



Sleaford Transport Strategy

June 2022



Sleaford Transport Strategy

Foreword

“Sleaford is one of our county’s larger market towns, which is why one of our focuses over the past two years has been on making it quicker, easier and safer to get into and around town.

With major improvements projects at the A17/A153 rugby club junction and Holdingham Roundabout now complete, our focus is on how else we can shape travel and transport in and around Sleaford to make the town the absolute best it can be over the next fifteen years.

And that’s where this strategy comes in...

As part of this strategy’s development, we’ve factored in the significant changes to working patterns and travel habits we’ve seen as a result of the pandemic, with more people using online services and working in home/work hybrid scenarios.

We want to meet these, and other changing travel demands by offering a wider range of affordable, reliable, and environmentally-friendly travel options for people to choose from – all while supporting planned economic growth in the area.

This will lead to more people using alternative forms of transport, resulting in less congestion and a more pleasant town centre, making Sleaford a more prosperous, attractive, and healthier place to live, learn, work and visit. This strategy provides a number of proposals for us, the district council and developers to consider over the next fifteen years as we strive towards meeting growth targets for the area.

Some of our top priorities are to: make the town centre a more pleasant and safer place; improve facilities for walking and cycling; and investigate junction improvements at key pinch-points. Doing this will help cut congestion, open up new development land and meet changing travel demands.

The challenge now is finding the funding needed to make these improvements a reality. And the only way we’re going to be able to do that is if everyone gets behind the plan and works together.”



Cllr Richard Davies

Executive Member for Highways and Transport at Lincolnshire County Council

Sleaford Transport Strategy

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Introducing the strategy



Overview



The Sleaford Transport Strategy has been developed by Lincolnshire County Council, in partnership with North Kesteven District Council, in order to provide a clear vision for the future of transport and travel in and around the town up to 2036.

It aims to support residents, visitors, and organisations through improvements to movement and transport, supporting the transition to net zero carbon, helping to build a resilient economy, and enhancing access to opportunities and services.

With the proposals and interventions contained in this strategy, the aim is to improve travel choice and access through the development of an inclusive, sustainable, and future-ready transport system, helping Sleaford to grow and adapt and to meet the big challenges and opportunities over the next 10 to 15 years.

Understanding Sleaford



Located at the centre of Lincolnshire's rural heartland, Sleaford has retained its rich history whilst playing an important role in the region's key economic sectors, including agri-food. The town is situated between the larger population centres of Grantham, Boston, Newark-on-Trent, and Lincoln, and located at a critical point on the A17 and A15 corridors. They are important distribution routes for the agricultural, food and logistics sectors and provide links to Lincoln, Newark, the Port of Boston, the Humber Ports, and the wider region.

The market town's historic core is a key asset and service centre for the wider area, providing access to retail, employment, leisure, and healthcare facilities. However, access to these services remains a challenge, particularly for those living outside of the urban area. For roughly half of the population who live outside of Sleaford, and in particular for those in smaller, rural settlements, the private car is vital for accessibility to basic services and accessing opportunities across the region. Connectivity by public transport from more rural parts of the network remains limited, affecting access to services and opportunities. This has a disproportionate impact on more deprived parts of Sleaford and those who do not have access to a vehicle.

Consequently, an opportunity exists to enhance travel choice across the study area and improve access to central Sleaford, supporting the local economy and its future plans for housing and economic growth.



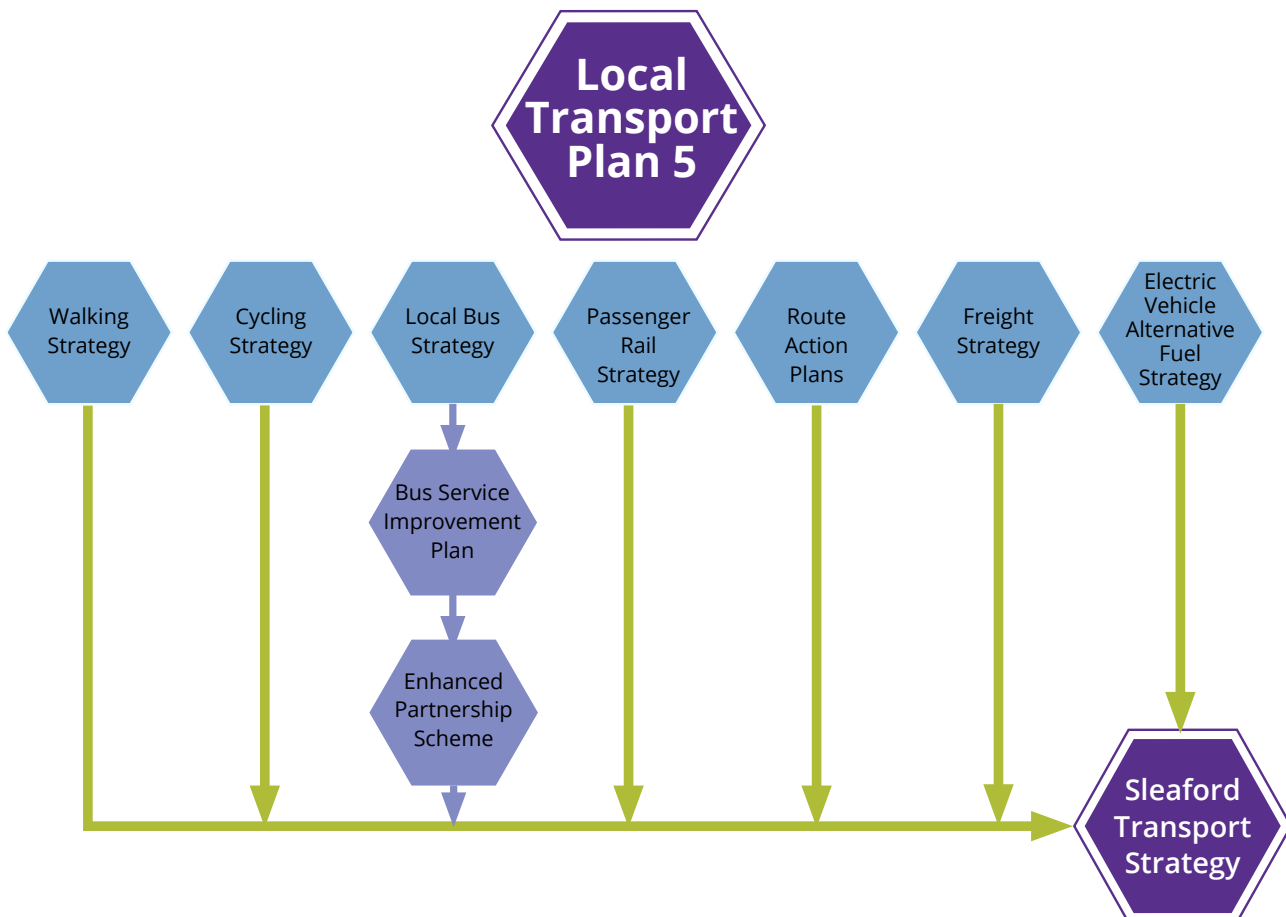
Understanding Sleaford



Purpose of the strategy



The purpose of the transport strategy is to help develop and provide a transport system within Sleaford that helps residents, visitors, businesses and organisations meet their daily needs now and over the next 15 years. It will be consistent with, and support, the county council Corporate Plan, The Green Masterplan and Local Transport Plan 5.



As we all continue to adapt and change in response to a range of societal and environmental issues such as climate change, the transition to net zero carbon emissions and the COVID-19 pandemic recovery, there will be a range of challenges that the transport strategy will help the town and the wider area to meet. These include:

- Supporting Sleaford's key economic sectors including agri-food by increasing the resilience of the transport network
- Supporting the planned housing and economic growth in the study area, including the delivery of the Sustainable Urban Extensions
- Providing more travel choice and maintaining an inclusive and reliable transport network across the urban and more rural areas, that supports all of Sleaford's communities and businesses
- Successfully meeting the different and changing travel demands across the area, including tackling how people access different activities such as employment, education, healthcare, retail, leisure and tourism
- Helping meet the significant environmental challenges resulting from the impact of travel. This includes improving air quality, protecting the town's historic centre and green spaces, and playing our part in tackling climate change, by using more sustainable forms of travel and transitioning to low emission vehicles

In developing this transport strategy, consideration has been given to a wide range of strategic themes and issues, including:

- The national and regional strategic and policy context and direction, including the net zero carbon agenda, climate change and the wider national and global trends which will have an influence on Sleaford
- The views and experiences of the public and stakeholders
- The development of Sleaford's economy and its continuing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- The changing way transport services and infrastructure are provided, and the new challenges and opportunities presented by technology, especially for active travel modes
- The increasing availability of different modes of transport, as well as the need to increase opportunities to do things digitally
- The needs of central Sleaford as well as the surrounding rural areas and villages
- The different activities undertaken by people and organisations that shape the economy and communities
- The considerable future housing and employment developments planned in and around Sleaford



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The strategy process



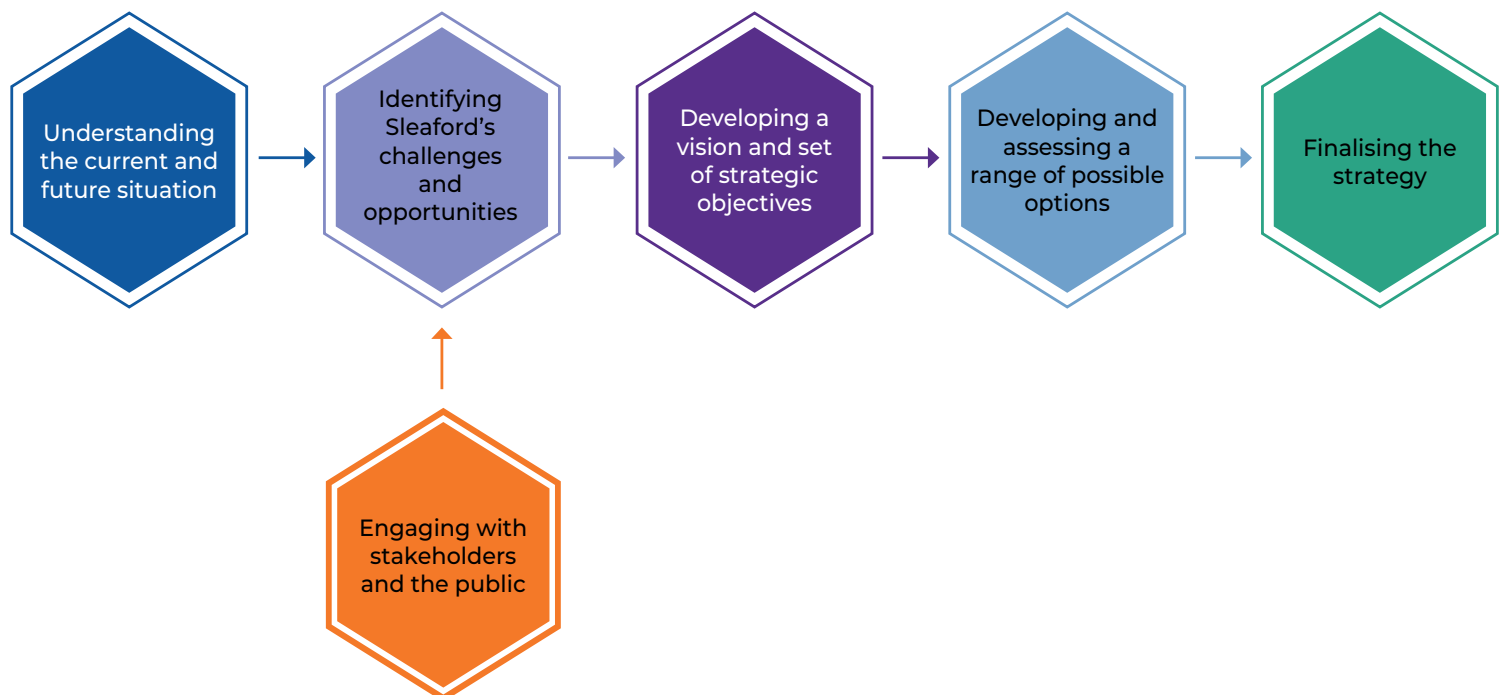
The process



The Sleaford Transport Strategy has been developed using a process that incorporates the use of policy, data and stakeholder contributions and inputs, to form the evidence to support a set of key emerging themes.

A robust and comprehensive process has been used which has been overseen by representatives from Lincolnshire County Council with support from North Kesteven District Council. This has involved using a logical and stepped process to shape the strategy, ensuring that there are clear links between the following elements:

- The issues and opportunities to be addressed
- Where investments need to be focussed
- What outputs will be delivered
- The short to medium-term outcomes
- The overall impact of the proposals



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Informing the strategy



Engagement, evidence and opportunities



To support the strategy, a range of engagement activities were undertaken to ensure a collaborative approach. Members of the public and stakeholders were invited to comment on transport and accessibility in Sleaford at workshops, drop-in events, and by completing a questionnaire. This helped to steer the strategy and ensured that the key local issues were understood:

- With members at key stages of the process to steer decision-making
- With key stakeholders discussing specific travel needs and modes of transport
- With wider stakeholder workshops and the general public to identify the big challenges both now and in the near future, to support the development of the vision and to identify possible options

The strategy is supported by comprehensive evidence gathering and analysis to reveal the current challenges faced by the town and surrounding area, and to gauge what they may be over the lifetime of the strategy and beyond. The data collection process has taken into consideration a number of strategies previously prepared by North Kesteven District Council, as well as their recently prepared masterplan document. The evidence has also included a range of national and regional data and information sources, traffic modelling and wider transport, economic and land use planning policy, supported by inputs from stakeholders and the public.

These processes have identified a set of key themes:

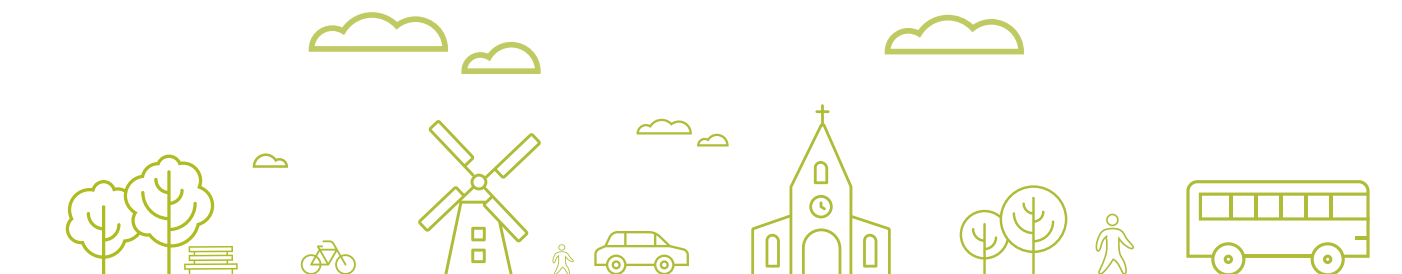
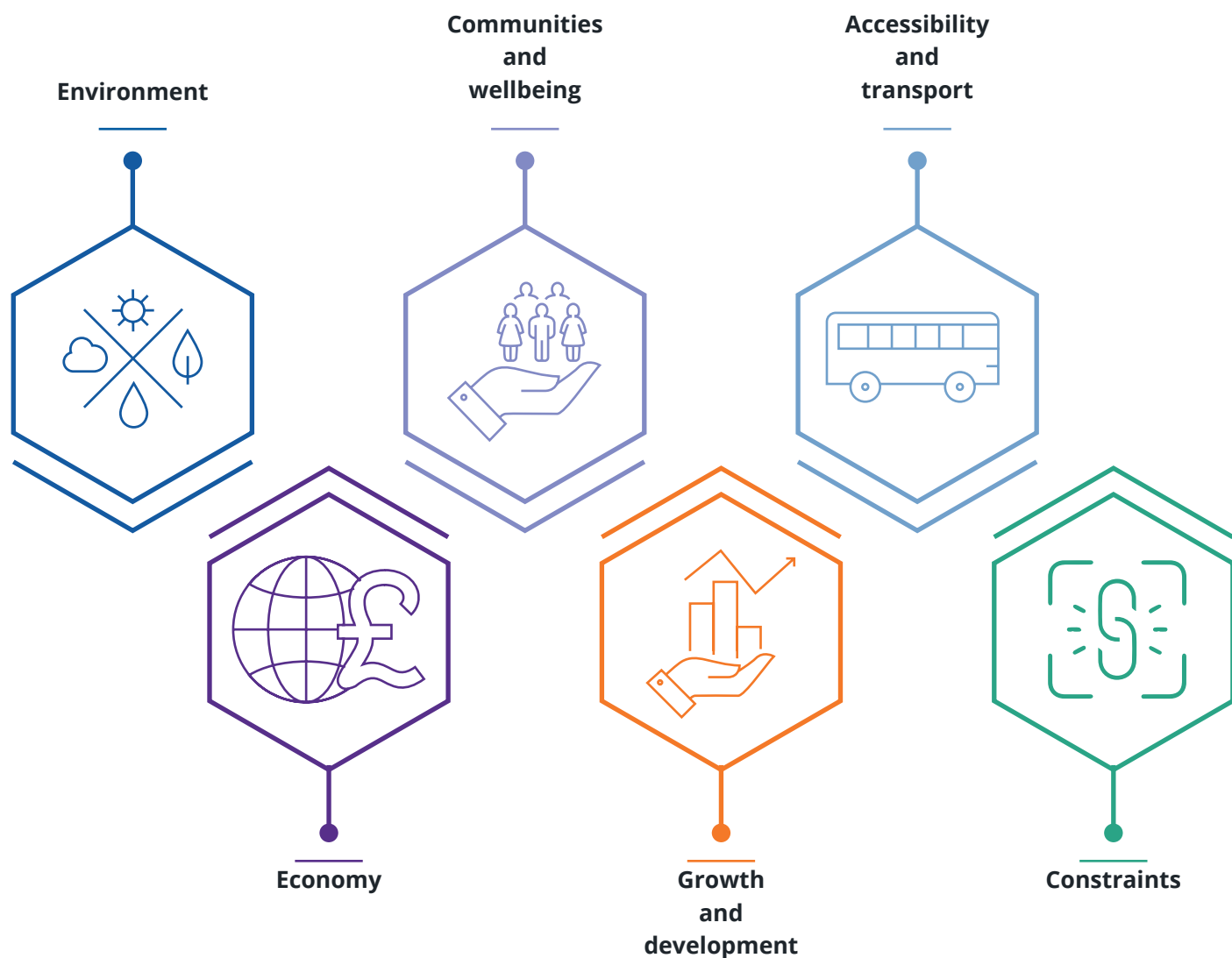


Key themes



The challenges faced by this transport strategy reflect the changing nature and operation of a modern society, changes in the way we are choosing to travel and access our daily activities, the significant environmental challenges we are facing and the local issues specific to Sleaford.

Importantly, it also needs to reflect national and regional planning policy, which has evolved over the last few years to tackle these issues and challenges facing the UK. A set of key themes have been identified as follows:



What are the challenges and issues?



A focus on the environment



Climate change and net zero carbon

Transport will need to become more resilient when facing the challenges that climate change is bringing if it is to contribute effectively to the net zero target set out by the Government. The transport sector needs to catch-up and make significant changes to how we build our supporting infrastructure, how we power our vehicles, and how we use them. Decarbonising the transport system will involve shifting trips to walking and cycling, modernising and expanding bus network by bringing forward zero emission buses and coaches, decarbonising the railways, and phasing out petrol and diesel cars, vans and motorcycles.



Protecting Sleaford's historic core and green spaces

Traffic and its associated noise and pollution can have a negative impact on streets, the urban realm and historic buildings. Sleaford's historic core and heritage is an asset. However, the current levels of traffic and road infrastructure detracts from the historic environment, limits opportunities to develop it further, and makes it a less pleasant place for people to use and spend time in.

Improving the health and wellbeing of our communities



Congestion and clean air

There is a clear need to reduce the negative health and wellbeing impacts that are associated with traffic and transport. Congestion has been identified as a problem in some areas of Sleaford and the associated air pollution, noise and safety problems can have a significant negative impact on health and the quality of life.

Supporting the economy



Post-COVID-19 recovery

COVID-19 has had a significant negative impact on the economy and the delivery of services throughout the country, but there is an opportunity to build in some of the emerging positive and sustainable travel trends that have resulted from the pandemic. Improvements to access and transport can contribute to the economic recovery, help to improve travel choice for Sleafordians and help places become more resilient.



Supporting the agri-food sector

The South of Lincolnshire is an area dominated by agriculture, food production and logistics. Greater Lincolnshire's Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the need to continue to build on the successful food enterprise zone and develop the 'Food Valley UK'.

Sleaford acts as an important hub within Lincolnshire's rural heartland and the food enterprise zone with the A15 and A17 forming important distribution routes for agricultural, food and logistics sectors. Any operational problems on these corridors have a disproportional impact on the agri-food sector, which relies on both routes to access the strategic road network and onward connections to the international ports.

Improving travel choice



Car dependent community

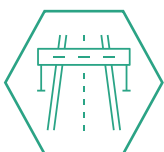
Around 85% of households in the study area have access to at least one private vehicle, substantially higher than the national average of 74%. However, opportunities brought about by economic growth need to be open to all parts of our communities, including those without access to a car. Like many rural communities in the country, Sleaford has a more limited public transport and active travel network which affects access to services, employment and education.



Need to improve rural to urban connectivity

Access to the public transport network across the area is mixed and, although Sleaford's inter-town bus network has reasonable coverage, more rural areas are less accessible. Access to the rail network is also mixed. There are stations at Rauceby, Ruskington and Heckington but rail services to the stations are limited. Improving rural to urban connectivity is a key challenge and forms an important part of building a sustainable, inclusive and accessible Sleaford.

Constraints



Physical constraints

Sleaford and the areas surrounding the town contain a number of physical barriers that affect movement for those travelling to and within the town. These physical constraints include busy roads and rail infrastructure as well as the River Slea that runs through the centre of the town.



Funding

The availability of funding is an important consideration, whether that be paying for bus improvements, upgrading the road network or providing active travel focused infrastructure. The strategy will be dependent on securing investment from a range of sources and, to successfully capture some funding types, it will be necessary to demonstrate how the proposals address the challenges identified, and how they support the national and regional strategic policy priorities.



Uncertainty

Uncertainty is one of the most significant issues for transport. This can be related to the speed of development in new technologies, how people are changing their travel patterns and, indeed, the need to make journeys. Furthermore, the uncertainty surrounding the transition to net zero, the country's new relationship with the EU, and the continuing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, have made it even more difficult to predict future transport needs.



What are the future challenges for Sleaford?



A changing society



An increasing population

Population growth adds extra demand onto the network. North Kesteven's population is predicted to grow by approximately 12% by 2036 to 130,156 and, without any intervention, this growth could potentially exacerbate many existing transport problems, affecting movement in and around Sleaford.

Demographic shifts, including those associated with an ageing population, also pose future challenges for the local area. The proportion of the population that is of working age is predicted to decline. Consequently, an increasing ageing population is likely to be more reliant on less sustainable transport modes, such as the private vehicle, putting further pressure on the transport system.



Changing needs - access to services

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that some people can work from home, at least for part of their working week, and those working patterns are set to continue for many with hybrid working becoming the new norm for some. While schools will still be the focus of learning for the youngest, digital learning may also change post-16 student travel patterns.

The ageing population will also mean there will be more need to access health and social care as the growing number of older people need support. This mean access to health and care services will be of growing importance.



A changing retail sector

With the rise of online retail, there are ongoing significant changes to the retail market which will continue to influence the viability of traditional retail on the 'high street'.



Developing resilient communities

Developing resilient communities is a key challenge at a regional and local level. Economic 'shock' events such as the COVID-19 pandemic pose a significant threat to the economic security of the region and demonstrate how important resilience is. In particular, it is crucial to support businesses and ultimately seek economic growth. However, this must be done in a sustainable manner, and we should look to avoid a private vehicle-led recovery at the expense of the necessary carbon emission reduction as set out by net zero policy.



Sustainable growth



Sustainable urban extensions

The economic growth of Sleaford will, in part, be delivered through an expanding population and the delivery of new housing, including the planned Sustainable Urban Extensions. This will not only provide homes for new residents, but allows an opportunity to improve connectivity to existing communities. It will be important to support this growth with a sustainable and inclusive transport network that meets the needs of existing and future Sleaford residents. Managing travel to and from the sustainable urban extensions will need to be delivered in the context of the net zero carbon agenda and ensure that a high quality digital, public transport and active mode network is provided.

How we travel

Transport and access are rapidly changing with key improvements providing new choices in how we move, how we power our vehicles, how we pay for journeys and whether we travel at all.



Walking and cycling (green infrastructure network)

A focus on active travel, walking and cycling for short journeys will continue to form a core part of all transport networks. This will help to reduce traffic and its negative impacts, thus supporting healthy lifestyles.



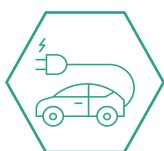
Public or shared transport

Public and shared transport must be at the centre of transport's future, acting as the principal way to move large numbers of people efficiently and affordably.



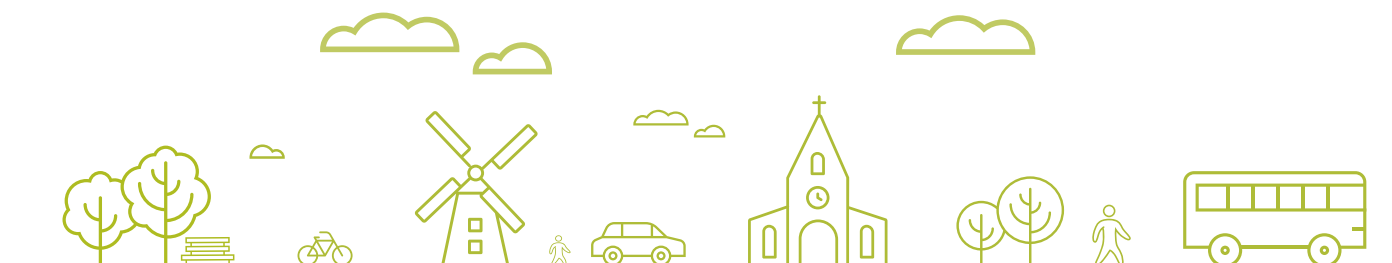
Decarbonising transport

Transport must now play its full role in decarbonising our economy by improving access to transport modes such as active travel and public transport, supporting the increased use of electric vehicles, and taking advantage of digital connectivity to reduce the number of journeys we make.



Future of mobility

Future mobility options provide significant opportunities to encourage behaviour change through new technologies, to improve travel by digitisation, electrification, sharing, automation, and new models of business. However, the pace of change is uncertain, and it is difficult to predict when some technologies will appear and when is the right time to adopt them.



Improving strategic connectivity



Access to Lincolnshire's and Sleaford's rural heartland

Sleaford is located in Lincolnshire's rural heartland and agri-food sector plays a key role in the local economy. Large numbers of HGVs and freight travel along its strategic corridors and maintaining access to markets will continue to be a key concern. It is crucial that the routes to the ports and international gateways remain effective. Transport and the road network will play a fundamental role in this, and is a particular concern for the agri-food sector, where just-in-time production and the timely transportation of goods is vital.



Freight

The A17 and A15 will continue to be important corridors for Lincolnshire's industries, and it will be a continuing need to ensure that they operate efficiently and effectively. The growth in online retail is resulting in an increase in home deliveries of parcels, groceries and hot food. This is having a very specific impact on travel with a rise in van traffic on local roads.

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What does the strategy aim to achieve?

The process to prepare this Sleaford Transport Strategy has been driven by a clear objective to provide a coherent vision for mobility and transport across the study area up to 2036.

The strategy considers all accessibility needs in the study area and will provide a framework for dealing with the key local and wider challenges and changes which will impact on the area over the coming years.

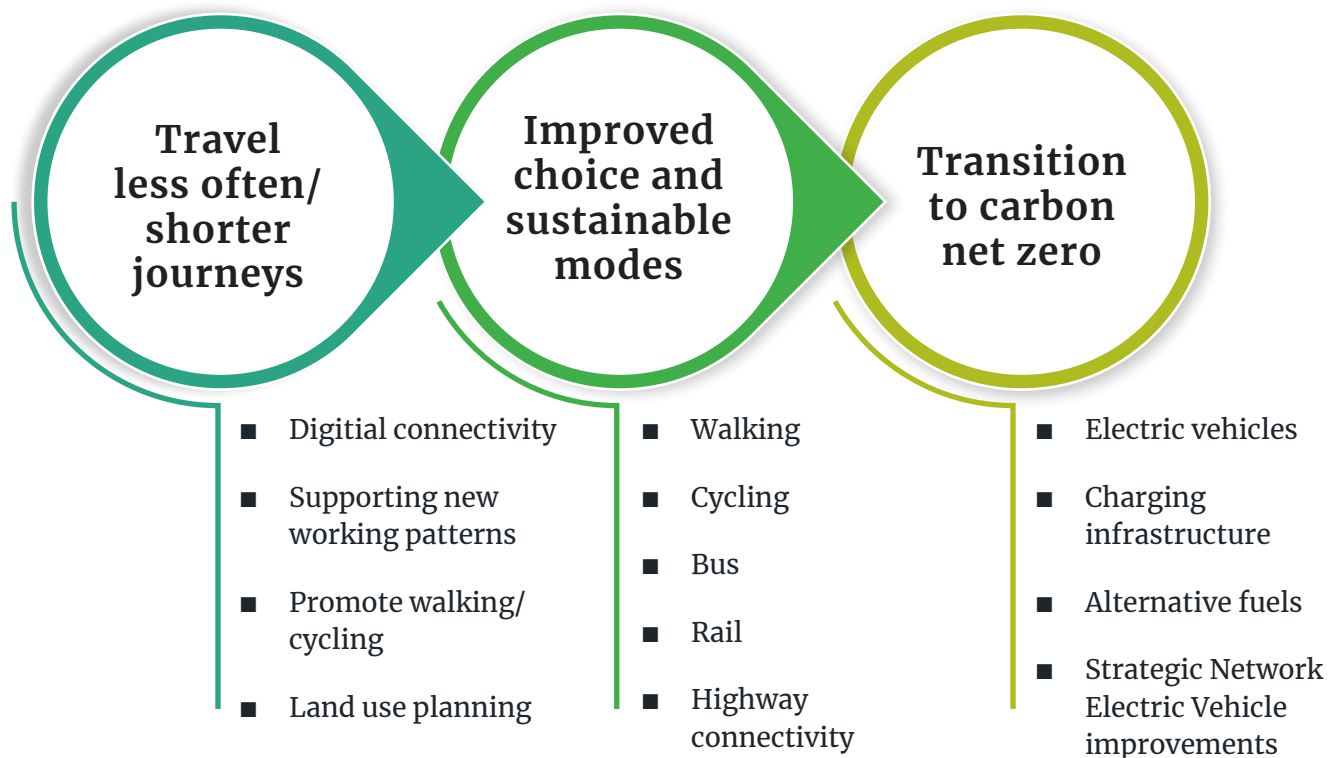


A future ready and sustainable Sleaford



The primary purpose of this strategy is to make travel within, through and around Sleaford inclusive and sustainable, encouraging people to walk and cycle for short journeys and increasing the use of shared and public transport when they need to travel further.

A major aim of the strategy is to promote new 'future ready' travel approaches to Sleaford both now and over the course of the strategy period, improving choice whilst also monitoring how new technologies are changing travel around the country and how this may affect the town. When car travel is necessary, the transport strategy aims to encourage the uptake of low emission vehicles whilst also making journeys safer and more reliable. The three priorities of interventions are shown below:



This future ready and sustainable approach will help to support the growth of the town, make its economy stronger and more resilient, and its communities more vibrant, healthy and inclusive.

A vision for accessibility and transport in and around Sleaford has been developed for the period up to 2036.



Vision and objectives



This provides direction for the strategy and considers both current and emerging future trends in digital communications, travel and mobility that are likely to be seen over the next 15 years. The transport strategy's priorities include:



Future ready

Inclusiveness (supporting all communities across all areas covered by the strategy) is at the heart of the vision, supporting everyone and all organisations to access their daily activities and needs. Central to the future ready vision are walking and cycling, as well as shared trips and public transport, relating to both traditional forms of public transport and new advances in more flexible transport opportunities, where vehicles and services are shared;



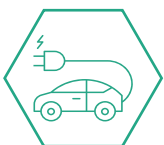
A vibrant market town

A thriving agri-food market town, supported by improved public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure across the town, providing access to the town centre, business parks, the two sustainable urban extensions and with connections to the surrounding villages;



Maximising assets and sustainable travel

The area will benefit from expanded high quality active travel networks and enhanced public transport infrastructure, creating a 'people-centric' environment. Advances in mobility enabled by new technologies and digital connectivity will improve access to opportunities and services, improving the vibrancy, health and wellbeing of the town and supporting the transition towards low carbon transport; and



Net zero carbon

In line with national policy, the transition to low carbon transport will continue to accelerate. This will not only focus on the role of digital, active travel, public and shared transport schemes but be underpinned by a behaviour change shift and complemented by an improved range of travel choices. With the 2030 ban on new petrol and diesel vehicles in place, the electric and alternative fuel infrastructure and services, required for the transition to low emission vehicles, will form an ongoing priority.



The vision strapline



Sleaford...a vibrant, connected and inclusive market town. A thriving agri-food market town, supported by improved public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure in the town centre and connections to the surrounding villages and the two sustainable urban extensions.

The area will benefit from expanded high quality active travel networks and enhanced public transport infrastructure creating a 'people-centric' environment. Advances in mobility enabled by new technologies and digital connectivity will improve access to opportunities and services, improving the vibrancy, health and wellbeing of the town and supporting the transition towards low carbon transport.



The vision statement



“By 2036, Sleaford will have a vibrant and resilient high street. The emphasis on walking and cycling within central Sleaford has created a ‘people-centric’ environment that has enhanced access and movement within the town.”

“Improvements to Sleaford Rail Station and the local bus network has improved connections to the surrounding villages and regional centres, providing greater travel choice and enhancing access to key services and opportunities. The delivery of the two sustainable urban extensions has also been supported by strong digital connectivity, extensive walking and cycling networks, fast and reliable passenger transport services to support more sustainable travel choices, and reduced urban traffic. The wider area has also benefited the roll out of electric and low emission charging infrastructure which has helped the transition to low emission vehicles.”

“The strategic network, both road and rail, continue to play an important role in the local and regional economy, with the A15 and the A17 continuing to form key routes for Lincolnshire’s priority economic sectors, including the agri-food industry. To support these journeys, the road network has been equipped with the infrastructure and innovative technology to help travel become more efficient and greener.”



The objectives



Objective theme	Objective
Health and wellbeing	◆ To enhance the health and wellbeing of Sleaford through improved air quality (carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and particulates), reduced traffic noise level and increased physical activity and safety.
Thriving high street	◆ To support the development of a thriving and vibrant high street and town centre through improvements to the walking and cycling network, and the urban realm.
Sustainable Urban Extension delivery	◆ To support the delivery of new housing and employment sites, including the sustainable urban extensions, through integrating sustainable travel infrastructure and delivering strong digital, walking and cycling and passenger transport connectivity.
Protecting heritage	◆ To protect and enhance the historic and cultural environment of Sleaford including supporting an improved public realm.
Climate change / net zero	◆ To support the net zero carbon emission reduction targets by limiting the impact of travel and providing the infrastructure to increase the numbers of people walking, cycling and travelling by public transport.
Active travel, natural environment and open space	◆ To enhance the health and wellbeing of communities by establishing and promoting walking and cycling within the strategy area for shorter trips and leisure purposes, the creation of green corridors and improving access to green space.
Future mobility ready	◆ To prepare the strategy area for the transition to low emission vehicles including the use of electric vehicles and alternative fuels, shared and connected mobility as well as the business models that support them.

Strategic highway connections

◆ To ensure Sleaford’s key strategic links, including the A17 and the A15, operate efficiently and effectively and continue to support the areas key economic sectors including agri-food.

Economy

◆ Strengthen Sleaford’s position as a key market town by improving strategic connectivity, public transport connectivity and network resilience.

Rural to urban connectivity

◆ To increase accessibility of the town centre and rail hub by increasing multi-occupancy, shared mobility, local bus and passenger transport options.

Customer focused / improved choice

◆ Promote technologies that help to improve travel choice and access to alternative modes of transport.



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Defining the strategy



Delivering a comprehensive strategy for accessibility



The focus of this strategy is on accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring residents, visitors and businesses are connected to employment, services, and leisure facilities via more sustainable transport modes. The strategy aims to improve connections within the town and village centres, as well as between them. Crucially, this will tackle the identified problem of isolation amongst some residents who are currently unable to access Sleaford, and many local services, from the surrounding villages.

The strategy aims to deliver this set of objectives, whilst addressing the significant local and national challenges relating to the climate change agenda. The proposed shift toward sustainable transport modes and low carbon travel, supports the vision whilst responding to these challenges, ensuring Sleaford is future ready and climate resilient.

To facilitate the modal shift that underpins the context of the strategy's vision, sustainable modes need to become an attractive alternative. A comprehensive and integrated public transport and active travel network will dramatically improve the experience of these forms of travel, improving choice and increasing connectivity. It recognises the continued importance of the road network, whilst also acknowledging the potential of digital connectivity to access employment and services, thus eliminating the need to travel all together.

Up and coming shared modes, such as car clubs and e-cargo bikes, are proposed in instances where the strategy aims to provide people and businesses with greater travel choice and flexibility. Capitalising on these new technologies now will make sure that Sleaford is future ready.



Delivering for the current and future population







As highlighted in this strategy, a number of local, national and global factors have been identified that are expected to have a significant impact on the provision of transport across Sleaford up to the year 2036. This includes the significant population growth that is projected across the region, the changing way we access services and employment, and the need to deliver sustainable and inclusive communities.

Transport will have an important role to play, and the strategy aims to provide the framework to help the transition and support Sleaford adapt to these changes.

This strategy will monitor these trends and adopt those which are appropriate for Sleaford, to ensure an efficient transport network for all. The strategy aims to support the need for sustainable growth with a core focus on improving accessibility and inclusivity, for current and future generations, including residents, workers and visitors.

Future population and behaviour change

-  Considerable population growth in and around Sleaford between now and 2036 and with a likely increasingly ageing population.
-  Major development planned for Sleaford over the next two decades, including business and major housing growth.
-  Significant travel behaviour changes prompting alterations to the demand for travel, new technologies and new ways of purchasing and paying for mobility.
-  Working to increase choice, resilience and flexibility on the transport network.



Need for change and defining the priorities



There is a clear need for change, and a hierarchy for investment, which considers behaviour change and sustainable travel a priority. The priorities for Sleaford will include providing infrastructure to reduce the impacts of travel and taking advantage of the advancements in digital technology, which have become prominent through the pandemic, to increase access to services and opportunities.

The strategy also aims to increase the attractiveness of active travel and public transport to provide a valid alternative to private vehicle use. The key to this will include improving safety, reliability, frequency, costs and infrastructure.

Active travel, particularly walking and cycling, will be encouraged especially for shorter trips. These modes are effective at reducing emissions from transport, helping to improve health and wellbeing, and supporting the delivery of people centric places. It will also be critical in supporting the transition to low carbon.

Public and shared transport is to be promoted for longer journeys. Improving reliability and frequency will be key, particularly across the more rural parts of Sleaford, helping to increase travel choice and inclusivity.

The strategy also recognises the importance of the road network and the need to make it as efficient as possible, supporting the transition to electric and other low emission vehicles and mitigating against the impacts of road travel.

Accessibility hierarchy



Improving travel behaviour

Helping to provide greater choice in meeting daily activities from home without the need to travel, including hybrid / home-working. When people do need to make journeys, influencing where these are from and to, so that the distance travelled is reduced.



Promoting active modes

Making cycling and walking the preferred option for shorter journeys by considerably improving infrastructure, including the use of up-to-date active travel technologies.



Encouraging shared and public transport use

Encouraging existing and new forms of public and shared transport for longer distance journeys by providing priority measures, and increasing frequency and level of service.



Mitigating the residual impacts of traffic and improving the efficiency of the road network

Supporting the transition to electric and low emission vehicles and mitigating the impact of road travel.



6

The strategy

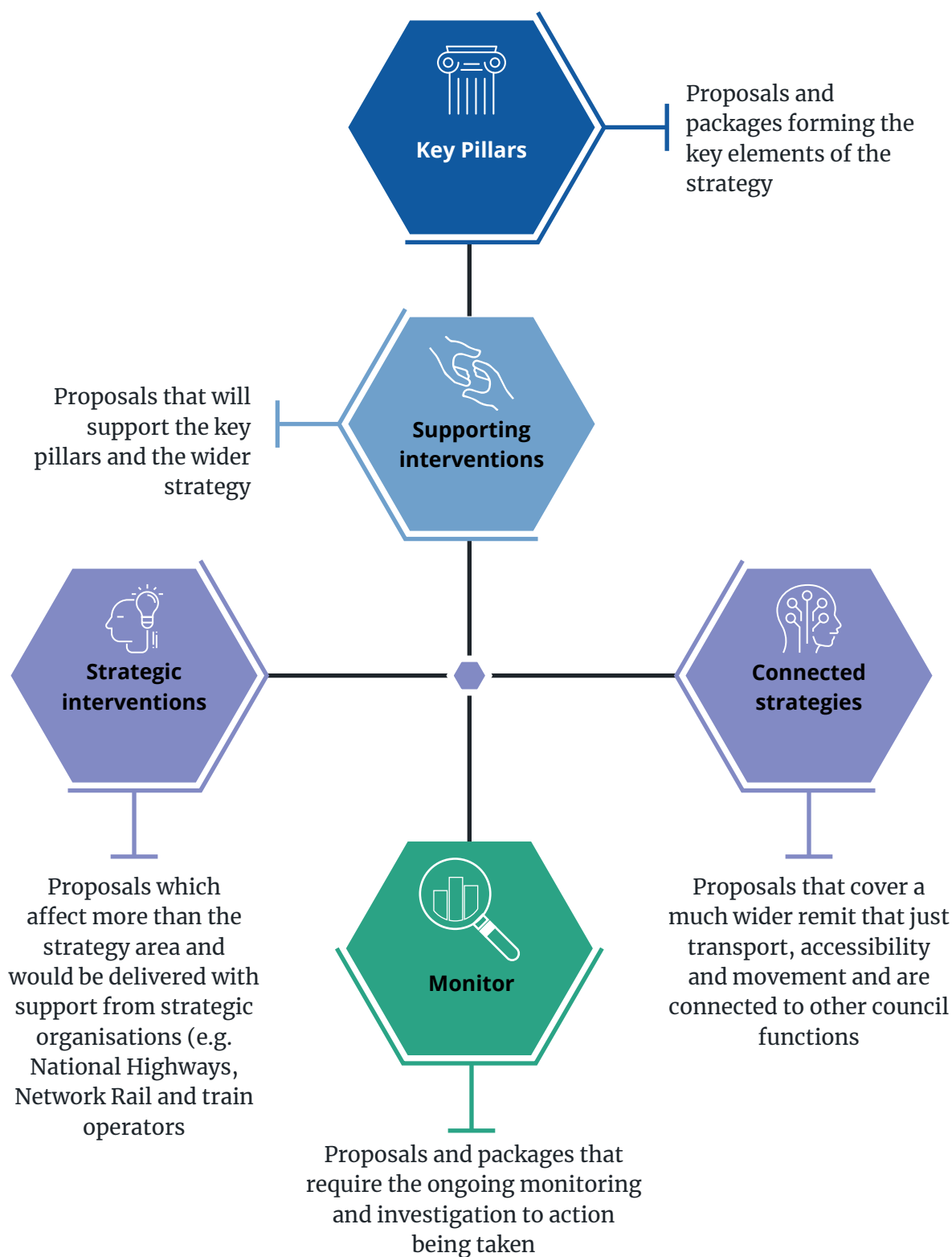
By prioritising active travel, promoting shared and public transport, and mitigating the impacts of traffic, we will support a strong and thriving economy, protect and enhance the wellbeing of communities and help to improve the environment.



Strategy components



The strategy and the proposals identified to deliver the vision and objectives are structured under several different themes, that when brought together, will help to deliver the strategy's aims:



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Interventions



Key pillars



The key pillars of the strategy are the interventions which will form the priority infrastructure, service and policy interventions. These will provide the key plans to support the delivery of the vision and objectives.

Sleaford cycling and walking network plan package



Providing a comprehensive cycling and walking network for Sleaford

This package aims to take forward the three priority routes identified in the Sleaford cycling and walking network plan. This includes delivering cycle and pedestrian priority junction and link improvements, such as 'toucan' crossings and segregated cycle lanes, on the following routes:

- Cranwell to the town centre via Lincoln Road
- Ruskington to the town centre via East Road
- Silk Willoughby to Sleaford West Sustainable Urban Extension via London Road and Castle Causeway

This will provide the high-quality infrastructure to encourage people to walk and cycle, increasing choice and improving access to central Sleaford. Combined with the need to consider implementing up-to-date cycling technologies in the strategy area, it will help enhance the public realm, increase safety, improve local air quality, reduce congestion, tackle climate change, improve access for those with no car, and improve personal health.

Bus service reliability



Improving the reliability of bus services running along congested routes

Buses in Sleaford can get stuck in traffic on congested routes into the town centre, such as on Boston Road, London Road and Grantham Road. Bus priority measures on these roads would make bus travel more appealing, increasing travel choice and reducing car travel. This will help address congestion, poor air quality and the lack of access for those without a car.

Electrification package



Decarbonising our vehicles

Decarbonising travel and transport is key to tackling climate change. The transition to electric vehicles is gathering pace and the strategy aims to support this by:

- Developing an electric vehicle (EV) charge points strategy for the study area and launching an EV campaign to publicise the changes
- Requiring EV charging points to be included in all new developments within the study area which provide car parking
- Converting public sector fleets to electric

- Providing EV charging only bays at car parks in the town centre
- Installing EV charging points at all taxi ranks within the study area and supporting the transition to EV taxis

Local bus improvement package



Increasing the frequency of services

Bus frequency in the study area is currently very low, with the most frequent services being two an hour. This affects bus patronage and discourages people from using local bus services. More frequent, later running, and Sunday services will make bus travel across Sleaford more appealing, helping to address congestion and a lack of access for those without a car.

The package will include:

- Increasing the frequency of bus services from Sleaford to neighbouring towns and villages
- Services in the strategy area to run later in the day
- Introduce bus services to run until 10pm and on Sunday for some existing services to Lincoln, Grantham, Newark and Boston
- Introducing a new bus route to link future Sleaford West Quadrant Sustainable Urban Extension with the town centre
- Synchronising local bus timetables with departures and arrivals from Sleaford rail station
- Draft a Sleaford community bus and coach management strategy to assess the needs of the community, and prepare a structured plan to improve bus and coach accessibility

Local bus infrastructure package



Upgrading buses and local bus stops and infrastructure

This package focuses on three aspects: bus quality, bus accessibility and vehicle emissions.

Improved facilities on buses and at bus stops, such as electrical device charging ports and timetable information, will increase the appeal of buses and help to boost their use.

Getting the bus can also be challenging for those with mobility and visual impairments. Ensuring step-free access onto all buses and having audio announcements of stops would address these challenges and improve disabled access.

Finally, converting bus fleets across the area to low emission or electric will deliver a future ready service and support the wider net zero carbon emission strategy.

As part of this package we will look to:

- Improve local bus stops by improving waiting facilities, maintaining timetable information at bus stops and providing real-time information via a smartphone 'app'
- Improve the quality of all buses running through Sleaford, supporting the transition to low emission and electric vehicles
- Ensure there is disabled access on buses

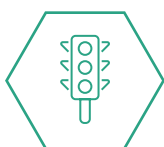
Demand responsive transport



Increasing the number of CallConnect vehicles operating across Sleaford

CallConnect buses currently provide a vital service for those who do not have a regular bus nearby, especially in more remote areas of Sleaford, but the current small supply of these buses, combined with the high demand for them, means users can have to book weeks in advance. Increasing the supply of these buses will help to cope with this demand. Any changes, however, need to be made while taking into consideration the local bus improvement package.

Traffic management package



Managing the impact of traffic

This package includes the options:

- A banned turn from the A15 Sleaford bypass to Drove Lane for motor vehicles
- Implement a no-loading ban on South Gate for all vehicles between the hours of 7am to 9am and 5pm to 7pm
- Partial pedestrianisation of South Gate to allow access for deliveries and buses but reduce the impact of general traffic on other road users, reducing pollution and noise levels and improving safety for cyclists and pedestrians

Drove Lane is a narrow, single lane road, currently unsuitable for high volumes of car traffic. However, it is used by drivers wanting to avoid town centre traffic. Preventing this would improve noise and air quality in the area and make the road more suitable for walkers and cyclists. It is important to do this before the development of Sleaford West Sustainable Urban Extension, which would further increase traffic in the area.

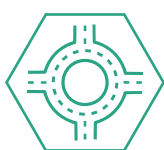
The loading bays on South Gate can cause congestion by allowing people to drive and stop their cars on the high street where they would otherwise park slightly further away and avoid the high



street entirely. Preventing this at the busiest times would reduce congestion in the town centre.

Partial pedestrianisation of South Gate has the potential to reduce traffic and improve pollution, noise levels and safety on South Gate whilst lowering traffic levels on roads feeding into South Gate, such as Grantham Road and London Road from the West, Boston Road westbound from the east and along East Gate and Carre Street from the north. Improvements to the South Gate level crossing can also help to improve highway conditions for pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre, and enhance their access across the rail line.

Junction improvement package



Optimising traffic flow in Sleaford

Pinch points and locations where congestion is a real problem have been identified across the road network. This is forecast to worsen due to the increased future traffic demand, resulting in:

- Slower and less reliable buses, which discourages their use
- Delayed goods vehicles making deliveries, which has a cost to the economy
- Vehicles delayed in congestion release more polluting emissions, which results in poor air quality. This has a subsequent impact on public health

As well as rebalancing travel to more sustainable modes, we will also review all of the pinch points and problem junctions across Sleaford to assess if remodelling or signal changes would improve traffic flow.

Parking package



Streamlining car parking in the town centre and on key routes

Motorists choose to drive into the centre based on the availability and cost of parking near to key destinations. The location of car parks can contribute towards congestion in the urban area due to the circulation of vehicles. More widely, traffic impacts on the quality and appeal of the streetscape and contributes towards noise pollution, carbon emissions and poorer air quality. These issues can be detrimental to people's health and may restrict the appeal of Sleaford for visitors, which is damaging for the local economy.

This package proposes to:

- Develop a Sleaford car parking strategy
- Robustly enforce on-street parking on Grantham Road within the study area to prevent cycle lane blockages
- Ban parking outside schools in Sleaford which currently do not have a ban
- Implement mobile parking payments at all car parks within the study area

Supporting interventions

Active travel package



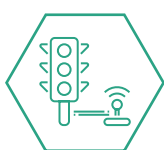
Extra support for walking and cycling in the study area

This package aims to support the cycling and walking network plan by providing additional routes and infrastructure. This will ensure maximum use of the network.

Interventions include:

- Feasibility study to investigate speed reduction projects in Sleaford, Ruskington and Silk Willoughby to improve safety and access conditions for pedestrians and cyclists
- Improved shared-use links east of Holdingham Roundabout to improve walking and cycling access
- New walking and cycling route from Leasingham to Cranwell
- Improving walking and cycling wayfinding to Sleaford Town Centre from: Rauceby and Greylees via Rauceby Drive and Grantham Road; Ruskington via Sleaford Road and East Road; Cranwell and Leasingham via Sleaford Road and Lincoln Road; and Heckington via A17 and Boston Road
- Making the cycle path on Pride Parkway continuous
- Improving the quality of the cycle path on Grantham Road from the town centre to A15 roundabout in line with the Government's LTN 1/20 guidance
- Installing secure cycle parking at key locations in the town centre

Low traffic neighbourhoods, ensuring that there is a consistent standard of lighting, cctv, and bins across the town centre.



Reviewing the feasibility and appetite for low traffic neighbourhoods

Certain residential roads can be used for 'rat-running', creating an unpleasant experience for residents of these roads and making cycling and walking difficult. Installing modal filters on these roads prevents this and discourages car use for residents, encouraging them to cycle and walk where possible.

Feasibility tests would include a consultation process to capture resident's views, and an assessment of those areas where Low Traffic Neighbourhoods could be beneficial.



Education Package



Encouraging sustainable school travel

The 2019 National Travel Survey found that 35% of pupils arrive at school by car in the UK. This is likely to be higher in Sleaford due to the car dependent nature of the area.

Most journeys to schools are short distance journeys, but many are still made by car. These journeys contribute towards high traffic levels across the town which leads to congestion. Vehicle dominated routes contribute to carbon levels and other harmful emissions, which cause climate change and health issues. Traffic activity and parking around schools at pick-up and drop-off times also creates safety issues. In conjunction with the parking package described above, this package will look to identify and tackle parking issues associated with school trips, especially on Eastgate.

This package will look to implement travel plans for all schools within Sleaford. These would monitor school travel and encourage it to be via sustainable modes. To support travel by bike, this package also proposes initiating cycle training at all schools in the study area.

Behaviour change package



Encouraging sustainable travel

Some residents may be unaware of the health and wellbeing benefits of walking and cycling. Promoting of the benefits set out in this transport strategy via an advertising campaign would increase the levels of active travel in the study area.

Equally, some residents may be willing to cycle but may never have had the opportunity to learn. This package proposes funded cycle training for adults in Sleaford.

As part of this we will look to:

- Promote adult cycle training in Sleaford
- Launch a behaviour change campaign in Sleaford aimed at increasing walking and cycling levels, with close cooperation with Public Health England
- Launch a road user education campaign to improve safety within the strategy area for pedestrians and cyclists in particular



Quiet lanes



Protecting the countryside and our green spaces

Rural roads are ideal for cycling, walking, or horse-riding, but due to their low congestion rates, lack of enforcement, and traffic calming measures, they can be hotspots for vehicle speeding. Quiet lanes aim to combat this by putting in soft measures, such as signs and lower speed limits. The package will look to implement a network of quiet lanes, improving safety and access to green spaces.

An analysis of speeding issues and consultation with local residents would be required to determine the location of where speeding hotspots exist.

Freight and deliveries package



Reducing the number of goods vehicles in the town centre

The change to the retail sector and the rise in online shopping has led to increases in the number of good vehicles and vans in our urban areas. This contributes towards congestion, as well as impacting the streetscape and urban environment.

Whilst deliveries are essential to the local economy, we recognise that this needs to be managed and made more efficient.

This package proposes two measures to manage the impact of goods vehicles on central Sleaford:

- Installing delivery lockers in Sleaford at the train station, supermarkets, and other key locations, to be used by all couriers. This also promotes more sustainable use of online retail. Providing centralised locations reduces the need for goods vehicles to make multiple trips to individual addresses
- Introducing HGV restrictions in the town centre. Prohibiting HGV's on South Gate and Carre Street at certain peak times would improve the local environment and safety whilst still allowing deliveries at quieter times

Speed limit review



Improving road safety

Higher speeds cause an increased severity of collisions. Indirectly, this danger also makes cyclists and pedestrians less likely to share the road with drivers, lowering the mode share for non-motorised users. Additionally, the faster a car goes the more noise it emits, meaning roads with higher speed limits are unpleasant to walk along.

A review of all speed limits within the study area would start by identifying those roads with a high incident rate and those which have the potential to be shared by more non-motorised users. The speed limit of the road would then be assessed and adjusted if necessary.

Sharing package



Hire a bike or scooter in Sleaford

This package aims to increase travel choice and encourage a shift away from private vehicles by implementing an e-bike, and cargo bike hire scheme in the study area.

E-bikes and cargo bikes are a form of micro-mobility and address the ‘last-mile’ challenge, where someone may travel into town easily but struggle to complete the final leg of their journey by walking. These modes of travel provide a convenient and efficient way of making this journey. In essence, e-bikes are useful for completing short-distance journeys.

Cargo bikes are also a convenient and cost-effective way of delivering goods over short distances and can help to reduce the reliance on private vehicles.

Ride-sharing



More taxis across Sleaford

Ride-sharing platforms, such as Uber, provide users with the ability to travel door-to-door with full flexibility. They can be used to fill in the gaps where it is not possible to take public transport, providing a great deal of customer choice. This mode also gives those unable to drive a car a greater degree of access to amenities.

Across Sleaford, residents have stated that they are often unable to find a taxi, so we will aim to encourage more to the area addressing this challenge and improving access for all residents.

Electric vehicle car sharing, car clubs



Making cars in the study area more efficient

Owning a car can be needlessly expensive for those who do not need to use one frequently. Car sharing and car club schemes provide an alternative to this by providing members with flexible access to a car.

On average, private cars are parked 95% of the time, requiring a vast amount of parking space to store them. Sharing cars allows for the car to be used more often and parked less, freeing up some of this parking space.

A car club being exclusively EV or using alternative fuels such as hydrogen has all the additional benefits of reduced emissions, i.e., improved local air quality, improved public realm, and reduced climate change.

We will work with industry partners to increase the number of EV and alternative fuel car clubs and car sharing schemes across Sleaford.



Travel plans



Influencing and supporting individuals' travel behaviour

Travel plans allow workplaces and other venues to take stock of how people travel, and support the transition to more sustainable modes by introducing new measures. Rebalancing towards sustainable transport has a multitude of benefits such as reduced congestion, improved environment surrounding the workplace, and a healthier, more productive workforce. We will work with workplaces and venues across Sleaford to introduce a package of travel plans to manage travel across the area.

Highway maintenance package



Ensuring a well-maintained highway network

This package includes developing a highway condition and maintenance strategy for the area and assessing the impact of roadworks in the study area.

Poorly maintained roads can be unsightly, uncomfortable for road users, damaging to vehicles, and sometimes dangerous, such as when avoiding potholes.

The highway authority has a statutory duty to maintain its highways, and this requires regular reviews of the network and responding to any road damage. To help, we will develop a highway maintenance strategy that will set out how we plan to review, respond to and address any urgent issues.

However, any resulting road works must take care to not cause undue delays by blocking more road than necessary, not providing an adequate diversion, taking longer than necessary, or being at inconvenient times. A study which assesses the impact of roadworks in the area would be required to identify what issues an area is currently facing with regards to roadworks and suggest how to deal with them.



Road signage review



Clear signage across the study area

If signage is not clear drivers may not take the best route to their destination and may not understand the rules or restrictions in place on a certain road, risking safety and optimal road functioning. In addition to this, drivers may pay less attention to the road if they are trying to understand confusing or covered signage.

We propose to review all road signage in the study area to ensure all existing signage is necessary, beneficial and in good condition, and to identify gaps in signage and install more where appropriate.

Equestrian routes strategy



Promoting safe, comfortable, and convenient travel by horse in Sleaford

A barrier to horse riding can be a lack of appropriate bridleways and other routes suitable for horses.

Encouraging horse riding by developing a robust equestrian routes strategy will have a multitude of benefits:

- More people horse-riding, a low-carbon activity which is beneficial for health and wellbeing
- Raising the profile for the area as being good for horse-riding
- More residents horse-riding and visitors coming to the area for horse-riding will boost the economic performance of equestrian businesses, which in turn will stimulate the local economy



Strategic interventions



Sleaford interchange



A multimodal mobility hub for Sleaford

Transport interchanges are central hubs which form the beginning, middle and end of many trips. This allows for hub-and-spoke style journeys where users can access a wide variety of locations via one central hub.

The plan is to upgrade Sleaford rail station to a mobility hub. This would include expanding the train station area to incorporate an improved bus facility, increased cycle parking, cycle hire, and EV charging, on top of public realm improvements in and around the station.

This has the benefits of providing a central hub for accessing all parts of Sleaford and beyond, and a wider mode choice, allowing more journeys to be by more sustainable modes.

Rail station improvements package



Improving the facilities and disabled access at Sleaford rail station to encourage use and improve accessibility

This package proposes upgrading Sleaford rail station by ensuring it is well lit in the evenings, with waiting rooms on both platforms and regularly cleaned toilets which are always available during opening hours. The package also proposes installing step-free access over the railway by exploring opportunities to work with partners to improve crossing of the railway.

A station with poor facilities discourages use of rail and makes the user experience worse, reducing the potential for repeat trips. A station which is poorly lit with poor access to toilet facility can deter people from using the rail network, especially for those who require more frequent access. A lack of waiting rooms can make waiting for trains an uncomfortable experience for all but can also discourage rail use from more vulnerable members of the community.

For those with mobility disabilities, a lack of step free access over the tracks can cause considerable accessibility issues at Sleaford rail station. This reduces autonomy for vulnerable users and forces them to rely on prior arrangement with staff to be helped across a nearby foot crossing (only available between the hours of 7:00-13:30 Monday-Saturday). This can be stressful for many disabled people and can mean they resort to taking another, less sustainable mode at best or be isolated at worst.



Public transport ticketing package



Vision for a county-wide, affordable, integrated public and shared transport ticketing system

The existing transport system operating in Sleaford is not fully integrated. Different modes and even services are operated by different companies, each offering different ticketing products. Multi-modal journeys are complicated and often expensive and there is currently little choice of payment method available despite the continued shift towards cashless payments.

A fragmented and expensive system adds a level of complexity which is not easy for some potential users to understand and may discourage customers from using public transport. As a result, some potential users choose to travel by car. This contributes towards high traffic levels across the town and congestion.

For people who do not have access to a car, poor access to sustainable transport limits travel opportunities to employment, social and leisure activities.

To combat this, we will work with partners and providers to look at options to improve ticketing, this could include:

- An Oyster Card-style season ticket for all modes within the study area, managed online and through a smartphone app. All modes could be included, such as car sharing, bus, train, and cycle hire
- A London-style set bus fare: £1.55 for unlimited journeys within one hour
- London-style fully integrated contactless ticketless payments across all rail, bus, and cycle hire services, whereby you use your phone/credit card to 'scan in' on a bus/train/bike, 'scan out' when your journey is completed and are charged automatically at the end of the day

Rail service improvements package



More trains for the study area and a better-quality service

Rail mode share in the study area is very low, with 0.3% of commuters getting to work by train. This is despite there being four rail stations in the area, strategically located in areas of dense population. The infrequency of services and lack of services during certain times act as a barrier to people using rail. Sleaford has one train to Lincoln every one to two hours Monday-Friday, fewer on Saturdays and none on Sunday.

The introduction of more frequent, later running, and Sunday services would help to increase mode share for rail and decrease it for private cars.

We will look at options and measures to improve the quality of these trains. Increased capacity and more cycle spaces would further increase the attractiveness of rail travel and help to increase mode share.

Connected strategies



These are the options that cover a much wider remit that require support from other council functions, such as land use and digital.

Sleaford 30-minute rural community strategy



Rural transport solutions

The low population density of Sleaford and its surrounding areas presents unique issues which more densely populated areas do not face:

- Limited accessibility to services resulting in inequity of access to opportunities for those without a car
- Non-existent or poor-quality infrastructure for walking, and cycling in many areas
- Social isolation and loneliness due to poor transport services for those without access to a car

To combat these issues, we propose to look at a new concept that considers the benefits of developing a '30-minute Rural Community Strategy'. It covers a wider remit than just transport and is based on the idea that everyone in the strategy area should be able to access key amenities and opportunities within 30 minutes via sustainable modes. This would be achieved by the following three principles:

- Improve the baseline level of social land community infrastructure in rural parts of Sleaford to maximise 'day to day' opportunities across their diverse population, using clusters of settlements working together as an eco-system rather than individual settlements
- Localise the layer of social infrastructure, through community / public / third sector partnerships, to maximise the potential to capitalise on fixed, moving and human resources
- Improve physical and digital access, and energy provision to the next layer of services, that are not available to those community 'clusters', by improving connectivity to local market towns and cities

Sleaford access to green space strategy



Improving green space

Access to green space has a multitude of benefits, such as an enhanced local environment and a healthier community. However, there are barriers to achieving these benefits:

- There may not be enough green spaces in an area
- The existing green spaces may not be inclusive and equitable, they may not be well maintained, or they may be under threat from development
- Urban public streets and other places may be devoid of green space or other green infrastructure
- Transport links to green spaces may be poor

A Sleaford access to green space strategy would assess if any of the above barriers apply to Sleaford and to what extent and suggest ways to address this.

Digital package



Improve the digital offering for Sleaford

Being a relatively rural area, Sleaford has pockets of poor access to the internet, both via broadband and mobile networks. The area is yet to receive any 5G coverage, with the closest 5G connection being in Grantham. 41% of the area has access to ultrafast broadband, compared to 58% nationally.

Improving internet access, along with providing guidance on how best to utilise this via a digital strategy, will have a multitude of benefits. These include faster speeds for social networking, entertainment, and working, improved opportunities to work from home. This will reduce strain on the transport network, and the digitisation of local businesses, allowing them to be more competitive.

We will continue to support the work already completed across Lincolnshire and aim to:

- Support the council to roll out 5G infrastructure in the study area
- Develop a digital strategy for Lincolnshire
- Improve and expand Council services available online



Land use package



Reducing the need to travel

This package is composed of two options:

- Develop policies within the strategy area to allow more residential developments in the town centre
- Encourage more amenities to be built within new and existing residential developments

Having amenities close by, either by living in a densely populated area, or by having amenities in less densely populated areas, is a way to improve access and reduce vehicle miles travelled. Developing policies to encourage this will have a multitude of benefits, including:

- Promoting and enabling living within the town centre will help remove long distance journeys to key services, therefore making walking and cycling viable options and reducing vehicle traffic
- Town centre businesses will benefit from footfall of customers living within close proximity
- People will have improved access to employment opportunities if living and working in the town centre
- Focusing required development on available land in the town centre will reduce the amount of development required on greenfield sites, protecting areas of green spaces within the strategy area



Monitor, investigate



Sleaford southern bypass feasibility study

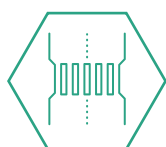


Determining the need for a southern bypass

A feasibility study would determine if a southern bypass would be beneficial. It would ask if it would improve journey times and decrease congestion significantly enough to negate the negative environmental impacts it would have.

The study would quantitatively and qualitatively establish if the project would be beneficial in relation to its cost and negative environmental impacts.

A17 dualling



A complete dualling of the A17 within the Strategy area

Highly trafficked roads, such as the A17 are liable to congestion and slow journey speeds, which can result in economic losses and frustrate drivers. Dualling the road could provide relief for this congestion.

The single carriageway portions of the A17 have had 29 road traffic accidents in the last five years. Six of these have been fatal, 14 have been serious, and 35 have been slight. This gives a killed and seriously injured (KSI) rate of 36%, compared to a 26% KSI rate on the current dual carriageway sections of the A17 in the Sleaford area. Statistically, drivers are three times more likely to be in a fatal or serious accident on a single carriageway than on a dual carriageway, so dualling this road could decrease road deaths.

We will look at the benefits of dualling the A17 and continue to monitor opportunities for improving the operation of this key route.

Eastgate to Boston Road link road



Providing better highway connectivity in the town centre

Currently for drivers, it is an 800m journey to get from Lafford Terrace on Eastgate to the leisure centre on Boston Road, despite these locations being 100m apart. Building a road and bridge between these locations could have a number of potential benefits, such as faster journey times on the proposed route and through the town centre, creating better access for developments close to the link, with the potential for new businesses opening.

A feasibility study will allow us to assess the benefits and challenges of a new Eastgate to Boston Road link.



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Delivering the strategy



A collaborative approach

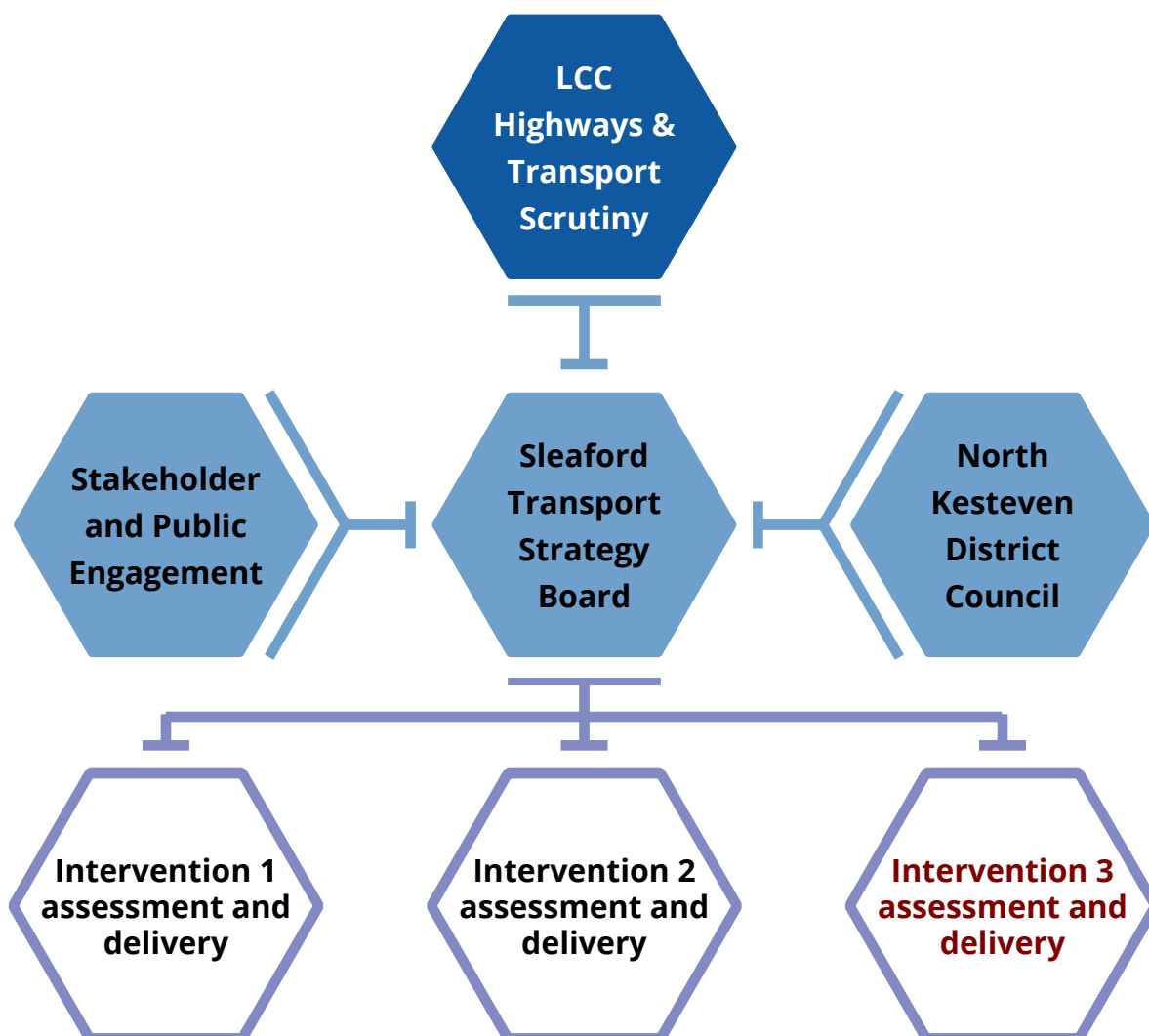


The Sleaford Transport Strategy Board is responsible for progressing the interventions outlined in the strategy and identifying potential funding streams, opportunities, and funding sources to allow for successful delivery of these projects.

The board will encourage its members to take a lead on progressing elements of the strategy that fall within their remit. The interventions set out in this strategy will be led by transport strategy board members deemed most appropriate to progress its delivery.

Success will also be dependent on engagement from a range of stakeholders and the general public. A collaborative approach will be needed, with the process capturing expertise from a number of individuals and organisations.

There are interventions within this strategy which have the potential to secure third-party funding and provide an opportunity for greater collaboration with the private sector and through local development. This would allow for sustainable travel choices to be embedded from early stages of development and could lead to securing funding for off-site measures.



Programming the strategy



The strategy provides a long-term plan for transport and mobility within Sleaford for the period up to 2036. Timescales have been set for the various interventions, ranging from short, medium and long-term delivery. The transport strategy board will ensure that measures are delivered as soon as is feasible. It will be appropriate in some cases to have set timescales for some projects while others will continue throughout the strategy period.

Monitoring the strategy



The transport strategy board will be responsible for the continual monitoring and reviewing of the interventions, ensuring progress and improvements are being made where necessary. The strategy will be reviewed every five years against the following measures:

- Reduced traffic in the urban areas and an increase in the number of journeys being made by active and shared modes
- Continued growth of Sleaford's economy and improved access to employment, education, services, and the sustainable urban extensions via sustainable transport modes
- Increased uptake of digital modes, connecting people to services remotely, avoiding the need to travel
- Increased patronage on public and shared modes
- Reduced transport-related emissions and progression toward net zero carbon emission targets
- Improved air quality and less pollution (including carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and small particulates), physical activity and safety
- Increased partnership working



