

**Report for the Peak District Local Access Forum
10 June 2021**

Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) - Update

Gill Millward, Countryside Access Improvement Officer,
Derbyshire County Council

Purpose of Report

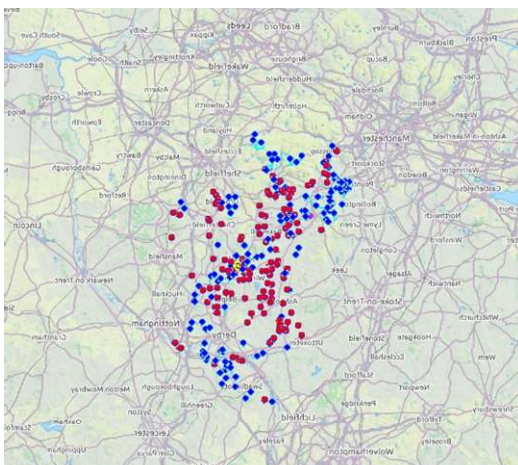
To present Forum members with an update on progress towards the delivery of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Aim 1: Existing Rights of Way Network

- **Roadside signposting, surface condition/ drainage improvements:** Almost £1.7m has been identified in the County Council's Highways Capital Programme for 2021/22 for the delivery of major route and general rights of way improvements, including Bamford Clough, as well as on-going roadside signposting
- **Vegetation clearance:** Information about paths where it is planned to cut back surface vegetation can be viewed here:
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/rights-of-way/scheduled-maintenance-programme/scheduled-maintenance-programme.aspx

Aim 2: Definitive Map and Statement

- **Project 2026 Derbyshire:** The Joint LAF Unrecorded Ways Sub-Group met virtually on 20 May and notes from the discussion are attached to the end of this report. Volunteers are continuing to investigate historic, unrecorded routes across the county, with 295 research records now created on the British Horse Society's database. Restricted access to the Record Office due to Covid has no doubt affected the pace of research and making of Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications, but the increasing availability of on-line archive material has been helpful. As of the beginning of June 2021, 149 claims were shown to have been submitted for Derbyshire, compared with 18 in March 2020. From a national perspective, the British Horse Society's Project 2026 is making good progress overall, with well over 1400



routes logged across England by means of registered DMMO applications. Due to the impact of Covid, Sport England has extended its funding for the project for an additional 12 months until March 2022

- In terms of dealing with the backlog of DMMO applications, legal orders have been confirmed for the Restricted Byway which runs between Hearthstone Lane and Littlemoor Lane, near Matlock and for the Bridleway leading into Beresford Dale from the road to Wolfscote Grange, south of Hartington

Aim 3: An improved network

- **Greenway/ Cycle Route Development and Maintenance in 2020/21:**

A total of 9.90km of new Greenways/ Cycle Routes was achieved in 2020/21, exceeding the 8km target for the year and bringing the total length of the off-road network to just over 430km. In addition to this, maintenance projects have provided new surfaces/ drainage on parts of the High Peak Trail, Five Pits Trail and Trans Pennine Trail

- **Investment:** A total of £1,452,958 has been allocated in the Highways Capital Programme for 2021/22 to be spent directly on multi-user Greenway/ Derbyshire Cycle Network development and maintenance. The funding will be used to pay for design work on the missing link between the Bolsover Loop and Trans Pennine Trail at Poolsbrook Country Park near Staveley, as well as repairs to several sections of trail, including the Pennine Bridleway, Peak Forest Tramway, Shallcross Incline, Archaeological Way and Skegby Trail. Details of the work which will be delivered by officers from the Sustainable Travel and Countryside Service teams can be found in the report to Cabinet on 11 March 2021 - Agenda item 6(h)

<https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=650&Ver=4>

Additional funding is available for further design and construction to be carried out on several high priority sections of the Key Cycle Network, including the White Peak Loop, Little Eaton Branch Line and Pennine Bridleway

- **Pennine Bridleway National Trail (PBW):** We have received grant offers from the Pennine National Trails Partnership on behalf of Natural England (totalling £39,346) towards the costs of employing a Pennine Bridleway Maintenance Officer and for carrying out works on the Trail in 2021/22 - these will be supported with match funding from the County Council. We have also received a further offer of funding (£20k) from the Partnership to allow some preparatory work to continue on the three remaining sections of the Trail to be completed around Glossop. Maintenance work has been on-going with ditching, drainage and general repairs taking place along the route, with continued input from the Volunteer Leader for Groundwork Greater Nottingham. On the development side, discussions with Network Rail (NR) are continuing for the proposed section of the PBW under the railway viaduct at

Dinting. Detailed plans and other necessary information have been collated and forwarded to NR to proceed with the next stage of Technical Clearances, which will be undertaken throughout May and June. There have been further discussions with DCC Engineers about the practicalities of building this section of the route and possible alternative alignments are also being explored

- **Visit. Sleep. Cycle. Repeat (VSCR):** Work is substantially complete on 6.3km of new and improved cycling trails, including the Rowthorne Trail (pictured below) around the Pleasley Hub in Bolsover District at a cost



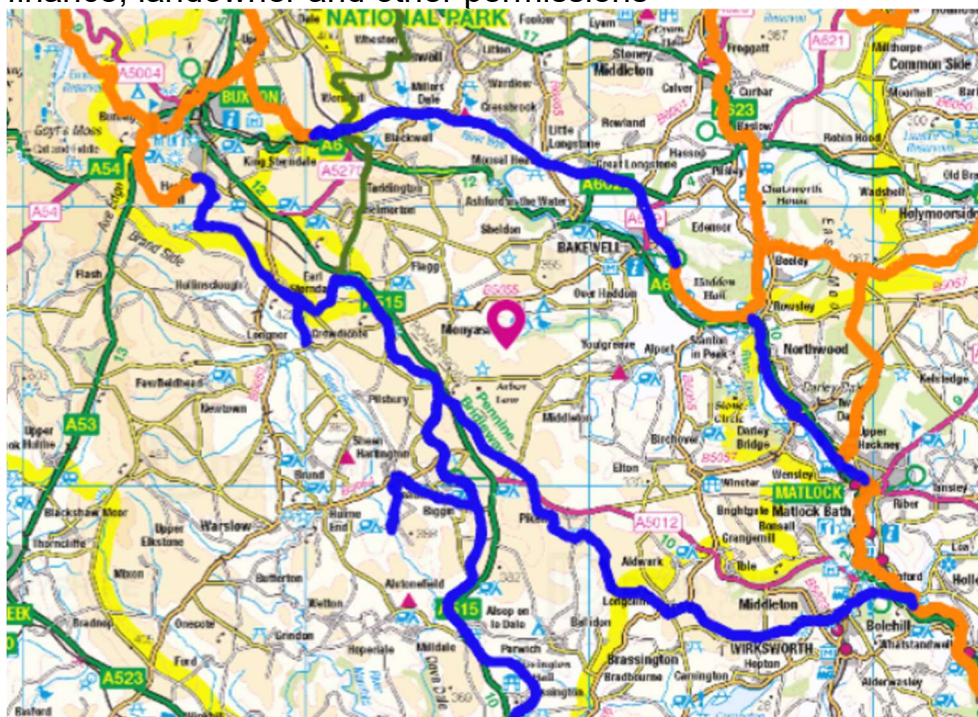
of £404,000 and funded by the Rural Development Programme for England. Design work has been finalised for an additional 1.2km of improvements on the Skegby Trail, to be funded through DCC's Highways Capital Programme at a cost of £150,000. Construction

should be complete by March 2022. Other DCC funding which has been secured includes £120,000 to improve routes around Shirebrook and Pleasley, along with £30,000 to improve signage and promotion throughout the VSCR area. Work on several feasibility studies, funded by Derbyshire's Business Rates Retention Programme, is now either complete or nearing completion. These include an audit of the whole VSCR Trails Network, an analysis of the Pleasley Hub and an accessibility audit of a number of sites. The studies support the business case for future investment and will be used to promote the VSCR programme further.

- **Clowne Greenway:** This project is now complete, bringing a new 7.4km multi-user route to the network, as part of the Bolsover Loop, linking the deprived wards of Creswell and Clowne to the Markham Enterprise Growth Zone at Seymour. Work continues to secure community links onto the Greenway, including the onward connection to Elmtown Road which will provide direct access into Creswell village centre and the railway station. As a means of following up on the development of the Clowne Greenway, a customer survey is being compiled to help better understand the individual journey purpose, health gains and behavioural change. It is hoped that this data will also help to appraise the value for money aspect of this type of investment
- **Little Eaton Branch Line:** Initial walkover surveys have been carried out with the Project Engineer and issues of encroachment have been forwarded to our Estates colleagues to investigate. A design budget has

been approved and a project plan formulated. Initial vegetation clearance and site investigations are expected to commence during early summer in consultation with a qualified ecologist. Links with community groups and neighbouring landowners are underway

- **White Peak Loop (WPL):** This 54-mile circuit around the White Peak area of the Derbyshire Peak District is being developed by the County Council to provide a predominantly traffic free walking, cycling and horse riding route, where possible, with links to the railway stations at Buxton, Cromford, Matlock and Matlock Bath. The WPL is 71% complete and connects three of the county's most popular multi-user trails: Monsal, Tissington and High Peak.
 - A DCC Project Control Board has been set up and meets monthly to guide delivery
 - Meetings have also been held with various stakeholders and partners to discuss issues and actions to help progress the missing links around Buxton between the Monsal and High Peak Trails; between Rowsley and Bakewell and from High Peak Junction, near Cromford to Matlock (see map below). These will all be challenging to deliver due to securing the necessary finance, landowner and other permissions



- Feasibility studies are being commissioned for the missing sections of the WPL from High Peak Junction to Rowsley, in particular, exploring options for crossing the A6 at Rowsley to link with Church Lane and Peak Village shopping centre, as well as through Wye Dale and Woo Dale near Buxton to help identify the best available routes with minimal impact in areas with high conservation and heritage status

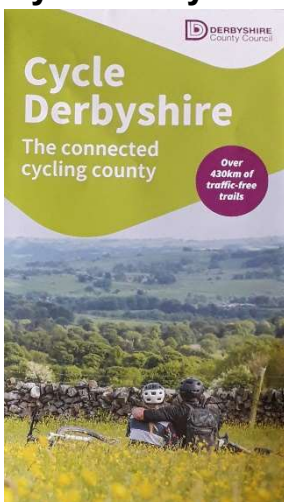
- Drainage and surface improvements on Rowsley Bridleway 2 are now complete. Further work is being considered for the continuation of this route towards the Monsal Trail as part of an interim route for the WPL between Rowsley and Bakewell



- **Buxton Walk & Ride Network:** We are continuing to work with Buxton Town Team and High Peak Borough Council to develop a Walk & Ride Network for sustainable/ active travel which takes people around the town to school, work, the shops and to access open countryside, avoiding roads as much as possible. We are investigating various issues on each of the five routes and preparing a costed action plan for those that can be developed when funding allows. In the meantime we are looking at a signage schedule to implement effective waymarking for both pedestrians and cyclists
- **Active Travel Fund (Tranche 2):** There has been a good response to the community engagement exercise which took place during March 2021 for the east to west walking and cycling route across Chesterfield. The comments are being analysed and used to help inform further detailed design of each of the five sections which make up the overall 8km route
- **D2N2 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP):** Following Cabinet approval earlier this year, it is anticipated that a six-week public/ stakeholder consultation on the draft LCWIP will take place later in Summer 2021

Aim 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

- **Cycle Derbyshire Leaflet:** With over 430km of ‘traffic-free’ trails in Derbyshire, the new Cycle Derbyshire leaflet promotes routes which are great for the whole family as well as for everyday journeys. This includes some of the lesser known trails which are being showcased by Visit Peak District & Derbyshire as part of its 2021 marketing campaigns. The leaflet is now available online and the distribution of 30,000 printed copies is underway. All 45 Derbyshire libraries are now stocked as well as many visitor attractions, cycle hire, cafes and transport hubs



www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/cycling/cycling.aspx

- **Customer Usage Monitoring:** The current user monitoring counters which are installed across the trail network have been assessed for effectiveness. A rationalisation/ modernisation programme has been devised to maximise the capture of effective and meaningful usage data to help provide evidence of value for money and support future funding bids to deliver further sections of the Key and Local Cycle Networks. Some older monitoring sites will be decommissioned where equipment is damaged or ineffective. A programme of repairs and further coverage has been prepared using funds secured through the Highways Capital Programme in 2021/22. As part of the Clowne Greenway project, three new monitoring stations were added to the network. In just six months almost 140,000 customers were recorded on the Clowne section of the Greenway, with over 40,000 at both Creswell and Seymour. These figures include counts for pedestrians, cyclists, mobility scooters and horse riders

Aim 5: Greater community involvement

- **Volunteer contribution:** We look forward to continuing our Service Level Agreement with Groundwork Greater Nottingham in 2021/22 and to welcoming back many volunteers, both new and existing, keen to help look after the paths, trails and countryside sites across Derbyshire

Other Council News:

On 17 May 2021, the County Council's Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) Department become known as "Place" with a new Executive Director, Chris Henning. A new Cabinet line-up was also announced at the Council AGM on 26 May

Recommendations:

That Forum Members note this progress report for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Joint Local Access Forum Unrecorded Ways Sub-Group Meeting held at 10am on Thursday 20 May 2021 via MS Teams

Sub-Group's Aim - to explore what the LAFs can do to facilitate the registration of unrecorded rights of way based on historic (pre-1949) evidence. Raise public awareness and guide the work of others - bring interested parties together and encourage collaborative working, as well as identifying where assistance is needed, how it might be provided and managing people's expectations.

Present: DADLAF: Claire Brooks, Geof Cole, Ian Else and Brian Nicholls; Derbyshire County Council: Gill Millward; Derby City: Ray Brown

Apologies: Charlotte Marrison (DADLAF). John Morrissey (DADLAF) and Charlotte Gilbert (Peak District LAF) were unfortunately unable to access the meeting due to technical issues

It was anticipated that a response to the joint letter sent by the two LAF Chairs to Helen Barrington (Director of Legal and Democratic Services at DCC) would be received in advance of the next round of LAF meetings in June 2021

It was noted that the Derbyshire Record Office had re-opened and was operating an appointment only system for visits, including the need to pre-book all archives and local studies material

The advantages of submitting Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications on behalf of an organisation were reiterated

The length of time it was taking the County Council to process some DMMO applications was raised, citing an example of a BOAT claim which is only just being considered after 17 years

This led to a discussion about the lack of resources to progress DMMO applications and the need to prioritise the most useful, rather than dealing with them in chronological order eg claims for bridleway and above which would benefit more different users and help link up these fragmented networks; those in areas of the county where there are no public rights of way, with a lower priority possibly being given to those routes which are currently not used at all

There could be a role for the LAFs/ volunteers to help with the prioritisation of claims or even with their initial assessment. It was felt that it would be useful to start a dialogue with Legal Services

It was agreed that it would also be useful to have an update from the British Horse Society (BHS) and GM offered to contact Will Steel, their 2026 Project Manager

A meeting with the wider Unrecorded Ways group would also be beneficial to see what progress was being made and if there are any issues which the LAFs could help with. GM agreed to arrange this over the summer

It was mentioned that the 2026 cut-off date is to be repealed in Wales. A survey has also been carried out by ADEPT Rights of Way Managers Group and the Institute of Public Rights of Way Officers about altering the date to 2031. It was felt that the increased demand for walking and cycling during the pandemic should be a good enough reason to extend the deadline in order to help improve access/ connectivity of the network

It was noted that LAFs have a varying approach to Unrecorded Ways, with some carrying out the research etc themselves and others having no involvement at all

IT WAS AGREED THAT:-

- 1) Contact be made with Will Steel, BHS 2026 Project Manager for an update (GM)
- 2) A meeting would be arranged over the summer with the wider Unrecorded Ways Sub-Group to find out how the research/ submission of DMMO applications is progressing and identify any issues/ blockages which the LAFs could help with (GM)
- 3) There would be further discussion at the LAF meetings in June about continuing dialogue with the County Council's Legal Services, particularly with regard to the prioritisation of DMMO applications