



Policy LP1

A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Evidence Report

Proposed Submission
April 2016

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1 Introduction and Policy Context

Introduction

- 1.1 A joint Local Plan for the Central Lincolnshire area is being produced which will set the framework for how development will be considered across the districts of the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey to 2036.
- 1.2 This Evidence Report (which is one of a collection) provides background information and justification for policy LP1, which relates to a presumption in favour of sustainable development as required by national planning policy.

National policy

- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was introduced in 2014 which offers 'live' government guidance.
- 1.4 Sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. Paragraphs 18 to 219 set out the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system in England. The following points are particularly relevant:
 - Paragraph 6 - The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - Paragraph 8 - Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions.
 - Paragraph 14 – At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.
 - Paragraph 15 – Policies in Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay. All plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally.
- 1.5 Paragraph 11 of the Local Plans section of the NPPG (Reference ID: 12-011-20140306) highlights paragraphs 14 and 15 of the NPPF: "...Local Plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This should be done by identifying and providing for objectively assessed needs and by indicating how the presumption will be applied locally".
- 1.6 The above NPPF policy and the NPPG have been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP1 in particular.

2 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft

- 2.1 The Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan (published for consultation in October – November 2014) included a policy on a presumption in favour of sustainable development based on the model policy issued by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 2.2 The main issues raised through the Preliminary Draft Local consultation were:
- The policies of the plan that affect the location and type of development in rural communities will undermine the delivery of sustainable development.
 - The statements in this policy about working with developers could give the perception of bias towards developers.
 - Should include a reference to working with local communities to negotiate a way forward.
 - The bullet points are too vague and need to be expanded upon.
 - Additional bullet points should be added for demonstrable evidence of clear local community support or opposition.
 - This policy talks of sustainable growth, but there is a lack of evidence to justify the high levels of proposed development, a lack of evidence showing that the allocated sites can be delivered sustainably, a likely negative impact on the setting and character of Sleaford, lack of evidence of plans for infrastructure to accommodate development, and a lack of strategic approach to issues relating to environmental sustainability, climate change, local resilience and self-sufficiency.
 - Growth should be in accordance with neighbourhood plans.
 - When considering new development it is important to consider the amount of other development locally.
 - There is no evidence to support this policy.
 - Developers are taking this statement without the full context of the NPPF as a green light to build large-scale developments on green field sites despite opposition from the Government.
 - The adverse impacts in the first bullet point need to be defined.
 - This policy reflects the NPPF too enthusiastically and should instead give an equal emphasis on the necessary balance between presumed approval and sensitivity to the historic environment.
 - This policy needs greater explanation of the term sustainability with additional focus of being for the benefit of existing members of the community.
 - This policy should allow for a moratorium on development where neighbourhood plans are in production.
 - The policy is close to the wording from DCLG that is no longer required to be in plans.
 - The policy should refer to the strands that make up sustainable development.
 - The policy suggests that pre-application advice will not be charged for.
 - This should be introductory text rather than a policy.

3 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 3.1 Policy LP1 in the Further Draft version of the Local Plan was not amended from the original Preliminary Draft version, as the policy wording is standard text required to be included as a Policy in all Local Plans, as instructed by Central Government and the Planning Inspectorate. No comments suggested why we should deviate from such a national position. Nevertheless, the comments were considered, and where relevant the points made were considered in relation to other policies in the Local Plan.

- 3.2 The Further Draft version of the Local Plan was published for consultation in October – November 2015. Most comments against policy LP1 were in support of the policy, though some objections and general comments were made, namely:
- Support for assurance that the Central Lincolnshire Planning Authorities will deliver sustainable growth and consider applications with a positive approach, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
 - Concern that the term ‘sustainable development’ is frequently used, but not clearly defined.
 - Concern is that this positive approach is not embedded into the other draft Local Plan policies.

4 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 4.1 The policy in the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan has not been amended from the Further Draft version (which was as per the original Preliminary Draft version), as the policy wording is standard text required to be included as a Policy in all Local Plans and again no comments suggested why we should deviate from this national position. Nevertheless, the comments have been considered, and where relevant the points made have been considered in relation to other policies in the Local Plan.

5 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been considered for this policy (with Option 1 being the preferred policy in the Local Plan).
- 5.2 **Option 2:** To have no local policy and rely on national policy. This option has been rejected, as a policy on the presumption in favour of sustainable development is standard text required to be included in all Local Plans, as instructed by Central Government and the Planning Inspectorate.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the April 2016 Proposed Submission Local Plan. We hope this helps demonstrate how we have responded to comments received during both the Preliminary and Further Draft consultations, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.