

Item 9

Briefing Note for the Peak District Local Access Forum Meeting – Thursday 7th December 2017 (TN)

The Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Public Consultation (13th November 2017 to 12th January 2018)

Purpose of the note

The purpose of this note is to update the Peak District Local Access Forum on the progress of the Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, and to raise awareness of the current public consultation process.

Background

The Peak District National Park is a unique place, not only with regard to its varied geology, landscape and special qualities, but also because of its position at the heart of the country, surrounded by large urban areas. This has led to a complicated mix of responsibilities across the National Park and its constituent authorities. The Peak District National Park Authority is the planning authority for the whole of the Park, regardless of any other local authority boundaries. However, there are 11 constituent authorities whose area falls within the National Park: -

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Cheshire East Council, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, High Peak Borough Council, Kirklees Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, Oldham Council, Sheffield City Council, Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

There are 7 highway authorities with direct responsibility within the National Park; Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Cheshire East Council, Derbyshire County Council, Kirklees Council, Oldham Council, Sheffield City Council and Staffordshire County Council

There is one Trunk Road (the A628) which falls under the management of Highways England and there is one cross-Park railway, the Hope Valley Line carrying a mix of passenger and freight trains, which falls under the responsibility of Network Rail.

There are 6 Transport Authorities, who are each responsible for public transport; Cheshire East Council, Derbyshire County Council, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, Staffordshire County Council, Transport for Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

The National Park has a population of approximately 38,000 people, whilst approximately 16 million people live within 1 hour's drive of the National Park. This results in around 11 million visitor days made spent in the Park each year, with approximately 89% of visits being made by private car. National Park roads carry a mix of resident, business and visitor traffic, which led to some of the Peak District roads being grouped amongst the Top 10 riskiest roads in the Country during the second half of the last decade (according to the European Road Assessment Programme).

Whilst the National Park is the Planning Authority for the whole of the National Park, the majority of highway schemes that have come forward over recent years are classed as permitted development. This means that highway authorities have the right to maintain and carry out enhancement schemes on or adjacent to the highway; however, they are bound by Section 62 of the Environment Act (1995) to have regard to National Park purposes in carrying out their work.

Road safety had become a particular concern over the life of the Labour Government, with Safety Partnerships and Highway Authorities being rightly tasked with tackling the causes of accidents. This included a review of rural speed limits, with the result that the A and B roads across the National Park generally have lower speed limits than the C or Unclassified roads and lanes.

In an era of litigation, most road safety practitioners erred on the side of caution when designing schemes, and this led to some signage schemes where the infrastructure was at odds with the National Park Setting.

Because of the impact of some of the signage schemes, and because the Highway Authority with the largest area was Derbyshire, our then Chief Executive Jim Dixon negotiated an agreement whereby the national Park Authority was consulted on highway schemes. This gave us the opportunity to work with the highway engineers to influence schemes to ensure that they did the job required of them, but that they were also designed with the National Park setting in mind.

This was a rewarding but time consuming process. An attempt was made to extend this agreement to our other constituent highway authorities and the Highways Agency / Network Rail, with mixed results. The Highways Agency and subsequently Highways England are generally very good at ensuring that we are consulted; however with other bodies the results have been mixed. This situation is further complicated by the recent approach of outsourcing transport work to consultancies as highway authorities have seen budget cuts.

Planning policy approach

Within the Peak District National Park Core Strategy, our Strategic Planning document Policy LT3 sets out the requirement for transport infrastructure to have regard to the National Park setting and valued characteristics. However within the accompanying text we suggested bringing forward a design guide for transport infrastructure for the National Park.

The intention behind this approach was based on the need to ensure that the purposes and special qualities of the National Park are reflected in the planning, design and installation of transport infrastructure. This includes; New roads, road signs, junctions, cycle paths, bridges, bus shelters, footpaths alongside the highway, shared space, railway infrastructure, car parks etc.

The purpose of a Supplementary Planning Document is to provide further detail and guidance in relation to policies within other Development Planning Documents. As such it will take the intent of Core Strategy Policy T3 and our emerging Development Management Policy DM2: Access and Design Criteria to provide greater clarity and guidance for both Developers and Constituent Authorities undertaking work within the National Park.

How will the design guide work?

It is anticipated that the guide will be used to provide design guidance in decision making on both planning applications and for General Permitted Development schemes. It is hoped that this approach will lead to a more consistent approach to how schemes are delivered within the National Park.

The Design Guide advocated a top-down approach based on the following assessment: -

- 1) Park – this sets the general approach for undertaking works within the Peak District National Park
- 2) Place – this directs the scheme designer to be aware of the landscape character of the scheme's location, and suggests ways in which a scheme can work with that landscape.
- 3) Element – this suggests ways in which individual scheme elements can be delivered within the National Park.

The basis of the guide is to try and ensure that where transport infrastructure is required it is both functional and in keeping with its National park setting. To do this it needs to: -

Respond to needs
Be legally compliant
Be safe
Be consistent
Be flexible / adaptable
Be cost effective

In order to try and ensure that the Design Guide achieves these aims we have taken a collaborative approach to its development including through both a stakeholder workshop and an informal stakeholder consultation.

How to respond to the consultation?

The Peak District National Park Authority is holding a nine week public consultation into the Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document from Monday 13th November 2017 to Friday 12th January 2018. The details of the consultation can be found via the following link to our website: -

www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/transportdesignguideconsultation

The consultation web-page contains a link to an on-line survey, which enables respondents to comment on the document. Alternatively, representations in respect of the document can be sent either in writing to: -

Tim Nicholson, Transport Policy Planner, Peak District National Park Authority, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1AE;

Or by email to: policy@peakdistrict.gov.uk

We would welcome a response from the Peak District Local Access Forum Meeting to the public consultation.