

18. PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK TRANSPORT DESIGN GUIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (TN)

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Planning Committee on the progress of the Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and to seek approval from the Committee for the draft document, and also for the commencement of an eight week public consultation process, subject to any amendments arising from this meeting.

The Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide SPD has been under development since the Summer of 2016. During the autumn of 2016 the document was subject to a six-week informal consultation with stakeholders including constituent highway authorities, Highways England and Network Rail.

Since January 2017, the document has undergone a number of revisions based on the informal consultation responses and as a result of internal input in relation to the documents role in informing developers.

As a result of the work undertaken, it is now proposed to undertake a full public consultation on the Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide SPD, with the Consultation Version of the document forming Appendix A of this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee:

- 1. Approves the Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Consultation Version).**
- 2. Gives approval to an 8 week Public Consultation on the Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document to be undertaken during the Autumn of 2017.**
- 3. That delegated authority is granted to the Director of Conservation and Planning in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee to agree any further modifications and finalise the document at Appendix 1 prior to public consultation**

History

The Peak District National Park falls within the constituent area of seven different highway authorities (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Cheshire East Council, Derbyshire County Council, Kirklees Council, Oldham Council, Sheffield City Council and Staffordshire County Council). In addition, the A628 Trunk Road lies under the ownership / management of Highways England, whilst the Hope Valley railway line falls under the ownership of Network Rail.

The National Park Authority's planning documents have traditionally included policies relating to the design criteria for transport infrastructure. The aim of these policies being to ensure that new transport infrastructure is of a size and design that is effective, but compatible with National Park purposes.

During the period from 1997 to 2010, the Government tasked highway authorities with improving road safety in general and in particular on rural class 'A' and 'B' roads. This approach included the review of rural speed limits and the establishment of road safety partnerships whose remit

included delivering reductions in both the number of road traffic collisions and in particular, the numbers of road users killed or seriously injured as a result of such collisions.

During this period, EuroRAP (European Road Assessment Programme) produced a series of reports highlighting the riskiest roads within the UK across a number of differing criteria. In most cases, four to five roads within the Peak District were rated as being amongst the ten riskiest roads in the country, with the A537 Cat & Fiddle usually being rated as the riskiest.

With this drive towards improved road safety, the Park's reputation for risky roads, a higher than average presence of some of the more at risk groups (including motorcyclists) and a concern of litigation amongst highway engineers, led to a series of intrusive signage schemes within the National Park. It was generally considered by Officers of the Authority that some of these schemes were both oversized and over engineered in relation to their location and National Park purposes. In some cases, it was thought the overabundance of individual signs and yellow backings may lead to confusion amongst road users rather than providing the intended clarification and direction.

As a number of the larger and intrusive signage schemes had been introduced within the Derbyshire County Council area of the National Park, the then CEO of the National Park Authority brokered a nine point agreement with the County Council on transport infrastructure, which commenced in 2007. This included an agreement to consult on highway schemes to enable officers of the National Park Authority to provide comment.

The agreement with the County Council enabled officers of both organisations to work together to ensure that schemes were fit-for-purpose, but that regard was given to National Park purposes. An attempt was made to introduce a similar agreement with the Park's other constituent highway authorities with mixed success.

Supporting text to the adopted *Core Strategy Policy T3: Design of transport infrastructure* (adopted 2011) suggests that there may be a need to bring forward a design guide to offer guidance the high standards required of transport infrastructure within the National Park and in support of commitments to remove unnecessary signage and clutter. An approach to the removal of signage clutter was also promoted within the Department for Transport's review of road signs and subsequent Transport Advisory Leaflet 02/12 Reducing Sign Clutter.

Since 2010, cuts to highway authority budgets have meant a combination of staff cuts and outsourcing of functions to consultancy companies. In some cases this has coincided with a lack of awareness of National Parks and the Section 62 Duty that applies to both highway authorities and those acting on their behalf. In some cases this has meant that schemes have been delivered without prior consultation, and in a way that does not have regard to National Park purposes.

Production of the Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

Whilst the intention had originally been to develop the Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide SPD internally, (it was a commitment within the Policy Strategy & Partnerships Service Plan) a lack of resource led to delays in undertaking the work. It was therefore decided during 2015-16 that the work be outsourced, with the contract being awarded to Arcus Consulting in 2016.

In developing the Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide SPD, the National Park Authority hosted a workshop in September 2016 which was attended by representatives of constituent highway authorities and Network Rail. Feedback from this workshop informed the first draft of the Design Guide which underwent an informal 6 week consultation during the Autumn of 2016.

Since January 2017 work has been ongoing to ensure that in addition to dealing with signage and highway infrastructure, that the Design Guide can also be used by developers to inform the design of parking facilities; roads, junctions and access facilities; and street furniture within the public realm.

The Peak District National Park Parking Standards are included as an annex within the SPD.

The version of the document provided at Appendix 1 contains a number of small errors, mainly typographical, which are to be addressed prior to the commencement of the public consultation. Members are asked to note that these errors have been recognised and will be addressed, and to give delegated authority to the Director of Conservation and Planning and the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee to agree these modifications and finalise the documents ahead of the public consultation.

Main Policies

Relevant Core Strategy policies: Policy T3: Design of transport infrastructure

Relevant Local Plan policies: Policy LT18: Design criteria for transport infrastructure

Emerging Development Management Policies: Policy DMT2: Access and design criteria

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and saved policies in the Peak District National Park Local Plan 2001. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of planning applications. It is considered that this SPD will provide greater consistency between the framework and local policy by clarifying the way that transport infrastructure proposals can be achieved within the National Park.

Human Rights

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

It is considered that if the SPD is effective in achieving its aims that it will enhance access to, from and within the public realm in settlements for non-motorised users. In particular this relates to pedestrians, and those with mobility issues. This is achieved by the enhancement and decluttering of public and shared space.

The parking standards which form an Appendix to the SPD seek to ensure adequate provision of suitably sized parking bays for disabled drivers where new public car parks or those associated with retail and business development are created.

Sustainability

The Draft SPD underwent a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Process during the summer of 2016, incorporating an assessment of the SPD against the Sustainability objectives of the National Park Management Plan and Core Strategy. This screening exercise was undertaken by Arcus Consulting, who submitted it to Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency for their consideration. All three statutory consultees agreed that the SPD was unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects.

It should be noted that since the screening exercise, the SPD has been through an informal consultation process, which has resulted in changes to the document. However, these changes are in line with the Core Strategy and as such, it is thought that the screening exercise remains valid.

The screening exercise indicated that the SPD would have a positive impact in delivery of both National Park Purposes and particularly in relation to the first purpose through the provisions of well-designed transport infrastructure appropriate to the National park setting. Because the SPD includes amongst other things advice on identity, brand, gateways, wayfinding and the public realm it will also act to promote enjoyment and understanding of the National Park. Those elements of the SPD which are supportive of the second purpose are also likely to assist in fulfilling the Authority's statutory duty.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Appendix A – Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Consultation Version)

Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report For The Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document – August 2016