



Policy LP33 Lincoln City Centre Primary Shopping Area and Central Mixed Use Area 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 LP33, which relates to Lincoln City Centre Primary Shopping Area and Central Mixed Use Area.

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 Section 2 of the NPPF concerns "ensuring the vitality of town centres" and there is a separate section on "Plan-making". The following points are particularly relevant:
 - Paragraph 23 of section 2 states that in drawing up Local Plans, planning authorities should: "define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;" and "define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;" And requires suitable sites to be allocated in town centres and edge of centre sites.
 - Paragraph 156 - 157 of the section on plan-making states that the Local Plan should include strategic policies to deliver "the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development" and "the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities" and to indicate "land use designations on a proposals map"
- 1.5 The above NPPF policy has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP33 in particular.
- 1.6 The NPPG provides advise on ensuring the vitality of town centres (ref ID: 2b-001-20140306) advising on main town centre uses and application of the sequential test.

2 Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP33

- 2.1 Lincoln City Centre is the main urban area in Central Lincolnshire providing an extensive range of facilities and services including shopping, employment, leisure, arts, tourism, public services and higher education and has a lively evening economy based on its restaurants, hotels, bars and cultural venues such as the Drill Hall, Engine Shed and Theatre Royal.
- 2.2 The City Centre has seen many changes in recent years, most significantly in and around the Brayford Pool including hotels, restaurants, an Odeon Cinema and the further

development of the University of Lincoln Campus, development of a Cultural Quarter based around the Collection/ Usher Gallery and significant investment in the Waterside Shopping Centre. As Central Lincolnshire grows, the City Centre will need to continue to evolve to ensure that Lincoln's role as a regional attractor is maintained and enhanced to meet the needs of shoppers, residents, businesses and visitors.

- 2.3 Lincoln City Centre benefits from a broad retail offer that currently sustains it as a thriving retail centre. As well as the larger national retailers, it has the diverse/ niche shops of the historic Uphill area and the vibrant entrepreneurial small business market in South High Street. However, in order for the City Centre to remain vibrant and meet current and future needs to sustain future growth, there are critical issues which need to be addressed. These include ensuring sufficient land for employment and retail development is available, that access and movement within the City Centre are suitably managed and improved and that there is adequate parking provision.
- 2.4 A Central Mixed Use area is shown on the Policies Map and within this area there is a defined Central Primary Shopping Area. The Central Mixed Use area is intended to be suitable for a wide range of uses designed to encourage and promote a sustainable City Centre while the Primary Shopping Area is predominantly focussed on providing a strong retail offer. The policy also identifies Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages where it is intended to restrict ground floor uses to shops and other uses such as banks and building societies, cafés and restaurants which people would expect to visit as part of a shopping trip.
- 2.5 The Growth Strategy for Lincoln (2014-2034) outlines a number of challenges facing the City including the need to ensure that growth and development benefits all local neighbourhoods as a result of investment decisions with particular positive impact on the most deprived areas including Wards within the City Centre.

3 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft

- 3.1 The Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan (published for consultation in October – November 2014) included an overarching policy LP32 entitled “Supporting the Natural Evolution of Lincoln” ahead of any allocations in the Further Draft Local Plan. It listed those uses which may require locally specific designations and sought feedback on what should be included, where they should be and whether there should be changes to any existing boundaries. One suggestion was the “City Centre, Neighbourhood and Service Centre Boundaries” and whether existing boundaries, as shown in the City of Lincoln Local Plan (1998) should be amended.
- 3.2 One comment expressed general support for additional allocations without being specific, whilst one felt that unless issues such as traffic and rail network were address, Lincoln would not evolve into the City envisioned. The need to balance conflicting needs and demands runs throughout the plan and its supporting documents and transport issues are specifically covered in LP12: Infrastructure to Support Growth; LP13: Accessibility and Transport; LP36: Access and Movement within the Lincoln Area and policies LP48-LP54 which identify specific allocations and supporting evidence base documents.

4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 4.1 A new section and policy on Lincoln's primary shopping area and central mixed use area was added to the Further Draft version of the Local Plan and proposed boundaries on the accompanying policies map. The Further Draft Local Plan was published for consultation in October – November 2015.
- 4.2 Various comments were received as part of the Further Draft Local Plan consultation broadly supporting the policy or elements of it, including the principal of identifying Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas and Central Mixed Use Area. Various detailed suggestions were made to improve clarity of policy wording including the need for the use of consistent terminology and clarity on retail areas/ zones suggested.
- 4.3 Concern was expressed that the policy was not in conformity with the NPPF retail tests and it was suggested that not enough retail space had been allocated to meet the needs evidenced in the Retail Study 2015. Concern was also expressed that the policy as written would add a further cost burden on developers, which could make development unviable, particularly in respect of planned retail redevelopment to the east of the City.
- 4.4 Some comments suggested that the policy needed substantial or significant rewording, especially in relation to: adding reference to the historic environment and local distinctiveness including niche and independent retailing and historic retail premises; specific reference to the need to accommodate the operations of nearby businesses within the Mixed Use Area; the need to redefine the Central Mixed Use Area to a more tightly constrained boundary; that the policy should explicitly state the need for any retail proposals outside the Primary Shopping Area not to impact on existing or proposed retail investment within the City Centre/ Primary Shopping Area, and any such proposals should be subject to sequential testing; that further reference to the City Centre Masterplan should be made in the definition of the City Centre and Primary Shopping Area; and concern that designation of St Marks as Secondary Shopping Area is not correct and needs reconsidering as a part of the Primary Shopping Area.
- 4.5 In response to the issues above, the policy is considered to conform to NPPF requirements to define the extent of town centres, primary shopping area and primary and secondary shopping frontages and to set policy that makes clear what uses would be acceptable within these areas. This policy, along with all others in the plan has been subject to a whole plan viability assessment. Niche and independent retailing are referenced in the supporting text and protecting, conserving and enhancing historic or physically important retail premises or the character of an area is covered by other policies in the Local Plan, particularly LP25: The Historic Environment , LP26: Design and Amenity and LP27 Main Town Centre Uses – Frontages and Advertisements. The policy is intended to identify suitable uses in identified areas but is supported by the sequential test as outlined in policy LP6; Retail and Town Centres in Central Lincolnshire and the latest Growth Strategy for Lincoln (2014-2034) is referenced in the supporting text.

5 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 5.1 The policy and supporting text in the proposed Submission Local Plan have been amended slightly to reflect comments received including adding theatres to the list of acceptable uses in the Central Mixed Use Area and ensuring consistent terminology to avoid confusion.
- 5.2 Boundaries on the proposed policies map have been amended to reflect the latest developments and to allow for future growth and choice without compromising vitality and viability of the centre. A revised Central Mixed Use Area, Primary Shopping Area and Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontage boundaries are shown, taking into account the existing boundaries as defined in the adopted City of Lincoln Local Plan (1998) along with information supplied by the Central Lincolnshire City and Town Centres Study (2012) and its update (2015), Building Our Future on Strong Foundations: the Growth Strategy for Lincoln 2014-2034 (2014) and comments received as part of the Further Draft Local Plan consultation responses.
- 5.3 The policy is also supported by other policies in the local Plan including:
- Policy LP6: Retail and Town Centres in Central Lincolnshire;
 - Policy LP25: The Historic Environment;
 - Policy LP26: Design and Amenity;
 - Policy LP27: Main Town Centre Uses - Frontages and Advertisements;
 - Policy LP29: Protecting Lincoln's Setting and Character;
 - Policy LP31: Lincoln's Economy;
 - Policy LP35: Lincoln's Regeneration and Opportunity Areas;
- and by the
- Central Lincolnshire City and Town Centres Study and Update (2012 and 2015);
 - Building our Future on Strong Foundations: the Growth Strategy for Lincoln 2014-2034 (2014).

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:** Identifying only a primary shopping area and primary and secondary shopping streets within Lincoln identifying appropriate uses and criteria. This option would ensure the continued vitality of the town centre in accordance with the NPPF but would not reflect the character of a wider central Lincoln or provide clear guidance or support for uses outside of the main shopping core.
- 6.3 **Option 3:** Rely on an existing or expanded generic retail hierarchy policy. This option would ensure the vitality of the town centre in accordance with the NPPF but to be relevant to other centres in Central Lincolnshire may be lengthy and complicated and would not necessarily reflect the character or meet the needs of central Lincoln.

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 comments received during the Preliminary Draft and Further Draft consultation, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.