

# Central Lincolnshire Policy NS41 City and Town Centre Frontages Evidence Report

Formerly Policy NS40

March 2022



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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 NS41, which relates to City and Town Centre Frontages.

## 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 and a further update in July 2021.

- 2.2. Section 8 of the NPPF concerns ‘Promoting healthy and safe communities’ and the following is of particular relevance:

Paragraph 92 - Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas;
- ...

- 2.3. Section 12 of the NPPF concerns “Achieving well-designed places” and the following is of particular relevance:

Paragraph 130 – Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and

where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- 2.4. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was first introduced in 2014 and offers 'live' government guidance. The PPG provides guidance to help in the implementation of policy in the NPPF.
- 2.5. The PPG contains a specific section on design – Design: Process and Tools which sets out details of how well-designed places can be planned for in Local Plans, the tools available and the importance of engaging on design. It states that:

“Well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage. This guidance explains the processes and tools that can be used through the planning system and how to engage local communities effectively.”
- 2.6. It provides a link to the National Design Guide published in 2019 and updated in 2021 which is intended to be read alongside the PPG. The National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice.

### Local Policy

- 2.7. The adopted Local Plan includes Policy LP27: Main Town Centre Uses – Frontages and Advertisements. The policy seeks to offer detailed local guidance on design, safety and amenity matters.

## 3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1. The Central Lincolnshire Authorities recognise the need to maintain and enhance the built environment to a high standard in order to improve the quality of life for residents, attract visitors and investors and ensure public safety.
- 3.2. Some areas of Central Lincolnshire have rich street scenes due to high quality, considerate building design and the rich historic fabric of the locality. In contrast, some areas are in need of regeneration and better quality and more sympathetic design could significantly contribute to the revitalisation of these areas.

## 4. Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.1. The Issues and Options consultation did not identify the existing policy, LP27: Main Town Centre Uses – Frontages and Advertisements as a policy that was proposed to remain unchanged. However, no specific questions were asked about it in the Issues and Options consultation document and one respondent expressed concern that further details of how the policy was to change were not provided.

## 5. Regulation 18 Consultation

- 5.1. A Consultation Draft of the Local Plan was published for consultation between 30 June and 24 August 2021. During this eight week consultation comments were received on the plan, the policies within the plan, and supporting information and evidence.
- 5.2. Various comments were received broadly supporting the policy or strongly supporting elements of it.

## 6. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

- 6.1. Although it is not intended to retain Policy LP27 in its original form, the discrete elements of the policy have been separated out and identified independently with some explanatory text added to avoid confusion. Other than this, the policy, as far as it relates to city and town centre frontages, is not proposed to be amended significantly.

## 7. Reasonable Alternative Options

- 7.1. The following alternative options have been considered for this policy (with Option 1 being the preferred policy in the Draft Local Plan).
- 7.2. Option 2: A policy combining guidance for advertisements with guidance for frontages and shutters for main town centre uses. Advertisements, shutters and frontages for main town centre uses are often closely related, but not all advertisements are necessarily linked to such uses. Therefore, whilst a single policy providing guidance for frontages and shutters and advertisements for main town centre uses could be worded in such a way as to separate the different elements, combining them into one policy may cause confusion. This option has therefore been discounted with separate policies covering the different elements favoured as a less ambiguous approach.
- 7.3. Option 3: No local policy on city and town centre frontages, relying on national policy and guidance and other local plan policies. National policy is brief in some areas and advises interpretation by the local authority. Local Plan policies such as those for design and amenity and the historic environment whilst providing useful advice for all development, do not specifically refer to or necessarily relate to city and town centre frontages. It is therefore felt that a specific policy would provide valuable additional guidance to supplement national policy and guidance and other local plan policies and so this option has been discounted.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the Proposed Submission Draft Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. 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.