

## Peak District Local Access Forum

**Date:** Wednesday 21 February 2024

**Item:** 7

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

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### 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:** Progress to deliver the package of rights of way schemes being funded through the County Council's Highways Capital Programme has been affected by the need for work teams to prioritise repairs on Derbyshire's roads for which the Authority has received additional funding from central Government in 2023/24. The current situation with regard to the routes which the Peak District LAF Sub-Group has been consulted on and is following with particular interest is set out in the table below.

<b>Works completed since September 2023</b>	
Castleton FP 20 Tor House to Hollins Cross	Completed September 2023
<b>Works issued to contractor</b>	
Eyam BOAT 25 (Sir William Hill Road to Edge Road)	Works stopped due to verge damage
Edale BW 19 Phase 2 (Pennine Way, Jacobs Ladder)	Due to start in Autumn 2024
Hope Woodlands FP 24	After ash dieback felling
Hartington Upper Quarter FP144/ FP106	Alongside Fernilee reservoir
<b>To be funded in 2024/25</b>	
Castleton BW 40	Dirtlow Rake
Hayfield BW 47 – Phase 1	Kinder Reservoir
Hope BW 32 & BW 5	Low Barn and Brinks Road to Hope Cross
Macclesfield Old Road	Bridge Car Park to Buxton

Peak Forest BW 55	Eldon Quarry
Birchover BOAT 23	Clough Lane
Chapel en le Frith BOAT 144	Rushup Edge (Chapel Gate)
Monyash BOAT 29	Derby Lane

- **Roadside signposting:** A schedule of work to install 400 roadside signposts on rights of way across the county during 2023/24 has now been completed. Funding is also available for further signposting work in 2024/25. Details of any missing or damaged signposts can be reported online, but it is worth checking the Derbyshire Mapping Portal first to see if there are already plans to provide a signpost in a particular location: [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/rights-of-way/scheduled-maintenance-programme/scheduled-maintenance-programme.aspx](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/rights-of-way/scheduled-maintenance-programme/scheduled-maintenance-programme.aspx)

## **Aim 2: Definitive Map and Statement**

- In terms of dealing with the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications, following a Public Inquiry held back in August the Order to add a Byway Open to All Traffic between New Road and Main Road near Stoke in Grindleford Parish has been confirmed by the Secretary of State and will be advertised shortly. An Order proposing to add a Footpath from Yardsley Lane to Buxton Road (A6) in Whaley Bridge has also been confirmed following a local hearing and is currently being advertised on the County Council's website. All the latest public notices for DMMOs and Public Path Orders, along with those relating to permanent Traffic Regulation Orders and Statutory Declarations deposited by landowners under Section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980 can be viewed here: [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/rights-of-way/notices/rights-of-way-notices.aspx](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/rights-of-way/notices/rights-of-way-notices.aspx)
- **Project 2026 Derbyshire:** Volunteers are continuing to investigate historic, unrecorded routes across Derbyshire with research records now created for 385 paths and 209 DMMO applications submitted to the County Council to date. The Joint LAF Unrecorded Ways Sub-Group is continuing to look at how the processing of these applications could be made easier and how they might be prioritised in light of an increasing backlog. A further meeting of the Sub-Group is to be arranged in the near future.

## **Aim 3: An improved network**

- **Pennine Bridleway National Trail (PBW):** On the Derbyshire section of the Pennine Bridleway, general maintenance continues predominantly concentrating on essential drainage work and vegetation clearance with the continued help of Groundwork volunteers. The replacement of non-slip surfaces is also being progressed for several

road crossings, including the A6 at Blackwell, the A515 at Pomeroy and the A5012 (Via Gellia road) near Pikehall, with funding which has been secured from the County Council's Highways Capital Programme. Meetings are on-going with the Pennine National Trails Partnership Manager to assess potential accessibility improvements on linear and circular routes off the National Trail which may be eligible for funding from Natural England's Accessibility Fund. These include routes in the Biggin, Longdendale and Hayfield areas. On the development side, investigative work is underway for two missing sections of the Pennine Bridleway around Glossop, looking at a possible alternative route into Gamesley which avoids the Dinting Viaduct and exploring a suitable crossing point of the River Etherow for the section between New Road at Tintwistle and Woolley Bridge Road in Hadfield.

- **White Peak Loop:** 62km or 71% of the White Peak Loop (WPL) is currently complete. The missing gaps are from the Monsal Trail at



Topley Pike into and through Buxton to Harpur Hill; from High Peak Junction near Cromford to Matlock Railway Station and from Old Station Close in Rowsley to Coombs Road, Bakewell.

Following receipt of the Tranche 4 grant from Active

Travel England to help fund further work to develop the missing section of the WPL from Topley Pike across Buxton to Harpur Hill, a commissioning process is due to get underway to award a contract to progress this in early 2024. Since

improvements were carried out to the surface of the WPL between Matlock and Rowsley, extensive repairs have now been completed on the boardwalk near



Rowsley to replace damaged planks and repair a section of broken railing. The condition of the structure will continue to be monitored.

Further information about the WPL can be found here:

[www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/cycling/white-peak-loop/white-peak-loop.aspx](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/cycling/white-peak-loop/white-peak-loop.aspx)

- **Buxton Walk and Ride Network:** Surface improvements for the paths across Temple Fields, situated off London Road (A515) in Buxton are due to start in February 2024. This will help provide a more direct route to local primary and secondary schools which avoids walking alongside busy main roads.

- **Little Eaton Branch Line – Derby City to Ripley Active Travel**

**Route:** Following the receipt of £2.73m funding from Active Travel England, a planning application has now been submitted to develop this 5.5km section of former railway as a multi-user Greenway between Duffield Road in Little Eaton and Rawson Green, near Kilburn. It will form part of an active travel route between Derby City and Ripley, as well as an extension to the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 54.



- **Derwent Valley Cycleway:** Work on the feasibility study which has been commissioned by the County Council to look at the possible route options for a 54km proposed cycleway/ trail through the Derwent Valley between Shardlow to the SE of Derby and Hathersage is nearing completion. Consultants are in the process of finalising the overall report, along with those for each of the five sections of the route to incorporate feedback from DCC officers and members of the Derwent Valley Trust so the complete package of work can be reviewed ahead of its final publication.
- **Safer Roads Fund Projects – A5004 (Long Hill) Buxton to Whaley Bridge:** Surface improvements on a badly eroded section of Old Road which runs parallel with Long Hill are due to start in early March for a period of 8 to 12 weeks. A temporary closure will be in force while the work is underway. The scheme has been designed with input from local users and offers an alternative to walking or riding along the main road. Other improvements to be delivered as part of this Safer Roads Fund Project include a shared footway alongside the Manchester Road section of the A5004 into Buxton and pedestrian improvements on the approach into Whaley Bridge.
- **Investment:** A total of £2,030,520 has been allocated in the Highways Capital Programme for 2024/25 to be spent directly on public rights of way and multi-user Greenway/ Derbyshire Cycle Network development and maintenance, including work with volunteers and surface improvements on the Trans Pennine Trail, White Peak Loop, High Peak Trail, Silverhill Trail and Archaeological Way. These schemes will be



delivered by officers from Rights of Way, Countryside Service and Sustainable Travel teams. Acceptance of the 2024-25 Local Transport Plan grant from the Department for Transport (DfT) and its allocation to the Highways Capital Programme was approved by Cabinet on 19 October 2023:

<https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=1325&Ver=4>

- **Active Travel Masterplans:** With recent Active Travel England Capability and Ambition funding, the County Council has begun to develop a series of local active travel masterplans (business cases for network design and scheme planning) for potential cycling/ walking schemes for the three



market towns of Belper, Glossop and Ilkeston. These will be comprehensive strategies to encourage and support active and sustainable travel modes. The plans will typically include a range of measures to make active travel safer, more convenient and more appealing to a wider range of people. Stakeholder engagement (including key partners, including County members, District and Town Council Members, as well as local stakeholder groups interested in Active and Sustainable Travel) has been undertaken and concept masterplan development is underway. The next step will be to undertake wider public engagement exercises on the draft masterplans through March 2024. These activities will comprise both in person events and online consultation portal. In addition to the grant already received, the Council has been awarded a further grant uplift from the Active Travel England Capacity Fund. This funding will be used to expand the Masterplan programme by seeking to establish a similar set of Active Travel proposals and principles for smaller settlements or a collection of smaller settlements in the County. Further details will be shared as this project develops.

- **Green Towns Initiative:** The findings of a public consultation on plans to pilot the introduction of 20mph speed limits on roads in areas surrounding the town centres of Buxton and Long Eaton were reported to Cabinet on 7 December 2023. As a result of a lack of public support, it has been decided not to proceed with this initiative aimed at introducing a lower, safer speed to help improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions and encourage more people to walk or cycle for shorter journeys, with benefits for their health and wellbeing.
- **Preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Derbyshire:** In accordance with its statutory duties under the Environment Act 2021, the County Council is preparing a LNRS for

Derbyshire which must be approved and published by 31 March 2025. The framework set by Government includes undertaking a public consultation on the draft document. On 11 January 2024, Cabinet approved the proposed governance arrangements for stakeholder engagement which should ensure that the LNRS is co-produced through effective engagement with interested stakeholder organisations and the public.

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

- **Walk Derbyshire:** In response to feedback received about the Walk Derbyshire website, several changes have been implemented to make it easier to navigate and provide the information that everyone needs to get out walking more. The focus is on everyday walking, providing resources to help encourage this from people's doorsteps, as well as details of organised, led walks. There is also a section on the Active Neighbourhood and Community Engagement Pilots which are taking place across the county: <https://walkderbyshire.org.uk/>
- **Cycle Derbyshire:** In 2023, 13,000 copies of the Cycle Derbyshire leaflet/ map were distributed and on display at key tourist information and visitor information points, cycle hire centres and cycle shops all around Derbyshire. It is the second most popular leaflet picked up by tourists and locals alike, second only to the Visit Peak District Maps and is also available on the County Council's website: [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/cycling/cycling.aspx](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/cycling/cycling.aspx)



#### **Aim 5: Greater community involvement**

- **Volunteer contribution:** The work of volunteers on our countryside sites, paths and trails continues to be supported under a service level agreement with Groundwork Five Counties. Groundwork operates across Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland and Leicestershire, delivering projects to support local people and communities. Volunteer task days are managed and supervised on behalf of the County Council, including support for the groups working on the Clowne Greenway, Archaeological Way, Pennine Bridleway National Trail, Little Eaton Branch Line and White Peak Loop.



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