

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

4 April 2008

**WORKS TO BRIDLEWAY / ACCESS ROAD - SHIPLEY BRIDGE TO AVON DAM,  
SOUTH BRENT**Report of the Director of Park ManagementRecommendation : **That:**

- (i) **the Authority contributes £5,000 to the re-instatement of the bridleway/access road to Avon Dam, to secure the long term future of this route as an accessible, all ability route**
- (ii) **Written confirmation is given to South West Water that this contribution is made on a without prejudice basis and shall not be taken to assume or as evidence of any intention to assume responsibility for the future condition or maintenance of the route**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 Through 2007 South West Water (SWW) has undertaken a range of works in the area of Shipley Bridge and the Avon Dam reservoir, comprising a new water main from the Water Treatment Works (near Avon Dam) to South Brent and beyond; works in the reservoir for water quality improvements and works (a kiosk, requiring electricity supply) in the dam compound.
- 1.2 An electricity supply and telemetry link has now been completed and placed underground rather than as an overhead supply at the request of the Authority. It follows the route of the existing track and bridleway from the car park at Shipley Bridge to the Avon Dam Reservoir (see attached plan at appendix A). The route is a public bridleway; it is publicised by the Authority as an 'easy going' route and is very popular with locals and visitors. During the six months that work has been ongoing complaints from the public have been received both by this Authority and SWW.
- 1.3 Over recent years the surface of the track has deteriorated and become potholed and cracked in places but was still useable by people with wheelchairs and pushchairs.

**2 Current Situation**

- 2.1 SWW has now completed the work and is in the process of re-instating the track. The initial plan from SWW was to have one trench up the middle of the track approximately one metre wide. Unfortunately, due to problems with the machinery and heavy rain leading to flooding at a crucial time in the process, there has been deterioration of the track beyond the trench width along some, but not all, of the route.
- 2.2 SWW has proposed a level of reinstatement for the track, which it considers adequate to meet its legal requirements. This allows for re-instatement of the full

width of the track where necessary (i.e. where there has been damage to the full width) but the rest of the route will be re-instated just to the width of the trench. The re-instatement will be black top but will not be surfaced dressed. Because of the nature of the damage to the track this will result in a patchwork of reinstatement with many joins in the surfacing which will be liable to cracking and erosion.

- 2.3 Whilst this patchwork approach may satisfy SWW's legal obligation to reinstate the land, it is agreed that such an approach does not represent a long term investment in the route. The number of joins in surfaced sections are likely to mean the track will deteriorate more quickly than if the full width were to be resurfaced for the whole length of the route. SWW has no further responsibility for the maintenance of the track, its upkeep remains the responsibility of the Highways Authority (to bridleway standards) or the landowner. The landowner has not responded to correspondence with SWW regarding these works. In recent years DNPA has undertaken PROW maintenance on behalf of DCC under a delegation agreement.
- 2.4 DNPA promotes this as an Easy Going route for people with special needs and it is also well used by families with children on bicycles as a safe easy route. It is one of the best all ability routes on Dartmoor. It is unlikely that the landowner or the Highway Authority will pay for future works to ensure that the surface remains suitable for this use.
- 2.5 Following discussion, SWW has provided a cost estimate of £12,000 for the additional works required to reinstate the track across its full width, along its whole length. This is in addition to the re-instatement work that SWW currently proposes as a cost of £70,000.

### **3 Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is proposed that DNPA makes a contribution of £5k towards this shortfall in order to secure the complete black top re-surfacing of the track with the balance being met by SWW. We would hope that this surface will last at least 15 years with the lightweight use it receives. This is considered to offer a good investment for the future of this popular route. The £5,000 would come from existing budgets, £3,000 from a traffic management budget and £2,000 from an access budget, both to be carried forward from 07/08 budgets due to other projects being unsuccessful.

### **4 Implications for People in Under-represented Groups**

This is one of the best all ability routes in the National Park. People in wheelchairs, people with limited mobility, families with pushchairs, young children on bicycles all get much pleasure from this route. The gentle gradient, good surface of the route and the fact that it is within a moorland setting make this a very popular route. If the surface is allowed to deteriorate certain people may be excluded.

SUZANNE GOODFELLOW

(For further information please contact – Alison Kohler, Head of Recreation, Tourism and Ranger Service, or Philip Markham, Head of Forward Planning and Community)

**Attachment** – Appendix 1 - Map

Ak 0408 Shipley Br to Avon Dam – wks to Bridleway.doc