

# Central Lincolnshire Policy S50 Community Facilities Evidence Report

Formerly S49

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 S50, which relates to protecting and enhancing community facilities.

# 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. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF explains that:

*“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At the 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):*

  - a) **an economic objective** – *to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
  - 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 well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and...*
- 2.4. In respect of Plan making, paragraph 20 sets out that *“Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for: c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure; and...”*
- 2.5. Paragraph 84 states that planning policies and decisions should enable *“the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”*
- 2.6. Paragraphs 92 to 96 provide requirements for promoting healthy communities including the requirement for planning policies to *“plan positively for the provision and use of shared*

*spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments” and “guard against unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs; ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community;”*

### Local Policy

- 2.7. The adopted Local Plan includes Policy LP15: Community Facilities which seeks to protect existing and support the provision of new community facilities, either as part of wider development proposals or as standalone facilities.

## 3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1. Community facilities can play a vital role in our communities, providing a venue for groups to meet, offering essential services and generally supporting a population and encouraging socialisation, cultural activities and integration.
- 3.2. Central Lincolnshire is a predominantly rural area containing many dispersed settlements. Within these settlements there are many existing facilities that provide for the needs of the community. It is important that these facilities are protected as in addition to meeting the day to day needs, they contribute towards sustainable and thriving communities. In the main urban areas, there are also a range of facilities providing a variety of roles in supporting the urban communities, often serving a large population.
- 3.3. The provision of new community facilities is also important to ensure that existing communities remain sustainable, and also to ensure that where large scale development is proposed, the future residents have access to community facilities.

## 4. Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.1. The Issues and Options consultation identified the existing policy, LP15: Community Facilities as a policy not intended to be changed. There were no objections to this proposed approach, and only two other comments, one relating to national policy and the other an expression of support.

## 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. A number of comments were made on this policy. These comments have been summarised as follows:
- Various comments broadly supporting elements of the policy
  - Various detailed suggestions, to improve clarity of policy wording.
  - The evidence behind the policy is lacking / weak, particularly in relation to leisure facilities.

- Concern that the policy is not in conformity with the NPPF.
- Concern that the policy as written would prevent public sector organisations operating efficiently

5.3. It is not considered necessary to make any changes to this policy in light of the comments received. It is considered that Part A of the policy adequately addresses the concerns expressed in respect of public sector organisations and their operations. Other suggested minor amendments were not taken forward, as it was not considered that they would add value or clarity to the policy, in particular, within the policy, the examples of community facilities provided do not provide an exhaustive list, which is clear from the current draft policy wording.

## 6. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

6.1. The Draft Local Plan includes a policy in relation to the protection of existing and provision of new Community Facilities. This policy has been carried forward from the adopted Local Plan with only minor amendments to bring it up to date.

## 7. Reasonable Alternative Options

7.1. The following alternative options have been considered for this policy (option 1 being the preferred option).

7.2. Option 2: to have no policy and rely on national policy. This option was discounted as although it would provide some protection for existing facilities, it would not ensure that new facilities would come forward.

7.3. Option 3: to identify and safeguard community facilities (through the identification of specific sites). This option was discounted, as although it would ensure that existing facilities were protected, it is unlikely to be effective in ensuring that new facilities come forward.

## 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.