especially to young people), increase understanding of impacts and improve opportunities when they arise.

2.3.4 Horse riding

Horse riding is popular on the bridleways and country lanes throughout the Peak District with good opportunities for riding, hacking and trekking throughout the area. The bridleway network is more fragmented than the footpath network but some good public and concessionary routes exist and the trails provide safe off-road choices. The Rights of Way Improvement Plans aim to improve provision and dedication of routes suitable for bridleway users and to continue development of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail. Facilities are provided in some places for horse box parking and tethering (eg Hartington Station, Torside car park). The Peak District National Park Authority and its partners, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and National Trust, will continue to work with horse-riders to extend and improve the bridleway network on the Eastern Moors Estate.



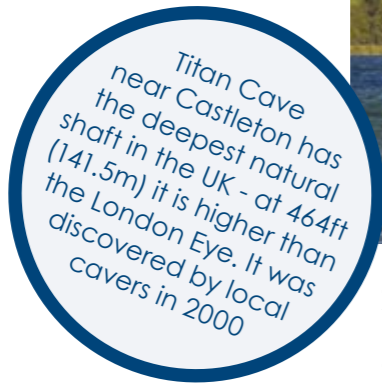
2.3.5 Air sports

There are a number of suitable sites for hang gliding and paragliding, and one site for gliding. Landowner permission is required for launch sites so membership of a flying club is advisable. Management of air sports facilities aims to raise awareness among participants and reduce any local impacts of the activity on the quality of the National Park.



2.3.6 Caving

There are excellent caving opportunities within the limestone area of the National Park. This is not an activity suitable for casual recreation, requiring specialist equipment and knowledge. Access to caves and mines is dependent on landowner permission (generally negotiated by Derbyshire Caving Association). A number of show caves open to the public can whet the appetite and help engage new audiences. Outdoor centres offer tuition and access for supervised groups.



2.3.8 Water sports

Sailing, windsurfing and canoeing takes place on a number of reservoirs in and around the edge of the National Park, notably Carsington, Tittesworth and Rudyard. A few reservoirs within the National Park such as Torside, Errwood, Dovestone and Winscar have clubs that offer water sports. There is limited river access within the National Park but a stretch of the River Derwent at Matlock Bath provides a popular permanent slalom course and a short stretch at Bamford provides local youngsters with a chance to try canoeing.

The Peak District National Park Authority will continue to work with water companies and landowners to seek further opportunities. Any new infrastructure developments, eg sailing club, would be subject to an environmental impact assessment as part of the planning process but it is anticipated that the focus for new development is most likely to be outside the National Park.

2.3.9 Multi-Activity Centres

A number of well established licensed multi-activity centres within and close to the National Park offer instruction in a range of outdoor activities and qualification courses.

2.3.10 Other activities

Besides reinforcing the popularity of walking, National Park Visitor Surveys in 1998 and 2005 illustrate the range and diversity of other activities undertaken. These include:

- Orienteering
- Fell running
- Bird watching
- Study or enjoyment of heritage, culture, wildlife and landscape
- Conservation volunteering
- Off-road vehicle use and trail bikes
- Photography and artistic pursuits

Where activities cause local disturbance or environmental damage they are managed in partnership with user groups and relevant authorities/agencies. A specific example is the management of recreational motor vehicle access to unsurfaced highways and 'off-road' activity in the National Park ('Stay on the Right Track' etc).

2.4 Attractions and facilities

The Peak District has a wide variety of attractions including heritage sites, country houses and parks, reservoirs and caverns. The two spa towns of Buxton and Matlock Bath, lying just outside the National Park, have been popular with visitors since Victorian times. Other surrounding Peak District towns such as Ashbourne, Matlock, Wirksworth and Leek offer a range of tourist amenities. Many of the Peak District villages have annual well-dressing ceremonies, festivals and events during the summer months. (Map 5)

Hotels, guest houses, B&Bs, holiday cottages, camping barns, bunkhouses, youth hostels, caravan and camp sites provide accommodation for all tastes and budgets. Locally produced foods, arts and crafts help create a special Peak District identity and sustain local producers; shops, farmers markets and events help in their promotion.

Recreation facilities are provided by many organisations, the key ones include:

- County, metropolitan, district, borough and parish councils
- Peak District National Park Authority

- Water companies
- National Trust
- Forestry Commission
- Private operators

Facilities include toilets, car parks, camping and caravan sites, cycle hire centres, picnic sites, visitor centres and information. (Map 6)

Outdoor activity centres, trekking stables, walking festivals, guided walks, workshops and courses in activities, arts and crafts all add to the recreation opportunity on offer. For more information visit www.peakdistrict.gov.uk and www.visitpeakdistrict.com

Traffic management schemes operate in popular areas such as the Upper Derwent and Goyt Valleys providing safe and pleasant traffic free environments for all at peak times. Peak Connections guides (www.visitpeakdistrict.com/peakconnections) encourage people to explore the Peak by bus or train with ideas for days out, places to visit and things to do. People arriving by bus can enjoy discounted entry to many attractions across the area. Map 7 shows the transport infrastructure.



2.3.7 Angling

Coarse and game fishing is available in rivers, ponds and reservoirs throughout the Peak District, subject to a licence, day permit or membership of a local club.

Excellent fishing is available on rivers throughout the Peak District including the Dove, Wye, Derwent and Lathkill. Game fishing takes place on reservoirs eg Ladybower, Carsington and Ogston and some privately owned lakes. Fishing platforms for disabled anglers are provided in some places including Ladybower and Damflask Reservoirs.

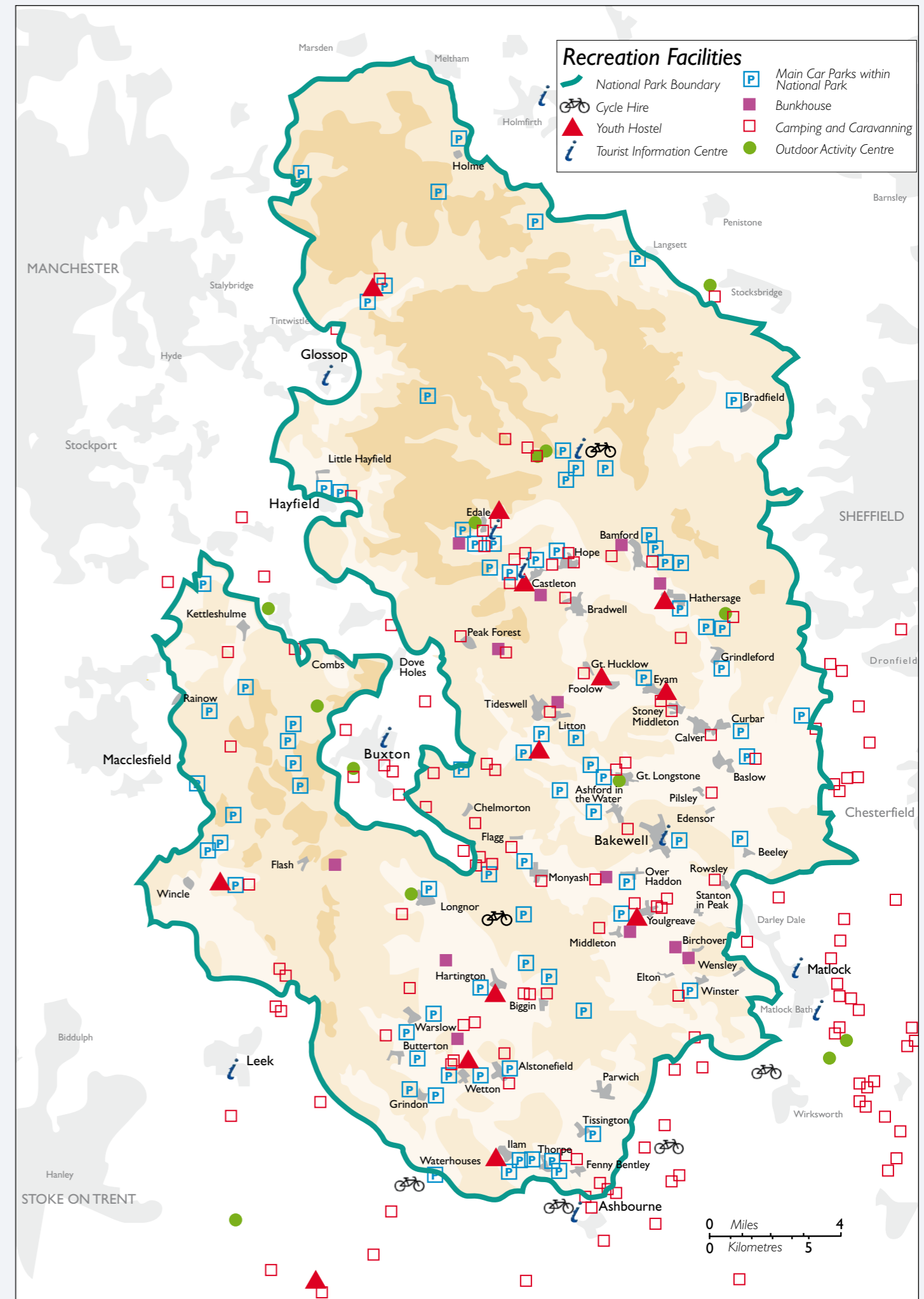
There is scope to increase information about the opportunities available and to raise awareness of environmental and sustainability issues so that anglers can choose more sustainable options. There may be potential for negotiating further access through projects such as a fishing passport scheme for the River Dove, trialed in other areas of the country. Further opportunities for disabled anglers will be sought.



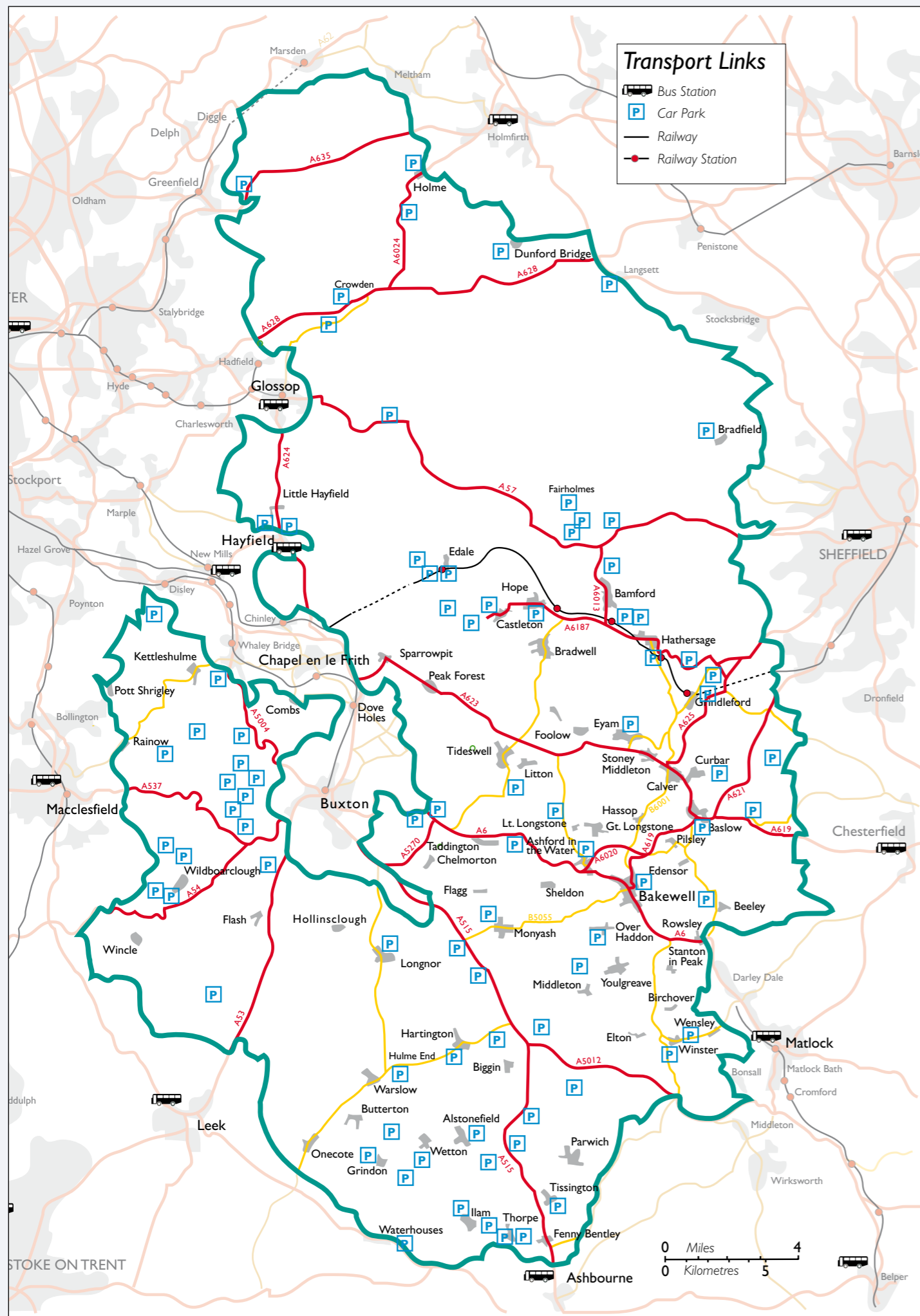
Map 5: Visitor attractions



Map 6: Recreation facilities



Map 7: Transport infrastructure



The most popular areas of the Peak District National Park are:

- Bakewell with interesting buildings and a busy market
- Chatsworth, home of the Duke of Devonshire
- Dovedale, a spectacular limestone dale
- Hartington village
- Hope Valley and the village of Castleton
- Upper Derwent and the Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs

The National Park Authority provides facilities for visitors:

- Information Centres at Bakewell, Castleton, Edale and Upper Derwent.
- Ranger Service to provide help and information for visitors; help keep good relations with farmers and other local people; patrol access land and footpaths; and deal with stile repairs, moorland fires or mountain accidents
- Losehill Hall, the Peak District National Park Centre for Environmental Learning, provides day visits and residential courses on many aspects of environmental education and training
- Car parks in villages and popular beauty spots, often with toilets
- Permanent trails on redundant railway lines, such as the Tissington Trail, for cycling, walking, riding
- Cycle Hire facilities at three centres



2.5 Recreation management

There have been many advances in recreation management in the Peak District from the first negotiated access agreements with landowners to investments in recreation opportunities, facilities, services and information. Over 90% of the land in the Peak District is privately owned (the National Park Authority owns about 4%) and the water companies, National Trust, Forestry Commission and private estates all have major landholdings (Map 8). Consequently many authorities, organisations and businesses are involved with the provision, management and promotion of recreation.

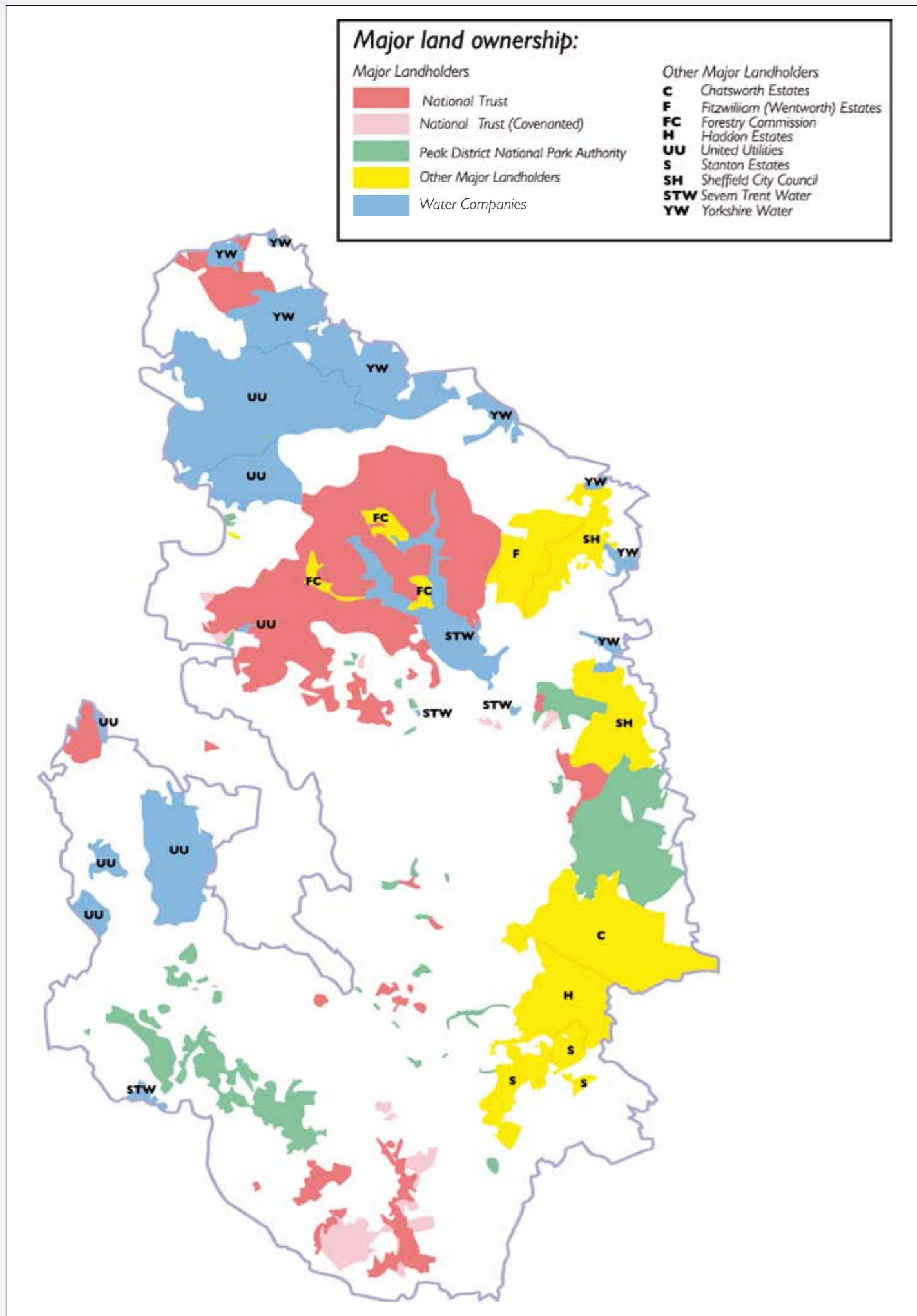
There are many good examples of partnership working exemplified by the case studies highlighted in this Strategy.



Case study: Peak District Local Access Forum (PDLAF)

In the 1980s the Peak District National Park Authority established the innovative Access Consultative Group – which led to Local Access Forums being set up across the country following the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). The country's first Local Access Forum was set up in the Peak District and it continues to thrive. It has a voluntary membership from a range of backgrounds to represent interests of active recreation, farming, conservation, rural business and local communities. The Forum offers advice to both the Peak District National Park Authority and highway authorities on a range of subjects, including access to open country, rights of way improvement plans, management of recreational motor vehicle activity and dogs in the countryside. The role of the Forum is essential to enhance access and accessibility to the National Park and to remove barriers to inclusion.

“The strength of the Local Access Forum lies in its diverse and informed membership,” says Andrew McCloy, PDLAF Chair. “We have a blend of knowledge and experience drawn from many different fields which allows us to offer balanced and independent advice to further access and recreation in the National Park.”



Part 3: Themes

“I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits unless I spend four hours a day at least – and it is commonly more than that – sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements.” Henry David Thoreau

The broad strategic context will guide the strategy and provide a framework within which it will be implemented. As referred to at 1.5, six main drivers for change or themes have been identified from national agendas:

- Healthy lifestyles
- Widening participation
- Climate change and sustainability
- Raising awareness and understanding
- Community participation, including volunteering
- Partnership working

Higher levels of clinical obesity are predicted across all age groups including young people. The social and economic costs of this are high with greater pressure on health and social services and increased absenteeism amongst the working age population. Enjoyment outdoors and in pleasant green spaces reduces stress and anxiety and improves mental well-being.

Many people view the outdoors with apprehension due to unfamiliarity. Research from the Diversity Review 2005¹⁰ suggests that children without experience of the natural world are less likely to appreciate it later in life. Moderate activities in the natural environment offer low cost, healthy opportunities to help people pursue a healthier lifestyle. The national parks are a fantastic resource for people of all ages and abilities and can be used to begin to promote physical activity, benefit mental health and improve quality of life.

3.1 Healthy lifestyles

Aim: Promote the health benefits of recreation

Outcome: Increased participation in outdoor recreation that enhances overall health and wellbeing

Health is one of the four main themes on which Natural England is campaigning and the work of the ‘Walking the Way to Health Initiative’ is an integral part of this campaign (www.whi.org.uk). Primary Care Trusts are encouraging people to do more to stay healthy or become healthy.

Further opportunities exist to work more closely with Derbyshire Sport, the National Health Service, Primary Care Trusts and others, to access funding, influence how and where this is targeted and promote the health benefits of recreation in the National Park.

Case study: Peak Park Leisure Walks

The Peak Park Leisure Walks initiative started in 1991 and was one of the first ‘walking for health’ schemes in England. It is a partnership between the Peak District National Park Ranger Service, Bakewell and Eyam Community Transport and Derbyshire Primary Care Trust.

Participants are referred to the scheme for a variety of reasons by community health professionals. Ten accessible walks per year are organised for up to 30 people and supported by rangers. Community Transport is used to take people to the walks; packed lunches and drinks are provided. The walks are always over-subscribed and a rota scheme has been introduced for participants.

A ‘next steps’ programme has been recently piloted where the more active and able participants from the leisure walk programme take part in mainstream walks of up to five miles, run as part of the Ranger Service guided walks programme. Participants are introduced to basic navigation skills to give them the knowledge and confidence to start to walk in the countryside on their own or in their own groups.

Chris Porter (National Park Authority Field Services) adds: “The Leisure Walks provide a very high level of support for people of all ages and abilities who are not able to access other walks or perhaps don’t have the confidence to go for a walk without support. The walks encourage people to adopt healthier lifestyles. Walking in this way benefits the participant’s fitness and mental health whilst giving the people from local communities the opportunity to enjoy visiting their National Park.”

3.2 Widening participation

Aim: All people have more opportunities to participate

Outcome: The Peak District National Park offers a diverse range of quality recreation opportunities that are easily accessed and affordable

National parks are for all people to experience, learn about and enjoy. However, research for Defra's Rural White Paper, 2000⁹ indicated that particular groups are under-represented in the countryside. They include people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, young people, people with special needs and those living in deprived communities. Under-representation does not necessarily equate to social exclusion; many people have the opportunity for full access but may choose not to visit the countryside.

The National Park is surrounded by urban areas with people of all ages, social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. The Government's Diversity Review¹⁰ proposes new ways

of working, both with the organisations providing outdoor recreation opportunities, and with the under-represented groups, so that the objective of increasing participation can be achieved. The Peak District National Park Authority and other organisations have begun to make good links and find ways for the National Park to benefit neighbouring communities.

The National Park Authority's People and Communities Strategy and Under-represented Groups Action Plan (2008) set corporate priorities and provide a basic framework for working with partners. By targeting information on the right social networks and organizing initial visits, the aim is to build peoples' knowledge of what the National Park has to offer and confidence in using it. Working from this policy base and drawing on experience of successful projects, this Recreation Strategy will, through its Action Plan, contribute further to addressing issues of under-representation and social exclusion in the Peak District. Identification of 'gateway sites' which are mostly used as initial arrival points for less frequent visitors will provide a focus for future investment.

Case study: Mosaic Partnership

Mosaic is a project that aims to develop long-term and direct engagement between people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and national parks.

The project has been running since 2001. In 2004 a second phase was set up involving the Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, North York Moors and Brecon Beacons national parks, the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) and the Youth Hostels Association (YHA). Funding has now been secured for a further phase of the project to recruit more community champions and to develop cluster groups in Derby, Sheffield and Tameside.

The partnership has led to -

- Help and encouragement to many people from BME communities to visit national parks for the first time and created links and built relationships between BME community leaders and national park authority staff
- Increased the understanding of BME needs when visiting national parks
- Helped more visitors feel welcome in national parks
- Raised interest in a greater involvement in decision making
- Promotion of the national parks as part of a shared cultural heritage, with good opportunities for physical recreation and spiritual renewal

The project identified opinion formers in BME communities and recruited them to become 'community champions'. Their role has been to act as ambassadors for national parks, passing on information to people in their communities. They have also been on training and visits to gain the knowledge and skills to organise visits to national parks for other groups or individuals from their community. The champions have been enthusiastic about working with the National Park Authority as volunteers and now have some great ideas for promoting the National Park to a wide range of local communities.

"They [BME Communities] didn't know anything about the National Park but they are now aware of the National Park."
(Community Champion, Peak District)



3.3 Climate change and sustainability

Aim: Promote more environmentally sustainable choices for recreation in response to climate change and other environmental challenges

Outcome: The open spaces of the Peak District National Park provide a wide range of recreational opportunities that do not compromise environmental values

Climate change is likely to have an impact on the biodiversity, landscape, and social and economic fabric of the National Park. It is likely to result in changes to the flora and fauna of the Peak District. How to reduce the impact of recreation on the environment, adjust to climate change and what influences the climate may have on recreational behaviour are all key issues. Future investments in facilities need to take into account likely impacts of climate change.

Visits for recreation reflect the weather with many more visitors to the National Park during dry sunny weather in both summer and winter. Climate change could result in more fluctuation; wetter weather may discourage visitors whilst extreme heat and fire risk may prevent some visitors enjoying the National Park in the summer. Fluctuating water levels in rivers and reservoirs affect water based recreation activities and torrential downpours increase surface erosion of paths. Restricting recreational activities on rivers and lakes could impact on the local economy.

Increasing awareness of the possible environmental impacts associated with air travel, coupled with the economic recession, may lead to more people staying in Britain and making more use of the countryside closer to home for holidays and recreation.

Accessing recreation in the National Park and the surrounding countryside poses a significant challenge to environmental sustainability for recreation. The National Park Authority, with other local authorities and organisations, has subsidised and promoted public transport as a means of accessing and getting around



the Peak District and there have been modest successes such as the Sheffield - Stanage bus service. Yet for the vast majority of visitors, time, personal preferences, cost and convenience means that people still prefer to visit by private car. This coupled with seasonal and weekly patterns, together with multiple origins and destinations, poses a major challenge to the provision of a comprehensive public transport system covering the National Park.

The Peak District National Park Authority is now developing a Sustainable Transport Action Plan to address ways to reduce car-use and improve cycling, horse riding and walking links to urban areas. Partner bodies have similar plans and policies such as Rights of Way Improvement Plans, Greenways Strategies and Accessibility Strategies. The National Park Authority's Climate Change Action Plan for the Peak District identifies ways it can work in partnership to tackle climate change. Investment in sites with good walking, cycling or public transport links will help provide more sustainable gateway sites and opportunities for recreation close to where people live.

Case study: Peak Connections

Peak Connections guides have been designed to encourage people to explore the Peak District by bus or train with lots of ideas for days out, places to visit and fun things to do – all with bus or train times. People arriving by bus can enjoy discounted entry to many attractions across the area by using a voucher printed in the leaflet and showing their bus ticket.

Visit www.visitpeakdistrict.com/peakconnections to view and download available guides; some are available as printed leaflets from local Tourist Information Centres.



3.4 Raising awareness and understanding

Aim: Raise awareness and understanding of the Peak District National Park promoting it as a welcoming destination with diverse recreation opportunities for visitors and residents

Outcome: Visitors and residents will have a greater understanding of the National Park and its special qualities, leading to greater care and involvement

The Peak District National Park Authority, working with partners, has a major role to play in raising awareness of the environment and outdoor recreation opportunities for all.

There are a range of commonly used interpretive techniques, including outdoor panels, audio trails, guided walks and publications. Face to face interpretation through public events is generally a very effective form of interpretation.

Under-represented groups clearly expressed a desire to enjoy the benefits of outdoor recreation, but had concerns about the lack of information in accessing the outdoors.¹⁰ The results of a Mosaic Champions communications workshop in the Peak District in June 2008 highlighted that

information in a range of formats is important to ensure access for all.

The National Trust's events programme offers an exciting and innovative range of learning activities for all to enjoy from their centres at Ilam Park and Longshaw. The Moorland Discovery Centre at Longshaw is a sustainably built lifelong learning centre which encourages groups of all ages to enjoy outdoor learning experiences. Seven miles from the centre of Sheffield, it specifically targets school children from disadvantaged areas of Sheffield and local community groups.

Losehill Hall, the Peak District National Park Centre for Environmental Learning, provides high quality resources for encouraging young people to connect with, enjoy and explore the National Park through school visits and Youth Ranger programmes.

The National Park Authority is producing a new framework for interpretation which will help to deliver consistent messages across the whole National Park that will benefit visitors and residents alike. Closer working between partners including Destination Management Partnerships will encourage networking and packaged opportunities. Continuing dialogues with under represented groups is a priority. Providers need to consider who the interpretation is for so that the appropriate messages, style and media are used. Stimulating interest and inspiring new audiences is

important, as well as identifying the barriers which prevent some people from participating and learning about the National Park.

3.5 Partnership working

Aim: Work with partners to manage, enhance and develop a range of recreation opportunities appropriate to the special qualities of the National Park

Outcome: There will be a wide range of recreation opportunities based on quality facilities and services, appropriate to the identity of the Peak District National Park

'Partnerships are essential: in many cases they achieve more than individual organisations can achieve alone, creating the opportunity to pool resources, skills, powers and ideas.'

The majority of the National Park is privately owned with most recreation taking place 'as of right' or with landowner agreement. Partnership working coordinates recreation provision and enables joint promotion of opportunities for the benefit of visitors. There is scope for more partnerships and joint initiatives with the private sector such as accommodation providers, outdoor retailers and facility operators. The National Park Authority has a long history of working in partnership to improve recreation opportunities and works closely with landowners and others in the management of recreation including on their

own land. These include the National Trust, Forestry Commission, water companies, primary care trusts and local authorities. Good liaison and joint management with major landowners and others has resulted in many developments and improvements that would have been difficult to establish by individual organisations. New partnerships will be developed to deliver new initiatives.

A key partnership involves the management of the rights of way network in the National Park. There are seven different Highway Authorities responsible for protecting, maintaining and enforcing the use of public rights of way. They each have a duty to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan in consultation with the National Park Authority and joint accords/agreements are in place to facilitate day to day working arrangements. The Peak District National Park Authority also has a long-standing arrangement with Natural England and the relevant Highway Authorities over the management of the Pennine Way National Trail.

Partnerships with local authorities, health authorities, user groups, governing bodies for sport and recreation and communities are fundamental to the sharing of contacts, information and good practice, reinforcing national park messages at regional level, coordinating projects to deliver improvements and gaining the goodwill of users and the community. The active involvement of stakeholders in a full and transparent process ensures that management decisions are widely owned, respected and supported and it is essential in seeking consensus on how best to address recreation management issues.

Case study: National Trust Podcasts

The National Trust has produced a series of Peak District podcasts to inform and enlighten. People can listen to them on their computer or iPod/mp3 player. They include a series of on the iconic Peak District moorland bird, the Red Grouse, through the trials and tribulations of the breeding season. Wardens, ecologists and countryside managers share their knowledge about this valuable species and explain how management for grouse has wider benefits for the moorland environment.



Case study: Peak Experience Guides

Ten themed 'Peak Experience' guides have been produced by the Peak District Interpretation Partnership to enhance people's enjoyment of the Peak District and encourage visitors to stay a little longer. The award winning guides showcase the best of the Peak District's natural and cultural heritage including wildlife, historic houses, water, film and literary locations, ancient monuments, churches, museums, industrial heritage and local food. The guides encourage people to get out and enjoy the Peak District while discovering its special qualities and also help to promote local places to stay, eat and drink.

Peak Experience has also piloted uses of new media to test the suitability of various applications to interpretation. These include a series of self-guided trails as downloadable PDFs, mp3 audio trails, a mobile phone tour, a Bluetooth wildlife guide and a user-generated website www.mypeakexperience.org.uk

Case study: Upper Derwent Valley

A partnership between the National Park Authority, Severn Trent Water, National Trust, Forestry Commission, Derbyshire County Council, High Peak Borough Council and two parish councils has led to major achievements for recreation in the Upper Derwent Valley as a result of joint working over 25 years and has produced a wide range of benefits including:

- 6.5 miles of traffic-free roads with exceptions for access and disabled people
- A minibus service provided 100 days a year when the Fairholmes to King's Tree road is closed
- Improved parking arrangements
- Connecting bus service from surrounding cities, towns and Bamford railway station
- Many new and improved routes suitable for cycling, walking, horse riding and people with disabilities
- Extensive award winning efforts to diversify species and improve the shape of woodlands to enhance nature conservation and landscape interest
- Jointly-funded ecological, archaeological and visitor surveys of the area along with interpretation boards and leaflets
- Cycle hire facilities with a range of bikes and mobility scooters for all abilities
- Briefing centre to provide a base for the ranger services
- Visitor centre with small retail outlet and refreshment kiosk
- Guidelines and coordinated responses to proposed large scale events in the Valley



3.6 Community participation, including volunteering

Aim: Increase community participation and volunteering to facilitate recreational enjoyment and benefit the environment and local economy

Outcome: Quality community-led recreation facilities and opportunities are provided

The term “community” applies to both local residents and the wider community who live or work close to the National Park or visit for recreation. Raising awareness of recreation opportunities and engaging different communities can be achieved in a number of ways.

For example, the National Park Authority’s services play an important role in community liaison, operating in area teams to cover the whole of the National Park. Rangers and other field staff provide the interface between all National Park aspirations (strategies) and delivery on the ground. Also part of the area teams and leading on community engagement, Live & Work Rural Programme (Village) Officers implement the National Park Authority’s

community planning initiative. They harness the skills, energy, enthusiasm and knowledge of local residents and help parish councils and community groups to highlight and tackle issues in their own villages.

Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the sustainable management of the National Park. Outdoor conservation work supporting recreation projects gives volunteers an opportunity to learn new skills, benefit from physical exercise and enjoy a sense of achievement. Besides the Peak District National Park Authority, other organisations also work with volunteers in the countryside. Volunteer input is vital to all National Trust properties; Severn Trent Water and the RSPB provide volunteering roles for people seeking to educate and engage with the public as well as undertaking practical tasks. Natural England, the YHA and Wildlife Trusts also use volunteers to engage people in countryside management and gain support for their work.

In consultation with partners the National Park Authority is developing a Volunteer Strategy that will coordinate volunteer and community effort across the National Park. Further engagement with local communities will positively address recreation issues and explore new opportunities.



Case study: Safer Communities Project

This project aims to show how taking part in sport and recreation activities can reduce anti-social behaviour. Funded by Sport England, Derby-based charity Sporting Futures and the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Community Safety Partnerships, this five-year project focuses on ten wards across the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales with high levels of anti-social behaviour and low participation rates in sport and recreation.

Diversions activities form the focus of the project which aims to:

- Increase regular participation in sport and recreation by young people aged 8 – 16
- Increase the number and quality of opportunities for them to take part in sport
- Increase the number of active sports leaders
- Reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour by young people in target wards
- Reduce drug misuse among young people referred to the project

Sports Development Officer, Rob Wilks, of Derbyshire Dales District Council said:

“Developing opportunities for local people, especially young people to participate in sport and recreational activities in our rural communities is so important both now and for the future. The Safer Communities through Sport programme does exactly that, and by working closely with local communities and partners such as the Peak District National Park Authority, the programme will continue to go from strength to strength”.

Part 4: Taking Action

“When I see an adult on a bicycle, I do not despair for the future of the human race” H.G.Wells

4.1 Overall approach

From the evidence collected from research, survey and from those officers with many years working knowledge of the National Park, the findings suggest that the strategy should build upon the proven successes of the current approach to recreation management whilst focusing on the six socio-economic drivers for change (themes) described in section 3. The overall approach to the strategy is threefold, incorporating spatial elements, focusing on individual activities and providing more opportunities for awareness and understanding.

The spatial distribution of recreation and supporting facilities complements the approach to development, land and transport management in the National Park’s Development Plan (Local Development Framework). The National Park’s Landscape Character Assessment recognises eight Landscape Character Areas in the Peak District, based on the geology, vegetation, landform, human influence, etc. As well as providing a spatial framework for the Local Development Framework for planning purposes, this helps to inform the strategic development of recreation and access. By adopting a spatial approach, the demands of recreation and the conservation of highly sensitive environments can be delivered successfully together and an appropriate balance achieved.

It is proposed that future recreation planning should be based on the Landscape Character Areas defined in the Landscape Strategy. The eight Landscape Character Areas are:

- Dark Peak
- Dark Peak Western Fringe

- Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe
- South West Peak
- White Peak
- Derwent Valley
- Eastern Moors
- Derbyshire Peak Fringe

These areas are illustrated spatially in Map 9 and described in Appendix 3.

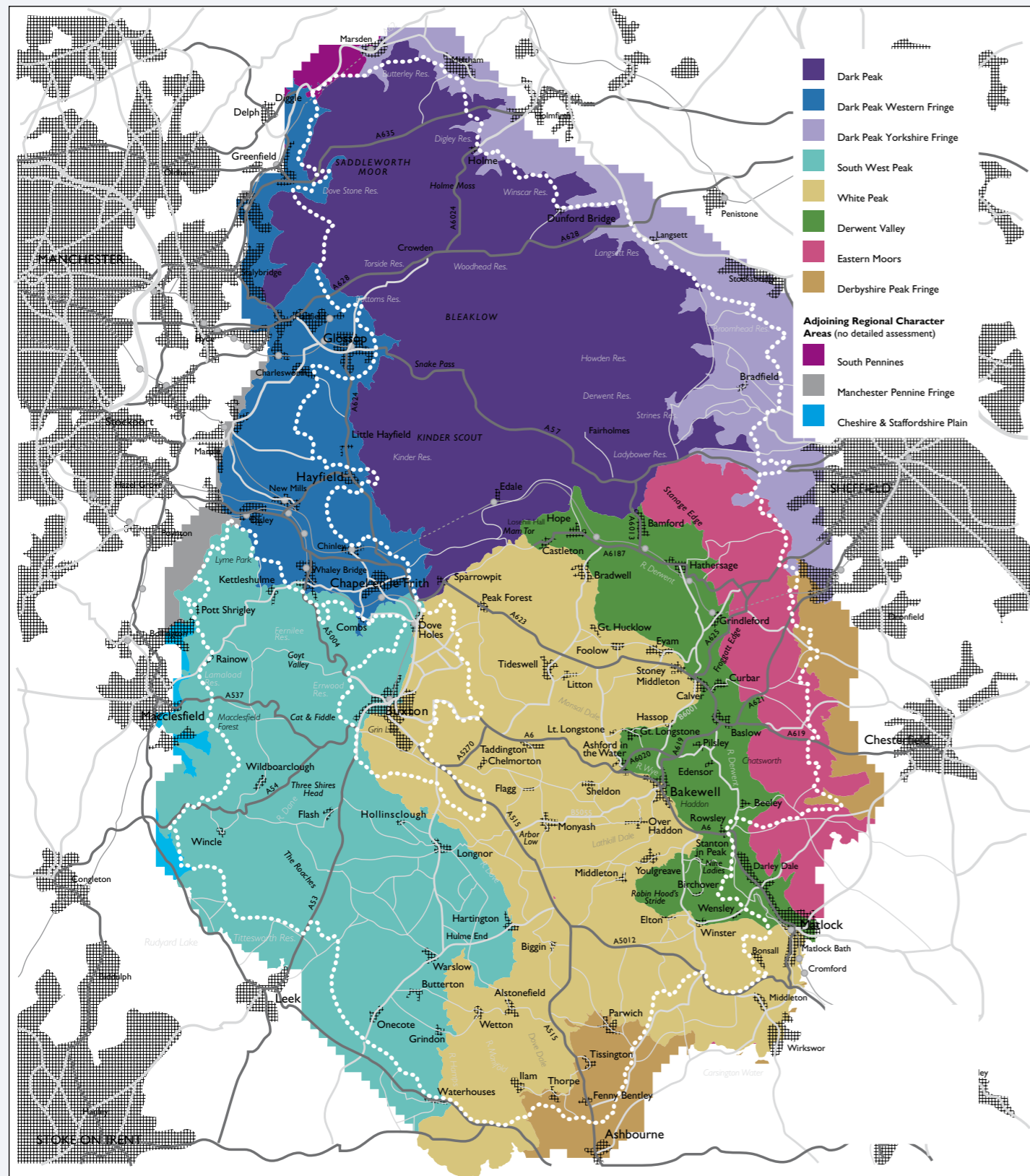
The activity approach looks at individual recreation activities and their specific needs and may be supported by individual activity action plans at a later stage. The detailed Action Plan will develop this activity led approach.

4.2 Widening participation

Working with partners at key sites the National Park Authority will focus on welcome, interpretation and quality of experience. The Mosaic Community Champion model will be expanded into target areas to highlight what there is to see and do in the Peak District and to support and organise visits for Black Minority Ethnic groups, especially from Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean communities living in Derbyshire, Sheffield, Barnsley, Kirklees and Oldham. Information will be made available at locations relevant to the target groups and developed with Community Champions. The most deprived communities living in Derbyshire, Sheffield, Barnsley, Kirklees and Oldham will be connected to gateway sites (such as Dovestone) by delivering activities as part of a wider partnership approach.



Map 9: Peak District landscape character areas



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4.3 Gateways

The National Park Authority does not have a blank canvas when formulating a strategy for recreation. People visiting the Peak District naturally gravitate to those particular areas or attractions which most appeal to them. As a consequence some areas/places are now viewed as honeypots or gateways - the busiest places in and around a busy National Park. Gateway sites offer accessible opportunities providing a high quality, enjoyable countryside experience to both existing and new visitors. The facilities and infrastructure at these gateways has developed over the years to cater for visitor needs and recreational demand and this strategy recognises that established gateways will continue to be popular for the foreseeable future.

For some visitors the gateways are a point of first contact. For many these gateways are their Peak District destination. Gateway towns provide a good base for staying visitors due to good access, information provision and serviced accommodation eg Bakewell, Matlock, Buxton and Ashbourne.

For others they are a stepping off point for wider exploration and enjoyment and can be viewed as 'active recreation hubs'. These gateways are likely to be used by those pursuing specific interests/activities on a regular basis and are defined by good access to the active recreation infrastructure such as:

- Climbing edges, caves
- Bridleways for mountain biking, horse riding
- Water for angling, canoeing, sailing

Active recreation hubs might include for example villages

in the Hope Valley, Stange Edge, Upper Derwent Valley, Langsett and Goyt Valley

In essence, gateways are focal points, not only requiring investment and management, but also providing opportunities - to inspire, spread the word and increase peoples' understanding and enjoyment of the National Park. The continued investment in these gateways is at the heart of this strategy. They will be used as a springboard for facilitating the recreational enjoyment of the National Park.

These destinations often draw visitors who are not confident in the wilder landscapes or prefer a visit based around a particular facility, village/town or heritage attraction. Different communication techniques could be used to encourage people to visit other places or try new activities. Access for all routes could be extended and promoted linking to attractions and facilities and these should be user friendly eg circular routes to clearly recognisable destinations, options for different abilities, distances and likely journey times.

Discussion will be needed with potential partners to guide investment in recreation infrastructure at gateway sites. If there is a proven need and the opportunity arises to influence the location and investment in major new recreational facilities, there should be a presumption that the focus should be on gateway sites on the approaches to the National Park rather than in core areas. Gateway sites require high quality, robust facilities and information on sustainable means of accessing the National Park. Gateway towns provide a good opportunity to introduce visitors to the range of recreation opportunities available whilst active recreation hubs would be more appropriate to highlight specific opportunities or messages.

4.4 Looking beyond gateways

Most of the busiest recreation areas of the National Park are in the Derwent and Hope Valleys, the White Peak and parts of the Fringe Landscape Character areas (see Map 9). These core areas are relatively robust landscapes offering a broad range of recreational opportunities and capable of sustaining moderately high levels of activity. A major asset is the public rights of way network which for many is the key to enjoying these areas. Effective maintenance and management is essential and opportunities to extend and diversify the network should be pursued. Promotion of agreements to create new public rights of way and permissive routes to plug gaps in the network would further recreational enjoyment. Opportunities should be explored to link communities with their surroundings therefore engaging both local residents and visitors with the National Park. Scope to further integrate local bus and community transport with train services should also be investigated.

These areas afford the greatest opportunity to accommodate new National Park users, linked to one-off events or specific sports and activities. There is scope to build on and imaginatively extend the recreational opportunities available eg 'healthy and family friendly activities', themed or activity based trails and sporting events. Circular routes should be developed and promoted to support local people who want to become more active and pursue a healthier lifestyle.

This contrasts with the approach to recreation in the moorland areas of the National Park - notably the Dark Peak and the moorland within the Dark Peak Fringe areas, the South West and the Eastern Moors (Map 9). Here the National Park Authority and its partners need to continue to promote the special qualities of the moorlands - often likened to a 'wilderness landscape' - and to only encourage recreational activities appropriate to that special character. Clear messages are needed explaining why some activities and facilities can be inappropriate so that users' expectations are realistic and they are encouraged to act

responsibly eg to reduce the impacts of uncontrolled dogs, disturbance of nesting birds, sheep killed on roads and risk of fires.

The continued and extended provision of sustainable transport to the moorlands should be a priority, in order to limit the impact of vehicles and to enable a wider cross-section of the population to visit. There may also be scope for promoting some of the less accessible areas for organised group visits eg school/ Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme trips, using minibuses or public transport. There may be pressure to stage more sponsored or themed events in the moorlands. In principle, those events which draw upon the special qualities of the area and for which tackling the rugged terrain is the main element of the challenge, should be accommodated provided they are carefully managed and their impact monitored to ensure sustainability.

In recreational terms the fringe areas could be viewed as transition zones between the quiet moorlands and either the much busier areas of the National Park or the urban areas just beyond its boundary. Transition zones border the National Park boundary providing urban populations opportunities for good connections with the National Park eg the Dovestone area, Holmfirth/Penistone and the Matlock fringe.

The mainly peaceful environment of the transition zones on the edge of the moors should be conserved. Local visitors in particular will often have a good knowledge of the area, so facilities should be kept low-key and sensitive to the location, with limited signage or on-site interpretation. However there may be opportunities to consider increased access to reservoirs, rivers and riversides or to work with landowners to open up more areas of woodland for recreation. Redundant quarries may offer opportunities not just for activities like climbing but also for some more intrusive activities which have site specific requirements and are otherwise difficult to accommodate in more sensitive locations. Any such proposals would need careful consideration.

4.5 Understanding and enjoyment

The second purpose of national park designation is to provide opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the National Park. The National Park Authority does this through (a) interpretation and provision of information (to promote recreation opportunities, for health, wellbeing, interest in and enjoyment of the landscape and wildlife) and (b) provision of quality facilities and services that enhance the recreation experience (eg visitor centres, cycle hire, toilets, etc). Other agencies and organisations also play an important part - communicating opportunities to their members, consumers and service users; instructing individuals and groups in outdoor activities and developing or enhancing recreation facilities. The National Park Authority's strategic aims include the engagement of key target audiences and improving the sustainability of visits.

4.6 Providing sustainable choices

This strategy will help to provide a more coordinated approach to information provision by:

- highlighting the most appropriate activities and locations
- agreeing codes of behaviour
- promoting sustainable access
- suggesting ways of minimising the impact of recreation on the environment and other people.

A key focus should be to increase sustainable transport choices to the National Park to facilitate sustainable recreational use by a more diverse range of users. The integration of sustainable transport hubs and networks from the National Park fringe to promote and enhance access into the National Park by train or bus should be an essential element of this approach. Opportunities should be explored to link communities with their surroundings therefore engaging both local residents and visitors. Scope to further integrate local bus and community transport with train services should also be investigated.

4.7 Summary

The provision of new opportunities must be set in the context of the National Park's first purpose - to conserve and enhance the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage. Primarily therefore, recreation developments should be located where they will not harm the special qualities of the National Park, but may be considered elsewhere if they can be appropriately accommodated or can actively manage a demand-led recreation activity. Although this strategy is for the National Park, the Peak District National Park Authority will continue to work with existing and new partners to consider recreation

opportunities, facilities and infrastructure development close to the boundary of the National Park, eg with Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council in the Holme Valley or with Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, United Utilities, RSPB and others at Dovestone. The aim would be to facilitate enjoyment by managing recreation visits and activities, improve access for people living in neighbouring urban areas and increase understanding of National Park and environmental issues.

The quality of the landscape and range of recreation opportunities on offer attracts large numbers of visitors to some areas, eg Upper Derwent Valley, Castleton and Dovedale. Recreational management must ensure that the infrastructure at gateway sites is sufficiently robust to cater for demand. Landowners and managers need to raise users' awareness of the impact of their visit and ways to reduce it.

A desire to widen the economic benefits of recreation by raising visitors' awareness of what is available throughout the Peak District has been identified in workshops leading up to this strategy.

Suggestions included:

- focusing on 'gateway' sites on the edge of the National Park to provide appropriate information and easier access to local facilities
- improving links to surrounding rural and urban areas (these could include walking, cycling and horse riding links as well as better public transport)

In summary:

- Current level of provision for recreation and access varies across the National Park depending to a large extent on the landscape, with some parts offering better provision than others.
- The majority of appropriate recreational activities can be accommodated but in some instances there is insufficient provision to meet demand eg for water sports.
- The Public Rights of Way network is the most important element of most recreational activities so it is important to maintain it to a high standard and enhance where possible.
- Levels of activity vary considerably across the area,



with some places experiencing very high levels of usage, and other areas where activity is more dispersed.

- Popular sites require increased investment to maintain and manage the infrastructure and meet visitor expectations. Increased information and interpretation to increase engagement with the National Park's special qualities at these sites should lead to greater understanding, confidence and potential dispersal to explore other areas.
- Increased dispersal could bring benefits to the local economy and reduce some of the potentially negative impacts of high visitor pressure.



4.8 Priorities for action and challenges for the future

The issues and challenges identified in the process of developing the strategy will guide the approach to future management of recreation in the Peak District National Park. Key priorities to be addressed in the detailed action plan at Appendix I will be:

- Promotion of active recreation and activity based tourism linked to landscape character and the special qualities of the Peak District *eg Peak District Outdoor Festival 2010*
- More/better liaison with representative organisations/groups - both users and providers - and community champions *eg Setting up partnership groups to implement the strategy*
- Joint initiatives with public and private sector partners *eg Providing key messages at major attractions and private sector outlets*
- Effective dissemination of information to target audiences *eg Reciprocal use of websites*
- Addressing climate change and promote sustainable transport initiatives and greener recreational infrastructure *eg Develop new projects based on Peak Connections approach linked to market towns initiative*
- Proactive management of recreational activities which undermine the National Park's special qualities *eg Building on successful projects like Stay on the Right Track*
- Health initiatives based on active outdoor recreation *eg Refreshing the Peak Park Leisure Walks programme*
- Recreational initiatives which support the local economy and Peak District communities *eg Work with local communities to develop their ideas*
- Encouraging volunteering and local participation *eg Setting up parish volunteer groups*
- Sustaining a high standard of management and maintenance of rights of way and facilities *eg Encouraging customer feedback on standards of management and maintenance*

4.9 Looking to the future

An annual Peak District Recreation Forum, representative of all who have an interest in recreation in the Peak District, will be established to review the direction of the strategy. The Action Plan will be driven by a small Implementation Group of key stakeholders who will evaluate, monitor and review progress.

The strategy will require ongoing collection of data and evidence to stay relevant and to respond to changing situations such as changes in taste, economy and climate. To identify improvements in provision the Peak District National Parking Authority will work with user groups, highway authorities and landowners. After five years this strategy will be reviewed in the light of evidence collected in the intervening period. This may require additional quantitative and qualitative survey work. Performance will be measured in relation to wider Peak District National Park Authority targets and outcomes, and those of key partners and stakeholders. Additional performance monitoring will be undertaken in relation to the detailed targets set out in the Action Plan. The Action Plan will be monitored and updated annually.

This action plan is the result of evidence and analysis presented in the strategy. It sets out the headline actions and suggests how they will be achieved. The actions are listed under the relevant strategic themes which are outlined in more detail in the strategy. The six themes are interlinked and of equal importance. Each headline action is only listed once, although many of them relate to more than one theme.

Following the establishment of an annual Recreation Partnership to review the Strategy and Action Plan, an Implementation Group of representatives from key partners and stakeholders will be formed to address these headline actions in more detail, including the development of targets and measures and identification of potential sources of funding. Partners are asked to sign up to these actions and commit to their delivery, including

provision of information to assist with annual monitoring.

Individual actions show 'Indicative Measures' at this stage; specific targets and measures will be devised when detailed actions are identified with partners/stakeholders involved in their delivery.

Theme I – Healthy lifestyles

Aim - Promote the health benefits of recreation

Outcome: Increased participation in outdoor recreation that enhances overall health and wellbeing.

Ref	Headline action	Key partners involved with delivery	PDNPA role	Priority H,M,L	Indicative Measures
A1	Increase awareness, among target audiences, of the health benefits of active recreation	Derbyshire Sport, Local authorities (initial focus on Derbyshire, Sheffield City and Kirklees councils), Primary Care Trusts, Natural England, representatives of target audiences	Work with identified partners to deliver National Park messages to target groups using the most appropriate communication tools within the resources available <i>eg continue and develop Peak Park Leisure Walks</i>	M	Level of awareness of the benefits of active recreation among participants Number of people participating in initiatives
A2	Promote the Peak District National Park as a destination for healthy recreation activities, recreation events and active holidays	Destination Management Partnerships, Youth Hostels Association, National Trust, Derbyshire Sport, Local Authorities, activities providers	Implementation Group to agree health promotion programme	H	Increase in take-up of activity breaks (Peak District & Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership)
A3	Develop and promote cycling and walking routes linked to urban areas/public transport hubs, particularly a route between Buxton and Matlock and between Buxton and Ashbourne, adding to existing High Peak and Tissington Trails	Highway authorities, Local authorities, Cycling England, Sustrans, landowners, Cyclists' Touring Club, Ride the Peak, Natural England, Local Access Forum	Initiate discussions with partners including Matlock - Buxton cycle route and links to Cycling Demonstration Towns of Stoke-on-Trent and Derby	H for cycling initially	Number or length of new routes developed Number of users of key routes
A4	Research and benchmark models of best practice for providing quality recreation opportunities that enhance health and wellbeing	Local authorities, National Park Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Natural England, Countryside Research Network, Natural England, private sector providers	Contribute staff and resources to research project	L	Complete research project

Theme 2 – Widening participation

Aim – All people have more opportunities to participate

Outcome: The Peak District National Park offers a diverse range of quality recreation opportunities that are easily accessed and affordable.

Ref	Headline action	Key partners involved with delivery	PDNPA role	Priority H,M,L	Indicative Measures
B1	Promote recreation opportunities and enhance access to these by people from under-represented groups	Mosaic champions, Local authorities, community groups, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, National Trust, voluntary sector, Peak District Interpretation Partnership, Community Sports Networks, Local Access Forum, Friends of the Peak District	Work with a range of community champions to expand participation by black and ethnic minority communities. (delivered by Working with People and Communities Strategy, Action Plan for Under-represented Groups)	M	Participation in recreation activities by under-represented groups (eg number of contacts and % that are: children and young people; minority ethnic groups; people with a limiting long-term illness/disability; from a deprived area)
B2	Increase accessibility and promote services at key 'gateway sites' and facilities (eg Dovestones and Fairholmes)	Water companies, National Trust, Forestry Commission, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, Local authorities, user groups, interest groups, voluntary sector	Recreation Partnership / implementation group to steer process. Work with the voluntary sector to develop a range of opportunities to engage communities in recreational activities for under-represented groups	M	Number of people at key sites and satisfaction levels in target groups: Children and young people; minority ethnic groups; people with a limiting long-term illness/disability; from a deprived area
B3	Provide safe, clearly marked off-road trails at key access points to the National Park for people of all abilities to walk, run or ride	Highway authorities, landowners, private operators, Local Access Forum, Community Sports Networks, Natural England	Co-ordination, with initial focus to be agreed with partners but possible focus could be north-west and Chesterfield/Sheffield	M	Proportion of trails that are clearly marked Number or length of new routes provided
B4	Promote recreation events suitable for a range of abilities linked to public transport	Destination Management Partnerships, Peak Connections, Passenger Transport Executives, Local authorities, local media	Liaison, delivery and promotion For example ranger guided walks programme, village trails	M	Number of people accessing recreation events (eg % of guided walks participants from target groups: Children and young people; minority ethnic groups; people with a limiting long-term illness/disability; from a deprived area) Number of people accessing events via public transport

B5	Promote development of educational and recreational opportunities for children and young people	National Trust, Forestry Commission, Natural England, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, Derbyshire Sport, Institute for Outdoor Learning, Local authorities, outdoor activity centres, Wildlife Trusts, Youth Hostels Association	Facilitation through Young People's Action Plan, Working with People and Communities Strategy: - bring partners together - co-ordinate and apply for or support funding bids	M	Number of young people participating in educational/recreational activities in the National Park
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Theme 3 – Climate change and sustainability

Aim - Promote more environmentally sustainable options for recreation in response to climate change and other environmental challenges

Outcome: The open spaces of the Peak District National Park provide a wide range of recreational opportunities that do not compromise environmental values

Ref	Headline action	Key partners involved with delivery	PDNPA role	Priority H,M,L	Indicative Measures
C1	Develop and promote public transport links from surrounding urban centres, transport hubs and settlements in the National Park	Peak Connections, Passenger Transport Executives, Ramblers Association, Cyclists' Touring Club, other interest groups	Liaison, development and publicity eg Peak Connections developing initiative with market towns	H	Number of new routes provided
C2	Develop facilities and services at key sites in or close to the National Park that are most accessible by public transport, cycling or walking	Local authorities, Passenger Transport Executives, National Trust, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, Landowners, Highway authorities, conservation/interest groups	Work with partners to develop priorities for gateway sites (eg Dovestones, Fairholmes, Eastern Moors) including key National Park messages, etc	H	Investment in infrastructure at gateway sites Level of satisfaction by service users
C3	Address potential impacts of climate change and use sustainable development techniques for new or enhanced recreation facilities (eg emissions reductions, use of water, rate of soil erosion)	Local authorities, private sector partners	Apply to Peak District National Park Authority properties/facilities and encourage partners to do so	M	Environmental management systems in place
C4	Promote sustainable travel choices eg linked public transport routes, campaigns, offers and initiatives	Peak Connections, Sustainable Transport Action Plan stakeholders	Sustainable Transport Action Plan led by Peak District National Park Authority	M	Number of people using public transport Level of awareness of, and satisfaction with, sustainable travel choices

Theme 5 – Partnership working

Aim - Work with partners to manage, enhance and develop a range of recreation opportunities appropriate to the special qualities of the national park

Outcome: There will be a wide range of recreation opportunities based on quality facilities and services, appropriate to the identity of the Peak District National Park

Ref	Headline action	Key partners involved with delivery	PDNPA role	Priority H,M,L	Indicative Measures
E1	Establish a Recreation Partnership and Implementation Group of key recreation stakeholders to ensure strategic alignment of priorities and a partnership approach to improving provision and management of recreation opportunities	All partners/stakeholders	Establish, facilitate and run Recreation Partnership and Implementation Group	H	Evidence of the extent to which strategic priorities and actions are aligned
E2	Establish mechanisms to positively manage recreation activities in relation to specific conservation aims and potential conflicts between different users	User groups, representative organisations, Local Access Forum, landowners	Co-ordinate and contribute as appropriate	M	Effectiveness of initiatives to address specific issues (for example, level of use of routes, level of satisfaction with engagement processes)
E3	Develop a strategic approach to the provision of facilities such as toilets and car parks	Local authorities, National Trust, Forestry Commission, Water companies, other recreation providers including private sector	Implementation Group to co-ordinate and deliver	H	Strategic plan in place
E4	Establish partnership 'task groups' to explore potential for specific recreation activities eg water sports, horse riding, cycling	Local Access Forum, user groups, representative organisations	Establish, facilitate and run task groups	M	Number of action plans agreed
E5	Work with partners to implement integrated Rights of Way Improvement Plans and develop routes accessible to all	Highway authorities, access groups, Local Access Forum	Identify routes and promote (including GIS database)	H	Percentage of network open and in good condition Number/length of routes accessible to all
E6	Manage access to open country	Highway authorities, landowners, Local Access Forum	Manage access database, liaise landowners	H	Area of access land open

Theme 4 – Raising awareness and understanding

Aim - Raise awareness and understanding of the peak district national park promoting it as a welcoming destination with diverse recreation opportunities for visitors and residents

Outcome: Visitors and residents will have a greater understanding of the National Park and its special qualities, leading to greater care and involvement

Ref	Headline action	Key partners involved with delivery	PDNPA role	Priority H,M,L	Indicative Measures
D1	Promote positive messages about sustainable recreation and how to access the National Park safely and in a way which encourages people to make a positive contribution as part of their visit (eg purchasing locally or volunteering)	All partners and stakeholders, Peak District Interpretation Partnership, local businesses, activity providers, media	Promote positive messages and ensure that all publicity material, information provision and marketing campaigns linked to the National Park reflect the diversity of all users. Seek sponsorship	M	Level of understanding of the special qualities of the National Park Number of people committed to behavioural changes as a result of their National Park 'experience'
D2	Encourage product/service providers to network and promote new recreation products including 'packaged' offers	Destination Management Partnerships, Business Link, regional development agencies	Contribute to networks eg Environmental Quality Mark, Peak Cuisine. Influence marketing plans and campaigns	H	Number of new networks established
D3	Establish and maintain a database of recreation opportunities and an evidence base of visitor profile, service uptake, etc	All partners, user groups	Collate and update data including map existing actions. Undertake regular monitoring/surveys of recreational use at a variety of sites to track participation by a range of groups	H	Database and frequency of maintenance established
D4	Produce guidance for use of the National Park for recreation eg for large scale organised events, safety issues and links to services	Events organisers, user groups, landowners, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, charities, Moorland Association, Moors for the Future, Association of National Park Authorities	Co-ordinate and produce web-based guidelines which can be linked to other websites	M	Guidance produced containing agreed messages Level of use of guidance (eg website downloads)

Theme 6 – Community participation, including volunteering

Aim - Increase community participation and volunteering to facilitate recreational enjoyment and benefit the environment and local economy

Outcome: Quality community-led recreation facilities and opportunities are provided

Ref	Headline action	Key partners involved with delivery	PDNPA role	Priority H,M,L	Indicative Measures
F1	Develop a volunteer strategy for the National Park to encourage local people and visitors to make a personal contribution to the National Park	Natural England, National Trust, Groundwork, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Youth Hostels Association, Parish Councils, Derbyshire Sport	Co-ordination of Volunteer Strategy	M/H	Number of people volunteering/number of volunteer hours or days
F2	Facilitate/support local communities in positively addressing recreation issues and explore opportunities linked to recreation and its management in the National Park	Parish councils, Rural Community Councils, Local Authorities, community groups	Facilitation work with local communities and possible grant provision through programmes such as Live & Work Rural, Leader and Sustainable Development Fund	M	Number of community recreation initiatives
F3	Develop village trails linked to public transport and sustainable local businesses	Parish councils, Rural Community Councils, Local Authorities, Peak Connections, local community groups, local business networks	Facilitation and co-ordination	M/H	Number of new village trails established
F4	Identify and address the recreation needs of communities living in and close to the National Park	Local Strategic Partnerships, Local authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Derbyshire Sport, local community groups	Influence Community Strategies to ensure National Park outcomes for recreation are included	M	Actions in community strategies Level of satisfaction with recreation facilities

Appendix 2: Background

Legal and policy context

When writing this strategy relevant national, regional and local policies and plans and any relevant legal requirements have been taken into account. For more information please refer to the websites listed.

- (2006-11) www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/npmp
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Derbyshire 2007-12 www.derbyshire.gov.uk
- Greenway Strategy for West Derbyshire and High Peak (2008) www.derbyshire.gov.uk
- Active Derbyshire Plan 2009-12 www.derbyshiresport.co.uk

National context

- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) www.defra.gov.uk
- Environment Act (1995) www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals
- Department of Environment Circular 12/96 www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals
- Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002) www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals
- Health Concordat (2005) www.forestry.gov.uk

Regional context

- Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) – Regional Spatial Strategy governs all planning policy for the Peak District National Park www.goem.gov.uk
- East Midlands Development Agency (emda) – for economic development in the Derbyshire part of the Peak District www.emda.org.uk. Emda is the most relevant in terms of tourism, delivered through East Midlands Tourism (EMT) www.eastmidlandstourism.co.uk. Areas with other government office regions are covered by Advantage West Midlands, Yorkshire Forward and Northwest Development Agency.
- Derbyshire Sport – the County Sports Partnership for much of the area. www.derbyshiresport.co.uk

Local context

- Peak District National Park Local Development Framework (LDF) www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ldf
- Peak District National Park Structure Plan (1994) www.peakdistrict.gov.uk
- Peak District National Park Local Plan (2001) www.peakdistrict.gov.uk
- Peak District National Park Management Plan

Relationship to other strategies and plans

The recreation strategy is one of a number of strategies recently agreed or currently being developed by the PDNPA to underpin the Peak District National Park Management Plan (2006-11) (www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/npmp).

These include the Sustainable Transport Action Plan, Sustainable Tourism Strategy, the Climate Change Action Plan and the Landscape Strategy. A Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Cultural Heritage Strategy are already in place, as is the Working with People and Communities Strategy and its related Action Plans to address target audiences of young people, local residents and under-represented groups. A Minerals Strategy is being developed. To be effective all of these documents must be linked and inter-related, sharing some common themes: protection of the environment; maximising accessibility, choice and diversity. As a result some actions appear in more than one strategy.

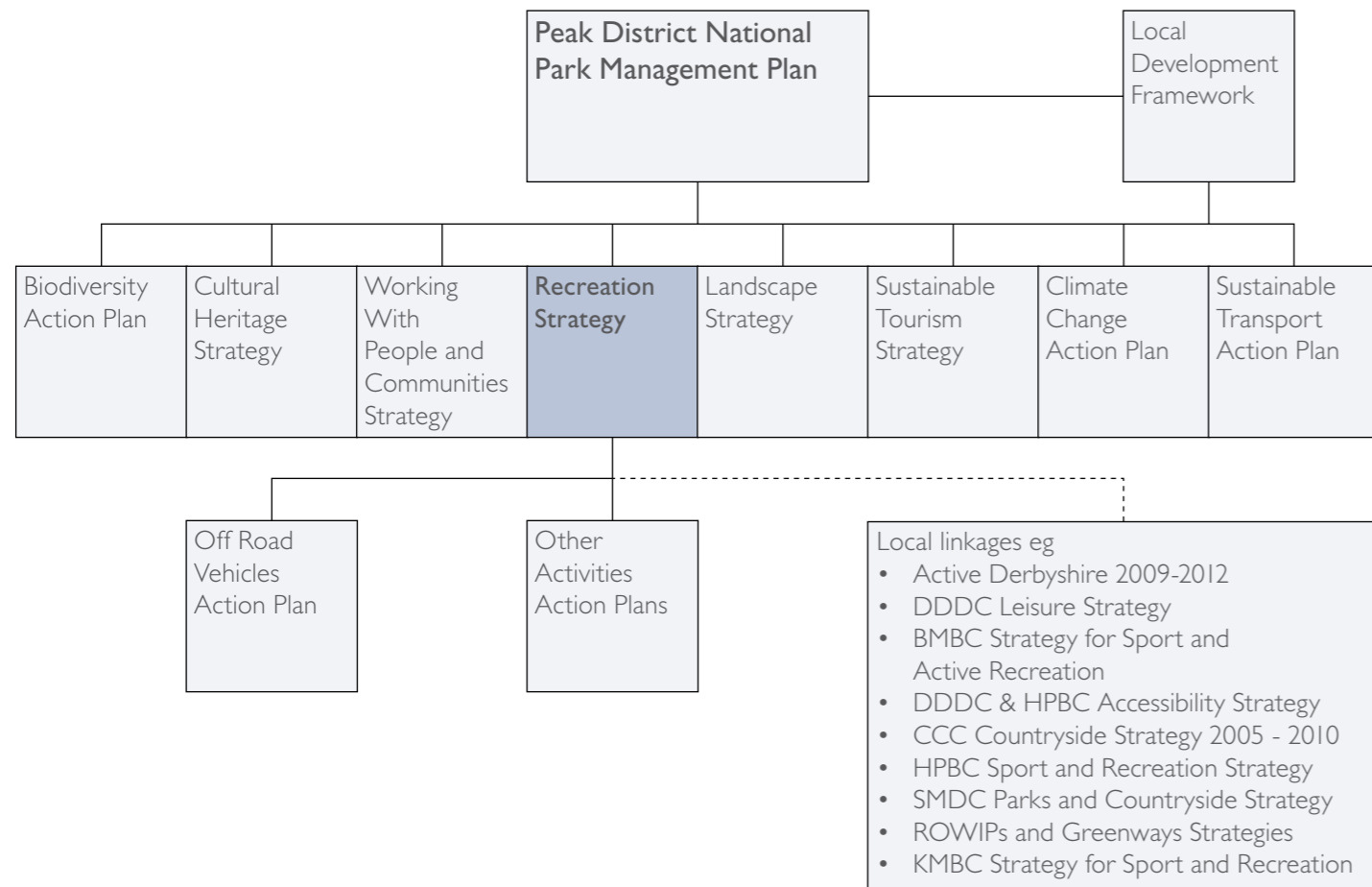
It is recognised that overlap exists between tourism and recreation. Much tourism is recreational in that a good proportion of tourism activity in the Peak District takes place during leisure time in natural settings. The PDNPA tries to influence tourism development to increase sustainability of visits. The vision for tourism in the Peak District is set out in the Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

All of the constituent local authorities that make up the National Park area produce strategies and action plans related to the countryside, recreation, sport, leisure, rights of way and greenways. Most have themes of improving health, increasing sustainability, enhancing opportunities and promotion, working in partnership and increasing community participation.

The relationship to other strategies and plans is shown in Figure 1



Figure 1: How the Recreation Strategy links to other strategies and action plans



An extensive list of interest groups and partners was compiled for consultation and liaison purposes. The process began with a workshop at Losehill Hall, the National Park Learning and Environmental Conference Centre, on 7 May 2008 when 58 interested stakeholders took part in discussions on how to improve recreation opportunities in the Peak District.

The Local Access Forum is fundamental to the development of recreation and access in the National Park. It has been kept informed of progress throughout and a sub-group helped to formulate the action plan.

Information was collated on existing sites, facilities and providers and for the first time current recreation provision in the Peak District has been mapped using a Geographical Information System (GIS). As well as the public rights of way network and access land, this includes:

- angling
- canoeing
- climbing crags
- caves with access
- hang gliding and paragliding sites
- horse riding stables
- water sports
- cycle hire
- outdoor activity centres
- bunkhouses, camping and caravanning sites
- orienteering courses
- heritage attractions
- main car parks

The information can be overlaid with information such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas for Conservation (SAC) and Landscape Character Areas to help identify where further opportunities might be located appropriately.

An online survey directed at existing users of the Peak District was carried out by consultants during late summer 2008 to find out what recreational activities people do now and how that might change in the future. This was supplemented by a desk study of existing research to understand why some groups appear to be under-represented as visitors.

Recreation was the subject of the annual PDNPA's Parishes Forum day in September 2008, where local people's views were sought on issues such as how to engage young people better in outdoor recreation and how parish councils could help deliver the strategy.

Anecdotal evidence has been collected from individuals working in the recreation sector, including the National Park Ranger service.

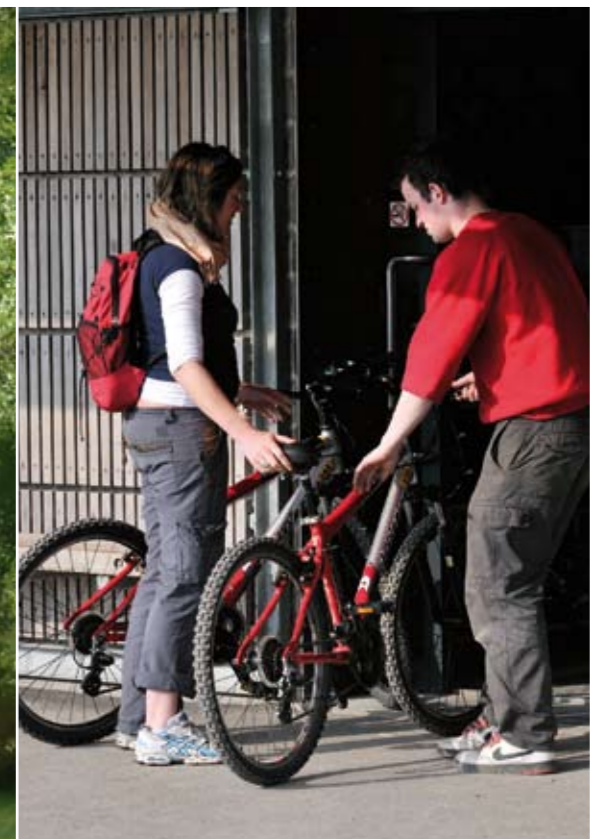
Peak District National Park Authority members were able to contribute their views at a workshop about the strategy in February 2009. Liaison and discussion with other local authority partners has continued throughout.

Although the PDNPA has a key role to play in developing and delivering this strategy and action plan, on-going and new partnership working is essential if the benefits of recreation are to be sustained and extended.

How the strategy was produced

The National Park Authority has a long history of working in partnership with others in recreation provision and management and some of the main partnership successes are illustrated as case studies throughout the strategy. The delivery of the vision and aims of this strategy and action plan will rely heavily on existing and new relationships developed with the wide range of administrative, community and interest groups represented in the national park.

The strategy has been produced in partnership with many stakeholders who will all have a role to play in achieving its aims. They include governing bodies for sport, recreation clubs, user groups, landowners, conservationists, local authorities, community and health representatives, and recreation providers and promoters. It includes input from the Peak District Local Access Forum (PDLAF); the stakeholders' workshop, the Members scrutiny team and preliminary consultations with a wide range of recreation providers and users.



Dark Peak

This mostly open moorland is wild, remote and tranquil, giving a sense of wilderness in a landscape with few signs of habitation. It includes the high gritstone plateau of the Peak District with Kinder Scout and Bleaklow its highest summits and rocky outcrops around its edges. Win Hill and Mam Tor are distinct features of the popular Edale valley.

Most of this area is Access Land where people can roam at will; it also includes the southern section of the Pennine Way from Edale and the central section of the Trans Pennine Trail coast to coast route. Much of the terrain is challenging. A number of climbing sites lie in the Dark Peak such as Laddow Rocks north of Crowden and disused quarries at Tintwistle. Some winters, ice-climbing takes place on the frozen Kinder Downfall. Longdendale and the Upper Derwent valley attract a wide range of recreation uses including walking and strolling, sailing and windsurfing, mountain biking, cycling and horse riding. There is a cycle hire centre at Fairholmes in the Upper Derwent and a trekking centre in the Edale valley. A number of outdoor pursuits centres lie within the Dark Peak.



Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe

Lying to the east of the Dark Peak, this is an area of lower moorland slopes (often wooded), more enclosed farmland and large settlements (eg Penistone, Holmfirth and Stocksbridge) as well as smaller villages such as Ewden and Bradfield. There are a number of reservoirs, often surrounded by coniferous plantations.

Recreation provision in this area is focused on the reservoirs where a variety of water sports, fishing and walking is well catered for. A link for walkers, riders and cyclists from Langsett Reservoir to the Trans Pennine Trail has increased accessibility to this major route.



Dark Peak Western Fringe

This area comprises the sloping and lower lying landscapes of the upper Goyt, Etherow and Tame river valleys to the west of the Dark Peak and encompasses a number of settlements including Glossop, Hayfield and Chapel-en-le-Frith.

There is a small amount of Access Land but this is mainly enclosed farmland with many paths and bridleways including the Pennine Bridleway and the Sett Valley Trail. There are a number of reservoirs offering fishing and water sports, several riding stables and two permanent orienteering sites. There is some local climbing on Combs Edge.



South West Peak

This is a diverse gritstone area of upland moorland and rolling hills stretching to the edges of Macclesfield and Leek. It includes tree lined watercourses, high rocky outcrops and reservoir valleys. There are scattered farms and small settlements as well as larger villages, some of which are popular for leisure and recreation (eg Longnor and Pott Shrigley).

The South West Peak includes areas of Access Land and the major recreation areas of the Goyt Valley, Macclesfield Forest, Tegg's Nose, Lyme Park, Tittesworth Reservoir and the Roaches but otherwise recreational activity is relatively low key and dispersed. The Gritstone Trail and Cheshire Cycleway pass through the area, and the Manifold Track lies on its boundary with the White Peak. It encompasses the National Park Authority owned Warslow Moors estate, with the rocky outcrops of Hen Cloud, Ramshaw Rocks and the Roaches popular with climbers, and a large area of moorland used for military training (controlled access). Cycle hire is available at Waterhouses.



White Peak

An elevated, gently rolling limestone plateau dissected by deeply cut dales often associated with rivers (Manifold, Hamps, Dove, Lathkill, Wye and Derwent). There are many small villages and scattered farms and a distinctive pattern of dry stone walls enclosing small fields.

Whilst there is recreational activity throughout the area, most visitors head for the dales and popular towns and villages such as Bakewell, Hartington, Monyash, Buxton and Matlock Bath. There are a large number of caravan and camping sites which offer low-cost holiday accommodation. A number of trails run through the area including the High Peak and Tissington Trails (with cycle hire at Parsley Hay), the Monsal Trail and the Limestone Way. Horse riders can embark on the Pennine Bridleway stretching northwards from its start at Hartington Station on the High Peak Trail, where there is parking for horse-boxes and an enclosure for tacking up. There are a number of important limestone climbing and caving sites notably around Stoney Middleton.



Eastern Moors

This area encompasses moorland, slopes and cloughs and the gritstone edges of Stanage, Burbage, Gardom's and Birchen. It is an accessible, attractive landscape with wide views (eg Surprise View) which can still retain a sense of remoteness.

Popular hubs of recreation activity include Stanage, the Burbage Valley and Longshaw, all in close proximity to Sheffield. Some good walking and cycling links from Sheffield provide sustainable access to this area.



Derwent Valley

Between the limestone plateau and the gritstone edges, the Derwent Valley Regional Character area covers the lower valley of the River Derwent and its tributaries (Rivers Wye and Noe). It includes the Hope Valley in the north and stretches south to Matlock. It includes three moorland outliers at Stanton Moor, Eyam Moor and Abney Moor.

The area is easily accessible from Sheffield and Chesterfield resulting in high visitor numbers. It benefits from good public transport links - railway stations in the Hope Valley stations and at Matlock and buses from Sheffield, Chesterfield and Derby. There are a number of recreation and leisure attractions including Chatsworth, Castleton and Hathersage. The popular walking and climbing edges of Froggatt, Curbar and Baslow lie close to the boundary between this area and Eastern Moors. The Derwent Valley Heritage Way is a footpath following the river from its source below Ladybower Dam to its junction with the River Trent at Shardlow near Derby.



Derbyshire Peak Fringe

Two separate areas – one east of the Eastern Moors on the National Park boundary and close to Chesterfield and south-west Sheffield; the other south of the White Peak between Parwich and Ashbourne. These are undulating, transitional landscapes of enclosed farmland with some woodland. The southern area includes the villages of Parwich, Tissington, Thorpe and Fenny Bentley and both areas have scattered farms.

Visitors are particularly drawn to Dovedale, Tissington, Ilam, Ashbourne and Linacre Reservoir. The southern end of the Tissington Trail runs through one of the areas with a cycle hire centre close to Ashbourne.



Annual 2-day guided walk for the Disabled Ramblers

This event has been run in the Peak District successfully for 10 years with good support from National Park and other Local Authority rangers. Most participants use battery powered mobility scooters to tackle routes of varying degrees of difficulty up to 10 miles long. A wide variety of routes have been enjoyed including full circuits of Dovestone Reservoir, Derwent and Howden Reservoirs, Carsington Reservoir, Damflask and Agden Reservoirs. Routes have incorporated the many trails in the National Park (High Peak and Tissington, Thornhill, Longdendale, Manifold) and on one occasion participants wore hard hats to enable a memorable trip through the closed tunnels of the Monsal Trail from Bakewell to Millers Dale. Other attractions have included a visit to Chatsworth grounds and gardens, a circuit of Macclesfield Forest and a trip onto the high moorland of Rowlee Pasture above the Woodlands Valley.

Working with such enthusiastic participants has increased our understanding of what disabled people can do. Their desire to take part in adventurous activities is not diminished by their lack of mobility. The group campaigns at a national level to create more opportunities for disabled people to enjoy the countryside.

Stanage Forum

The Stanage/North Lees Estate is owned and managed by the Peak District National Park Authority. The land is home to internationally rare heather moorland and blanket bog. The Estate receives over half a million visitors per year, who take part in a wide range of activities including walking, cycling, hang-gliding and paragliding, and bird watching. Stanage Edge is perhaps best known as an internationally important gritstone climbing edge.

In 2000, the authority wished to review the management plan for the estate. It was perceived that there were real conflicts between the various activities on the estate, and with its management for conservation and farming interests. A decision was taken to try a new approach to managing the land.

A website was established with an on-line discussion board to enable as wide a debate as possible. An open public meeting was held in August 2000, attended by over 70 people, to agree principles and a shared vision for the plan. A Steering Group of 17 people were elected to identify specific problems and then discuss them in technical

groups. The aim was to build up a consensus and agreed solutions.

Over the next two years these volunteers produced the Stanage/North Lees Estate Management Plan which was completed in October 2002.

The work has enabled mutual understanding of conservation, farming and recreation issues to take place. This in turn has led to co-coordinated and agreed management of the land for the benefit of farmers, wildlife, local people, land managers, climbers and other visitors. Benefits have included a voluntary restriction on climbing near nesting ring ouzels; a bus from Sheffield partly subsidised by the British Mountaineering Council; improved walking routes and re-vegetation of eroded paths. www.peakdistrict.org/index/looking-after/stanage.htm

Cycle Hire Facilities

A wide range of bikes including mountain bikes, tandems, trikes, hand-cranked tricycles, wheelchair cycles and mobility scooters can be hired from the Peak District National Park cycle hire centres. Friendly cycle hire staff help people of all abilities to enjoy their cycling experience of the National Park.

Robert Dallison, PDNPA Cycle Services Manager, adds: "We have cycles for all ages, sizes and abilities with access to some of the best traffic free trails in the country. Cycling is a fun, healthy way to see the wonderful scenery."

You're Welcome

A free 48-page 'You're Welcome' booklet produced by the Moors for the Future Partnership and the Peak District National Park Authority is an invaluable guide for newcomers to the countryside as well as wheelchair users, families with small children and the elderly. It has detailed maps showing easy-access routes where unnecessary barriers like steps and stiles have been removed and smooth continuous surfaces provided. These include 15 miles of moorland footpaths where access has been recently improved.

Sites include beautiful places such as Surprise View (between Sheffield and Hathersage), Green Drive in the Burbage Valley, Curbar and Baslow Edges. In addition, an 18-mile circuit of Severn Trent Water's Upper Derwent reservoirs can now be navigated without barriers, and work has been completed at United Utilities' Dovestone

reservoir, Greenfield (near Oldham) on new footpath surfacing and three easy-access gates.

The booklet also identifies accessible car parks, children's play areas, accessible toilets, public transport choices and scenic viewpoints as well as easy access routes in the White Peak, including the trails network. Alison Salmen, Hope Valley Access Group commented: "This guide helps people discover the many accessible places that the national park has to offer."

Peak District National Park Conservation Volunteers

The Conservation Volunteers scheme was set up over 25 years ago and undertakes a variety of tasks throughout the whole of the national park; including habitat and woodland management, footpath repairs and the conservation of heritage structures. It reaches out to under-represented groups including young people and adults with special needs. It works with local authority youth services, the Groundwork Trust, the Home Farm Trust and other charities and organisations.

Volunteers can work either as an individual or part of an organised group such as scouts, youth clubs and Duke of Edinburgh award. Many groups stay at one of the two residential hostels at Marsh Farm in the Staffordshire Moorlands or Brunts Barn, near Grindleford.

Of the 569 projects in 2007/8, 62% of the 4,297 volunteers were either young people aged 21 and under or adults who had special needs. A significant proportion of the rest were adults aged 50+ who are retired or semi-retired. An analysis of volunteer postcodes indicates that a substantial proportion live in what are considered to be disadvantaged urban areas.

The ethos of the Conservation Volunteers is to provide participants with a positive, fun national park experience to take home.

Choi Junho, an international volunteer from South Korea, said: "It's really nice to work in the countryside with people from all over the world. I'm very happy that we can help the rangers look after the national park. There are not very many opportunities to do this at home, but now that I have had this experience I am looking forward to finding similar projects in my own country." www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ppcv.html

The Peak District Northern Gateways Initiative

This is an exciting and innovative countryside project in Oldham and the Peak District National Park. The area has important peat and blanket bog protected under both UK and European law and is home to the Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway National Trails.

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and the Peak District National Park Authority have identified, through the Northern Gateways Initiative, several key routes which link the national trails with other established trails in the area. Branded as the Peak District Northern Gateway, a range of recreational experiences will be available from the Sunday afternoon family walk to long distance weekend horse riding or cycling breaks, set against the magnificent backdrop of the Peak District.

The hub of this initiative revolves around three existing popular 'honey pot' locations – the Friezeland Riding Arena, Brownhill Countryside Centre and Dovestone Reservoir. This initiative will:

- Develop way marking and route maps
- Improve the facilities and range of services on offer
- Reduce congestion in popular areas
- Attract visitors who have never been to the area before

The Peak District Northern Gateways Initiative is an excellent example of joint working to raise awareness of the global importance of the Dark Peak landscape, with outstanding opportunities to enjoy the special characteristics of this unique countryside in a sustainable way.

Access Passport

"Access Passport" is a short film showing how wheelchair users and people with other mobility problems can enjoy the Peak District. The film is presented by a former paralympian John Harris, 63, who explores the possibilities of what most wheelchair-users could achieve. John uses an adapted cycle along traffic-free trails at Parsley Hay, he rolls up to a cavern in Castleton and he joins young disabled people abseiling at Millers Dale. John said: "It gives people with a disability the opportunity to take part in activities they never would have had, and I was treated no different from anyone else. It was an unbelievable moment to see that river below. I want to do it again, even higher!"

"Access Passport" was produced by Axess Film (the UK's only charitable film company) for the Peak District National Park Authority. www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/accesspeak

Audio Trails

The Moors for the Future Audio Trails are pre-recorded guides that inform, educate and entertain. Easily downloaded onto MP3 players, iPods and mobile phones, the audio tours can be accessed and listened to at any time. They peel away the rich history of the Peak District moors with a mix of interviews, songs, poetry, music and sound effects.

Take a stroll with a Roman medic, an Anglo-Saxon thane and 'Dambuster' Guy Gibson on Win Hill, discover the struggle for access in Edale or take a walk with a Ranger in Marsden.

www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk

Ride the Peak

The growth of off-road cycling, and particularly mountain-biking, in the Peak District raises a number of management issues. One of the key problems for the PDNPA was the lack of a recognised user group to represent the interests of mountain-bikers, to engage in the processes of management. In 2007 a seminar was held at Losehill Hall, involving a wide range of mountain-bikers, including guide-book writers, cycle shop owners, riders and landowners to establish common aims and objectives. From this seminar, an action plan was developed. It aims to target promotion of active sports such as cycling and mountain biking, in suitable locations – a key action in the Peak District National Park Management Plan.

A working group known as 'Ride the Peak' has been established. The group's aims are to maintain and enhance mountain-biking in the Peak District by:

- Developing the trail network (spreading the load)
- Highlighting and if necessary developing new facilities
- Create online information and a forum for discussing riding in the area
- Acting as a forum for discussion between mountain-bike riders, promoters, land owners, other user groups and local decision / policy makers in the Peak District.
- Linking with national mountain-bike projects and work, through close liaison with the International Mountain-Biking Association and other groups.

White Peak Cycle Routes

These routes offer 70 miles of relaxing cycling in the spectacular limestone countryside of the White Peak. Much of the network is traffic-free, based on disused railway lines which have been restored for cyclists, walkers and horse riders by the Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire and Staffordshire county councils. Other sections follow "green lanes" and minor roads. New links have recently been added to the network. A leaflet has been produced to promote the routes, as well as providing details of local accommodation and catering businesses in the area.

www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/trailsleaflet.pdf

Limestone Way makeover

The Peak District National Park's Countryside Maintenance Team spent the winter months improving the Limestone Way, partly funded by the Derbyshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The Limestone Way trail between Matlock and Castleton was set up in the 1980s, but no maintenance fund was put in place to look after it. Twenty five years later the very well used trail was, unsurprisingly, getting a bit the worse for wear. The ranger service carried out a survey of the entire route, developed a bid to the County Council and liaised with farmers to agree a planned programme of work.

The Countryside Maintenance Team set out to make the access easier along the whole route but wanted to ensure that the heritage squeeze stiles and features of the landscape were conserved and enhanced. Forty six new or replacement fingerposts now line the route.

White Hall Centre

Derbyshire County Council's outdoor education near Buxton offers a wide range of fun activities, day and residential courses. The centre now welcomes about 8,000 visitors a year. High quality outdoor education helps young people become more independent, encourages the development of social skills and can often motivate reluctant learners. The outreach unit is a new initiative whereby equipment and instructors can be booked to provide activity sessions in the local community.

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/whitehallcentre

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