

11. ACTIVE TRAVEL PLAN

1. Purpose

For members to adopt the high-level Peak District Walking, Wheeling, Cycling and Horse-riding Infrastructure Plan (the Plan) for active travel in the National Park.

2. Context

2.1 The National Park Management Plan sets out 4 headline aims relating to:

2.1.1 Climate Change

2.1.2 Landscape and Nature Recovery

2.1.3 Welcoming Place

2.1.4 Thriving Communities

2.2 Taking a strategic approach to active travel will provide benefits across all of these stated aims, e.g. to improve visitor experience, lowering greenhouse emissions, promoting accessibility for all, providing alternatives to private car use, and creating improved infrastructure linkages.

2.3 In 2024 Active Travel England introduced a new National Parks Capability Fund worth £100,000, equivalent to £1 million for all the English National Parks. The Authority accepted the funding (RMM minute 17/24) which was available from 5 April 2024. The initial project delivery deadline was 31 March 2025, however Active Travel England offered all NPAs the opportunity to extend the deadline until end of June 2025. The PDNPA successfully applied for this extension to enable the results of the public consultation on the strategic high-level network to influence the feasibility element of the project.

2.4 The objective of the fund is: 'To support capability building activities that will enable National Parks and co-located local authorities and highway authorities to develop inclusive active travel programmes. This is likely to include building technical capability to plan and deliver high quality walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure networks; building effective partnerships; engaging local communities; and collecting evidence of impact to inform optimisation of future programmes.'

2.5 The funding supports the development of strategic feasibility guidance and plans in rural areas. It is recognised that the existing guidance on Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans (LCWIP) is orientated towards urban areas and that there has been limited involvement/prioritisation of initiatives elsewhere. The funding will also help to enable National Park Authorities to apply for and obtain future funding for routes, structures, facilities, and other measures to support active travel, such as development of a secondary network and for behavioural change. The plans produced will provide an evidence-based case for this approach with the funding allowing feasibility studies and visualisations as appropriate.

2.6 The work supports the delivery of ambitions for a sustainable travel framework and access for all, including the role that the Authority's properties play in providing this access. The work will look at routes, including the White Peak Loop, and support the development of the Recreation Hub work. In the Peak District our local focus has been on a plan for ***Walking, Wheeling and Horse Riding***.

2.7 During the last 12 months officers have used the funding to facilitate consultation, purchase further monitoring counters, and commission an economic business case. Final stages of the project will also allow spend on the production and design of the plan and the development of feasibility work to create detail on specific improvement projects.

2.8 The consultation focused on a “**strategic high-level network routes**” of routes. The routes include:

The National Park’s six multi-user trails; and

The Derbyshire Key Cycling Network;
other Sustrans routes; and
Links to visitor centres/attractions.

2.9 The consultation process drew out a good number and range of comments largely supporting the proposed routes, but also useful specific concerns and suggestions for change (e.g. landowner and resident concerns regarding indicative routing). Officers have made changes as a result. The summary of proposals Members are being asked to adopt in sections 7, 8, 9 of the plan and amendments to the strategic high-level network form Appendix 1 of this report. The full Peak District Walking, Wheeling, Cycling and Horse-Riding Infrastructure Plan can be found as a background paper to this report. Four specific workshops were held with all major highway authorities, key landowners impacted (such as Chatsworth, utilities companies and the National Trust) and the Local Access Forum.

2.10 It has been important to highlight the overlaps with all constituent Highway Authorities and tie into existing initiatives such as the White Peak Loop. Having its own National Park focused Active Travel Plan also provides a place to coordinate the various county and city-based plans emerging across the area and helps support the prioritisation of schemes.

2.11 The consultation process has also drawn out some novel thinking on promoting and delivering enhanced gateway links into the national park from our neighboring urban catchment.

2.12 The Plan has identified a series of schemes prioritised through the consultation process, that would enhance the existing strategic high-level network. It should however be noted that the proposed sections of this network are indicative only and subject to detailed appraisal to identify, in consultation, a preferred scheme. Once adopted, we will be in a position to prioritise these schemes for further work with a view to securing further funding for scheme development.

2.13 Subject to further funding, our ambition is to continue the work undertaken over the last 12 months to work with partners in the design, development, and delivery of the strategic network and to identify our secondary network, which will provide enhanced links to the strategic network.

2.14 Feedback from Active Travel England will be provided as a verbal update to Members at the Authority meeting.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is now proposed to seek adoption of the Plan by Members, subject to final details and publication being delegated to officers in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Authority. The draft Plan has been shared with Active Travel England for comment, and their feedback will guide the final version of the Plan. Officers also anticipate ongoing input by Active Travel England following adoption of the Plan.

4. Recommendations

1. That subject to recommendation 2 below, the Peak District Walking, Wheeling, Cycling and Horse-Riding Infrastructure Plan, be adopted by the Authority and thereafter published
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, for further additions and amendments and any specific feedback received from Active Travel England to finalise the Plan.
3. That progress reports and future updates on active travel and the Plan be reported to future meetings of the Authority.

5. Corporate Implications

- a. **Legal** –
 - I. Pursuant to section 65(5) of the Environment Act 1995, the Authority has the power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the accomplishment of its statutory purposes. The Plan falls within the Authority's statutory purposes. This power is subject to any express statutory or public law constraints which should be considered holistically and as this project progresses.
 - II. Impacts on equality, diversity and inclusion have been considered as the Plan has been developed, taking into account the evidence and responses from consultees received throughout the process. Consideration will also be given on the impacts of the Plan on equality, diversity and inclusion following receipt of feedback from Active Travel England and the finalisation of the Plan. The publication/implementation and monitoring of the Plan will identify and address any adverse equality impacts on a case by case basis.
- b. **Financial** – project claims and total spend is required to be completed by the end of June 2025
- c. **National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan** – this report highlights the ways that this work will contribute multiple benefits across the aims of the NPMP
- d. **Risk Management** – The plan includes proposals adopted by co-located Highways Authorities. Officers have sought to engage closely with all highway authorities, major landowners and the Peak District Local Access Forum, to take on board their suggestions. Where concerns have been raised, direct liaison has been undertaken and changes have been made accordingly to the plan. Some changes have been made to the high-level strategic network in response to the consultation on the network.
- e. **Net Zero** – The work on active travel and a plan for cycling, walking, wheeling and horse riding provides a mechanism for the Authority to engage with visitors to the National Park regarding issues associated with climate change and for engagement with actions to protect its assets. The Authority recognises that for some people options are more limited but would not seek to promote unsustainable transport decisions.

6. Background papers (not previously published)

[Peak District Walking, Wheeling, Cycling and Horse-Riding Infrastructure Plan](#)

Link:

<http://mgintranet/documents/s60350/PeakDistrictCyclingWalkingWheelingInfrastructurePlan.pdf>

7. Appendices

Summary of proposals for adoption in the Peak District Walking, Wheeling, Cycling and Horse-Riding Infrastructure Plan

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Brian Taylor, Head of Planning, 30th April 2025

Responsible Officer, Job Title

Brian Taylor, Head of Planning