



**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Subject: West Lindsey draft Housing Strategy 2017 - 2022**

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

To introduce the draft West Lindsey Housing  
Strategy 2017 – 2022 and associated  
Implementation Plan to members and seek  
approval to begin formal consultation.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That members give approval to begin formal consultation on the draft West  
Lindsey Housing Strategy 2017-2022 and associated Implementation Plan

**IMPLICATIONS**

**Legal: There is no statutory requirement for authorities to have a Housing Strategy therefore no legal implications**

**Financial : Fin/GCLT/18/18**  
**None**

**Staffing : The consultation process will be undertaken in house within existing staff resource therefore no staffing implication**

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**  
**Mechanisms will be in place to ensure fair and equal access to consultation**

**Risk Assessment : N/a**

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : n/a**

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**  
*Wherever possible please provide a hyperlink to the background paper/s  
If a document is confidential and not for public viewing it should not be listed.*

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

*i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)*

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

*A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications*

**Yes**

**No**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 West Lindsey District Council has a key role to play in supporting the provision of good quality housing across all tenures to meet the needs of current and future residents which in turn underpins economic growth and the success of our communities. The West Lindsey Housing Strategy 2017-2022 therefore will provide the framework to support the council's ambitions and priorities for housing from 2017 – 2022 in order to achieve its vision where 'Everyone has access to good quality housing which meets their housing need and aspiration'. At the same time it will highlight the challenges facing us and opportunities available to us in order to achieve this.
- 1.2 There is no longer a statutory requirement for local authorities to have a housing strategy however in order to support the delivery of West Lindsey's aspirations with regard to housing and growth a contract to prepare a draft housing strategy was awarded to Arc4 following their production of a baseline evidence report on balancing the housing market in West Lindsey
- 1.3 The original commission was to draft a prospectus type strategy focussing primarily on growth. However after reviewing initial drafts it was felt this approach would not provide a framework which would deliver our corporate aspirations across the growth and housing agendas and the links to health and wellbeing thus demonstrating how appropriate sustainable housing impacts on all aspects of our communities and is more complex than just the built environment.
- 1.4 The uniqueness of West Lindsey and the challenges and opportunities specific to our district were not evident in initial drafts therefore officers across growth, housing and planning have worked together on the formation of a draft housing strategy (attached at appendix 1) based on existing evidence and combined knowledge which will enable the Council to set a clear strategic vision for housing to deliver growth to meet housing need and social wellbeing. It also demonstrates how our role as an enabling authority is critical to achieve our ambition for housing in an increasingly uncertain national economic, legislative and policy climate.

## **2. West Lindsey Housing Strategy**

2.1 The implementation of this strategy will support the following themes within the West Lindsey Corporate Plan;

- Open for Business
- People First
- Asset Management

- Central Lincs Local Plan
- Partnerships
- Excellent Value for Money Services

2.2 It will provide the key link between the West Lindsey Corporate Plan, the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012 – 2036 and a number of other key plans and strategies detailed on pages 3-7 of the draft strategy with the aim of achieving the aforementioned vision.

2.3 The vision will be delivered through 3 proposed themes allowing resource and work streams to be specifically targeted towards increasing housing supply across all tenures, ensuring existing stock is safe, desirable and promotes health and wellbeing and ensuring appropriate housing options and support for households in housing need to prevent homelessness whilst further promoting health and wellbeing and also choice and independence;

- Theme 1; Driving housing growth to meet housing need
- Theme 2; Improving homes and transforming places
- Theme 3; A partnership approach to support choice, wellbeing and independence

2.4 The intention is that the authority will take a lead role in developing an approach to housing across all tenures to ensure the delivery of integrated housing and housing related services, working in partnership with other public, private and third sector organisations to find innovative solutions to meet housing need.

2.5 In line with good practice it is proposed to consult with key stakeholders ie Registered Providers, housing developers, housing and other third sector groups, statutory organisations, elected members and officers to ensure the strategy is relevant, comprehensive and will facilitate future partnership working.

2.6 The associated draft Implementation Plan (attached at appendix 2) is a working draft identifying some of the actions we intend to take in order to meet our ambition. A number of the cells within the document are to be confirmed (TBC). This is a joint piece of work involving officers across housing, planning and growth who are in the process of populating the plan. Members will be presented with an updated Implementation Plan following the consultation period as further actions may be identified through the process.

- 2.7 The actions within the Implementation Plan will form the basis of the programme of work for the Housing Board enabling projects to come forward for delivery and progress through the council's existing governance structure providing us with the best possible chance of implementing change within current legislation and policy.
- 2.8 The draft Implementation plan will be further populated jointly by officers from Growth, Housing, Private Sector Housing and Planning in concurrently with amendments identified through the consultation process
- 2.9 Following the consultation a final draft strategy will be reported back to Prosperous Communities Committee for approval.

## **West Lindsey Housing Strategy (Draft) 2017 – 2022)**

### **Foreward by Cllr Bibb**

#### **Introduction**

Access to good quality housing is the foundation upon which people can build happy and successful lives. This housing strategy provides an overarching plan to guide the council and its partners in tackling the major housing challenges facing the district. It aims to promote three key themes which affect housing and identifies the outcomes that the council wishes to achieve, through the implementation plan.

We are clear that our role as an enabling authority is a critical one if we are to realise our ambition to increase housing supply, meet housing need and aspiration and transform our neighbourhoods and that to do so we will need to work with a range of partners across all tenures, balancing the needs and aspirations of all within legislation and policy. This strategy therefore aims to provide clear strategic vision and leadership in an increasingly uncertain national economic and policy climate. It has been developed with full knowledge of the significant challenges ahead and allows for an early review to meet the requirements of legislative changes. The Strategy contributes towards the council's corporate priorities for West Lindsey and is intrinsically linked to a number of other plans and strategies, not only of the council, but other key partners and stakeholders. At a time when the Authorities capacity to deliver services is reducing the importance of maximising the potential to shape the work of partners, and work collaboratively, to deliver not only the built environment but existing housing and housing related services, is at the heart of the West Lindsey Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022.

#### **West Lindsey - Who we are**

West Lindsey is the largest and one of the most rural districts within the County of Lincolnshire. West Lindsey includes villages to the north of the City of Lincoln, and covers an area of approximately 446 square miles. The administrative centre of the district (and largest town) is Gainsborough, with the district also home to the market towns of Caistor and Market Rasen.

- West Lindsey is home to some 98,812<sup>1</sup> residents and around 42,350<sup>2</sup> dwellings.
- West Lindsey has witnessed steady population growth since 2001 and over the next twenty years (to 2036) the population in West Lindsey is forecast to growth by a further 11,500 residents (or 6,500 households)<sup>3</sup>.
- Situated in the north west of the county West Lindsey is bordered by East Lindsey, City of Lincoln, North Kesteven, Newark and Sherwood, Bassetlaw, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire Councils
- The district is rural in nature transacted by a number of 'A' roads.

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<sup>1</sup> Mid 2015 estimate, ONS 2016

<sup>2</sup> 2016 Valuation Office Agency data

<sup>3</sup> Central Lincolnshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015

- The proportion of ethnic minority residents in West Lindsey was approximately 3.5% as of 2011. Amongst ethnic minorities, those classified as Other White, White Irish and Indian comprise the largest groups<sup>4</sup>.
- West Lindsey currently has an ageing population; between the 2001 and 2011 Census the median age increased by 3 years, and the 0-14 and 25-44 age groups fell in absolute terms  
Average household size is 2.3<sup>5</sup> people and in line with national trends household sizes have fallen over recent years.
- Increase of 15.1% dwellings in the district between 2001 and 2011<sup>6</sup>.

## **Our Vision**

Our vision for West Lindsey is one where “***Everyone has access to good quality housing which meets their housing need and aspiration***”.

This means that we want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access good quality housing upon and within which they can build happy, successful and prosperous lives. Our challenge however is principally one of how we can meet the differing requirements of all 129 communities within the district especially where their needs, strengths, assets and opportunities vary so much.

To achieve this vision we will require all housing partners and providers to work together across the district to deliver priorities within three key strategic themes:

- Driving housing growth to meet housing need
- Improving homes and transforming places
- A partnership approach to support choice, wellbeing and independence

These themes are the building blocks and form the section headings of this strategy; they will underpin not only all of the Council’s work on housing, but also the level of contribution we seek and need to secure from our partners to deliver our vision for the benefit of our communities.

## **Our Ambition**

Primarily led by the development of new housing West Lindsey is committed to housing growth and economic development. However we must ensure that the level and type of growth we are seeking is supported by appropriate infrastructure and meets the needs of our residents and businesses alike. We must also ensure that the benefits associated with growth and increased investment are accessed and enjoyed by all of our residents.

Our desire through growth is therefore to create safer, stronger, more resilient and prosperous communities.

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<sup>4</sup> Census 2011

<sup>5</sup> Central Lincolnshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015

<sup>6</sup> Census 2011

To achieve this ambition our housing strategy is embedded and aligns itself with a number of key locally adopted strategies and plans, most importantly the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012-2036 and West Lindsey District Council's own Corporate Plan 2016-2020.

### **Diagram to demonstrate links between strategies and plans to follow**

We recognise that the successful delivery of our ambition through our strategic themes will require partnership working across a number of areas within the council and through collaboration with a number of key partner organisations. It will involve not only delivering new housing that meets the housing needs of our residents but raising standards and making best use of existing housing stock and by doing so reduce health inequalities, promote healthy lifestyles and maximise health and wellbeing within the district.

It is important that we consider both challenges and opportunities moving forward in an ever changing local and national picture. These challenges and opportunities are varied and include the following;

- Need for additional new homes across all tenures
- The impact and implications of new legislation and regulation across planning, homelessness and the private sector
- Innovative affordable housing solutions to meet housing need
- Viability of development sites in some areas of the district
- Government emphasis on home ownership
- Increased demand on homelessness services
- Renewed emphasis on homelessness prevention
- Increased demand in the private rented sector to meet housing need
- Identifying new and innovative methods to finance housing development
- Removal of housing benefit support for 18 – 21 year olds
- Changes to the future funding of supported and sheltered housing
- A drive to integrate housing, health and social care
- Disproportionate challenges in areas of the district requiring a strategic 'place based' approach

### **National and local context**

Much of the way in which housing services are delivered is governed by legislation and national and local policies of which there are a number providing context to this housing strategy and the impact they have on our district including:

#### **Housing White Paper (2017) 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market'**

The White paper identifies the following three main challenges facing the national housing market:

- an insufficient land supply for the required amount of housing development;
- the slow pace of development from permission to completion; and
- the need to diversify the housing market.



Once legislated the White Paper will provide a significant part of the policy background to deliver this strategy. We recognise the need to build more homes at an increased pace and how these aspirations link to economic growth. By putting 'people first' at the centre of our strategy our plans over the next 5 years will do just that resulting in all sectors of the community benefitting including those trying to get onto the housing ladder, those looking for a better quality property in the private rented sector and vulnerable households seeking accommodation to meet their needs.

### **Housing and Planning Act (2016)**

The 2016 Housing and Planning Act is a major piece of legislation for the housing sector and introduces a number of changes including;

- the introduction of Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants which has the potential to significantly impact on our statutory duties in relation to homeless households.
- end of lifetime tenancies
- giving local authorities greater powers to tackle rogue landlords including the provision of the use of fixed penalty notices for Housing Act offences. Income from this to be reinvested into local authority housing services. Also the creation of a rogue landlord database to enable the worst offenders to be easily identified across different geographical areas.
- The expansion of the self build and custom build sector – opening up a new way of entering the housing market
- measures to increase the supply of new starter homes which would likely mean less affordable homes for rent being built. The Housing White Paper however gives further clarity on delivery and the ambition of the government to build 200,000 starter homes by the end of the next parliament. Even with the subtle change to 'help over 200,000 people become homeowners by the end of parliament'<sup>7</sup> the target is now defunct due to the General Election which was held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2012)**

The NPPF sets out the planning policies for England and how they are applied. The NPPF required Local Planning Authorities to assess and plan to meet their own objectively assessed housing requirements. Subsequent amendments to the NPPF are proposed through the Housing White Paper (2017) and revisions to the NPPF are expected later in the year. This will form a significant part of the policy background for the delivery of this strategy.

### **Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) (2017)**

The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) amends Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. It is likely to be enacted in 2018 and will become a major piece of homelessness legislation. It will introduce a number new legal duties with resulting implications. Placing a renewed emphasis on homelessness prevention the HRA introduces duties to assess the needs of and seek to prevent homelessness for all eligible households within 56 days of them becoming homeless, irrespective of priority need or intentional homelessness.

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<sup>7</sup> Housing White Paper 2017

Key changes and implications of the HRA include:

- Extension to the period of time within which a household is classed as 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 days to 56 days
- Initial duty owed to all eligible persons who are homeless
- Duty to provide advisory services
- Duty to assess every eligible applicants case and agree a clear plan of the steps required to prevent or relieve homelessness
- Introduction of a 'prevention duty' for all eligible applicants
- Introduction of a 'relief duty' to take reasonable steps to secure accommodation for eligible homeless applicants regardless of priority need
- 'Duty to Refer' – The Act also places a duty on other local services to notify the local housing authority if they are working with an applicant who is homeless or at risk of homelessness

### **Welfare Reform and Work Act (2016)**

There is a strong government focus on reform to the Welfare Benefit system. One of the key policy focus' being to encourage and support households to take up employment opportunities as opposed to being reliant upon welfare payments to meet housing and living costs.

The introduction of Universal Credit (which consolidates a range of existing welfare payments into a single monthly payment) and the introduction of caps and limits of the benefit that households are entitled to in order to cover their living and housing costs presents enormous challenges as many households across the district, particularly those already facing financial exclusion, have experienced a reduction in their income placing significant pressure on their ability to sustain their tenancies.

Key impacts include:

- Lowering of the benefit cap from £26,000 per year to £20,000 which will impact on a larger number of households particularly in higher value areas where housing benefit is being claimed to support accommodation costs.
- Housing benefit restrictions for those aged under 35 which creates challenges for meeting the housing needs of those in this age group, particularly in relation to those whose needs are best met in self-contained as opposed to shared accommodation.
- Housing benefit removal for 18-21 year olds which was intended to encourage young people into work, or to remain at home, but in reality is limiting the housing options available for younger people
- Introduction of a 4 year reduction in social housing rents by 1%.

Sitting below the national strategies and policies are a range of regional and local plans. These include:

## **Greater Lincolnshire Local Economic Partnership and the Strategic Economic Plan (2014 – 2034)**

The SEP sets out ambitious targets of creating 13,000 new jobs by 2030, and assisting in the creation of 100,000 new homes and helping 22,000 existing businesses grow across Lincolnshire.

## **Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2012 – 2036)**

The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan – adopted April 2017 establishes a total housing target of 36,960 new dwellings up to 2036 with the focus for future housing growth falling within the main settlements of the City of Lincoln, Sleaford and Gainsborough. This approach makes the most of existing services and facilities, delivering growth where it is most needed.

For West Lindsey, the Local Plan sets out the delivery target of 4,435 new homes within the Gainsborough area which includes two new Sustainable Urban Extensions. Outside of the main urban areas the smaller towns and villages in Central Lincolnshire vary in size, demography, accessibility, facilities, issues and opportunities. The CLLP determines how each community can contribute to the delivery of a sustainable Central Lincolnshire

## **Central Lincolnshire Housing Growth Strategy 2016-2021**

The Central Lincolnshire Housing Growth Strategy sets out the housing issues and challenges facing Central Lincolnshire, identifying the following six strategic objectives:

- Deliver sustainable housing growth
- Deliver affordable housing
- Deliver housing to meet diversity of need including Older Persons
- Maintain and improve the housing stock and bring empty properties back into use
- Deliver quality and energy efficiency in the new housing stock
- Deliver and maintain a robust and up to date evidence base.

It focusses on increasing housing supply recognising that the development industry alone will not provide the full range of homes needed and sets out how the partner authorities will work together to deliver more homes.

## **West Lindsey Corporate Plan (2016 – 2020)**

The West Lindsey Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities and objectives designed to meet the many and varied needs of our district. The vision within our Corporate Plan has six themes:

- Open for Business
- People First
- Asset Management

- Delivering the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan
- Partnerships
- Excellent, value for money service

### **Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy**

Local authorities have long recognised that partnership working is the key to tackling homelessness. Lincolnshire Housing Authorities have, for a number of years, had a collaborative strategic approach to preventing and tackling the issue across Lincolnshire. As a result of this successful collaboration, a further countywide homelessness strategy is currently in development.

### **Lincolnshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy**

Informed by the Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy underpins the activity for the Health and Wellbeing Board. Housing is identified as a key priority for Lincolnshire in the current strategy (2013 – 2018) however activity to genuinely integrate housing has only recently started to gain momentum. The national drive to align and better integrate housing, health and care is reflected within the most recent JSNA for Lincolnshire and is likely to be a focus of the new strategy, which is currently in development.

### **The Care Act (2014)**

The Care Act (2014) makes a requirement for closer cooperation between health, care and services that address the wider determinants of health, including housing; to deliver outcome based support, systems and provision to meet identified needs.

### **Housing in West Lindsey**

The current housing offer in West Lindsey is very diverse across the District reflecting the urban and rural locations and the dispersed nature of the district. The wider urban area of Gainsborough is characterised by smaller properties focused around terraced, semi-detached and flatted property, whereas in more rural areas the housing stock more usually comprises of larger owner occupied detached properties.

House prices accordingly vary greatly across the district with some smaller terraced properties in Gainsborough priced below £75,000 where in contrast prices in more rural areas can attract values in excess of £300,000.

### **Key facts**

- Non stock holding authority
- Objectively assessed need within the Central Lincs Local Plan 2012 -2036 for 1540 dwellings per annum (SHMA)
- Need for 911 affordable homes (2012-17) then 676 dwellings until 2036 (SHMA)

- 11% of housing stock social rent. Below the national average with the exception of Gainsborough East
- 13.7% of housing stock in the district is private rent. Diversely spread with less choice in rural areas. Sector grew by 7.1% between 2001 and 2011<sup>8</sup>
- South West ward in Gainsborough 50% stock privately rented
- In 2014 approximately 33%<sup>9</sup> of all private rented properties in West Lindsey were estimated to contain at least one Category 1 Hazard under the Housing and Health Rating System
- Approximately one third of private rented properties in the district have EPC rating below band E
- Selective licensing scheme introduced in the South West Ward Gainsborough helping tackle anti-social behaviour, poor housing standards and poor standards of housing management practices by private landlords
- Decommissioning of MOD sites without a clear exit strategy has led to the emergence of vulnerable, unstable and unsustainable
- The West Lindsey overall ranking for deprivation is 152 out of England's 326 local authorities
- Increase in demand for housing advice, homelessness and homelessness prevention services year on year since 2013/14
- Significant increase in 2016/17
- Loss of Private Rented Sector (PRS) tenancy leading cause of homelessness in West Lindsey
- Assistance to remain in PRS tenancy through proactive homelessness prevention intervention is key prevention tool

### **Positioning ourselves to meet the need and aspirations of our communities**

To address the future housing challenges and aspirations of the district our strategy sets out three key strategic themes identified through evidence gathering to deliver our ambition. Crucially, the council cannot and will not aim to do everything itself and we are clear that leadership and service delivery on housing in West Lindsey extends beyond the council. Our approach is that the strategy should apply to all homes in the district, which means everyone involved in building, managing and supporting the people who live in West Lindsey's homes has a role to play.

We recognise that it does not contain all of the detail, challenges, issues or possible solutions for housing in West Lindsey. In part this is because we do not have or have not yet developed all of the answers. More detail is available within the accompanying Housing Strategy Implementation Plan where within each theme we have identified a number of key areas of priority actions which need to be addressed in order to meet the objectives, detailing the measures and resources required.

In order to ensure this strategy is effectively implemented and meets its objectives progress against the key actions will monitored quarterly and reviewed annually. An annual review enables us to ensure that we have the flexibility to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing housing environment and to ensure we can be responsive to

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<sup>8</sup> Central Lincs Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015/Census 2011

<sup>9</sup> Lincolnshire Stock Condition Survey 2014

both local issues and changes to the national legislative and policy environment that will occur over the lifetime of the strategy.

This strategy is therefore a public document which we want it to be accessible to everyone. There are some groups of people that we expect will be particularly interested in some or all of the document. These include:

- ✓ Existing residents
- ✓ People looking to move into West Lindsey so they can understand what their options are and what support they might expect
- ✓ Private developers and registered providers (housing associations) proposing to build new homes
- ✓ Private landlords and registered providers who let homes in West Lindsey, so they know what standards are expected and how those standards might be enforced
- ✓ Regional and central government agencies such as Homes England formerly the Home and Communities Agency (HCA) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), to help inform their funding decisions
- ✓ Public bodies and voluntary sector organisations that provide services or advice to current or future residents, so they can make sure their own work with residents is consistent with the council's approach and is linked properly to the work being done by housing providers.
- ✓ The council itself, to ensure that our approach to housing and the future challenges are consistent with our overall strategic / corporate approach
- ✓ Providers of supported housing

Partnership working is therefore at the very heart of not only the delivery of the strategy but also the development of future delivery solutions. Emphasis on partnership working is already a major focus for West Lindsey District Council. It is identified in our Corporate Plan and recognises the crucial role of partnership working further extended to include the creation of commercial partnerships and Joint Ventures.

## **Key Themes and Housing Priorities**

Theme 1: **Driving Housing Growth to meet housing need**

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

This theme seeks to increase the supply, mix and quality of new homes across all tenures. An increase in supply encourages greater choice to meet the housing needs of existing and future residents within the district and at the same time delivers the additional benefits of infrastructure to improve not only the built environment but the social role in improving the lives and wellbeing of our residents.

The local housing market in West Lindsey has seen improvements in recent years and whilst housebuilding has also improved the level across the district is lower than required. In order to meet our ambition for growth, we need to take positive and

proactive steps as an enabling authority to ensure that residential development proposals are both viable and deliverable.

12% of the growth for Central Lincolnshire is planned for Gainsborough.<sup>10</sup> During the plan period 2012-2036 the town will seek to accommodate 4435 new homes. At the fore-front of our housing plans for the town is the Greater Gainsborough Housing Zone which aims to act as a catalyst to the creation of a new and differentiated housing market in the town. Bespoke procurement of a development partner to act as master developer and delivery body of the Gainsborough Growth Programme is underway focussing on this aspect. Access to recoverable investment funding and government support through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is available to the authority to expedite the delivery of housing on brownfield land by removing the barriers, such as the cost of addressing flood risk in areas where values may be low, that are preventing delivery. The Housing Zone designation has also given access to HCA grant funding to increase the capacity, skills and expertise within the council's dedicated delivery team to further drive housing growth.

The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) commitment to the facilitation of housing growth is demonstrated at a countywide level with Local Plans leading on the delivery target of 100,000 new homes by 2031. West Lindsey's successful bid to the GLLEP's Single Local Growth Fund aligned to the implementation of our ambitious regeneration plans for the town resulted in an award of £4m which will further kick start housing development. The delivery of the Housing Zone sites therefore will not only provide a minimum of 750 new homes but will regenerate the town centre and riverfront areas of the town contributing to a new sense of place and wealth. In turn this will help unlock and service a further 3,500 new homes, including development on the town's two Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE's), and help create more than 3,000 new jobs.

Whilst investment in the town on this scale is welcomed and will certainly have a positive impact on delivery the challenges associated with delivering this level of growth in the town are considerable. The Housing Zone designation has enabled us to position the town and raise its profile but the viability of sites remains a key issue due to the riverside location of a number of sites resulting in higher build costs and lower values within some areas of the town.

This diversity of the district in relation to house type, tenure and location and the impact of this on values that can be achieved is recognised in the Whole Plan Viability Study undertaken as part of the evidence base for the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) examination.<sup>11</sup>

Due to the significant variance in values, and the aforementioned high levels of growth planned for Gainsborough, additional detailed testing in the town was undertaken. The testing concluded that in order to achieve delivery within the Greater Gainsborough Housing Zone investment in the wider provision of infrastructure and pump prime funding would be required. The Council's Capital Investment Programme, designed to unlock the housing zone sites, is such that it would exceed any potential loss of CIL

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<sup>10</sup> Central Lincs Local Plan

<sup>11</sup> Peter Brett Associates Whole Plan Viability Study 2015

revenue available from the developments and as a consequence a zero charging zone was established in an area bounded by the railway line in Gainsborough West.<sup>12</sup>

This pragmatic approach to CIL not only recognises the diversity of the district through the use of charging zones, based on market evidence, but further demonstrates our commitment to promoting development and driving growth whilst at the same time ensuring that where achievable, contributions to affordable housing and strategic infrastructure is made.

Moving forward, we want the balance of housing in the district to change to ensure that there are enough homes of the right types, sizes and quality for people at all stages in their lives to aspire to. Critical to West Lindsey's future economic success will be ensuring there are a number of larger homes in attractive environments, providing more choice, to attract economically active households as well as providing appropriate housing for our aging population which will free up existing properties

Further evidence of the diversity of the district is demonstrated by the fact there are areas where house prices are lower than average and it is assumed that because of this that these houses are 'affordable'. However in reality these houses may not be of the type or quality expected to meet modern expectations or in locations currently viewed as desirable. These houses therefore cannot be seen as the solution to the evidenced need for affordable housing across the district. They do however have the potential to provide other innovative opportunities to the Council and our partners.

The challenges facing the authority and our Central Lincolnshire partners to deliver the quantum of affordable housing in Central Lincolnshire to meet the full needs set out in the Central Lincs Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Turleys, 2016) are considerable. The policy position followed in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted April 2017) has needed to have regard to what can viably and reasonably be achieved in consideration of the other policy 'asks' and developer contributions needed to deliver other forms of essential infrastructure, such as education provision and healthcare. As such the affordable housing requirements set out in the plan are presented as targets and in most cases, due to the clear viability constraints set out in the Whole Plan Viability Report (Peter Brett, 2016), would only deliver around half of the actual need presented in the SHMA.

With the likely introduction of the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in late 2017/early 2018, the evidence robustly demonstrates that affordable housing targets can viably be met whilst also meeting the requirements of the CIL, it must be noted that where CIL will be fixed, affordable housing will remain subject to negotiation. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that there will be at least some challenge from the development industry where the affordable housing targets face scrutiny and pressure specifically in parts of the district where values are lower or where the viability gap is known to be tighter.

This inability to meet affordable housing need through the planning process alone is not exclusive to West Lindsey, nor indeed to the Central Lincolnshire sub-region, and is in fact reflective of a country-wide issue that is well evidenced and a common challenge for nearly all local authorities.

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Brett Associates Whole Plan Viability Study 2015 p50



The challenge for West Lindsey will be to deliver additional affordable housing to help mitigate the known undersupply that is likely in coming years that the planning system alone can deliver. This issue will be a concern in all parts of the district. An undersupply of additional affordable homes to meet housing need will not only occur in areas where there is less delivery across all tenures but will also occur in areas where the housing market is more buoyant such as the villages on the Lincoln fringe. The evidenced need for affordable homes will only be met where additional intervention takes place using alternative and innovative approaches.

Coupled with this the shift in government policy to focus on home ownership will undoubtedly generate opportunities to support households into home ownership across the district it is likely to result in fewer homes being developed for affordable and social rent. This creates further challenges for the council in relation to how we plan to meet the needs of those for whom home ownership is not a viable housing solution.

A key challenge for us is to understand how many households will be able to afford low cost home ownership products – for some, this will present a new opportunity however for others and in some parts of the district, this will not be a viable solution.

As an enabling authority we aim to continue to work in a flexible manner so that supply can adapt as the housing market and demand for homes changes ensuring that the places where we want development to happen are both viable and attractive.

## **Theme 2: Improving Homes and Transforming Places**

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

Improving the existing housing stock and the resulting benefits to residents, and communities is a key priority for the council. Whilst we do not own or manage any housing stock we wish to work with others to achieve a number of outcomes including raising housing standards, addressing energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty. Reducing the number of empty homes in the district will also be addressed under this theme.

As it has grown in size, the private rented sector in West Lindsey has become increasingly more important. A healthy high quality private rented sector helps to support economic and social mobility, and can provide an affordable housing option for those households on lower incomes. As well as encouraging the development of more homes for owner occupation, we are keen to support and encourage the continued growth of the private rented sector where the accommodation (and management services) meets the required standards.

The quality of housing within this sector has however not always kept pace with the demands of the market and so in places, it detracts from our vision for a thriving and prosperous district. Nowhere is this more evident than in parts of Gainsborough and in the former MoD estates. To address this we want to raise standards and competition within the sector by increasing the quantity of new good quality homes for

rent. We want private landlords to raise their game and in doing so provide homes and the residential environments that meet aspirations. Where private landlords either cannot or choose not to respond to these challenges, we will provide advice, assistance and where necessary utilise our statutory powers to ensure standards are improved.

We recognise that the majority of landlords provide a good standard of accommodation and service to their tenants. The council will therefore continue to support these landlords through a range of assistance and advice based services. Our advice will be focussed on ensuring that landlords understand their legal obligations and are signposted to the appropriate resources and advice to enable them to manage their properties effectively and to a high standard.

The Council, in partnership with other agencies will actively seek out rogue and criminal landlords and will utilise its statutory powers to deal with them. The Council has already introduced a selective licensing scheme in the South West Ward of Gainsborough to address issues such as anti-social behaviour and low housing demand. This approach is in line with the Government's increased regulation for the sector and is an approach that may be required across other parts of the district. The move towards increased regulation in the sector is seen as a positive step and the approach to dealing with poor housing standards is in line with this.

We also recognise the impact that empty properties can have upon all neighbours and wider neighbourhoods. As well as a wasted resource and potential blight within a community, empty properties can present a health risk, can become a focus for unwanted or anti-social activity and can adversely impact upon the image and values within a neighbourhood.

We have a strong track record of identifying and working with owners to help them bring these properties back into use. Where owners are either unable or unwilling to take the necessary steps to re-use their properties, again we are able to utilise and deploy a range of powers to aide this process.

### **Theme 3: A Partnership Approach to support Choice, Wellbeing and Independence**

#### **Challenges and Opportunities**

Housing is about more than the built environment – it is about people and communities. We will only be successful in our ambition if the provision of housing and housing related services helps to meet the wider needs and aspirations of all of our residents and communities as recognised by the 'People First' and 'Partnership' themes of our Corporate Plan.

We want our neighbourhoods and communities to be mixed and inclusive. To achieve this we need to ensure greater equality, resilience and stability through improvements in the amount, mix and quality of our homes. Therefore whilst much of the early focus

of this strategy prioritises the delivery of new homes and physical improvements to existing properties, we need to balance this against the need to ensure that housing in West Lindsey provides a foundation upon which people can build happy and successful lives, promoting stability, independence, health and wellbeing.

This means that we and our partners become more than landlords and service providers but take a more proactive approach to helping residents find and keep a home and by working together with them improve their health, education, skills and employment prospects and maintain their independence.

At its most extreme the very real issues of rising homelessness and decreasing access to housing mean that there needs to be a focus on early intervention, prevention and enabling access to housing. Whilst we already place emphasis on homelessness prevention, the new duties associated with the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) will enhance our responsibilities to prevent homelessness for a much broader cohort of customers. The HRA is likely to significantly increase the prevention outcomes we achieve whilst reducing the number of applicants that require a full homeless duty. The duties and changes to the assessment journey for customers will require some adjustment to roles and processes for receiving and managing caseloads. The work required at the initial assessment and advice stage of the revised process will be substantial. There will also be a need to enhance capacity in terms of monitoring and reporting on our homelessness prevention performance.

Moving forward we will continue to shift resources to tackle the causes of problems rather than just treating the symptoms. This focus upon intervention aims to reduce the number of specialist interventions and prevent crisis. In order to achieve this, we will focus on working in partnership to bring resources together in order to maximise the impact of any interventions. Additionally, we must consider a number of challenges that are likely to impact heavily upon those who are vulnerable to experiencing homelessness. These challenges include changes to government policy where careful management of the possible impacts are required, a continuous demand on resources in the face of tightening budgetary pressures, a fragile national economic picture and various policy areas that have the potential to impact on preventing and tackling homelessness but are not necessarily coordinated. Alongside our ambitions for growth we must place emphasis on preventing homelessness and developing a range of housing and support options to assist us to do so.

Homelessness is a complex issue that cuts across many policy areas. Over the past four years Lincolnshire has experienced both an increase in homelessness, alongside an increase in the complexity of the needs of individuals and households affected by homelessness. Now more than ever we need to work together to respond to an environment of rapid change.

The potential impact of a wide range of policy changes on people vulnerable to experiencing homelessness cannot be underestimated. Of particular concern is the affordability of housing for younger people – we will need to explore, in partnership, options to enable access to good quality, affordable accommodation for all.

Local Authorities are reliant on social housing stock to meet housing need and prevent homelessness. A decrease in the supply of new social housing has the potential to

significantly impact on our ability to meet our statutory duties in relation to homelessness households. A reduction in supply may also limit our ability to utilise social housing to prevent and/or alleviate homelessness before it arises, and also to limit the options available for those in need of independent accommodation (such as those presently residing in supported accommodation). We must seek to ensure that the available supply of affordable rented housing is prioritised for those in greatest need, and that those who can meet their housing needs through alternative tenures, including a good quality affordable homes in the private rented sector are supported to do so.

The loss of private rented accommodation continues to be a leading cause of homelessness in West Lindsey. Similarly, our homelessness prevention activity majors on supporting people to remain in the private rented sector. Ensuring that the private rented offer in West Lindsey is suitable, affordable and well managed and that by seeking to intervene earlier we can prevent the loss of accommodation where possible.

In common with many areas, the population in West Lindsey is also set to witness a significant level of growth amongst older person households. As well as living for longer, many older person households prefer to continue to live in their own homes before seeking specialist accommodation. Support should therefore maintain a focus upon developing the range of services which will help many older people maintain and stay within their own homes.

We do however also recognise that housing choices for older people is often limited so in partnership we need to also consider the appropriateness of more specialist accommodation with support, including retirement housing and extra care models alongside reviewing existing sheltered housing which may no longer be fit for purpose to respond to long term demographic changes and support the future needs of specific groups.

Housing also plays a key role in supporting wellbeing. As a district council, we are well placed to have a leading contributory role in the strategic infrastructure surrounding housing, health and care as key policy areas and their associated interdependencies. Our commitment to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for communities is rooted in our corporate plan and the council has invested in resource to fully understand and maximise the role we can play. Whilst we are increasingly and more actively involved, this agenda is moving rapidly and we need to position ourselves to have a collaborative role at both a strategic and local level for the benefit of residents in West Lindsey. Through this housing strategy we aim to explore the opportunities which will enable us to maximise the role we can play.

Housing is identified as a key priority for Lincolnshire in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013 – 2018. The Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board is one of only 12 (out of 150 across the country) to have identified it as such. Given the necessary focus on and the rapidly moving transition to align housing, health and care to improve wellbeing outcomes, it is considered likely (at the time of drafting) that housing will continue to be a priority for the board. District Councils are currently developing detailed proposals for the introduction of a 'housing and health' focussed sub group of

the health and wellbeing board to develop stronger working relationships and better integrated services, to better meet the needs of residents. Understanding and maximising opportunities to improve health and wellbeing through this housing strategy is important.

### **Our response to the Challenges**

See attached implementation/action plan

#### Key documents

Central Lincs Local Plan 2012 – 2036

Central Lincs SHMA (2015)

West Lindsey Corporate Plan 2016-2020

Central Lincolnshire Housing Growth Strategy 2016-2021

Peter Brett Associates Whole Plan Viability Study 2015

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013 - 2018

## Appendix 2 Draft Implementation Plan (work in progress)

Housing Strategy Theme	Action/Project/Recommendation	Link to Corporate Plan	Lead organisation and partner organisations	Resource required	Outcome/measure	Timeframe
1,2 and 3	Promote role of Housing Strategy to ensure linkages between built environment and social wellbeing are fully understood internally and externally <i>and through this ensure the opportunity to influence changes to legislation and policy are maximised</i>	TBC	WLDC	Existing staff resource/time  Member time	Member Champion in place  Comms plan in place  Press releases published  Staff development monitored	TBC
1.Driving Housing Growth to meet housing need	1.1 To develop and implement a private rented sector solution to assist with meeting affordable housing need in the district	TBC	WLDC	TBC	Preferred option approved  X number homes available for rent	TBC
1.Driving Housing growth to meet housing need	1.2 Attract a variety of high quality developers and housing investment to the district to deliver high quality development and secure the delivery of appropriate housing across all tenures to meet need and demand	TBC	WLDC Housing, Planning and Growth services, Private Developers, Registered Providers, CLLP Partners, Planning agents, Landowners and agents Neighbourhood Plan Groups ParisTBCh Councils	Existing staff resource/time	During CCLP period provision for development of 4435 new homes in Gainsborough.  1540 new homes per annum across CL  Private sector and RP investment to deliver a mix of tenures  Set up/re engage with CL Developers and Agents Forum  Monitor housing completions to ensure variety of homes are delivered to meet demand and need  Housing engagement with Neighbourhood Plan Groups  Number of neighbourhood plans adopted	TBC
1.Driving Housing growth to meet housing need	1.3 To deliver housing regeneration in Gainsborough and meet the Greater Gainsborough Housing Zone delivery target of a minimum of 750 new homes on brownfield land	TBC	WLDC  HCA  Landowners  Developers	TBC	Development partner procured  Delivery strategy in place for Riverside Gateway  Starts on site recorded for all Housing Zone sites	TBC

1.Driving Housing growth to meet housing need	1.4 Support the acceleration of delivery Gainsborough Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE's)	TBC	WLDC Planning, Housing and Growth  TSE  Developer	TBC	Phase 1 Southern SUE Developer identified  Phase 1 Southern SUE submission Reserved Matters  Phase 1 Southern SUE Infrastructure delivery commenced  Phase 1 southern SUE x homes completed  Northern SUE outline planning permission granted for x number dwellings	TBC
1.Driving Housing growth to meet housing need	1.5 Support the wider Gainsborough regeneration Programme through deliver the 'Living over the shop' project	TBC	Market Street Renewal (JV Dransfield properties Ltd and WLDC)  WLDC	TBC	X number of additional town centre dwellings Reduce empty properties Increase footfall in town centre	TBC
1.Driving Housing growth to meet housing need	1.6 Assess potential of alternative building methods through custom and self build models to meet need as identified through self build register	TBC	WLDC	Officer time Sites identified	Identification of sites Provision of fully serviced plots to meet need Completion of site prep	TBC
1.Driving Housing growth to meet housing need	1.7 Seek to acquire land off Japan Road/Wilson Street in line with Council's acquisition policy to enable delivery of mixed tenure housing scheme	TBC	WLDC  WLDC agent  TSE agent  Acis	TBC	Land acquired Developer identified Housing delivered with quantum of affordable housing to meet need Contributes to Housing Zone delivery target	TBC
1.Driving Housing growth to meet housing need	1.8 Explore innovative solutions to delivery of ancillary sites within Greater Gainsborough Housing Zone ie Crowd it Built it Gleadell's Wharf	TBC	WLDC  Landowner  Developer	TBC		TBC
1.Driving Housing growth to meet housing need	1.9 Ensure that intelligence and evidence of housing need within the district is appropriate and up to date	TBC	CLLP Team  CLLP Partner Authorities  WLDC	TBC	Refresh of Central Lincs SHMA?  New housing register system delivered	TBC
2. Improving homes and	2.1 to deliver financial assistance in the PRS to improve property standards, energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

transforming places						
2. Improving homes and transforming places	2.2 Develop a place based approach to improving deprived and unstable communities	TBC	WLDC	TBC	TBC	TBC
2. Improving homes and transforming places	2.3 Effective use of planning policies to embed health and wellbeing into considerations for growth and development of housing	TBC	WLDC Housing and Planning teams	TBC	Monitor policies LP( and LP10 of Central Lincs Local Plan  Building regs M4 (2)?	TBC
3. A partnership approach to ensure choice and independence	3.1 Work in partnership with Registered Providers to enable the delivery of affordable housing options throughout the district including options to meet the needs of specific client groups, those aspiring to own their own homes and to prevent homelessness supporting the provision of the Homelessness reduction Act (2017)	TBC	WLDC  External Registered Provider partners  Service provider partners	TBC	Number of affordable dwellings completed by type, tenure, client group  Land identified for delivery  Homelessness measures	TBC
3. A partnership approach to ensure choice and independence	3.2 Undertake detailed review of provision of accommodation for older persons to inform future delivery options	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
3. A partnership approach to ensure choice and independence	3.3 To develop a policy in line with the Better care Fund objectives which enables independent living and improves health and wellbeing	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
3. A partnership approach to ensure choice and independence	3.4 To review the existing regulatory and licensing schemes within the district and the impact they have had in the short and long term	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
3. A partnership approach to ensure choice and independence	3.5 Deliver a sophisticated new housing register system that is fit for purpose, enabling the Council to fulfil its revised legal duties under Homeless Reduction Act	TBC	TBC	TBC	Ability to evidence need for a variety of housing options including low cost home ownership	TBC
3. A partnership approach to ensure choice and independence	3.6 Maximise future role in enabling development and delivery of supported housing to meet the housing needs of diverse and vulnerable households/	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
3. A partnership approach to ensure choice and independence	3.7 Assess impact of welfare reform and develop responses with partners to address	TBC	Health and Wellbeing Service Registered providers Supported Housing providers	TBC	Mitigation against welfare reform changes which may increase risk of homelessness  Understand impact on private rented sector tenants	TBC



