



Policy LP8 Lincolnshire Showground Evidence Report

**Proposed Submission
April 2016**

Contents

1.	Introduction and Policy Context.....	1
2	Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP8.....	1
3	Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft	2
4	Local Plan Policy: Further Draft.....	2
5	Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission	3
6	Alternative Reasonable Options.....	3
7	Conclusion.....	3

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 LP8, which relates to the Lincolnshire Showground.

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 The section of the NPPF, paragraph 150 to 157 concerns "Plan-making" and the following points are particularly relevant:
 - Paragraph 154- Local Plans should set out the opportunities for development and clear policies on what will or will not be permitted and where.
 - Paragraph 157- ...Local Plans should:... allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate;...
- 1.5 The above NPPF requirements have been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP8 in particular.
- 1.6 The NPPG (Reference ID 12-002-20140306) supports this by stating that "The Local Plan should make clear what is intended to happen in the area over the life of the plan, where and when this will occur and how it will be delivered."

2 Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP8

- 2.1 The Lincolnshire Showground is an established agricultural show venue for Lincolnshire and as such provides a unique facility serving Central Lincolnshire and beyond, particularly when major events are being held. Bishop Burton College are currently in the process of moving their agriculture, animal management, equine studies and horticulture and arboriculture courses to a new campus on the showground site, along with a halls of residence, and the Epic Centre on the site provides exhibition, conference and events facilities and a number of 'eco-friendly' homes have recently been built. The Showground has also been identified as a food and farming Enterprise Zone and a Local Development Order is in preparation for the area (in association with Hemswell Cliff Business Park (around 10 miles to the north of the Showground site, along the A15)).
- 2.2 The Showground site is a strategically important agricultural show venue located in the open countryside. The importance of the Showground to Lincolnshire is acknowledged and there is widespread support to ensure its continued success. Facilitating this success will be the need to diversify and provide wider services and facilities on the site. There is therefore considered to be a need to make sure that a balance is reached between

ensuring that the Showground's continued use for agricultural shows and other events is not compromised, and its rural setting and open nature protected, whilst at the same time managing development pressures (such as the impact on infrastructure) created by the need to diversify and strengthen its operations. The planning implications of Enterprise Zone and Local Development Order status will also need careful consideration.

- 2.3 Overall, it is this unique set of issues, and the strategic importance of the Showground, which justifies its own policy in the Local Plan.

3 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft

- 3.1 The Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan (published for consultation in October – November 2014) did not include a policy on the Lincolnshire Showground.

4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 4.1 It had been considered at the Preliminary Draft stage that national policy and guidance provided sufficient advice, together with the more general policy in the Local Plan on 'A Sustainable Visitor Economy' to provide guidance for development at the Showground. However, recent development pressures, the emerging Enterprise Zone and Local Development Order status and the acknowledgement of the unique nature of the Lincolnshire Showground, all combined to warrant specific advice and guidance in the Local Plan in the form of specific policy in the Further Draft Local Plan.
- 4.2 Policy LP8 was therefore introduced into the Further Draft Local Plan (published for consultation in October – November 2015) with policy wording that included the types of suitable development and thresholds for growth.
- 4.3 There was some general support for the policy received during the consultation on the Further Draft Local Plan although various detailed objections were also received. Some welcomed the inclusion of a business park and acknowledgment of the importance of the showground to the potential future growth of the Lincolnshire agrifood, wider business and visitor sector economy.
- 4.4 Some comments were made regarding:
- the need to improve the road network to access the Showground site;
 - improvements to the facilities to make it a national facility;
 - that the showground could be used in a more productive way for outdoor events;
 - that it needs a hotel
 - that the area should be extended to allow for the complete relocation of the Bishop Burton College from the Riseholme campus if necessary and for the redevelopment of the dated exhibition halls; and
 - that emphasis should be added on the Local Development Order objectives.
- 4.5 Some objected to the classification of the Showground as a visitor attraction given the plans for partial redevelopment as an agricultural college and for housing development.
- 4.6 An objection was also made to the fact that the Further Draft Plan made no mention of Market Rasen Racecourse.

5 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 5.1 Following careful consideration of the issues raised, it is considered appropriate to retain a Lincolnshire Showground policy in the Proposed Submission Local Plan to reflect its strategic importance, as well as in recognition of the current development pressures, and the emerging Enterprise Zone and Local Development order status.
- 5.2 Policy LP8 has been slightly amended at the Proposed Submission stage to increase the conference facility and Agricultural College threshold allowances on the site, in response to comments received and following discussions with West Lindsey District Council (the applicable administrative district within which the Showground falls, and it is this District Council which has led on the various Enterprise Zone and LDO emerging work).
- 5.3 In response to other issues raised, allowance is made for a hotel and for improvements to facilities on the site for its use as an agricultural show venue/ visitor attraction. The Local Development Order is referenced in the policy and supporting text reflecting the intent and aims of the Food and Farming Enterprise Zone. Policy LP8 seeks to provide a balanced planning framework that allows for growth and investment on the site, with a mix of uses including college facilities and some limited housing, whilst protecting and promoting its main showground use and maintaining the area's rural character.
- 5.4 The need for improvements to the highway network in the Central Lincolnshire area as well as implications beyond our boundary are considered elsewhere in the plan and in supporting documents, though the policy has clear referencing to the need to ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place, including addressing any impact on the local highway.
- 5.5 In relation to the Market Rasen Racecourse issue, support and policy guidance for the sustainable growth of all other high quality visitor attractions, including sporting attractions such as the Racecourse, is given by policy LP7: A Sustainable Visitor Economy. The Racecourse, and other visitor attractions in the countryside in Central Lincolnshire, are not deemed to be of the same degree of significance or under the same development pressure as the Showground, and hence no need for a bespoke policy for any such site.

6 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been considered for this policy (Option 1 is the preferred policy approach which has been included in the proposed Submission version of the Local plan).
- 6.2 **Option 2:** To have no specific policy on the Lincolnshire Showground. This was the option pursued in the Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan (as explained above). However, in light of the strategic importance of the Showground, the development pressures on the site and the subsequent consideration of the site as a suitable candidate for Enterprise Zone and Local Development Order status, it has been decided that a specific policy on the Lincolnshire Showground is required and appropriate.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the Proposed Submission Local Plan April 2016. We hope this helps demonstrate how we have responded to changing circumstances since the Preliminary Draft and Further Draft

consultation and how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.