



Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy



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Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy – Foreword



For over 60 years the National Park Authority has been looking after Peak District landscapes and enabling many people to enjoy and understand their special qualities. This cycle strategy is grounded in these principles. Through a focus on cycling we aim to help drive forward benefits for strategic access, sustainable transport, community health, economic growth, education, enjoyment, sporting challenge, local access, tourism, carbon reduction and more. The focus on cycling is a means of achieving more benefits for the wider Peak District (communities | businesses | place) none of which are exclusive to cycling.

Promoting understanding of and experiencing its special qualities at first hand is what a national park is all about, and is central to this strategy. Slow travel, through cycling, offers a means of discovery and enjoyment of the Peak District; with enough speed to cover the ground and explore the diversity of the varied landscapes, but slow enough to take in the sights, smells and sounds of the countryside. Cycling the extensive network of green lanes, trails, and bridleways of the Peak District is a journey through a series of living galleries, each carefully curated by farmers, land managers and populations over time. The scenery encompasses a natural landscape shaped by millennia of human habitation and influence, where prehistoric monuments sit alongside Roman mines and mediaeval settlements, and where the power of water drove the Industrial Revolution. Coupled with active recreational cycling on traffic-free trails, quiet lanes, challenging mountain bike routes or iconic road rides, the health and wellbeing benefits are huge.

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Although the Peak District National Park is central to this strategy, it isn't confined to the National Park. The Peak District's position, at the heart of the nation, presents a fantastic opportunity to connect world class landscapes with wider populations. This strategy isn't just about cycling the Peak District's network of trails it's about putting the Peak District at the heart of a national cycling network. It's about connecting inspirational landscapes with major cities and enabling the Peak District to be a destination for cycling trips – significantly contributing to the visitor economy. This would make the Peak District National Park one of the most cycle accessible national parks in the world.

We aren't beginning this strategy from a standing start. It builds on great natural assets and a growing reputation - an extensive and dispersed network of green lanes, bridleways and some of the country's best multi user trails, set in stunningly diverse landscapes. This diversity of cycling experience is accessible for all levels and interests – from novices looking for a first experience, regular cyclists, and mountain bike enthusiasts, right through to endurance cyclists and Olympic athletes. When this diversity is coupled with

proximity to a massive market, ease of access and an established but low spending visitor economy, it presents a significant opportunity to grow a wide range of economic benefits, through gearing up our cycling offer. This is the essence of our unique position.

Through this strategy our aim is *for the Peak District to be one of the great places to cycle ... using the iconic landscapes of the Peak District as the inspiration for a diverse cycling experience for everyone; delivering lasting health, economic and community benefits.*

The Peak District National Park is a fantastic asset and through this strategy we will deliver benefits to its 38,000 residents and 16 million near neighbours, who will have better cycle access to the national park as well as many more visitors from wider national and international markets.

Our strategy is founded on the principles of sustainability – people | place | business - and the long term viability of each.

Cycling in the wider Peak District now ...

Recent years have seen a growth in popularity in cycling in the area, partially driven by the delivery of new and exciting cycle routes and partly because of the UK's recent success in competitive cycling events such as the Tour de France and the Olympics. We already have an intrinsically good cycling offer, with the potential to become one of **the** best cycling destinations. This is our assessment of the current situation.

Strengths

- Diverse landscapes offer varied experiences
- Strategic location, close to large populations
- Reasonable strategic transport linkages
- Enviaible network of on and off-road cycling routes
- Extensive bridleways and green lanes
- Good provision of cycle hire facilities

Weaknesses

- Connectivity between the elements is poor
- Gaps in the network
- Poor connectivity to public transport
- Cycling tourism market is fragmented with little provision of signed circular routes
- Business awareness of cyclist needs is low
- Large numbers of car dependent visitors

Opportunities

- Popularity of cycling is rising fast
- Best positioned UK national park to offer direct cycle visits by so many people
- An intrinsically good offer to build on
- Potential to be a successful cycling destination
- Tour de France 2014 & L'Eroica Britannia offer opportunities to showcase the area

Threats

- Availability of future funding to deliver the strategy
- Individual elements will require planning permission and landowner consent
- There may be conflict of interest with existing users in particular locations
- There is an increasingly competitive market for cycling

Benefits of Cycling in the wider Peak District

Health & Well being

Health and wellbeing benefit; there is a wealth of evidence that participating in active recreation can bring health benefits, as well as promoting mental health and wellbeing. In addition, it is recognised that modal shift to cycling brings wider health benefits to society including improved air quality and reduced noise pollution.

Economic

Economic benefit; as well as bringing significant investment into the area through spending on infrastructure, investment in cycling encourages both day and staying visitors to the area to spend more in the local economy.

Community

Community benefit; investment in cycling benefits residents as well as visitors, bringing cycle friendly infrastructure to a number of communities. Improvements to local traffic-free cycle routes provides more leisure opportunities, as well as helping everyday cycling such as getting to work, school, college or just to the shops. Encouraging children of all ages and abilities to cycle gives lifelong benefits.

Personal discovery, fun & development

Personal benefits of discovery and enjoyment; cycle routes give access to iconic landscapes, spectacles of nature and the deep history of the Peak District, often hidden from the road. Access by bike means people can take time to breathe in the scents, admire the views or wonder at the ingenuity of our ancestors.

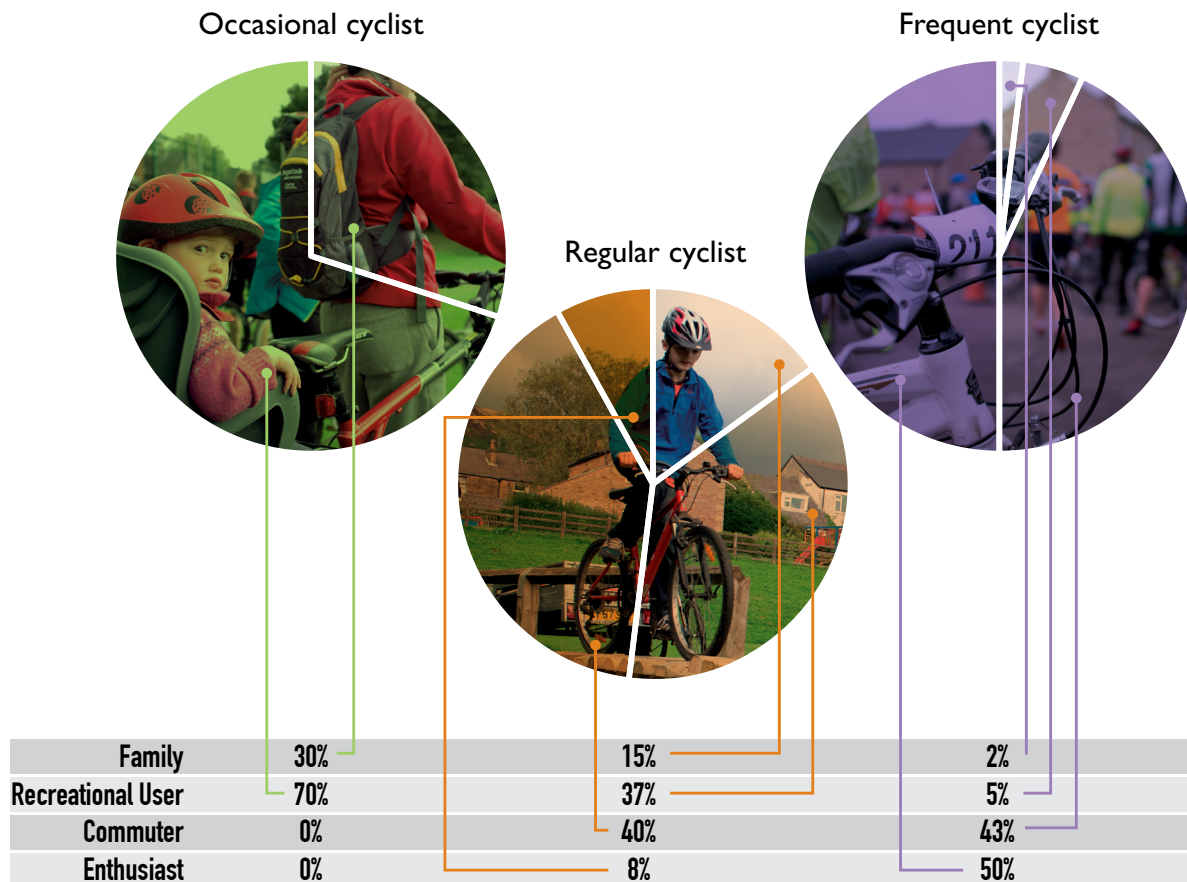
Transport & access

Transport and access benefit; cycling investment delivers practical improvements, making it easier for people to travel by bike or on foot, thus helping to improve access and reduce congestion.

Within these there are wider benefits such as safety and carbon saving. We begin to will quantify the benefits during the first year of the strategy.

The cycling market

The cycling market



This strategy aims to encourage occasional cyclists to progress to become regular cyclists enabling them to use a bike for more of their everyday journeys .

The actions in the strategy will also enable progression for regular cyclists to become frequent cyclists.

Cyclist sectors (used by British Cycling) show that UK cycling can be divided into three major segments:

1. **Occasional Cyclist:** Cycles infrequently; less than other categories
2. **Regular Cyclist:** Cycled 12 or more times in the past year
3. **Frequent Cyclist:** Cycles once per week or more

Route hierarchy

The cycling market



Main Network: connects the main towns in a direct and expeditious manner



Secondary Network: connects housing, attractions and key destinations



Complementary Network: links and provides continuity to the network



It is our aim that in the Peak District the **main network** connects the cities and towns in a direct manner. The **secondary network** leads riders to the main network, it connects housing, attractions and key destinations within the main network. The **complementary network** links and provides continuity to the network. It consists of additional bike paths that are required to complete the mesh system and to disperse cyclists.

The strategy provides a mechanism to enhance the existing network by delivering new cycle routes. The short term actions will provide main network links from neighbouring cities to the national park; secondary network links market towns; including railway access. Enhancement of the complementary network will be delivered as and when opportunities arise.

The Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy

Why we need a strategy... to outline our ambition for cycling in the wider Peak District; build on existing plans; work together to gather evidence; consult and source funding to grow the benefits of cycling.

The strategy covers... the National Park, and surrounding area including cities, market towns and countryside; residents, neighbouring communities, and visitors; novice to experienced cyclists across all types of cycling; delivery of routes and infrastructure; marketing and support to community and businesses.

Our Ambition is:

To be one of *the* great places to cycle...

using the iconic landscapes of the Peak District as the inspiration for a diverse cycling experience for everyone, encouraging sustainable travel and delivering lasting health, economic and community benefits.

Theme 1

Increase the network of routes

Theme 2

Support cyclist infrastructure to provide a welcome and stimulate the cycling economy

Theme 3

Promote the Peak District cycle experience

Theme 4

Develop sustainable transport packages

Inter-related (see principles)

Increase the network of routes



One of the biggest drivers for encouraging new and returning cyclists is the availability of traffic-free, convenient and connected cycle routes. Building on the Peak District's network of dispersed cycle routes, we aim to increase their connectivity, including fantastic multi-user trails and iconic routes at the centre of the experience. Better connectivity will enhance the network and help with the dispersal of users around the wider Peak District, spreading the benefits and reducing any negative impacts. The connectivity and extension of the network will be the basis for extended stays in the Peak District with iconic multi-day routes, whilst offering new opportunities for residents as well as considering how to plan for onward travel by car or public transport. Cycle routes are green corridors, and will provide opportunities to get close to and experience nature in the Peak District and connect to places of interest. Mindful of the requirements of other more confident users and the need to provide for cyclist progression, partners will explore opportunities to improve routes and facilities for mountain bikers, BMX riders and on-road cyclists and increase the number of people cycling for pleasure and everyday journeys.

Key action areas:

Creating new routes, connecting cities... new traffic-free, multi-user routes that are accessible to all, in order to meet the entry level needs of less confident cyclists, whilst ensuring connectivity to major population centres, enabling long distance rides.

Plugging the local gaps... connect the gaps in the network through new routes or signage to join sections of the network and places of interest. This will increase the size of the available network whilst easing access to and around the wider Peak District by visitors and residents, and gaining economic benefits.

Creating iconic multi-day routes... develop the iconic status of the White Peak Loop as a destination and develop other strategic cycle routes such as links from Sheffield to Manchester.

Enhancing the distinctive Peak District mountain biking offer... develop a more connected, comprehensive and progressive mountain biking offer.

Encouraging diverse experiences... explore opportunities for skills development and improving safety for road cyclists.

Creating and enhancing wildlife corridors along cycle routes... look for opportunities to enhance wildlife habitats and increase the understanding of users, enhancing their experience as well as improving conservation.

Although the emphasis of this strategy is on cycling, in most cases the infrastructure that it is provided will benefit walkers, horse riders and other users.

THEME 2

Support cyclist infrastructure to provide a welcome and stimulate the cycling economy



Of almost equal importance to the route network is the infrastructure and facilities available to cyclists, particularly those visiting an area for the first time. Providing a 'welcome' and the support that cyclists require when they arrive, as well as connecting to places of interest, enables them to have a more enjoyable stay. This includes infrastructure, services and the all-round offer provided by local businesses. This approach also increases the chance of cyclists staying longer, spending more money in the local economy and visiting again. It is important that gateways to the destination and cycle hubs throughout offer this 'welcome' and enhance the new routes. The promotion of new routes will disperse users across the network, sharing benefits more widely and reducing any negative impacts.

Key action areas:

Creating cycle friendly places... help popular cycle destinations to offer the highest level of cyclist welcome and support, including: - secure or better cycle parking, traffic calming measures or route information. Promote opportunities and focus improvements in market towns; including links to public transport and car parking.

Developing special cycling attractions... develop anchor attractions along key cycle routes, using the unique Peak District cycling offer as the backdrop for great experiences.

Stimulating cycle friendly businesses... encourage and support businesses (cafes, shops, accommodation, cycle hire, attractions, etc) and public providers to offer a high level of welcome and facilities to cyclists and thus benefit from a growing cycling economy.

Helping communities to get the most from cycling... link new routes with green travel planning for schools and work places.

THEME 3

Promote the Peak District cycle experience



Through targeted promotion, advice and support we aim to encourage new and occasional cyclists to become regular cyclists, bringing health and other benefits. We will encourage people to explore more and not just to stay at the most popular destinations. With a mix of routes, information and skills training we will provide opportunities for cyclists to progress and become more confident. Stimulating a more diverse range of regular cyclists and simply getting more people on a bike starts to normalise cycling, helping to make it more accepted, popular, and ultimately safer.

Key action areas:

Helping occasional cyclists to become regular cyclists... through promotion and advice on fitness, routes, safe cycling, cycle hire and equipment for disabled, new or occasional cyclists aimed at increasing skills and confidence. Promote fun and health benefits through cycling ambassadors, bikeability training and work with schools.

Promoting the Peak District as one of the best places to cycle... using our combined marketing efforts to build the Peak District cycling brand and market; using the natural environment to attract and enthuse people.

Packaging of routes... by promotion and development of a range of consistent, coherent and signed routes for all abilities and types of cyclists, including a

multi-day circular route around the whole area. We will develop branding for the Peak District cycling experience and iconic multi-day routes, including downloadable route information.

Growing the Peak District cycling market through events... by establishing a nationally known programme of events to encourage more overnight stays and encourage cycling for everyone; including investigating closed road circuits.

Building loyalty and respect from Peak District cyclists... by providing opportunities to build lasting relationships with the place, encouraging good cycling behaviour and mechanisms to enable people to put something back into the place.

THEME 4

Develop sustainable transport linkages



Through providing easy, reliable and fun alternatives to the private car, based on better sustainable transport linkages, facilities and information to enable more people to be less car dependent for more of the time. This will increase the numbers of people cycling for everyday journeys through improved infrastructure and facilities.

Key action areas:

Encouraging better transport connectivity... especially at gateways towns and cities, exploring how the cycle network can better connect with other sustainable transport options. We will use more local (commercial and third sector) sustainable transport solutions to join up parts of the network.

Encouraging more bike/bus and bike/train facilities... by seeking to persuade operators to trial more bike friendly carriage.

Providing integrated sustainable transport information... through a single joined-up web based sustainable transport information service for the Peak

District, as the first port of call for easy to use transport information, along with other media such as apps. We will work with tourist boards to embed visitor travel information in wider tourism marketing.

Incentivising people to use sustainable transport... through investigating how packages can be put together to encourage travellers to use sustainable travel through a participating business scheme (such as a Peak District Green Explorer). Develop itineraries as alternatives to the car making it easy and fun for people to get to and around the wider Peak District by bike for all or part of their journey.

Principles underpinning the Strategy

Partnership Working - developing, funding and delivering future schemes to enhance the cycling offer; ensuring that existing and future infrastructure is maintained for the benefit of current and future generations;

Interrelationship of themes - although the strategy is based around four key themes, all are interrelated, with an action associated with one either adding value to another or requiring a reciprocal action.

Joined up marketing and branding - a consistent and integrated approach to interpretation, marketing, branding and promotion of new routes and infrastructure; taking a consistent approach with partners to the surfacing and signing of routes within any environmental constraints.

Community consultation and engagement - undertaking thorough community consultation and appropriate impact assessments as specific schemes are developed.

Sustainable solutions - delivering solutions promoting cycling and other sustainable means of transport; where visitors arrive by car we will direct them to the most appropriate parking facilities providing access to new routes; adopting an approach that disperses demand away from honeypot locations and shares the benefits of cycling across the wider Peak District.

Sharing benefits - delivering actions leading to community, health, economic and environmental benefits; looking for the conservation and enhancement of natural heritage wherever new routes or infrastructure are created. We will begin to quantify these benefits during the first year of the strategy.

Safety - ensuring that where new schemes are brought forward, the safety of users is a key consideration during scheme development.

Monitoring and evaluation - undertaking ongoing monitoring to enable assessment and evaluation of the strategy's impact; and informing future delivery.

Delivering and funding the strategy

This strategy sets out an ambition for cycling in the wider Peak District along with the processes for working with partners to develop specific schemes, gather evidence and build business cases for financing the actions.

Actions set out in the short term action plan (2014-16) have funding. However, actions included in the medium to long term plans do not have funding and partners will be working to secure funding from various sources such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Sustainable Transport Fund, public health, lottery and other sources.

There is strong evidence to indicate that funds invested in cycling bring a range of benefits including economic, transport and health and well-being, and that in most cases, these benefits outweigh costs by some considerable margin. We will use the strategy to build the case for delivery of the medium and long term actions and as a means to identify and secure funding beyond 2016.

