

Central Lincolnshire Policy NS74 Sleaford Regeneration and Opportunity Areas Evidence Report

Formerly Policy NS73

March 2022



Central Lincolnshire
LOCAL PLAN

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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 Sleaford Regeneration and Opportunity Areas, which relates to a number of areas within Sleaford that present opportunities for regeneration or renewal.

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 sites within Sleaford, 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. Policy LP45 ‘Sleaford’s Regeneration and Opportunity Areas’ is the current policy for regeneration within the adopted 2017 local plan. Regeneration of Sleaford Town Centre is a key objective for North Kesteven District Council. The policy sets out the four key areas for regeneration opportunities. These areas include:
- Heart of Sleaford
 - Riverside Retail Precinct
 - Southern Southgate
 - Former Avanta Seeds Site
- 2.6. Each of these areas has a number of guiding principles for the regeneration of these sites. The guiding principles range from preserving and enhancing heritage to improving public realm and connectivity within Sleaford.

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. The key sites for development in the 2017 Local Plan are carried forward in the new Local Plan, but this is occurring in two different policies. The Heart of Sleaford, Riverside Retail Precinct and Southern Southgate sites are included in Policy S38 of the new Plan. This is

¹ Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 61-001-20190315
Revision date: 15 03 2019

because these are primarily retail and town centre-focused sites within the town centre boundary.

- 3.3. However, it is still important that the Avanta Seeds site is also given a framework in policy to help encourage its development in a sustainable way, where it contributes positively to the town. This site is now joined in this policy with two additional sites which are considered to be important opportunities for regeneration – these are the former Bass Malting Site (ROA8) and the former hospital buildings at Greylees (ROA9). A framework is used for each of the sites as to when appropriate development will be supported in these locations. These are areas identified as having potential to substantially contribute to Sleaford’s offer.

4. Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.1. During the Issues and Options Consultation Policy LP45 – Sleaford’s Regeneration and Opportunity Areas was noted as a policy area not to change. One comment was raised regarding this policy area stating, “The regeneration of Sleaford is of great importance – it is of concern that this policy is to be amended with no details provided of how.” [Issues and Options Report pg.15.] The Issues and Options was an initial sift of what policy areas would be updated based on consultation. Further details for Sleaford Regeneration will be explored in the Regulation 18 Consultation.

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 issues were raised during this consultation:
- Various support provided for this policy.
 - Suggestion that these sites need 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.
 - Objection raised on site ROA9 (Greylees) as there is no minimum expectation for providing essential amenities such as a shop.
 - Objection raised on site ROA7 (Avanta Seeds) suggesting the current wording will lead to viability issues:
 - The largest part of the current permission for the site are for comparison retailing and retirement apartments. Market conditions may be weak, so flexibility is needed in the policy to allow for shifts from the extant permission.
 - More flexibility required for the delivery of sports provision and access road from Boston Road.
 - Letter b and c of the policy is supported however suggestions have been.
- 5.3. There were a number of comments broadly supporting this policy. An objection raised that there should be at least a shop in Greylees (ROA9). The policy is flexible to allow for mixed use led development to take place on the site which could well include a shop.

Limiting use class in this instance could lead to uncertainty in terms of inward investment for regeneration.

- 5.4. The Avanta Seeds site (ROA 7) policy has a number of guiding principles and whilst there is an extant permission with a large proportion for comparison retailing there is nothing stopping an updated permission being sought in line with the policy.
- 5.5. The bowls club provision set out next to letter 'e' provides enough scope and flexibility for alternative provision and a fall-back position within the wording. Comments raised queries over lead times and accurate assessments of availability, suitability, deliverability, develop-ability and viability. The policy does not allocate these sites but sets a framework as to what kinds of development would be supported.

6. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

- 6.1. The proposed approach to this policy is to refresh the existing policy and refine accordingly through each stage of consultation. Retaining the policy through a refresh provides certainty for Sleaford with some of the sites identified in LP45 of the current adopted plan 2017 to be continued.
- 6.2. The framework gives certainty and sets parameters for development in order to achieve the best outcomes for the sites. The framework links the site/s with the wider area of Sleaford including aspects on design to ensure regeneration schemes are sympathetic to the character of the historic environment. Having specific sites listed gives detail on what sort of regenerations schemes will be supported.
- 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). They are summarised as follows:

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 Sleaford regeneration and opportunity areas outlining the ambition for each area identified site/area. This approach provides certainty and a clear direction for future development of these sites/areas. For all sites, a criteria-based approach is applied to ensure clear parameters for future proposals.
- 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 2 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 detailed site by site approach.

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.