



PRCC.25 15/16

Prosperous Communities
Committee

29 October 2015

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Subject: Central Local Plan – 2nd Draft – Process of Engagement

Report by:

Chief Operating Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

This report outlines how members and communities are being engaged in the consultation process on the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2nd Draft) which started on 15 October 2015.

It will describe the process undertaken so far and how this council has responded. It will outline the next steps in the process towards the adoption of the local plan.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) That members consider the contents of the local plan and make their views known (in writing) to the chairman of the committee by the end of businesses on 3 November 2015 to allow them to be incorporated in the report to the Council on 16 November 2015.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None arising from this report

Financial : FIN/ 81/ 16 None

Staffing : None arising from this report

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: None arising from this report.

Risk Assessment : None arising from this report

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None arising from this report

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- 1.Report to the Council - "Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Consultation – Council Response" 10th November 2014
2. Preliminary Draft of the Local Plan – October 2014
3. Second draft of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan – published October 2014

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes X No

Key Decision:

Yes X No

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Since 2009 the council's local planning function has been delivered by a separate local planning authority known as the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (CLJSPC), supported by a team of officers known as the Joint Planning Unit (JPU). This CLJSPC is made up of members from the four contributing councils, including three members (plus one reserve) from West Lindsey. The committee's role is to oversee the production of the local plan through to adoption. That means the approval and adoption of the local plan lies with the CLJSPC.
- 1.2 Having said this it is a statutory duty for this council to have full and effective local plan coverage for its area. The government is committed to ensuring that there is full local plan coverage across the country and, through the Housing and Planning Bill, is proposing to take powers to enable it to intervene to where local planning authorities are not progressing their duties with regard to local planning. The joint arrangements the council has entered into will be sufficient, once the plan is adopted, to ensure that it complies with this duty.
- 1.3 The role of this council is to consider the plan at its various consultation stages and ensure that in spatial planning terms it assists the council in delivering its spatial objectives for the District, principally around the delivery of economic growth, housing growth, jobs growth and environmental protection.
- 1.4 The local plan will ensure that the economic growth, housing growth and jobs growth are delivered in a coordinated and planned way that makes the most of the opportunities available in the District and protects the areas that are environmentally sensitive.
- 1.5 The local plan is currently in its second draft stage the consultation period on this opened on 15 October 2015 and is due to end on 25 November 2015. This is the first full draft of the local plan and includes site allocations for the first time. The plan can be accessed via a link on the West Lindsey website or via central-lincs.org.uk.
- 1.6 This report will set out the current position with the local plan following the publication of the preliminary draft last year. It will set out the process around the current consultation and the next steps following the close of this consultation. It will also outline at a high level what the local plan is seeking to achieve and how this aligns with this councils ambitions for the District.
- 1.7 Finally the report contains a summary of the responses which have already been received from members at the workshops held in September 2015.

2.0 Process and Timetable

- 2.1 Councillors considered the preliminary draft of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan at a meeting of the full council on 10th November 2014.
- 2.2 At that stage the local plan contained the broad strategy to be adopted, including a settlement hierarchy and policies. It did not contain any specific site allocations, apart from the identification of the sustainable urban extensions around Gainsborough, Lincoln and Sleaford.
- 2.3 Following that council meeting a wide range of comments on the plan which were derived from: discussions with councillors on 30th October 2014; notes from a public meeting which took place at the Epic Centre on 22nd October 2014 and comments received from councillors at workshops held in the early autumn of 2014 were submitted to the CLJSPC.
- 2.4 Since the close of the consultation period on the preliminary draft the CLJSPC and the JPU have been working on the 2nd Draft of the Local Plan to take account of the comments received and develop proposals for specific site allocations.
- 2.5 This 2nd Draft represents the first full draft of the local plan to be published. It builds on the preliminary draft by finalising the housing numbers to be delivered in the period, makes housing and employment land allocations and deals with issues such as the allocation of land for gypsy and traveller sites.
- 2.6 This version of the plan has been considered at workshops with members and is currently going through a round of public consultation which started on 6 October in Gainsborough, continued on 8 October in Market Rasen, 13 October in Caistor and will end on 6 November in Cherry Willingham. The formal consultation period for the receipt of consultation replies started on 15 October and will finish on 25 November 2015.
- 2.7 In terms of the involvement of this council Prosperous Communities Committee are asked to agree the following process;
 - Members consider the second draft of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan during the consultation period which open on 15 October 2015 (including their inputs into the workshops which took place in September 2015, these are set out in summary form in paragraph 4.0). This consideration should also include members liaising with their communities on the policies and proposals set out in the 2nd draft of the Local Plan.
 - Make their views known to the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee by 3rd November 2015.

- These views will then shape the report to council on 16 November 2015 which will be used as the basis for the council's response on the Local Plan to the CLJSPC.

3.0 Next Steps

3.1 Following the close of this consultation the responses received will be analysed and the plan altered where necessary to take account of the comments received.

3.2 The key dates for 2016 are set out below:

- Submission draft of the Local Plan consultation – March/April 2016
- Submission to the Secretary of State – May 2016
- Examination of the Local Plan - May/November 2016
- Inspector's Report – November 2016
- Adoption of the Plan – December 2016

3.3 Whilst there will be a third consultation period in March/April 2016 there will very little opportunity to alter the plan at that stage. This version of the plan together with all the comments received will be submitted to the Secretary of State to hold an independent examination into the "soundness" of its policies and proposals.

4.0 Scope of the Council's Comments

4.1 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan is a strategic document which will help the council realise its objectives around economic growth, housing growth, employment growth and achieving and maintaining a quality local environment set out in its corporate plan.

4.2 When members consider the local plan and its policies and proposals it is recommended that they approach the plan from the perspective of whether it helps or hinders this council's ambitions for the District.

4.3 As referred to earlier workshops have already been held with councillors in September 2015 to go through some of the issues set out within the plan. At these workshops members considered whether the plan met the council's strategic objectives. A summary of the comments received at those workshops is set out below. Members might like to refer to these in any further comments they make.

4.4 Proposed levels of growth

Members supported the proposed levels of growth for central Lincolnshire and the distribution of this growth around the area. It is

appropriate that this is evidence led and that the potential for strong economic growth is not inhibited by low housing land supply.

- 4.5 Growth in the West Lindsey part of the Lincoln fringe is proposed at an appropriate and manageable level, predominantly determined by either existing permissions or sites currently being promoted in emerging Neighbourhood Plans. The right for communities to determine for themselves, by way of neighbourhood planning, whether these settlements should allocate additional housing or employment land represents a new way of working, and was fully supported.

4.6 Supporting Prosperity and Job creation

Policy LP5 Delivery of Prosperity and Jobs was strongly supported and aligned to delivering the councils growth ambitions. The council will continue to make full use of every available resource to ensure that the ambitious level of economic growth contained in the plan is delivered. Members welcomed the inclusion of policy support for economic growth in rural areas and the flexibility to ensure that growth can be supported for appropriate rural employment. As a predominantly rural district this flexibility is essential and it is recognised that housing growth alone will not sustain the vitality of settlements in rural areas.

4.7 Supporting the regeneration of Gainsborough

- 4.8 The proposed level of growth identified for Gainsborough in the draft local plan is very positive and will support the regeneration priorities for the town. The urban extensions identified are an essential component of the council's growth agenda and will provide developers and investors with the confidence that the town is 'open for business' and has suitable allocated sites that can deliver growth.

4.9 Rural development

- 4.10 Delivery of rural affordable housing is a key priority and it is vital that appropriate levels of both housing and economic growth can be supported in the district's smaller rural settlements. The draft local plan allows for appropriate levels of growth in small villages (in contrast to the 2006 West Lindsey Local Plan), and this is fully supported. The council will continue to provide a high level of support to local communities that develop neighbourhood plans, to ensure that appropriate development in rural locations is encouraged and delivered with local support.
- 4.11 Equally, members are clear that high grade agricultural land must be protected and welcome the control that new policies offer (LP55) in resisting future developments on such land.

4.12 Infrastructure requirements

4.13 Members have identified a number of sites where, from the benefit of local knowledge, the proposed residential allocations are likely to add further demand to already stretched local infrastructure – including schools, medical care and highways.

4.14 Members recognise the importance of producing the Local Plan in partnership with the County Council and are reassured that infrastructure needs and provision has been assessed as part of the land allocation process and in setting appropriate levels of growth. WLDC strongly supports this partnership working and need for the continued high level of involvement through both the local plan process, and also in assessing planning applications as sites come forward for delivery.

4.15 Renewable Energy

Members welcomed the inclusion of the new policy relating to Standalone Renewable Energy (LP19) and support the need for any proposals for such development to gain strong community backing. It is important that the council can make its own decisions on renewable energy developments, in partnership with local communities, and the proposed policy will facilitate this.

4.16 Gypsy and Traveller site provision

Members understand and support the need to identify suitable new sites to meet the evidenced need, as set out in the adopted Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2013). However it was noted that at present very few sites are available and Members raised concerns that this would inhibit the opportunity to offer a choice of sites. For the sites identified in the draft plan (LP56) Members have requested that the relevant planning history is considered fully for each proposed site to ensure that where any issues have been identified previously, such as highways or drainage concerns, that these are fully explored with the relevant authority. Members also note that currently there are no proposed new sites identified for the whole of North Kesteven and request that the Joint Planning Team continue to work with NKDC to identify suitable sites that will ensure delivery of sites is consistent across Central Lincolnshire. As far as possible the Local Plan should seek to ensure that delivery and distribution of land for new pitches is aligned to the recommendations set out in the GTAA, as far as practicable.

4.17 Development in Scotter.

4.18 It is recognised that the Preliminary Draft did not propose growth for Scotter but that the most recent evidence reflects both a strong demand for growth in the village and the suitability of the village, on sustainability grounds, for accommodating an appropriate level of new development there in the future.

- 4.19 Members discussed the potential for the village to be subjected to speculative and unplanned development if allocations are not identified and agreed that this is likely. A further consideration is that not allocating sites could present inconsistencies and unsoundness of the plan. Growth in Scotter should therefore be planned for consistency with that proposed in comparable settlements elsewhere in West Lindsey and the rest of central Lincolnshire.
- 4.20 It was also noted that currently there is not a neighbourhood plan for Scotter offering an alternative growth scenario or to inform the location of preferred sites. The proposed allocations will enable control over the location of new development, supporting the ability to resist speculative additional growth in less suitable parts of the village. Any subsequent neighbourhood plan would be able to control the phasing of new housing, and also the design and layout of the allocated sites.