

Central Lincolnshire Policy NS73 Gainsborough Riverside Regeneration Area Evidence Report

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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 NS73 Gainsborough Riverside Regeneration Area, which relates to regeneration of the Riverside.

2. Policy Context

National Policy and Guidance

- 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in July 2021 and sets out the framework for planning in England. There are number of key strands relating regeneration including aspects within Chapter 6 Building a Stronger, Competitive Economy.

Paragraph 82. *“Planning policies should:*

- a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;*
- b) set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;*
- c) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and*
- d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.”*

Paragraph 86. *“Planning policies should:*

- a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;*
- b) set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;*
- c) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and*
- d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.”*

- 2.2. Paragraph 124, Chapter 11 ‘Making Effective Use of Land’, sets out key requirements to take into account an areas character when regenerating or promoting opportunities for change. Paragraph 124 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
- b) local market conditions and viability;*

- c) *the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
- d) *the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*
- e) *the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.”*

2.3. Relevant to the regeneration of Gainsborough Riverside, is Chapter 16 ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’

Paragraph 189. *“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value⁶⁶. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations⁶⁷.*

Paragraph 190. *“Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:*

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”

2.4. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPG was introduced in 2014 and it sets out live guidance on how to implement the policies of the NPPF. There are number of guidance pages relating to estate regeneration many of the regeneration opportunities presented within the reviewed Central Lincolnshire Local Plan are mixed used development opportunities and are currently a mix use. Therefore, these specific guides are not necessarily all encompassing for the scenarios presented within this policy. When reviewing the PPG, the general role of plan making is important aspect when developing local specific regeneration opportunities with planning policy.

“Statutory duty and the role of plans -What is the role of plans?”

⁶⁶Some World Heritage Sites are inscribed by UNESCO to be of natural significance rather than cultural significance; and in some cases they are inscribed for both their natural and cultural significance.

⁶⁷ The policies set out in this chapter relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making.

The development plan is at the heart of the planning system with a requirement set in law that planning decisions must be taken in line with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places. It is essential that plans are in place and kept up to date.

Section 19(1B) - (1E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that each local planning authority must identify their strategic priorities and have policies to address these in their development plan documents (taken as a whole).

The development plan for an area is made up of the combination of strategic policies (which address the priorities for an area) and non-strategic policies (which deal with more detailed matters). Paragraphs 17 to 19 of the National Planning Policy Framework describe the plan-making framework which allows flexibility in the way policies for the development and use of land are produced¹”

Local Policy

- 2.5. The 2017 adopted Local Plan includes policies LP40 Gainsborough Riverside and LP41 Regeneration of Gainsborough which closely relate to this new policy. Various parts of these policies have now been included in Policy NS73 or the Gainsborough Town Centre Policy (S37). Furthermore, the adopted Local Plan included some site allocations which reflected “Greater Gainsborough Housing Zones which was part of an initiative by West Lindsey District Council to deliver regeneration at certain locations in the town.² The current local plan policy LP40 Gainsborough Riverside sets out the vision that any future proposals along the riverside must assist in the delivery of the long-term aim in creating uninterrupted and attractive pedestrian and cycle corridor connecting other areas of Gainsborough.
- 2.6. Completed in 2010, Gainsborough had a £16.7m upgrade to the flood defence schemes but also included new pedestrian and cycle routes to improve linkages to the town centre. Gainsborough Riverside represents an important opportunity to improve the public realm of the waterfront and countryside vistas beyond.

3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1. There are a number of areas within Central Lincolnshire that have been identified for development or redevelopment/ renewal. A local plan-based policy approach will help ensure the future of these sites/areas are progressed in line with the ambitions for the site. The regeneration-based policies are written with a ‘in principle approach’ to help provide certainty for the sites and to help ensure that any development that does occur, makes the most of the opportunities at these sites. The District Councils within each policy area may wish to progress a masterplan, design code or other site-specific guidance to supplement these policies further still.
- 3.2. In Gainsborough the Riverside has been identified as regeneration area. Previously, there were sites allocated for housing within this area. The proposed policy sets out a

¹ Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 61-001-20190315

² <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/my-business/growth-and-regeneration/housing-zone/>

framework outlining what proposals would be considered favourably. This will set out opportunities for regeneration that will maximise the natural features of the riverside and promote greater connectivity to the town centre through walking and cycling routes.

4. Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.1. During the Issues and Options Consultation, LP40 Gainsborough Riverside and LP41 Regeneration of Gainsborough were listed as a policy area not proposed to be changed. No comments were made specifically about these policies.

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. The following specific issues were raised on this policy in the Regulation 18 Consultation:
- Suggestion that these sites have accurate assessments of availability, suitability, deliverability, develop-ability and viability.
 - The Councils' assumptions on lead-in times should be correct and supported by parties for delivery housing on the sites.
 - Comments of support for enhanced public spaces and green infrastructure.
 - Clarity requested regarding regeneration area reference numbers to be included on the policy map.
 - Objection raised on the basis that the policy needs to provide clarity for existing industrial businesses and allow flexibility to grow without been undermined by noise sensitive users
- 5.3. Most of the comments made broadly support the policy noting the importance of enhanced public spaces and green infrastructure. One objection raised concerns that clarity was needed for expanding existing industrial uses. This point would be covered within the suite of employment policies as to what is acceptable against the relevant tier of employment hierarchy. Comments raised queries over lead times and accurate assessments of availability, suitability, deliverability, develop-ability and viability. The Riverside Regeneration policy is not an allocation but a framework that sets out opportunities for redevelopment. Therefore, is not reliant on for the 5-year land supply, or the wider supply of housing in Central Lincolnshire.

6. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

- 6.1. The proposed approach to this policy is to refresh the existing policy, LP40. All aspects to the main aims of the policy remain largely unaltered. Retaining the policy through a refresh provides certainty for the Riverside area of Gainsborough. The approach has simplified the existing policy by using a framework for when proposals would be considered favourably. The policy has been streamlined to be shorter and more succinct than the earlier policy, LP40 within the 2017 adopted plan. The Regeneration of Gainsborough, LP41 (Local Plan adopted 2017) is now included within S37 Gainsborough Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area.

- 6.2. The refreshed policy for Gainsborough Riverside set out the framework for when proposals will be considerably favourably. The policy gives opportunities for regeneration of the area. It also harnesses the inclusion of connectivity into the centre of Gainsborough through walkways and cycle routes from along the riverside.
- 6.3. It should be noted that no reliance is placed on any development coming forward on these sites to meet the strategic needs of the Local Plan.

7. Reasonable Alternative Options

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

Option 1: A policy which provides a positive framework to promote the redevelopment or regeneration of these areas with specific criteria for each area.

Option 2: A generic policy promoting the regeneration of all of these areas.

Option 3: No policy with development proposals being considered against general policies in the plan.

- 7.2. Option 1 gives specific details for Gainsborough Riverside. This approach provides certainty and a clear direction for future development of the Riverside area. A criteria-based approach is applied to ensure protection for the historic identity, visual interest and enhance public spaces.
- 7.3. Option 2 would provide a limited degree of certainty. However, the approach would not be area/site specific so is likely to be too broad and therefore has potential not to control development that protects the character of the area.
- 7.4. Option 3 would not provide certainty for these specific locations. Instead, regeneration proposals would not be localised and may not necessarily take into account the local specifics of the site. The land uses proposed may be detrimental to the local character if there were to be no local specific based policy in place for detailing the vision for Gainsborough Riverside.

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.