

A plan by the community

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## Draft Background Topic Paper

### Neighbourhood Plan Core Document The Deepings' Green Walk

*This document follows initial consultation carried out in October-November 2017. It is a travelling draft that will be the subject of further ongoing and targeted consultation.*

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## 1. The Concept of the Green Walk

The Green Walk aims to achieve linking of publicly accessible green spaces and other routes around the town to create an attractive network. It will create routes to areas rich in biodiversity, heritage and landscape value. The routes will lead to the wider countryside beyond the built up area and connect with adjacent villages. At its heart is the promotion of non-car based movement, away from trafficked routes where possible, with associated long term health benefits.

Map 1 is a concept plan that shows the main routes and other components forming the proposed Green Walk network. It readily connects with the Peterborough Green Wheel to the south.

The Walk is considered 'green' due to both the natural and historic environment components forming it; and the promotion of recreational trips using healthy, non-motorised forms of sustainable 'transport'. It will waymark travellers to other parts of the Walk.

The Walk will encircle the Deepings, creating a continuous accessible corridor, with outward links to the adjacent villages. It will also promote new and improved routes through the built-up area linking key facilities with off- road or otherwise safe routes.

Ultimately all parts of the route will be designed to suit its predominant use and context. The most demanding user will be the cyclist. This is given their speed, need for clear visibility, requirement for high quality surfaces, and appropriate vertical and horizontal alignment. Key cycle routes need to be hardened, generally smooth and straight. Unless there are good reasons, all parts of the route will be freely available to walkers, cyclists, and mobility scooter users.

Sections will provide appropriate routes for horse riders.

Green spaces and associated features forming the Green Walk may both be trip destinations in their own right; or may be corridors to other attractions further afield.

Although primarily delivering enhanced public access, the Green Walk should also protect, manage, enhance, and promote other Green Infrastructure thematic assets, including biodiversity, landscape and heritage. Where possible, new habitats, landscape features and accessible green spaces should be created to link and extend the existing features to add to the network and contribute to such a Green Walk.

As potential allocated sites come forward for development they will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of the Green Walk with direct implementation of its objectives, or through financial contributions via S106<sup>1</sup> or CIL<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 106 of the Planning Act can require development to make off site contributions subject to certain legal tests.

<sup>2</sup> CIL = Community Infrastructure Levy

**2. The high level view - Vision, objective and aims.**

**a. Vision – extracts from the emerging Neighbourhood Plan vision statement relevant to the Green Walk.**

*By 2036, The Deepings will be two Parishes with one diverse community. It will still have the character of a friendly market town but will have seen growth that is proportionate and appropriate. The result will be:*

- *a more attractive place to live, work and play,*
- *a peaceful set of neighbourhoods with live social networks, and*
- *a good place to grow up and grow old in, supporting healthy behaviours and reductions in health inequalities.*

*Specifically, we will work together with other agencies to secure*

- *Healthier and mixed communities.*
- *The promotion of a strong network of attractive walkable streets and cycle routes, more and improved useable green open spaces, and improved countryside connections.*
- *Improved well-being and active healthier lifestyles.*
- *Ease of accessibility to services and facilities, all schools and parks, with barrier-free and safe access by foot, cycle, mobility scooters and wheelchair users.*
- *Enhanced connections to the Deepings from adjacent villages, as well as from the Deepings to Peterborough and Stamford for access to key services and facilities not offered locally.*

**b. Objective derived from the vision:**

**To establish, develop and maintain *The Deepings Green Walk* around the Deepings neighbourhood and throughout the wider Deepings area including adjacent villages.**

The Plan will aim to secure improvement in movement by means other than the car. This will be within the Deepings, to and from the villages that rely on its services, and to and from Peterborough. Although the use of the private car will persist as the dominant form of transport, greater promotion of walking, cycle use and public transport is desirable.

**c. Aims:**

- To define the neighbourhood and enhance a sense of community identity and heritage
- To identify, protect, improve, and extend local green spaces and footpaths as assets.
- To ensure all new developments contribute positively to improving non-vehicular access.
- To provide new, non-vehicular, access routes around and throughout the neighbourhood
- To ensure all key local facilities and amenities are easily accessible to all residents
- To provide opportunities for all to engage in activities that develop healthy lifestyles
- To support the local economy by facilitating the ability to shop, work and access leisure
- To provide effective and efficient travel connections to and from the adjacent countryside and adjoining villages

### 3. Support in current statutory planning policy, and other policy advice sources

#### South Kesteven Core Strategy, 2012

Policy SP3- Sustainable Integrated Transport..

*"The Council will encourage the creation of a sustainable, modern transport network ...by:  
..Promoting and assisting journeys by public transport, cycling, mobility aids and walking, by making them accessible, safe, convenient and as attractive as possible"*

#### National Planning Policy Framework, 2011

17 ' ... planning should: ....-actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and ....-take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

58. 'Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:  
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;'

61 ' ... planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.'

70. 'To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:  
- plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;'

73. 'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.'

75. 'Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.'

#### **Lincolnshire Waste and Minerals Plan: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, June 2016**

DM6 – Impact of minerals working on landscape and townscape

R2 - After-use of minerals sites – restoration to provide public access to countryside

R3 Restoration of working sin South Lincolnshire (West Deeping/Langtoft): creation of wet fenland habitat or enhancement of existing wetland habitats.

**Other material policy considerations.**

**Lincolnshire County Council Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan  
2007–2012**

Page 49 – in a Lincolnshire context, recognises at a strategic level that countryside access from The Deepings is limited. Also establishes a general project plan with 49 action points that supports the extension and enhancement of rights of way. Wider participation in countryside activity is encouraged.

**Lincolnshire Streetscape Design Manual.**

This is the outcome of the ‘Every Street Matters’ project looking at how everyone who carries out works to our streets and market places can improve the way the spaces look and feel, and therefore how they are used. The Streetscape Design Manual is intended for use by highways engineers when new schemes are being proposed, and where works are part of the Highway Authority’s routine maintenance programme, as suggestions on how to approach these changes. Includes advice on geometry, surfacing, public art

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/conservation-areas/every-street-matters/91118.article>

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#### 4. Principles to guide development of the Green Walk

The proposed principles below have been developed through extensive consultation elsewhere in the country on similar Green Infrastructure (GI) projects. Local consideration should be given on a project by project basis as to whether they are all appropriate for The Deepings, and whether any additional principles reflecting the local area should be added. Guiding principles for the Green Walk include that it will

- enhance connectivity
- be multi-functional
- secure extended access
- promote character and bio-diversity enhancement
- inspire landmark projects

At a more detailed level, the following principles will help secure successful outcomes.

1. Where possible, linear routes should:
  - a. Be traffic free, safe and inspire confidence for users
  - b. Be designed for personal safety maximising 'natural surveillance' from adjacent buildings
  - c. Maintain reasonable privacy and respect for adjacent occupiers and users
  - d. Offer easy access for users with a wide range of mobility levels, including pushchairs and walking aids
  - e. Have the potential for future upgrading to use by cyclists (where not already possible)
  - f. Have designated, safe crossing points over motorised routes
  - g. Provide connections between where people live and where they want to travel (for recreational or employment purposes)
  - h. Be clearly signed and easy to follow
  - i. Be well maintained
  - j. Provide enhanced user enjoyment through the provision of information boards and benches in attractive locations
  - k. Where appropriate provide access for horses, particularly links to existing bridleways
  - l. Be protected from future development. Where future development does occur, any existing sections of the Green Walk should remain as inner route options and new outer sections created.
  - m. Cause no damage to archaeological sites and their setting
  - n. Provide safe passing places on those paths with shared vehicular use including appropriate management of vegetation to the sides
2. Accessible green spaces should:
  - a. Be safe spaces that inspire confidence in visitors
  - b. Cater for a wide range of user-types (dog walkers, playing children, joggers, family groups, older people)
  - c. Provide attractive landscapes
  - e. Provide opportunities for wildlife, heritage conservation and interpretation
  - f. Provide informal recreation opportunities (including playing, bird watching)
  - g. Provide interactive interpretation through information boards, play structures/environments and art features to encourage more people and a wider audience into the countryside
  - h. Be well maintained
  - i. Have regard to designs that are friendly to increasing numbers of dementia sufferers
3. The wider landscape should:
  - a. Protect, enhance and create aesthetically pleasing views
  - b. Have well maintained hedges
  - c. Enable interconnectivity of habitats
    - d. Protect, manage and enhance the historic environment.

## 5. Standards / Specifications

To support the creation of the route within the above basic principles, a series of standards based on national guidance are proposed below. The proposed standards and specifications have been developed through extensive consultation elsewhere in the country on similar projects. Consideration should be given as to whether they are all appropriate for The Deepings, and whether any local standards required by Lincolnshire County Council or South Kesteven District Council should replace these.

### a. Minimum Route Widths **(NB consultation with LCC Highways necessary)**

In keeping with the Green Walk principles, the route should be set within a landscape and wildlife corridor; and not be limited to the width of a path. However it is also accepted that routes in the built up area will be necessarily narrow given current constraints.

For an un-segregated, shared use path, guidance generally points towards a preferred minimum width of 3m, although a minimum width of 2m may be acceptable where usage is low, provided there are no side constraints (i.e., there should be space to the side of the path to use to allow passing). A greater width will always be sought as a first preference.

	Standard	Minimum	Where width is physically restricted*
Shared use path	3m	2.5m	2m
Footpath links	2.5m	2m	1.5m

\*Restricted access will usually be where all or part of the route is using a pre-existing alley way or where there are other significant structures which physically prevent the allocation of a greater width. Paths should conform to the general policy in as far as possible. Where there are localised intrusions and/or short lengths over which the path would be less than 2m wide this may be acceptable depending on the circumstances.

### b. Surfacing standards for new paths

It is anticipated that the Green Walk routes will have a range of surfacing types. This range of surfacing will form a hierarchy of standards based on the level of expected use, landscape sensitivity and other factors. The optimum level of surface should always be sought for the expected level of use:

Level 1: Bound surface – e.g. Bit Mac, TarMac

Level 2: Unbound surface – e.g. road planings and granite dust blinding

Level 3: a) Reinforced grass  
 b) Well maintained farm track

Level 4: Rolled/consolidated grass or compacted suitable ground

Routes which are more urban in setting and expected to have high levels of use should be Level 1 (Level 2 minimum). Routes which are more rural in setting and expected to have lower levels of use could be Levels 3 and 4.

**c. Structures**

Structures will be required at many locations for a range of purposes including, stock control, limiting unauthorised vehicular access, and safety (to reduce speed at junctions with roads).

With the exceptions of highway safety, barriers, including motor cycle/ staggered/kissing gates, should only be a last resort. They should only be used to address actual problems, not to alleviate fears of future potential problems. They should only be installed when other methods have been considered or trialled and been discounted, or have proved to be ineffective. Even when a barrier is installed, it should ideally only be in place for a limited period until the problem has stopped or considerably reduced.

Design solutions should minimise the obstacle to legitimate users, as barriers which stop motorcyclists are likely to also exclude wheelchair / scooter users, parents with prams and pushchairs, some users with mobility impairments (for example, sticks and crutches) and some visually impaired people.

**d. Gradients**

Green Walk routes should be designed to achieve a maximum gradient of 3% with the absolute maximum 5% for lengths up to 100m. On the approach to priority junctions this should not exceed 3%. Where steeper slopes are unavoidable the limiting gradient is 7% for lengths up to 30m.

**e. Horizontal alignment**

**Need developing.** Avoid profiles that causes user uncertainty or hazard

**f. Junctions and road crossings**

Where Green Walk routes meet or cross the public highway, extra consideration to safety must be given; and Road Safety Officers consulted. Clear signage must be provided, for both users of the Green Walk and the public highway. Dependent upon sight lines, gradients and other local factors, structures may be required to reduce the speed of users of the Green Walk on approaches to roads and pavements.

Dropped kerbs at road crossings should be used to improve ease of use and safety, improving comfort for all users, especially cyclists and pushchair/ wheelchair users.

**g. Signage, way marking and mapping**

Signage for the Green Walk should be clear, informative and consistent. A Green Walk symbol/ logo and colour scheme will be utilised.

Signposts should be used at all junctions and access points to the Green Walk. Destinations and distances, both into the built up area along key routes and around its perimeter will be identified.

Waymarking should be used to supplement the main signage and should provide directional information. Waymarking should be undertaken in accordance with LCC's Countryside Access Waymarking Policy.

Additional information about the Green Walk, including a map of the entire Walk, will be provided at key access points.

The issues of signage, waymarking and mapping, along with identity, marketing, promotion and information provision will be addressed more fully in a supporting document (to be produced once this document is adopted).



**h. Fencing and hedges**

- The route of the Green Walk should be aesthetically pleasing, wherever possible maintaining a 'green' setting through appropriate planting and landscaping.
- Planting and landscaping requirements will vary greatly around the Green Walk, influenced primarily by available space and degree of rural/ urban setting.
- All planting should be of native, locally distinctive species. Planting within more urban settings should be decided with robustness and maintenance as key factors.
- Wherever possible, Green Walk routes should not be 'fenced-in', to avoid users having a feeling of being contained or funnelled. However, at certain access points and other areas, such as where stock is grazing or for safety, fencing may be required
- Fencing specifications should be robust and in keeping with their immediate setting.
- In general, rural settings should have timber fencing which should be of a similar design to any adjacent existing fencing. Where no existing fencing is present, posts should measure a minimum 125mm x 75mm and rails 100 x 50mm.
- Fencing specifications in more urban settings will be determined by primary function (e.g. safety, security), but in all cases should be as attractive as possible and in keeping with surrounding structures.

**i. Green Space standards**

Green spaces forming the Green Walk will range from linear paths and corridors, through amenity green spaces to natural and semi-natural open spaces in the wider countryside. All components of the Green Walk should deliver multiple green infrastructure benefits – linking and maximising the quality and value of access, landscape, biodiversity and heritage. Sites forming the Green Walk will:

- be **clearly signposted** to and from the Green Walk and the wider network
- be **welcoming** and clean and safe.
- be designed to **incorporate public realm** features (e.g. sculptures)
- provide **seating**, in both sunny and shaded areas
- have a **naturalistic** appearance if appropriate to the setting
- have **attractive views** out of or across the site
- make **good use of space** and planting
- protect, manage and provide **opportunities for interpreting the historic environment**
- provide **informal and engaging** activities for people of all ages
- seek to maximise **ecological value** and opportunities

New green spaces will be identified where they extend, buffer or link existing sites (particularly those with high biodiversity or heritage value); or where they contribute to creating an accessible corridor.

**j. Wider rural landscape**

As part of this project we are seeking to increase the quality of the environment surrounding the town, and at key locations inside the town. It is critical that this plan acts as a challenge to all land managers to seek to maintain and develop the quality of the land they manage through the restoration and creation of attractive routes interconnecting habitats, including pollarded willows, hedges, and woodlands; wetlands and ponds. Derelict or underused sites should be explored for enhancement opportunities.

**k. Maintenance**

To guarantee maximum value, use and longevity of the Green Walk once it is developed, it will need to be maintained to a proper standard and to encourage people to use it. Ongoing maintenance work will have to include verge cutting and surface spraying for which revenue funding will be required. Careful consideration should be given, when any planting or landscaping is proposed, to

ensure that it will not become a problem in the future. Where appropriate, a sealed surface should be considered at the development stage to reduce maintenance liabilities in the future.

**1. Impacts and Constraints**

It is acknowledged that the implementation of any of these above standards have the potential to have a negative impact upon features of ecological, heritage or landscape value. Such features may be both assets and constraints on an individual site basis and the application of standards for the creation and maintenance of the Green Walk infrastructure may need to be amended accordingly.