

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: 3 June 2026

Item: 8

Title: Active Travel Update

Author: Sue Smith & Tim Nicholson

Purpose of the Report

The report provides an update on the Active Travel programme.

Background

In April 2024, the Peak District National Park received £100k of funding from Active Travel England to develop a programme for active travel and a Peak District Walking, Wheeling, Cycling and Horse-riding Infrastructure Plan. The funding ran until end June 2025. An Active Travel Sub group, comprised of LAF members and other key stakeholders was established to advise on and support this work.

National Parks Capability Fund Phase 2

In April 2026, the Peak District National Park received £200k of funding from Active Travel England for scheme design, for strengthening network plans, articulating and advocating active travel agendas among local stakeholders, and for building further capability in National Parks enabling staff to effectively drive their active travel agendas.

In the Peak District, the focus is to take forward the feasibility work already undertaken and as identified as active travel priorities in the [Peak District Walking Wheeling Cycling and Horse-riding Infrastructure Plan](#). This includes extensions and links to the Monsal Trail, a link from Sheffield, Bakewell Town connectivity, and a quiet lane approach. The work will also encompass data and evidence, network development. and engagement. Opportunities will also be taken as they arise for connectivity along the A628 and Trans Pennine Trail and delivery of the White Peak Loop and links with the Trails.

Close working with Highway Authorities, land owners and managers, and communities and involvement of the Local Access Forum's Active Travel Sub group will continue. As will joint working with the other National Parks for the combined ambition to develop and promote active travel.


Mayor's Big Transport Conversation

The Forum's response to the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority's (EMCCA) Local Transport Plan consultation, is provided at Appendix 1.

Recommendation:

- 1) To note the contents of the report.**
- 2) To agree the LAF response to the to the EMCAA consultation.**

Appendix 1

| | |
|--|--|
|  The logo for the Peak District Local Access Forum. It features a stylized green and blue landscape with a winding path or river, enclosed in a circular frame. Below the frame, the text 'PEAK DISTRICT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM' is written in green capital letters. | <p>Peak District Local Access Forum c/o Peak District National Park Authority Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell Derbyshire DE45 1AE Email: PDLAF@peakdistrict.gov.uk</p> |
|--|--|

8th February 2026

By email:

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Mayor's Big Transport Conversation.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Peak District Local Access Forum (PDLAF), in response to the above consultation.

The Peak District Local Access Forum is the statutory body advising the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC) on recreation and access matters within the PDLAF area. We were set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 to advise on the improvement of public access in the Peak District and Northwest Derbyshire for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment. Forum members are drawn from a wide range of access interests including walking, climbing, cycling, horse riding, water sports, recreational motor vehicles, disabled access, farming, land management, conservation, climate change and local business.

The forum meets in person three times a year and welcomes presentations from a wide range of access interests as well as the interests represented on the forum. Issues raised are not just of local concern and we often consider how these issues reflect on the statutory purposes of the National Park and nationally.

As a forum we have taken a keen and active interest in sustainable transport initiatives; having presentations from Hope Valley Climate Action, Sustrans, amongst others and have been involved, as consultees, in the production of the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) Sustainable Transport Strategy and Local Plan. We have also been involved in the development and embedding of active travel and have established an Active Travel Sub-group to help take this forward. Within the National Park we would like to see fewer car journeys by residents and visitors alike and would welcome a greater emphasis on journeys made by public transport, on foot and cycle. An efficient public transport system would provide connections for work, shopping, health care and education and allow tourists to arrive in the Peak District by train or bus and having arrived make journeys around the national park. Many rural communities and visitor attractions are poorly, if at all, served by a regular bus service so the only option is using a car.

The Forum's answers to the consultation questions are set out below.

Question 1 – Yes, I have read and understood the privacy policy.

Question 2 – I am responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation – Peak District Local Access Forum.

Question 3 – We **AGREE** with the statement of ambition for the Mayor's Transport Plan.

Question 4: We rank the four strategic schemes as follows:

- 2 To increase modal choice
- 3 To better connect communities
- 4 To create greater economic opportunity
- 1 To protect our environment

Question 5: Is there anything more you would to tell us about the ambition for the Mayor's Transport Plan?

The Forum is disappointed that the ambition of the plan does not run to leisure activities. Leisure is mentioned in the overall plan but is not reflected in the questionnaire. The Peak District National Park is ringed by large conurbations, and it is estimated that 20 million people live within an hour's drive of the Peak District making it one of the most accessible national parks. At present approximately 13 million people visit annually most of these visitor journeys are by private transport.

Further, the Forum would welcome support for the many existing local authority statutory plans; for example: Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Key Cycle network and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the recently published Peak District Walking, Wheeling, Cycling and Horse Riding Infrastructure Plan.

https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/218413/DH-Peak-District-Walking,-Wheeling,-Cycling-and-Horse-riding-Infrastructure-Plan-Final.pdf These plans offer a vision for an integrated, inclusive and well managed rights of way network; giving access to green and blue spaces for health and wellbeing benefits.

Are there any aims or goals you would change, add or remove?

We believe the plan is urban centric and more interested in connectivity within and between larger conurbations. We would welcome a stronger reference to how the challenges to our rural communities beyond the towns and cities are to be addressed. For many rural communities a car is a vital connection to work and local services.

We are encouraged to read that the importance of walking, wheeling and cycling is recognised in the Mayor's Transport Plan, however, we would like to see horse riding recognised as a legitimate use of active travel networks - there are 17,330 horses registered in Nottinghamshire and 25,133 horses registered in Derbyshire (DEFRA, 2024). Each horse equates to a contribution to the economy of £6,887 pa therefore £292,442,681pa. The Transport Plan should be considering equestrian access to make Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire attractive places for equestrians to be. Equestrian tourism is on an upward trend with people holidaying with their horse; good transport links and improved connectivity on the off-road network is key for this to be successful.

Public Rights of Way (footpaths, bridleways and byways) have no specific reference within the plan. RoW are very important within the Peak District as many of our visitors are attracted to our extensive network of rights of way. For rural areas these paths are vital for connecting communities. They contribute to people's health and wellbeing, and to the rural economy. They also contribute to

most of the aims and visions of the Plan. We would like to see a developing RoW network with emphasis on multi-user trails and greater provision for cycling and horse riding; within the Peak District bridleways amount to 11% of the total network where the national average is 22%.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the emerging policies detailed below will enable the Mayor's Transport Plan to meet its first goal: "To strengthen and extend the public transport network"

AGREE Bring transport nearer more people

AGREE Improving reliability, journey times and frequencies

AGREE Enhancing the passenger experience

AGREE Supporting simpler and more affordable public transport tickets

STRONGLY AGREE Improving the ease of switching between different types of transport

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the emerging policies detailed below will enable the Mayor's Transport Plan to meet its second goal: "To support active, healthy and vibrant places"

STRONGLY AGREE Creating transformative cycling, walking & wheeling networks

STRONGLY AGREE Integrating active mode into our wider transport networks

STRONGLY AGREE Supporting people to use active mode with training and information

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the emerging policies detailed below will enable the Mayor's Transport Plan to meet its third goal: "To connect communities and new homes"

AGREE Designing our places to bring people closer to key services

AGREE Focusing new housing and employment developments in well-connected areas

STRONGLY AGREE Increasing provision of shared transport

STRONGLY AGREE Better connecting communities by active and sustainable travel options

Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the emerging policies detailed below will enable the Mayor's Transport Plan to meet its fourth goal: "To facilitate a productive and inclusive economy"

NO VIEW / NOT SURE Working collaboratively to influence funding decisions to invest in the strategic growth corridors

STRONGLY AGREE Supporting efficient operation of our transport networks

STRONGLY AGREE Prioritising investment to connect people to employment and training opportunities to enable growth

Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the emerging policies detailed below will enable the Mayor's Transport Plan to meet its fifth goal: *"To promote an integrated, sustainable and resilient network"*

STRONGLY AGREE Improving the climate resilience of our transport networks

STRONGLY AGREE Making our roads safer by following the 'Safe System' approach

STRONGLY AGREE Improving maintenance of our networks so our assets stay in good condition for longer

Question 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the emerging policies detailed below will enable the Mayor's Transport Plan to meet its sixth goal: *"To improve our unique natural and historic environment"*

STRONGLY AGREE Supporting the protection and enjoyment of our environments

STRONGLY AGREE Reducing the negative impact of transport and travel on the environment

Question 12: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the emergent policies detailed below will enable the Mayor's Transport Plan to meet its seventh goal: *"To decarbonise travel as part of net zero"*

STRONGLY AGREE Working with partners to support increase provision for low zero emission fuels for all transport MODES

Question 13: Is there anything more you would like to tell us about the emerging policies presented above? Are there any policies you would change add or remove?

As the plan is developed we would like to see prioritisation of the 22 policies as it will not be possible to do everything at once. We support the commitment to greater use of and extension to the existing public transport system. We see a robust transport system as encouraging more people to use sustainable solutions to their transport needs. We would like to see a roll out of information encouraging people to make more journeys by public transport for both work and leisure; it has been shown that healthy leisure options will be extended into work and education travel options (those who use a bicycle for leisure purposes will be more amenable to taking the step to using the bicycle for other transport needs). Being able to switch between different transport modes is important; taking bikes on busses and trains; cycle hire at railway stations and other hubs; integrated ticketing for both buses and trains.

Where new housing, employment and education facilities are developed due consideration should be given to sustainable travel options before the project is undertaken rather than an add-on at the end. Increased journeys create more congestion at certain times and disrupt journey plans and increase environmental pollution.

We would like to see the options of "Park and Ride" explored not just as a solution to inner city parking and congestion problems. Many "honey-pot" sites within the Peak District are plagued by insufficient and inconsiderate parking (Mam Tor made national media coverage last year). Inconsiderate parking has many effects on rural communities with emergency services and agricultural vehicles being unable to pass.

Question 14: Below are some of the ways the Mayor's Transport Plan could support EMCCA's wider inclusive growth ambitions. Please rank them in order of importance of improving access to health, skills, prosperity and growth across the region, with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least important:

- 1 A transport network that makes it easier to get around without needing to rely on private car ownership.
- 2 A transport network that facilitates active lifestyles to improve the health of our communities
- 3 A transport network that reduces the negative impact of transport on our neighbourhoods
- 4 A transport network that supports the movement of older and vulnerable people including children
- 5 A transport network that provides capacity for future innovations and accounts for changes in the way we live, shop and work
- 6 A transport network that offers affordable fees and ticketing
- 7 A transport network that makes it easier to get to education, training and employment
- 8 A transport network that reduces social isolation, particularly in rural areas.

Question 15: Would you like to suggest any other ways in which the Mayor's Transport Plan could improve inclusive access to health, skills, prosperity and growth across the region, or tell us anything more about your answers above?

It would be helpful to look at bus stops. In rural areas there can be long distances between stops, and not all stops are highlighted on the timetable. It would be good if rural buses could consider a 'hail and ride' system; this would benefit residents and visitors alike. Rural buses can be very infrequent, and this discourages their use for accessing parts of the National Park; as part of a promotion and education strategy people could be encouraged to use the bus service to visit an area and then walk or cycle to another connection or back to their vehicle. Any publicity of bus services should be across many media platforms as not everyone is connected to the digital world.

Question 16: Below are some of the ways the Mayor's Transport Plan could improve the experience of using our transport network. How important do you think each of the following are in improving the way that our transport network is designed for the future?

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| IMPORTANT | Managing future travel demand on the transport network to address congestion caused by projected population growth |
| IMPORTANT | Improving the safety and personal security of people using the transport network |
| VERY IMPORTANT | Removing obstacles to walking, including with a pram, and wheeling |
| VERY IMPORTANT | Improving priority for busses and trams on the network |
| VERY IMPORTANT | Improving priority for cycling on the transport network |
| VERY IMPORTANT | Improving the maintenance of roads, pavements, bridges, lighting etc |

VERY IMPORTANT Ensuring better access to green spaces in our neighbourhoods

NO VIEW/NOT SURE Focusing new housing development and employment in areas that are well connected to the transport network

Question 17: Would you like to suggest any other ways in which the Mayor's Transport Plan could improve the way that our transport network is designed in the future, or tell us anything more about your answers above?

We would like to see better coordination between rail and, long and short distance bus services. We would like to see more buses travelling from the main towns to the villages, and popular visitor attractions. Many people do not visit the countryside by public transport because services are infrequent or non-existent. Rural areas are poorly served by Sunday and late-night services; this has many social and economic disadvantages as people are unable to take part in evening activities in neighbouring villages and towns. Again, we would welcome publicity of these services across many media platforms.

We would welcome more information about local walking, cycling and wheeling routes to be provided at transport hubs to encourage people to explore the area with confidence giving access to all the social and health benefits of the natural world.

Question 18: Which of the following challenges, if any, regularly have a negative impact on your business or organisation? All that apply are listed below:

- Congestion slows the journey down
- A lack of suitable bus routes to take me where I want to go
- A lack of suitable walking, wheeling and cycling routes to take me where I want to go
- A lack of information to assist in making journey planning decisions
- A lack of public transport services in my area at the time I need to travel
- Public transport services that are too infrequent or unreliable
- Lack of evening and Sunday bus services
- Public transport service connections that are not well co-ordinated
- Safety when walking, wheeling and/or cycling
- The limited electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the region
- Poor maintenance of the road network
- Accessibility when using public transport

Question 19: Are there any other transport related challenges your business or organisation faces in making journeys around the EMCCA region that you would like to tell us about, or tell us anything more about your answers above?

The membership of PDLAF is drawn from a wide range of interests in outdoor activities representing recreational user groups, land managers and visitors.

The transport network in the Peak District needs to serve residents and visitors alike. We would like to see a more connected network with options for car free journeys. The rights of way network is important within our area as a source of tourism revenue and for connection between our towns and villages. We would like to see better maintenance of the existing rights of way network and development of multi-user routes connecting the Peak District to the surrounding towns and cities. We would prioritise improvements to circular routes, routes which connect to visitor attractions and local services (pubs, café and shops).

Please note there is no response provided to Sections 4 and 5 of the questionnaire; these sections appear to relate to staff employed by an organisation and not relevant to our organisation.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Plan and hope that our comments will be useful. We welcomed Alan Simpson to the last meeting of the Forum on 4th February and found his presentation and Q&A very helpful. We hope that we will be able to take part in further consultations as your plans develop and we look forward to receiving any feedback in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Charlotte Gilbert
Co Vice Chair PDLAF