

Draft Policy LP11 – Disused Railway Trackways

Link to draft policy and comments in full received from the draft consultation stage:

<https://west-norfolk.objective.co.uk/portal/lpr2019/lpr2019?pointId=s1542883345278#section-s1542883345278>

Consideration of issues:

The main issues raised were:

- That we should make reference to the County Council’s Greenways Project as relevant to the Policy. This change is recommended to be made.
- That a cross-reference should be made to the GI Policy LP20. This change is recommended to be made.
- That some additional trackbeds should be protected (from Middleton Towers to the borough boundary at Pentney; from the A47 near Wisbech to Watlington; and from Heacham to Burnham Overy). These additional trackbeds are recommended to be included.
- Holme Parish Council make the case for reopening the King's Lynn to Hunstanton railway. This remains to be proven, but the County Council is now investigating the feasibility. This particular policy relates to safeguarding former trackbeds from adverse development, not reopening former rail routes. No change is recommended.

The resulting changes recommended to the policy and supporting text are set out below.

Officer Recommendations to Task Group:

The Task Group is recommended to:

1) Amend Policy LP11 clause 1. By including the following (additions underlined):

- a. Part of the former King’s Lynn to Fakenham line route from the West Winch Growth Area to the Bawsey/Leziate countryside sports and recreation area towards Fakenham;**
- b. From Middleton Towers to the borough boundary at Pentney.**
- c. From the A47 near Wisbech to Watlington (Magdalen Road);**
- d. Heacham to the borough boundary at Burnham Overy.**

2. Add the following text to the end of para. 5.6.1 “The County Council’s Greenways Project is examining the potential reuse of the former railway trackbeds between King’s Lynn and Hunstanton and King’s Lynn and Fakenham as walking and cycling routes”.

Policy Recommendation:

Policy LP11 Disused Railway Trackways Policy (previously DM13)

1. The following existing and former railway trackways and routes, as indicated on the Policies Map, will be safeguarded from development which would prejudice their potential future use for paths, cycleways, bridleways, new rail facilities, etc. unless the proposals for trackway use are accompanied by appropriate alternative route provision that makes the safeguarding unnecessary:
 - a. King's Lynn Harbour Junction - Saddlebow Road;
 - b. King's Lynn east curve;
 - c. King's Lynn docks branch to Alexandra Dock and Bentinck Dock;
 - d. Denver - Wissington;
 - e. King's Lynn to Hunstanton; and
 - f. Part of the former King's Lynn to Fakenham line route from the West Winch Growth Area to the Bawsey/Leziate countryside sports and recreation area **towards Fakenham**;
 - g. **From Middleton Towers to the borough boundary at Pentney.**
 - h. **From the A47 near Wisbech to Watlington (Magdalen Road); and**
 - i. **Heacham to the borough boundary at Burnham Overy.**
2. The King's Lynn docks branch (as above) will, however, not be safeguarded to the extent this compromises port operations within the Port Estate.

Supporting text:

Policy LP11 Disused Railway Trackways Policy (previously DM13)

Introduction

5.6.1 One of the key aims of the National Planning Policy Framework is to promote sustainable transport. Encouragement is given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. Disused railway trackways and routes can be a valuable resource, such as, providing future routes for footpaths or cycleways. It is therefore important to protect them from adverse development which might otherwise compromise their future as alternative economic or recreational transport routes. The County Council's Greenways Project is examining the potential reuse of the former railway trackbeds between King's Lynn and Hunstanton and King's Lynn and Fakenham as walking and cycling routes.

Relevant Local and National Policies

- National Planning Policy Framework: Promoting sustainable transport
- National Planning Policy Framework: Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- Strategic Policy LP12 Transport

Policy Approach

5.6.2 The Council consider that the identified former railway routes could be a significant transport resource in the long term future, whether for recreational or alternative transport use. The proposed approach is to restrict development on identified former railway trackbeds. These routes will be kept intact which will enable them to be reused in future.

Sustainability Appraisal:

LP11 Disused Railway Trackways Policy

This policy is very similar, to the draft policy and the sustainability appraisal of that. The proposed policy was assessed as having a positive effect.

LP11: Disused Railway Trackways Policy

Policy	SA Objective:																				Overall Effect		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		+	-
LP11	--	+	0	+/-	0	+/	0	0	+/-	0	0	+	0	0	++	++	0	0	++	0	+11	-5	Likely Positive Effect +6
Draft LP11	--	+	0	+/-	0	+/	0	0	+/-	0	0	+	0	0	++	++	0	0	++	0	+11	-5	Likely Positive Effect +6
No Policy	-	0	0	+/-	0	-	0	0	+/-	0	-	+/-	0	0	+	+	0	0	+	0	+6	-7	Likely Negative Effect -1

Appendix 1: Summary of Comments & Suggested Response:

Consultee	Nature of Response	Summary	Consultee Suggested Modification	Officer Response / Proposed Action
Planning Campaigns Consultant CPRE Norfolk	Mixed	CPRE Norfolk supports the safeguarding of these former railway trackways from development, but would like to see a more ambitious policy, aiming to instate these as greenways where practicable for use as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways.	3. It is an aspiration of this policy that the listed former railway trackways and routes will be instated as Greenways for use as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways.	Disagree - this may limit other potential uses such as new rail facilities. No change.
STP Estates Group (inc. West Norfolk NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust, Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust)	Support	The STP estates group and health partners would like to note their support of this policy and the role it plays in supporting people to live healthy lives and to walk and/or cycle as a form of transport.		Support is noted.
Committee King's Lynn Hunstanton Railway Campaign	Object	The King's Lynn Hunstanton Railway Campaign group (KLHRC) was formed in 2017. Its objective is to restore a reliable, relatively fast public transport service between King's Lynn and Hunstanton. The group consists of local residents and people from a wider area who have had practical experience of managing rail travel. The preference is for heavy rail that could connect directly with	Amend 1f to read "King's Lynn to Fakenham line route from the West Winch Growth Area past the Bawsey /Leziate	Agree with proposed change to 1f wording. Disagree with addition of 1g in its entirety as King's Lynn to Middleton Towers

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		<p>services to Cambridge and London but alternatives have not been ruled out. It is widely acknowledged that the closure of the railway line on 3 May 1969 was a great mistake. The hasty removal of the track and the sale of the trackbed was an even bigger mistake. Dr Richard Beeching did not recommend the closure of this line. The group is fully supportive of the aim of LP11 in keeping all the trackbeds intact so that they are available for future use. We are also in full support of the Norfolk Greenways project for using former railway routes as footpaths and cycle ways but because the trackbed is a valuable piece of infrastructure we see such footpaths and cycleways going alongside the original trackbeds rather than actually on them. We have spoken to county councillors and officers and they consider that these twin goals are achievable along the same corridors. The respected Campaign for Better Transport group has recently proposed a national plan for reopening several railway lines, funded at national level as railway lines should be viewed as a national infrastructure network. The rail industry is currently looking at plans for a “rolling Reopening Programme” rather than the current stop-start system. Costs would be reduced significantly and the financial burden would be removed from local authorities. King’s Lynn to Hunstanton and Wisbech to King’s Lynn are both included in the CBT list!” The group is currently seeking to raise funds for a professional appraisal to be done of the types of service and the optimal routes. It is likely that only parts of the former track bed from King's Lynn to Hunstanton would be utilised. “The railway from March to Wisbech is likely to re-open in the near future, and consideration has already been given to extending this from Wisbech to King's Lynn to give a much more direct Line from King’s Lynn to Peterborough. The former trackbed from Wisbech to Watlington (Magdalen Road) is a possibility but a route alongside the A47 may</p>	<p>countryside sports and recreation area towards Fakenham”.</p> <p>Add 1g to read "King's Lynn to Dereham route via Middleton Towers and Swaffham”.</p> <p>Add 1h to read "From A47 near Wisbech to Watlington (Magdalen Road) Add 1j to read "Heacham to Wells”.</p>	<p>is an active railway line so it doesn't meet the criteria of <u>disused</u> railway trackway. The disused stretch from Middleton Towers to the borough boundary at Pentney could be included within the policy.</p> <p>Agree with the suggested additions of 1h and 1j (to the borough boundary at Burnham Overy not Wells).</p>

Consultee	Nature of Response	Summary	Consultee Suggested Modification	Officer Response / Proposed Action
		be a better prospect.” The former trackbed from Heacham to Wells should also be protected so that it could become a valued footpath and cycle route accessing the north Norfolk Coast and AONB. As a separate group has started a petition to open a railway from King's Lynn to Norwich, it would be prudent to safeguard routes that such a line might take.		
Norfolk County Council (Infrastructure Dev, Community and Env Services)	Object		5.6 LP11 - Disused Railway Trackways Policy – additional reference should be included to the County Council’s Greenways Work.	Agree - include reference to County Council's Greenways project in the supporting text.
Parish Clerk Holme-Next-The-Sea Parish Council	Object	Preserving this route for the future is a laudable objective – but the future is now and it should become a development priority for identification of funding. Congestion on the A149 between Hunstanton and Kings Lynn is costly to travellers, damaging to the environment and is impacting negatively on the regeneration of Hunstanton as a quality tourist destination. Furthermore, it is severely restricting Hunstanton Area Residents access to job opportunities in Kings Lynn and the A10 Corridor restricting the towns residential potential. The disused rail track between Hunstanton and Kings Lynn offers a real opportunity to solve these problems by introducing a quality public transport corridor. An integrated transport study would be timely and we would like to see this taken forward as an action plan with appropriate partners.		Disagree - the case for reopening the King's Lynn to Hunstanton railway remains to be proven. This particular policy relates to safeguarding former trackbeds from adverse development.
Parish Clerk West Winch Parish Council	Support	West Winch Parish Council agrees with BCKL&WN Policy 5.6.2 approach. More forms of public transport are needed. Former		Support is noted.

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		railway track beds and routes should be kept intact and protected for future use.		
Climate Emergency Planning and Policy (CEEP)	Support	109LP11 - Disused Railway Trackways Policy is welcomed		Support is noted.
Consultations Team Natural England	Mixed	We support the safeguarding of disused railway routes and the potential of these routes as footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways. We recommend direct communication with North Norfolk District Council where routes cross boundaries. We suggest that this policy is incorporated or referenced in Policy LP20 (GI).	Where disused tracks are within close proximity to designated sites, specifically Dersingham Bog, consideration should be given to the possible increases in recreational disturbance.	Support is noted. None of the existing protected routes cross district boundaries, but some of the additions suggested elsewhere would involve discussions with adjoining authorities. Agree with the inclusion of a cross reference in Policy LP20 (GI). The suggested modification can be included as a reminder to consider these impacts.