

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: Wednesday 12th June 2024

Item: 5

Title: Active Travel England Funding for the development of a National Park Walking and Cycling Plan

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Purpose of Report: To inform the Forum about the project to produce a Peak District National Park Walking and Cycling Plan and to seek the Forum's assistance in its development; specifically, the establishment of a Peak District Local Access Forum sub-group to provide input and feedback.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Peak District National Park is a complex location, particularly from a transport perspective, with 7 constituent and two close neighbouring highway authorities; plus, National Highways. All of these organisations have a responsibility for the provision of routes for active travel within and linking to the National Park.
- 1.2 The Peak District National Park and partners secured funding from the Department for Transport in 2013 and 2015 as part of the Linking Communities: Grants to support Cycling in National Parks fund. The resulting Pedal Peak II Project focussed on routes connecting the National Park with its surrounding urban catchment.
- 1.3 Building on the success of the Pedal Peak II Project, the National Park Authority and its partners developed a Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy. Adopted in 2015, the Strategy included a range of future schemes across the whole of the National Park and offering further connections beyond the Park's boundary.
- 1.4 In 2017, the Department for Transport published its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. This Strategy set out the approach for Local Walking and Cycling Plans (LCWIPS). Whilst they were intended to be partnership plans, the onus was on their development according to highway authority, Local economic partnership or metropolitan boundaries. With funding being linked to the production of LCWIPS, the Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy became effectively redundant.
- 1.5 The formation of Active Travel England has offered a funding mechanism for the delivery of walking and cycling schemes. The availability of an LCWIP or equivalent strategy has led to the prioritisation of funding to those authority's best placed to meet the aims of Active Travel England. To date this has not included National Park Authorities, and it has been noted that the overall focus has been on delivery in urban areas at the expense of rural communities.
- 1.6 In order to address this shortfall, National Parks England has been involved in discussions with the Department for Transport and Active Travel England about the opportunity to take forward walking, wheeling and cycling routes within National Parks. The [funding announced by Active Travel England](#) for the 10 English National Park &

Broads Authorities in March 2024 will allow the development of National Park specific LCWIPS or equivalent plans.

- 1.7 Each National Park / Broads Authority has been given £100,000 to prepare an LCWIP or equivalent Plan, with a deadline of the end of March 2025. The production of a traditional LCWIP would take too long; particularly within the Peak District context. For this reason, we are planning on producing a high-level Infrastructure Plan. We will use our resulting Plan to then look to develop more detailed proposals.

2. Our Focus

- 2.1 We are splitting the work into 4 complementary strands: -

- Data and evidence collection,
- Facilitation and consultation,
- Scheme development, including auditing possible routes,
- Developing a National Park Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (NPCWIP).

- 2.2 One key piece of work will involve the bringing together of lead officers from our constituent and neighbouring highway authorities to learn about their LCWIPS and proposed schemes. We want to add value, so this will enable us to look for gaps in the network that can deliver benefit to our residents and visitors.

- 2.3 We also want to work with a range of stakeholders with an interest in delivering better walking, cycling, horse riding and wheeling access to, from and within the National Park. This is where the Peak District Local Access Forum can help.

3. Our ask of the Peak District Local Access Forum

We would like to establish a Local Access Forum sub-group to help with the development of the National Park Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (NPCWIP). This group will provide guidance and feedback on the emerging NPCWIP and the work being undertaken to support its development. This group would also include additional stakeholder representation beyond the existing members of the Peak District Local Access Forum, for the purposes of this project only.

Recommendation

- i) That the Peak District Local Access Forum establish a sub-group to assist the development of the National Park Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, with provision for the sub-group to include representation of bodies not currently forming part of the Local Access Forum.
- ii) That Authority officers determine in consultation with the Local Access Forum additional sub-group membership.