

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: Wednesday 14 June 2023

Item: 8

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

Author: Gill Millward, Countryside Access Improvement Officer, Sustainable Travel Team, 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

- **Surface condition and drainage:** Work is continuing to deliver the package of rights of way schemes funded through the County Council's Highways Capital Programme which will be discussed in more detail under Item 7. This includes several major surfacing and drainage projects, as well as works of a minor nature, such as surface patching, vegetation clearance, boardwalk and step repairs, which are equally important in helping to make routes available and more accessible.
- **Roadside signposting:** During 2022/23, signposting work was completed at around 1,051 locations across the county. In 2023/24, funding is available to deal with 400 missing or damaged signposts in an initial phase of work with the potential for a further 200 locations to be dealt with this year.

Aim 2: Definitive Map and Statement

- The latest public notices for Definitive Map Modification Orders and Public Path Orders can now be seen on the County Council's website, along with those relating to permanent Traffic Regulation Orders and Statutory Declarations deposited by landowners under Section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980:
<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/rights-of-way/notices/rights-of-way-notices.aspx>
- The number of Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications which the County Council receives continues to increase. A further seventeen claims have been added to the online register since the beginning of December 2022, with the majority of more recent applications now being based on historic, documentary evidence:
<https://apps.derbyshire.gov.uk/applications/right-of-way/results.asp>

Whilst good progress is being made, given the limited staffing resources which are available, as of the 1 March 2023, the Authority was dealing with 320 applications at various stages in the process, of which 272 were undetermined.

- **Project 2026 Derbyshire:** Back in March, after previously announcing its decision to repeal the 1 January 2026 cut-off date introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, Defra has reimplemented a cut-off date for claiming historic rights of way extending it by 5 years to 1 January 2031. The work of the Joint LAF Unrecorded Ways Sub-Group in gathering information and people's views about the issues surrounding the prioritisation of DMMOs has become increasingly important and should enable the LAFs to be in a better position to provide further support and advice in accordance with their role and statutory function.

Aim 3: An improved network

- Details of the proposed forward plan of activities for the County Council's Sustainable Travel Programme, including the continued delivery of Derbyshire's Key Cycle Network, can be found in the report which was approved by Cabinet on 16 March 2023 (Item 49/23): <https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=1181&Ver=4>
- A further report is due to be presented to Cabinet on 15 June 2023 to formally accept the **£3,005,000 Active Travel Tranche 4 grant** from the Department for Transport. This will be used to fund two high profile projects which are currently being developed by officers in the Sustainable Travel team for the Little Eaton Branch Line and White Peak Loop.
- **Little Eaton Branch Line:** The award of £2.73m, once accepted by Cabinet, will fund the full construction of a multi-user Greenway between the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 54 Millennium Cycleway at Duffield Road in Little Eaton and Rawson Green in Kilburn as part of a longer route eventually connecting Ripley into Derby City. The scheme is subject to planning permission and our application which is currently in preparation is expected to be submitted later this summer. Using funding secured through our Highways Capital Programme, the track bed of this former railway line now owned by the County Council, has been cleared of overgrowth to enable an engineering investigation of all structures to be undertaken, as well as the necessary Flood Risk Assessment which will be used to support our planning application. The Little Eaton Greenway Supporters Group volunteers continue to be actively involved in the project through site action days and sharing project information in the wider community.



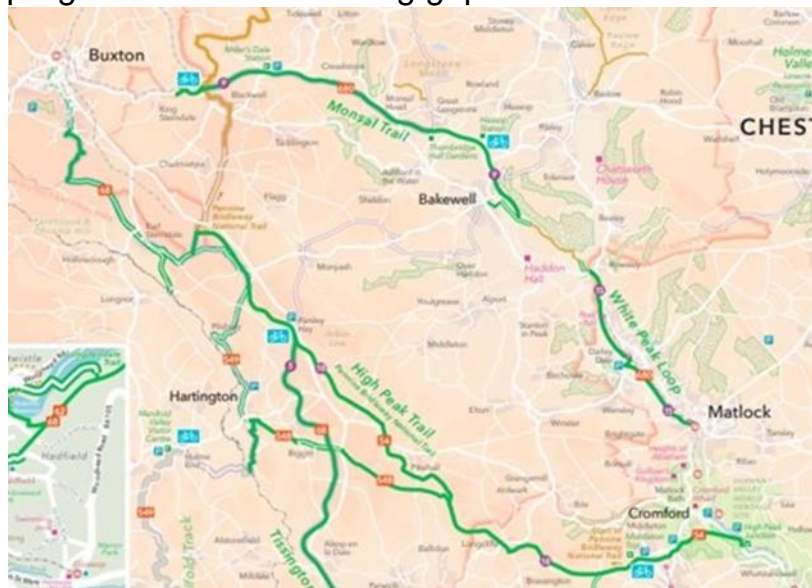
The results of the stakeholder engagement which was carried out last Autumn will be published on our website shortly

- **White Peak Loop (WPL):** The award of £275,000 will fund further development and feasibility work to help progress connecting the WPL from the end of the Monsal Trail at Topley Pike into and across Buxton Town Centre to Harpur Hill, a route which also meets local needs as part of a Buxton Walk and Ride Network. The work includes preliminary to detailed design, community and stakeholder engagement, surveys, planning and approvals and will build on the recent appraisal work undertaken by our consultants to identify the preferred route options. This has also been informed by the feedback received from an online stakeholder input workshop held on 28 January. These routes will enable people to choose more active choices for their everyday short trips promoting greener travel. The funding from Active Travel England will also extend to investigating a safe and coherent active travel scheme alongside the A6 from the Hogshaw Roundabout in Fairfield, Buxton to Dove Holes to meet current design guide standards. There is more information about the WPL on our website here:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/cycling/white-peak-loop/white-peak-loop.aspx>

Work continues to progress the other missing gaps in the WPL from High Peak

Junction near Cromford to Matlock Railway Station (through the feasibility study which is nearing completion for the Derwent Valley multi-user trail between Shardlow in South Derbyshire and



Hathersage in the Derbyshire Dales), as well as the section from Rowsley to Coombs Road in Bakewell.

- **Pennine Bridleway National Trail:** On-going maintenance continues, with drainage work and general repairs being undertaken along the route. Groundwork volunteers have been busy replacing gates, gate posts and several sections of fencing, as well as carrying out drainage and litter picking. Investigation work for the missing sections of the Trail around Glossop is continuing. Further site visits have taken place with DCC Highways and Estates to look at the options for improving access over the A626 Glossop Road railway bridge and to investigate another

route running initially through Network Rail land along the northern flank of the railway line, near Bankwood Gate. Negotiations with Network Rail have now commenced and at this stage several different alternatives are being considered to identify the best feasible route available.

- **Peak Forest Tramway Trail:** Resurfacing of 1.3km of the Peak Forest Tramway between Lower Crist, near Buxworth and Green Lane in Chinley is scheduled to commence in early June for an expected duration of four weeks. There will be a temporary closure in place while the resurfacing is being carried out. Works also include the removal of three motorcycle barriers, with two immediately at the roadside due to be replaced with two way opening easy access gates suitable for all legitimate users.
- **Shallcross Incline, Whaley Bridge:** Work to reconstruct the surface and improve drainage on the Shallcross Incline in Whaley Bridge is currently underway on site and should be complete in time for the school holidays in July. Due to the fairly steep nature of the route, this will be top dressed with a porous paving material to assist with drainage and provide a suitable surface for all permitted users which include pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and people on mobility scooters or with pushchairs. Again, the route is closed while construction is underway and motorcycle barriers at either end of the route will be removed to leave a gap alongside each maintenance access gate.
- **Chesterfield Active Travel Route:** This 7.8km east-west route across Chesterfield is a £1.68m scheme being funded under Tranche 2 of the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund. Crow Lane, at the eastern end of the route was permanently closed to vehicles on 17 February 2023 to provide a dedicated walking and cycling route (also accessible to horse riders) to the Chesterfield Royal Hospital. The remaining 7.2km of the route is being progressed and will be completed in 2023/24. Construction is underway to widen and enhance the existing section of the Hipper Valley Trail which runs through Somersall Park past Walton Dam, including resurfacing the section out onto Somersall Lane. Work has also commenced at the western end of the route to provide a new superhighway style arrangement in the form of a segregated cycleway on the A619 Baslow Road/ Chatsworth Road, including a new signal layout at the junction with Storrs Road. New lining features will be provided on the rest of the route (5.05km) which utilises current facilities eg along Bobbin Mill Lane, Goytside Road, Dock Walk and through Queen's Park etc.
- **Safer Roads Fund Projects:** Following the public consultation which took place back in January for the A5004 (Long Hill) between Buxton and Whaley Bridge, a four week consultation was also undertaken during March 2023 for the A5012 (Via Gellia) between Cromford and Newhaven. New proposals are being developed to improve road safety along both stretches of road and provide an opportunity to make some improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

- **Greener Towns 20mph zones:** A further consultation is underway until 9 June 2023, seeking people's views on a Green Towns initiative to pilot 20mph speed limits in two Derbyshire towns, Buxton and Long Eaton: <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/have-your-say/consultation-search/consultation-details/greener-towns-20mph-zones-2023.aspx>
A lower, safer speed, with fewer accelerations and decelerations would improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions and help encourage more people to walk or cycle for shorter journeys, with benefits for their health and wellbeing.
- Other consultations include a short on-line survey to understand the demand for **electric vehicle charging infrastructure** across the county from residents, businesses and visitors to the area. This is open until the end of 2023: <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/have-your-say/consultation-search/consultation-details/electric-vehicle-charging-in-your-area.aspx>

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

- **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP):** We are awaiting the results from the online public engagement which closed back in March for the shared LCWIP which has been prepared jointly by Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council for the D2N2 area. The comments received will help gauge the level of the support for the LCWIP and inform the final version of the document.
- **Cycle Derbyshire:** The cycle route planner tool has been developed to encourage people to explore the County's 266 miles (444km) of traffic-free trails that are family friendly and accessible for all, with inclusive cycling hubs offering a range of electric and adapted cycles to hire. The planner is easy to use and will help find the best route for recreational or commuting use, reducing carbon on the journey to Net Zero. <https://cycle.travel/map/derbyshire>
- **Walk Derbyshire:** At the end of April, Walk Derbyshire launched its "Inclusive Spaces" webpage: <https://walkderbyshire.org.uk/get-walking/> This is for groups that provide activities for specific people eg those with health conditions/ disabilities, women or men only groups, religious and faith groups. Anyone who knows or has a group that provides specialist walks is encouraged to get in touch so details can be added to the website. The Districts and Boroughs which have been chosen for the four Active Neighbourhood pilot areas are Bolsover, Chesterfield, Erewash and NE



Derbyshire, based on high levels of inactivity and deprivation. They each have the opportunity to access £100k of funding, with up to £20k being available initially for Stage 1 community engagement activity which will guide the full Stage 2 proposals. The Stage 1 bids have now all been agreed by the Pilot Proposal Panel meaning that work should be able to start very soon.

- **Derbyshire Countryside Events Programme:** Further information about the events which are taking place for the remainder of 2023, including the popular Woodland Festival held at Elvaston Castle Country Park near Derby, can be found in our Countryside Destinations and Events brochure here:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/whats-new-this-season/countryside-events-programme.aspx>

Aim 5: Greater community involvement

- **Volunteer contribution:** In 2022/23, volunteers working on our countryside sites, paths and trails have contributed just over 1,545 days, which is a 24% increase on the previous year and estimated to be worth in the region of £138,579. Groundwork Greater Nottingham continues to manage and supervise volunteer task days on behalf of the County Council, including support for the groups working on the Clowne



Greenway, Pennine Bridleway and Little Eaton Branch Line. Groundwork has also been working with the recently formed Darley Dale Community Volunteer (DDCV) group. The Group has been concentrating on cutting back vegetation and litter picking on a section of the White Peak Loop (WPL) alongside Peak Rail's heritage railway and would like to expand its activities to include improvements to local rights of way. Its work on the WPL is being complemented by a contract which has been issued for more extensive vegetation clearance and siding out on the Matlock to Rowsley section of the route which had become very narrow in places.

This is nearing completion and is being funded and managed by the County Council.

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