

Central Lincolnshire Policy S25 Houseboat Moorings Evidence Report

June 2021



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan is being updated since the first Local Plan for Central Lincolnshire, an area covering the districts of City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey, was adopted in April 2017.
- 1.2. This Evidence Report (which is one of a collection) provides background information and justification for Policy S25, which relates to houseboat moorings.

2. Policy Context

National Policy and Guidance

- 2.1. Since the Central Lincolnshire Plan was adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2018 with subsequent additional changes being published in February 2019.
- 2.2. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF explains that:

“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
- 2.3. Paragraph 8 goes on to state that:

“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

... b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and...”
- 2.4. Section 5 relates to Delivering a sufficient supply of homes. Specifically relevant to this policy are:
- 2.5. Paragraph 61, which states *“...the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).”*
- 2.6. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was first introduced in 2014 which offers ‘live’ government guidance. The PPG provides guidance to help in the implementation of policy in the NPPF.
- 2.7. One of the categories within the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is ‘Housing needs of different groups’. This section of the PPG when read as a whole sets out how housing needs of different groups are to be assessed and planned for.

Local Policy

- 2.8. The adopted Local Plan does not include a specific policy in relation to houseboat moorings and caravans.

3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1. The Central Lincolnshire Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) (April 2020) specifically included the consideration of need for houseboat moorings and caravan accommodation. It is identified that the Canal and River Trust (CRT) currently operate about 20 dedicated residential moorings and 40 leisure moorings in Lincoln, on the Foss Dyke Canal. The CRT estimates that it aims to increase the number of residential moorings in Lincoln by 30 – 40 to meet their understanding of current and future demand. This could be done through the conversion of existing moorings.

- 3.2. The HNA summarises the need for houseboats as follows:

“Houseboats ... are becoming increasingly recognised as a housing option but continue to see low uptake in absolute terms at a national level and by inference in Central Lincolnshire. Engagement suggests that where there is a modest perceived rise in demand/ need the supply response will need to be explored in partnership with the Councils albeit with existing mooring potentially offering sufficient flexibility to respond, subject to planning.”

- 3.3. In relation to caravan pitches, the HNA concludes:

“There are an estimated 1,300 static caravans and mobile units, known as park homes, throughout Central Lincolnshire. These are generally restricted to older people and could be viewed as an affordable option for those looking to downsize who consider this form of accommodation as suitable for their needs. It is also, however, noted that there are concerns around the extent to which park homes should be considered as contributors to the area’s housing supply, given potential for heightened risk of sub-standard living conditions for older people in particular. In addition, their nature as mobile units create a point of distinction with the more standard profile of housing supply.”

4. Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.1. The Issues and Options Consultation sought respondents’ views on proposals relating to the need for houseboat moorings and caravan accommodation.

- 4.2. Proposal 24 asked “Are you aware of any need for moorings for houseboats or sites for caravans in Central Lincolnshire? Any evidence to support your comments would be welcome, or suggestions as to how such need could be identified in Central Lincolnshire.” There were 7 responses suggesting the respondent was aware of needs for moorings and sites for caravans. A summary of the comments received, specifically in relation to houseboats and houseboat moorings are set out below:

- We are receiving planning applications for them with little evidence to support the need.
- House boats all along the Brayford.

- Houseboat moorings could add an interesting dynamic to use of the waterways. Caravan developments and mobile home placements need to be much more rigorously controlled.
- Tourism is becoming more prevalent in rural areas such as Lincolnshire caused by people living longer and retiring earlier. Boat and caravan sites should be allocated.
- The Canal & River Trust does not have the evidence available to enable it to provide a view on the need or demand for new moorings on its waterway network, or for any particular type of mooring. Should you decide to undertake a specific needs assessment the Trust would be happy to provide further background information on licences and moorings which may assist.
- West Lindsey Planning Department have been subject to a number of applications for 'lodges,' both large and small scale.
- Potential harm to heritage assets and their settings must be assessed.
- Both at Marton. We have 3 at Marton and 1 for travellers.
- Park homes are caravans as defined and regulated through the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, the Caravan Sites Act 1968. The current Local Plan does not comment on the value of this sector as a provider of low cost, high quality accommodation, similar to bungalows. There is an increasing number of Park Home owners moving closer to families who support them in their Park Homes rather than reliance on social services. In order to meet growing demand the sector needs to be allowed to expand. It is very difficult to compete with mainstream housing developers for sites designated for housing within local plans. If Park Home housing is to be considered for the provision of elderly accommodation the criteria used to assess the sites should be different, i.e. is the settlement sustainable, does it have a doctors or bus route but not a school.

5. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

- 5.1. The Draft Local Plan proposes to include a specific policy in relation to Houseboat Moorings and Caravans, Policy S25. This policy recognises that there is a modest need for houseboats and caravans and park homes in Central Lincolnshire, and sets out the approach that will be taken when considering planning applications for houseboat moorings and caravan pitches and park homes. This approach reflects the very limited need for such accommodation, but also provides a positive framework to allow proper consideration of any proposals to deliver additional moorings or pitches.

6. Reasonable Alternative Options

- 6.1. The following alternative options have been considered for this policy (option 1 being the preferred option within the Draft Local Plan)
- 6.2. Option 2: No policy on houseboat moorings and caravan pitches, rely on national policy. This option was discounted as it would not provide an acceptable degree of certainty in respect of the provision of houseboat moorings, caravans and park homes to meet the identified needs.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the Draft Central Lincolnshire Local Plan January 2021. This report will be updated following responses received during the Regulation 18 consultation prior to finalising the Local Plan for submission. This helps bring together relevant evidence that has informed this policy and how we have responded to comments received during the plan making process, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.