

Active Travel Network Plan

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report presents the Active Travel Network Plan for approval. The Network Plan (Annex 1) is a strategic transport planning tool to guide the development of pedestrian, cycling and wheeling infrastructure across the Lake District National Park. The Network Plan prioritises new active travel routes and improvements and will be used to secure funding opportunities for new routes.

Recommendation that:	a Approve the Active Travel Network Plan (Annex 1) subject to any amendments.
	b Delegate authority to the Director of Sustainable Development to oversee the migration of the Active Travel Network Plan to a webpage-friendly layout.

2. Background

- 2.1. In March 2024, Active Travel England awarded each English National Park Authority £100,000 to support capability building activities that enable National Parks to develop inclusive active travel programmes. This is the first time National Parks have been awarded funding from Active Travel England, recognising 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.
- 2.2. In the LDNP this funding was used to commission studies in Keswick and Wasdale - in addition to the Network Plan that was developed internally.
- 2.3. The Network 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.
- 2.4. The development of the Network Plan involved partnership working between Active Travel England, Westmorland and Furness Council, Cumberland Council, Sustrans and Cumbria’s Cycling Mayor. These partners sat on the Network Plan project board and advised on the process of developing the Plan and the contents of the Network Plan. Stakeholder workshops were also held with these partners and other stakeholders including the Cumbria and Lakes Local Access Forum and major landowners in the LDNP - National Trust, Forestry England and United Utilities. Additionally, we engaged with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Cumberland Council’s Lakes to Sea Community Panel to investigate and prioritise new active travel routes into the LDNP.
- 2.5. Public engagement underpins the Network Plan. Between July and September 2024, an online interactive map was launched which enabled members of the public to plot new active travel routes and route improvements on the map. Over 250 comments and suggestions were received suggesting new active travel routes and route improvements.

- 2.6. New routes and route improvements suggested by stakeholders and members of the public were plotted on the Network Plan map, categorised and prioritised based on a prioritisation criterion that was developed in collaboration with stakeholders. The Network Plan is structured based on the categorisation and prioritisation of routes into the following classifications: strategic corridors, secondary links, routes into the LDNP, local routes and route improvements.
- 2.7. The Network Plan will be a web-based document, like our Local Plan and Design Code, allowing users to access information most relevant to them. Routes and route improvements will be presented on an online interactive map similar to the Local Plan policies map.
- 2.8. Identified routes are indicative in most cases as detailed design and landowner engagement has not yet taken place. Routes in the network plan are subject to landowner confirmation and future funding opportunities.

Previous Committee	Main Points discussed	Changes made
4 th February 2025 Park Strategy and Vision Committee Away Hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced the Active Travel England project and Network Plan. • Outlined how the Network Plan has been developed and the forward plan to finalised and approve the Network Plan. 	None

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. Links to Local Plan: The Network Plan supports the implementation of Policy 08 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions and Policy 21 Sustainable Access and Travel. The Network Plan will help to ensure that new development is adequately supported by infrastructure including active travel infrastructure to improve connectivity and reduce reliance on private cars.
- 3.2. Links to Business Plan: The Network Plan delivers part of key action 10 of the business plan, to work in partnership with transport authorities to deliver a plan for walking and cycling improvements into and within the National Park.
- 3.3. Links to Partnership Plan: The Network Plan helps to deliver part of the Sustainable Travel and Transport key transformative action 5, to work with Active Travel England to develop priority networks within the Lake District. The Network Plan prioritises active travel routes and improvements outlined in the interactive map and action plan.

4. Options

- 4.1. a) Members agree the recommendation to approve the Active Travel Network Plan and delegate authority to the Director of Sustainable Development to oversee the migration of the Active Travel Network Plan to a webpage-friendly layout.
- b) Members propose an alternative approach.

5. Proposals

- 5.1. Option a) is recommended. The production of the Active Travel Network Plan has fulfilled the requirements of Active Travel England's funding requirements and has been informed by engagement from the public, Westmorland and Furness Council, Cumberland Council and other relevant active travel stakeholders including local access forums. We have received excellent feedback from Active Travel England on the Plan, describing it as '...well-structured and legible, while clearly stating the case for investment based firmly on the data and prioritised routes across the park'. By prioritising active travel routes, the Network Plan will be a key tool to enable us to access future funding opportunities to deliver the prioritised routes in the future. The Network Plan will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure it remains up to date.

6. Stakeholder Consultation

- 6.1. Formal public consultation in line with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement is not necessary for the Network Plan but the development of the Plan and prioritisation of active travel routes has been informed through public and stakeholder engagement.
- 6.2. The [online interactive map](#), which enabled members of the public to plot new active travel routes and route improvements on the map, was publicised through social media channels, targeted social media posts to existing active travel channels and an email to the existing consultee database. Over 250 comments and suggestions were received suggesting new active travel routes and route improvements.
- 6.3. Targeted workshops were held with the cycling community and local access forums to understand more about necessary route improvements and where new active travel routes are needed.
- 6.4. Multiple stakeholder workshops were held with key landowners (National Trust, Forestry England, United Utilities) and Westmorland and Furness Council, Cumberland Council and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to ensure that new active travel routes and improvements align to existing strategic and future infrastructure plans. A duplicate online interactive map was developed for stakeholders to input new routes and route improvements, these routes are included in the Network Plan.

7. Demonstrating Best Value

- a) Challenged – we are the first local authority to produce an active travel network plan. Currently, local authorities produce local cycling and walking improvement plans, but this was deemed to be inappropriate considering the rural nature and scale of the Lake District. This approach was supported by Active Travel England.
- b) Compared – we have compared existing local cycling and walking improvement plans from a variety of different local authorities, predominantly in rural areas. As part of the Active Travel England Capability Funding, we have been in regular contact with other National Park Authorities sharing throughout the development of Network Plan.

- c) Consulted – we have engaged with members of the public to understand the new active travel routes and route improvements they would like to see developed across the LDNP. We have also engaged with key stakeholders to ensure the Network Plan aligns to existing local authority strategies.
- d) Compete – not relevant.

8. Finance Considerations

- 8.1. There are no significant financial issues arising from this report. We were awarded £100,000 by Active Travel England to support capability building activities that enable us to develop inclusive active travel programmes.

9. Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Members do not approve the Network Plan, and we are unable to publish the Network Plan as required by Active Travel England.	The milestones that are set by Active Travel England won't be achieved and will result in delays to approving the Network Plan. Additional work or delays in adopting may incur additional costs to the Authority as additional resources may be required to deliver the project.	Approval of Network Plan or delegated authority to Director of Sustainable Development to make amends and publish the Network Plan.
Future infrastructure developments and financial contributions cannot be utilised to deliver the active travel routes and the Network Plan.	Active travel is not considered a priority by developers and therefore active travel improvements and new routes are not delivered.	Approve the Network Plan and communicate it effectively.
Route improvements and new routes are prioritised incorrectly.	Without the approved Network Plan, active travel improvements and new routes risk being prioritised incorrectly resulting in the incorrect routes and improvements being delivered.	Approve the Network Plan and communicate it effectively.

10. Legal Considerations

- 10.1. There are no legal considerations to consider.

11. Human Resources

- 11.1. The recommendations will not have a significant impact on staff resources.

12. Diversity Implications

12.1. The active travel routes and route improvements outlined in the Network Plan aim to improve access into and within the LDNP. The development of the Network Plan specifically considered how access into the LDNP can be improved, particularly for communities facing rural and social deprivation, this is outlined in section four of the Network Plan. The Network Plan also considered the needs of wheelchair users and outlines where new multi-user trails are needed to improve physical access into and within the LDNP.

13. Sustainability

13.1. The Network Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by improving active travel and connectivity between settlements, reducing reliance on the private car and consequent carbon emissions. Active travel can play a vital role in improving the health, mobility and social engagement of populations demonstrating the need to facilitate improved walking, cycling and wheeling routes. Developing and increasing participation in active travel also delivers economic benefits to communities - for example, we know that the Keswick to Threlkeld Trail has over 250,000 users per annum, bringing an estimated economic benefit of over £15 million per annum.

Background Papers	Online interactive network plan map shared separately
Author/Post	Chloe Swift, Strategy Planner and Emma Moody, Lead Strategy Adviser Recreation and Sustainable Transport
Responsible Director	Stephen Ratcliffe, Director of Sustainable Development
Date Written	27 th March 2025

Annex 1: Active Travel Network Plan

Annex 2: Active Travel Network Plan Summary