Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 13**

Full Authority Meeting

24 June 2025

Yorkshire Dales Active Travel Plan

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Member support for an Active Travel Plan for the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Recommendation(s)

2. It is recommended that the Authority:
    a. endorses the draft Active Travel Plan (available on this link/hard copies available at the meeting) https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2025/06/Active-Travel-Plan-Draft-Final-1.pdf as the basis for developing a strategic active travel network into and within the National Park,
    b. delegates officers to finalise and then publish the Plan.

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and support the strategic planning framework:

    - Corporate Plan Objective 15.1:

    Develop an Active Travel Plan, including, economic business case and site-specific feasibility studies, for the National Park

Background

4. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Active Travel Plan has been developed with funding from Active Travel England's Capacity Fund 23/24. Active Travel England provided £1m of funding, support and training to England's 10 National Park Authorities to develop their own Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) or equivalent (Active Travel Plan).

5. The active travel plan has been developed based on the principles of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan (LCWIP) for Local Authorities, but adapted for a rural environment. The plan outlines a high-level aspirational network for active travel, which if realised would increase the number of people walking, wheeling, horse riding and cycling for work, utility and leisure in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The plan

serves as a guide for the future development and delivery of new routes and other interventions. It also helps us secure external funding, and assists in our collaboration with Local Authority partners.

6. The Authority has been the lead organisation in developing the Active Travel Plan for the Yorkshire Dales National Park. We have been supported in this process by Active Travel England and a newly established Steering Group including representatives from North Yorkshire Council, Westmorland and Furness Council, Lancashire County Council, York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Sustrans, the Local Access Forum, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Wheels for All and Experience Community.

7. The network plan has been created using data and evidence analysing existing and potential demand for active travel in the National Park. Officers have worked in consultation with stakeholders, user groups, residents and visitors to prioritise active travel routes and interventions which seek to:

    - Improve the opportunity for active travel between communities in the National Park.
    - Improve the opportunity for active travel to key visitor destinations in the National Park.
    - Connect gateway towns on the periphery into the National Park.
    - Improve opportunity from public transport provision in the National Park.
    - Improve routes to and around service centres and visitor hubs.
    - Make the best use of the existing public rights of way network and the potential for quiet lanes.
    - Increase accessibility for disabled users.
    - Complements the LCWIP's created by our Local Authority Partners.

8. The active travel plan also has the potential to offer additional benefits, beyond improved connectivity, which:

    - Respond to demand for recreation for all by providing a safe and accessible network for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding.
    - Improve health and wellbeing in National Park communities by providing opportunity for physical activity and reducing air pollution.
    - Reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging a modal shift away from private vehicles.
    - Boost the local economy by attracting visitors and improving access to work.
    - Increase accessibility for disabled people.
    - Enhance accessibility for people without cars.

9. The Active Travel Plan is an aspirational document, and there are significant challenges which will need to be overcome before it can be realised:

    - **Funding**: There is currently no specific Government funding allocated to National Park Authorities for the implementation of Active Travel plans. However, the adoption of the plan will provide the Authority with the information needed to bid for development and/or implementation funding from public, private and charitable sources; and act as a guide to the allocation of any future capital grant we might receive. Additionally, the plan will provide the Authority with information which puts us in a better position to request funding from developers towards new joined up active travel infrastructure.
    - **Land Ownership**: Permissions will be needed for new active travel routes.
    - **Topography**: The gradients in the National Park can present challenges for accessibility and meeting the requirements of the Department of Transport's LTN 1/20 (cycling infrastructure design guide)
    - **Behaviour change**: a network for establishing active travel is only the start of a process. Motivating people to travel actively requires sustained societal behaviour change.

An Active Travel Plan for the Yorkshire Dales National Park

10. The main text is detailed on the Active Travel Plan

    Sections 1 and 2 detail the:

    a. Geographical scope of the plan.

    b. Data and evidence used to inform the draft network.

    Section 3 details the:

    c. Network planning process.

    d. The active travel network which includes 14 Multiuser routes (Strategic and secondary) and 7 local schemes.

11. Members will see that the draft plan has some final details that need to be added, including a summary of the analysis of the second public consultation. The draft plan has been submitted to Active Travel England and our constituent local authorities for comment. Any comments will inform the final document.

12. Subject to Members' approval, these tasks will be completed and the Plan published online by December 2025. The Plan will be published alongside the proposed network map, commissioned economic business case for active travel and feasibility study identifying improvements for active travel to schools in the National Park.

Financial Implications

13. There are no additional financial implications associated with developing and adopting the active travel plan.

Legal Implications

14. There are no legal implications associated with developing and adopting the active travel plan.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

15. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the active travel plan

Climate Change Implications

16. The active travel plan has the potential to have positive climate change implications by providing improved infrastructure that should, with the correct promotion, encourage a modal shift from car travel to walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding. This reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport. It also contributes to broader environmental benefits like improved air quality and reduced pollution.

Consultation

17. Stakeholders and the public have been consulted throughout the development of the plan. This includes the following meetings, events and online consultations:

- Hosting an active travel conference to inform and engage key stakeholders with the proposal to develop an active travel plan.
- Establishing an Active Travel Steering Group to provide support and advice on the development of the plan.
- Network planning workshops with a variety of users-groups and stakeholders including The Local Access Forum, local landowners, land agents and estates, the YDNPA Ranger service, young people and Steering Group members.
- First round consultation with residents and visitors seeking their ideas on active travel into and around the Yorkshire Dales National Park.
- Second round consultation with residents and visitors invited to comment on the draft Active Travel Network.

Conclusion

18. The National Park provides many opportunities for recreation, including a comprehensive and well-maintained rights of way network, with excellent opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding for leisure. There are however constraints to the existing provision being used for active travel, meaning the potential

economic, health and environmental benefits of such provision are not being realised, for example:

- Many of the routes connecting users with key destinations are fragmented or discontinuous.
- There are gaps in connecting settlements with service centres or public transport hubs, limiting opportunity for local utility journeys.
- Except for the ‘Miles without Stiles’ routes, much of the existing network isn’t ‘accessible for all’.
- Alternative routes are unattractive, often involving the use of busy roads.

19. These constraints result in greater car use with associated increases in traffic and parking pressures, as well as a failure to maximise social wellbeing and economic benefit for residents.

20. Subject to approval, the Plan will be used to:

    a. Inform future development and delivery of new routes and interventions.
    b. Work collaboratively with other organisations to direct resources towards helping to achieve the objectives of the Plan.
    c. Guide the allocation of Authority expenditure – including any future capital funding from Government.
    d. Form the basis for direct bids for additional external funding from public, private and charitable sources.

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