



Lake District
National Park

April 2025

Lake District National Park Active Travel Network Plan Summary



1. Introduction

The Network Plan is a strategic transport planning document developed by the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) to plan and guide the development of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure across the Lake District National Park (LDNP). The Plan outlines new walking, cycling and wheeling routes and priority areas for improvement to achieve the objectives of promoting active travel and creating safe, accessible and sustainable infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users and horse riders. The Network Plan also serves as a tool for securing funding and to encourage collaboration between stakeholders.



Image 1 – Group of walkers, Wansfell Pike

The Network Plan considers the entire LDNP and key settlements outside the LDNP to encourage and improve access into the LDNP.

1.1. Aims, objectives and outcomes

The primary aim of the Network Plan is to increase the number of people walking, cycling, wheeling and riding in the LDNP.

The objectives of the Network Plan are:

- To identify, in consultation with communities, visitors, user groups and stakeholders, new active travel routes and connections where interventions could improve active travel for all.
- To ensure that new routes meet our objectives of enacting behaviour change to reduce carbon emissions and traffic in the Lake District National Park, enabling residents and visitors without a car to travel actively, improving access to nature and increasing health equality.
- To develop a high-level plan showing strategic routes and priorities for action.
- To develop a pipeline of projects that can be delivered by us and partners over the coming 10 years.

In doing so we agreed to:

- Ensure that our proposals improve equity in transport, improving accessibility for disabled users, and ensuring that a wider range of people feel safe using them.

- Work closely with our local highway authority partners, Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council, and National Highways to develop active travel improvements on or crossing their networks.

The outcomes of this Network Plan are to:

- Reduce dependency on private vehicles by encouraging active travel.
- Create safe and accessible infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Create a connected and comprehensive active travel network.
- Make wheeling, walking and cycling safe, attractive and convenient modes of transport for everyone, regardless of age, gender and ability.
- Promote sustainability, health and quality of life in communities.
- Reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.



Image 2 – People on the West Windermere Way



Image 3 – People walking on the West Windermere Way

1.2. Challenges and Opportunities

This Network Plan provides a structured approach to planning and prioritising new active travel routes and active travel improvements that will deliver a range of benefits including:

- Improved public health by promoting physical activity, reducing air pollution and creating healthier communities.
- Behaviour changes leading to carbon reduction as people switch to less polluting alternatives.
- Reduced congestion by reducing the use of private vehicles.
- A boost to local economies by creating jobs, attracting tourists, and improving access to businesses.
- Enhanced accessibility. Well-designed walking and cycling infrastructure will improve accessibility for people of all ages and abilities, including people with disabilities.
- Improved quality of life by creating attractive and safe environments for active travel.

Delivering the ambitions of this Network Plan will need to consider the following challenges:

- Securing consistent and sufficient funding for the implementation of this Network Plan.
- Acquiring land or permissions for new active travel routes.
- The topography of the LDNP.
- New active travel routes require public support.
- New active travel infrastructure alone is not enough. Encouraging people to travel actively requires behaviour change.

1.3. National Parks Capability Fund

In March 2024 Active Travel England (ATE) and the 10 English National Parks agreed to work together to develop active travel within these iconic landscapes. In recognition of the importance of active travel in a rural context and the opportunity to facilitate active travel with the millions of people who visit national parks in England each year in addition to national park residents. Capability funding was allocated to each national park to action development work.

This work was to meet ATE's stated objectives:

- To support capability building activities which enable NPAs and partner LHAs to develop inclusive active travel programmes.
- To increase the capability of NPAs to commission and/or deliver active travel programmes and apply for future funding.
- To leverage active travel to support the wider strategic objectives of NPA.

2. Supporting Data

The development of the Network Plan was informed by data including demographics, health, car ownership, how people travel to work, propensity to cycle, the Cumbria Visitor Survey and Strava Metro

- Given the increasingly ageing population of the LDNP, active travel is increasingly important to promote health, mobility, and social engagement.
- The LDNP has a low population density compared to surrounding areas, with key settlements such as Ambleside, Keswick, and Windermere serving as hubs for residents and visitors. There is a clear need to prioritize active travel routes connecting to urban areas.
- Health outcomes in the LDNP are relatively positive, with 96.7% of residents rating their health as fair, good, or very good. However, Cumbria as a whole faces more health disparities. Investing in active travel infrastructure can help address these challenges by promoting physical activity and reducing chronic disease risks.
- Car ownership is generally high across Cumbria, with most households having access to cars or vans, behaviour change along with improved active travel infrastructure is necessary to reduce the reliance on private vehicles.
- In the larger settlements of Keswick, Ambleside and Windermere 20-25% of commuters travel to work on foot, which is significantly higher than the national average.
- Each year over 18 million tourists visit the LDNP, with 92% of tourists arriving by car.

3. Developing the Network Plan

3.1. Partnership Work

The development of this Network Plan involved considerable partnership working. Stakeholder workshops were held with the Cumbria and Lakes Local Access Forum, Westmorland and Furness Council, Cumberland Council, Sustrans, National Trust, Forestry England and United Utilities to understand their priorities and support for routes identified in the Network Plan.

3.2. Public Engagement

Public and stakeholder engagement underpins the Network Plan. During the project, three stages of engagement were undertaken:

- Public engagement through an online interactive map
- Targeted engagement with the cycling community and local access forums.
- Multiple stakeholder workshops with key landowners across the LDNP.

3.3. Prioritisation Framework

The Network Plan process involved the prioritisation of routes and route improvements to create a programme of cycling, walking and wheeling schemes.

The framework included the following criteria:

- **Alignment with policy objectives** - how well new routes deliver actions in existing strategies.
- **Effectiveness** - based on the potential number of walking or cycling trips that might utilise the route.
- **Deliverability** - the deliverability of new routes including engineering constraints, land ownership and level of support.
- **Connectivity** - how well the route links to key hubs.
- **Carbon reduction potential** – how much carbon the new route or route improvement is likely to save.
- **Funding** - future funding opportunities to develop and maintain routes.
- **Accessibility** - how inclusive and accessible the new route would be to users.
- **Health and wellbeing benefits** – potential of the route to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.



Image 4 - Cycling on the Keswick to Threlkeld Trail



Image 5 – A wheelchair user on the Grasmere Jubilee Miles Without Stiles route

4. Network Plan

Information gathered through the background data analysis, public engagement and stakeholder consultation has been used to develop the Network Plan for the LDNP.

The Network Plan categorises routes into strategic corridors, secondary links, routes into the LDNP and local routes. Areas for improvement have also been identified where appropriate within the existing walking and cycling network.

Prioritised routes and improvements are detailed in Appendix 1.

5. Next steps

Delivering the ambitions of this Network Plan will take time and funding. Currently this Plan has no funding attached to it. But we are experienced in bringing in external funding to deliver active travel projects.

Potential funding could be sought from:

- a) Department for Transport, including via ATE if further capability funding were available or National Highways.
- b) UK Government regeneration and economic development funds as available, such as the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- c) Improvement and safety funds available through our LHAs, these would be particularly suitable for on road schemes that would be led by the LHA.

- d) Visitor giving and sponsorship through Lake District Foundation.
- e) Corporate sponsorship arranged through National Parks Partnerships.
- f) Heritage Lottery Fund.
- g) Developer contributions secured through planning applications.
- h) DEFRA grants such as those channelled through the National Parks such as Farming in Protected Landscapes and Access for All, if continued.
- i) Other business, legacy and charitable organisations with an emphasis on access, health, inclusion and accessibility.

Working in partnership with funded landscape recovery programmes where active travel development fits with their footprints and objectives.

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive, and inclusion in this list carries with it no expectation of funding. Further work and partnership discussions will take place, and potential opportunities followed up.

Appendix 1

Active Travel Network Plan – Action Plan

This action plan will be reviewed with partners annually with a rolling 2-year programme of actions.

Within 5 years, funded or part funded			
Project	Action	Theme	Lead partner
Keswick to Threlkeld Extension	Complete design, planning permission (K2TX only) and tendering, submit full business case to Borderlands Project Management Office to draw down allocated funds, deliver projects by March 2027.	Strategic Corridor	LDNPA
Grasmere to Dunmail Raise		Strategic Corridor	Westmorland and Furness Council
Thirlmere West Shore quiet road and crossing		Strategic Corridor	Cumberland Council
Gosforth to Calderbridge	Develop off cycle route avoiding A595	Strategic Corridor	Cumberland Council and Sustrans
Bootle – Wellbank – Bootle station	Design and deliver Active travel link, connecting to public transport	Secondary route	Bootle Parish Council
Cumbria Active Travel Journey Planner	Launch 2025. LDNPA to add content including curated accessible routes, cycle trails and cycle facilities	Behaviour change	Westmorland and Furness Council
Cycle route signage refresh	Promoted off road cycle routes to be re-signed	Behaviour change	LDNPA
Derwentwater accessible trail	Design and deliver 7km long accessible route	Secondary route	National Trust
Muncaster Estate	Through the Whole Estate Plan work with the owners to develop strategic access improvements	Local routes	Muncaster Estate

Access and accessibility improvements, small to medium	LDNPA to action at least 5 improvements per year to the rights of way network	Local routes	LDNPA
Walking trails (long)	Work with partners to deliver the Coast to Coast Walk National Trail, the Westmorland and Furness Way and the Penrith to Kendal trail (walking).	Secondary routes	Natural England, Westmorland and Furness Council, Council, Cumbria Connects.
Forest Trails	Work with Forestry England to improve and promote trails in and to their forests, including a new accessible route in Grizedale Forest.	Local routes	Forestry England
Ullswater Way	Consider options to improve safety and user experience at the Stybarrow Crag part of the route just north of Glenridding	Secondary route	Friends of Ullswater Way
Farming in Protected Landscapes	Work with farmers and landowners to improve connections with the farmed landscape and accessibility.	Local routes	LDNPA/farming community
Within 8 years, subject to funding and landowner permissions			
Kendal to Sizergh	Quiet lane and upgraded paths to form multi user route.	Link into the National Park	National Trust and Lancaster Canal Towpath Trust
Workington to Cockermouth	Quiet Lane route	Link into the National Park	Sustrans
Cockermouth to Bassenthwaite	Improvements to walking and cycling network as part of the Higham Estate Whole Estate Plan.	Local routes	Higham Estate
Keswick Crosthwaite Road	Implementation of walking route and junction improvement plan developed through ATE capability funding.	Local links	Cumberland Council

Wasdale traffic management	Implementation of traffic management plan developed through ATE capability funding.	Secondary routes	Cumberland Council
Yorkshire Dales connections	Working with the Yorkshire Dales National Park to create quiet lane routes connecting Kendal, Sedbergh, Shap, Haweswater, Orton, Tebay and Penrith where NCN links not present	Strategic corridor	LDNPA, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Westmorland and Furness Council
Round Thirlmere route, East	Install underpass on A591, create new sections of trail with reduced gradient, waymark forest trails	Strategic corridor	United Utilities
Ferry House to Hawkshead	Improve cycle infrastructure through quiet lanes and off-road sections of path	Secondary routes	LDNPA
West Windermere Way	Complete missing section between YMCA Lakeside and Ferry House and extend from Newby Bridge to Haverthwaite and New Bridge to Fell Foot.	Secondary routes	LDNPA
Cycle parking improvements	Audit and improvement plan for cycle parking in hubs.	Supporting infrastructure	LDNPA, Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council
Valley Travel Plans	Deliver key outputs and recommendations from the valley plans being developed for Langdale, Ullswater, Hawkshead, Wasdale.	Secondary routes	LDNPA and Westmorland and Furness Council
Grasmere to Red Bank and Langdale	Quiet lanes or access only traffic regulation order between Grasmere, Red Bank and Langdale.	Secondary links	Westmorland and Furness Council
8+ years, subject to funding and landowner permissions			
Esk to Barrow	Multi user trail linking along SW coast of Lake District, including bridges over Esk, Irt and Duddon	Strategic Corridor/link into the national park	Community Group

Pedestrian zones	In main town and village centres. Further scoping work needed	Pedestrian zones	Westmorland and Furness and Cumberland Councils
Bassenthwaite cycleway	Complete traffic free and quiet lanes route around Bassenthwaite	Strategic Corridor	National Highways
Haweswater	Eastern side bridleway and quiet lane, walking and accessibility improvements	Secondary route	LDNPA, United Utilities and RSPB
Penrith to Pooley Bridge	Traffic free/quiet lane route from Penrith station to Pooley Bridge in the Ullswater valley	Link into the National Park	Sustainable and Integrated Transport in Ullswater (SITU)
Cleator Moor to Ennerdale	Linking to NCN7 forming connection from Whitehaven and Egremont into the national park. Quiet road and new trail construction.	Link into the National Park	LDNPA, Cumberland Council and Local Community
8 Years + subject to funding and landowner permissions			
Cockermouth to Buttermere	Quiet lane	Link into the National Park	Cumberland Council
Penrith – Troutbeck to Threlkeld	Mix of quiet lanes and old railway line	Strategic Corridor/link into the National Park	LDNPA, National Highways and Westmorland and Furness Council
Ulverston to Greenodd	Old Railway and canal	Link into the National Park	Westmorland and Furness Council and Ulverston Town Council

Brockhole to Ambleside	Cycle route avoiding A591 – more feasibility needed	Strategic Corridor	LDNPA and Westmorland and Furness Council
Kendal to Plumgarths	Segregated cycle path	Strategic Corridor	Westmorland and Furness Council
Arnside to Grange viaduct	New cycle and walking route attached to viaduct	Link into the National Park	Morecambe Bay Partnership
Keswick Railway Extension towards Penrith	Exact route to be determined. Upgrading of footpaths and bridleways connecting Keswick to Threlkeld extension to Troutbeck.	Strategic Corridor	LDNPA and Westmorland and Furness Council