



Council

16 November 2015

**Subject: Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Further Draft – Consultation Response**

Report by:

Chief Operating Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

This report will make recommendations on the strategic response West Lindsey District Council should make to the “Further Draft” of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

In accordance with the approach agreed at Prosperous Communities Committee and in accordance with the request by the Chief Operating Officer set out in a letter dated 14 October 2015 asking for comments on this draft of the local plan by 3 November 2015 this report will contain the strategic response of this council. Detailed and individual responses by individual members should be sent directly to the Local Plans Team. Any detailed responses received by the Chair of Prosperous Communities Committee by the 3 November are included in a schedule of responses attached as an appendix to this report.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1) That the council recognises that the Further Draft of the Local Plan is a progressive document that supports development in the District and will help in ensuring that the necessary development takes place in the right places.
- 2) That the Council welcomes the publication of the “Further Draft” of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan in that it:
  - a. Provides a statutory spatial planning framework for the regeneration, growth and development of Gainsborough in accordance with the corporate aspirations this Council has for the town.

- b. It assists with the use of major infrastructure assets present in the District (such as the A15) to further jobs growth and economic prosperity within the District
  - c. It enables the growth and development of our market towns
  - d. It gives (through the provision of a five year housing land supply) appropriate protection to those areas within the District where further housing growth would damage the identity of communities and put a further strain on existing infrastructure
  - e. It gives support to communities who desire to see their areas grow by providing a framework within which Neighbourhood Plans can be prepared.
  - f. It enables some of the smallest settlements in the District to grow at a scale appropriate to their needs.
- 3) That the within the schedule of detailed or individual changes put forward by members, set out in appendix, those supported be forwarded to the Local Plans Team for consideration.

**IMPLICATIONS**

**Legal:** None arising from this report

**Financial :**FIN/89/16

**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" 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014

- 2. Preliminary Draft of the Local Plan – October 2014
- 3. [Further Draft of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan](#) – published October 2015
- 4. Letter to members setting out the consultation arrangements from the Chief Operating Officer dated 14 October 2015
- 5. [Report to the Prosperous Communities Committee – 29 October 2015](#)

**Call in and Urgency:**

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

Yes  No

**Key Decision:**

Yes  No

**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Since 2009 the council’s statutory local planning function has been delivered by a separate local planning authority (established by parliamentary order) 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 where local planning authorities are not progressing their duties with regard to local planning in their area. 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 strategic spatial objectives for the District, principally around the delivery of economic growth, housing growth, jobs growth and environmental protection.
- 1.4 The local plan is a strategic document that will ensure 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 “further draft” stage. The consultation period on the “Further Draft” 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](http://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. It will also summarise the responses that have been received from members in accordance with the process agreed at the Prosperous Communities Committee. Finally in will make recommendations on the strategic response the council should make to this draft of the local plan.

## **2.0 Current Position**

- 2.1 Councillors considered the preliminary draft of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan at a meeting of the full council on 10<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> October 2014; notes from a public meeting which took place at the Epic Centre on 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 Further Draft of the Local Plan to take account of the comments received and develop proposals for specific site allocations. This has included analysing the evidence, commissioning the gathering of new evidence where gaps existed and following the appropriate governance process through the CLJSPC.
- 2.5 This Further 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. Its drafting has also taken account of the

comments made by this council on the Preliminary Draft published in the autumn of 2014.

- 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 ended 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.

### **3.0 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan – Further Draft - What is it Seeking to Achieve?**

- 3.1 At a high level the plan is seeking to achieve a spatial planning framework within which central Lincolnshire can grow sustainably over the next twenty years.

- 3.2 Within that high level objectives the plan sets itself the following specific objectives:

- a. Housing – To ensure that the housing stock meets the needs of the central Lincolnshire area.
- b. Employment – To create and improve access to high quality employment and training opportunities for everyone within the central Lincolnshire area.
- c. Local Economy – To encourage and support a competitive, diverse and stable economy and to protect and enhance central Lincolnshire’s hierarchy of centres to meet the needs of residents and visitors.
- d. Transport and Accessibility – To make efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure, reduce the need to travel by car, improve accessibility to jobs and services for all and to ensure that all journeys are undertaken by the most sustainable travel modes (particularly public transport, walking and cycling).
- e. Health – To reduce health inequalities, promote healthy lifestyles and maximise health and wellbeing.
- f. Social Equality and Community – To stimulate regeneration that maximises benefits for the most deprived areas and communities of central Lincolnshire. To ensure equitable outcomes for all, particularly those at risk of experiencing discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.
- g. Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure – To conserve and enhance biodiversity across central Lincolnshire and provide opportunities for people to access and appreciate wildlife and the natural environment. To create and improve high quality green and blue

spaces that are multifunctional (including opportunities for sport, recreation and play), accessible to all and which form part of and are connected to the green infrastructure network.

- h. Landscape and Townscape – To protect and enhance the rich diversity of the character and appearance of central Lincolnshire’s landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- i. Built and Historic Environment – To protect and enhance the significance of the buildings , sites and features of archaeological, historic or architectural and artistic interest and their settings, and ensure new buildings, spaces and places are designed to a high quality.
- j. Natural Resources – Water – To protect and enhance water resources and their quality in central Lincolnshire.
- k. Pollution – To minimise pollution (air, noise and light) and improve air quality.
- l. Natural Resources – Land Use and Soils – To protect and enhance soil and land resources and quality in central Lincolnshire.
- m. Waste – To minimise the amount of waste generated across all sectors and increase the re-use, recycling and recovery rates of waste materials.
- n. Climate Change Effects and Energy – To minimise the effects or climate change by developing the area’s renewable energy resources, reducing the dependency on fossil fuels, minimise energy usage, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the area.
- o. Climate Change and Adaption and Flood Risk – To ensure central Lincolnshire adapts to the effects of climate change, both now and in the future through careful planning and design of development, including reducing and managing the risk of flooding from all sources.

***[Further Draft – Central Lincolnshire Local Plan – “Our Objectives” pages 7/8]***

#### **4.0 Alignment with the Ambitions of the Council**

- 4.1 The current West Lindsey corporate plan is centred upon a number of themes – a prosperous and enterprising district; accessible and connected district; a green district where people want to live, work and visit.
- 4.2 Below these themes are a list of priorities around:

- Assets management, creation and disposal
- Job creation, NEETs and apprenticeships
- Open for business
- Broadband
- E-accessibility
- Mobile connectivity
- Green premier energy solutions
- Drive down waste and support rural initiatives
- Community action and volunteering
- Promote wellbeing and healthy communities
- Address the wider determinants of health.

4.3 It is true to say that strategically and spatially the objectives of the local plan fully support the delivery of the council's corporate plan themes and objectives.

4.4 At a more detailed level the council has ambitions to support the growth and regeneration of Gainsborough, the growth and development of its market towns, to exploit the potential of the A15 corridor through the district to drive economic growth and development, support the communities of the district to help them deliver the type and scale of development they need and to ensure that development takes place in the right locations without straining local infrastructure to breaking point.

4.5 The Further Draft of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan will support the council in achieving its strategic and spatial ambitions in these areas.

#### **5.0 Specific Comments from Members – From the Workshops in September 2015**

5.1 At the workshops held in September members supported the proposed levels of growth and the distribution of that growth as set out in the Further Draft of the Local Plan. Members recognised that the level of growth proposed was supported by evidence and that low levels of housing growth would inhibit long term economic growth in the area.

5.2 Members also recognised that growth in the West Lindsey part of the Lincoln fringe is proposed at an appropriate and manageable level in the Further Draft, 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.

5.3 Members strongly supported Policy LP5 Delivery of Prosperity and Jobs which is seen as being 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 also 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.

- 5.4 Members considered that 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.
- 5.5 Members see the 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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 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.

- 5.10 Members appreciated 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.
- 5.11 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.
- 5.12 Members 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.

## **6.0 Comments from Members Received By the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee by 3 November 2015.**

- 6.1 A schedule of specific comments given by members to the chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee is set out at appendix 1 with appropriate comments.
- 6.2 However members consider generally that the plan is progressive and supports development in the District and should lead to development in the right place.
- 6.3 General concerns of members included:
- The need for car parking standards to ensure that cars could be accommodated off road in all new developments.
  - Review of the proposed traveller site allocations at North Greetwell and Marton
  - Support for the provision of footpaths and cycle paths in Gainsborough especially to integrate the new Sustainable Urban

Extensions into the town and the surrounding countryside – this should be incorporated in policies LP38 and LP39

- LP40 should be amended to emphasise its role in bringing about an enhanced public footpath and cycle path network in the town.
- LP20 should have a reference to the creation of footpaths and cycle as part of developing the green infrastructure offer.
- LP18 – “Climate Change and Low Carbon Living” the energy production section needs to be changed to so the word “could” becomes the word “should”.

## 7.0 Next Steps

7.1 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.

7.2 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

7.3 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.

## 8.0 Conclusion

8.1 It is a statutory requirement for councils to have a local plan for their area. The government is increasing its pressure on all councils to have up to date local plan coverage for its area.

8.2 The Housing and Planning Bill which is currently going through its parliamentary procedures makes provision for the Secretary of State to intervene where councils are not making sufficient progress towards achieving local plan provision.

8.3 Following the abandonment of the Core Strategy in 2013 rapid progress has been made to get the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan to the “Further Draft” stage. To give this some context this has been done in half the time that would normally be expected. Whilst there was an evidence base available in 2013 so the team was not starting from

scratch, much of the evidence base for the plan has had to be to refreshed in the last eighteen months.

- 8.4 The local plan process has also been subject to an audit during this period and has received full assurance.
- 8.5 Whilst progress to date has been good there is no room for complacency or unnecessary delay. I would therefore urge members to concentrate on the strategic elements of the plan (which firmly support the corporate position of the council) and not get caught up in the detail. Should members have detailed comments on the plan I would recommend that they make them directly to the Local Plans Team during the statutory consultation period.

**Comments from Members Received by the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee by 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015 and responses.**

| <b>Comment</b>   | <b>Response</b>  | <b>Support comment to JPU?</b> |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Support the aspiration, but concerned that it is not a “business plan” and could still be rejected by an inspector   | The plan has been prepared in accordance with current regulations (including a full assurance audit).  | No                             |
| Growth rate and the ambition to build 17,000 affordable houses is over optimistic  | The plan is based upon objective evidence of housing need and housing growth over the period of the plan. It is therefore realistic and has a reasonable chance of being delivered within the plan period. | No                             |
| Sports fields and recreational facilities need to be planned before new housing is built.  | The policies in the plans support this stance.   | No                             |
| Better road links need to be built now   | The need for new roads and other infrastructure has been assessed and will be provided in parallel with the development specified in the plan. The economics of development will not allow this to happen  | No                             |
| Encouraging health and wellbeing can be brought about by the provision of public open space.   | This is the approach set out in the policies of the Plan, especially at LP26 and appendix C  | No                             |
| Tourism – the plan fails to say how tourism will be expanded   | Policy LP27 sets out the criteria upon which new tourist facilities will be assessed.  | No                             |
| The proposed site at Greetwell seems at odds with the criteria set out in the local plan. The best solution is to expand existing sites                          | The sites accord with the criteria set out in policy LP56  | No                             |
| Supports green wedges  | Noted  | No                             |
| Supports expanding the university and the showground, however the residents of Riseholme need protection   | Noted  | No                             |
| Opposes the provision of a traveller site at Marton they are in flood zone.  | Noted  | Pass comments on to the JPU    |
| Welcomes the expansion of Hemswell Cliff, but this should be on the north side of the A631 not the south as this would be more convenient for village facilities | Noted  | Pass comments to JPU           |
| Page 50 – Renewable Energy. This section needs re visiting. The saved policies in the WLDC local plan need to be carried over and there is a                     | The section and policy reflects the latest advice on how to deal with these policies issues in local plans.  | No                             |

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| need to spell out the various forms of renewable energy.<br><br>The policy is silent on the growing challenge to our landscape  | Paragraph 5.2 and Policy LP17 seek to protect the landscape  |     |
| Given the configuration of the boundary between Middle and Market Rasen CIL generated in Middle Rasen should be split between the two communities as the services for increased growth in Middle Rasen will have to be provided in Market Rasen | Noted  | Yes |
| Concern about no development in Linwood   | The new policy should allow development in even the smallest settlements – include Linwood in the list of small settlements                        | Yes |
| Villages within 5km of Market Rasen should also be allowed 10% growth along with Gainsborough, Sleaford and Lincoln   | This changed would result in inappropriate levels of growth in very small settlements. Linwood should be added to the list of “small” settlements. | Yes |
| The Gallamore Lane employment site in Market Rasen/Middle Rasen should be expanded beyond what is shown on the proposals map for Market Rasen.  | Agree  | Yes |
| Detail in the chapter on renewable energy is lacking – policy is acceptable   | Complies with Government advice  | No  |
| LP55 needs amending to allow for single dwellings in small settlements  | No – Linwood needs adding to the list of small settlement given in LP2   | No. |
| The Green Wedge which prevents the coalescence of Welton and Dunholme should be extended at each end so that it meets the A46   | Agree  | Yes |
| The allocations in Keelby shown as CL1307 should be expanded to include the wedge shaped field to its east as this is part of a planning permission for 90 homes  | Agree  | Yes |
| The potential to provide a western relief road around Caistor should be protected within the plan   | Agree  | Yes |
| In Caistor all the sports grounds should be designated as important open space  | Agree  | Yes |
| The allotments in Keelby should be shown as important open space  | Agree  | yes |