

RECREATION STRATEGY
for the
**PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL
PARK**



PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK RECREATION STRATEGY

Preface

- This Strategy has been drafted within the context of the Peak District National Park Management Plan (2000-2005) and the National Park Authority's Best Value Performance Plan (2001-2002).
- Focusing on recreation issues, it develops the broad themes, objectives and outline actions in the National Park Management Plan. Like the National Park Management Plan, the Strategy is for the National Park as a whole not just the Authority and will in due course supersede the recreation elements of the previous National Park Plan (adopted in 1989 and reviewed in 1995). The Strategy identifies key cross-cutting themes, setting out a vision and objectives.
- The Framework for Action proposes ways and means of achieving these objectives through partnership working and a possible timescale depending on resources. Whilst it is suggested that the Strategy should be reviewed after five years, there is provision within the Strategy for work on more detailed Action Plans within this period. Prior to developing these, we need to be sure that we have a sound basis from which to work. Key actions in the Strategy therefore include further collection and evaluation of data, and liaison with providers and users to consider future aspirations and identify shortfalls in provision.

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK RECREATION STRATEGY

1. Background

1.1 The Peak District is Britain's busiest National Park

It is estimated that in excess of 22 million recreational visits are made to the Peak District National Park each year. Whilst the Park has only 38000 residents, over 20 million people live within an hour's drive of its boundaries.

The Peak District has a deep rooted tradition of recreational usage and was the scene of the 1932 'Mass Trespass' on Kinder Scout when walkers battled to gain public access to private moorlands. This event, and the subsequent lobbying, were major factors in the process that led to the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). The 1995 Environment Act reinforced the role of National Park Authorities and redefined the purposes of National Parks as -

- **to conserve and enhance the National Parks' special qualities**
- **to promote opportunities for their enjoyment and understanding**

The Act also places a duty on National Park Authorities in pursuing the twin purposes to:

- **seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters**

This a major factor in caring for the future of National Parks through partnership working.

The Act recognises that it will not be appropriate for all forms of recreation to take place in every part of each National Park. Where conflict exists between the first and second purposes then the aim should be to resolve this by good management. If this fails, then greater weight should be attached to the primary conservation purpose (the Sandford Principle) and in some cases the activity may be deemed to be inappropriate for a National Park location.

1.2 What people do....

The majority of the Peak National Park's visitors come for the day by car from surrounding urban areas. A typical day visit is likely to include 'informal' activities such as short walks, picnicking, sightseeing, visiting towns and villages, going to events, etc. Other visitors opt for more active pursuits eg long walks, cycle rides, horseriding, water based activities or traditional country pursuits. Others are drawn by the unique opportunities the Park offers for activities like climbing, caving, hang-gliding or parascending. Some are drawn by the tranquility of the remote areas of the Park or to observe its wildlife.

Each recreation activity and every visit to the Park has an impact on those qualities which we are seeking to safeguard.

Some benefits.....

- **people enjoy their visit** – their health and well-being benefits
- **direct economic benefits** – businesses and jobs are created in response to recreation and tourism
- **indirect economic benefits** – visitors help to support shops, banks, local services etc.
- **cultural diversity is encouraged** - helping to sustain local communities

and some issues.....

- **traffic congestion and pollution** – most people come by car
- **wear and tear** – too much use is detrimental to the infrastructure and landscape of the Park
- **conflict with conservation** – damage to habitats and disturbance of wildlife
- **low income generation** – the lowest visitor spend per head of any National Park in England and Wales.

2. About the Peak District Recreation Strategy

2.1 Why do we need a Recreation Strategy and what is its purpose?

- To affirm the role of sustainable recreation as a major contributor to National Park purposes and duties
- To develop recreational themes, objectives and actions arising from the National Park Management Plan
- To strengthen partnerships by establishing common aims and objectives
- To address issues such as social inclusion and Best Value arising from the Government's agenda for modernising local government
- To help to draw in funding from external agencies
- To demonstrate effective use of resources and a basis for measuring performance

2.2 How does it link to other Strategies?

- It has been drafted in the context of the Government's and its agencies' national and regional policies and addresses crosscutting themes such as sustainability, Best Value and social inclusion

- It builds on the National Park Management Plan and will complement other strategies as advocated by the government and now being developed
- It will provide a strategic framework for related strategies and action plans on specific issues eg Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Access Action Plan and Village Plans.

2.3 Who has produced the Strategy?

- A Steering Group representing local and regional organisations with day to day involvement in recreation issues in the National Park (see appendix C) led by the Area Management Service at the Peak District National Park Authority.

2.4 Who is the Strategy for?

- Everyone seeking to enjoy, contribute to or benefit from recreation in the National Park

3. The Strategy

3.1 Key Themes

The following **key themes** underpin the Strategy:

SUSTAINABILITY - making use of recreation resources today in a way that safeguards this special environment for future generations to enjoy

OPPORTUNITY - offering opportunity for everyone to enjoy the National Park

ACCESSIBILITY - encouraging sustainable access by removing barriers

ENJOYMENT - catering for different needs and aspirations through a range of recreational experiences

UNDERSTANDING - promoting awareness of the issues arising from recreational use

PARTNERSHIP - working through partnership to achieve consensus and maximise benefit from the available resources

3.2 Our Vision

The vision of this Recreation Strategy for the Peak District National Park is to provide all local people and visitors with access to high quality leisure and recreation opportunities. These will range from informal countryside recreation to more formal sports opportunities using community facilities. It will enable people to enjoy, understand and care for the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. It will promote recreation as a healthy lifestyle choice to people from every part of society, encourage and promote the use of sustainable transport for recreation purposes and bring positive benefits to the local economy.

3.3 Objectives

1. To work in partnership with others to pursue an integrated approach towards recreation which is sustainable and socially inclusive.
2. To extend, improve and manage access to open country, public rights of way and other paths and trails in a sustainable manner.
3. To encourage the development of community recreation activities and facilities for the benefit of local people and visitors.
4. To ensure that recreation activities which are dependent on the special qualities of the National Park are accommodated without conflict.
5. To discourage recreation activities which are incompatible with National Park purposes and seek alternative sustainable locations.
6. To maintain, improve and extend the recreation facilities provided or jointly managed by the National Park Authority in a sustainable manner and encourage other public and private sector providers to set good standards .
7. To promote awareness of recreation opportunities within and surrounding the National Park and respect for its special qualities.

4. Acting on the Strategy

4.1 Framework for Action

The attached framework (Appendix A) indicates how the Strategy can be translated into action to achieve each of the 7 key objectives. Progress will be dependent upon successful partnerships and developing a consensus approach. Whilst many actions are ongoing within existing resources, others may necessitate re-prioritisation or depend upon new sources of funding. For each action there is a commitment from the lead agency, with the support of the major partners identified to progress the action within the timescale suggested.

4.2 Monitoring and Review

The intention is to review the Strategy after five years and monitor progress throughout this period. Arising from the Strategy, more detailed Action Plans setting targets for specific activities and projects will be developed. Monitoring of progress will be linked to the National Park Authority's Best Value Performance Plan and major partners will be encouraged to adopt a similar approach to monitoring within their own organisations. There is scope for the Recreation Strategy Steering Group to co-ordinate this process as well as fulfilling a continuing role in promoting the Strategy.

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK RECREATION STRATEGY

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

OBJECTIVE ONE

To work in partnership with others to pursue an integrated approach towards recreation which is sustainable and socially inclusive

REF. No	ACTIONS	WAYS and MEANS	POTENTIAL LEAD AGENCY/PARTNERS (see footnote)	POSSIBLE TIMESCALE
1.1	jointly develop and review plans and policies with partner organisations and user groups to manage recreation in a co-ordinated manner	liaison with Recreation Strategy Steering group	PDNPA , DPPSRF STW, NT, UU, YW, FC, Constituent Authorities	ongoing
		implement integrated management plans for areas of high recreational demand or sensitivity	PDNPA , STW, NT, UU, YW, FC, EN, Constituent Authorities, User Groups	ongoing
1.2	develop and encourage more sustainable transport for recreation purposes	introduce the Derwent Lane road pricing scheme	DCC , PDNPA, STW, NT	2003/4
		continue to work through LTPs, SPITS, Peak Park Transport Forum, RTPs and CA initiatives to influence recreation and transport issues	PPTF , HA, RTP, PDNPA, CA, Constituent Authorities	ongoing
1.3	promote sustainable tourism	Sustainable Tourism Action Plan is being developed	Peak District Sustainable Tourism Forum	2003/4 onwards
1.4	identify ways recreation can help deliver the Social Inclusion Action Plan	devise and undertake a social profile survey	PDNPA , DPPSRF	2003/4
1.5	secure funding for recreation, focusing on drawing additional support from external sources	work in partnership to derive maximum benefit from European and Regional funding programmes	All	ongoing
1.6	ensure a range of sustainable recreation opportunities are available which promote enjoyment of the National Park.	maintain, extend and improve existing facilities and seek new opportunities	All	ongoing

Footnote - see Glossary (Appendix B) for explanation of abbreviations
 - lead agencies in bold type

OBJECTIVE TWO

To extend, improve and manage access to open country, public rights of way and other paths and trails in a sustainable manner.

REF. No	ACTIONS	WAYS and MEANS	POTENTIAL LEAD AGENCY/PARTNERS	POSSIBLE TIMESCALE
2.1	Support Government initiatives to extend access to open country as set out in the CRoW Act (2000)	Access Action Plan to be drawn up	PDNPA , LCAF, UU, STW, CA, YW, NT, other landowners	ongoing
2.2	seek practical and sustainable solutions to facilitate access for all	Implement Social Inclusion Action Plan ensure all 'relevant bodies' and partners include access for all in their plans for recreation	PDNPA All 'relevant bodies'	ongoing 2004/5 onwards
2.3	ensure the public rights of way network and other recreational routes are well managed and maintained	annual rights of way monitoring and condition reports	PDNPA , HAs	ongoing
2.4	sustain and encourage extension of access to open country where already secured by agreement or on a permissive basis	continue with Access Agreements currently in force until superseded by CRoW Act	PDNPA , LCAF, UU, STW, YW, NT, other landowners	ongoing until terminated
2.5	promote participation in the discussions on access, public rights of way and strategic recreational issues	LCAF established to take forward access and Rights of Way issues Stange Forum helping to develop new management plan for North Lees Estate	LCAF , PDNPA, user groups, landowners Forum Steering Committee, Focus Groups	ongoing ongoing
2.6	contribute to the preparation of Rights of Way Improvement Plans	liaison with all constituent HA's to influence RoW Improvement Plans	HAs , PDNPA, LCAF, CA, user groups	2003 onwards
2.7	ensure all National Park Authority owned land is open to public access where consistent with cultural heritage nature conservation and land management aims	review Estate Management Plans in response to CRoW Act	PDNPA	2005/6

OBJECTIVE THREE

To encourage the development of community recreation activities and facilities for the benefit of local people and visitors

REF. No	ACTIONS	WAYS and MEANS	POTENTIAL LEAD AGENCY/PARTNERS	POSSIBLE TIMESCALE
3.1	work with other providers to improve sports and recreation facilities and activities within the towns and villages of the National Park and the immediate surrounding areas	<p>advise and lend support to community sport and recreation development plans.</p> <p>work with other agencies to ensure that sport and recreation facilities benefit from initiatives to sustain local communities.</p> <p>Continue the Discovering Villages initiative</p>	<p>Constituent Authorities, SE, DPPSRF, PDNPA</p> <p>PDNPA, Constituent Authorities, User Groups</p> <p>PDNPA</p>	<p>ongoing</p> <p>2003/4 onwards</p> <p>ongoing</p>
3.2	optimise the use of local community facilities by making them available to visitors where appropriate	work with Parish Councils, local organisations and clubs to benefit local community facilities	Constituent Authorities, Parish Councils, PDNPA, user groups, SE, CA, Rural Community Councils, County Association of Local Councils	ongoing

OBJECTIVE FOUR

To ensure that recreation activities which are dependent on the special qualities of the National Park are accommodated without conflict

REF. No	ACTIONS	WAYS and MEANS	POTENTIAL LEAD AGENCY/PARTNERS	POSSIBLE TIMESCALE
4.1	use the recreation zoning policy in the National Park Structure and Local Plans to broadly guide recreation activities and development (needing planning permission) in the National Park	Planning and development control mechanisms in place	PDNPA	ongoing
4.2	provide opportunities for regular liaison with representatives of key recreational activities	review arrangements for liaison meetings with user groups	PDNPA, DPPSRF, LCAF, user groups	2003/4 onwards
4.3	work with organisers to accommodate recreation events which promote the enjoyment of the National Park without detriment to its special qualities	Upper Derwent Events consultation group set up	PDNPA, NT, STW, FC	ongoing
		investigate extension of events consultation process throughout the National Park	LCAF, PDNPA	2004/5
4.4	foster an understanding and awareness of environmental issues amongst participants in organised sports and events	work with user groups and sports governing bodies to develop user guidelines which support National Park purposes	PDNPA, DPPSRF, STW, YW, FC, PDBARG, Constituent Authorities, user groups, UU, NT, sports governing bodies,	ongoing
		events consultation process and education and interpretation	PDNPA, DPPSRF, user groups, sports governing bodies	2004/5 onwards
4.5	investigate existing recreational use, potential needs, constraints on participation or gaps in provision	collate existing data and commission further survey work.	DPPSRF, PDNPA, user groups, SE, sports governing bodies	2003/4
		develop, maintain and monitor a database of recreation activities to highlight patterns in demands and trends (see also 6.2 + 6.3)	PDNPA, DPPSRF, user groups, SE, sports governing bodies	2004/5 onwards
4.6	develop detailed Action Plans for key recreational activities	identify key activities in partnership with DPPSRF.	PDNPA, DPPSRF	2003/4
		PDNPA Cycling Strategy to be developed with partners.	PDNPA, HAs, Constituent Authorities, user groups	2003/4
		develop Action Plans for other key activities identified	PDNPA, DPPSRF, user groups	2004/5 onwards

OBJECTIVE FIVE

To discourage recreation activities which are incompatible with National Park purposes and seek alternative sustainable locations.

REF. No	ACTIONS	WAYS and MEANS	LEAD AGENCY/PARTNERS	POSSIBLE TIMESCALE
5.1	use the legislative, planning control process, and other means to deter unsustainable or unsuitable recreation activities or associated development	Planning Control process in place	PDNPA	ongoing
		seek sustainable locations outside the National Park for recreational activities which are incompatible with National Park purposes and its special qualities	PDNPA , DPPSRF, user groups, Constituent Authorities	ongoing
5.2	minimise any adverse impact or conflict arising from recreational activity	develop codes of practice and user guidelines	PDNPA , DPPSRF, user groups, LCAF, Constituent Authorities	2004/5
		develop working relationship with Constituent Authorities for areas outside the National Park	SE , Constituent Authorities	ongoing

OBJECTIVE SIX

To maintain, improve and extend the recreation facilities provided or jointly managed by the National Park Authority in a sustainable manner and encourage other public and private sector providers to set good standards

REF. No	ACTIONS	WAYS and MEANS	POTENTIAL LEAD AGENCY/PARTNERS	POSSIBLE TIMESCALE
6.1	continue to maintain and enhance existing facilities, including car parks, picnic sites, toilets, information centres, cycle hire and trails recognising the need for Social Inclusion and Access for All	PDNPA Estate Management Plans and Area Managements Plans Identify non users of facilities provided (see also 1.4)	PDNPA , Constituent Authorities PDNPA	ongoing 2004/5 onwards
6.2	identify and address any shortfall or improvements required in provision of recreational facilities as resources permit	PDNPA Estate Management Plans and Area Management Plans	PDNPA , partners	ongoing
6.3	carry out user surveys to assess whether the standard of recreation facilities provided is satisfactory	devise research methodology and identify sites/areas to be surveyed	PDNPA	2004/5

OBJECTIVE SEVEN

To promote awareness of recreation opportunities within and surrounding the National Park and respect for its special qualities

REF. No	ACTIONS	WAYS and MEANS	POTENTIAL LEAD AGENCY/PARTNERS	POSSIBLE TIMESCALE
7.1	provide information on recreational opportunities in the National Park and surrounding area through all forms of media	produce factsheets, leaflets and user guides ensure websites of partners are maintained and updated with appropriate information	PDNPA , all partners DPPSRF , all partners	ongoing
7.2	improve accessibility to information about the special qualities of the National Park	maintain and update PDNPA website develop a database-led destination management system	PDNPA , Sustainable Tourism Forum, PDBARG PDNPA	ongoing 2003/4
7.3	encourage and organise targeted events and outreach programmes to promote opportunities for wider participation	hold public events and exhibitions implement Social Inclusion Action Plan	PDNPA , all partners PDNPA , all partners	ongoing
7.4	deliver key messages about recreation and how to minimise its environmental impact on the National Park through a range of interpretation and education	implement Peak District Interpretation Strategy with LIP's	PDNPA, Peak District Interpretation Project , PDBARG	ongoing

Glossary of Abbreviations:

CA	Countryside Agency
CRoW Act (2000)	Countryside and Rights of Way Act
DCC	Derbyshire County Council
DPPSRF	Derbyshire and Peak Park Sport and Recreation Forum
EN	English Nature
FC	Forestry Commission
HA	Highways Authority
LCAF	Local Countryside Access Forum
LIP	Local Interpretive Plan
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NT	National Trust
PDBARG	Peak District Biodiversity Awareness Raising Group
PDNPA	Peak District National Park Authority
PPTF	Peak Park Transport Forum
RDP	Rural Development Partnership
RoW IP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
RTP	Rural Transport Partnership
SE	Sport England
SPITS	South Pennines Integrated Transport Strategy
STW	Severn Trent Water
UU	United Utilities
YW	Yorkshire Water

The Peak District National Park is covered by the following constituent authorities:

Derbyshire County Council, Staffordshire County Council, Cheshire County Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, High Peak Borough Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, Macclesfield Borough Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Sheffield Metropolitan District Council, Kirklees Metropolitan District Council, Oldham Metropolitan District Council, Barnsley Metropolitan District Council.

The Sustainable Tourism Forum is a public/private partnership involved with developing a Peak District Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

Organisations represented on the Peak District National Park Recreation Strategy Steering Group:

Countryside Agency
Derbyshire Dales District Council
Derbyshire and Peak Park Sport and Recreation Forum
Forestry Commission
National Trust
Peak District National Park Authority
Peak District Wildlife Executive Group
Severn Trent Water (chair)
Sport England