

SPITS

South Pennine Integrated Transport Strategy

SPITS Newsletter March 2003

TO BE INCLUDED
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SPITS ENSURES ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS FEATURE IN A628 UPGRADE

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The Peak Park Transport Forum and the Peak District NPA Policy Committee have both supported in principle the Highway Agency's proposals for the construction of the A628 Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle By-Pass. However, stringent environmental safeguards will be required. The scheme which is now being put forward for inclusion in the Government's Targeted Programme of Improvements comprises three elements:

- The bypass of the villages of Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle lying to the west side of the national park. This links the A628 east of Tintwistle directly to the M67 junction at Hattersley relieving the three villages of much of the through traffic. Also included in this is the link from a new junction on the bypass to the east of Mottram to the existing A57 Mottram Moor.
- Selected and Limited Improvements which include re-alignment of the existing route through the Upper Longdendale Valley with some sections widened to three lanes to provide a crawler lane for slow traffic climbing eastwards.
- Traffic Restraint Measures involving the installation of traffic signals along the A57/A628/A616 between the M67 junction at Hattersley and the M1 at Chapelton.

Construction is not expected to begin until 2006 at the earliest, which will give ample opportunity for the design of the scheme, including environmental mitigation measures, to be agreed.

The strategy for the A628 Woodhead route, outlined in SPITS and approved by the National Park Authority, is that it should encourage and accommodate the transfer of traffic from other routes passing through the National Park and that the bypass should be built to relieve the villages of through traffic, particularly the high proportion of HGV's that use the route.

The Peak Park Transport Forum and the Peak District National Park Authority have both stressed the need to address environmental issues in the National Park thoroughly, including examining the possibility of constructing part of the route over Langsett Moor in tunnel. Legislation concerned with National Parks requires appraisal of any proposal to ensure it does not compromise their overall purposes which are firstly to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and secondly, to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. National Park Authorities also have to seek to foster economic and social well-being of local communities.

SPITS has earmarked £50,000 for further study into traffic restraint on other cross-park routes, and will closely monitor progress of the scheme.

SPITS is run by the Peak Park Transport Forum. The Forum consists of representatives of 9 highway authorities, 5 district/borough councils, the Peak District National Park Authority, 2 railway companies, Network Rail, 3 PTEs, Countryside Agency and Transpennine Ltd. (and 4 regional government offices and the Highways Agency as observers).

50K Towards Traffic Restraint Study

Up to £50,000 has been made available by the Forum to look into the most appropriate traffic restraint measures for local roads paralleling the A628 with the intention of introducing these measures through the Local Transport Plan system. This study will take forward in terms of practical schemes the earlier SPITS Traffic Restraint study carried out by Scott Wilson. It will build on the current Highways Agency proposals for the bypass that include an element of trans Pennine traffic restraint on the A628 trunk road. The details of the impact of these additional Highways Agency restraint measures need further consideration. Similarly, the need for traffic restraint on the local highway network requires detailed investigation, along with the issues surrounding environmental mitigation measures and the complementary public transport options.

Deputation to Ministers

The Forum is seeking a meeting with the Minister for Transport to stress the need for an integrated approach to the problems of the Woodhead route and associated roads whilst at the same time emphasising the importance of progressing work on the Mottram-Tintwistle bypass and the selective and limited improvements elsewhere on the route. The Minister will also be reminded of the need for improvements to trans-Pennine rail routes and services as part of delivering SPITS objectives, and urged to give these support.

Quiet Lanes

News is eagerly awaited from the Countryside Agency regarding feedback from the DfT on the monitoring of Quiet Lanes projects. Quiet lanes initiatives have been subject to scrutiny from the Department for Transport in order to assess the effectiveness of schemes already undertaken. However, a scheme in Youlgreave will be implemented shortly with funding from Derbyshire County Council.

Quiet Lanes have caused some interest in the area, with Parish Councils and other community groups showing a willingness to participate, should the resources be made available to instigate more schemes.

SPITS contribution into Quiet Lanes is generally at the instigation stage. Getting support of local communities is seen as vital to the successful implementation of schemes.

A quiet lane is defined as "a minor rural road which can allow safe recreational use by walkers, cyclists and horse riders through measures designed to shift priority from motor vehicles". Quiet Lanes are a part of the traffic restraint element of SPITS. In order to ensure that traffic restraint measures are effective it is necessary to consider the smallest roads as well as strategic routes across the area.

SPITS welcomes comments on, and interest in Quiet Lanes projects. For further information call Chris Bell 01629 816282.

SPITS DEVELOPS JOINT MARKETING STRATEGY

A new sub group of SPITS has been formed to look at a joint marketing strategy for sustainable transport in the 'Greater Peak District' area. This group is looking to improve awareness of existing public transport, both for residents but especially for visitors to the Park.

One of the first projects is a 'Peak District Public Transport Visitor Guide'. This will cover an area roughly defined by the 3 key districts of Derbyshire Dales, High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands and including all the National Park plus key towns surrounding the Park. It will be published in Spring 2003.

It is hoped a bid to the Countryside Agency will fund a new post of Sustainable Transport Marketing Officer who will develop a sustainable transport marketing strategy. Match funding for the bid is to be sought from Derbyshire County Council, Peak District National Park Authority and other neighbouring transport authorities.

SPITS is also involved with 'Tourism Without Traffic' organised by Transport 2000.

Public Participation

There has in the past been no provision for the public to speak at PPTF meetings but they have always been welcome to attend. An item was placed before the PPTF meeting of 3rd February proposing provisions for public participation at each meeting. It was approved that at each PPTF meeting there will be a public participation session up to 30 minutes long at the start of the meeting allowing up to 3 items to be discussed. Publicising the meeting and the public session is vital. All partners are to be asked to display dates and agenda on their websites as soon as the information is available.

SPITS £954,000 BID FOR RURAL BUS CHALLENGE IS SUCCESSFUL – BUT THERE'S A CATCH

Derbyshire County Council working on behalf of the PPTF was successful in their 2002 Rural Bus Challenge bid. The £954,000 of Government grant has been approved to improve the Trans Peak bus service.

However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister now no longer requires the submission of a Local Transport Plan and the ringfencing of transport budgets for authorities who have achieved excellent status in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Since Derbyshire has met this standard the DfT has put a hold on the payment of Challenge funding as there is no legal obligation for an authority to spend it as proposed in the bid. Hopefully, this situation will be remedied quickly.

Four extra buses will be purchased to upgrade the existing Trans Peak service so it runs every hour, instead of every two hours. The existing network of services operating around the A6 will be reorganised to better mirror the arrival times of the service at key interchange points. This will allow the enhanced Trans Peak to act as a spine route along the A6 corridor into which the reorganised network of rural services will inter link. As a result, passengers will be able to change from one bus service to another with reduced waiting times at the interchange points and with greater confidence that connections will be made successfully.

This will allow people from the more remote rural communities greater opportunity to access facilities, jobs and training only found in the larger market towns and major centres. Not only will this aid the residents of the area but it will also assist tourism and leisure, a vital part of the local economy, by giving people from the surrounding urban centres greater opportunities to visit the rural area in a more sustainable manner.

TIMETABLE PUBLISHED FOR MATLOCK BUXTON RAILWAY!

Derbyshire County Council have published the first newsletter for the Matlock-Buxton Railway in which key dates of the feasibility study are set. Entitled 'Between the Lines' it is distributed to all households along the proposed route and is available to all interest groups to ensure public awareness of the scheme is developed.

Scott Wilson Railways were appointed last October to carry out the feasibility study on re-opening the Matlock to Buxton section of the railway. This is currently looking at the engineering, environmental and financial implications of the re-opening.

The main activities so far have been the preparation of an inception report which provided a more detailed outline of the work programme; a review of previous reports and studies; the collection of survey data; and initial meetings with key stakeholders. The first meeting of the Project Reference Group was held on 11 December 2002. Chris Bell attended for SPITS.

Scott Wilson Railways have a year to produce a report outlining possible options. All the partners will then have a short period to decide if the scheme should progress. If the project is viable the feasibility study will enter a second stage. This will take six to eight months and involve a detailed look at the practicalities of reinstating the line.

The partners involved in funding the feasibility study are Derbyshire County Council, Amber Valley Borough Council, Derby City Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, East Midlands Development Agency, High Peak Borough Council, the Peak District National Park Authority, Peak Park Transport Forum, Strategic Rail Authority, Tarmac plc and the Countryside Agency.

SPITS INVOLVED IN RECLAIMING MAIN ROADS

SPITS has offered to participate in 'Reclaiming Main Roads', a new initiative being launched by Transport 2000 with the aim of reclaiming our main roads and local high streets from excessive traffic and to recreate the streets that we use every day to go shopping, go to work, school, or visit local leisure facilities. The aim is to create street environments that are safe from the danger of traffic, healthier places to live and work in, enjoyable places to shop in, or just sit and watch the world go by in and pleasant environments to travel through.

SPITS has proposed that Bakewell town centre might benefit from this kind of treatment.

To progress the scheme SPITS and Derbyshire County Council will need to take part in a national main roads forum with a range of professionals including traffic consultants and urban designers. This forum will meet two or three times a year, with each meeting visiting a different project location. The first meeting will take place in late March/early April 2003. A national seminar is also planned for autumn 2003 to enable local authority officers and community participants to exchange their experiences at an early stage in the project.

Website News

As part of SPITS drive to publicise the Peak Park Transport Forum meetings as open to the public, the SPITS website www.spits.org.uk will give the dates and agenda of PPTF meetings as soon as they are available.

Links to all the partners websites are on the website, also the SPITS business plan and PPTF minutes. More minutes and information will be added periodically. There is a new area just for PPTF partners.