

## **7. PEAK DISTRICT SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PROJECT**

### **1. Purpose of the report**

To inform Members about proposals for a Sustainable Transport Project for the National Park and to seek approval for the development of this report into a formal proposal and bidding document for funding to deliver this project.

#### **Key Issues**

- The Peak District National Park is one of the most popular destinations for visits, and in particular day visits, in the United Kingdom. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019, there were 14.9 million visits to the National Park lasting three hours or more. It is likely that there were an almost equal number of visits lasting less than three hours.
- The majority of visitors to the Peak District National Park (83%) arrived by private car prior to the pandemic. Public transport patronage levels have fallen as a result of the pandemic, with some former passengers reluctant to use buses because of safety concerns.
- Whilst the National Park still has a good core public transport network in many places, levels of coverage are variable across the whole of the National Park. Overall, there has been a decline in bus services due to budgetary constraints, and there are currently many popular Peak District destinations that cannot be accessed by public transport. Where bus services do exist, they often don't operate on Sundays, Bank Holidays or in the evening.
- Those without access to a private car would find it almost impossible to visit many popular areas of the National Park.
- Transport remains one of the major contributors to carbon emissions and climate change within the National Park.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 1. That Members offer support for the development of this report into a formal proposal and bidding document for a Peak District Sustainable Transport Project.**
- 2. That Members support the development of the bid with partner organisations including our constituent transport authorities.**
- 3. That Members agree that this project be steered under the auspices of the Member Climate Change Steering Group.**
- 4. That Members support the convening of a meeting with appropriate partners in Spring / Summer to develop the bidding document.**

**How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?**

### **3. Landscape Review Recommendations**

While we are still waiting for the Government response to the Landscapes review, the proposed Peak District Sustainable Transport Project is in direct response to Proposal 19: -

*“Proposal 19: A New Approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake*

*District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes”.*

### **National Park Management Plan (2018-23)**

The Peak District Sustainable Transport Project has a strong connection to the following Special Qualities; ‘*Special Quality 3: Undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies within reach of millions*’ and ‘*Special Quality 6: An inspiring space for escape, adventure, discovery and quiet reflection*’.

The project will also contribute to the following Areas of Impact – Area of Impact 4: A National Park for everyone; Area of Impact 5: Encouraging enjoyment with understanding; Area of Impact 6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy.

### **Corporate Strategy (2019-24)**

The Peak District Sustainable Transport Project is linked to the Corporate Strategy outcome ‘A National Park Loved and supported by diverse audiences’. Specifically, the project will assist in the delivery of Key Performance Indicator 12: -

KPI 12: Increase public connection with the Peak District National Park.

### **Core Strategy (2011)**

The Peak District Sustainable Transport Project will assist in the delivery of Policy T1: Reducing the general need to travel and encouraging sustainable transport. This policy sets out the Authority’s general strategic approach to transport within the National Park. The Peak District Sustainable Transport Project is particularly pertinent for Parts C, D and F of the policy: -

C. Modal shift to sustainable transport will be encouraged.

D. Improved connectivity between sustainable modes of travel will be sought.

F. Sustainable access for the quiet enjoyment of the National Park, that does not cause harm to the valued characteristics, will be promoted.

### **Background Information**

4. The Peak District National Park is one of the most popular visitor locations nationally, attracting between 13 and 26 million visits per annum. Lying at the heart of England, the Peak District National Park owes its creation and popularity to the large urban populations that surround it, including the Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire conurbations. According to the Census data (2011), the Peak District National Park lies within a one-hour drive of 16 million people.

The ease of access by car means that the majority of visitors travel to the National Park by private car. Surveys undertaken by the Authority indicate that 83% of visitors arrive by private car. However, for some popular recreation hubs, with limited alternative means of access, data suggests that this percentage is higher.

There are a number of reasons why visitors choose to arrive by private car, these include convenience, perceived costs, and awareness of alternatives. However, a key factor has also been the decline in the availability of public transport access over recent years. Ongoing budgetary constraints affecting Transport Authorities has meant that leisure and off-Peak services have declined. Unfortunately, this has had a negative impact on the availability of opportunities for car-free travel at those times when the

demand to visit is highest, namely weekends and bank holidays.

The complex political geography of the Peak District adds yet another layer of complexity to the provision of public transport to, from and across the National Park. The Peak District falls under the auspices of six transport authorities (Cheshire East Council, Derbyshire County Council, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, Staffordshire County Council, Transport for Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire Metro).

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated this situation with the public being actively discouraged from using public transport during the early part of the pandemic. Following this, as the initial lockdown eased the availability of public transport was also less than before the pandemic. However, the demand to connect with nature was at its highest ever, with visitor levels exceeding capacity for much of the Summer of 2020. Whilst travel restrictions have eased, particularly from the Spring of 2021 onwards, demand for access has remained high, and the levels of public transport patronage (both bus and rail) are yet to reach pre-pandemic levels.

The impact of the current dependence on the private car for visits to the National Park, on the Park's special qualities has been magnified during the Covid-19 pandemic. Encouraging a shift away from the private car to more sustainable means of transport including public transport and active travel would alleviate these impacts and deliver the following positive outcomes: -

- i) Reduced Carbon emissions – in 2016, road transport accounted for 14% of greenhouse gas emissions (Carbon Dioxide, Methane and nitrous oxides)<sup>1</sup>. Cars and taxis accounted for more than 70% of road transport emissions.
- ii) Community – the number of visitor-owned vehicles often outstrips parking provision at a number of locations across the Peak District. This often leads to a mix of unsafe, obstructive or damaging parking, with impacts on residential access and amenity. Delivering modal shift would lessen these impacts.
- iii) Visitor enjoyment – traffic congestion, difficulty parking and parking fines are generally stressful. Conversely, opportunities to try new things, such as cycling or a visitor experience focussed bus service as part of a day out can be both exciting and empowering.
- iv) Landscape – where cars are parked in inappropriate locations, they often cause damage to verges, destroying vegetation and the habitats that they support. From a wider landscape perspective, long lines of vehicles parked along the roadside reflecting sunlight can be visually intrusive in open moorland landscapes. Widespread modal shift by visitors would lessen this impact.

### **Big ambition**

The National Park Authority has no direct responsibility for transport within the National Park. We are neither a highway nor a transport authority, and our statutory powers are directed towards the achievement of National Park purposes through our role as a planning authority. However, the complex geopolitical make up of the Peak District, coupled with the ease of access from surrounding urban areas means that we have a role to play in facilitating the delivery of opportunities for modal shift.

We have a longstanding tradition in this area of work; the delivery of a visitor management scheme in the Goyt Valley more than fifty years ago was ground-breaking. The scheme incorporated a range of measures aimed at providing access whilst

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<sup>1</sup> This total excludes point sources such as Hope Cement Works.

reducing the impact of the private car. The Goyt Valley visitor management scheme has evolved over the last 50 years and we have ambitions for its ongoing development in line with current use and drivers for change.

By working with a range of partners, including the local authorities, private business, landowners, residents, visitors and the Government, we believe that we can deliver another ground-breaking project to deliver modal shift in the Peak District. Like the Goyt Valley Visitor Management scheme, we believe that our Sustainable Transport Project will be capable of replication in other National Parks and other protected landscapes; fulfilling the requirements of Proposal 19 of the Glover Report: Transforming our National Landscapes (2019).

The Peak District National Park Authority has an established preferred visitor travel hierarchy: -

- i) Active travel – focussed on walking, cycling and horse riding
- ii) Public transport – bus, train demand responsive transport and Mobility as a Service (MaaS).
- iii) Low emission car journeys – Electric vehicles (plug-in and hybrid) and preferably multiple occupancy / car share.

### **Sharing ideas**

Proposal 19 of the Glover Report makes specific reference to “*A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes*”. Whilst the proposal specifically references the Lake District National Park, the Peak District National Park Authority expressed an early interest to Defra and the Department for Transport (DfT) to deliver an additional pilot scheme. We believe that our challenging geopolitical complexity offers a good contrast to Lake District as well as opportunities to trial different approaches.

Dartmoor National Park Authority has also expressed an interest in acting as a third pilot area, with a remote rural heartland and limited existing public transport provision. Officers from all three National Park Authorities have met regularly to share information and to discuss opportunities for fulfilling Proposal 19.

### **Starting small**

Whilst the Peak District National Park Authority is not responsible for the delivery of transport within the National Park, we have invested money and other resources to deliver projects on our own and in partnership with others to meet the travel hierarchy provided above. We believe that successfully delivering on all or part of the following projects demonstrates their viability and offers opportunities for their rapid growth.

### **Hope Valley Explorer Project**

The Peak District National Park Authority launched the Hope Valley Explorer Visitor Experience bus service in July 2019. Operated by Stagecoach South Yorkshire, the project was intended as a 3-year pilot to demonstrate demand for a visitor experience bus service within the National Park.

In its first season, the Hope Valley Explorer operated for 42 consecutive days during the summer school holidays between Sunday 21st July and Saturday 31st August 2019. The service included on-board commentary, hop-on-hop-off day tickets and associated discounts for ticket holders for two visitor attractions. In order to promote multi-modal sustainable journeys, the Hope Valley Explorer called regularly at Bamford, Hope and

Edale railway stations (Hope Valley Line).

The Hope Valley Explorer route ran from Chesterfield and acted as a shuttle linking Bamford, the Upper Derwent Valley, Edale, Castleton and Mam Tor (via Winnatts Pass). During the course of the 2019 season, the service carried approximately 2,600 passengers, (an average of 62 passengers per day). Unfortunately, due to capacity issues associated with the pandemic, the service did not go to Edale in 2021; otherwise the route was very similar to 2019.

The Hope Valley Explorer did not operate during 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It did however run in 2021 on weekends and bank holidays from 24th July through to 30th October 2021 (30 days in total). During 2021, the service carried a total of 1,811 passengers, and average of 60 passengers per day.

### **White Peak Loop**

The White Peak Loop is a partially completed, aspirational, largely off-road circular cycling route linking railheads at Matlock and Buxton via the Monsal and High Peak Trails. There are some incomplete sections within the Peak District that are key to its delivery. Derbyshire County Council and the Peak District National Park Authority believe that the completion of the loop will benefit residents of and visitors to the National Park. We also believe that it will support the local rural economy whilst delivering carbon saving benefits.

In 2010, the Peak District National Park Authority secured a grant of £2.25 million from Cycling England / the DfT for the delivery of the Pedal Peak Project. This project focussed on the reopening of four disused tunnels along the Monsal Trail to provide an 8.5-mile multi-user route. On completion in May 2011, cycle use on the route increased by more than 300%.<sup>2</sup> In the ten years since its opening there have been more than 1,023,264 cycle journeys and 1,497,297 walking journeys on the Monsal Trail past Hassop Station<sup>3</sup>.

In 2013, the Peak District National Park Authority led on authoring a successful bid to the DfT's Linking Communities Fund for a number of cycle infrastructure projects including elements of the White Peak Loop. This enabled the delivery of a Monsal Trail link between Matlock and Rowsley and a High Peak Trail link between Hurdlow and Buxton.

The key focus moving forward is the delivery of the two missing sections of the Monsal Trail between Wyedale and Buxton and Rowsley and Bakewell respectively.

### **Recreation hubs**

The Peak District features a number of popular visitor locations from which members of the public access the open countryside. Visits to these locations often focus on active recreation including; walking, cycling, horse-riding, climbing / bouldering and running. Even when the focus of a visit to these sites may be for less active pursuits (bird-watching, picnicking, visiting an historic monument or place of interest), access often involves walking<sup>4</sup>. These locations offer a range of facilities for visitors and are often the first location that visitors experience and interact with the National Park away from their means of transport. We describe these busy locations as recreation hubs. In most cases, the recreation hub will have a primary site with a range of facilities. Many recreation hubs have peripheral smaller scale parking or other facilities across the wider

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the average daily total for the calendar month before opening (99 in April 2011) and the average daily total for the month after opening (312 in June 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Based on data recorded by the Hassop Station Cycle Counter (from May 2011 to December 2020) and the Hassop Station Pedestrian Counter (from March 2012 to December 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Peak District National Park Visitor Survey 2014

area.

In its planning role, the National Park Authority must take account of its two statutory purposes and duty. This means achieving a balance between the conservation and enhancement of the National Park and the provision of opportunities for understanding and enjoyment; whilst having regard to the well-being of residents.

Recreation hubs are locations where development can be focused according to environmental capacity. This also offers the opportunity to ensure that future development is accompanied by opportunities to enhance sustainable access to, from and between neighbouring sites; and the public transport network.

The development of the recreation hubs programme will allow definition for both policy and practice to be developed by the National Park Authority, providing focus for our corporate planning work across all services into the future.

### **Bus Service Improvement Plans**

The Bus Back Better: National Bus Strategy for England was published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in March 2021. This strategy sets out a call for action for transport authorities to work with bus operators to deliver improved bus services. Two approaches are advocated; bus franchises or enhanced partnerships. In both cases, authorities are directed to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) setting out an approach for delivering bus services within their area and for working across boundaries.

The Peak District National Park has six constituent transport authorities all of whom have produced BSIPs which act as a bidding document to the Department for Transport. Nationally, transport authorities have produced a range of ambitious plans. However, the currently allocated funding available from the Government is insufficient to deliver all of the aspirations of all of the BSIPs. It is likely that the focus for funding will be in urban areas, where it is often assumed to provide most value for money.

**Derbyshire BSIP** – the BSIP Team at Derbyshire County Council has been very proactive in consulting officers of the National Park Authority during the development of the BSIP. The Derbyshire BSIP includes many references to the National Park, including: -

*“The BSIP gives Derbyshire a chance to expand the public transport network and make it easier for visitors to enjoy the Peak District and Derbyshire using sustainable travel modes.”*

In turn, the Chief Executive of the National Park Authority provided a letter of support stating *“the Peak District National Park Authority would like to offer its full support to the Derbyshire Bus Service Improvement Plan”*.

A key part of the Derbyshire BSIP is the ‘Large Scheme Proposal’ for *“an integrated countywide scheme of interconnected Transport Hubs.”* The Derbyshire BSIP defines the Transport Hubs as follows: -

*“Our Transport Hubs will be easily accessed via active modes with secure cycle parking, and carefully sited so that existing (and new) conventional bus services can serve the Hubs. Most importantly the Transport Hubs will be the foundation for a network of flexible DRT services tailored to individual communities and visitors, operated by zero-emission minibuses, and supported by modern demand-responsive booking systems which facilitate rapid adjustments to planned operations.”*

Proposed hubs within the National Park include Bakewell and Hope (rural hubs); and Castleton, Chatsworth and Ladybower (bespoke hub / destination)

**South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority BSIP** – also recognises the importance of providing sustainable transport access to the Peak District and contains the following statement: -

*“Given a desire in the National Bus Strategy to improve bus facilities for tourists and the proximity of many parts of South Yorkshire to open space, this may also be an opportunity*

*to trial a new DRT service. Initial discussions have been held with the Peak District National Park on considering a new DRT service based on the Hope Valley Explorer and the Moorlands Connect services, providing enhanced bus access to both the National Park itself and also the Hope Valley rail line within it.*

**Staffordshire BSIP** – focuses on the role of Demand Responsive Transport to support journeys into the National Park through the Moorlands Connect service (see below)

### **Demand Responsive Transport**

#### **a) Moorlands Connect**

Staffordshire Moorlands Council successfully applied to the DfT’s Rural Mobility Fund earlier this year. The application was based on the upgrading and relaunch of the Moorlands Connect Service. The original Moorlands Connect Service was launched by Staffordshire County Council in 2010 with some initial funding from the National Park Authority; with Ashbourne Community Transport as the operator. The demand responsive service operated within a set area centred on Leek and the Staffordshire Moorlands part of the Peak District. The Staffordshire BSIP references the Moorlands Connect, stating: -

*“Focused on the rural area between Leek, Ashbourne and Buxton, nearly two-thirds of the scheme’s area is within the Peak District National Park.”*

The upgraded service soft-launched in October 2021 with an expanded operating area; an updated back-office system, stronger links to scheduled bus services and an enhanced focus on providing access for visitors to the Peak District. The service continues to be operated by Ashbourne Community Transport, with an official launch anticipated for the Spring of 2022.

#### **b) Peak District Connect – Sheffield**

Officers of the National Park Authority have been working with Via Consultancy to bring together a proposition for a Demand Responsive Transport service to link Transport Hubs in Sheffield with the eastern Peak District. The aim of the proposition is to drive modal shift from the private car for those visitor journeys not currently accessible by public transport. The service would also provide links to existing scheduled services and offer options for reciprocal journeys by National Park residents.

The benefit of this approach is recognised by the team leading the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Bus Service Improvement Plan; which contains a placeholder for a Demand Responsive Service linking Sheffield with the Peak District National Park.

In addition, the National Park Authority’s CEO has discussed the role of Demand Responsive Transport with the DfT and Defra as a means of delivering elements of

Proposal 19 in the Peak District.

### **Travelling Light Project – Hope Valley Climate Action**

The Travelling Light Project was launched in July 2021 and the project aims to bring about transformative and sustainable change in the way local people and visitors travel to, from and within the Hope Valley. The project aims to promote walking and cycling for everyday purposes, encourage the use of bus and rail, and reduce the current high dependency on vehicles powered by fossil fuels.

The Hope Valley receives several million car-borne day visits each year; it is also the home to a local population of around 9,000 people. Hope Valley Climate Action has received grant funding from the Foundation for Integrated Transport for the initial development year of a nationally significant five-year project. The Peak District National Park Authority has also provided financial support for initial stages of the project. The Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council are both represented on the Project's Steering Group.

Hope Valley Climate Action have appointed a Project Officer, whose work during 2021 has focused on engagement, research and the development of a 'Scene setting document'. There is a current focus on identifying and securing funding for the five-year delivery stage of the project.

### **Scaling rapidly**

The projects described above are focused on specific areas, but all have the potential to be delivered at a larger scale and over a wider geography. This could be a replication across other parts of the National Park, or the whole of the National Park, with the individual approach tailored to demand, catchment, geography and the specific special qualities of the area. If successful, the approach could also be replicated in other National Parks, AONBs or popular rural visitor destinations.

At the current time, no one authority or body has responsibility for delivering sustainable transport across the Peak District, resulting in different approaches across constituent authority boundaries. More importantly, no one body has sufficient funding or expertise to deliver a National Park wide sustainable transport project. Our proposal seeks to address these gaps.

### **Transport Summit**

In order to better understand the challenges in delivering sustainable transport solutions across the National Park, a Transport Summit is being proposed. This will seek to: -

- i) Better understand the scale of transport's contribution to climate change in the Peak District;
- ii) Better understand the role that transport plays in providing access to services and the outdoors for visitors and residents; and
- iii) Identify opportunities to deliver modal shift and reduce carbon emissions whilst maintaining opportunities to access services and the outdoors.

The summit will focus on how the Peak District National Park Management Plan can act as a delivery mechanism for sustainable transport and modal shift to, from and within the National Park. It will also offer opportunities for seeking partner support for the

proposals and bid.

## **Proposals**

### **Sustainable Transport Project**

There is a currently largely untapped market of existing visitors who access the National Park by private car. There is also an untapped market of residents within the Peak District's neighbouring urban catchment who do not have access to a private car. The latter group contains many people who are unable to access the National Park at all despite living within relatively short journey time. Even allowing for the existing rail and core bus routes that link the surrounding urban areas with the National Park, there are many who either cannot access the Park at all, or who are extremely limited in the locations that they can visit.

Proposal 19 of the Glover Report: Transforming our National Landscapes (2019) is for:

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*“A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes”.*

Following on from the publication of the Final Report, officers of the Peak District National Park Authority have been in discussion with Defra and the DfT with regard to the proposal being widened out to include the Peak District National Park as a pilot area. The Peak District's predominant popularity as a day visit destination makes it a different but equally valid pilot area for Proposal 19.

In order to successfully deliver the Peak District Sustainable Transport Project, there will be a need to focus on several strands of work. We believe that the project will be delivered across two streams of funding plus a focus on existing resources and influence. The main strands of delivery are: -

#### **1) Revenue Funding**

##### **Project Officer**

In order to successfully deliver a Peak District Sustainable Transport Project there will be a requirement for a dedicated Project Officer. Given the complexity of the political geography of the area and the need for the project to serve the whole of the National Park, there will need to be close partnership working with both constituent and neighbouring transport authorities. This is particularly important as the focus for the project is likely to be on providing public transport access from the National Park's surrounding urban catchment to the Peak District. A partnership approach would best achieve this, building on the wealth of existing knowledge and experience contained within these organisations.

All transport authorities have been tasked by the Government to deliver Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) as part of the 'Bus Back Better – National Bus Strategy'. The commitments included within some of our constituent and neighbouring transport authority BSIPs will deliver benefit to the Peak District's residents and visitors. However, given the ease of access that the private car provides, persuading visitors to change modes will be a significant challenge.

Previous experience has shown that with secure funding a branded partnership approach has proved effective in promoting public transport for visitors. The Peak

Connections project was an area of work undertaken through the South Pennines Integrated Transport Strategy (SPITS). The project produced a range of promotional materials aimed at delivering modal shift for visitors to the National Park. The value placed on the project by partners meant that it survived the dissolution of the South Pennines Integrated Transport Strategy Partnership.

In order to deliver an effective project, we believe that a Project Officer would need to be appointed for a minimum of 5 years. The role will need to be of sufficient seniority to enable the postholder to be experienced in project delivery and to be comfortable in working with a range of partners (PDNPA Scale 1). The Project Officer would also need to be able to balance the requirements of the various partners in delivering the project.

The partnership would need to include all constituent transport authorities and where appropriate neighbouring transport authorities, all of which would be required to provide funding for the project and in-kind support as appropriate. The partnership would also benefit from the inclusion of constituent LEP's, district, borough, unitary and city councils, as the project would deliver economic and environmental benefits within their respective boundaries. It would also be beneficial to include the relevant DMO(s) and Community Rail Officers within the partnership.

Whilst the funding of the Project Officer post is important, it is also vital that there is a separate source of funding for delivery of the project. Again, this would be shared amongst partners, and would need to be guaranteed for the life of the project. There is an opportunity to draw in additional funding from private business to support specific projects, where they bring direct benefit to key visitor attractions.

The estimated revenue cost of funding the Project Officer post would be approximately £45,000 per annum or £225,000 over five years. This would enable the recruitment of a senior grade post to reflect the necessary skills and experience required. There may be a need to include a contingency allowance to cover national pay awards over the five-year period.

## **2) Capital Funding**

### **a) The Explorer Network**

This would focus on the delivery and expansion of the current Hope Valley Explorer to develop an interconnected network of Explorer routes offering visitor experience bus services. The focus of the network would be the experiential offer for visitors, including on-board commentary, discounted entry to visitor attractions or other offers.

Initial work has already been undertaken to identify new routes, including a 'Heritage Explorer (Longshaw, Chatsworth, Haddon Hall & Bakewell) and two options for a Dales and Trails Explorer focusing on the Monsal or Tissington / Manifold trails (see Appendix 1).

### **b) Peak District Connect (Demand Responsive Transport)**

This would focus on the successful delivery of a Demand Responsive Transport service to link Transport Hubs in Sheffield with the eastern Peak District. If successful, there is an opportunity to investigate the delivery of similar services across the National Park.

The main focus would be the provision of Demand Responsive bus services for visitors to those locations not currently served by existing public transport. In

order to maximise the utilisation of the vehicles, they would serve key transport hubs in neighbouring towns and cities, with the focus being of additionality to existing services.

**c) White Peak Loop**

The Derbyshire Key Cycle Network (approved by Cabinet in January 2020)<sup>5</sup> includes specific elements of the White Peak Loop that need to be delivered in order to achieve a circular off-road route connecting Matlock and Buxton via the Monsal and High Peak Trails. The outstanding elements are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Missing sections of the White Peak Loop**

Link Number	Section	Length (km)	Timescale	Approximate Cost
17	Buxton Rail Station to Fairfield Common (A6)	1.5	Medium (< 5 yrs.)	£1 to £5 million
18	Coombs Road, Bakewell to Rowsley (A6)	3.9	Medium (< 5 yrs.)	£1 to £5 million
19	Matlock Rail Station to Cromford (High Peak Junction)	7.0	Medium (< 5 yrs.)	£5 to £10 million
20	Harpur Hill to Ladmanlow via HSE land	3.6	Long (>5 yrs.)	£0.5 to £5 million
21	Ladmanlow to Macclesfield Road, Buxton	1.7	Medium (< 5 yrs.)	Up to £0.1 million
22	Macclesfield Road to Buxton Rail Station	1.8	Medium (< 5 yrs.)	£0.1 to £0.5 million

Derbyshire County Council has commissioned Aecoms to carry out feasibility work for Link 17a between Wyedale car park and Fairfield Common (A6). This work commenced towards the end of 2021.

**d) EV charging points**

The Peak District National Park currently has low numbers of publicly available EV charging points (see Appendix 2). Where they do exist, they are limited to a few locations in public car parks, none of which are owned or managed by the National Park Authority.

Whilst grant schemes have been made available to local authorities to install EV charging points within their own car parks, the Peak District National Park Authority does not meet the appropriate definition of a local authority to be able to access these grants. Where possible we have worked with other constituent authorities to influence delivery of EV charging points in their public car parks within the National Park. However, most of these car parks are themselves either too small, too isolated or serving too small a resident catchment to themselves meet the criteria for funding.

<sup>5</sup> <https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/documents/s2561/Key%20Cycle%20Network.pdf>

For users of electric vehicles to be able to access the National Park, we need to increase the provision of electric vehicles. In some cases, this may mean providing additional electrical capacity as well as charging infrastructure. Making grants available to National Park Authorities is vital if the delivery of a network of EV charging points is to be delivered.

The growth in the use of electric bikes should also be considered. It is important that provision for parking and charging is made in popular visitor locations. There may be opportunities to work visitor attractions to offer this provision.

**e) Peak Resort**

The Peak Resort is a development at Unstone on the northern edge of Chesterfield. Under development, the resort aims to offer a 'Resort experience' which incorporates sustainable access to the Peak District National Park for Resort residents and day visitors through low / no emission busses.

This project has strong synergies with the Explorer Network and Peak District Connect Projects, offering opportunities for public / private partnership working. Benefits include national park messaging, park and ride opportunities and opportunities to deliver economic recovery.

**f) Travelling Light**

Hope Valley Climate Action and the Travelling Light Project Officer are seeking funding for the five-year delivery stage of the project. Two possible sources of funding have been identified and both are currently being pursued.

The delivery phase of the Travelling Light Project will require the recruitment of two Project Officers and is costed at £500,000 over five years.

*Hope Valley Climate Action (HVCA) will be the lead partner, piloting a community-led ecosystem for change. HVCA aims to combat climate change through raising public awareness, undertaking practical demonstration projects, and advocating policy change, although the objectives of Travelling Light stretch well beyond the aims of the lead organisation alone.*

*Travelling Light believes that no single action [such as the switch to electric vehicles or the creation of cycle lanes] will create change on its own. To meet the scale of the challenge, an agile, integrated and cross-cutting approach will need to emerge.*

*Travelling Light is seeking a 5-year grant to incubate this new approach, so it is ready to spread.*

*A key development tactic will be to innovate and experiment with alternative modes of travel in the Hope Valley area of the Peak District National Park. Many of the answers to decarbonising rural travel are yet to be found. Initialising the project in one geographic area will provide a testbed to ask questions, iterate solutions and catalyse wider change.*

The Travelling Light Project offers an opportunity to focus measures to reduce car dependency on one busy geographical area of the National Park. The Peak District Sustainable Transport Project provides an opportunity to widen that scope to locations that are either traditionally difficult to access by means other than the private car; or where existing car-borne visitor pressure is proving problematic.

### 3) Data

The Peak District Sustainable Transport Project will require an ongoing monitoring and analysis element to ensure that the National Park and others can assess its effectiveness over time.

The data sources will include existing traffic and cycle count data, which provides background information on how people travel through the National Park. There may be a requirement to either install additional automatic counters or to buy-in existing data from other suppliers.

There will also be requirement to assess the direct effectiveness of the projects being delivered through periodic interview or questionnaire surveys with users. The project will need to include funding to deliver and analyse user surveys. It is unlikely that this work will fall within the scope of the Peak District Sustainable Transport Project Officer, so will need to be funded separately.

### 4) Leadership

For the Peak District Sustainable Transport to prove successful, it will require strong leadership that can bring together a range of public and private partners for the benefit of the National Park, its residents, visitors and businesses. Whilst, all of the partners in the project will have a key and important role to play, the Peak District National Park Authority is the one body established to deliver national park purposes within the Peak District. Therefore, in this instance the leadership role rests with this Authority.

Building a strong relationship with our statutory partners will be vital, and we would wish to instigate a Steering Group to work with the National Park Authority of the delivery of this project. We have experience of delivering similar partnerships, including in the preparation of the Pedal Peak II funding application in 2013.

In this case we intend to convene an additional small-scale summit with constituent and neighbouring transport / highway authorities. The focus of this approach is to look for opportunities to combine both ideas and opportunities for funding across the wider Peak District area. Our aim is to deliver a partnership project that brings wider benefits for the National Park and its surrounding area than each partner can deliver in isolation.

### Benefits

The ultimate aim for the project is the delivery of modal shift for visitors to the Peak District National Park. If achieved, this has the potential to deliver a range of benefits to all partners. These include, but are not exclusive to: -

- Air quality benefits – within the National Park and within the Park's urban catchment.
- Economic – visitors using public transport are more likely to support National Park businesses as part of their visit.
- Climate change – on average, visitors arriving by public transport have a smaller carbon footprint per visit than those arriving by private car.
- Inclusivity – public transport offers access to the National Park for those without access to a private car.
- Wider environmental benefits – visitors arriving by public transport are less likely

to damage verges etc searching for available parking spaces.

- A good range of commonly branded public transport services accessing the National Park.
- Economic benefit for rural businesses – statistically, people travelling by public transport or via active travel are more likely to spend money as part of their day out.

### **Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?**

#### **Financial:**

5. Not at this stage, but if the National Park Authority were successful in obtaining funding for the Peak District Sustainable Transport Project, this would create additional income to the Authority.

#### **Risk Management:**

6. Proposal 19 of the Glover Report makes specific reference to “*A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes*”. Whilst the proposal specifically references the Lake District National Park, the Peak District National Park Authority expressed an early interest to Defra and the Department for Transport (DfT) to deliver an additional pilot scheme. There is a danger of raising public expectation of what the Authority can deliver in relation to Proposal 19 and the Peak District Sustainable Transport Project.

This report sets out a plan to seek funding to deliver a Sustainable Transport Project for the Peak District, failure to secure the funding would leave the National Park Authority with no clear way to deliver this project.

Covid-19 continues to affect the willingness of the public to travel by public transport and the availability of drivers to deliver it.

#### **Sustainability:**

7. The Peak District Sustainable Transport Project is intended to promote modal shift and reduce single or low occupancy car travel to the National Park. Its aim is also to make the provision of alternatives to the private car financially stable.

#### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:**

8. The availability of public transport links to the National Park from urban areas has the potential to offer access for those who do not own a car. This can include the young, the elderly and those with limited finances.

### **9. Climate Change**

Delivery of the Peak District Sustainable Transport Project would encourage transport modal shift for visitors to more sustainable means. This should contribute to reducing carbon emissions associated with road transport and deliver climate change benefits.

### **10. Background papers (not previously published)**

None

## **11. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Hope Valley Explorer – Review of the 2021 Season, plus options for 2022 and beyond

Appendix 2 - Screen print of Zap Map showing EV charging points within the Peak District National Park (4th January 2022)

### **Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

Tim Nicholson, Transport Policy Planner, 12 January 2022  
Tim.Nicholson@peakdistrict.gov.uk