

Cuckney, Norton, Holbeck & Welbeck

Green Infrastructure
Project Proposal



May 2015



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Introduction

The Cuckney, Norton, Holbeck and Welbeck Neighbourhood Plan Group have commissioned BRCC to undertake local Green Infrastructure (GI) Planning work. This GI Study is intended to guide the Cuckney, Norton, Holbeck and Welbeck Neighbourhood Plan and embed GI provision within the development of the town, making it a desirable place to live, work and visit.

The Vision of the Neighbourhood Plan is:

In 20 years' time the Neighbourhood Plan area will be a thriving and vibrant community led area. It will value its rural environment and heritage and provide the whole community with opportunities to meet their needs at every stage of their life. It will be a sustainable place where everyone can flourish and prosper.

Having a well-planned and well managed GI network will be vital in enabling the community to meet this aim.

This report also links to the Bassetlaw District Council GI Plan (May 2010), the vision for which states:

In 2026 green infrastructure will be an integral part of the development process, ensuring that people and places in Bassetlaw benefit from a strong network of multifunctional green spaces.

Strong connectivity within and between urban centres, rural villages and the wider countryside will minimise habitat fragmentation and contribute to green and attractive places where people enjoy living, working and visiting. Accessible, well managed areas of the core habitats of woodland and river valley wetlands will encourage greater levels of biodiversity, support climate change mitigation and facilitate recreational opportunities for local residents.

The Bassetlaw DC Local Development Framework defines GI as:

“Green infrastructure comprises networks of multi-functional open space, at all scales. Its fundamental principles are therefore the multi-functionality of open space resources, to enable them to maximise public benefit, and the connectivity of these resources into functional networks to ensure that the overall value of the network is greater than the sum of its component parts.”

GI comprises 5 overlapping themes: Open Space, Access, Biodiversity, Historic Environment and Landscape. Examples of GI assets include:

- Accessible Countryside
- Urban parks
- Canals and Water space
- Pocket Parks
- River Meadows
- Cycleways
- Playing Fields
- Nature Reserves
- Woodlands
- Historic Sites
- Cemeteries

Background

To inform the production of this report, site visits were undertaken by BRCC in September and October 2014. These visits enabled the identification of existing and potential GI assets and how these could be linked to create a coherent GI 'network'. The creation of this network over the coming years, in parallel with limited housing and employment development, will result in the area consisting of thriving communities, linked, served by and caring for the local environment.

The main existing GI assets are:

The Welbeck Estate extends to some 15,000 acres and straddles the borders of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Welbeck is a working estate and contains a Grade 2 registered historic park designed in 1748 by Francis Richardson; ancient woodlands and forestry; a chain of lakes; farmland and grazing; a deer park; and some of the country's most important rural heritage buildings. At the heart of the estate, which dominates the north eastern part of the NP area lies the historic Welbeck Abbey and Welbeck Village. The lakes within the Estate grounds are identified as being of great conservation value, with Local Wildlife Site and Site of Special Scientific Interest designations.

Cluster of green spaces associated with the River Poulter in and around Cuckney. A number of sites close the river and St Mary's church enhance the rural setting of the village. Sites include play areas, community garden, wetland meadows, churchyard and graveyard. Although some of these sites currently have no public access, their combined landscape, heritage and wildlife interests make them an important green corridor through the village.

The southern edge of the Neighbourhood Plan area is dominated by part of the wooded ridge which runs from Langwith to Budby. The beech and chestnut woodland is an important landscape feature, with significant heritage and wildlife value. Currently providing limited public access, there is great scope for this site to contribute to enhanced cycling and walking provision.

Other woodlands and tree belts, including three 'remises', are a particular feature of the Neighbourhood Plan area. These act as important landscape features, as well as being of significant for biodiversity as habitats and corridors; also have historic environment value. Remises are small fields bounded by woodland belts, used for the rearing and shooting of game birds.

In the north western corner of the Neighbourhood Plan, and accessed via the Robin Hood Way, is Cresswell Crags - a limestone gorge honeycombed with caves and smaller fissures. Stone tools and remains of animals found in the caves by archaeologists provide evidence for a fascinating story of life during the last Ice Age between 50,000 and 10,000 years ago.

Robin Hood Way

The Robin Hood Way is a well-established long distance route of 105 miles travelling through the county of Nottinghamshire.

Starting at Nottingham Castle and finally finishing at Edwinstowe church, the trail explores the haunts of famous outlaws and many other hidden delights including Creswell Crags.



Robin Hood Way waymarking

Concept

This report proposes the provision of an enhanced green infrastructure network within the Cuckney, Norton, Holbeck and Welbeck Neighbourhood Plan area.

The appropriate enhancement of existing green spaces alongside the provision of new recreation and habitat areas will provide local people and wildlife with high quality and valuable recreational spaces for generations to come.

Enhancing the public access network through upgrading the condition and / or status of existing paths; and the creation of new off-road routes, will provide a range of safe and attractive paths. The linking of new and existing routes will lead to the establishment of a series of circular routes, providing walking, cycling and in places horse riding options to both local residents and visitors to the area.

It is acknowledged that the proposals within this plan are ambitious and their implementation is subject to a range of factors, not least landowner consent and funding.

It is fully expected that this GI Plan will be delivered in phases, over many years, as opportunities, consents and funding arise.

Fig 1 shows the main Green Space components forming the proposed GI network.

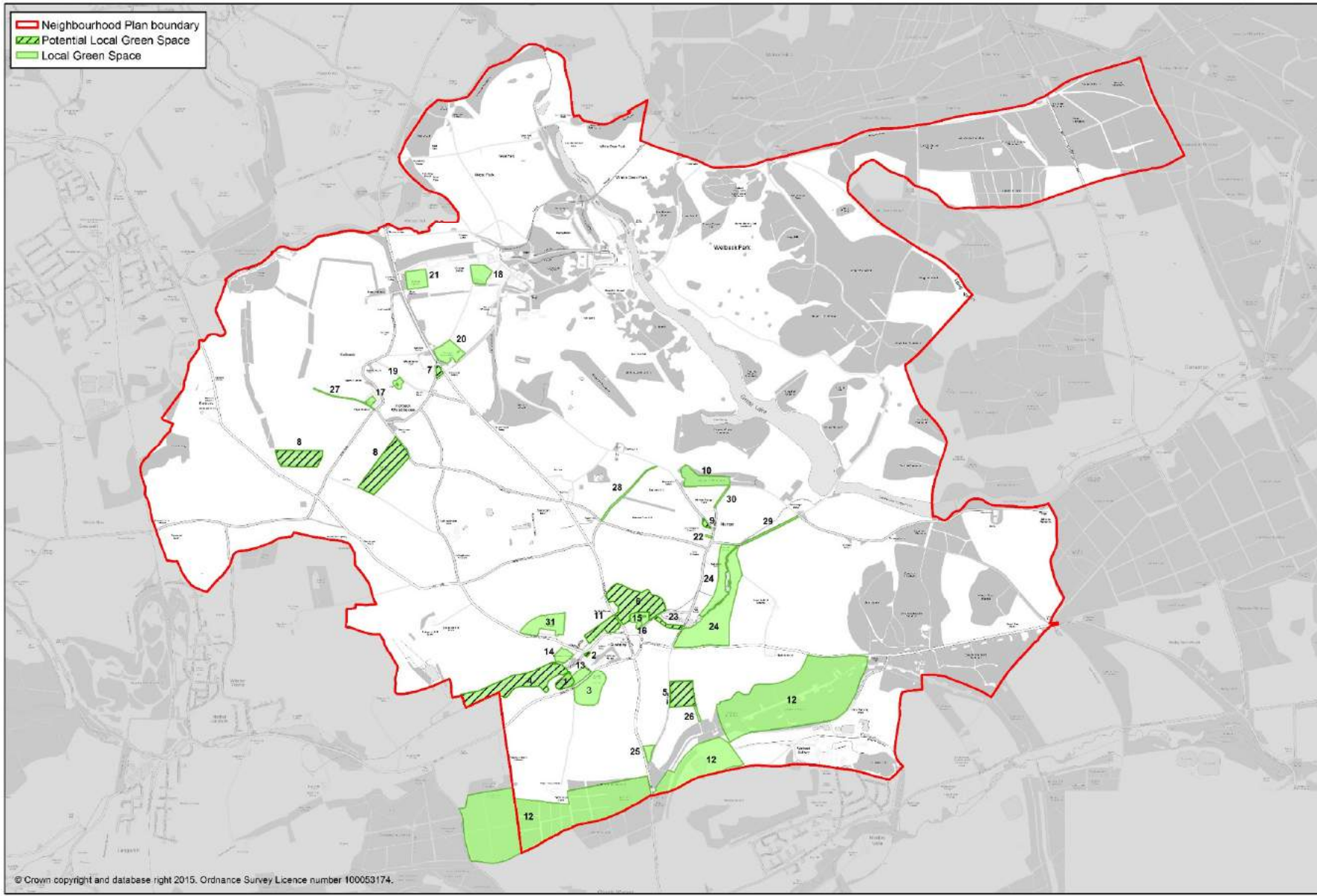


Fig 2 shows the main Access Routes forming the proposed GI network.

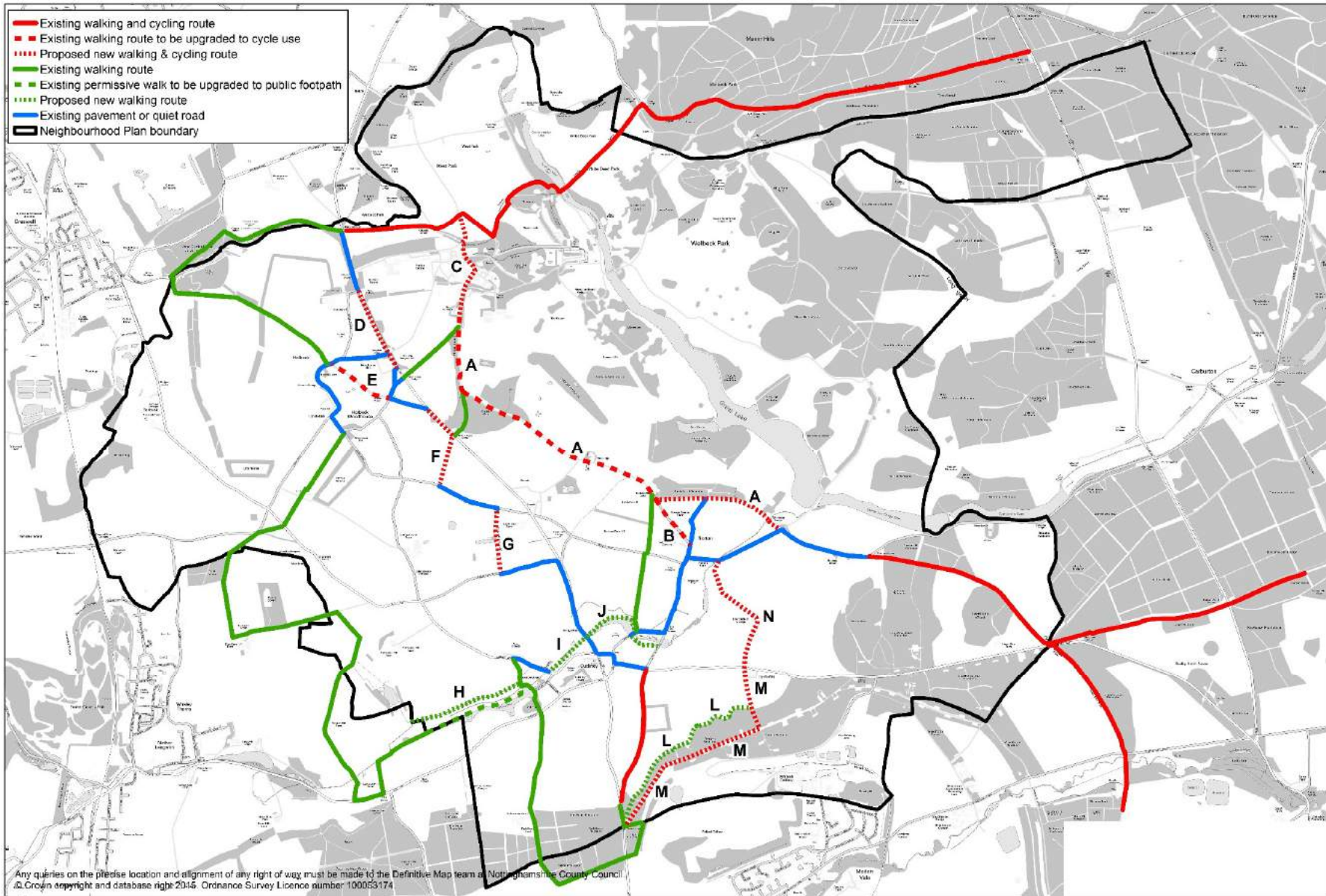
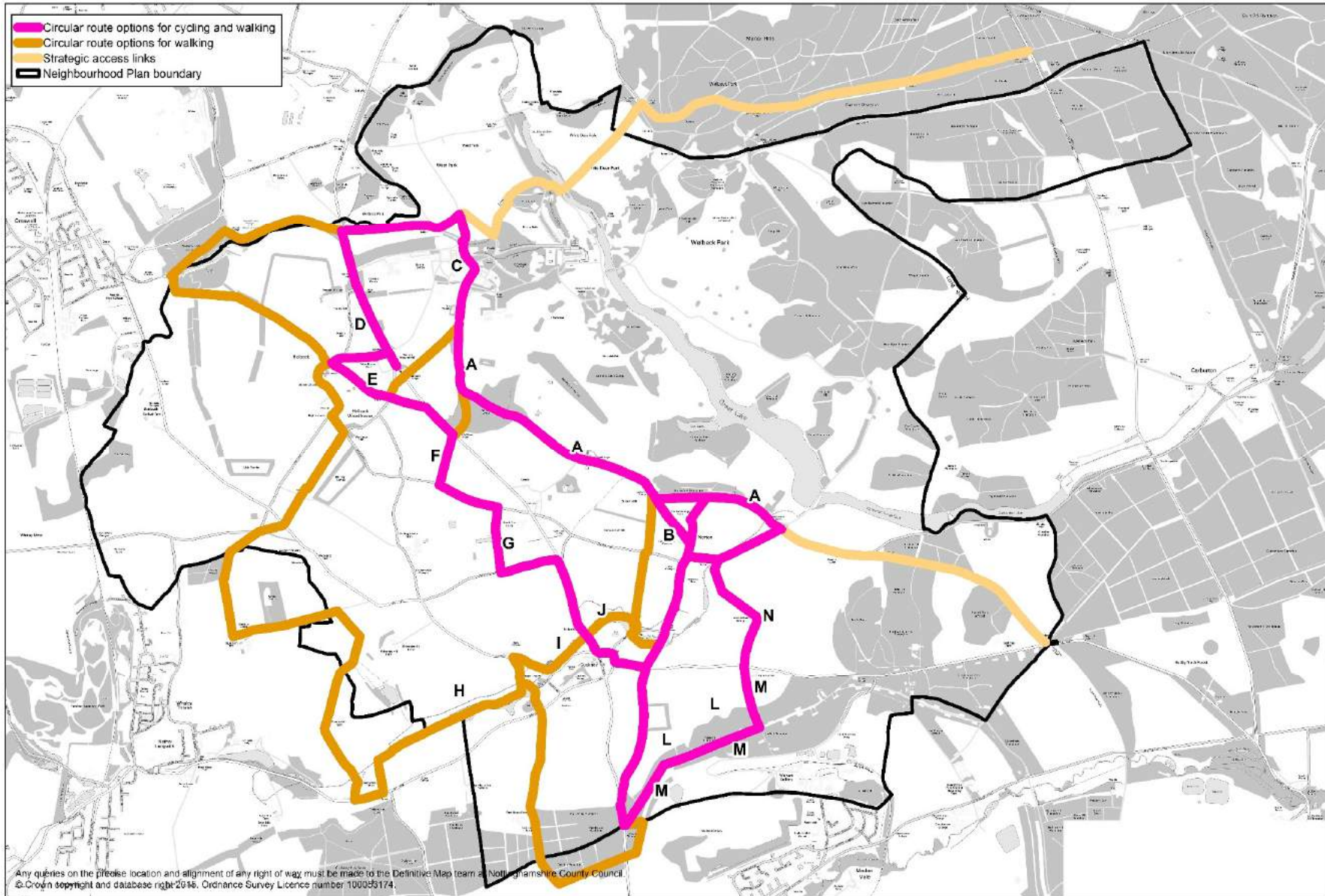


Fig 3 shows the main Circular Routes forming the proposed GI network.



Basic Principles

The proposed principles below have been developed through extensive consultation elsewhere in the country on similar GI projects. Local consideration should be given as to whether they are all appropriate for Cuckney, Norton Holbeck & Welbeck, and whether any additional principles reflecting the local area should be added.

Where possible, linear routes should:

- Be traffic free
- Be safe and inspire confidence in visitors
- Offer 'easy access' i.e. be reasonably easy to use for users with a wide range of mobility levels, including pushchairs and walking aids
- Have the potential for future upgrading to use by cyclists (where not already possible)
- Have designated, safe crossing points over motorised routes
- Provide connections between where people live and where they want to travel (for recreational or employment purposes)
- Be clearly signed and easy to follow
- Be well maintained
- Provide enhanced user enjoyment through the provision of information boards and benches in attractive locations
- Where appropriate provide access for horses, particularly links to existing bridleways
- Be protected from future development. Where future development does occur, any existing sections of the Green Wheel should remain as inner route options and new outer sections created.
- Cause no damage to archaeological sites and their setting
- Provide safe passing places on those paths with shared vehicular use including appropriate management of vegetation to the sides

Accessible green spaces should:

- Be safe spaces that inspire confidence in visitors
- Cater for a wide range of user-types (dog walkers, playing children, joggers, family groups, older people)
- Provide attractive landscapes
- Provide opportunities for wildlife, heritage conservation and interpretation
- Provide informal recreation opportunities (including playing, bird watching, etc.)
- Provide interactive interpretation through information boards, play structures/ environments and art features to encourage more people and a wider audience into the countryside
- Be well maintained

The wider landscape should:

- Protect, enhance and create aesthetically pleasing views
- Have well maintained hedges
- Enable interconnectivity of habitats
- Protect, manage and enhance the historic environment

Standards / Specifications

To support the creation of the route within the above basic principles, a series of standards based on national guidance are proposed below. The proposed standards and specifications have been developed through extensive consultation elsewhere in the country on similar GI projects. Consideration should be given as to whether they are all appropriate for Cuckney, Norton Holbeck & Welbeck, and whether any local standards required by Bassetlaw District Council should replace these.

Widths

For an un-segregated, shared use path, guidance generally points towards a preferred minimum width of 3m, although a minimum width of 2m may be acceptable where usage is low, provided there are no side constraints (i.e., there should be space to the side of the path to use to allow passing). A greater width will provide an improved level of service.

	Standard	Minimum	Where width is physically restricted*
Shared use path	3m	2.5m	2m
Footpath links	2.5m	2m	1.5m

*Restricted access will usually be where all or part of the route is using a pre-existing alley way or where there are other significant structures which physically prevent the allocation of a greater width. Paths should conform to the general policy in as far as possible. Where there are localised intrusions and/or short lengths over which the path would be less than 2m wide this may be acceptable depending on the circumstances.

In keeping with the Green Wheel principles, where possible the route should be set within a landscape and wildlife corridor; and not be limited to the width of a path.

Surfacing standards for new paths:

It is anticipated that the Green Wheel routes will have a range of surfacing types. This range of surfacing will form a hierarchy of standards based on the level of expected use, landscape sensitivity and other factors. The optimum level of surface should always be sought for the expected level of use:

Level 1: Bound surface – e.g. Bit Mac Tar/Mac

Level 2: Unbound surface – e.g. road planings and granite dust blinding

Level 3: a) Re-enforced grass

b) Well maintained farm track

Level 4: Rolled/consolidated grass or compacted suitable ground

Routes which are more urban in setting and expected to have high levels of use should be Level 1 (Level 2 minimum). Routes which are more rural in setting and expected to have lower levels of use could be Levels 3 and 4.

Structures

Structures will be required at many locations for a range of purposes including, stock control, limiting unauthorised/ vehicular access and safety (to reduce speed at junctions with roads).

With the exceptions of highway safety, barriers, including motor cycle/ staggered/ kissing gates, should only be a last resort. They should only be used to address actual problems, not to alleviate fears of future potential problems. They should only be installed when other methods have been considered or trialled and been discounted, or have proved to be ineffective. Even when a barrier is installed, it should ideally only be in place for a limited period until the problem has stopped or considerably reduced.

Design solutions should minimise the obstacle to legitimate users as barriers which stop motorcyclists are likely to also exclude wheelchair / scooter users, parents with prams and pushchairs, some users with mobility impairments (for example, sticks and crutches) and some visually impaired people.

Gradients

Green Wheel routes should be designed to achieve a maximum gradient of 3% with the absolute maximum 5% for lengths up to 100m. On the approach to priority junctions this should not exceed 3%. Where steeper slopes are unavoidable the limiting gradient is 7% for lengths up to 30m.

Junctions and road crossings

Where Green Wheel routes meet or cross the public highway, extra consideration to safety must be given; and Road Safety Officers consulted. Clear signage must be provided, for both users of the Green Wheel and the public highway. Dependent upon sight lines, gradients and other local factors, structures may be required to reduce the speed of users of the Green Wheel on approaches to roads and pavements.

Dropped kerbs at road crossings should be used to improve ease of use and safety, improving comfort for all users, especially cyclists and pushchair/ wheelchair users.

Signage, way marking and mapping

Signage for the Green Wheel should be clear, informative and consistent. A Green Wheel symbol/ logo and colour scheme will be utilised.

Signposts should be used at all junctions and access points to the 'rim' of the Green Wheel. Destinations and distances, both into town along key 'spokes' and around the 'rim' will be identified.

Waymarking should be used to supplement the main signage and should provide directional information. Waymarking should be undertaken in accordance with CBC's Countryside Access Waymarking Policy.

Additional information about the Green Wheel, including a map of the entire wheel, will be provided at key access points.

The issues of signage, waymarking and mapping, along with identity, marketing, promotion and information provision will be addressed more fully in a supporting document (to be produced once this document is adopted).

Fencing and hedges

The route of the Green Wheel should be aesthetically pleasing, wherever possible maintaining a 'green' setting through appropriate planting and landscaping.

Planting and landscaping requirements will vary greatly around the Green Wheel, influenced primarily by available space and degree of rural/ urban setting.

All planting along the 'rim' and the more rural 'spokes' should be of native, locally distinctive species. Planting within more urban settings should be decided with robustness and maintenance as key factors.

Wherever possible, Green Wheel routes should not be 'fenced-in', with users having a feeling of being contained or funnelled. However, at certain access points and other areas, such as where stock is grazing or for safety, fencing will be required (although the route and adjacent land should provide a corridor feel).

Fencing specifications should be robust and in keeping with their immediate setting. In general, rural settings should have timber fencing which should be of a similar design to any adjacent existing fencing. Where no existing fencing is present, posts should measure a minimum 125mm x 75mm and rails 100 x 50mm.

Fencing specifications in more urban settings will be determined by primary function (safety, security, etc.), but in all cases should be as attractive as possible and in-keeping with surrounding structures.

Greenspace standards

Greenspaces forming the Green Wheel will range from linear paths and corridors, through amenity greenspaces to natural and semi-natural open spaces in the wider countryside. All components of the Green Wheel should deliver multiple green infrastructure benefits – linking and maximising the quality and value of access, landscape, biodiversity and heritage. Sites forming the Green Wheel will:

- be clearly signposted to and from the Green Wheel and the wider network
- be welcoming and clean and safe.
- may incorporate public realm features (e.g. sculptures)
- will provide seating, in both sunny and shaded areas
- have a naturalistic appearance
- have attractive views out of or across the site
- make good use of topography, space and planting
- protect, manage and provide opportunities for interpreting the historic environment
- provide informal and engaging activities for people of all ages
- seek to maximise ecological value and opportunities

Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard in Nature Nearby Natural England, 2010

ANGSt aims to address this by setting a range of accessibility standards for natural sites and areas within easy reach of people's homes. This standard should be used to establish the level of deficit of accessible natural greenspace across the settlement.

ANGSt

ANGSt recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:

- of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

Local Green Space

The National Planning Policy Framework allows for appropriate sites to be put forward for designation as Local Green Spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan process. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. Related guidance.

The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

In relation to sports pitches and their contribution to the GI network the Bassetlaw Playing Pitch strategy should be used.

Wider landscape

As part of this project we are seeking to increase the quality of the environment surrounding the town. It is critical that this masterplan acts as a challenge to all land managers to seek to maintain and develop the quality of the land they manage through the restoration and creation of interconnecting habitats, including pollarded willows, hedges, and woodlands; wetlands and ponds. Derelict and urban fringe sites should be explored for enhancement opportunities.

Maintenance

To guarantee maximum value, use and longevity of the Green Wheel once it is developed, it will need to be maintained to a proper standard and to encourage people to use it. Ongoing maintenance work will have to include verge cutting and surface spraying for which revenue funding will be required.

Careful consideration should be given, when any planting or landscaping is proposed, to ensure that it will not become a problem in the future. Where appropriate, a sealed surface should be considered at the development stage to reduce maintenance liabilities in the future.

Impacts and Constraints

It is acknowledged that the implementation of any of these above standards have the potential to have a negative impact upon features of ecological, heritage or landscape value. Such features may be both assets and constraints on an individual site basis and the application of standards for the creation and maintenance of the Green Wheel infrastructure may need to be amended accordingly.

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Key Components of the GI Network

The following sections of this report detail the existing and proposed GI assets and associated enhancements which together will form a cohesive and valuable GI network for residents and visitors of the Cuckney, Holbeck, Norton and Welbeck Neighbourhood Plan area.

Sites

There are many existing green spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan area that contribute to the area's GI network. Many of these sites have public access while a few are not open to the public but provide a significant feature in the local landscape. This report proposes enhancements to existing sites and some additional new green spaces – both publicly accessible sites and landscape/ wildlife features.

Some sites, such as churchyards, are already subject to protection against changes in future use. This report proposes that other sites which are currently not protected, are designated as Local Green Spaces through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Proposed Local Green Space Designation sites

The following sites are considered worthy of being designated as Local Green Spaces due to meeting one or more criteria as set out in the NPPF guidance (see Greenspace Standards above).

1 Mill Hill (approx. 1.75 ha)

A wooded hill can be accessed by steps from the A632 Langwith Rd and from the Dam Head at School Lane. With an unmarked path circumventing the hill and a public footpath crossing the site, it has been used as an unofficial play area for generations of children. Recent waymarking and clearance works have improved the Public Footpath through this site. Additional works to improve ease of access on the steps on the northern slope are suggested. Further works to raise the crowns of some trees and to install some seating and interpretation to provide a viewpoint over the lake should be considered.



Waymarked Public Footpath through Mill Hill.

2 Cuckney Community Garden (approx. 0.05 ha)

This small central area in the village, opposite the village shop, is regularly maintained by Cuckney residents, giving local people the opportunity to work together. The garden has seating and is open for everyone to enjoy, as well as being an attractive feature for passing motorists.



The community garden.

4 The Dam and Dam Meadow (approx. 12 ha)

The meadow is an area of wetland bounded by the River Poulter to the north and Cuckney Dam to the south. It has the old millstream running through it to the weir. Grazing of the meadow is let to a tenant farmer and the lake, as well as being of high wildlife value, is used for fishing. A Permissive Path (under the Higher Level Stewardship scheme) leads westwards through the meadow towards Langwith; and consideration should be given to upgrading this important access link to a permanent Public Right of Way.

Ensuring that traditional grazing of the meadow area continues is essential to preserve the biodiversity value of the site. Cuckney Dam's biodiversity value is recognized by its designation as a Local Wildlife Site: 'A large shallow pond with noteworthy reed-swamp and open marginal aquatic communities'.



Cuckney Dam viewed from School Lane

5 Remise on Sandy Lane (also known as Donkey Lane) (approx. 4 ha)

This is a small field surrounded by large mature trees and low ground cover shrubs. It was established to give cover and roosting for game birds for the local Welbeck shoot. The field is set with wildflowers and grasses that support wildlife and birds. The site, along with the other remises in the Neighbourhood Plan area, are a striking feature of the local countryside, contributing heritage, landscape and biodiversity value.

With its local significance and location adjacent to the Sandy lane / Donkey Lane Public Bridleway, consideration should be given to allowing public access into the grassland area, with the provision of seating and interpretation at an appropriate viewpoint.

6 Church Meadow and Fieldings Bank (approx. 15ha – *although exact extent of existing area unclear*)

The bank on the north side of the River Poulter offers excellent views of the wetland, the church and the fields beyond. The south side of the river is mostly wetland and often floods in winter. A public footpath on the north side connects Cuckney and Norton. The landscape and wildlife value of the lower lying land could also be enhanced through the planting of specimen riverside trees (willows?) and the creation of ponds / scrapes/ berms which can also help minimize flood risk. The tree belt along the NE boundary of the site should be extended further west; and also widened to reinforce this important landscape and habitat feature. Interpretation should be provided at the existing bench location at the top of the bank.

There is also the potential to connect Fieldings Bank and Church Meadow to the land to the west of A60 / Worksop Rd and to make this entire area accessible for local people



The River Poulter looking west through Church Meadow with Fieldings Bank as the backdrop.

7. Millennium Garden, Holbeck Woodhouse (approx. 0.45 ha)

This memorial garden is an attractively landscaped area with seats provided for quiet contemplation. Trees have been planted by local residents that are dedicated to people who have lived and worked for the community. It is owned and maintained by Welbeck estate and is accessible for the community. The garden is close to the proposed development of the Woodhouse Hall housing complex for elderly people and is likely to see increased use.

An old underpass beneath the A60 links the northern corner of this site to site 19. Although it may be considered to have insufficient height and drainage issues, consideration should be given to exploring its restoration as a historic route and safe 'crossing' of the A60.



Millennium Garden

8. Little Remise and Hill Top Remise (approx. 10.5ha)

These two areas, like site 5, are significant and characteristic features of the local landscape. Each remise is a small field surrounded by large mature trees. The purpose of these areas is to give cover, and grazing for game birds for the Welbeck shoot. It is important to conserve these two remises for game birds, local birdlife, and to maintain the unique characteristic of the landscape.



Hill Top Remise

9. The Lady Margaret Crescent Lawn (approx. 0.4ha)

This is an attractive and unusual feature, bounded on one side by the crescent of bungalows and on the other side by a hedge and mature trees. It is maintained by the Welbeck Estate and serves as a village green where outdoor village events are held.

The beauty and character of the site should be protected and further consideration should be given as to whether the community would be best served by designating the site as a Local Green Space, or registering it as a Village Green.



The Lady Margaret Crescent Lawn

There are two additional sites proposed for Local Green Space Designation which are currently not discrete sites in their own right, but could form components of a GI corridor through Cuckney:

11 Riverside Close – A60 (approx. 1.4ha)

This wetland area along the northern side of the River Poulter could provide an important access and wildlife link along the river corridor through Cuckney. Opportunities should be explored to provide a public access link from Riverside Close/ A616 to the A60. The landscape and wildlife value of the area could also be enhanced through the planting of appropriate specimen riverside trees and the creation of ponds / scrapes/ berms which can also help minimize flood risk.



The River Poulter looking west from the A60

23 Old Mill Lane – Norton Lane (approx. 1ha)

It is anticipated that some housing development will occur in the vicinity of this site. To provide a local green space for these houses, and protect this area from further development, the area north of the building line that is along the edge of the river should be allocated as a green space. Consideration should be given to connecting this area with areas 6 and 11 to make a continuous access and wildlife corridor through the village along the River Poulter 'valley'.



Looking west from old Mill Lane.

Other Existing Green Space Sites

3 Cuckney Cricket Ground (approx. 7ha)

This site was established prior to WW2 and has been in regular use ever since. The site and its facilities underwent major enhancements in the 1990's and is now used on a daily basis. There is an indoor cricket sports hall that is also used for social events. This important sports facility could be significantly enhanced to improve its landscape and biodiversity value, through the planting of hedges around the site's boundary; and planting trees in the grassland surrounding the pitches, either as individual parkland trees or small copses in the corners of the site.



Cuckney Cricket Ground.

10. Bunkers Hill Plantation (approx. 7ha)

This is the site of Norton Camp which was a prisoner of war camp in WW2. Although none of the buildings remain, the road ways are still present. It was locally known as the University behind Wire, as many people were given the chance to receive education here as part of a repatriation scheme. The site hosts occasional events where families of the prisoners of war have come to visit the site. This woodland is managed as part of the Welbeck Estate for game birds and biodiversity. It currently has no access, although permitting public use of the road along the southern boundary of the site is now proposed (see Routes A). The provision of a seating area and interpretation of the site's history at an appropriate location off this roadway is proposed.



Bunkers Hill currently has no public access, except for occasional events

12 Woodland (over 75ha within NP area)

This hillside along the southern edge of the Neighbourhood Plan area is filled with mature beech and chestnut trees, and is part of a continuous woodland that runs along the north side of a natural ridge from Langwith to Budby.

These extensive woodlands are a high quality green infrastructure asset, delivering benefits for landscape, biodiversity and heritage; and having the potential to provide additional public access opportunities.

It has been suggested that locations within the woodland could be developed for business or leisure uses, with the caveat that the wooded nature of the area should be preserved. Any business or leisure development could make a net contribution to further enhancing this valuable GI asset.



Wooded hillside viewed from the A616 east of Cuckney.

13 Football field (approx. 0.9ha)

The field, on the northern side of Langwith Rd, was levelled to provide a full sized football pitch and was used intermittently by youth teams, who used the changing facilities of the cricket club. The field is no longer used for sporting purposes, but has the potential to be a valuable community asset as a community orchard or woodland, or similar. Local consultation should be undertaken, including with the school which is located very close to the site, to decide on the best future use of the site.



Football field to the north of Langwith Rd

14 Recreation ground and playground (approx. 1ha)

The northern part of the playground is fitted with up-to-date play equipment which is maintained by Cuckney Parish Council.

The southern area of the recreation field has a junior size football pitch, maintained by Bassetlaw Council. It is also regularly used by the school for football and games lessons and occasional village events. A bridge over the river connects the recreation ground to the school.

The site could be enhanced through the provision of additional play equipment and the planting of specimen trees. These enhancements should be funded through contributions from any development associated with the adjacent old allotment site. An area of this site adjacent to the old allotment site has permission for the creation of a car park which could serve both the park and the school.



Play area at the northern end of the Recreation Ground.

15 St Mary's Church and churchyard (approx. 0.9ha)

The 12th century church is the most significant architectural building in Cuckney. It is regularly used by the residents of Cuckney and Norton for religious services and ceremonies. It is occasionally used for concerts and exhibitions. The graveyard around the church is well maintained and is used for burials. It is a significant asset to the history and landscape of the village. The graveyard to the west of the church is very old and is believed to be the original site of a castle/manor house predating the church. This area is less well maintained would benefit from interpretation and small scale wildlife enhancements such as bulb planting, bird box provision etc.



St Mary's Church



Old graveyard on site of old 'castle'

16 Village Hall and Car Park and Pound (approx. 0.2ha)

For over fifty years, the building has been used for village meetings, clubs and events. It continues to be used regularly by various local clubs, and play groups. It is well equipped and well maintained: it is licensed to accommodate 120 people, with the associated car park having approximately 20 spaces. The Pound, sited next to the Village Hall, has significant local historic interest. The small area of green space between the car park and the church ground could be planted with a few locally appropriate heritage fruit trees.



Green space adjacent to the Village Hall and Pound.

17. Recreation ground at High Holbeck. (0.25ha)

This small amenity area is set in the middle of the houses in high Holbeck. It is open to the general public but is primarily used by the residents of High Holbeck. There is a play area with play equipment provided and maintained by Holbeck Parish Council; and the site is used for occasional community events. A recently planted small orchard adds to the value of this green space.



Fruit trees and play equipment at High Holbeck Recreation Ground.

18. Bowling Green and Village Green (approx. 1.8ha)

The bowls club is situated in Welbeck village, and owned and managed by the Welbeck Estate, although it is in fact within Holbeck Parish. The Village Green adjacent to the Bowls Club is owned and maintained by Welbeck Estates. It is used for Welbeck Estate events. Access to, and use of, these areas is restricted to club members (the bowls club) and occasional community events (Village Green).

The planting of a few specimen parkland trees may be considered appropriate for enhancing the Village Green.



The Village Green within the Welbeck Estate.

19. St Winifred's Church and graveyard (approx. 0.3ha)

This church serves the communities of Holbeck and Welbeck Estate. The graveyard is still used for burials, and the Dukes of Portland are buried there. There are regular church services and ceremonies, and it is occasionally used for exhibitions. The graveyard is very attractive and well maintained, making a significant contribution to the area's landscape and heritage.



St Winifred's Church and graveyard

20. Lady Margaret Hall complex (approx. 3.9ha)

This area comprises a large community hall, with staging and catering facilities; tennis courts, a car park and a field at the side. The community hall is regularly used for all kinds of social events.

The tennis courts are used regularly by Welbeck Tennis Club. The car park is regularly used for events in the hall, and also for Caravan club gatherings.

The field at the side of the hall is part of the complex facilities and is used as a caravan site. The field could be enhanced by further tree planting – individual parkland trees as well as possibly a tree belt along the eastern boundary...

An old underpass beneath the A60 links this site to site 7. Although it may be considered to have insufficient height and drainage issues, consideration should be given to exploring it's restoration as a historic route and safe 'crossing' of the A60.



Field used as a caravan site beside lady Margaret Hall, with tunnel beneath the A60.

21. Walled garden (2.25ha)

This large site was originally a walled garden that served the Abbey. 3 of the original walls remain intact and half of the area is now used as a Car Park for the Garden Centre and other outlets. The remaining part of the walled garden is an open grass area for which consideration could be given to planting a heritage orchard; or the garden centre restoring it as part of the original garden.



Large grass area within the walled garden.

22. Norton Play Area (approx. 0.07ha)

This small play area is situated centrally in the village, just off the main through road to Clumber Park. It is well used, both by village children and those brought by parents from neighbouring villages. The site is quite small with little scope for significant enhancements. However, the opportunity to expand the site into the adjacent paddock/ orchard area should be explored, to create a multi-functional community green space, potentially including the re-creation of an orchard and the provision of additional seating.



Norton play area

Proposed New Green Space Sites

In addition to sites 11 and 23, which are proposed for Local Greenspace Designation, a further new green space is proposed for adding to and enhancing the local GI network:

24 River Poulter corridor, Old Mill Lane – Limetree Ave (approx. 12ha)

This riverside grazing land has the potential to provide an area of attractive 'open access'. Although the NP area is generally well catered for in terms of public access, there are few, if any areas available for informal access. The site could be enhanced with the planting of a small copse in the NE corner; parkland trees (as per those in the SE corner of the area) through the meadow and a viewing point (seating / interpretation) by the lake.

Additional Landscape & Biodiversity Enhancements

In addition to green spaces above, which would all include some level of public access, a number of landscape and biodiversity enhancements are proposed:

25. Plant small copse of trees in the uncultivated southern corner of the field between Donkey Lane and the A60.
26. Plant small copse of trees in the uncultivated corner of the field east of Donkey Lane and south of the Remise.
27. Extend and link tree-belt alongside Restricted Byway 5, west of Holbeck as landscape and habitat corridor.
28. Extend and link tree-belt along field boundary north from Infield Lane, Norton, as landscape and habitat corridor.
29. To replicate a significant local landscape feature, extend the planted avenue of Lime trees along the Limetree Avenue road, east of Norton.
30. To replicate a significant local landscape feature, plant an avenue of Lime trees along the track heading NNE from northern end of Norton to Bunkers Hill Plantation.
31. The field behind New Cottages north of Cresswell Road has significant earthworks, and as such is an important local heritage site. Retain the grassland management of the site and consider the provision of interpretation and public access.

Access Routes

The Neighbourhood Plan area has a range of public access routes including, Public Footpaths, Public Bridleways, Byways and a Permissive Path. These Public Rights of Way are supplemented in places by roadside pavements and informal/ unauthorised paths. Although valued, the network could be significantly enhanced by:

- Upgrading the status of some existing routes to cater for cycling (and possibly horse riding), as well as walkers
- Creating new access routes to fill gaps in the network and facilitate the creation of circular routes

The following routes, detailed on Fig 2, identify the main proposals to enhance the public access network within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Fig 3 identifies the various circular routes that could be created through these enhancements. These routes seek to link particularly attractive features and popular sites, such as views from high points, Cresswell Crag etc.) to provide excellent recreational opportunities.

Route A: Milnthorpe Lodge – Welbeck Village (The Winnings) via Deer Park Drive.

This 3.2km route utilises existing estate roads and as such provides an excellent walking and cycling option. Much of this route (from the western end of Bunker's Hill Plantation to just south of The Winnings) is already a Public Footpath and carries the Robin Hood Way. It is proposed that the eastern section of this route is also dedicated as a Public Right of Way, with the whole route being upgraded to Public Bridleway, or Cycleway status.



A section of the Deer Park Drive

Route B: Lady Margaret Crescent

This 450m estate road is currently available to walkers, but has the potential to provide a valuable link for cyclists also. It is proposed that this route is upgraded to Public Bridleway, or Cycleway status.

Route C: Welbeck Village

To maximise the benefits of proposal A (and B); a north-south walking and cycling route through Welbeck Village is desired, to link with the section of the Robin Hood Way which passes east-west to the north.

Various options are available; and the Welbeck Estate is invited to propose a route which is acceptable to them.

Together, routes, A, B and C form a strategic north-south link within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Being to the east of the A60, the entire link is off-road, providing a safe, attractive and enjoyable new route.

Route D: Within tree avenue to west of A60 and north of Holbeck Millennium Garden

The northern 530m of this route utilises an avenue of tree planted parallel to the A60. Currently having no public access, the proposal to create a shared, off-road walking / cycling route to link with the roadside pavement further north, will provide a safe and attractive link to the Dukeries Garden Centre and associated facilities.

The southern 130m of this route passes across land between the A60 and Woodhouse Hall, linking to the quiet lanes around the Millennium Garden and the Robin Hood Way crossing of the A60.

It is proposed that a new Public Bridleway or Cycleway is created along the combined 660m of this section.



Avenue of trees parallel to the A60 north of Holbeck

Route E: Holbeck – Holbeck Woodhouse via St Winifred’s Church

This 510m estate road provides an attractive setting for visitors to the local countryside. Currently a Public Footpath linking Holbeck to Holbeck Woodhouse via St Winifred’s Church, permitting use by cyclists will provide an additional, safer route, enhancing the local access network. It is proposed that this route is upgraded to Public Bridleway, or Cycleway status.



Tree-line lane past St Winifred’s Church

Route F: A60 – Elma Lane

The northern 275m of this route follows the inside field boundary to the south west of the A60.

The southern 400m of this route follows a hedge-line (could be either western or eastern side) south from the A60 to Elma Lane.
It is proposed that a new Public Bridleway or Cycleway is created along the combined 675m of this section.



Northern side of hedge line linking the A60 to Elma Lane

Route G: Elma Lane – Buskeyfield Lane

A 480m track joins Elma Lane and Buskeyfield Lane. Lined by hedges on either side, this track would make a very safe and enjoyable walking and cycling route. It is proposed that a new Public Bridleway or Cycleway is created along this track.



Track linking Elma Lane and Buskeyfield Lane

Route H: Cuckney Dam Meadow

Cuckney Dam Meadow is an important habitat and wildlife corridor to the west of Cuckney. A Permissive Path (under the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme) follows the river bank and continues westwards towards Langwith. It is proposed that the Permissive Path within the meadow is extended to form a 1.9km circular route, enabling visitors to have an enhance opportunity to discover and enjoy this valuable wildlife area.



Cuckney Dam Meadow, looking west

Route I: Riverside, from Riverside Close – A60

See Site 11. The river between Riverside Close and the A60 currently has no public access. However, people of all ages enjoy views of, and access alongside, water and it is proposed that a 390m pedestrian access path is created along the northern bank of the River Poulter. It is acknowledged that the low-lying nature of the land may mean that the path is occasionally flooded. Options to secure a route along the riverbank from near the entrance to Riverside Gardens should be explored; although an alternative route around the north and eastern sides of the residential area may be required.



View west from A60

Route J: Riverside, from A60 – Norton Lane

There is currently no public access alongside the river immediately east of the A60, however, further east lies Fieldings Bank, with an existing Public Footpath leading north towards Norton. Linking the A60 to Fieldings Bank, through the provision of a 480m Public Footpath would help to create an accessible riverside corridor through the village. Ideally, access would be provided along the northern side of the River Poulter throughout this section; however, should this not be possible, the western part could follow the southern bank for approx...75m with a footbridge installed to carry the route onto the northern bank.



View west from Norton lane towards A60

Route K: Riverside, from Norton Lane – Old Mill Lane

See Site 23. Subject to the land south of the River Poulter at this location being developed for housing, an accessible corridor should be provided. This corridor would buffer the existing properties and the river against the new development; and a 230m path would enable the continuation of the accessible riverside corridor through the village.

Route L: Woodland edge route from A60 – High Hatfield/ A616

The southern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area is dominated by the east-west wooded ridge. Informal access along the northern edge of the trees is currently permitted (unofficially). It is proposed that this unofficial pedestrian access is formalised with the designation of a 1.2km Public Footpath. It is proposed that at the eastern end, this Public Footpath would link with a new Public Bridleway, or Cycleway, linking a route within the woodland to the A616 at High Hatfield.



Southern edge of woodland, viewed from the A616

Route M: Woodland route from A60 – High Hatfield/ A616

Informal access also occurs within the woodland along the ridge. It is proposed that the central ride – ‘Tank Tracks’ – eastwards from the A60 is designated as a 1.9km Public Bridleway, or Cycleway, with a spur northwards at the eastern end to link with the A616 at High Hatfield.

Route N: High Hatfield/ A616 – Limetree Avenue

To enable the provision of a circular, off-road, cycle route, a link between the A616 at High Hatfield and Limetree Avenue to the east of Norton is required. It is proposed that this 1km link is created by using the lanes which lead to and from Low Hatfield Grange. Currently this route leads between the buildings at Low Hatfield Grange. To minimise disturbance it is proposed that a new route, following the field edge boundary to the south and west of the buildings is provided.



Lane leading to Low Hatfield Grange from Limetree Avenue

Pavements

Throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area there are many roadside pavements. The majority of these pavements have been neglected over the years, with the apparent available width being greatly reduced from the original built-with due the hedge and grass encroachment.

It is proposed that local consultation is undertaken to ascertain levels of use/ desired levels of use and seek to restore the most wanted routes to their full width. Additionally, there may be scope to widen some pavements to permit shared pedestrian / cycle use. This option should be explored for the pavement on the west side of the A60 between Cuckney and Buskeyfield Lane; and further north if the proposed new routes G and F are not able to be created.



Narrow, overgrown pavement

DRAFT

Biodiversity

The Neighbourhood Plan area is of significant biodiversity value with a strong mosaic of habitats (woodland, grazed pasture, lakes and wetlands). The majority of designated sites have no public access but by virtue of their habitats and wildlife and their contribution to the local landscape are key components of the GI network.

It is proposed that a study of locally important biodiversity sites is undertaken to identify how these sites could be buffered, extended and linked to make an even greater contribution to the GI network. Such a study should use this report and its GI network maps to identify opportunities.

12 sites within the area are identified as Local Wildlife Sites. This designation, although giving no legal protection, identifies the sites as especially important to local wildlife. These sites are

Bismarck Plantation LWS - A mixed plantation with a noteworthy flora and a valuable faunal habitat

The Old Hag, Holbeck LWS - A deciduous woodland with a noteworthy flora

Cuckney Dam LWS - A large shallow pond with noteworthy reed swamp and open marginal aquatic communities; incorporating Cuckney Wet Grassland LWS

Elkesley Hill Colliery Village, Welbeck LWS- A small hill with noteworthy mosaic of scrub and acidic grassland communities

Tile Kiln Wood, Welbeck LWS - A deciduous woodland with a notable flora and species rich road side verge

Creswell Crags LWS - A site with good habitat diversity and valuable flora and fauna; also incorporating Church Hole Grassland LWS,

Church Drive, Holbeck LWS - (no further info available)

Elma Lane Grassland LWS – (no further info available)

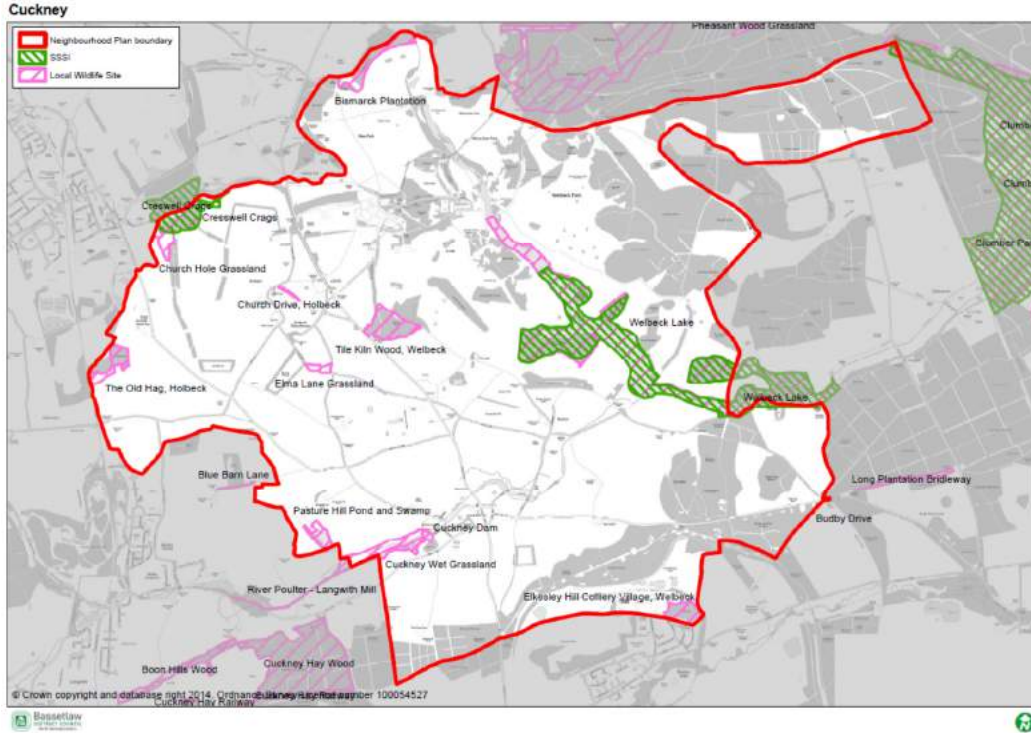
Pasture hill Pond and Swamp - (no further info available)

Two Local Wildlife Sites, Creswell Crags and Welbeck Lake, are also designated as SSSI's. A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a conservation designation denoting a protected area in the United Kingdom. Sites are designated for their biodiversity and / or geological value and are considered to be the best, or only examples of their type of feature.

Creswell Crags is a site of national and international importance for Quaternary studies. Creswell Crags is one of the three richest sites in Britain for fossil mammals. A site with good habitat diversity and valuable flora and fauna; also incorporating Church Hole Grassland LWS,

Welbeck Lake comprises a complex of habitats centred on the Great Lake and Carburton Dams, Welbeck and is notable for its breeding bird community, which includes a heronry, and for its wintering wildfowl.

Map showing designated biodiversity sites.

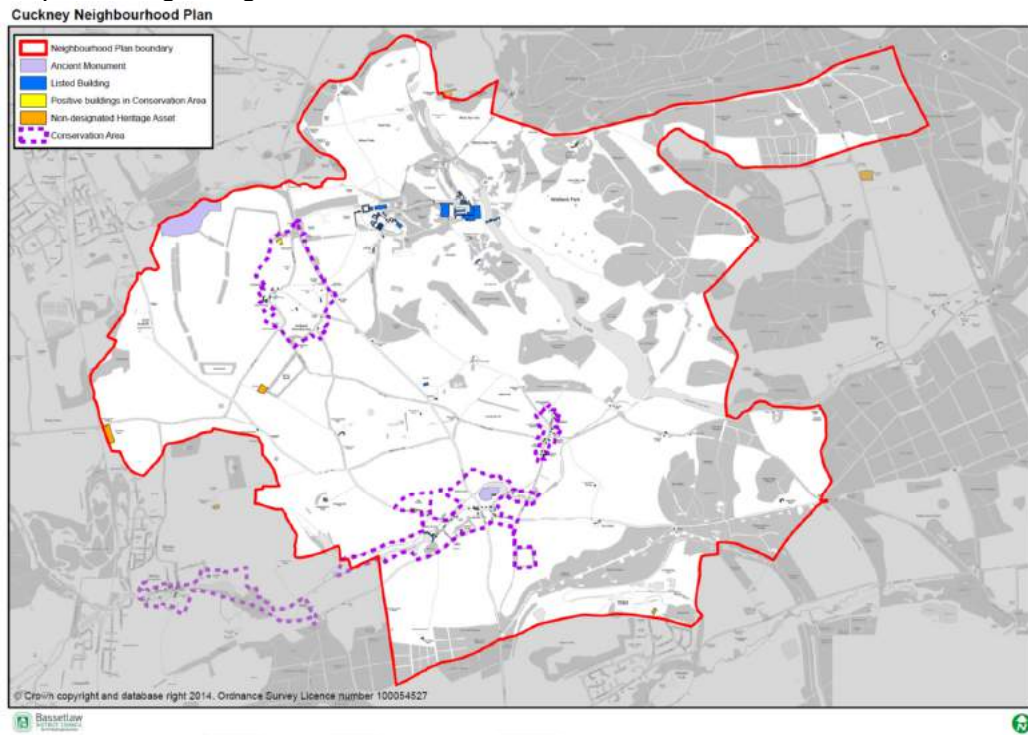


In addition to the above designated sites, Welbeck Park and other woodlands in the wider Neighbourhood Plan area make a significant contribution to the biodiversity value of the locality.

Heritage

The historic Welbeck Estate covers a significant part of the Neighbourhood Plan area, and with the internationally important Cresswell Crag, the area is rich in heritage. The proposed GI network seeks to increase access to and interpretation of such heritage, while retaining privacy and protection where required.

Map showing designated historic environment features and areas.



Conclusion

This report demonstrates that the Cuckney, Holbeck, Norton & Welbeck Neighbourhood Plan area has good existing Green Infrastructure assets. Through the proposed enhancement of existing and creation of new assets, a valuable and coherent GI network can be created. This GI network will help to make the area an even better place to live in as well as enhancing and protecting the wider landscape for wildlife and heritage.

New and enhanced access routes, wherever possible, should be designated as permanent Public Rights of Way.

Further biodiversity and heritage studies are required to add detail to the outline proposals in this report.

Green spaces which are proposed for designation as Local Green Spaces through the Neighbourhood Plan process are:

In Cuckney

- Mill Hill
- Cuckney Community Garden
- Cuckney Dam and Dam Meadow
- Remise on Sandy lane
- Church Meadow and Fieldings Bank
- Land to north of River Poulter between Riverside Close and A60
- Old Mill Lane – Norton Lane

In Holbeck

- Millennium Garden
- Little Remise and Hill Top Remise

In Norton

- The Lady Margaret Crescent Lawn