

9.1 Sleaford Introduction

- 9.1.1** Sleaford is a historic market town situated on the River Sleas in the heart of Lincolnshire. It is the main retail, service and employment centre for people living in the town and in the surrounding villages.
- 9.1.2** Sleaford has experienced rapid population growth over the past 30 years rising from 8,000 in 1981 to around 18,000 today with a further 30,000 people living within 10 miles of the town. Growth has largely been the result of people moving to the area attracted by the quality of life, low crime rates, relatively low house prices, good-quality education and its central location with good road and rail links to national employment centres including to London. The quality of life Sleaford offers means that the town will continue to experience pressure for further growth.
- 9.1.3** Sleaford has very low levels of unemployment and thriving industrial estates with growing companies in the food, manufacturing and engineering sectors. In recent years there has been significant growth in the wider services sector, particularly business to business, sports leisure and retail, leading to overall improvements in Gross Value Added (GVA).
- 9.1.4** Sleaford hosts the National Centre for Craft and Design, a major tourist attraction located in the town centre. The town has a strong heritage, an attractive market place and a tight urban grain.
- 9.1.5** The River Sleas runs through the Town Centre assisting to provide a pleasant environment. Parts of the town are in need of regeneration, including the approach to the Town Centre from the railway station and the extensive former Bass Maltings which is a Grade II* Listed Building. Regeneration, infrastructure investment, and a full realisation of the benefits offered by Sleaford's assets and location could unlock the town's potential as an exemplar living, working, shopping and recreational environment and to enhance Sleaford's role within Central Lincolnshire and beyond.
- 9.1.6** In March 2011, a 25 year masterplan for Sleaford was completed and sets out a vision for Sleaford and a comprehensive strategy for the town, including a series of projects to unlock the town's potential through environmental improvement and opportunities for the creation of new attractions. The principles of that masterplan remain a sound basis for developing the town.

9.2 Protecting Sleaford's Setting and Character

- 9.2.1** Sleaford's historic centre and land alongside the River Sleas are covered by a Conservation Area which, as at early 2016, is being reviewed by North Kesteven District Council. The town centre has a number of heritage and townscape assets and visitor attractions, particularly on Northgate and in and around the Market Place, which help to create a sense of place and a special identity. However in some cases, these are hidden and difficult to access, including the River Sleas, Money's Mill, Castle Field and National Centre for Craft and Design. In others, their settings are undervalued. The growth of Sleaford over the next 20 years will bring opportunities to improve the quality of the townscape by revitalising the urban fabric, reducing the number of heritage assets on the Lincolnshire Heritage at Risk Register and making the best use of key landmarks, social and heritage assets.
- 9.2.2** The Sleaford Masterplan identified that there was a need to focus on public realm improvements within Sleaford to create better links for pedestrians and improved settings for key attractions and heritage assets. The Masterplan concluded that the main areas that could benefit from improved public realm are: Southgate, Eastgate, Boston Road, Carre Street, Bristol Arcade, Nags Head Passage and the link to the National Centre for Craft and Design.

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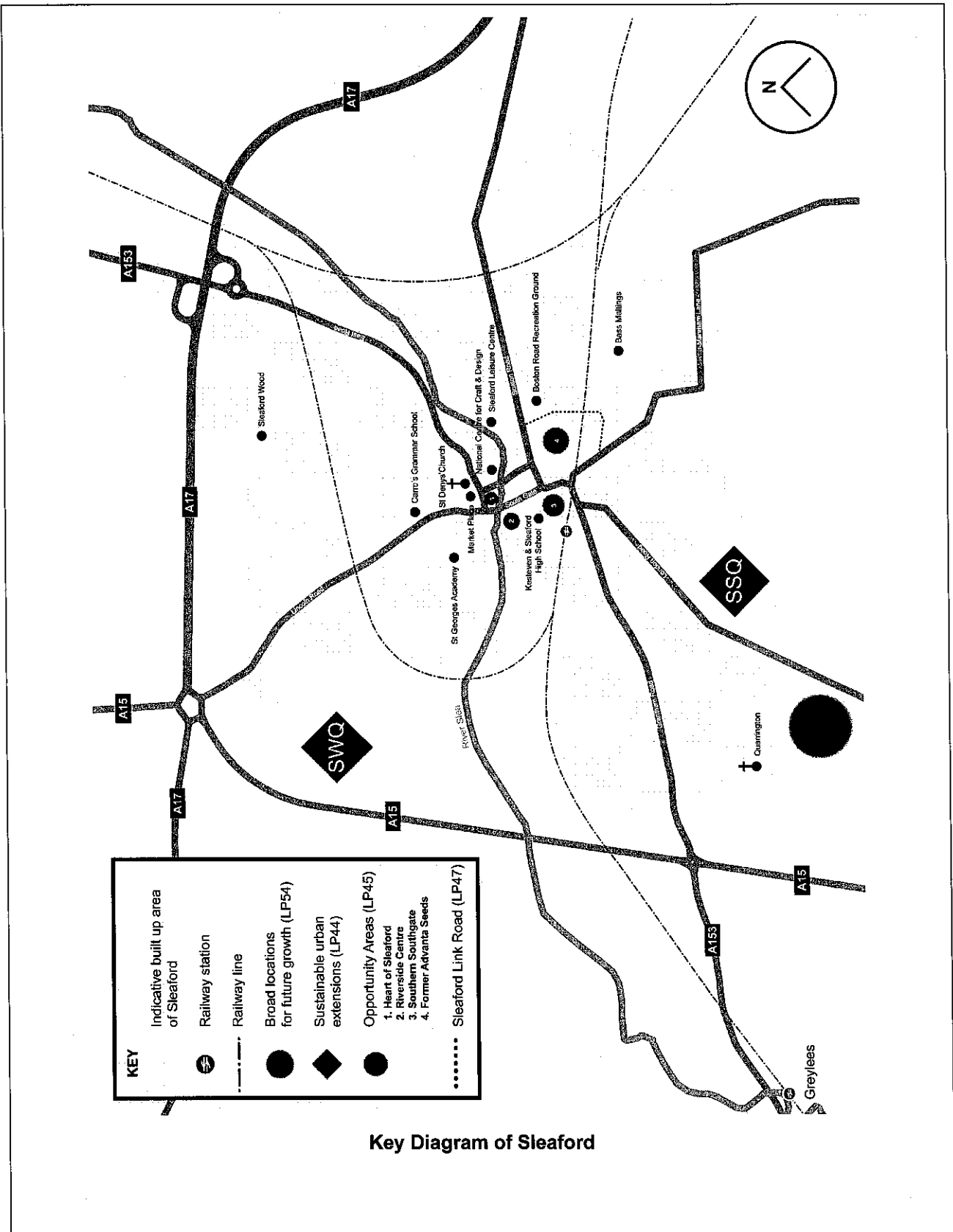
- 9.2.3** There are a number of key local views of Sleaford, both within and outside of the town, that have been identified in the Sleaford Masterplan and adopted Sleaford Conservation Appraisal. Perhaps one of the most dominant views in the Sleaford area is of the Bass Maltings complex just off Mareham Lane, which includes the largest group of malt houses in England. The site is listed as Grade II* on Historic England's National Heritage List for England and Heritage at Risk Register. Any development should not detrimentally affect important local views.
- 9.2.4** The Central Lincolnshire Green Infrastructure Study identifies a deficiency in natural green space sites in the Sleaford area, particularly to the east and west of the town. The Sleaford Masterplan proposes an East West Leisure Link running east to west along the River Slea through the town centre and connecting the urban area to the countryside and surrounding villages. This provides a range of opportunities to improve the Green Infrastructure network, leisure and tourism offer, including improved pedestrian and cycle movement and access, and habitat creation. Lincolnshire Rivers Trust have recently secured funding from Natural England to undertake an Urban Opportunities Study of the water environment in Sleaford. The study aims to identify opportunities to enhance the habitat along the River Slea and its tributaries in and around Sleaford.

Policy LP43: Protecting Sleaford's Setting and Character

Proposals for development should seek to make a positive contribution to the built and natural environment and quality of life in the Sleaford area. All development proposals should contribute to the realisation of the following key principles, aided by the Sleaford Masterplan, Sleaford Town Centre Regeneration SPD and any subsequent guidance:

- a. Protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the benefit of heritage assets, key landmarks and their settings to local distinctiveness and sense of place, including the Castle Site, Market Place, 17 Market Place, the Bass Maltings, Money's Mill and Yard, Handley Monument and Northgate, through sensitive development and environmental improvement;
- b. Protect important local views of Sleaford, including the Bass Maltings complex and its setting, from both within and outside the town;
- c. Deliver improvements to the public realm that will enhance Sleaford's attractiveness as a destination;
- d. Support the development of art, cultural and leisure assets and facilities within or close to the town centre, and improvement of access to such assets and facilities, such as the National Centre for Craft and Design;
- e. Protect and enhance the River Slea Navigation Corridor as a major focal point for the town, optimising its use and value for recreation, tourism and biodiversity, and taking into account the opportunities identified in the Sleaford Urban Opportunities Study;
- f. Protect and enhance the landscape character and setting of Sleaford and the surrounding villages, by ensuring key gateways are landscaped to enhance the setting of the town, minimise impact upon the open character of the countryside and to maintain the setting and integrity of surrounding villages;
- g. Support the development of the Sleaford East West Leisure Link as the key component of the Sleaford Urban Green Grid in accordance with the Sleaford Masterplan and Central Lincolnshire Green Infrastructure Study and take opportunities to deliver improvements to the wider Green Infrastructure network.

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KEY	
	Indicative built up area of Sleaford
	Railway station
	Railway line
	Broad locations for future growth (LP54)
	Sustainable urban extensions (LP44)
	Opportunity Areas (LP45)
	1. Heart of Sleaford
	2. Riverside Centre
	3. Southern Southgate
	4. Former Advanta Seeds
	Sleaford Link Road (LP47)

Key Diagram of Sleaford

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9.3 Sleaford Sustainable Urban Extensions

- 9.3.1** Sleaford is identified to accommodate around 12% of Central Lincolnshire's growth in new homes and employment land over the plan period. Most of the growth will be focused in two large scale Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) to the existing built up area of Sleaford, known as Sleaford South Quadrant and Sleaford West Quadrant, that can be masterplanned with appropriate infrastructure, a range of facilities and fully integrated with Sleaford.
- 9.3.2** Sleaford South Quadrant will be a natural expansion to the main built up area to the South of the town and should be fully integrated with existing communities and provide for much needed services in this part of Sleaford. Whilst the site is not considered to be appropriate for large scale employment uses due to impacts on the highway network, it has the potential for small scale employment work space.
- 9.3.3** Sleaford West Quadrant is located west of the town in close proximity to the A15. The site offers an opportunity to diversify the existing employment offer of the town through the provision of high quality employment integrated into an attractive residential environment, benefitting from a prominent position and access to the A15. The development should include a minimum of 3 ha of employment land adjacent to the A15 targeted towards knowledge intensive enterprise (B1 use class). This will add to the diversity of employment opportunities available in the town.
- 9.3.4** In addition to the sustainable urban extensions and residential allocations identified, a broad location for future growth (see policy LP54) has been identified and is shown on the key diagram for Sleaford.

Policy LP44: Sleaford Sustainable Urban Extensions

The growth and regeneration of the Sleaford area will be delivered through a co-ordinated and sustainable approach to planning and development, linking housing and economic growth with infrastructure improvements, whilst protecting and enhancing Sleaford's natural environment, heritage assets and local distinctiveness.

In addition to the generic requirements for Sustainable Urban Extensions in Policy LP28, development at the following strategic sites will be required to meet the following specific requirements:

Sleaford South Quadrant SUE (Land at Stump Cross Hill and land to the south-east of London Road)

Development at Sleaford South, as identified on the Policies Map, should result in the creation of a comprehensively planned, new sustainable neighbourhood to the South of Sleaford, comprising around 1,450 dwellings. The first phase of development should take place on the land immediately adjoining the existing built up area of Sleaford and include the provision of the new Local Centre.

Development of this SUE is likely to come forward in accordance with the outline planning consent granted for the site in 2014. However, should an alternative permission be sought for the site, then in addition to the requirements for SUEs in policy LP28, proposals for this area should:

- a. Deliver a new Local Centre of a sufficient scale to meet the day-to-day needs of the Sleaford South new community and nearby residents, and to include:
 - i. a health centre;
 - ii. a community centre;

- iii. retail units;
 - iv. a public house;
 - v. a care home site; and
 - vi. provision for small start-up offices.
- b. contribute as appropriate to upgrading utilities services in the wider Sleaford area;
 - c. provide vehicular access via London Road only, but incorporate cycle, pedestrian and bus connections into the adjoining Southfields Estate;
 - d. provide appropriate transport mitigation measures, having particular regard to measures to mitigate any adverse transport impacts on Silk Willoughby, Quarrington, King Edward Street and Castle Causeway, the junction between London Road and Grantham Road and minor roads linking London Road to Grantham Road;
 - e. deliver an extension of a shared footpath and cycleway along London Road;
 - f. maximise the opportunities associated with the proximity of the site to the Sleaford Railway Station and include measures to encourage rail travel, including contributions towards the delivery of a pedestrian footbridge at Sleaford Southgate level crossing;
 - g. provide on site a network of green infrastructure and public open space which links into the wider green infrastructure network for the Sleaford area, maximising the potential (and mitigates the impacts) associated with Moor Drain, and which achieves strong, though carefully planned, connections to Mareham Pastures Local Nature Reserve;
 - h. provides on site sports pitches, a site for a pavilion/changing facility and allotments.

Sleaford West Quadrant SUE (Land to the west of Drove Lane and to the east of the A15)

Development at Sleaford West Quadrant, as identified on the Policies Map, will result in the creation of comprehensively planned, new sustainable neighbourhood to the West of Sleaford of 1,400 dwellings. The first phases of development are likely to include the provision of an appropriate, limited scale (informed by traffic modelling) of residential development served from Covell Road, Stokes Drive and St Deny's Avenue. The provision of a new roundabout off the A15 will be required to deliver subsequent phases of the development. More specifically, proposals for this area should:

- a. deliver a new local centre to meet the day-to-day needs of Sleaford West Quadrant new community and nearby residents, incorporating provision of local retail facilities, services and community uses;
- b. provide a new healthcare facility adjoining the local centre;
- c. provide approximately 3ha of mainly use class B1 employment land including a range of premises to complement the existing employment offer in the Sleaford area;
- d. support the delivery of the Sleaford East West Leisure Link to connect the town centre to adjacent green spaces and improve connectivity, as identified in the Sleaford Masterplan;
- e. ensure access is provided via The Drove for pedestrians, cyclists, buses, existing residents and businesses, allotment holders and a limited number of new dwellings;
- f. provide, in line with the aims of the Sleaford Transport Strategy, primary vehicular access for the development via a new junction with the A15 with secondary accesses to be provided from Covell Road, Stokes Drive, St Deny's Avenue and The Drove;
- g. prevent vehicular access to the A15 from or through the development via routes other than those set out in f and g above;
- h. provide, in line with the aims of the Sleaford Transport Strategy, appropriate transport infrastructure measures to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport in order to maximise opportunities for sustainable modes of travel, with a particular emphasis on maximising opportunities associated with the proximity to the River Slea and connections to the Town Centre;

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- i. provide on site green infrastructure and public open space, which links into the wider green infrastructure network for the Sleaford area and includes multifunctional, dual use of the school playing fields;
- j. ensure that the development is safe from flooding from the River Slea through the application of the sequential approach to inform the site layout, ensuring that vulnerable land uses are, where possible, directed to lower areas of risk or are appropriately mitigated;
- k. preserve the setting of the historic settlement of Holdingham.

9.4 Sleaford's Regeneration and Opportunity Areas

9.4.1 The regeneration of Sleaford Town Centre is a key objective of North Kesteven District Council. In Sleaford, there are parts of the town in need of regeneration or where significant windfall sites may become available but which are not sufficiently advanced to include a specific allocation in this Local Plan. Nonetheless, it is important that these areas are recognised to focus attention on them as areas in need of regeneration and to promote them as opportunities for private development proposals and/or public sector initiatives. These have been identified in the Plan as 'Opportunity Areas' and are shown on the key diagram for Sleaford.

Heart of Sleaford and the Market Place

9.4.2 The Heart of Sleaford is a private, public and third sector partnership between North Kesteven District Council, Lincolnshire Community Foundation, Sleaford Corn Exchange Ltd and Bristol Arcades Ltd with a shared vision to create a new, vibrant destination in the centre of Sleaford for local people and visitors. The main objectives of the partnership are to deliver a viable mixed use development comprising retail, leisure, commercial and residential uses, to successfully regenerate the Grade II listed 17 Market Place building and site to the rear of 17, 18 and 19 Market Place and 25b Southgate, and to deliver a pedestrian link from Money's Yard to the Market Place via a footbridge over the River Slea.

9.4.3 The Sleaford Masterplan identified the Market Place as a northern gateway and one of the main civic open spaces into the town centre, but concluded that it was not currently functioning as a focal point or as Sleaford's main town square. The Market Place is currently used as a car park, whereby vehicles block views of prominent landmark buildings, including St Deny's church and impact negatively on the townscape. Pedestrian routes to and from the Market Place are poor and are dominated by highway clutter and congestion.

9.4.4 Money's Yard is primarily a car park with Money's Mill at its centre. There is a public toilet block and retail and food uses arranged within and around the Yard in an ad hoc manner. In order for Money's Yard to be reinstated as an important civic space in the heart of Sleaford, there is an opportunity to create a public realm improvement strategy that will help to strengthen and improve the existing open space.

Riverside Retail Precinct

9.4.5 The Riverside Retail Precinct is situated to the west of Southgate. The Masterplan concluded that this area offered regeneration opportunities, including leisure/retail led redevelopment and improvements to the riverside setting.

9.4.6 The Riverside Retail Precinct includes at present a supermarket and car park, Riverside Shopping Centre and Millstream Square. There are pedestrian links to Sleaford's main shopping street from the supermarket via Watergate and Riverside Shopping Centre, but these would benefit from being improved.

Southern Southgate

- 9.4.7** Southern Southgate, including the railway station, is the major gateway into the town centre from the south, but is in need of regeneration to create a more welcoming and attractive experience of arrival into Sleaford from the railway station. The railway station currently feels physically isolated and not well connected to the main town centre. In order to address this issue, there needs to be clear visual and pedestrian links to the town centre and public realm improvements.
- 9.4.8** Southgate and the area around the railway station has been the subject of a detailed urban design study which resulted in the adoption of the Sleaford Town Centre Regeneration Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2010). This SPD seeks to guide the regeneration of this key part of the town.

Former Advanta Seeds Site

- 9.4.9** The former Advanta Seeds Site is a key redevelopment area towards the southern end of Sleaford Town Centre. Whilst not precisely defined on the Policies Map, it is the area which was previously occupied by the Avanta Seeds premises, with the maximum extent of the regeneration and opportunity area bounded by the railway line to the south, residential to the east and the recreation ground to the north. This large scale site offers significant potential for a variety of uses, including a mix of retail, leisure, office and residential. Its development potential will depend upon the nature of development proposed and its traffic generation and how this will affect access arrangements and wider traffic movement in the southern part of Sleaford town centre.
- 9.4.10** The Sleaford South Regeneration Route (Link Road) secured planning permission in connection with the redevelopment of the Advanta Seeds site by Tesco. Following their withdrawal nationally from major supermarket developments including Sleaford, a number of options for the redevelopment of Southern Southgate area of Sleaford are under consideration. The option analysis and associated modelling will confirm whether there is a continued need for the Link Road. Currently the plan seeks to protect the route of the road whilst these appraisals are underway.
- 9.4.11** The following policy sets out the broad objectives for each identified Opportunity Area and should be used as a starting point should any development proposals come forward within the Opportunity Areas within the plan period.

Policy LP45: Sleaford's Regeneration and Opportunity Areas

Development proposals that come forward within Opportunity Areas, as identified on the Key Diagram and described in the supporting text, should take into account the following principles:

Heart of Sleaford

- Explore opportunities to reduce the level of car parking within Money's Yard in accordance with the parking strategy and design principles set out in the Sleaford Masterplan, to reduce traffic congestion, create a new public open space and improved setting for Money's Mill, a key landmark within the town centre;
- Improve the public realm and strengthen connections in this area by exploring the potential to create a new pedestrian link from Money's Yard to the Market Place via a footbridge over the River Sleas;
- Support proposals for the restoration and regeneration of the Grade II listed 17 Market Place building that are sensitive to its prominent location and surrounding townscape character;

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- Improve the public realm of the Market Place, including paving, lighting, street furniture and public open space, whilst ensuring they are in keeping with the character of the existing townscape;
- Support initiatives that reinforce the Market Place as an important civic open space, including initiatives that contribute to a revival of the town's market.

Riverside Retail Precinct

- Explore opportunities to bring forward schemes that strengthen the town's leisure and retail offer in this area;
- Support proposals that make a positive contribution to and restore the river frontage and its setting;
- Improve and upgrade pedestrian links to the main shopping street via Watergate and Riverside Shopping Centre.

Southern Southgate

- Support improvements to Sleaford railway station, including proposals to improve the appearance and function of the transport hub and effective integration with the wider town;
- Improve and upgrade pedestrian links from Station Road to the town centre;
- Support initiatives and proposals to enhance the physical setting of the Handley Monument, by reducing the impact of vehicles on this space and taking advantage of the existing built heritage to formalise new public space.

Former Advanta Seeds Site

- Support a mixed use development of this site which creates a strong physical and functional link with Southgate and which takes advantage of its connections to Southgate, the Town Centre, and to the Bass Maltings site to the south.

9.5 Sleaford Town Centre

- 9.5.1** Sleaford has an attractive and historic town centre with a number of retail, leisure, cultural and historic attractions. Sleaford's central location means that it competes with Grantham, Boston, Spalding, Stamford and Newark as well the major centres of Lincoln, Peterborough and Nottingham, but at present it is not competing as well as it should be. Kerching were commissioned by North Kesteven District Council to prepare a Sleaford Town Centre Visioning Report (July 2015) to assist in forming a new vision for Sleaford town centre. The report identified that Sleaford is not fulfilling its full potential and needs to attract further national and independent retailers to the town along with broadening its leisure uses.
- 9.5.2** A key barrier to enhancing the town centre's retail core is the constant circulation of vehicle traffic around the one-way traffic management system. This has many negative impacts upon the town centre including delays to public transport, problems for deliveries to local businesses and contributes to the poor environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 9.5.3** The retail offer is also constrained in part due to the town centre's heritage and charm. Sleaford has a tight urban grain, with small premises. Whilst this generates an attractive built environment it results in a shortage of modern larger retail premises desired by the retail sector, particularly national multiples, and for the sale of comparison goods. Larger and a more varied range of premises are needed to broaden the town centre offer and the Sleaford Masterplan identifies a number of opportunities where this could be achieved.
- 9.5.4** The NPPF requires Local Plans to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping

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areas. For Sleaford, the town centre boundary has not changed from that shown in the previous adopted Local Plan for North Kesteven, as the findings of the Central Lincolnshire City and Town Centres Study (May 2012) and Sleaford Town Centre Visioning Report do not highlight a need to change the town centre boundary.

- 9.5.5** The Central Lincolnshire City and Town Centres Study recommended a primary shopping area boundary for Sleaford, based on an analysis of current A1 retail uses and an understanding of how the town centre functions. It is this boundary that is shown on the Policies Map that accompanies this Plan.
- 9.5.6** Within the primary shopping area, retailing will continue to be the predominant land use and should be protected to retain the retail character of the town centre. The NPPF identifies office and residential uses as town centre uses. Whilst the value of these uses in town centres is recognised, these are only appropriate in upper floors in the primary shopping area. Such uses would not provide active frontages and are likely to cause harm to the vitality and viability of the primary retail core through diluting the identity of the area as a focus for retail activity.
- 9.5.7** The following policy seeks to maintain the main shopping function of the primary shopping area whilst ensuring an appropriate balance between retail and non retail uses.

Policy LP46: Sleaford Town Centre

In Sleaford town centre, as identified on the Policies Map, proposals for main town centre uses will, in principle, be permitted. Development should be compatible with adjacent buildings and land uses and not result in an over concentration of specific uses in whole or part of the town centre.

Within the defined primary shopping area, the following criteria will apply:

- a. Priority will be given to A1 retail uses with active shopfronts at ground floor level;
- b. Proposals for other uses which support retail activity and add to the viability and vitality of the primary shopping area will be supported;
- c. Offices in use class B1a and residential uses will be supported above ground floor level only;
- d. Proposals for non-retail uses at the ground floor level will be required to demonstrate that the development is complementary to and supports the competitiveness of the primary shopping area;
- e. Development that creates an over concentration of uses that undermines the primary shopping area's overall retail function and character will not be permitted.

9.6 Access and Movement within Sleaford

- 9.6.1** Sleaford has good connections, benefitting significantly from the A15 and A17 as major primary routes, and a railway station with direct services to Peterborough, Nottingham, Lincoln and Boston. The opportunities presented by these routes need to be maximised for businesses, residents and visitors. However the extent of vehicle movement in the town is a key issue and has been identified as a barrier to further regeneration. There is a need to improve connections to primary routes, develop linkages with surrounding settlements, improve the efficiency and movement of vehicles throughout the centre of town and promote a shift from private vehicles to walking, cycling and public transport options.
- 9.6.2** The Sleaford Transport Strategy (June 2014) sets out a vision that by 2030, "Sleaford will be an example of sustainable growth, economic prosperity, low carbon emissions and safe,

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healthy and happy communities. Transport will contribute towards a bigger, better and more confident town which is a great place to live, work, learn and visit. Key issues that the strategy identified include:

- Town centre congestion during peak hours exacerbated by level crossings which impacts on movement. Limited route choice and limited spare capacity on the network;
- Good bus network but with low frequency and poor Sunday service;
- Some car parks are over capacity whilst some have significant spare capacity;
- Fragmented cycle network and a lack of provision for cyclists and pedestrians at junctions;
- Town centre traffic impacts on the quality of the environment;
- Barriers to pedestrian movement and accessibility;
- Improve the appearance and function of the transport hub and integrate it more effectively within the wider town.

9.6.3 The carpark strategy for the town, as outlined in the Sleaford Masterplan, aims to reposition and rationalise parking to strategically locate car parks on the radial approaches to the town centre so that they are within walking distance of the centre and its retail offer. This will reduce unnecessary vehicle movement through the centre of the town, reduce pollution and noise, and allow an improved environment to be created which is more welcoming and pedestrian friendly.

Policy LP47: Access and Movement within Sleaford

Developers should work positively with the local planning authority, the highway authority and other partners to assist delivery of the objectives and projects identified within the Sleaford Transport Strategy and Sleaford Masterplan, and where appropriate necessary transport improvements associated with the development proposed. As necessary, conditions and/or developer contributions will be secured to achieve this requirement.

Support will be given for development proposals which will contribute, where applicable, to the following:

- a. Improving traffic circulation and reducing the number of vehicle movements in and around the town centre, including supporting the necessary highway infrastructure to deliver regeneration objectives for the town;
- b. Opportunities, as identified in the Sleaford Masterplan, to deliver additional perimeter car parking which facilitates pedestrian access into the town centre;
- c. Supporting projects associated with the implementation of the Sleaford Transport Strategy and the Sleaford Masterplan. Enhancements to connections for pedestrians and cyclists between the town centre and surrounding residential communities are particularly important, as well as through the town centre;
- d. Supporting the development of the Sleaford East West Leisure Link as the key component of the Sleaford Urban Green Grid in accordance with the Sleaford Masterplan and Central Lincolnshire Green Infrastructure Study.

In order to enable potential delivery of the Sleaford Link Road (current status: with planning consent), the route is identified on the Policies Map and safeguarded for such purposes. Any development proposal on or near the route should safeguard the future opportunity for the Link Road to be delivered, unless there is evidence available or a statement published by North Kesteven District Council which confirms that the Link Road is no longer required and/or deliverable.