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GREENWAY

North Northamptonshire Greenway Strategic Masterplan

August 2024

Introduction

North Northamptonshire Council commissioned a Strategic Masterplan for the North Northamptonshire Greenway in Spring 2023.

Phil Jones Associates Limited were the successfully appointed consultants and through a very robust and extensive process of research, scoping, data collection and analysis, network development, route prioritisation and stakeholder engagement at various stages to "sense check" and ensure it encompasses local knowledge.

The Strategic Masterplan became a draft in Autumn 2023, with consultation taking place during October and November 2023. The resulting comments were assimilated into the final draft Strategic Masterplan and taken to North Northamptonshire Council's Executive for approval in August 2024.

The North Northamptonshire Greenway Strategic Masterplan is now adopted and has weight in planning terms and can feed into other policies and strategies, including the emerging Strategic Plan for North Northamptonshire and future negotiations with developers regarding planning obligations.

The full North Northamptonshire Greenway Strategic Masterplan is a technical document which as such is not fully accessible. Copies of it can be made available upon request.

North Northamptonshire Greenway Strategic Masterplan development

The Strategic Masterplan is informed by many plans, strategies and technical studies. These include locally specific documents, for example, the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Part 2 Local Plans, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) for Kettering and Corby and the Ise Valley Greenway Interim Report.

The Strategic Masterplan has been developed following the methodology set out in the LCWIP guidance, in effect making the North Northamptonshire Greenway a rural strategic LCWIP which connects North Northamptonshire's key settlements and trip generators.

The robust, evidence-based approach taken to develop the Strategic Masterplan ensures that future investment in walking and cycling infrastructure is informed by an existing demand. Combined with the vision, bespoke to North Northamptonshire, it highlights investment will contribute to increasing walking and cycling – for all types of journeys including leisure trips – across North Northamptonshire.

Stakeholder engagement workshops with the North Northamptonshire Greenway Board and wider stakeholders including Natural England and National Highways highlighted the strong local desire for routes to be as safe and attractive as possible with a clear preference for traffic-free routes. In addition, given the rural nature of much of North Northamptonshire and high existing levels of walking and cycling for leisure, creating routes that cater for leisure and tourism are a key priority for stakeholders.

Stakeholders also demonstrated an appetite to improve existing, and create new Public Rights of Way where needed, to deliver a high-quality network though it was also accepted that improved ways of working would be needed to keep routes maintained to a good standard.

North Northamptonshire Greenway Vision

As a result, the agreed vision for the North Northamptonshire Greenway is:

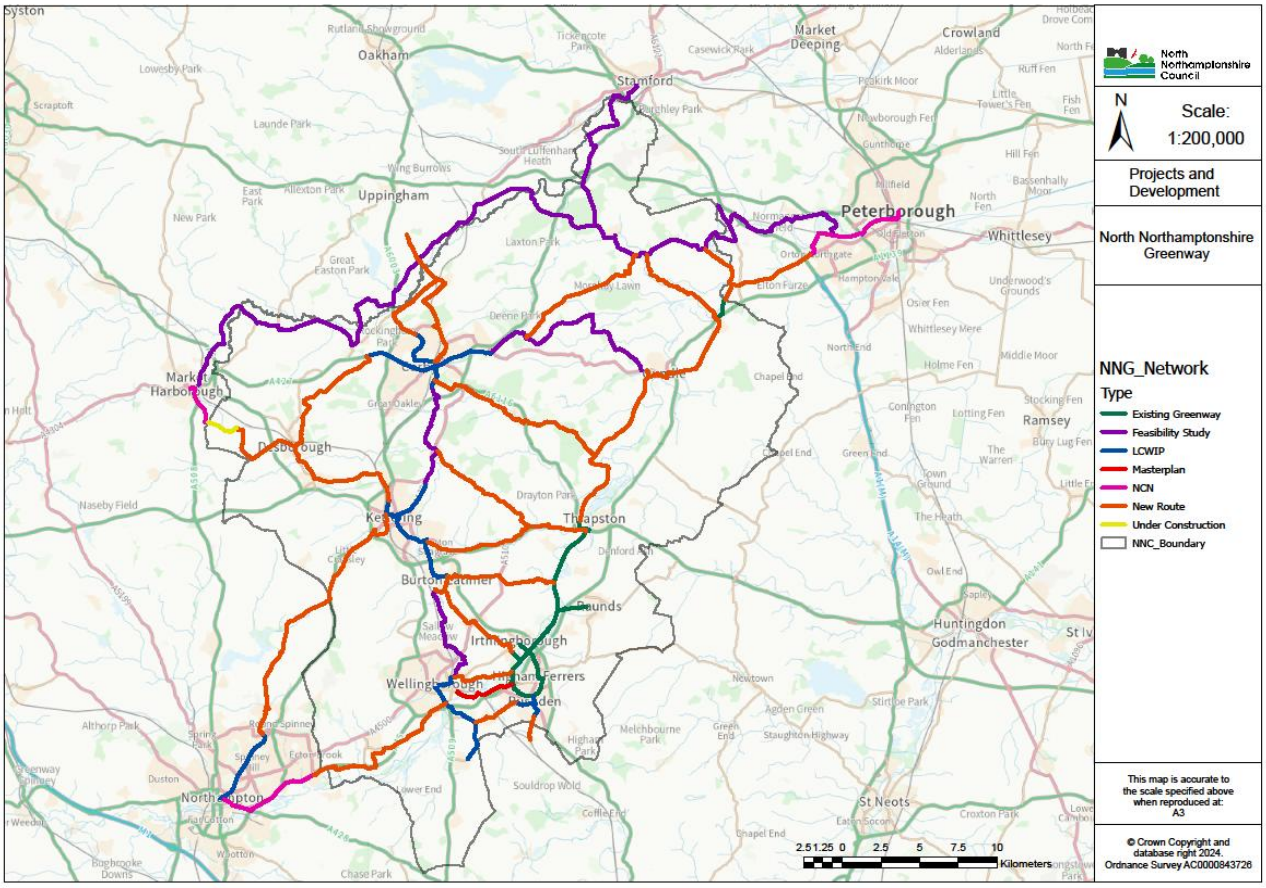
The North Northamptonshire Greenway will be a strategic rural network of safer, largely traffic-free routes suitable for walkers, wheelers, cyclists and equestrian users where appropriate, connecting settlements, employment, leisure and tourism destinations across North Northamptonshire and beyond.

The agreed logo for the North Northamptonshire logo is shown below:

The identified routes

The final document identifies nearly 275km of routes connecting settlements within North Northamptonshire and in neighbouring authorities broken down into 33 routes, all of which are a priority based on existing demand, to be delivered over the next 10 to 20 years.

The map below shows the routes which have been identified through the Strategic Masterplan; LCWIP routes; existing Greenway; those under construction (as at August 2024 Braybrooke to Market Harborough as part of Route 1); those with feasibility studies and those with a more detailed design study.



These routes are shown in the table below and are at various stages of development:

Route No	Point A	Point B	Intermediate Point	Total Length (Km)
1	Market Harborough	Desborough		8.05
2	Desborough	Rothwell		3.01
3	Rothwell	Kettering		8.17
4	Desborough	Corby		14.36
5	Corby	Oundle	Tresham Garden Village	6.99
6	Tresham Garden Village	King's Cliffe		10.15
7	King's Cliffe	Elton		7.62
7 & 18	Elton	Peterborough		0.00
8	King's Cliffe	Stamford	Collyweston, Easton on the Hill	10.78
9	Corby	Lyddington		10.45
10	Corby	Kettering	Geddington	10.06
11a	Corby	Thrapston	Brigstock	13.62
11b	Corby	Thrapston	Geddington	12.46
12	Kettering	Burton Latimer		17.47
13	Burton Latimer	Raunds	Great Addington	7.80
14	Thrapston	Raunds		9.22
15	Oundle	Thrapston		12.78
16	Tresham Garden Village	Oundle		14.00
17	Oundle	Warmington		5.13
18	Warmington	Peterborough	Eaglethorpe, Elton	1.50
19	King's Cliffe	Warmington	Apethorpe	8.22
20 & 21	Burton Latimer	Irthlingborough	Higham Ferrers	7.34
22	Higham Ferrers	Rushden		1.71
23a	Wellingborough	Rushden		3.04
23b	Wellingborough	Rushden	Little Irchester, Irchester, Route X	8.20
24	Burton Latimer	Wellingborough		4.38
25	Raunds	Higham Ferrers		5.30
26 & 27	Wellingborough	Northampton	Earls Barton	12.04
28	Wellingborough	Wollaston	Irchester	3.15
29	Rushden	Wymington		2.03
KT	Kettering	Thrapston		7.52
FR	Market Harborough	Wansford		20.87
KN	Kettering	Northampton		8.07
			Total	275.48

Please note the route when delivered may or may not exceed the distance listed in these tables once the actual route on the ground is finalised.

These routes are being worked on and are at various stages. The progress of the development of each route is dependent upon a number of factors such as funding availability; landowner appetite; LCWIP progression; Active Travel England; National Highways; local development; length of route; status of the route – for example whether it has had a feasibility or design study carried out upon it; neighbourhood planning and local interest groups and Greenway Champions.

Routes such as the Market Harborough to Wansford route is an ambitious project which will involve multiple authorities and interested parties. The benefits of having such pioneering, long distance projects on the identified routes mean that awareness can be raised and small sections can be delivered when and as the opportunity arises; in a similar vein to the smaller routes also identified.

A prioritisation toolkit has been developed specifically for the Strategic Masterplan. The toolkit has been designed to inform the delivery of the network including prioritising routes for further feasibility studies, and to help ascertain which routes can be put forward for funding depending upon the funding eligibility criteria.

The toolkit includes eight prioritisation criteria that reflects local needs and have been agreed with stakeholders; the criteria include: improving access to employment, education, leisure and tourism and green space, cost, value to network, connections to areas of growth and improving road safety.

The prioritisation process informed the selection of four priority routes to be further developed in child/design recommendations booklets. These four priority routes were chosen at random.

All the routes highlighted within this Strategy are a priority for North Northamptonshire. The chosen four were done as an exercise to demonstrate how the child/ design recommendation booklets could look, as evolving/live documents to sit beneath the overarching Strategy.

Developer Contributions Formula

A draft development contributions formula was developed as part of the Strategic Masterplan to help inform future negotiations with developers.

This is an example of how a methodology could be used and is not the end result. Further work is required to do this and will be done as a separate exercise. This example has been informed by the cost of the proposed network, the forecast development-related active travel trips and the cost per active travel trip, resulting in the following developer contributions formula:

Developer contributions = Active travel trips x cost per active travel trips

Greenway Champions

Due to the extensive network of Greenway routes proposed through the Strategic Masterplan, Greenway Champions are individuals on the ground, who sign up to become an ambassador for the North Northamptonshire Greenway.
Through their knowledge of their local area, their contacts and interest groups, where possible advocating the Greenway, the vision, and seek to highlight the benefits.

By signing up to be Greenway Champion it helps us to spread the word of the benefits that a Greenway network can bring, helps us to identify potential connections so that our future generations can benefit from safer, off road routes, and that active travel, whether it be walking, wheeling, cycling or horse riding for leisure and commuter trips becomes the norm.

A Greenway Champion would:

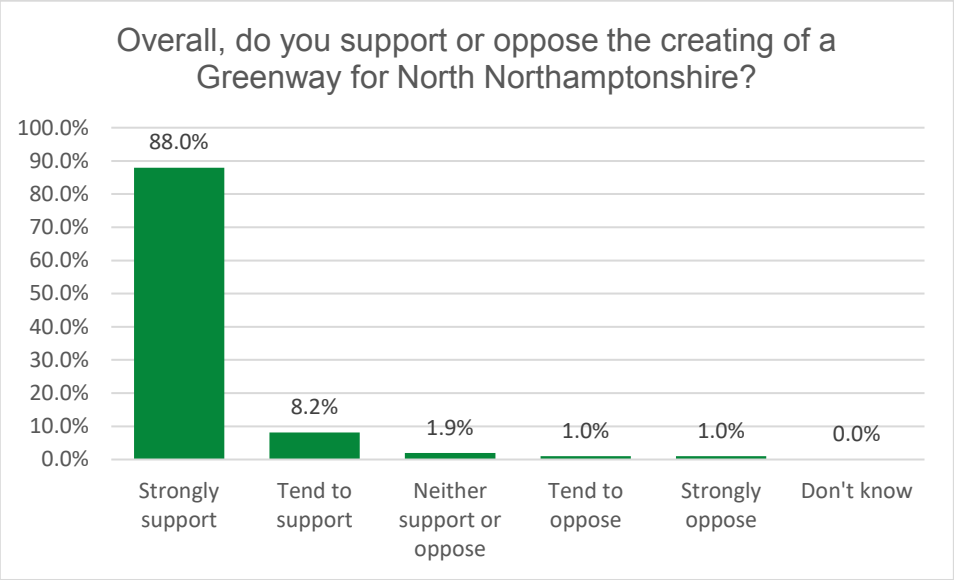
- Sign up to receive quarterly emails from the Project Officer leading the Greenway project
- Help identify possible routes to help deliver the network
- Raise the profile of the benefits of the Greenway
- Report any missing signage/ damage/ vandalism/ waste through the appropriate channels with the assistance of the Project Officer
- Attend Greenway Champion events (maximum 3 per year)
- Encourage peers, contacts, community members to visit the Greenway website
- Liaise with the Project Officer and local Greenway Area Lead (Councillor)

In return, the North Northamptonshire Greenway Project will:

- Provide updates on progress on the individual routes
- Offer support to groups who are looking to deliver routes in their locality
- Bring lessons learnt, case studies, expert advice to the group
- Signpost issues raised through to the correct department

Consultation on the North Northamptonshire Strategic Masterplan

When asked "Overall, do you support or oppose the creating of a Greenway for North Northamptonshire?" There were 208 responses to this question comments and 88.0% "strongly support" and 8.2% "tending to support. 1.9& "neither support or oppose", with 1.0% "tending to oppose" and 1.0% "strongly oppose"



It is clear that the respondents have a keen interest in Active Travel and that the development of the North Northants Greenway is supported.

Leisure trips are, at the time of the questionnaire, the trip generators rather than commuting, however the comments received show that with the progressive development of Greenways, commuting trips will rise.

Respondents are in agreement with the Vison and its key objectives. Underlying all responses is the need for maintenance, inclusivity, deliverability, connectivity and safety to be at the heart of all the development of routes.

Securing future maintenance agreements is key with the delivery of routes, and that needs to be agreed at the outset. As is the maintenance of the Greenways already delivered.

Inclusivity for all users is also highlighted throughout the consultation and from the responses it is clear that horse riders, mobility scooters and other users aside from walkers, wheelers and cyclists need to be accommodated for, where appropriate and feasible.

Using dismantled railway lines came up as a suggestion within the consultation, however where these sit on private land, the reality of entering into a mutually beneficial agreement with the landowner is yet to be discovered, but exploring ways of working with landowners can be added to the Strategy as a way to further develop the Greenway network.

In addition, keeping the Greenway off road wherever possible is also a strong theme from comments throughout the consultation. Working with private landowners and the Rights of Way team will therefore be a key strand of delivering sections.

In responses to the questions regarding the routes, a few identified a route which was already identified in the NNG Strategy. This could infer the question was perhaps too confusing or that the respondent did not look at the maps showing the identified routes before answering.

However, many responses referred to the Nene Valley Greenway which is open and gives us the opportunity to learn from that development when delivering new routes.

The questionnaire asked for "Greenway Champions" to come forward who would raise the profile of the Strategy, the benefits of the Greenway network, advocate it to their community and generally spread the word. This yielded 3 individual responses. Please read the Consultation Analysis for the Rushden to Wellingborough Greenway Masterplan as that yielded much more interest in Greenway Campions.

Furthermore, interested groups from villages and towns on the routes have come forward since the Consultation to both show their support and to work with us to help identify and scope the routes. These include Rockingham Forest Vision, the Slate Valley Greenway (Route 8), Wollaston and Irchester (Route 28), Great and Little Addington (Route 13 and Apethorpe for their part in routes 7 and 19.

In addition to that, scoping work is also taking place with Twywell, Cranford and Woodford through local interest on Route KT, and Braybrooke Parish Council to look at Route 1.

This interest and support from local community members is key to the scoping and profile raising of each of the routes at a local level, to engage local landowners, helping overcome barriers and with the development of each route from scoping through to delivery.

Furthermore, this local support provides the opportunity to access different funding streams that are not always necessarily available to local authorities. An example of this would be the Slate Valley Greenway Trail, currently at Feasibility Stage. The local interest group were able to apply to a local landfill site for the funds to commission their study.

It is also clear that there is strong support for harmonisation of the S106 formula across North Northamptonshire, and from the consultation, it is clear further work needs to be done internally within North Northamptonshire Council in order for it to become an adopted policy.