



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Application by Fosse Green Energy
Ltd for an order granting development
consent for the Fosse Green Energy
solar farm**

Written Representation Summary

**by North Kesteven District Council
(ID FD1E96A6C)
NKDC reference: 23/0325/NSIP
Planning Inspectorate reference: EN010154
January 2026**

Introduction

- S.1 This document is a summary of the Council's Written Representation (WR) which addresses the proposed Fosse Green Energy solar farm development and is submitted as part of the examination process under Deadline 1 alongside the Council's Local Impact Report (LIR) which was endorsed by the Planning Committee on December 16, 2025. It focuses on specific areas where the development conflicts with local and national policy or lacks adequate information.

Main areas of concern

- S.2 The WR identifies seven formal objection areas where the Council has identified policy conflicts, tensions, or information gaps as follows:
1. Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land
 2. landscape and visual impacts
 3. cultural heritage impacts
 4. ecology and biodiversity net gain (BNG)
 5. rights of way and recreation
 6. grid connection deliverability
 7. battery energy storage system (BESS) and fire safety concerns.
- S.3 The Council acknowledges that certain aspects of the development would have neutral or positive impacts, including general ecology, climate change benefits, access and traffic, noise and vibration, water resources and flood risk, socioeconomics, and air quality. For these topics, the Council is satisfied that mitigation measures contained within the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) Schedule 2 Requirements are adequate to address concerns, though the Council continues to engage with the applicant regarding the wording of these Requirements.

1. Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

- S.4 The Council notes that the Principal Site contains less BMV land than District and County averages and contains no Grade 1 or 2 land, which is favourable compared to some other solar NSIP schemes that have received consent. However, the Council has identified inconsistencies in the agricultural land classification data provided across multiple submitted documents, including the Agricultural Land Classification Report, Environmental Statement Chapter 12, the Planning Statement, and ES Chapter 3. The Council seeks clarification on which figures are correct before proceeding with final assessment.

- S.5 Regarding site selection, the Council considers the applicant has taken a generally reasonable approach given the existing policy context, particularly National Policy Statements EN-1 and EN-3 and Policy S67 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan relating to agricultural land quality. The Cable Corridor beyond the Principal Site has not been surveyed in detail, though broad-scale mapping suggests it may contain a similar balance of BMV to non-BMV land, with potential Grade 2 land in some areas.
- S.6 Despite acknowledging the relatively favourable agricultural land classification of the site, the Council remains concerned about the large quantities of agricultural land — including BMV land — that would be occupied by the solar farm development for an extended 60 year period. These concerns are heightened by the data uncertainties identified in the submitted information.
- S.7 Currently the Council considers that the criteria of CLLP policy S67 have not all yet been met in full.

2. Landscape and Visual Impact

- S.8 The submitted LVIA identifies significant adverse effects on landscape character at construction stage, and even by Year 15 when screen planting is expected to be fully effective, moderate adverse effects remain on the Principal Site and Local Landscape Character Areas. Major adverse visual effects at construction stage are identified for residents and recreational users of numerous public rights of way. Significant adverse visual effects are predicted to remain well into the operational phase, including for users of footpaths forming part of three Stepping Out Walks.
- S.9 AAH consultants take issue with the findings regarding cumulative impacts with four other NSIP solar farm proposals, noting that the landscape character may be completely altered over the operational period. The Council considers that there would be significant long term adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity (including cumulative effects with other proposed solar farms in the area), and an over-reliance on mitigation planting, such that CLLP policies S53 and S66 have not been satisfied.

3. Cultural Heritage Impacts

- S.10 There has been poor pre-application engagement with the Council on above-ground heritage assets, and the Council's request for the study area to be extended to 5km has been ignored. There are deficiencies in the scope and detail of assessments for several designated heritage assets including Morton Manor, Morton Grange, River Farmhouse, Grange Cottage, Coleby Hall Registered Park and Garden, and Coleby Conservation Area.
- S.11 Regarding archaeology, concerns are raised about the potential for various works to damage archaeological resources, which have not been addressed in submitted assessments. This is particularly so for areas of unknown value, for instance where

geophysical survey has not revealed significant results. Further trial trenching and the development of a more comprehensive plan for mitigation is necessary in advance of any grant of consent.

- S.12 There are gaps in the assessments of impacts on both above-ground and below-ground (archaeological) heritage assets, meaning that in the Council's view the proposals do not satisfy CLLP policies S53 and S67.

4. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- S.13 The ecological information provides a reasonable summary of ecological interest features, and the proposals have the potential to deliver benefits for biodiversity. However, the current assessment of BNG is deficient, so that in the Council's view the requirements of CLLP policies S59, S60 and S61 have not been shown to have been met.

5. Rights of Way and Recreation

- S.14 The Council raises concerns particularly regarding the Stepping Out Walks, noting that the submitted assessments have not properly taken into account the range of effects resulting from adverse impacts of the proposals on rights of way and permissive paths, in particular three Stepping Out Walks, and have not fully mitigated for those effects. These walks have been developed over 20 years, are actively promoted, and are known to be popular. Three existing Stepping Out Walks are affected:

Thorpe on the Hill (3 miles) - would experience moderate to major adverse visual effects across the lifespan;

Morton and Tunman Wood (4 miles) - would experience major adverse effects during construction continuing to moderate adverse significance up to at least winter in year 15;

Bassingham and Villages Circular (6.5 miles) - would experience moderate adverse effects during construction and up to year 1 of operation.

- S.15 In the Council's view the requirements of CLLP policy S48, policy T1 of the Bassingham Neighbourhood Plan, and policy 4 of the Thorpe on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan have not been satisfied. In addition, visual impacts would detract from user experience, with cross-cutting effects on health, recreation and the visitor economy – contrary to the Lincolnshire Walking Strategy, North Kesteven's Active Travel Strategy, and North Kesteven's Tourism Strategy.

6. Grid Connection Deliverability

- S.16 It is a matter of fact that the proposed development does not currently have a point of grid connection, and the proposals are dependent on securing a connection to the

proposed National Grid Navenby Substation (NGNS), which will need planning permission – though such an application has not yet been submitted to the District Council.

- S.17 The terms of the Development Consent Order as currently drafted would allow the proposed development to proceed with site clearance and various works, resulting in a range of adverse impacts - but with no certainty that the NGNS will secure planning permission.
- S.18 The Council considers that the applicant has not sufficiently addressed the requirements of paragraph 4.10.8 of EN-1, and the current submission lacks detail and comprises only a high-level commentary, failing to evidence that there are 'no obvious reasons' why the NGNS application will not be refused.

7. Battery Energy Storage System and Fire Safety

- S.19 The Council maintains its position that the BESS proposals involve new and evolving technologies with novel risks, especially to human health arising from fires, and the ExA should consider BESS safety issues through the course of the Examination, including the selection of battery technology type. Until it has been confirmed that all of Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service's requirements are agreed and a monitoring contribution secured, the proposals do not comply with CLLP policies S14 and S54.

8. Conclusions

- S.20 The Council raises formal objections across all seven topic areas. The Council considers that the terms of policy CLLP S14 have not been satisfied on a number of counts; and therefore the proposals do not benefit from the presumption in favour of ground-based solar development contained in that policy.
- S.21 In addition to the objections, there are other matters which the Council will continue to raise during the Examination, including amendments and queries regarding the draft DCO, and the need for a s.106 agreement to accompany any DCO which might be granted.



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Appendix B – Extracts from Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan (LTP5)

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Appendix D – Plan of Witham Valley Country Park (from NKDC website)

1.0 Terms of Reference

1.1 This document comprises North Kesteven District Council's Written Representation (WR) in relation to the proposed Fosse Green Energy solar farm, and is submitted to meet Deadline 1 of the Examination timetable. The content of the WR is consistent with the themes and overall conclusions set out in the Council's Local Impact Report (LIR) which will also be submitted at Deadline 1, and therefore should be read alongside it.

2.0 Scope, Purpose and Structure of the Written Representation

2.0 Following on from the positive, neutral and negative impacts of the development identified in the Council's LIR, this report has been prepared to highlight the ways in which the proposed development either aligns or conflicts with local and national policy based upon the applicant's submissions.

2.1 The Council's LIR contains information relating to the site planning history, the description of the proposals, the characteristics of the surrounding area and the overarching legislative and policy context relevant to the proposals including summaries of the relevant NPSs and relevant policies from the adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2023). It also sets out applicable local guidance and strategy adopted by the Council, as well as reference to themes and policies contained in the three made Neighbourhood Plans (Bassingham, Coleby and Thorpe on the Hill) applicable to the proposed Order Limits.

2.2 Consistent with the Council's LIR, this WR focusses on seven specific topic areas where to a greater or lesser degrees in each case, there are pronounced policy conflicts and tensions with national and local policy and guidance; or an absence of information (or departure from best practice assessment methodologies); or both, and which the Council considers should be brought to the Examining Authority's (ExA) attention. These comprise formal objections to the proposed development. As stated at paragraph 29.6 of the Council's LIR, these are:

- Impacts on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land
- Landscape and Visual Impact including Residential Visual Amenity
- Cultural Heritage impacts (above and below ground)
- Ecology, Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain (specifically BNG)
- Rights of Way/Recreation
- Grid Connection Deliverability
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and Fire Safety

2.5 The Council's LIR was debated by its Planning Committee on 16th December 2025 and who endorsed the submission of a WR framed around the above topic areas.

2.6 The LIR also records negative impacts in relation to cumulative effects, and these are dealt with in this WR under the topic headings of Landscape and Visual Impact, and Rights of Way / Recreation.

2.7 The Council also acknowledged in its LIR that there likely to be some ‘positive’ impacts in relation to general ecology and climate change; and impacts would be ‘neutral’ in relation to access and traffic, noise and vibration, water resources and flood risk, socioeconomics, and air quality. In respect of these topics deemed to have a neutral or positive effect, subject to the ExA taking account of statutory and other consultee comments where applicable, the Council is satisfied that in principle there are mitigation measures associated with these topic areas which are capable of resolution by the Requirements set out in Schedule 2 of the draft DCO. We will continue to engage with the applicant in relation to the wording of the Requirements; and to clarify the Council does not raise formal objection on the basis of these subject areas.

2.8 The LIR also set out the Council’s comments on the wording of the Requirements and Procedure for Discharge of Requirements as set out in Schedule 2 and 16 respectively of the draft DCO.

3.0 Impacts on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land

3.1 The Council’s LIR deals with this topic in section 14. Relevant Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP) policies are summarised in Table 8.1. In respect of BMV agricultural land, the relevant paragraphs of EN-1, EN-3 and the Written Ministerial Statement (15 May 2024) are set out in paragraphs 14.1 - 14.11; and relevant CLLP policies are summarised in paragraphs 14.14 – 14.14.

3.2 The Council has appointed Landscape agricultural consultants to provide it with specialist advice on soils and agriculture. The full comments by Landscape can be viewed at Appendix D to the Council’s LIR.

3.3 The LIR sets out the Council’s assessment of the application under a series of headings:

- Agricultural Land Classification – 14.16 – 14.17
- Site Selection – 14.18 – 14.19
- Scheme Design – 14.20 – 14.24
- Impacts – 14.25 – 14.39

3.4 The Council’s current position is summarised below.

Agricultural Land Classification

3.5 The submitted documents indicate that land of different agricultural land quality within the Principal site sits within the ranges set out in the table on the following page:

Classification	Area (ha)	Proportion of Principal Site
BMV land Grades 1 and 2	0	0%
BMV agricultural land Grade 3a	241 - 283	22.5 – 27.0%
Non-BMV agricultural land (grade 3b)	702.4 - 790	68.9 - 73.8%
Grades 4 and 5	0	0%
Non-agricultural land	15 - 40	1.5 - 3.7%

3.6 The Council notes that the Principal Site is well below the District and County averages, and does not contain any Grade 1 or 2 land. However, here is some uncertainty arising from different figures regarding land quality within the Principal Site provided in the submitted information :

- Table 6 in the Agricultural Land Classification Report ([APP-161](#))
- Table 12-15 and paragraphs 12.5.12 and 12.5.13 of ES Chapter 12 ([AS-016](#))
- paragraph 3.2.1 of the Planning Statement ([AS-098](#))
- paragraph 3.1.3b of ES Chapter 3: The Proposed Development ([AS-079](#)).

3.7 The Cable Corridor beyond the Principal Site has not been surveyed in detail to date, but broad scale mapping indicates that much of the route may have a similar overall balance of BMV to non-BMV land as the Principal Site, though there may be some areas of Grade 2 land encountered.

3.8 The Council seeks clarification from the Applicant on the correct figures to be used.

Site Selection

3.9 Given the existing policy context for solar farms - in particular that set out in the National Policy Statements EN-1 and EN-3, and in Policy S67 of the CLLP in relation to agricultural land quality - it is considered that the selection of the application site has taken a generally reasonable approach to this constraint. The detailed land classification survey of the application site (see above) indicates that the proportion of the land to be used would be substantially lower than some other solar NSIP schemes which have been granted consent.

3.10 Nevertheless, the Council remains concerned regarding the large quantities of agricultural land – including BMV – which solar farm developments are proposed to occupy for very lengthy periods of time. These concerns are not allayed by the uncertainties raised by the information on ALC data, as reported above.

Scheme Design

3.11 There is a lack of clarity within the application documents regarding quantification of the areas of land within different agricultural land quality grades which each element of the development would occupy (see further below, under 'Impacts'). It is not clear whether amendments to the scheme design could further reduce impacts on

agriculture and soils by occupying less BMV with the main elements of the development.

- 3.12 Subject to clarification from the Applicant on these points, the Council considers that the application appears to presents a scheme design which in general terms has had due regard to avoiding the use of BMV land as far as possible and seeking to strike a balance which also avoids other environmental constraints affecting the site, and is therefore largely in line with relevant national and local policy in this respect.

Impacts

- 3.13 The submitted information states that those parts of the Principal Site occupied by the solar arrays will cover approximately 456ha (43%), and the on-site substation together with the centralised BESS (if this option is chosen) will cover a further 8ha (0.75%). However, confirmation is sought on the quantify of land falling within different ALC grades for the different elements of the development, including the following:

- solar arrays
- solar stations
- BESS
- on-site substation
- other centralised plant and equipment
- inter-connecting cable routes
- tracks / access works.
- distinction for each of the above as regards those parts which will be “sealed over” for the duration of the development, and those which will not.

- 3.14 This will enable a clearer picture to be provided as to where the impacts of the development sit within the IEMA/ISEP guidelines say that the permanent sealing of land above 20ha (including temporary development where there would be a reduction in soil quality) is a major adverse (significant) effect.

- 3.15 Clarity should also be provided regarding the potential use of areas of land within the site which are neither proposed for infrastructure (solar arrays, substation etc), nor for specific biodiversity mitigation.

- 3.16 Concerns regarding the cumulative impact on BMV of a series of solar farm proposals on agriculture and BMV also remain, as it is considered that the applicant has downplayed this potential – including through not reviewing cumulative effects at the County-wide scale (see [AS-016](#), paragraph 12.7.43).

- 3.17 To ensure that potential damage to soils is minimised, and post-operation decommissioning is successful in returning the land to productive agricultural use (including BMV quality), it is considered important for the applicant to commit in the submitted Framework Soil Management Plan (FSMP, [AS-100](#)) and other management plans to the following:

- a) engaging an appropriately experienced soil specialist to be present on site to advise on, and supervise soil handling.

- b) carrying out suitable base-line surveys of each part of the site in advance of development in that area - in accordance with best practice, in line with accepted soil health standards. An example list of soil health factors which might be included in such a pre-entry soil condition survey is included at Appendix A to this LIR
- c) conservation grazing of the solar array areas could potentially provide both some degree of mitigation for impacts on agriculture and offer biodiversity benefits

Conclusions

- 3.18 It is possible that the outstanding concerns regarding negative effects on agriculture and BMV land identified in the LIR may be partly or wholly overcome if the applicant provides the clarifications and commitments set out above. However, currently the criteria of CLLP policy S67 have not all yet been met in full.
- 3.19 In relation to conservation grazing we note that the applicant has confirmed that they are not yet formally committing to such an arrangement post-consent. This was confirmed orally at the recent ISH. Consistent with our approach in relation to other NSIP scale solar farms in North Kesteven District, our position is that mitigation should be developed in line with 'BRE (2014) Agricultural Good Practice Guidance for Solar Farms' including the grazing densities set out under the sub-heading of 'Agricultural grazing for maximum production'. We would encourage the applicant to seek, and evidence, a contract with a grazier and to set out further principles for interested parties' review in subsequent updates to the Framework Soil Management Plan and Framework Landscape and Ecological Management Plan as necessary.

4.0 Landscape and Visual Impact (and Residential Visual Amenity)

- 4.1 The Council's LIR sets out the relevant national and local planning policies. The relevant paragraphs of EN-1 and EN-3 are set out in paragraphs 13.1-13.4 and relevant CLLP policies are summarised in Table 8.1, but dealt with more specifically in paragraphs 13.5-13.6.
- 3.20 Lincolnshire County Council has commissioned specialist advice from AAH consultants on the impacts of the solar farm on landscape and visual impacts in a shared arrangement with the District Council. AAH's report can be viewed at Appendix A to the Council's LIR.
- 4.2 The Council's LIR refers to the local impacts from development on landscape and visual impact at Section 13, under the following headings:
 - General comments – 13.9 – 13.14
 - Landscape Character Impacts – 13.15 – 13.21
 - Visual Impacts – 13.22 – 13.28
 - Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts – 13.29 – 13.36
- 4.3 The Council's current position, including comments on the submitted ES Chapter 10 Landscape and Visual Amenity (referred to in this LIR as the LVIA) ([APP-035](#)) is summarised below.

General Comments

- 4.4 AAH are satisfied with the scope and approach of the submitted assessments. Remaining concerns relate largely to judgements on findings, including:
- Clarification on the assumed screen planting growth rates, and whether these allow for failures – this may affect the efficacy of mitigation for landscape and visual impacts
 - lack of recognition of potential adverse effects of using tall hedgerows as screening
 - the need for additional information on the effects of necessary periodic and large scale / wholesale equipment replacement.

Landscape Character Impacts

- 4.5 The submitted LVIA ([APP-035](#)) identifies a range of significant adverse effects on landscape character of the Principle Site and Cable Corridor, as well as national and regional landscape character areas at the construction stage. These effects are assessed to have reduced substantially by year 1 of the operational stage. However, even by Year 15 when the screen planting is expected to be fully effective, there remain moderate adverse (significant) adverse effects on the area of the Principle Site, and on Local Landscape Character Areas LLCA 03: Tunman Hill and LLCA 08: Thurlby Fenland. AAH also consider that the land use change would result in residual moderate adverse (significant) effects across all areas directly affected by the development.

Visual Impacts

- 4.6 The submitted LVIA ([APP-035](#)) identifies major adverse (significant) visual effects at the construction stage for the residents of Church Farm and Low Barn, as well as for recreational users of a number of public rights of way; with moderate adverse (significant) effects for a much larger number of residents, users of other public rights of way, and drivers along Clay Lane. By Year 1 of the operation, these effects are assessed to have reduced substantially, with major adverse effects limited to users of six public rights of way; and moderate adverse (significant) effects limited to four residential properties, a limited number of public rights of way, and drivers along Clay Lane.
- 4.7 By Year 15 - when the screen planting is expected to be fully effective – the LVIA finds that major adverse (significant) visual effects would only remain in the winter period for recreational users of a group of four public footpaths west of Thorpe on the Hill, and during winter and summer for users of a path at Aubourn. Moderate adverse (significant) effects would also occur for residents of Grange Cottage (winter), and other paths near Thorpe on the Hill.
- 4.8 It is noted that significant adverse visual effects are predicted to remain well into the operational phase (including some throughout the 60 year duration) of the development, including for users of footpaths and roads which form part of three Stepping Out Walks (discussed later in this LIR). As identified above, there is

concern that the assessment relies on estimated screen planting growth – it is not clear that the proposals make sufficient allowance for failures and the need for replanting. In addition, there is also concern that some of this screen planting itself may cause adverse visual effects by blocking or foreshortening currently open, relatively uninterrupted views – thereby appearing out of place in what is otherwise an open landscape.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

- 4.9 AAH take issue with the findings of the submitted LVIA ([APP-035](#)) in respect of cumulative impacts with the four other NSIP solar farm proposals in the area which are at various stages of the DCO process: Springwell Solar, Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park, One Earth Solar Farm, and Leoda Solar Farm Ltd. AAH's view is that the landscape character of the local, and potentially regional area, may be completely altered over the operational period – changing from a predominantly agricultural landscape to one which is characterised by a mix of agriculture and renewable energy infrastructure. This would be an issue when experienced sequentially for visual receptors travelling through the landscape and experiencing repeated views and presence of large scale solar.

Residential Visual Amenity

- 4.10 The LVIA ([APP-035](#)) finds that during construction a total of 17 residential receptors assessed (including groups of houses) would experience significant adverse visual effects (2 major, and 15 moderate); reducing to 2 at Year 1 of operation (Housham Wood Farm, Church Farm and Low Barn), with none at Year 15 of operation, when screen planting is expected to have matured.
- 4.11 Although AAH agree it is unlikely any of the 29 residential receptors assessed in the LVIA ([APP-035](#)) would reach the recognised Residential Visual Amenity Threshold, these findings – together with the concerns expressed about the reliance placed on successful screen planting referred to above - are of concern to the Council. As AAH recommend, the Council considers that these effects and the potential to reduce residential amenity impacts even further – possibly through design changes and additional planting – should be explored through the examination's scrutiny of the application.

Conclusions on landscape character and visual impacts

- 4.12 As set out in paragraphs 13.37 – 13.40 of the LIR, the Council considers that there would be significant adverse effects on landscape character and the visual amenity at all main phases of the scheme (construction, operation year 1, operation year 15). Some of these effects are considered to be both understated in the LVIA; and very long term, meaning that perhaps they should be considered as permanent. The cumulative impacts of the proposals with other large scale solar energy schemes either submitted, or pending such, are also understated.
- 4.13 The Council recommends that the risks associated with possible over-reliance on mitigation planting success should be overcome by amending the submitted

Framework Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (FLEMP, [AS-101](#)) to ensure that the detailed LEMPs cover an extended period.

- 4.14 Unless and until the points raised by AAH have been addressed - including changes to the LEMP and mitigation proposals if necessary – the Council considers that the development has not done enough to satisfy the requirements of CLLP policy S14, S53 and S66 (along with the applicable parts of the three Neighbourhood Plans referred to in section 9 of the Council’s LIR) to ensure that it represents high quality sustainable design which contributes positively to local character and landscape.

5.0 Cultural Heritage Impacts

- 5.1 The Council’s LIR sets out the relevant national and local planning policies. The relevant paragraphs of EN-1 and EN-3 are set out in paragraphs 16.1-16.4, and relevant CLLP policies are summarised in Table 8.1, but dealt with more specifically in paragraphs 16.5 and 16.6 of the LIR.

- 5.2 The Council’s LIR refers to the local impacts from development on cultural heritage at Section 16 in paragraphs 16.8 – 16.21, under the following headings:

- Above-ground heritage assets
- Archaeology

- 3.21 The Council has an arrangement with Lincolnshire County Council for the provision of archaeological advice on behalf of NKDC. The Council supports the views of the LCC’s Historic Environment (Infrastructure) Officer which can be viewed at Appendix C to the Council’s LIR. The Council’s current position is summarised below.

Above Ground Heritage Assets (paragraphs 16.8 – 16.15 of the Council’s LIR)

- 5.3 Subject to the comments below, the Council is satisfied with much of the methodology, analysis and outcomes of the ES and development proposals in relation to the above-ground heritage assets – including the information set out in ES Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage ([APP-032](#)) and supporting documents such as ES Appendix 7-D Detailed Heritage Asset Setting Assessment ([APP-032](#)). However, the following points of concern remain.

- 5.4 Firstly, there has been a poor level of pre-application engagement with the Council by the applicant team on above-ground heritage assets. This may have been a factor in the second issue, which is that the Council’s request (for instance at the Preliminary Environmental Impact Review stage) for the study area for non-designated and designated heritage assets to be extended to 5km¹ has been ignored. It is therefore not possible to be sure that there are no above-ground heritage assets which would not be adversely affected by the proposals. In this regard, it is noted that Historic England (HE) does not normally comment on effects on Grade II Listed Buildings,

¹ The exception is the consideration of Lincoln Cathedral which is outside the normal 3km study area

which is left to local Councils to address. This was confirmed orally by HE at the recent ISH. Therefore sole reliance on Historic England's views on the extent of the study area risks omitting consideration of impacts on relevant assets, which, at their own confirmation, fall out of the scope of HE's advice.

5.5 Thirdly, there are deficiencies in the scope and detail of the assessments carried out, in relation to the following:

- a) the settings assessments for designated heritage assets Morton Manor and Morton Grange (both Grade II Listed), and River Farmhouse, Norton Disney (Grade II Listed) and Grange Cottage, Aubourn (Grade II Listed) – see paragraph 16.13 of the Council's LIR
- b) inaccuracies and omissions relating to designated and non-designated heritage assets Coleby Hall Registered Park and Graden, Coleby Conservation Area, Househam Wood Farm and Housham Grange – see paragraph 16.13 of the Council's LIR.

Archaeology (paragraphs 16.16 – 16.21 of the Council's LIR)

5.6 Broadly, the Council supports the concerns of LCC's archaeological advisers set out in Appendix C to the LIR. Concerns are raised regarding the potential for various works and activities to damage archaeological resources, which have not been addressed to date in the submitted assessments – especially for areas of the site with unknown potential. This means that it cannot be said with confidence that the currently proposed development design and the archaeological mitigation strategy are adequate. Further trial trenching is necessary in advance of any grant of consent.

5.7 In short, the baseline of information is not sufficient to properly show how the assessments have supported the design of either the development or an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy, as advised at section 3.1 of the EIA Scoping Opinion (APP-119). It is much preferred that sufficient trial trenching is undertaken across the full Order Limits to provide the essential baseline evidence to design a reasonable and fit-for-purpose mitigation strategy. Post-consent trenching leaves a high degree of risk, with the potential for archaeological works to impact the construction programme and budget.

5.8 At present, the ES concludes that no significant residual effects on the archaeological resource are predicted during the construction of the development. The Historic Environment (Infrastructure) Officer's view is that, based on the information gathered to date, this is incorrect. Potential buried archaeological remains have yet to be located, identified and characterised, as there is not yet sufficient baseline evidence for an informed understanding of the significance of surviving archaeology within the Order Limits.

Conclusions on Cultural Heritage

5.9 The Council considers that the baseline information in relation to cultural heritage is insufficient to inform the design of the development, including appropriate and sufficient mitigation proposals. Some effects on assets have either not been addressed, or are underplayed in the ES. Therefore it is not possible to conclude that there are no significant residual adverse effects on cultural heritage. Until these points have been addressed, it is not possible to say that the proposals satisfy CLLP policy S14, S53, and key policy S57 'The Historic Environment' in respect of the need to protect, conserve and take opportunities to enhance the historic environment, including the protection of assets and their settings - including both designated and non-designated assets.

6.0 Biodiversity Net Gain

6.1 In respect of ecology and biodiversity, the Council's LIR sets out the relevant national and local planning policies. The relevant paragraphs of EN-1 and EN-3 are set out in paragraphs 15.1-15.3; and relevant CLLP policies are summarised in Table 8.1, but dealt with more specifically in paragraphs 15.4 to 15.10 of the LIR.

6.2 The Council's LIR refers to the local impacts from development on ecology under a number of headings covering paragraphs 15.12 – 15.20. Specifically, Biodiversity Net Gain is dealt with in paragraphs 15.12 - 15.24.

3.22 The Council has an arrangement with Lincolnshire County Council to share advice from LCC's in-house ecological adviser, which can be viewed at Appendix B to the Council's LIR.

6.3 The Council's position is that the ecological information and assessments accompanying the application provide a reasonable summary of ecological interest features and likely significant effects, mitigation, and residual effects of the proposed development. If the full suite of avoidance and mitigation measures are carried out effectively, the proposals would have a negative impact on ecology during the construction phase.

6.4 However, if all of the proposed enhancements are delivered promptly and effectively, these adverse impacts may prove to be short term, and the development has the potential to lead to positive effects for ecology and nature conservation over the 60 year operational lifespan of the development.

6.5 Much depends in that respect on the successful preparation and implementation of a comprehensive scheme of biodiversity mitigation and enhancements; which in turn requires a rigorously prepared baseline assessment and evaluation. As set out at paragraphs 15.22 – 15.24 of the LIR, and reported by the District Council's Principal Ecology and Wildlife Officer, there are a number of potentially significant omissions from the applicant's BNG submissions. This means that the baseline metric and proposals cannot be accepted as accurate and sufficient at this stage. Until those

concerns have been resolved satisfactorily (in accordance with Central Lincolnshire's BNG guidance and national guidance), it is not possible to say that the scheme satisfies the requirements of the following policies of the CLLP:

- S59: Green and Blue Infrastructure Network
- S60: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- S61: Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains

6.6 As part of Issue Specific Hearing 1, it was proposed that discussions between the ecological advisers to the applicant, the County Council and the District Council on this topic should be held as soon as possible following publication of Local Impact Reports and Written Representations at Deadline 1. The District Council welcomes this approach.

7.0 Rights of Way / Recreation

7.1 North Kesteven District Council's overall position on the proposed development's effects on public rights of way and permissive access is set out in section 17 of its Local Impact Report (LIR). The Council's LIR sets out some of the relevant national and local planning policies for this topic, including paragraphs of EN-1 and EN-3 (paragraphs 17.2 - 17.4); and relevant CLLP policies are summarised in Table 8.1, but dealt with more specifically in paragraph 17.5 of the LIR.

7.2 Although the Council defers to Lincolnshire County Council on most matters related to the statutory rights of way network, the LIR raises concerns particularly in relation to the Stepping Out Walks which the Council promotes. Potential effects are discussed in paragraphs 17.8 – 17.23 of the LIR, and include not just public access *per se*, but also the potential for impacts on the character and value of the experience of users – not least as a result of visual effects - with consequences for recreation, public health, and the tourism economy (see also LIR sections 19 'Transport and Access', 23 'Socio Economics' and 26 'Cumulative Effects').

7.3 However, following on from the discussions at the Preliminary Meeting and at Issue Specific Hearing 1 under item 3.5 of the agenda, it was recognised that the Council's concerns covered a range of issues; and the Council was asked to provide the full policy basis for consideration of potential effects on the 'Stepping Out Walks'; along with a plan¹ showing how these relate to the rights of way and permissive paths proposed as part of the Fosse Green Energy project. Therefore this section of the Council's WR explains the overall policy framework in greater scope and detail, before identifying the Stepping Out Walks and noting the potential impacts and effects of the proposals on those walks.

¹ This plan will be submitted as a separate item at Deadline 1 of the Examination

Policy and Guidance

- 7.4 Planning policy of direct relevance to public access and rights of way issues surrounding solar farm developments is contained in National Policy Statements (NPS) and the elements of the local development plan. In addition, NKDC considers that other local strategies are relevant to the consideration of the effects of the development on public access, providing context and information to assist in the planning balance exercise.

EN-1 – Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy

- 7.5 Paragraph 5.11.24 of EN-1 states that the Secretary of State should consider imposing requirements to ensure the functionality and connectivity of the green infrastructure network is maintained; with necessary works to mitigate any adverse impacts and *‘... where appropriate, to improve that network and other areas of open space including appropriate access to National Trails and other public rights of way and new coastal access routes.’* It may be necessary to ensure that adverse effects are mitigated or compensated for by using planning obligations.
- 7.6 Paragraph 5.11.30 notes the importance of rights of way and other access rights to land – and advises that the Secretary of State *‘... should expect applicants to take appropriate mitigation measures to address adverse effects on coastal access, National Trails, other rights of way and open access land and, where appropriate, to consider what opportunities there may be to improve or create new access.’*

EN-3: National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure

- 7.7 Paragraph 2.10.43 of EN-3 encourages applicants to minimise the visual impacts of development on users of existing public rights of way. In connection with this, footnote 89 highlights that screening introduced to minimise views of solar developments may impact on the ability of users to appreciate the surrounding landscape.
- 7.8 EN-3 paragraph 2.10.44 states that:

‘Applicants should consider and maximise opportunities to facilitate enhancements to the public rights of way and the inclusion, through site layout and design of access, of new opportunities for the public to access and cross proposed solar development sites (whether via the adoption of new public rights of way or the creation of permissive paths), taking into account, where appropriate, the views of landowners.’

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP)

- 7.9 The CLLP includes the following relevant policy set out on the next page:

Policy S48: Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

Development proposals should facilitate active travel by incorporating measures suitable for the scheme from the design stage. Plans and evidence accompanying applications will demonstrate how the ability to travel by foot or cycle will be actively encouraged by the delivery of well designed, safe and convenient access for all both into and through the site. Priority should be given to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, people with impaired mobility and users of public transport by providing a network of high quality pedestrian and cycle routes and green corridors, linking to existing routes and public rights of way where opportunities exist, that give easy access and permeability to adjacent areas.

Proposals will:

- a) protect, maintain and improve existing infrastructure, including closing gaps or deficiencies in the network and connecting communities and facilities;
- b) provide high quality attractive routes that are safe, direct, legible and pleasant and are integrated into the wider network;
- c) ensure the provision of appropriate information, including signposting and way-finding to encourage the safe use of the network;
- d) encourage the use of supporting facilities, especially along principle cycle routes;
- e) make provision for secure cycle parking facilities in new developments and in areas with high visitor numbers across Central Lincolnshire; and
- f) consider the needs of all users through inclusive design.

- 7.10 CLLP supporting paragraph 8.3.1 emphasises the potential benefits of walking, including to the health and physical fitness of the population. CLLP paragraph 8.3.7 states that developments must integrate sustainable forms of transport into their designs, including consideration of the quality of walking environments to ensure routes are safe, legible and attractive; with good connections into the existing public rights of way network.

Thorpe on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2036 (made 2018)

- 7.11 This plan includes policy Policy 4: Green Spaces and Green Infrastructure, which states that:

- 1. Development should protect public rights of way and the enhancement of public rights of way will be supported.*
- 2. Where necessary to mitigate the impact of a development proposal, proportionate contributions will be sought to improve existing or deliver new green spaces or other green infrastructure. The delivery of new, or improvements to, green spaces or green infrastructure will be supported.*

7.12 The supporting text at paragraphs 6.4 – 6.6 emphasises the value placed on the network of access routes in the area, including benefits they bring to physical and mental health, connectivity, leisure, sense of place, visitor attractions and landscape character.

7.13 Policy 5: Landscape and Views goes on to state that:

Development outside the village curtilage should not reduce the separate identity of Thorpe on the Hill by reducing the existing gap between the village curtilage and the A46; and must respect the unique layout and pattern of the enclosure landscape of Thorpe on the Hill, as well as field boundaries such as hedges and trees. Development must also take account of the important views identified on Map 5. The preservation and enhancement of these views will be supported.

7.14 Supporting paragraph 6.13 notes that Map 5 shows distinctive views that need to be considered in development proposals, and which are described in further detail in Appendix 2 of the plan.

7.15 Extracts from the Neighbourhood Plan are set out at Appendix G2 to the Council's LIR. Bassingham Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2036 (made 2017)

7.16 This plan includes policy ES5, which states that:

Any proposal requiring a planning application for energy generating schemes and infrastructure using renewable energy sources, and new Renewal Energy Scheme development will be supported in the Neighbourhood Plan Area provided that: ...

- *The siting, scale and design of any energy generating infrastructure does not compromise public safety, allows continued safe use of public rights of way, and does not adversely affect existing amenities.*
- *Any technologies and infrastructure used to generate energy should not detract from the rural, visual and historic character of the village and the surrounding landscape setting and environment.*

7.17 Policy T1 states that:

Where it is appropriate and proportionate, planning applications should be accompanied by information which demonstrates how the following considerations have been addressed:

- *Provision of safe walking and cycling routes in the immediate area of the site with consideration given to the need to maintain and enhance walkable access to services and facilities in the village, and to the surrounding open countryside;*

- *Opportunities to extend existing routes for walkers and cyclists, including routes linking into the surrounding countryside, as well as into the village, and to accommodate people of all ages and abilities, including those with pushchairs and wheelchairs; ...*

7.18 In addition to the above planning policy statements and local development plan documents, there are other Council strategies and initiatives which are relevant to this issue, as summarised below.

Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5)

7.19 LTP5 is adopted by Lincolnshire County Council, and includes a number of policies arranged under identified themes and objectives. Relevant extracts of LTP5 are included as Appendix B to this WR.

7.20 Under Theme 3 ‘Promoting thriving environments’, the commentary to Objective 3c starting on page 77 of LTP5 includes Policy ENV5 which states that:

‘We will support, promote and provide sustainable access to our sensitive built and natural environments.’

7.21 This is noted to be important not least because, with reference to the visitor economy of Lincolnshire, *‘Improving sustainable access to our environmental and heritage assets would help to support this sector of our economy.’*

Lincolnshire Walking Strategy (LWS)

7.22 The LWS has been developed to support the overarching objectives of LTP5, and relevant extracts are included as Appendix C to this WR. The LWS sets out five themes, described on pages 7 - 10; with policies for each set out on pages 18 - 21. Relevant parts for this WR are identified below:

Theme 1: Infrastructure – it is noted on page 7 that *‘The lack of appropriate infrastructure is a key barrier to more people walking for more of their journeys or as a leisure activity.’*

Theme 2: Networks and connectivity – this states on page 8 that *‘... the potential for the role of walking when it comes to connecting people and place is often hindered by a lack of connectivity and incoherent networks.’*

... Linking to the Leisure and tourism theme (theme 4), the legibility of Lincolnshire’s walking network is important in supporting the visitor economy, ensuring people less familiar with their surroundings can make the most of walking routes as part of their excursion.’

Theme 4: Leisure and tourism – this theme is particularly relevant to the consideration of impacts of the development on the Stepping Out Walks, so the following extracts from LWS page 9 are repeated here:

'As a popular leisure and tourism activity, walking improves physical and mental health, can boost community spirit and supports a key part of the economy...

... The Walking Strategy will aim to build on the increase in people walking in their local area and seek to engage more people walking at least once a week as part of a health and active lifestyle.

Lincolnshire has a significant leisure and tourism offer for residents and visitors alike, with walking will benefit the economy, while providing health and wellbeing benefits to people and contributing has much to offer, such as scenic walking routes and destinations, both inland and along the coast.

The flat topography in many areas, particularly the coastal greater role in how people get around once they have arrived at their holiday accommodation.

More people walking as part of a leisure and tourism activity, whether they are residents or visitors, also provides an opportunity to boost the economy and support local businesses due to an increase in footfall. This is particularly important at present as many local businesses hope for a continued emergence from the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.'

- 7.23 In the tables on pages 18 – 21 of the LWS, the following policy of the LWS runs through Themes 1, 2 and 4:

'Develop an updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) that includes plans to enhance the existing PRoW network and develop new connections.'

- 7.24 In addition in relation to Theme 4, the following policies are considered relevant:

'Work with partners to promote walking routes and destinations, such as the Wolds, the Viking Way and the Coast, as part of Lincolnshire's tourism offer...

Build on the increase in local leisure walking during the lockdown periods by promoting local routes and green spaces.'

North Kesteven Active Travel Strategy 2025 – 2030 (see Appendix E to this WR for extracts)

- 7.25 Page 5 of this strategy sets out the aims and priorities. The overarching Aim is to 'Increase participation in walking, wheeling, and cycling by all in North Kesteven.' Priority Outcomes include:

- 1. Increase all residents' awareness of active travel and its associated health, wellbeing and environmental benefits.*
- 3. Provide more opportunities and infrastructure for active travel.*

7.26 The strategy identifies a range of health, environmental and economic benefits from active travel. It identifies Central Lincolnshire Local Plan policy S48 as the key framework to ensure active travel is addressed by requiring it to be designed into development proposals (see bottom of page 8). The Active Travel Strategy also explains how it relates to:

- the 2023 – 2026 North Kesteven Plan across all of the Council’s services;
- the 2021 – 2026 North Kesteven Sport and Physical Activity Strategy;
- the Council’s Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan;
- Lincolnshire County Council’s Local Transport Plan 5.

7.27 As part of Priority Outcome 1 above, part of the action plan for the Strategy at 4.1 on page 19 is to:

Investigate the potential for further development of ‘stepping out’ style routes and information for walking and wheeling.

North Kesteven Tourism Strategy 2024 – 2029 (see Appendix F to this WR for extracts)

7.28 This strategy identifies that “traditional tourism and the wider “Visitor Economy”” have a total estimated value of £201m and involves some 2.9m visits to North Kesteven in 2023. Tourism is seen as a priority for the District. It is reported that in the 2023 Tourism Survey, businesses and visitors ranked the following within the top five priority actions for the strategy:

- *‘Improvements to the North Kesteven walking / cycling / outdoor offer*
- *Focus on increasing visitor numbers from outside the district.*
- *Engage more with residents, encourage them to explore their local area and discover what is on their doorstep’.*

7.29 Under the heading of ‘Environment’ the strategy identifies the following priority:

Embed the Green Thread through businesses, residents, and visitors by promoting responsible tourism, minimise environmental impact, green business support and sustainable travel making NK a sustainable location.

7.30 The Council considers that the Stepping Out Walks play a small but significant role in delivering on the Tourism Strategy; and that adverse effects on the user experience have the potential to harm that delivery.

Witham Valley Country Park (WVCP)

7.31 The ExA issued a procedural decision letter ([PD-005](#)) dated requesting the submission of a plan or figure indicating the location of the WVCP relative to the Order Limits.

7.32 In its response to ([PD-005](#)), the applicant submitted document [AS-004](#) . This includes section 4, which describes the relationship of the WVCP to the proposed development;

and refers to a new plan showing WVCP and the Order Limits as Appendix E to the Planning Statement (now [AS-098](#)).

- 7.33 It is noted that the Planning Statement at paragraph 3.3.8 states that ‘*The entirety of the Principal Site is within the Witham Valley Country Park, which is a protected green space for recreation.*’ This might be seen as at odds with the statement in paragraph 4.1 of [AS-004](#) that ‘*The Proposed Development does not encroach upon any publicly accessible recreation areas.*’ The Council accepts that the proposed development does not impinge on identified assets such as Hartsholme Country Park, or Whisby Nature Reserve. However, the proposed development would have an impact on public rights of way and permissive paths which form part of the recreational offer within the WVCP, and which provide access to its features such as Tunman Wood.
- 7.34 It is the case that the WVCP is not a planning designation referred to in the development plan policies. However, the plan at Appendix D to this WR is published on the Council’s website ‘Countryside and open spaces’ pages. For orientation purposes, the ExA will note that the plan shows Tunman Wood, and settlements such as Thorpe on the Hill, Witham St Hughs, and Bassingham.
- 7.35 WVCP is a promoted concept, with an identified boundary and website promotion. The entirety of the main solar energy site, and a section of the main cable connection corridor, is within the WVCP mapped extent. The presence of the proposed development, and its impacts on public rights of way – especially the Stepping Out Walks – is considered to be a material consideration in the assessment of the application.

Comments on policy framework

- 7.36 The Council does not claim that there are specific NPS or development plan policies which specifically afford the Stepping Out Walks or the WVCP a higher status or greater level of protection than other statutory rights of way. Nevertheless, the Council does consider that the policy framework set out above seeks the protection and enhancement of the network of public access opportunities through development as an integral part of sustainability – with a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 7.37 In that context, the Stepping Out Walks have been brought together over a long period, and comprise a mix of statutory rights of way and permissive paths. They are actively promoted and managed by the Council in partnership with others in order to provide a focus to achieve the aforementioned wide range of sustainable development benefits. Therefore the Council considers that particular attention should be paid to the Stepping Out Walks when identifying the public access network baseline; assessing the effects of the development on that network; and taking opportunities to deliver appropriate enhancements. In the Council’s opinion, the identified impacts on the Stepping Out Walks should be factored into the planning balance when determining the DCO application for this development.

The Application documents

- 7.38 The application includes a range of documents which are relevant to public access issues.
- 7.39 Existing public rights of way are shown on AS-020 ES Figure 2-2 Public Rights of Way Plan (Rev 2). AS-024 ES Figure 3-3 Proposed Permissive Paths Plan (Rev 2) shows the permissive paths which the applicant intends to provide for the duration of the development, alongside the existing public rights of way. AS-007 'Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans' show both the existing rights of way, proposed changes (including diversions and closures), and also new permissive paths.
- 7.40 Under the heading of Existing Walking Facilities, Tables 13-1 and 13-2 in ES Chapter 13 Traffic and Transport (APP-038) lists existing public rights of way within the Order Limits; and paragraph 13.5.24 lists seven existing permissive paths within the Principal Site boundary:
- 15BCDE, 15BCD1, 17E42A, 15BCD0, 15BCCF, 15BC81 and 15BCC0
- 7.41 These are also listed at paragraph 12.5.33 of ES Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use (AS-016); and the Planning Statement (AS-098) also refers to seven permissive paths at paragraph 3.3.32. AS-016 also states that the study area for the assessment of effects on PRow users who might be affected by closures and diversions comprises all PRow and existing permissive paths located within the DCO site likely to be affected – and paragraph 12.5.9 describes a '*... network of numerous PRow and existing permissive paths ...*'. Paragraph 12.4.17 states that permissive path impacts during construction, operation and decommissioning have been considered. Paragraph 12.4.21 states that the assessment of effects includes effects on, *inter alia*:
- e. Local amenities and land use (including impacts on residential properties, business properties, tourism/visitor attractions, recreational facilities and open space, including PRow and permissive paths, community facilities and development land*
- 7.42 However, to date the Council has been unable to locate a plan within the application documents which identify and show these existing permissive routes.
- 7.43 Paragraph 6.3.173 of the Planning Statement (AS-098) states that construction impacts will be minimised by maintaining access along both public rights of way and existing permissive paths. APP-038 ES Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport states at 13.6.1 that construction phase impacts will be minimised by, *inter alia*:
- d. Maintaining access to and along PRow and the existing permissive paths or otherwise providing temporary or permanent PRow and permissive path diversion routes where necessary to avoid any closures or potential conflicts with the Proposed Development where possible. The diversion routes will be agreed with the local authorities prior to construction, and a Framework PRow-MP [EN010154/APP/7.14] has been prepared as part of the DCO application and contains further measures for PRow and permissive path management;*

7.44 Design Approach Document (APP-186) includes the following Design Principle 10:

The Proposed Development will enhance, where possible, the existing connectivity within the network of PRow through the provision of permissive paths and circular routes to be available for public use during the operation of the authorised development to improve accessibility

7.45 However, it is not clear that this has been translated into a Design Commitment in Appendix A so as to protect and enhance existing permissive routes, as opposed to the proposed permissive routes.

7.46 Paragraph 3.1.3 of the Framework Public Rights of Way Management Plan (Rev 1) (FPRoWMP, APP-195) states that the Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans (AS-007) show the permissive paths within the DCO site which may require management measures. However, although those plans show the proposed permissive routes, it is not clear that all of the existing permissive routes are identified.

7.47 Paragraph 3.5.10 of the FPRoWMP (APP-195) refers to a proposal to divert part of public footpath TOTH 13/1 on to an existing permissive route adjacent to the woodland edge. The FPRoWMP (APP-195) at paragraphs 1.2.6 and 3.5.3 refer the reader to the Framework Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (FLEMP, AS-101) for proposals for managing permissive paths during the operational phase. In the FLEMP (AS-101) permissive paths are dealt with in section 6. This emphasises the provision of new permissive paths, to be made available for '*... up to 364 days a year during the operation of the Proposed Development.*' (paragraphs 6.1.1 and 6.1.2). These permissive path provisions will cease at the end of the operational phase. Paragraph 6.1.3 refers to a network of PRow and existing permissive paths; but again, it is not clear which permissive paths the applicant is referring to.

7.48 Paragraph 6.1.4 the FLEMP states that "*A permissive path network, totalling approximately 9.5km ...*" will be provided across the Principal Site. The Planning Statement (AS-098) also refers to six permissive routes to be provided at paragraph 5.3.15. The Planning Statement identifies the permissive paths provided as a benefit of 'substantial' or 'moderate' weight in the planning balance (5.3.21, 6.2.3, 6.3.74, 6.3.105, 6.3.178, 6.3.179, 7.3.7).

7.49 The applicant has assessed some visual effects on rights of way users, including for the viewpoints identified on AS-059 ES Figure 10-7, and referred to in AS-120 ES Appendix 10-F Visual Assessment, listed in Table 1. APP-035 ES Chapter 10 Landscape and Visual Amenity states at paragraph 10.5.98 that recreation users of '*... PRow, Promoted Walking Routes and Cycle Routes*' are identified as forming a type of visual receptor; and this is repeated in Table 10-10. AS-098 Table 1 also includes '*Recreational Users (PRow, Promoted Walking Routes and Cycle Routes)*' as a sub-heading.

7.50 Permissive routes are not identified as recreational facilities within paragraphs 12.7.27 – 28 of ES Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use (AS-016). Paragraphs 12.7.29

– 12.7.34 do not appear to fully consider public rights of way in terms of the local community or tourist user experience during the operational phase of the development.

- 7.51 The Council has not been able to identify any place within the application documents which identify and assess the impacts of the proposals on the promoted Stepping Out network of walks. Therefore there is concern that the potential impacts on these promoted routes have not been adequately assessed and mitigated for where necessary. This includes both visual impacts on user experience (visitors and the local community), and consequences for both health and the visitor economy. These sorts of impacts may be repeated across other solar farm developments in the local area, and across the rest of North Kesteven District.

The Stepping Out Walks

- 7.52 As identified in the Council's Local Impact Report (see for instance paragraphs 17.16 – 17.18 and Appendix E), these walks have been developed over 20 years or so, and are currently promoted and maintained by a third party (Hill Holt Wood) to encourage public use. This includes the walks being available to download as PDF leaflets from the Hill Holt Wood website. The walks are actively monitored and maintained; and occasional guided walks are carried out with the assistance of a ranger.
- 7.53 The routes are monitored and known to be popular because they are well maintained, easily accessible, well signposted and waymarked with car-parking available in most instances. They are mostly undemanding in terms of terrain and therefore offer walkers of all ages and abilities the opportunity to get out and enjoy the countryside. Walking Tourism is an important part of the Council's tourism strategy and North Kesteven is promoted via 'The Heart of Lincs' brand and other 3rd party specialists as a destination for walkers. But it is also important to note that the Stepping Out network is also enjoyed by residents of the District - they are an important local amenity close to communities.
- 7.54 Three of the existing Stepping Out Walks have been identified as affected by the development. Published leaflets for each of these walks are included within Appendix E to the Council's LIR; but are also described below, along with a summary of how the application documents and proposals deal with the effects on the user experience.

A - Thorpe on the Hill

- 7.55 The published leaflet for this walk is contained in Appendix E1 to the Council's LIR. This circular walk of 3 miles (c.5km) is described as being "... *through woodland and open countryside, with lots of hedgerow birds and lovely views back to the village.*" The walk mainly runs along public rights of way TOTH 6/1, TOTH 6/2, TOTH 13/1, TOTH 7/3, TOTH 21/1 and TOTH 7/2. However, there is a section in the south-western part of the path (west of Housham Wood) which is shown as running off the public rights of way, along a permissive route.

- 7.56 In terms of the proposed alterations to the public rights of way network (shown on AS-007 Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plan), this walk would be largely unaffected. The proposed minor diversion to part of TOTH 13/1 shown on sheet 1 is not considered to be significant in itself.
- 7.57 A proposed permissive route is shown on AS-024 sheet 1 as running south-eastwards from the southern end of TOTH 13/1 to connect the western ends of TOTH 6/3 and TOTH 6A/1. The current Thorpe on the Hill Stepping Out Walk is shown as running along part of that permissive route.
- 7.58 A key concern of the Council would be in terms of the landscape and visual effects of the development on the experience of walkers using the route. Currently, views along the walk are largely of agricultural land and woodland, with trees and hedgerows around open arable fields; with some longer distance views. Thorpe on the Hill village is seen in that context.
- 7.59 The development would have a significant impact on the setting of the route, and thus the user experience. Table 3-1 of AS-120 (viewpoints 2, 33 and 34) finds that there would be adverse visual effects of moderate to major significance across the lifespan and stages of the development for users of paths TOTH 6/2, TOTH 6/3, TOTH 21/1 and TOTH 7/2 – all of which coincide with or are touched on by this walking route. Table 3-2 goes on to identify moderate adverse significant effects during construction and up to at least year 1; and also during decommissioning.

B - Morton and Tunman Wood

- 7.60 The published leaflet for this walk is attached to this WR as Appendix E2 to the Council's LIR. This circular walk of 4 miles (c.6km) is described as being "... *a peaceful journey, through open countryside and beautiful woodland.*" Within the Order Limits, the walk mainly runs along public rights of way TOTH12/1, TOTH 12/2, TOTH 12/3, TOTH 13/2, and TOTH 13/1. However, there is a section between the southern end of TOTH 6/3 and the eastern end of TOTH 11/1 which is shown as running off the public rights of way, along a permissive route.
- 7.61 In terms of the proposed alterations to the public rights of way network (shown on AS-007 Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plan), this walk would be largely unaffected. The proposed minor diversion to part of TOTH 13/1 shown on sheet 1 is not considered to be significant in itself.
- 7.62 A proposed permissive route is shown on AS-024 sheet 1 as running south-eastwards from the southern end of TOTH 13/1 to connect the western ends of TOTH 6/3 and TOTH 6A/1 (south east of Housham Wood Farm).
- 7.63 A further proposed permissive path is also shown connecting the aforementioned path, heading west from the point south-east of Housham Wood Farm to join the end of public footpath TOTH 11/1. This section of permissive path might offer an alternative

to part of the existing permissive route of the Morton and Tunman Wood Stepping Out Walk, albeit a somewhat longer one.

- 7.64 A key concern of the Council is in terms of the landscape and visual effects of the development on the experience of users of this walk. Currently, users along the walk enjoy undeveloped and sometimes longer distance views.
- 7.65 The development would have a significant impact on the setting of the route, and thus the user experience. Table 42 of AS-120 (viewpoint 29) finds that major adverse significant effects on users of TOTH 11/1 would occur during construction, and continue to be of moderate adverse significance up to at least winter in year 15 of operation; and returning to moderate adverse during decommissioning. Table 43 (viewpoints 30 and 31) finds major adverse significant effects on users of TOTH 12/3 during construction and up to at least year 1 of operation; and continuing at a moderate adverse level throughout the operational and decommissioning phases.
- 7.66 It should also be noted for both of the above walks, that the LVIA AS-120 Table 6 assesses the visual impacts on residents of Housham Wood Farm as of moderate adverse significance during construction, up to at least the first year of operation, and during decommissioning. This view point is very close to the routes of these two walks, where users might experience similar adverse effects.

C - Bassingham and Villages Circular

- 7.67 The published leaflet for this walk is contained in Appendix E3 to the Council's LIR. This circular walk of 6.5 miles (c.10km) is described as being through villages with "... *beautiful open expanses of arable farmland in between.*" The majority of the walk is away from the order limits to the south. However, the northern part skirts the proposed development, running along footpath NoDi 1/2 to the west of Bassingham; before using Clay Lane, a public road which heads south west towards the village of Norton Disney.
- 7.68 In terms of the proposed alterations to the public rights of way network (shown on AS-007 Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plan), this walk would be unaffected. A short circular permissive path is shown on AS-024 as running with a field west of Clay Lane next to the northern part of the walk.
- 7.69 However, a key concern of the Council would be in terms of the landscape and visual effects of the development on the experience of walkers using the route. Currently, views along this part of the walk are very open. Clay Lane is a single track road with no hedges either side for most of this section, giving views over open fields.
- 7.70 The development would have a significant impact on the setting of the route, and thus the user experience. Table 38 sets out an assessment of visual impacts on Viewpoint 22, which looks west from public right of way Bass 1/1, effectively along footpath NoDi 1/2 which forms part of this Stepping Out Walk. The assessment concludes that there would be moderate adverse significant effects on footpath users at least up until year

1 of operation, reducing to minor adverse by year 15 of operation and through decommissioning.

- 7.71 Perhaps more importantly, Table 55 of AS-120 (viewpoint 23) finds that there would be adverse visual effects of moderate significance during construction and up to at least year 1 of operation, falling to minor adverse from year 15 of operation and during decommissioning. However, this assessment relates to transitory effects on motorists, '*... experienced at speed and short lived*' using Clay Lane. It is suggested this places too low a value on the existing views when considering the experiences of walkers, who will spend longer traversing this area and taking in the landscape. Also, mitigation, in the form of screening on the north-western side of Clay Lane, has the potential to interrupt walkers' enjoyment of the distinctive character of this part of the route, by introducing barriers to longer distance views. As Table 55 notes, '*The views will change from open and long distance to channelled along the road*'.

Conclusions on rights of way and recreation

- 7.72 The Council considers that the applicant may not have identified all existing permissive routes which form part of the current public access network – they are not shown on the submitted plans; and the applicant has not demonstrated that it has taken into account potential effects on all existing permissive routes.
- 7.73 The Stepping Out Walks form an important part of the public access network for local residents and visitors in North Kesteven. They are well used, and offer benefits in terms of accessible recreation health, and to the visitor economy, thereby helping to deliver the aims and policies of the Local Transport Plan LTP5, the Lincolnshire Walking Strategy, the North Kesteven Active Travel Strategy 2025 – 2030 and the North Kesteven Tourism Strategy 2024 – 2029. These routes are promoted by the Council, and are consistent with, and sit within the identified Witham Valley Country Park.
- 7.74 Some adverse effects on the experience of users of public access routes, including three Stepping Out Walks, have been identified – particularly in relation to adverse visual impacts. However, the Stepping Out Walks have not been identified by the applicant as 'promoted routes', and it is it has not been shown that potential effects of the development on these routes has been properly taken into account.
- 7.75 Some 9.5km of new permissive routes have been proposed – but it is not clear whether these are in addition to all existing permissive routes, or whether some would replace existing routes, which is relevant to the 'planning balance' of benefits against harms. Opportunities to enhance the public access network have not been fully explored, and any potential benefits are temporary because they are time-limited to the life of the scheme.
- 7.76 The Council considers that the application has not fully assessed the potential health and economic impacts arising due to harmful effects on public access, including on user experience of the Stepping Out Walks. Impacts across a number of topic headings are reported in the LIR beyond section 17 Rights of Way and Permissive Access -

including at 13.26 (visual impacts), 19.4 (access and traffic), 23.16 (socio-economics). Therefore the LIR also refers to Stepping Out Walk impacts at 26.11 under the heading of Cumulative Effects.

7.77 Currently – and taking into account the full range of relevant policy documents and strategies identified above - the Council considers that the application has not demonstrated it would protect, maintain and take opportunities to improve the existing public access network, with particular reference to impacts on the experience of users of the Stepping Out Walks within and adjacent to the site. Ultimately, the Council considers that the proposals as set out do not make adequate provision to satisfy:

- a) criteria a) – c) of CLLP policy S48;
- b) Policy T1 of the Bassingham Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2036 (albeit that the main adverse impacts on the Bassingham and Villages Stepping Out walk would occur along part which is not within the Bassingham NP area); and
- c) Policy 4 of the Thorpe on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2036

7.78 The Council considers that the applicant should do more to show that it has understood and responded to the available opportunities to protect and enhance recreation and access matters, in accordance with paragraphs 5.11.24 and 5.11.30 of EN-1, and paragraphs 2.10.43 and 2.10.44 of EN-3.

7.79 Therefore District Council seeks additional mitigation and enhancements which could comprise some or all of the following:

- a) Permanent dedication as statutory rights of way of routes which are currently proposed as temporary permissive paths – especially where these could close existing gaps in the footpath network. As an alternative, the applicant could consider securing permissive path access in perpetuity.
- b) Enhanced waymarking and information boards along the Stepping Out Walks affected
- c) Improved surfacing, gates and stiles where appropriate
- d) Contributions to maintenance
- e) Assistance with promotional activities and guided walks
- f) Assistance with monitoring and surveying – with a plan to provide additional mitigation if necessary and feasible
- g) The above measures may require commitments in the form of planning obligations under s.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

8.0 Grid Connection Deliverability

- 8.1 This topic is addressed in section 28 of the Council's LIR (paragraphs 28.1 – 28.7); and was discussed as part of Issue Specific Hearing 1, as well as touched on in Issue Specific Hearing 2.
- 8.2 The Council currently has no additional information or updates to offer regarding the timing and content of the anticipated planning application for the National Grid Navenby Substation (NGNS). National Grid's website (www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/navenby-substation) notes that 'we expect to complete all the necessary surveys to support our application by late 2025, and are therefore aiming to submit our planning application to North Kesteven District Council in early 2026'.
- 8.3 The Council's position is, in essence quite straightforward. It is a matter of fact that the proposed development does not currently have a point of grid connection and no alternatives have been identified. This was confirmed orally at ISH1. If the proposed development is allowed to proceed before there is sufficient certainty that the NGNS will be built and provide a grid connection in a timely fashion, there is a risk that significant environmental harm will result without realising the sustainable development benefits which are claimed. This would include situations where preliminary site preparation works (including things like vegetation clearance and the erection of fencing) might be undertaken, but the grid connection might not be provided promptly thereafter or indeed at all. In this regard Part 1 (2) of the draft DCO defines the preliminary works which would be exempted from the definition of 'development' (APP-016).
- 8.4 Without prejudice to the submission and assessment of National Grid's planning application, any grant of planning permission for NGNS would be a significant regulatory milestone, providing significantly greater certainty in terms of whether the grid connection would be provided within a reasonable timescale. However, any such grant under Town and Country Planning legislation should not be treated as a foregone conclusion, especially as the planning application and its detailed supporting documents are not as yet available – but in any case will be subject to careful scrutiny by the District Council, and the timescales for its determination are as yet unclear; notwithstanding that the National Grid's website also suggests that the planning application will be determined in 'Spring 2026'.
- 8.5 Therefore (as included in the table at 27.11 of the LIR) the Council seeks the inclusion of an additional Requirement in Schedule 2 of the dDCO to ensure that no part of the development (including pre-construction site clearance and preparation works/preliminary works as defined) shall commence unless and until planning permission has been granted for the proposed NGNS. The Council has taken a similar approach during the examination into the Springwell Solar Farm NSIP which was held in 2025 and, if granted, is also proposed to connect to the NGNS.
- 8.6 The Council would also like to reiterate EN-1, which advises that the connection of a proposed electricity generation plant to the electricity network is an important

consideration for applicants wanting to construct a generation plant such as a solar farm. It envisages that *'... wherever reasonably possible, applications for new generating stations and related infrastructure should be contained in a single application to the Secretary of State or in separate applications submitted in tandem which have been prepared in an integrated way, as outlined in EN-5. This is particularly encouraged to ensure development of more co-ordinated transmission overall.'* (paragraph 4.11.7). Paragraph 4.10.8 then requires that (where separate applications are proposed) *'... the applicant should include information on the other elements and explain the reasons for the separate application confirming that there are no obvious reasons for why other elements are likely to be refused.'*

- 8.7 Pages 233 and 234 of the applicant's Planning Statement (AS-098) deals with this very simplistically, noting that 'whilst the proposed National Grid substation near Navenby does not form part of this DCO application and is subject to a separate decision-making process under the Town and County Planning Act 1990, there is no indication that this development will not come forward, with the website for the project stating planning submission will be in "Late 2025" (at the time of writing)'.
- 8.8 The Council does not consider that such high level commentary is sufficient to evidence that there are 'no obvious reasons' why the NGNS application will not be refused (as per paragraph 4.10.8 of EN-1) and we would suggest that this a key matter for the Examining Authority to engage with.

9.0 Battery Energy Storage System and Fire Safety

- 9.1 The Council's LIR sets out the relevant national and local planning policies and guidance in relation to the BESS under the heading of Major Accidents and Disasters in section 25. In respect of battery storage and fire safety, EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 are silent on this matter, however, there is guidance produced by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the National Fire Chiefs Council as set out in paragraph 25.12 of the Council's LIR. CLLP policies are summarised in Table 8.1, and paragraphs 25.10 and 25.11 of the LIR refer to specific relevant policies S53 and S54.
- 9.2 The Council's LIR refers to the local impacts from development arising from the BESS in paragraphs 25.13 – 25.23.
- 9.3 The Council largely defers to the views of the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) on matters related to BESS safety. Following on from the discussion on this topic as part of Issue Specific Hearing 2, the Council maintains its position that the BESS proposals involve new and evolving technologies, with novel risks especially the risk to human health arising from fires.
- 9.4 The perception of risk is capable of being a material planning consideration. Research suggests that LFP cells have an advantage over other lithium-ion chemistries in relation to thermal and chemical stability, which improves battery safety, as well as having a higher charge/discharge cycle life. As above the Council

will defer to comments from LFRS and also advise the ExA to have regard to advice from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). However, the Council's view is that the ExA should consider BESS safety issues through the course of the Examination, including the selection of battery technology type, and possible measures to control this by requiring installation of the safest system available at the detailed design stage, if DCO is granted.

- 9.5 Currently, the Council considers that until it has been confirmed that all of LFRS's requirements are agreed, and a monitoring contribution secured, the proposals do not comply with CLLP policies S14 and S54.

10. Conclusions

10.1 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP) offers general support for ground-based solar photovoltaic and associated infrastructure / battery energy storage in policies S14 'Renewable Energy' and S16 'Wider Energy Infrastructure'.

10.2 However, that support is not unqualified. The Council has raised concerns in relation to a number of topic areas set out earlier in this WR, and for the avoidance of doubt, these comprise formal objections to the proposed development. The concerns are summarised below:

- Impacts on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land – outstanding issues mean that the applicant has failed to fully satisfy the criteria in CLLP policy S67
- Landscape and Visual Impact including Residential Visual Amenity – there would be significant long term adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity (including cumulative effects with other proposed solar farms in the area), and an over-reliance on mitigation planting, such that CLLP policies S53 and S66 have not been satisfied
- Cultural Heritage impacts (above and below ground) – there are gaps in the assessments of impacts on both above-ground and below-ground (archaeological) heritage assets, meaning that the proposals do not satisfy CLLP policies S53 and S67
- Ecology, Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain (specifically BNG) – whilst the proposals have the potential to deliver benefits for biodiversity, the current assessment of BNG is deficient, so that the requirements of CLLP policies S59, S60 and S61 have not been met
- Rights of Way/Recreation – the assessments have not properly taken into account the range of effects resulting from adverse impacts of the proposals on rights of way and permissive paths, in particular three Stepping Out Walks, and have not fully mitigated for those effects – therefore the requirements of CLLP

policy S48, policy T1 of the Bassingham Neighbourhood Plan, and policy 4 of the Thorpe on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan have not been satisfied

- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and Fire Safety – the Council has concerns regarding fire safety, health risks, and the choice battery system, and notes that the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service also have unresolved concerns regarding this part of the development – so it is considered that CLLP policy S54 has not yet been satisfied.

10.3 CLLP policy S14 expresses a presumption in favour of ground-based solar developments and associated infrastructure, including commercial large-scale installations, ‘... *unless there is a clear and demonstrable significant harm arising; or the proposal will take place on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land ...*’. The above harms and topic-based policy conflicts mean that the Council considers that the terms of policy CLLP S14 have not been satisfied on a number of counts; and therefore the proposals do not benefit from the presumption in policy. Some of the objections span both individual and cumulative impacts along with other proposed developments; including other solar NSIP projects

10.4 In addition, and comprising a seventh ground for objection, The applicant confirmed at the January 2026 ISH hearings that they do not have an alternative point of connection. the Council has set out its concerns relating to Grid Connection Deliverability. This is because in order to generate the renewable energy benefits claimed, the proposals are dependent on securing a connection to the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation (NGNS). The NGNS will need planning permission, but an application has not yet been submitted to the District Council. The terms of the Development Consent Order as currently drafted would allow the proposed development to proceed with site clearance and various works, resulting in a range of adverse impacts – but with no certainty that the NGNS will secure planning permission so that it can be built. The Council considers that this is unacceptable in planning terms, and objects to the DCO unless and until a requirement is added (without prejudice) to prevent such a situation occurring.

10.5 The Council also considers that the applicant has not sufficiently addressed the requirements of paragraph 4.10.8 of EN-1 which requires that in the circumstances where separate applications are proposed/required (in this case a TCPA 1990 application for the NGNS) ‘... *the applicant should include information on the other elements and explain the reasons for the separate application confirming that there are no obvious reasons for why other elements are likely to be refused*’.

10.6 The Council’s position is that the current submission lacks detail in this regard and comprises only a high-level commentary. It does not, in the Council’s opinion, satisfy the EN-1 requirement to evidence that there are ‘no obvious reasons’ why the NGNS application will not be refused (paragraph 4.10.8 of EN-1) and we would suggest that this a key matter for the Examining Authority to engage with.

10.7 In addition to the objections set out above, there are other matters which the Council will continue to raise during the Examination. These include the following:

- a) Amendments and queries regarding the draft DCO – some of these were outlined at Issue Specific Hearing 2, and are the subject of a separate submission by the Council at Deadline 1.
- b) There is a need for s.106 agreement to accompany any DCO which might be granted – covering commitments in respect of the Stepping Out Walk impacts, Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring, and financial contributions to deliver against the applicant's recommendations within their Framework Employment, Skills, and Supply Chain Plan (APP-197).



**Application by Fosse Green Energy
Ltd for an order granting development
consent for the Fosse Green Energy
solar farm**

Written Representation
Appendices A - F

**by North Kesteven District Council
(ID FD1E96A6C)**

NKDC reference: 23/0325/NSIP

Planning Inspectorate reference: EN010154

January 2026



**Application by Fosse Green Energy
Ltd for an order granting development
consent for the Fosse Green Energy
solar farm**

Written Representation

Appendix A:

**Example soil health
assessment list**

by North Kesteven District Council

(ID FD1E96A6C)

NKDC reference: 23/0325/NSIP

Planning Inspectorate reference: EN010154

January 2026

Soil Health Assessments

In a healthy soil, the interactions between physical (soil structure and water balance), chemical (pH, nutrients and contaminants), and biological (including earthworms, microbes and plant roots) factors are considered to be optimal for the environment in that location.

Measuring soil health requires a combined approach that links the assessment of the chemical, physical and biological properties of soil.

It is recommended to consider a combination of:-

- Visual evaluation of soil structure (VESS)
- Soil texture
- Earthworm counts
- pH
- Nutrient status (typically N, P and K and some micronutrients and any contaminants)
- Soil organic matter / soil carbon
- Bulk density
- Infiltration/ hydraulic conductivity
- Water holding capacity
- Aggregate stability
- Porosity
- Soil structure + aggregate distribution

Other Measures to Consider

- Soil respiration
- Microbial/ fungal diversity
- Microbial biomass carbon

Some of these tests are simple and can be undertaken by hand on site using little more than a spade, but some assessments need technical input, such as laboratory testing. AHDB provide a useful document with spreadsheet checklist, attached.

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Visual assessment of soil structure (VESS)

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values	Management notes
Monitor	1 or 2	<p>CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING</p> <p>Good soil structure. Friable/crumby. Small round aggregates. Make a comparison with an area known to be poor (e.g. gateway) and likely to be good (e.g. hedge bottom). Consider including an assessment of subsoil. Assess regularly and especially where it has been necessary to traffic or cultivate the soil in wet conditions.</p>
Review	3	<p>REVIEW</p> <p>Adequate soil structure. Firm. Larger aggregates, some angular, but most aggregates break down. Make a comparison with an area that is known to be poor (e.g. gateway) and likely to be good (e.g. hedge bottom), including consideration of subsoil. Assess regularly and especially where it has been necessary to traffic or cultivate the soil in wet conditions.</p>
Investigate	4 or 5	<p>INVESTIGATE</p> <p>Poor soil structure. Compact or very compact with impacts on rooting observed. Serious compaction or runoff must be dealt with quickly. Major compaction problems are more commonly tackled as part of the cultivation operations for the next crop. Check subsoil layers; alleviating compaction in surface layers may be of limited value if subsoil has suffered compaction damage. It is essential that all operations to address poor structure are done under the right soil conditions. Working soil in wet conditions will usually make the problem worse.</p>

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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pH

Select the correct table below for your land use: Table 1 for cropping and Table 2 for grassland.

Table 1. Cropping

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values	Management notes
Investigate	≤5.49	INVESTIGATE Potential problems with aluminium toxicity Liming is usually required every 3–5 years to maintain pH, it will need to be done more frequently on lighter land. Where large changes in pH are required, a long-term liming programme may be needed.
Review	5.5-6.49	REVIEW Ensure there is a robust liming plan in place on non-calcareous soils to maintain pH.
Monitor	6.5-7.49	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING On non-calcareous soils, ensure that the lime rates used in the liming plan are not over-correcting. It may be better to use lower rates more often and maintain pH at 7 unless if there are very sensitive crops (such as oilseed rape, sugar beet, peas) in the rotation.
Review	≥7.5	REVIEW Potential nutrient interaction issues. Monitor crops for trace element deficiencies; foliar feeds will be more effective than soil applications in high pH soils.

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Table 2. Grassland

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values	Management notes
Investigate	≤5.49	INVESTIGATE Where biodiverse acid grasslands are not the management aim, liming is usually required every 3-5 years to maintain pH, it will need to be done more frequently on lighter land. Where large changes in pH are required, a long-term liming programme may be needed.
Review	5.5-5.99	REVIEW Ensure that there is a robust liming plan in place on non-calcareous soils to maintain pH.
Monitor	6.0-6.49 6.5–7.49	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING Liming may be needed for reseeds. Ensure that there is a robust liming plan in place on non-calcareous soils to maintain pH.
Review	≥7.5	REVIEW Potential nutrient interaction issues. Where high pH soils are used for livestock production, trace mineral deficiencies including cobalt, manganese, zinc and copper are aggravated as a result of the high pH soils. Hay (or silage) may have high Ca content and lower than desirable Mg or K contents and a high calcium to phosphorus ratio of the forage which can have negative impacts on livestock performance. These issues cannot be managed in the soil and should be addressed through careful planned grazing, with dietary supplementation as needed.

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Extractable P (Olsen) mg/L

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values	Management notes
Investigate	≤9	INVESTIGATE Index 0. P should be applied in fertiliser/organic materials to help meet crop needs and build the soil reserve. The best crop response may be seen where P is applied in early spring together with nitrogen.
Review	10–15	REVIEW Index 1. P should be applied in fertiliser/organic materials to help meet crop needs and build the soil reserve. The best crop response may be seen where P is applied in early spring together with nitrogen.
Monitor	16–45	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING Index 2 and Index 3. A clear rotational P management plan is needed to maintain the soil reserve without compromising productivity or increasing environmental risk.
Review	46–70	REVIEW Index 4. A clear rotational P management plan is needed to sustainably maintain the soil reserve whilst reducing the environmental risk.
Investigate	≥71	INVESTIGATE Above Index 4. Potential risk to the environment. A clear rotational P management plan is needed to sustainably run-down the soil reserve without compromising productivity.

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Extractable K (ammonium nitrate extract) mg/L

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values	Management notes
Investigate	≤60	INVESTIGATE Index 0. K should be applied in fertiliser/organic materials to help meet crop needs and build the soil reserve. Care is needed where K fertiliser is applied for grassland to avoid the risks of luxury uptake of K under cutting and inducing hypomagnesaemia (low Mg) under grazing.
Review	61–120	REVIEW Index 1. K should be applied in fertiliser/organic materials to help meet crop needs and build the soil reserve. Care is needed where K fertiliser is applied for grassland to avoid the risks of luxury uptake of K under cutting and inducing hypomagnesaemia (low Mg) under grazing.
Monitor	121–240	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING Index 2. A clear rotational K management plan is needed to maintain the soil reserve without compromising productivity.
Monitor	≥241	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING Index 3 and higher. A clear rotational K management plan should reduce and sustainably maintain the soil reserve without compromising productivity. Care is particularly needed to maintain Mg where K levels are high to avoid the risks of inducing hypomagnesaemia (low Mg) under grazing.

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Extractable Mg (ammonium nitrate extract) mg/L

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values	Management notes
Investigate	≤25	<p>INVESTIGATE</p> <p>Index 0. Where soil acidity also needs to be corrected, applying magnesian limestone is the best way to maintain soil Mg at a satisfactory level. An application of 5 t/ha of magnesian limestone will add at least 450 kg Mg/ha, and this Mg will become plant-available over many years. Where the Mg status is low, but additional lime is not required, a range of alternative sources of Mg are available. Foliar Mg can also be applied where plant deficiency symptoms are seen.</p>
Review	26–50	<p>REVIEW</p> <p>Index 1. Where soil acidity also needs to be corrected, applying magnesian limestone is the best way to maintain soil Mg at a satisfactory level. An application of 5 t/ha of magnesian limestone will add at least 450 kg Mg/ha, and this Mg will become plant-available over many years. Where the Mg status is low, but additional lime is not required, a range of alternative sources of Mg are available. Foliar Mg can also be applied where plant deficiency symptoms are seen.</p>
Monitor	51–350	<p>CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING</p> <p>Index 2 – Index 5. A clear rotational Mg management plan will allow the soil reserve to be maintained without compromising productivity.</p>
Review	≥351	<p>REVIEW</p> <p>Above Index 5. High soil Mg concentrations do not damage crop growth directly, but may affect plant availability of other cations such as potassium or calcium.</p> <p>A clear rotational Mg management plan will allow the soil reserve to be reduced and then maintained without compromising productivity. Carefully planned grazing and dietary supplementation may be needed in grassland on high Mg soils. If liming is necessary, consider the sources of lime available and, where feasible, select a low Mg lime. High Mg levels may reduce aggregate stability in some clay soils if Na levels are also high and Ca levels are low.</p>

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Earthworm count

Select the correct table below for your land use: Table 1 for cropping and Table 2 for grassland.

Table 1. Cropping

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values (per 20x20x20 cm spadeful)	Management notes
Investigate	≤3	INVESTIGATE Depleted. Crop rotations characterised by high tillage intensity and low inputs of organic matter through roots, residues and organic manures are often associated with low earthworm numbers. Reducing tillage intensity and increasing organic matter inputs wherever possible will benefit soil biology and is likely to be reflected in increased earthworm numbers.
Review	4–8	REVIEW Intermediate. Deep burrowing earthworms are most strongly affected by tillage practice with low populations in crop rotations with regular ploughing and intensive cultivations for seed-bed preparation, e.g. for potatoes. Considering the earthworm species present and the balance between juveniles and adults can be useful in giving more information about the factors affecting earthworm populations.
Monitor	≥9	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING Typical. There is no right number. In cropping systems, no or non-inversion tillage coupled with regular inputs of organic matter can lead to large and diverse earthworm populations. Considering the earthworm species present and the balance between juveniles and adults can be useful in giving more information about the factors affecting earthworm populations.

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Table 2. Grassland

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values (per 20x20x20 cm spadeful)	Management notes
Investigate	≤9 or predominantly one species	INVESTIGATE Depleted. Acid wet grasslands, especially those which are waterlogged for a significant part of the year, are often associated with low earthworm numbers. Often the main factors affecting earthworm numbers and diversity need to be addressed through physical (drainage) or chemical (liming) interventions. These changes are also likely to benefit grassland productivity as well as soil biology and are likely to be reflected in increased earthworm numbers.

Review	10–19	<p>REVIEW</p> <p>Intermediate. High-rate applications of slurry or digestate are often associated with the short-term disturbance of earthworm populations. Considering the earthworm species present and the balance between juveniles and adults can be useful in giving more information about the factors affecting earthworm populations.</p>
Monitor	≥20 with good range of eco- types	<p>CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING</p> <p>Typical. There is no right number. In grasslands neutral and moist, but well-aerated, soils with diverse swards are often associated with large and diverse earthworm populations. Considering the earthworm species present and the balance between juveniles and adults can be useful in giving more information about the factors affecting earthworm populations.</p>

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Soil organic matter (Loss on ignition) %

Select the correct table below for your land use and geographic region:

[Table 1. Cropping – East England](#)

[Table 2. Cropping – North East England, Midlands and South England](#)

[Table 3. Cropping – South West England, North West England and Wales](#)

[Table 4. Grassland – all lowland regions](#)

Table 1. Cropping – East England

In the table below, locate your topsoil character and the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values within each topsoil character			Management notes
	Light	Medium	Heavy	
Investigate	≤1.0	≤1.7	≤2.2	<p>INVESTIGATE</p> <p>Very low for the climate/soil type; may be associated with intensive cropping rotations with few organic matter inputs. In general, the simple rule is to add more organic materials and build more soil organic matter. Changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect. Consider whether crop residues can be returned and what sources of organic materials can be accessed.</p>
Review	1.1-2.1	1.8-3.3	2.3-4.4	<p>REVIEW</p> <p>Lower than average for the climate/soil type; may be associated with intensive cropping rotations with few organic matter inputs. In general, the simple rule is to add more organic materials and build more soil organic matter. Changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect. Consider whether crop residues can be returned and what sources of organic materials can be accessed.</p>
Monitor (Typical)	2.2-3.2	3.4-5.0	4.5-6.5	<p>CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING</p> <p>Typical for the climate/soil type; likely to be associated with crop residue returns and other regular organic matter inputs, e.g. through cover cropping or compost. Changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect. There is no clear evidence for a critical value of SOM. Ensuring there are regular additions of organic matter to 'feed' the soil is more important than achieving any particular measured value.</p>
Monitor (High)	≥3.3	≥5.1	≥6.6	<p>CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING</p> <p>Above average for the climate/soil type; likely to be associated with crop residue returns and other regular organic matter inputs, including ley-arable rotations. Many well-established conservation agriculture or organic farming systems would appear in this group. Ensuring there are regular additions of organic matter to 'feed' the soil is more important than achieving any particular measured value.</p>

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Table 2. Cropping – North East England, Midlands and South England

In the table below, locate your topsoil character and the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values within each topsoil character			Management notes
	Light	Medium	Heavy	
Investigate	≤1.0	≤1.9	≤2.7	<p>INVESTIGATE</p> <p>Very low for the climate/soil type; may be associated with intensive cropping rotations with few organic matter inputs. In general, the simple rule is to add more organic materials and build more soil organic matter. Changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect. Consider whether crop residues can be returned and what sources of organic materials can be accessed.</p>

Review	1.1–3.0	2.0–4.0	2.8–5.2	REVIEW Lower than average for the climate/soil type; may be associated with intensive cropping rotations with few organic matter inputs. In general, the simple rule is to add more organic materials and build more soil organic matter. Changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect. Consider whether crop residues can be returned and what sources of organic materials can be accessed.
Monitor (Typical values)	3.1–4.5	4.1–6.0	5.3–7.6	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING Typical for the climate/soil type; likely to be associated with crop residue returns and other regular organic matter inputs; e.g. through cover cropping or compost. Changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect. There is no clear evidence for a critical value of SOM. Ensuring there are regular additions of organic matter to 'feed' the soil is more important than achieving any particular measured value.
Monitor (High values)	≥4.6	≥6.1	≥7.7	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING Above average for the climate/soil type; likely to be associated with crop residue returns and other regular organic matter inputs, including ley-arable rotations. Many well-established conservation agriculture or organic farming systems would appear in this group. Ensuring there are regular additions of organic matter to 'feed' the soil is more important than achieving any particular measured value.

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Table 3. Cropping – South West England, North West England and Wales

In the table below, locate your topsoil character and the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values within each topsoil character			Management notes
	Light	Medium	Heavy	
Investigate	≤1.3	≤2.5	≤3.6	INVESTIGATE Very low for the climate/soil type; may be associated with intensive cropping rotations with few organic matter inputs. In general, the simple rule is to add more organic materials and build more soil organic matter. Changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect. Consider whether crop residues can be returned and what sources of organic materials can be accessed.
Review	1.4–3.7	2.6–5.0	3.7–6.2	REVIEW Lower than average for the climate/soil type; may be associated with intensive cropping rotations with few organic matter inputs. In general, the simple rule is to add more organic materials and build more soil organic matter. Changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect. Consider whether crop residues can be returned and what sources of organic materials can be accessed.
Monitor (Typical values)	3.8–6.1	5.1–7.5	6.3–8.8	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING Typical for the climate/soil type; likely to be associated with crop residue returns and other regular organic matter inputs, e.g. through cover cropping or compost. Changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect. There is no clear evidence for a critical value of SOM. Ensuring there are regular additions of organic matter to 'feed' the soil is more important than achieving any particular measured value.
Monitor (High values)	≥6.2	≥7.6	≥8.9	CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING Above average for the climate/soil type; likely to be associated with crop residue returns and other regular organic matter inputs, including ley-arable rotations. Many well-established conservation agriculture or organic farming systems would appear in this group. Ensuring there are regular additions of organic matter to 'feed' the soil is more important than achieving any particular measured value.

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Table 4. Grassland – all lowland regions

In the table below, locate your topsoil character and the data range for your result for specific benchmark values and management notes.

Soil status	Threshold values within each topsoil character			Management notes
	Light	Medium	Heavy	
Investigate	≤2.1	≤3.4	≤4.6	<p>INVESTIGATE</p> <p>Very low for the climate/soil type. Intensively-managed or recently established grasslands may have had relatively low returns of organic matter to the sward. If the soil is regularly poached or very compact, organic matter will not have been easily incorporated into the soil through biological activity. In general, the simple rule is to add more organic materials and build more soil organic matter. However, changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect.</p>
Review	2.2–4.9	3.5–6.4	4.7–7.6	<p>REVIEW</p> <p>Lower than average for the climate/soil type. Intensively-managed or recently established grasslands may have had relatively low returns of organic matter to the sward. If the soil is regularly poached or very compact, organic matter will not have been easily incorporated into the soil through biological activity. In general, the simple rule is: add more organic materials, build more soil organic matter. However, changes in SOM as a result of changes in practice can take a long time to detect.</p>
Monitor (Typical values)	5.0–7.9	6.5–9.3	7.7–10.5	<p>CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING</p> <p>Typical for the climate/soil type; likely to be associated with well drained grassland at near neutral pH with well-managed returns of manures through grazing and targeted applications. There is no clear evidence for a critical value of SOM. Ensuring there are regular additions of organic matter to 'feed' the soil is more important than achieving any particular measured value.</p>
Monitor (High values)	8.0–14.9	9.4–19.9	10.6–19.9	<p>CONTINUE ROTATIONAL MONITORING</p> <p>Above average for the climate/ soil type; likely to be associated with well drained grassland at near neutral pH with well-managed returns of manures through grazing and targeted applications. In some cases, accumulation of undecomposed SOM at the surface may give values in this range, indicating some deterioration in pH or drainage (e.g. due to compaction). Ensuring there are regular additions of organic matter to 'feed' the soil is more important than achieving any particular measured value.</p>
Review	≥15.0	≥20.0	≥20.0	<p>REVIEW</p> <p>Organic matter is accumulating at the surface. The soil may be an organic or organo-mineral soil type; these benchmarks do not apply to such soils. If this is a mineral soil, then accumulation of organic matter at the surface often indicates poor biological activity due to acidity or wetness.</p>

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Potentially mineralisable N mg/kg

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values.

Soil status	Threshold values	Description
Investigate	<27	INVESTIGATE Very low
Review	28–40	REVIEW Low (below average)
Monitor	>40	MONITOR Typical

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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CO₂-C burst mg/kg

Care is needed when interpreting CO₂-C burst data for calcareous soils as the current analytical method used may interact differently with these soils. This is currently being looked into.

Select the correct table below for your land use: Table 1 for cropping and Table 2 for grassland.

Table 1. Cropping

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values.

Soil status	Threshold values	Description
Investigate	<100	INVESTIGATE Low activity
Review	100–135	REVIEW Moderate activity
Monitor	>135	MONITOR Good activity (above average)

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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Table 2. Grassland

In the table below, locate the data range for your result for specific benchmark values.

Soil status	Threshold values	Description
Investigate	<130	INVESTIGATE Low activity
Review	130–180	REVIEW Moderate activity
Monitor	>180	MONITOR Good activity (above average)

Note: Table taken from AHDB's 'Soil Health scorecard approach: Sampling protocol and benchmarking tables England and Wales' Version 1.0

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**Application by Fosse Green Energy
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consent for the Fosse Green Energy
solar farm**

Written Representation

Appendix B:

Extracts from

Lincolnshire Local

Transport Plan LTP5

by North Kesteven District Council

(ID FD1E96A6C)

NKDC reference: 23/0325/NSIP

Planning Inspectorate reference: EN010154

January 2026

Local Transport Plan 5



The following section provides in more detail the reasoning for each objective, followed by the policy statement or statements that indicate what LCC, often with partners, will do to achieve the objectives. This in turn is followed by an indication as to the nature and types of interventions that are most likely to achieve the objective. This section, also provides a framework for the development of the supporting modal strategies that sit beneath the Integrated Transport Strategy.

Themes and strategic objectives

Theme 1 – Supporting economic growth

- a. Improve connectivity throughout Lincolnshire and to the East Midlands, the rest of the UK and beyond.
- b. Ensure a resilient and reliable transport system for the movement of people, goods and services.
- c. Support the vitality and viability of our town centres and rural communities.
- d. Improve connectivity to jobs and employment opportunities.
- e. Provide a transport system that supports the priority sectors identified in the LIS.

Theme 2 – Future ready, green transport

- a. Support the introduction of low-carbon technologies and thus reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- b. Develop and support communities to flourish locally and thereby helping reduce the need to travel.
- c. Deliver sustainable development by ensuring that new developments are designed to reduce the need to travel, minimise car use and support the use of more sustainable modes.
- a. Ensure the transport network is made resilient to climate change.

Theme 3 – Promote thriving environments

- a. Develop opportunities to both protect and enhance the built and natural environment.
- b. Minimise waste and make the best use of available resources.
- c. Provide sustainable access to Lincolnshire's wonderful environment and heritage.

Theme 4 – Supporting safety, security and a healthy lifestyle

- a. Improve road safety.
- b. Increase confidence in a safer and more secure transport network.
- c. Reduce the impacts of air quality, noise and light pollution.
- d. Improve the health of our communities through the provision for active travel.

Theme 5 – Promoting high aspirations

- a. Improve connectivity and access to education, healthcare and leisure.
- b. Improve the accessibility of the transport system and in particular access onto public transport.
- c. Encourage wider community participation in developing and delivering transport services.

Theme 6 – Improve quality of life

- a. To deliver on the first five objectives above.
- b. To improve the quality of place and reduce the overall negative impacts of transport on people's lives.

How will we do this?

We will work with organisations across the transport world and beyond to identify which parts of the transport network and which services would be at the greatest threat from the effects of climate change. We will monitor the impacts of climate change on our transport network and develop assessment tools to help us understand where and at what point we need to intervene.

During maintenance and construction, we will endeavour to use materials that are resilient to the impacts of climate change. We will seek to source them in ways that do not exacerbate the climate change problem using a circular economy and whole life cycle costing where possible.

We will continue to work closely with the Environment Agency to ensure that drainage schemes are prioritised on an appropriate basis and seek to ensure the transport network remains resilient to flooding events.

Theme 3 – Promoting thriving environments**Objective 3a – Develop opportunities to both protect and enhance the built and natural environment.****Why is this important?**

Lincolnshire has a diverse natural environment and valued heritage landscape with a significant number of protected areas in Lincolnshire .

Of particular note are the Lincolnshire Wolds, a cherished landscape of some 558 square kilometres (216 square miles) which was designated as a nationally protected Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1973.

Transport can adversely impact on the environment through noise and light pollution, contamination from engines and tyres can make its way into water courses and of course pollutants from burning fossil fuels will end up in the air that we all breath.

Policy ENV1

We will put in place procedures during construction, surfacing and maintenance works that will minimise and mitigate their environmental impacts.

Policy ENV2

We will incorporate improvements into transport schemes and highway maintenance so that they aid in the creation, preservation and enhancement of high quality and vibrant environments with unique and distinctive character. This includes taking opportunities to protect and improve habitats for both flora and fauna, protect and enhance historic features, landscapes and townscapes.

How will we do this?

The transport network provides excellent opportunities to help aid the emerging Greater Lincolnshire Nature Recovery Strategy and the accompanying Local Nature Recovery Strategies through the protection and improvement of adjacent habitats. Preserving roadside verges, a number of which are protected as Local Wildlife Sites and the network of interconnecting hedgerows can provide important links for often isolated habitats. A balance needs to be struck with maintenance regimes for safeguarding crucial sight lines to maintain road safety.

We will look to review of on-going maintenance regimes to consider how best to deal with the challenges of the potential harmful impacts from the winter salting, ground compaction from vehicle encroachments and also the large volumes of discarded litter, which then often gets cut up into ever small pieces of residue.

Key approaches that we will support include:

- Focus on improving the sense of "place" by designing for people not traffic.
- Decluttering of signage and street furniture.
- Applying highway design standards appropriately and seeking to avoid over engineered solutions.

- Using locally sourced traditional materials for both sustainability and design value and helping to blend infrastructure into the local landscape.
- Consider reduced specification requirements in areas with local environmental sensitivity.

Objective 3b – Minimise waste and make the best the use of available resources.

Why is this important?

The construction of new transport infrastructure is expensive and can often require significant amounts of natural resources in the form of aggregates and also land take. New and maintenance schemes both generate waste, which if we cannot recycle it will end up in landfill. Careful planning can reduce waste and make sure that minimal amounts of resources are used to deliver the project. This is good for both the economy and the environment.

Policy ENV3

In the planning, designing and delivery of our transport infrastructure and services we will seek to minimise the use of natural resources and minimise waste.

Policy ENV4

We will make use of our existing transport infrastructure and services and prioritise the maintenance and management of it over the building of new infrastructure.

How will we do this?

Where possible we will seek to utilise recycled materials during maintenance and construction and look to recycle any waste generated by transport schemes.

Investment will be prioritised to maintain and adjust the existing transport network rather than focussing on new building particularly in reference to the highway network. We will make the best use of our existing capacity and seek to improve connectivity and mobility within the constraints of what exists rather than expanding capacity.

Key approaches that we will support include:

- Promoting the benefits of using locally sourced and recycled products in the delivery of our transport projects.
- Look towards innovation and trial new materials on appropriate schemes.
- Seek to reduce the distances that materials are transported by sourcing them locally.

In order to maximise the capacity of existing road corridors we will:

- Champion active travel, public transport improvements and wider management measures as alternatives to road building in areas with congestion and where alternative modes are a viable option.
- Maximise the capacity of existing infrastructure and services with greater use of intelligent transport systems and other evolving new technologies.
- Deliver sustainable transport solutions through our modal strategies.

Objective 3c – Provide sustainable access to Lincolnshire’s wonderful environment and heritage.

Why is this important?

One of the priority growth sectors identified in the LIS is the visitor economy and the desire to extend the visitor season. Improving sustainable access to our environmental and heritage assets would help support this sector of our economy.

The heritage sector alone is estimated to be worth £16.4 billion pounds nationally²² with many visitors coming to Lincolnshire to visit our castles, museums, cathedral and churches. Ensuring access to these assets is vital but we need to balance the detrimental impact that too many car borne journeys can have on the very places and environments that attract so many visitors.

In some areas the very high numbers of walkers, cyclists and equestrians can also cause damage to routes and adjacent land and access needs to be controlled to protect both our built and natural attractions.

Policy ENV5

We will support, promote and provide sustainable access to our sensitive built and natural environments.

How will we do this?

We will work with the tourism and visitor economy to develop and promote more sustainable transport options for both residents and visitors to our sensitive environmental areas. We will encourage attractions to offer incentives to access by means other than the private car and support initiatives such as visitor travel plans, shared ticketing and the greater use of mobility hubs to enable a switch between modes.

Key approaches that we will support include:

- Provision of comprehensive, high-quality, safe and direct networks and facilities for walking, cycling and public transport that includes priority for cyclists and public transport.
- Provision of high-quality interchanges to improve connectivity between transport modes including local mobility hubs that have facilities to enabling EV recharging, reverse park and ride, car clubs and other innovative solutions.
- Implementation and monitoring of visitor travel plans.
- Provide information to visitors on ways to visit Lincolnshire's environment without using a car through their holiday accommodation, tourist information centres, online and at visitor attractions.

Theme 4 – Supporting safety, security and a healthy lifestyle

Objective 4a – Improve road safety.

Why is this important?

Reducing the numbers of deaths and serious injuries on our roads is both morally and statutorily the right thing to do. Although, the number of deaths and injuries on our roads has fallen over the last 10-years, it is still vitally important to continue to see these numbers fall further.

Policy SH1

We will seek to make Lincolnshire's roads safer for all and to make significant year-on-year reductions in those killed or injured on Lincolnshire's roads through a sustainable, co-located road safety partnership delivering targeted interventions focussed on education, engineering, and enforcement.

How will we do this?

We will continue to support the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP), formed in 2000. The partnership was the first of its kind in the Country and co-locates forensic collision investigators and casualty reduction officers from Lincolnshire Police with the county council's Accident Investigation and Road Safety teams to form a multi-agency centralised road safety unit. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue also have staff based with the LRSP who co-ordinate all fire and rescue road safety related activity. Additionally, the deployment and maintenance of safety cameras is managed within the LRSP. Consequently, the entire core functions of road safety, namely engineering, education and enforcement are coordinated from this centre.



**Application by Fosse Green Energy
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Written Representation

Appendix C:

Extracts from

Lincolnshire Walking

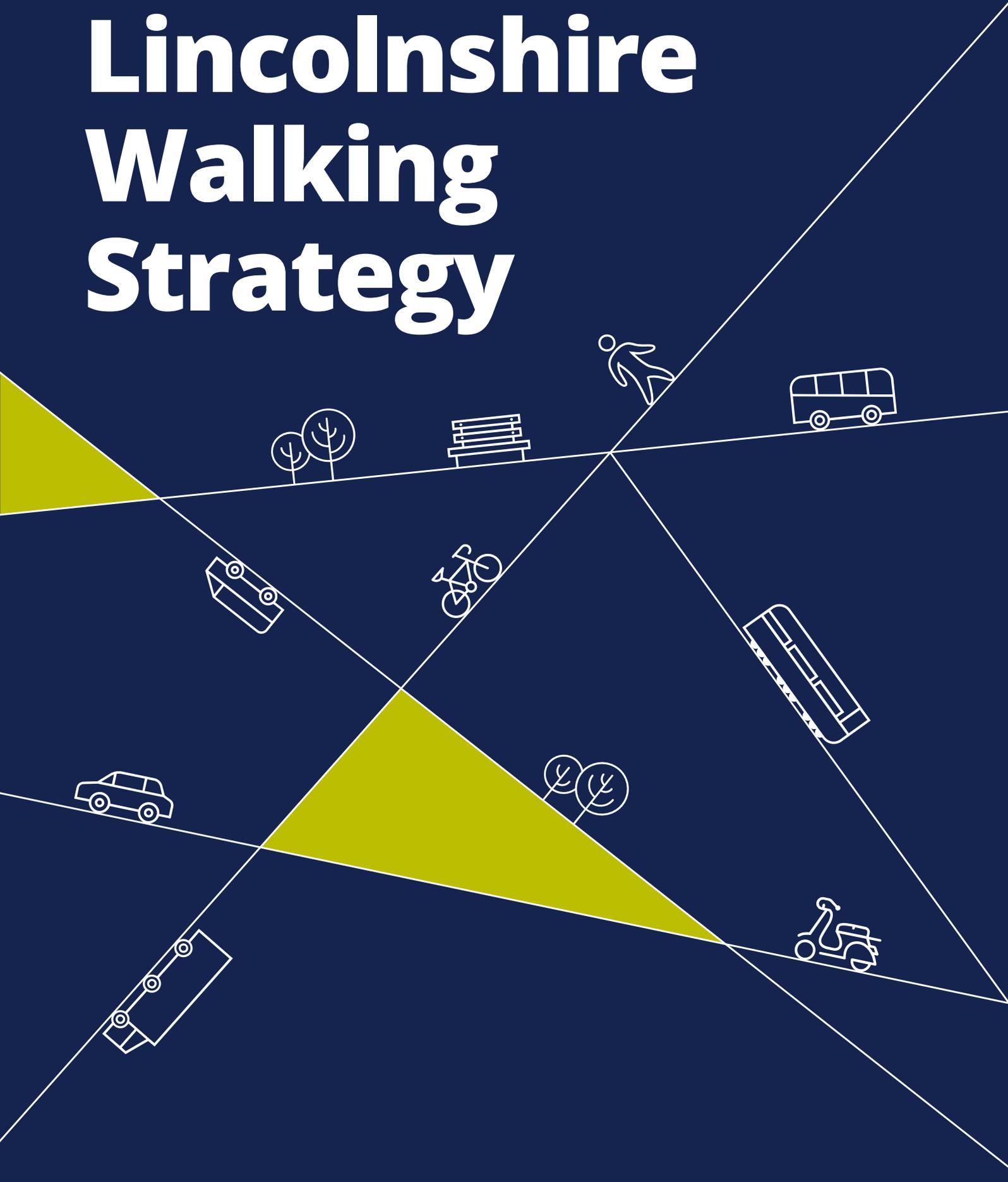
Strategy

by North Kesteven District Council

(ID FD1E96A6C)

NKDC reference: 23/0325/NSIP

Lincolnshire Walking Strategy



The previous figure presents the approach that has been undertaken to developing the strategy vision, objectives, themes and policies.

The Lincolnshire Walking Strategy vision presented in the Introduction section will be realised through the following four objectives:

- Improve the quality and usability of the walking environment to ensure it is safe and inclusive for all.
- Make walking a part of Lincolnshire residents' everyday travel choices to improve physical and mental health wellbeing.
- Enhance walking within Lincolnshire's leisure and tourism offer to support the economy.
- Increase pedestrian safety and make walking feel like a safe and accessible method of travel for all.

The objectives will be achieved through the implementation of a range of policies.

These policies have been categorised into five themes:

- Infrastructure;
- Networks and connectivity;
- New developments;
- Leisure and tourism; and,
- Encouraging and enabling.

The strategy policies sit within one of the themes and contribute to one or more of the four objectives.

The vision, objectives, themes and policies have been informed by the extensive evidence base, stakeholder engagement and policy review.

Policies

The Walking Strategy objectives will be achieved through policies that are arranged into the five themes.

The policies are introduced and presented in the following sections, which also provide a description of the five themes.

The table of policies within each theme references how each of the policies contribute towards one or more the strategy objectives.

Theme 1: Infrastructure

Providing the appropriate infrastructure to enable walking journeys.

In many parts of the county, the walking infrastructure connects people with the places that they want to reach on foot or allows them to connect with other forms of transport for an onward journey.

However, there is a lack of consistency in infrastructure, with many parts of the county lacking the appropriate infrastructure to support walking journeys, many of which are local trips within peoples' neighbourhoods.

The lack of appropriate infrastructure is a key barrier to more people walking for more of their journeys or as a leisure activity.

The Infrastructure policies in this Walking Strategy seek to identify where there are gaps in infrastructure or where the existing provision needs renewal.

Our approach will be strategic where necessary, following the DfT Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) approach to identify and prioritise where walking infrastructure improvements are needed.

We will also work collaboratively and at a local level, with planning authorities, parish councils and other stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and to seek funding from different sources to deliver the interventions.

Theme 2: Networks and connectivity

Enhancing walking's role in connecting people to the places they want to reach.

Walking allows people to make door-to-door journeys and can be an independent, reliable, accessible and low-cost form of travel.

However, the potential for the role of walking when it comes to connecting people and place is often hindered by a lack of connectivity and incoherent networks.

The policies in this Networks and connectivity theme aim to address the existing barriers that make it difficult to walk for part or all of a particular journey.

Walking supports the use of public transport, which will play a key role in a low-carbon transport future. The better integration of walking and public transport will allow the benefits of greater use of both modes to be realised, enhancing accessibility and connectivity across Lincolnshire.

Other emerging forms of sustainable transport that are likely to become mainstream in the future, such as shared mobility (e.g. bike sharing), will need integration with walking to fulfil their potential. The early identification of opportunities to integrate walking with other sustainable forms of transport will be key to facilitating increased levels of walking.

The Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network includes over 2,500 miles of routes for walking and in some cases cycling and horse-riding. The PRoW network provides a valuable resource to support walking trips for all purposes and the enhancement of the network is vitally important to supporting this Walking Strategy.

The road network uses an approach to signage and wayfinding for drivers that makes it understandable and consistent across Lincolnshire and beyond, regardless of the type of road. An effective and legible walking network needs the equivalent approach, whether using a footway adjacent to a road, a waterway path or a public footpath.

The Walking Strategy aims to address how the countywide walking network is presented to users, both when planning a journey and when using wayfinding information whilst making a journey.

Linking to the Leisure and tourism theme (theme 4), the legibility of Lincolnshire's walking network is important in supporting the visitor economy, ensuring people less familiar with their surroundings can make the most of walking routes as part of their excursion.

Theme 3: New developments

Opportunities to create sustainable communities with active travel at the centre.

There are four Local Plans that provide the land use planning framework for Lincolnshire over the next few decades:

- Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (City of Lincoln, West Lindsey and North Kesteven).
- East Lindsey Local Plan.
- Southeast Lincolnshire Local Plan (Boston Borough and South Holland).
- South Kesteven Local Plan.

The Local Plans include the provision of over 80,000 additional homes in Lincolnshire by 2036, approximately one-third of which will be in Sustainable Urban Extensions developed alongside the existing urban areas such as Lincoln and Boston.

These new developments provide a significant opportunity to embed sustainable behaviours from the outset and as such, a new developments theme forms part of this Walking Strategy.

The policies within the new developments theme seek to capitalise on the opportunity to put walking (and cycling) at the forefront of the transport hierarchy within major new development sites.

This is not just about enabling people to travel around easier on foot, it is also about creating walkable neighbourhoods that are shown to enhance social and community engagement³³, helping to create happier and more healthy communities.

The policies seek to work with our partners in the planning authorities to ensure effective planning and design of the development sites.

There is also a focus on maximising funding opportunities to deliver infrastructure and secure a revenue stream to implement effective travel planning, supporting new residents with the means to travel sustainably and use walking as part of their everyday travel choices.

Theme 4: Leisure and tourism

As a popular leisure and tourism activity, walking improves physical and mental health, can boost community spirit and supports a key part of the economy.

Many people in Lincolnshire walk for leisure several times a week, making it one of the most popular ways that people keep active.

It is also apparent that the COVID-19 pandemic saw more people walk more frequently than they did before¹³, which included exploring their local areas as wider travel was restricted and many places and activities were closed.

For many people this has increased the importance of being able to access green space and walking routes from home, without always needing to travel further afield to undertake this activity.

However, many people are still inactive and not meeting the minimum Government guidelines for activity per week with Lincolnshire's adult population identified as one of the most inactive in England¹⁴.

The Walking Strategy will aim to build on the increase in people walking in their local area and seek to engage more people walking at least once a week as part of a health and active lifestyle.

Lincolnshire has a significant leisure and tourism offer for residents and visitors alike, with walking routes through the picturesque countryside and along the scenic coastline. Our historic towns and the City of Lincoln are key attractions but are also compact and walkable.

More people exploring these locations on foot or combining walking with other sustainable modes will benefit the economy, while providing health and wellbeing benefits to people and contributing to our wider sustainability agenda.

It is likely that more people will take days out and holidays within the UK in the immediate future and Lincolnshire has much to offer, such as scenic walking routes and destinations, both inland and along the coast.

The flat topography in many areas, particularly the coastal resort towns, provide opportunities for walking to play a greater role in how people get around once they have arrived at their holiday accommodation.

More people walking as part of a leisure and tourism activity, whether they are residents or visitors, also provides an opportunity to boost the economy and support local businesses due to an increase in footfall. This is particularly important at present as many local businesses hope for a continued emergence from the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

Theme 5: Encouraging and enabling

Influencing behaviour and removing barriers.

We understand that walking is often not a viable option for many people due to accessibility issues. Even for those who are able to walk, not every journey is walkable due to distance, household characteristics or time constraints. There are also barriers that reduce the amount of walking for leisure purposes, such as access to open spaces and leisure routes.

The issue of pedestrian safety on our roads is an area we will continue to address, working with partner organisations in the process. Our approach will involve continuing existing programmes, such as the Community Speed Watch Scheme and identifying new initiatives that will contribute towards vision zero in terms of deaths and serious injuries.

We also recognise that the perception of safety and security can be a barrier to walking for many people. Accordingly, we want to better understand the obstacles that people face, recognising that this step is essential for implementing appropriate measures to increase walking.

The strategy is inclusive, supporting people of all ages to include walking as part of maintaining an active lifestyle, such as engaging with schools in addition to the ageing population.

The Strategy will also aim to encourage and enable walking by focusing on the segments of the population that have the highest propensity for increasing their walking levels. This will facilitate a tailored approach to enabling and encouraging walking based around people, the places they want to access and the activities they want to undertake.

Promoting walking as a way that people can build physical activity into their daily lives will be a key focus of the strategy. We will work with partners to achieve this, supporting mutual objectives related to creating a more active and healthier Lincolnshire.

Infrastructure	
Policies	Working with
Develop cycling and walking network plans for every local transport strategy area along the lines of the DfT LCWIP guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities
Use LCWIPs where available to identify and implement infrastructure improvements to facilitate walking trips to key destinations, such as schools, town/village centres, employment sites and transport interchanges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities
Work collaboratively with partners to maximise funding opportunities for walking infrastructure from every available source, including Section 106 and competitive bidding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities
Work with planning authorities, parish councils, and other bodies to identify and mitigate physical barriers to walking, such as the crossing of roads, railways and waterways, particularly those identified as key links and where the current and proposed Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network intersects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities • Parish councils
Improve the pedestrian environments in urban centres by promoting infrastructure changes and traffic management measures as part of placemaking and creating spaces where people want to walk, dwell and carry out linked trips through schemes such as streetscape planting and urban realm enhancements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities
Ensure that all infrastructure changes associated with new or improved walking routes to include comprehensive wayfinding and safety features such as lighting where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities
Expand the 'School Living Streets' programme across Lincolnshire based on the initial trial in Lincoln.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Living Streets
Develop an updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) that includes plans to enhance the existing PRoW network and develop new connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities • Parish councils

Network and connectivity	
Policies	Working with
Review and audit wayfinding signage to identify where improvements are needed (particularly in areas with high visitor numbers) and implement improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities
Improve the connectivity between walking and other modes of travel as part of a sustainable door-to-door journey and enabling people to reduce dependency on cars for more journeys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport operators
Develop an updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) that includes plans to enhance the existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network and develop new connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities • Parish councils
Work with public transport operators to promote and facilitate multi-modal journeys that include walking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport operators
Use the local cycling and walking network plans that have been developed for the urban areas of the county to identify and implement walking infrastructure schemes and develop public realm and place centred initiatives – securing funding that becomes available for these interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities
Develop a consistent signage and way finding strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities
Establish a branded county Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network with associated signage and mapping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities
Revamp our mapping, ensuring digital and paper coverage of maps for active travel journeys.	

New developments

Policies

Working with

Work with Planning Authorities to ensure that walking is prioritised through effective planning and design of new developments.

- Planning authorities

Work with Planning Authorities to prioritise development that provides mixed land use creating neighbourhoods that are walkable and well connected.

- Planning authorities

Enhance existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and identify opportunities for additions to the PRoW network in relation to new developments.

- Planning authorities

Work with Planning Authorities to maximise funding opportunities related to new developments, such as Section 106 funding.

- Planning authorities

Work with Planning Authorities to ensure Travel Plans that encourage and facilitate walking are developed and implemented.

- Planning authorities

Leisure and tourism

Policies

Working with

Work with partners to develop a co-ordinated walking tourism offer as part of Brand Lincolnshire.

- Planning authorities

Work with partners to promote walking routes and destinations, such as the Wolds, the Viking Way and the Coast, as part of Lincolnshire's tourism offer.

- Planning authorities

Identify and enhance where needed the key highway and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) routes that offer opportunities for people to access local green space, particularly those in urban areas.

- Planning authorities

Build on the increase in local leisure walking during the lockdown periods by promoting local routes and green spaces.

- Planning authorities
- Active Lincolnshire

Continue to support and promote events that celebrate walking, such as local Walking Festivals.

- Event organisers

Encouraging and enabling	
Policies	Working with
Identify population segments that have a higher propensity for walking and develop targeted approaches to encouraging and facilitating walking among these segments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authorities • Event organisers
Continue engagement with schools to support them in encouraging and facilitating more students to walk to school or walk as part of the journey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Living Streets
Promote walking as an accessible and enjoyable part of a healthy lifestyle with physical and mental health benefits, working across teams and with partners to develop active travel campaigns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Lincolnshire
Work with the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership to reduce the number and severity of pedestrian casualties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership
Work with partners, such as Ageing Better to support the aging population in adopting and maintaining active lifestyles through walking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing Better
Encourage, enable and promote people to walk (or use walking as part of a multi-modal journey) to events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event organisers

Monitoring and measuring success

To ensure that our walking and cycling strategies are effective we will monitor performance and review the strategies on a regular basis. To monitor and measure success of these strategies we will:

- Review and report on our performance every year.
- Develop our thinking and approach based on performance, changing technology and other opportunities for innovation.
- Be open to challenge from partners and stakeholders.
- Actively monitor published data sources; and,
- Identify appropriate technology and data sources to collect our own data across Lincolnshire.

Our approach to data

Robust data gathering and reporting is crucial to making our work a success. Holding sufficient, and suitable data allows us to spot changes and pinpoint weaknesses. It allows us to be proactive by seeing our actions are changing the way we travel and which of our residents and communities need support.

Some of the sources are published data that we will access, and others will be generated specifically to support the monitoring of this Strategy. We will also work with partner organisations who already undertake a range of data analysis, such as the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership, to gain key insights.



**Application by Fosse Green Energy
Ltd for an order granting development
consent for the Fosse Green Energy
solar farm**

Written Representation

Appendix D:

**Plan of Witham Valley
Country Park**

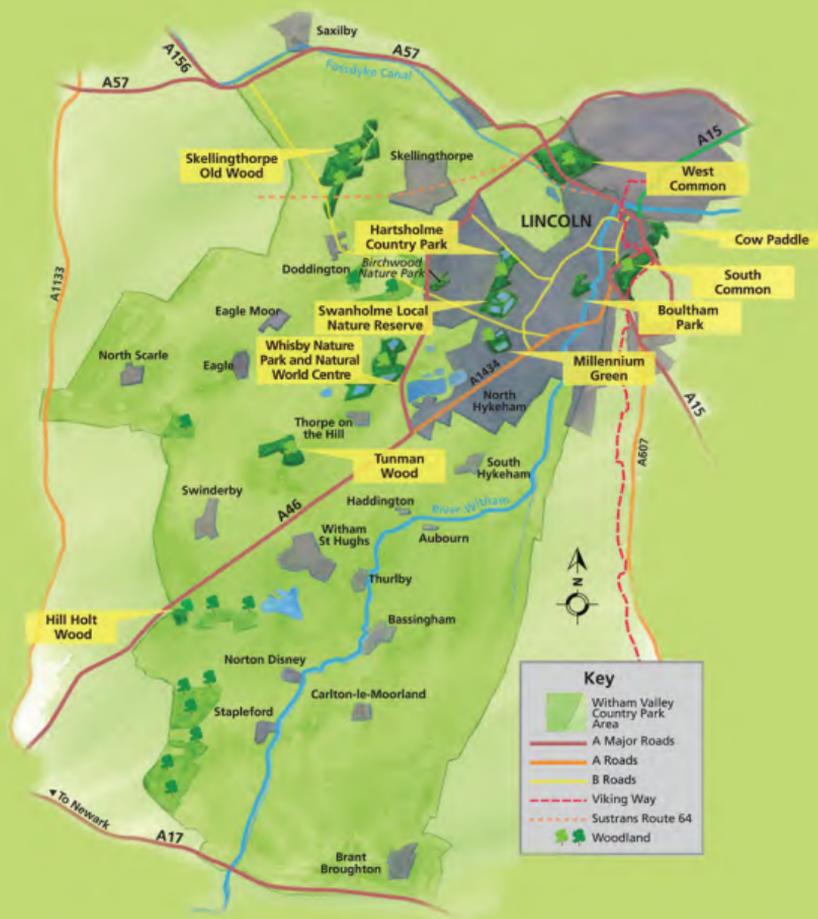
by North Kesteven District Council

(ID FD1E96A6C)

NKDC reference: 23/0325/NSIP

Planning Inspectorate reference: EN010154

January 2026



Key

- Witham Valley Country Park Area
- A Major Roads
- A Roads
- B Roads
- Viking Way
- Sustrans Route 64
- Woodland



**Application by Fosse Green Energy
Ltd for an order granting development
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solar farm**

Written Representation

**Appendix E:
Extracts from North
Kesteven Active Travel
Strategy**

by North Kesteven District Council

(ID FD1E96A6C)

NKDC reference: 23/0325/NSIP

Planning Inspectorate reference: EN010154

January 2026

ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY 2025 2030



**WALKING,
WHEELING
AND CYCLING**

North Kesteven is a district where everyone
is inspired to walk, wheel and cycle



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

FOREWORD

North Kesteven is a fantastic district! Our Council is committed to ensuring our communities continue to flourish and the district continues to be somewhere people want to live, work and enjoy.

The production of an Active Travel Strategy, with aims to encourage everyone to participate in active travel, further shows our commitment to maintaining a high quality of life for our residents and a high-quality experience for our visitors.

Active Travel encompasses walking, wheeling and cycling and is both an alternative means of transport to the motor vehicle and something that can be enjoyed as a leisure activity with all the associated benefits to health and wellbeing, the environment and to the economy. These closely accord with our Council's wider strategic objectives and with flourishing communities.

The Council has already worked in partnership to achieve positive outcomes for active travel including hosting and supporting a range of walking and cycling events for all abilities, creating and maintaining a Stepping Out walking route network, delivering path improvements, ensuring new developments design in active travel opportunities, and securing funding for active travel infrastructure.

With the strategy setting out our aspirations to continue to deliver and achieve more for active travel, this strategy is a framework for working with partners and stakeholders and for lobbying hard for the necessary resources.

Finally, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that simply getting out of the house and participating in active travel is a way to connect and engage with our community and our surroundings and can be great fun.

For all these excellent reasons we want North Kesteven to be a district where everyone is inspired to walk, wheel and cycle.



Leader of the Council
Cllr Richard Wright

NORTH KESTEVEN ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

ONE PAGE SUMMARY

Vision	North Kesteven is a district where everyone is inspired to walk, wheel or cycle		
Aim	Increase participation in walking, wheeling and cycling by all in North Kesteven		
	Priority Outcome 1	Priority Outcome 2	Priority Outcome 3
Priority Outcome (Section 1)	Increase all residents' awareness of active travel and its associated health, wellbeing and environmental benefits.	Promote safer active travel.	Provide more opportunities and infrastructure for active travel.
Why this is a priority (Section 2)	By promoting active travel, we hope to build on the good level of active travel in the district and encourage more residents to take it up for health, enjoyment and accessibility (journeys for pleasure and for essential reasons).	We want all residents to feel that they can participate in active travel safely, so concerns are not a deterrent to taking up walking, wheeling and cycling.	We want to increase the amount of physical active travel infrastructure (routes, lockers, etc.) so active travel is an attractive, easy option and also feels safer.
What we have done already (Section 3)	We have supported and sponsored a number of active travel events and festivals and worked with partners to increase residents' access to active travel.	We have supported cycling safety information and training. We have published information and worked with partners to highlight routes in North Kesteven.	We have supported the delivery of a number of additional active travel routes and infrastructure. We work closely with delivery partners and stakeholders in lobbying and bidding. We have secured planning obligations for improvement to existing active travel routes and the provision of new cycle paths.
What we are going to do (Section 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of and support walking, wheeling and cycling events. • Work with partners to further develop and extend our 'Stepping Out' routes with information for walking and wheeling. • With partners, promote active travel opportunities and raise the profile of cycling. • Encourage residents and visitors of all abilities and ages to take up active travel for leisure, commuting and fitness. • Integrate walking, wheeling and cycling activities, events, initiatives, and programmes within the Council's outreach activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with organisations to promote campaigns aimed at safety. • Produce additional information and online mapping of walking, wheeling and cycle routes in North Kesteven, identifying safe routes on highways, greenways, off road and dedicated cycle routes. • Work with partners to increase signage. • Support more safe cycling training. • Ensure the corporate website continues to provide information on safer walking, wheeling and cycling for adults and children, as well as opportunities for training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with a range of partners to explore and bid for funding opportunities for active travel infrastructure. • Ensure new developments accommodate active travel provision through the planning process. • Secure Section 106 planning contributions to the delivery of more active travel infrastructure. • Ongoing liaison with Lincolnshire County Council to ensure active travel is an integral part of provision and is incorporated in transport improvement works in the district.
Who we will work with (Section 5)	• The Council cannot deliver these aims and objectives alone and will work with a wide range of partners and stakeholders.		
Measures (Section 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators that monitor Sport and Physical Activity Strategy outcomes relating to active travel. • Monitor planning obligations collected and spent on active travel related infrastructure. • External funding secured for delivery of infrastructure. 		
Outcomes (Section 6)	More participation in active travel through greater awareness of routes, options and benefits. Improved health and wellbeing.	Residents feel safe to walk, wheel and cycle.	More active travel infrastructure is delivered.

1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The North Kesteven District Council Plan 2023-26 defines how we will develop and enrich our district of flourishing communities. It also defines key objectives around homes, the economy, communities, the environment, and the Council.

Focusing on the 'Our Communities' and 'Our Environment' priorities, the Council has key ambitions to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Increasing participation in walking, wheeling and cycling; 'active travel', is both a way to promote healthier lifestyles and to make positive impacts on the environment. More widely active travel as a leisure and tourism activity also has the potential to be beneficial to the economy.

In recognition of this, and the many positive outcomes that an increase in walking, wheeling and cycling deliver, the Council has produced this strategy.

The Council recognises that for many aspects of active travel we are not the lead authority, equally that the delivery of 'game changing' infrastructure for walking, wheeling or cycling cannot be achieved without securing significant resourcing from external sources and Central Government.

However, this strategy clearly sets out how important we consider active travel and our desire to work closely with partners, stakeholders and Central Government to achieve shared ambitions.

1.1 Introducing our Vision, Aim and Priorities for Active Travel

Our vision for active travel is:-

'North Kesteven is a district where everyone is inspired to walk, wheel and cycle.'

Our aim for active travel is:-

'To increase participation in walking, wheeling and cycling by all in North Kesteven.'

This strategy has three interrelated, and equally important, priorities which will deliver our vision and aim for walking, wheeling and cycling:

- Increase all residents' awareness of active travel and its associated health, wellbeing and environmental benefits.
- Promote safer active travel.
- Provide more opportunities and infrastructure for active travel.

for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity. Plans to address these issues can be seen throughout this strategy review.

1.2 Content and Purpose of the Active Travel Strategy

This Strategy sets out:

- Why we have these priorities;
- What we have done already to deliver them; and
- What more we want to do, and how we will work with partners and stakeholders to achieve them.

Recognising that the Council cannot achieve ambitious active travel outcomes without partners, stakeholders and without securing significant external funding this Strategy will act as a guide for the Council, local residents, stakeholders and partners to coordinate action and maximise positive outcomes for active travel in North Kesteven.

2 WHY DOES NORTH KESTEVEN NEED AN ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY?

This strategy has been developed as active travel is clearly beneficial, not only for those who undertake them, but more widely also.

These benefits include:

Improving general health, fitness and reducing obesity

Improving mental health and wellbeing

Environmental benefits, as a non-polluting activity
(both noise and emissions)

Contributing to a pleasant environment to live, work and spend
leisure time in

Offering a pleasant, enjoyable and relatively affordable means of
transport

Wider economic benefits arising from leisure and tourism
opportunities

An alternative to motorised transport

2.1 Strategic and Policy Context

For the strategy to be effective it must take account of the strategic policy context at both the national and local level.

2.1.1 The National Context

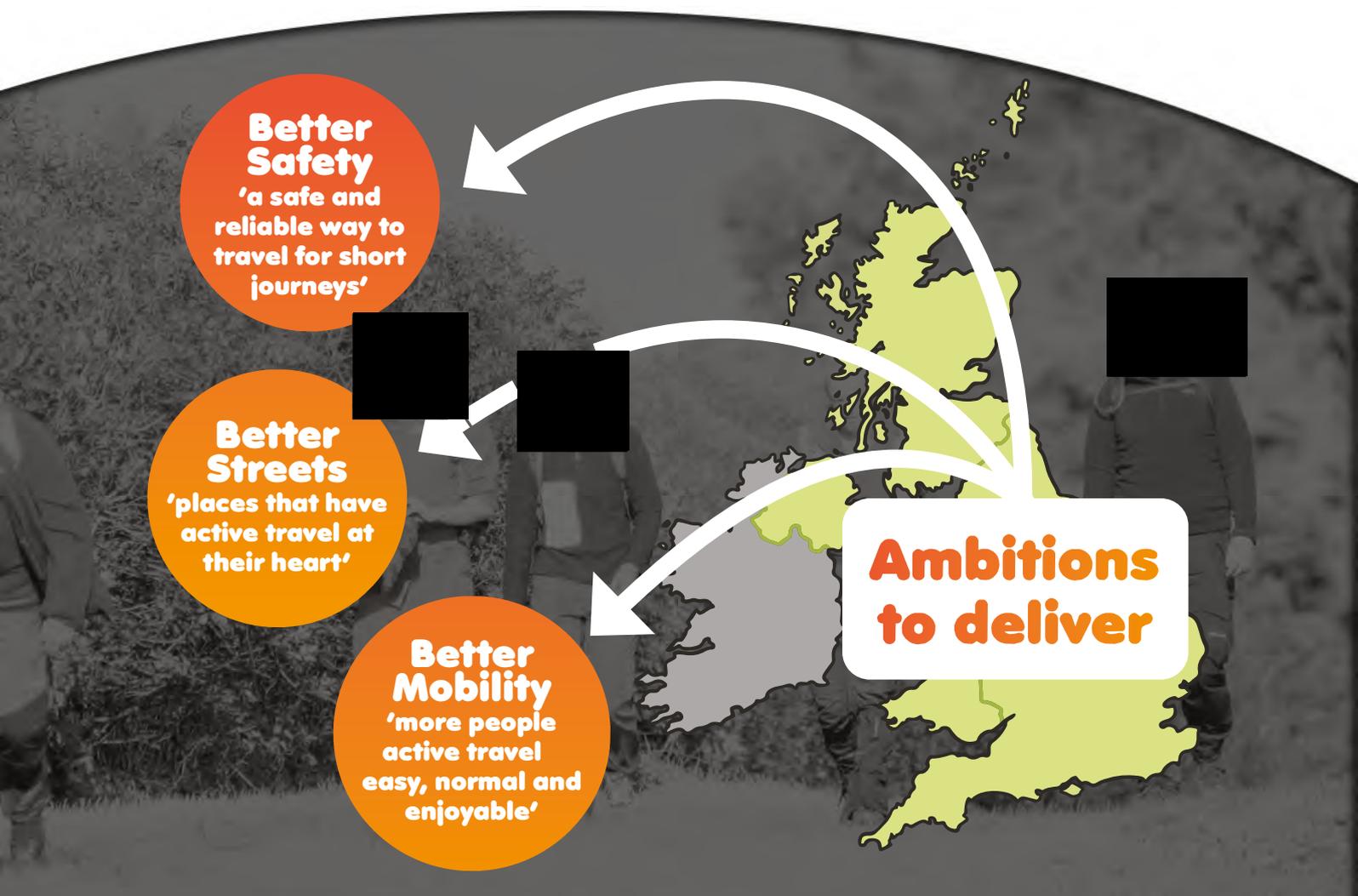
In July 2024 the Labour Government was elected. At the time of writing this strategy, the Government's detailed position, policies and funding opportunities for active travel are under development.

However post-election, the new transport secretary has pledged 'unprecedented levels of funding' for cycling and walking, as well as developing a new road safety strategy in recognition that access to safe cycle routes is essential for tackling the carbon footprint and pointed to the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of GP appointments that could be reduced each year through active travel investment.

Under the previous government a National Active travel Strategy was produced in 2017 which outlines the government's ambition 'to make active travel the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys by 2040'.

Active Travel England is the Government's executive agency responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around. They have an objective for 50% of trips around England's towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030. They provide advice, information, support and funding opportunities to deliver and embed active travel. They also ensure that £3.2 billion of government investment on active travel delivers to new high national standards.

Whilst the current Government is likely to revise its strategy and investment priorities, it is assumed that following the transport secretary's comments the promotion of active travel will be an ongoing priority.



2.1.2 North Kesteven Strategic Context

a) The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Adopted 2023

The current Local Plan was adopted in April 2023, by a partnership of authorities covering North Kesteven and West Lindsey District Councils, the City of Lincoln Council and Lincolnshire County Council. The Local Plan provides the policy framework for delivering the vision of sustainable growth across Central Lincolnshire. This sustainable growth will see more homes, more employment and supporting infrastructure delivered over the next 20 years.

A key element of the Local Plan is to deliver growth that will not be at cost to the environment, with a focus on sustainable locations for development, reducing energy usage, increasing renewable energy and moving Central Lincolnshire towards a carbon net zero region.

The Plan sets a number of objectives relating to climate and sustainability to achieve this vision. These objectives are:



As an important component of sustainable growth active travel is a theme within the Local Plan. Policy S48 is specific to cycling and walking infrastructure and states: "Development proposals should facilitate active travel by incorporating measures suitable for the scheme from the design stage. Plans and evidence accompanying applications will demonstrate how the ability to travel by foot or cycle will be actively encouraged by the delivery of well designed, safe and convenient access for all both into and through the site"

Therefore, the local plan provides the policy framework for the Council to ensure active travel is appropriately addressed, by requiring it to be designed into development proposals.

4 ACTION PLAN

The table below presents our action plan, to increase participation in active travel by all in North Kesteven.

4.1 Action Plan to Achieve our Aim and Priorities

PRIORITY OUTCOME 1

Increase all residents' awareness of active travel and its associated health, wellbeing and environmental benefits

We want to:

- Raise awareness of, and support, walking, wheeling and cycling events through general and targeted publicity.
- Investigate the potential for further development of 'stepping out' style routes and information for walking and wheeling.
- Publicise wheeling-friendly walks as part of the walking festival.
- Continue working with partners and local businesses to promote active travel opportunities and raise the profile in North Kesteven.
- Encourage residents and visitors of all abilities and ages to take up active travel for leisure, commuting and fitness.
- Integrate walking, wheeling and cycling activities, events, initiatives and programmes within the Council's outreach activities.
- Publicise active travel options as a way to attend any events.
- Investigate ways to make North Kesteven District Council an exemplar organisation for the number of personnel who undertake active travel for commuting and leisure pursuits.

PRIORITY OUTCOME 2

Promote safer active travel in North Kesteven

We want to:

- Work with organisations such as the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership to promote campaigns aimed at safety.
- Produce additional comprehensive information and online mapping of walking, wheeling and cycle routes in North Kesteven, identifying safe routes on highways, greenways, off-road and dedicated cycle routes.
- Support GLL to undertake more safe cycling training.
- Ensure the corporate website continues to provide information on safer walking, wheeling and cycling for adults and children, as well as opportunities for training.



**Application by Fosse Green Energy
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solar farm**

Written Representation

**Appendix F:
Extracts from North
Kesteven Tourism
Strategy 2024 - 2029**

by North Kesteven District Council

(ID FD1E96A6C)

NKDC reference: 23/0325/NSIP

Planning Inspectorate reference: EN010154

January 2026



North
Kesteven

Tourism
Strategy



2024



2029



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. Foreword

North Kesteven District Council's Tourism Strategy embraces 'traditional tourism and the wider Visitor Economy' with a total value of £201M and 2.9 million visits to North Kesteven in 2023. This strategy will help support and deliver both the new Destination Management Plan (DMP) for Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland and the recently accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), the vehicle linking local brands to the National Tourism Recovery Plan written by DCMS and its Arm's Length Body Visit England. Despite the clear benefits of this new hierarchy, it is important that North Kesteven continues to have a strong identity of its own, and it is intended to continue to use and develop our Heart of Lincs brand to promote the district, both independently and in partnership.

This Tourism Strategy is a companion to the North Kesteven Economic Development Strategy of 2024 which identifies tourism as a key growth sector, while it also aligns to The Council's Climate Change Strategy.

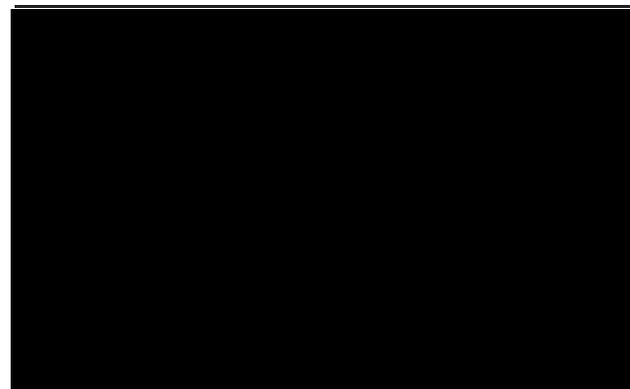
Tourism development is a priority for North Kesteven. It is a central component of the 'Our Economy' priority of the 2024-27 NK Plan which aims to: "Support sustainable and regenerative local economic growth and resilience, transitioning to a green economy working within environmental thresholds"

This Tourism Strategy will support the Priority's key aim and set out how we intend to deliver it. Tourism matters to the district because the sector supports and sustains flourishing businesses of all sizes. By continuing to engage with residents and visitors, we will champion job creation and retention, generate prosperity via increased visitor spend and foster further innovation and enterprise. Tourism showcases the district as a great location to visit, live and work, placing our unique heritage, attractions and natural beauty at the heart of the District's offer.

We aim to deliver continued growth in tourism and our tourism business sector but in a sustainable way that meets with the Council's long-term ambitions to be a carbon Net Zero authority by 2030. In this respect, this strategy is not just about attracting more visitors to the district at any cost. It is about nurturing balanced growth and adding value through enhancing the quality of the offer to key target visitor segments, whilst simultaneously working with businesses and partners to reduce the impact of that investment on the environment, encouraging longer stays and therefore greater spending per head by visitors.

2. Vision

Encourage, support and drive Sustainable Growth in our Visitor Economy with the Environment at the heart of everything we do, making the most of the natural advantages of the district as a distinctive rural Place for domestic and international visitors.



5. Emerging Trends and Research

NKDC 2023 Tourism Survey

Feedback from the 2023 Tourism Survey of both businesses and visitors stated that recruitment of staff remains a challenge for businesses post COVID with 37.5% saying they struggle to recruit and retain staff, citing quality of candidates to fill positions, rural location and transport links, skilled chefs, and general staff shortage in hospitality. Businesses are still looking to expand, however feel that the overall tourism offer in North Kesteven could improve, with more events collaborating with local businesses, network of businesses to support and learn from peers, wider promotion on Council websites and more accommodation in areas such as Waddington supporting the RAF and aviation sector and enthusiasts.

Businesses were asked to rank what the top 5 actions should be for the Tourism Strategy, the following were ranked the highest;

- Turn day visits into overnight visits by supporting and developing North Kesteven accommodation offer.
- Skills – To attract, develop and retain a skilled workforce. Challenge the misconceptions of careers in the tourism sector and support businesses to take advantage of training and development opportunities.
- Improvements to the North Kesteven walking/cycling/outdoor offer.
- Focus on increasing visitor numbers from outside the district.
- Engage more with residents, encourage them to explore their local area and discover what is on their doorstep.
- Encourage businesses to procure locally and encourage local spend.

