

# SPITS

South Pennines Integrated Transport Strategy

## SPITS Newsletter October 2003

**TO BE INCLUDED  
ON SPITS EMAIL  
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**Volume 2, Issue 2**

**28 October 2003**

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### **GO AHEAD FOR THE BYPASS but further investigation is required**

The Highways Agency proposal for a bypass of Mottram Hollingworth and Tintwistle along with restraint measures on the A628/A616 trunk road has been included in the Targeted Programme for Improvement by the Secretary of State for Transport. However, the selected and limited improvements to the road between Longdendale and Woodhead have not been included at this stage as the nature and extent of these is the subject of further discussion between the Peak District National Park Authority and the Highways Agency.

The construction of the road will be very welcome by the majority of villagers who have long argued for a bypass to relieve the villages that are currently bisected by the road.

Traffic restraint measures include traffic light control at key junctions along the trunk route between the M67 junction at Hattersley and

the M1 junction 35A at Chapeltown.

The Highways Agency say that this approach strikes an equitable balance between the problems in these villages, the impacts of traffic in the National Park and wider safety concerns along the route.

In giving their conditional approval to the scheme in principle, the Peak District National Park Authority and Peak Park Transport Forum confirmed that environmental factors should be fully addressed and reminded the Highways Authority of its duty to take account of the statutory purposes of the National Park, which require the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Park.

A SPITS aspiration is that the A628/A616(T) route takes any extra traffic off other cross-National Park routes as a consequence of the introduction of SPITS restraint policy on other cross Park roads and that mitigation measures are implemented on the route to accommodate any resulting traffic increases. It is the nature and extent of these improvements that is the subject of further discussion between the Highways Agency and the Peak District National Park Authority.

## **Traffic Restraint Study underway**

FaberMaunsell have been appointed as consultants to undertake the SPITS Traffic Restraint Study.

The study, which was allocated £50,000 at the Peak Park Transport Forum this February, has received further financial support from the Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM).

£15,000 has been allocated by GOEM towards the study which is set to investigate practical measures for traffic restraint that can be implemented with funding from the next round of Local Transport Plans, due to start in 2005.

The Study is timed to coincide with the development of the next round of Local Transport Plans and to co-ordinate with work being undertaken towards construction of the Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle Bypass. (See previous article)

The Traffic Restraint Study has set consultants the objective of identifying ways of reducing the environmental impact of traffic on the Peak District National Park such that local highway authorities can consider taking forward appropriate proposals as part of the formulation of their next Local Transport Plans.

The Study will look at options available in terms of their practicality, achievability, cost and political acceptability. The Study does not require major new traffic modelling, as up to date information of this type should

largely be available from work already being undertaken on other projects. The Study should concentrate on deliverable measures that can be implemented as part of Local Transport Plan settlements in the forthcoming rounds.

So far, an inception meeting has been held and a consultation workshop is arranged for late October.

## **TRANSPENNINE FRANCHISE AWARDED**

The Transpennine Franchise has been awarded to First Keolis. SPITS is in communication with the successful bidder in order to negotiate for improvements on the both South and North Transpennine Routes.

## **NORTHERN FRANCHISE SHORTLIST DRAWN**

There are four short-listed for the Northern Franchise, First Keolis, Arriva, National Express and Serco. SPITS have contacted each of the prospective operators with a wish-list for the franchise. It is hoped that detailed consultation will follow on appointment of a preferred bidder.

## **MIDLAND ROUTE UTILISATION STUDY BEING CONDUCTED**

The SRA has consulted on the Midland Mainline Route Utilisation Strategy. Of particular interest to SPITS on this route are any future plans for the East Midlands to Manchester corridor following the introduction of the St Pancras to Manchester Service during the West Coast Line upgrade. The document proposes a that an off peak service of 2 or 3 trains per day may be appropriate, but that analysis of usage figures is yet to be completed.

## **CONCERN OF SRA'S STAKE HOLDER BRIEF**

Concern has been expressed about the strategy of subsidy reduction and its consequences, which, if adopted could see reductions of service levels on local rail services. SPITS has written to the Strategic Rail Authority asking for assurances that current service levels can be maintained.

This letter covers:

- Section 34 agreements, that is the rights of PTE's to specify service levels;
- Reduced level of service in bid documents which include some elements of bus replacement for rail services without closures;
- Revised maintenance regimes which target a higher proportion of maintenance budgets at main routes.
- The mix of express and stopping services, asking if improved express services are only available if local services suffer.

# SPITS SEEKS EUROPEAN FUNDING

The European Union offers funding possibilities in many fields. SPITS has recently got involved in a project that could result in some of this being directed to helping strategic transport in and around the Peak District.

Money from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is being sought to further the aims of SPITS with a project called 'MoCo' (Mobility and Communication). This involves research and implementation measures to improve linkages between rural areas of visitor interest with neighbouring urban centres. The project is a partnership between the South Pennines/Peak Park region and similar areas in Germany, Belgium and Scotland.

The scheme should contribute towards the Greater Peak District Sustainable Transport Marketing Project. Measures include implementing information technology to deliver improvements to passenger information and enable purchase of combined tickets for public transport services, accommodation and attractions, via the Internet and/or telephone, at bus stops and information points. It also involves measures such as Demand Responsive Transport to enable the increased usage of public transport, and traffic management systems that may complement traffic restraint objectives and the Upper Derwent Road User Charging Scheme.

The project was originally due to be submitted for approval by the European Regional Development Fund on 1 October 2003. However the partners have agreed to defer this until the next funding round as this give more time to strengthen the bid. Deadline: 1 April 2004.

The other partners involved are proposing interesting schemes too:

- The German partner based in the region of North Hesse investigates the re-instatement of a disused freight line as a demand responsive rail service for tourists linked into an integrated transport network, together with a computerised system to integrate transport, accommodation and passenger information.
- The Scottish partner based in three conservation areas in Strathclyde, including the new Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, aims to improve sustainable transport access by developing demand responsive bus links from the existing and comprehensive rail network serving the edge of visitor areas utilising computerised booking systems.
- The Belgian partner's project is based around a new national park at Hoge Kempen in Flanders, which receives high visitor levels from neighbouring cities in Holland and Germany as well as Belgium, so they may experience cross-boundary issues similar to those of SPITS. Part of their project involves the closure of roads through conservation areas: Of interest to the SPITS Traffic Restraint Group, no doubt.

If the bid is successful, the project will run from mid 2004 until early 2007. Contact the SPITS Project Officer for further details.

## Peak District Marketing Initiative gets some funding from CA despite funding being oversubscribed

Uncertainty exists over the future of any funding from the Countryside Agency. A small amount of money is to be released by the Countryside Agency towards a project officer for the Greater Peak District Sustainable Transport Marketing Project. However project funding remains on hold.

A re-evaluation of how transport projects are funded through the Countryside Agency is to be undertaken in light of the difficulty being experienced in raising funding. Funding of schemes through the Wider

Welcome package was the first to become oversubscribed, followed closely by Vital Villages and Market Towns.

The Greater Peak District Sustainable Transport Marketing Project, which aims to deliver improved public awareness of the issues of sustainable transport, and help visitors to come to the Peak District by sustainable means, is adversely affected by this news. Products that are part of the scheme, including coachdrivers guides and walking guides, will require further financial support to be progressed. However, the Transpeak promotion, the Greater Peak District Visitor Map and the local guides are to go ahead.

It is hoped that these measures will help increase the amount of sustainable tourism to the National Park. This comes on top of a moratorium on Quiet Lanes funding from the Countryside Agency.

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## **EUROPEAN FUNDING BID MADE FOR NETA PROJECT**

The NETA (North European Trade Axis) Project has submitted a bid for European funding under the INTERREG IIIB scheme. Developed with funding contribution of £10,000 from SPITS towards a study of High Gauge Freight the project is designed to get take freight off the road.

The project aims to manage European freight that travels from East to West utilising Humber ports, rather than the Channel Tunnel offering East-West Freight links rather than North-South.

The funding was submitted on 1 October 2003 and a decision will be made at the meeting of the Programme Steering Committee on 27-28 November.

## **Creation of a Corridor of Excellence in the Hope Valley**

SPITS has established the Hope Valley as the centre for a project to deliver higher quality transport. The Hope Valley Corridor of Excellence project covers the area of the Hope Valley, Upper Derwent, the Stange area and the corridor into Sheffield. Long term aspirations of the project have been discussed at The first meeting with representatives of the Peak District National Park Authority, South Yorkshire PTE, Derbyshire County Council and the Hope Valley and High Peak Partnership.

The project aims to integrate improved gateway information for public transport travellers, measures to

ease parking problems in sensitive areas around the National Park, the Upper Derwent Road-User charging scheme, and initiatives taken by the Stange Forum.

## **SPITS participates in Revitalising Communities on Main Roads**

Proposing Bakewell, Derbyshire County Council in co-operation with SPITS has been selected to take part in the Transport 2000 initiative 'Revitalising Communities on Main Roads'. Launched at the House of Commons on 26 March 2003 by Jenny Agutter, the patron of Transport 2000, seven urban locations (Ashford, Bakewell, Bradford, Hull, Luton, Southwark and Evesham) aim to tackle problems of allocating road space to improve the urban environment.

Despite Bakewell being a relatively small town, common problems exist with the quality of streetscapes. The conflict between motor vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users exists in many different locations.

This scheme aims to develop better ways of dealing with these problems. In Bakewell, a particular problem is the narrowness of streets. It is hoped that the management of traffic in such a scheme can contribute to traffic restraint more widely across the National Park as well as adding to the quality of the street environment in the town.

As part of this scheme, the SPITS Officer has been on study visits to Hull and Luton where other participants in the scheme gave site visits of projects in the partnership.

## **NEW CHIEF FOR THE PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

The Peak District National Park Authority has appointed Jim Dixon as new Chief Executive. His previous job was Head of Strategy at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Tony Hams, Chair of the Authority, said, "We are delighted that Jim has agreed to join us. He has a passion for the countryside and he brings with him a wealth of experience. He has worked in conservation and agriculture and he's strongly committed to building partnerships with people at local, regional and national levels."

Before joining Defra Jim had been Senior Agricultural Officer at English Nature. For nine years he was head of Agriculture Policy at the RSPB and he has also worked for the Countryside Commission for Wales.

Tony said, "Jim joins the Authority at an exciting time. We've nearly completed a review which will modernise the way we work, we have new management structures in place and we're improving the way we deliver our services. We're also committed to involving more people in the business of looking after the National Park.

"Jim is ideally placed to help us with all of these tasks. He brings knowledge of strategic planning, at the highest level, and he has many years of sound management experience. He also has an excellent track record of working with people and forming partnerships at every level, from individuals to the government & other agencies."

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Jim took up his new post in early July. He is married to Tracey, who works in publishing and they have a 3 year old son, Matthew.

## **FREIGHT GROUP BUSINESS - NOW CONDUCTED BY EMAIL**

Due to the difficulty in attracting industry representatives to meetings, the Freight Sub Group now operates electronically. Instead of the regular six-monthly meetings, the SPITS Project Officer will email Sub Group members on a regular basis to keep them abreast of developments and report to the Officer Working Group.

Should the situation change, this arrangement may be subject to review.

## **Condolences**

It is with great regret that we announce the death of Roger Anderson of Tameside MBC after a long illness. All thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues.

## **Welcome to new members and officers**

**Steve Whitehurst replaces Rob Cramer at Macclesfield Borough Council**

**Andrew Brown replaces Kyle Maylard from the Highways Agency**

**Richard Smith replaces Andrew Brown from the Highways Agency**

**Claire Jenkins replaces Lisa Atkinson at the Countryside Agency**

**Phil Calverley replaces Barry Holt from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council**

**Best wishes also to Ian Allred of Staffordshire County Council on his retirement after all his good work in public transport.**

**We would like to offer a warm welcome to all new members and officers on the Peak Park Transport Forum**

## **Forthcoming Meetings**

### **Peak Park Transport Forum**

**Monday 15  
December 2003 at  
14:00 Derbyshire  
County Council  
Offices Matlock**

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