

# Central Lincolnshire Policy S56: The Historic Environment 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 S56: The Historic Environment, which relates to protecting and enhancing the historic environment.

## 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. The NPPF defines a heritage asset as:

*“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).”*
- 2.3. Designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas.
- 2.4. Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies, such as a local planning authority, as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.
- 2.5. The setting of a heritage asset is defined by the NPPF as:

*“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”*
- 2.6. Section 16 of the NPPF concerns “Conserving and enhancing the historic environment” and there is a separate section on “Plan-making”. The following paragraphs are particularly relevant:
  - Paragraph 20 – *Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for: ...conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment...*
  - Paragraph 185 – *Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk of neglect, decay or other threats.*

- Paragraph 189 - *...local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance...*
- Paragraph 190 – *Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset)...They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*
- Paragraph 192 - *In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*
  - a) *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
  - b) *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
  - c) *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*
- Paragraph 193 - *When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*
- Paragraph 194 - *Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.*
- Paragraph 195 - *Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
  - a) *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
  - b) *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
  - c) *conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*
- Paragraph 196 - *Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

- Paragraph 199 - *Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.*
- 2.7. 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.
- 2.8. The following paragraphs offer useful guidance in relation to the historic environment:
- Paragraph 003 - What is a positive strategy for conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment? (ref ID: 18a-003-20190723);
  - Paragraph 006 - What is 'significance'? (ref ID: 18a-006-20190723);
  - Paragraph 008 - How can proposals avoid or minimise harm to the significance of a heritage asset? (ref ID: 18a-009-20190723);
  - Paragraph 013 - What is the setting of a heritage asset and how can it be taken into account? (ref ID: 18a-013-20190723);
  - Paragraph 015 - What is the optimum viable use for a heritage asset and how is it taken into account in planning decisions? (ref ID: 18a-015-20190723);
  - Paragraph 020 - What is meant by the term public benefits? (ref ID: 18a-020-20190723);
  - Paragraph 023 - What are the different types of designated heritage assets? (ref ID: 18a-023-20190723);
  - Paragraph 039 - What are non-designated heritage assets? (ref ID: 18a-039-20190723).
- 2.9. In developing Policy S56, the Central Lincolnshire authorities have also taken into account the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to ensure that the policy is consistent with the statutory provisions contained within these Acts.
- 2.10. Historic England is a public body that champions and protects historic places. Key documents that have informed the development of the historic environment policy in the Local Plan are: The Historic Environment in Local Plans, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 1 (July 2015) and, The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans, Historic England Advice Note 3 (October 2015).

## Local Policy

### Adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan

- 2.11. The adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (April 2017) includes a specific policy, LP25 The Historic Environment, which sets out a positive strategy for the historic environment across Central Lincolnshire, as well as seeking to protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings.

### Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.12. A neighbourhood plan gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Many of the made neighbourhood plans across Central Lincolnshire recognise the importance of the local historic environment and the need to retain and enhance heritage assets. Some neighbourhood plans identify certain buildings, structure or features as non-designated heritage assets worthy of protection due to the important contribution they make to the distinctive local character of the neighbourhood area.

### Heritage Grant Schemes

- 2.13. North Kesteven District Council's Heritage Grant Scheme aims to preserve and enhance the historic interest of buildings and places by encouraging the sympathetic repair or historic buildings. Various grants are available for residential and commercial buildings towards the cost of eligible works for listed buildings, works or buildings in a Conservation Area, and eligible works for local heritage assets on the Council's Local List, or which meet the designation criteria.
- 2.14. North Kesteven also operates a Sleaford Shopfront Grant Scheme funded by North Kesteven District Council, Historic England and Sleaford Town Council. The aim of the scheme is to improve the historic environment in the town centre. Grants of 80% of the cost of the reinstating historic architectural feature is available, but priority is given to the installation of traditional shopfronts in order to restore the character of the building.
- 2.15. West Lindsey District Council operates a Gainsborough Shopfront Improvement Scheme. The scheme provides a one-off discretionary financial contribution to eligible individuals or businesses to cover up to 75% (to a maximum value of £15,000) towards the total cost of physical improvements works and enhancements to the premises. Properties must face onto a main retail areas and proposals must bring about a significant impact to the heritage led-regeneration approach of the Gainsborough Town Centre Masterplan.

## 3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1. Central Lincolnshire has a rich historic environment. The rural countryside and historic towns and villages are attractive aspects of Central Lincolnshire as a whole, while within Lincoln's historic core are aspects of national and wider importance. The notable historic environment positively contributes to Central Lincolnshire's character, the quality of life experienced by residents, and its appeal as a destination for visitors and tourists.
- 3.2. Within the area there are: over 2,300 listed buildings, 72 Conservation Areas, almost 200 Scheduled Monuments, 12 national Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, and a wealth of nationally and locally significant archaeological remains. In addition, there are numerous other heritage assets that, whilst not designated, are make a positive contribution to the historic environment.
- 3.3. Key local evidence to support the development and implementation of this policy includes:
- Historic England's National 'Heritage at Risk Register', which is updated on an annual basis. For Central Lincolnshire, there are currently 61 entries that include Grade I and II\* listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas<sup>1</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

- Lincolnshire Heritage at Risk (Listed Buildings Grade II, archaeological earthworks);
- Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record;
- Lincoln Heritage Database and Lincoln Archaeological Research Assessment;
- Lincoln Townscape Assessment;
- Lincolnshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project;
- Lincolnshire Farmsteads Assessment Framework;
- Lincolnshire Extensive Urban Survey;
- Conservation area appraisals and management plans;
- Local lists of Non-Designated Heritage Assets;
- 14 Article 4 directions; and
- Gainsborough Town Centre Heritage Masterplan.

## 4. Issues and Options Consultation

4.1. The first, formal stage of the Local Plan review was the Issues and Options consultation that took place in June and July 2019. The consultation identified the existing policy in the adopted Local Plan, LP25: The Historic Environment, as a policy not intended to be changed. Only one comment was received specifically to the proposal to not change the policy:

- The wording could be updated to more closely reflect NPPF wording, such as substituting 'preserve' for 'conserve'.

## 5. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

5.1. Following consideration of the comments received to the Issues and Options consultation, national policy and guidance, and local policy and evidence, the proposed approach in the Draft Local Plan is to carry over the existing parameters set out in the adopted policy LP25 The Historic Environment, but with some minor amendments to the wording to reflect the wording of the NPPF and feedback from Development Management Teams on implementation of the policy in practice. The supporting text to the policy has been expanded to cover Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

## 6. Reasonable Alternative Options

6.1. The following alternative options have been considered for this policy (with Option 1 being the preferred policy in the Draft Local Plan).

6.2. Option 1: One overarching development management policy covering the historic environment.

6.3. Option 2: Specific separate policies covering listed buildings, archaeological sites, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and non-designated assets. This option has been discounted, as it was felt an overarching policy on the historic environment was needed to reflect the requirements of the NPPF to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

- 6.4. Option 3: No local policy on the historic environment – rely on national guidance on the historic environment as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. This option has been discounted: whilst national policy on heritage assets is quite extensive, the NPPF requires local authorities to set out “a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment” and it is felt that a specific policy in relation to this is the most appropriate approach.

## 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.