

Policy LP38
Protecting Gainsborough's Setting and Character
Evidence Report
(New Policy in Proposed Submission Local Plan)

Proposed Submission
April 2016

Contents

1	Introduction and Policy Context.....	1
2	Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP38.....	2
3	Local Plan Policy	2
4	Alternative Reasonable Options.....	2
5	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 LP38, which relates to protecting the setting and character of Gainsborough.

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 7 of the NPPF concerns "requiring good design", Section 11 concerns "conserving and enhancing the natural environment", Section 12 concerns "conserving and enhancing the historic environment", and there is a separate section on "Plan-making". The following points are particularly relevant:
 - Para 58 – Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area...Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments... respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials.
 - Para 109 – The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...
 - Para 114 – Local planning authorities should: ...plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.
 - Para 126 - Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment ... In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. ...
 - Para 157 – ...Local Plans should...contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment...
- 1.5 The NPPG includes guidance on good design and how it can help achieve local character, including landscape objectives. Paragraph 007, (Reference ID: 26-007-20140306) states that "...development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development".

- 1.6 The above NPPF policy and NPPG guidance has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP38 in particular.

2 Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP38

- 2.1 Gainsborough is located on the eastern banks of the River Trent, extending its urban area eastwards into an undulating and often wooded landscape. Gainsborough's historic core is protected by three conservation areas, namely the Britannia Conservation Area, Riverside Conservation Area and Gainsborough Town Conservation Area. Gainsborough benefits from a number of buildings of architectural and historical merit, and historic street patterns and passageways can still be identified within the traditional town centre area.
- 2.2 The town centre also has a number of special assets and visitor attractions, including the Gainsborough Old Hall, the Trinity Arts Centre, The Old Nick Theatre, Gainsborough Model Railway as well as various art and music venues. These assets lie within the four key areas that make up the town centre: Market Place; Marshall's Yard; Church Street; and Trinity Street. However, these places and assets, as well as the major asset of the River Trent, are poorly connected and their settings are undervalued.

3 Local Plan Policy

- 3.1 Neither the Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan (published for consultation October – November 2014) or the Further Draft Local Plan (published for consultation October – November 2015) included a policy specifically on protecting the setting and character of Gainsborough.
- 3.2 The policy has been introduced to the Proposed Submission Local Plan in response to the comments received during consultations on the Draft Local Plan and for consistency.
- 3.3 Policy LP38 is based on policy LP43, Protecting Sleaford's Setting and Character: there was support for this policy during the Further Draft consultation, with one respondent commenting "we fully support the contents of this policy – this is excellent ... Lincoln and Gainsborough would benefit from a similar policy approach".
- 3.4 It was noted by another respondent that "as a matter of consistency, Lincoln and Sleaford both have sections on Protecting Setting and Character, but there does not appear to be a comparable section for Gainsborough which has a large number of buildings on the local Heritage at Risk survey. This is an opportunity missed if a comparable section is not included".
- 3.5 The policy is supported by other policies in the Local Plan, namely: LP17 Landscape, Townscape and Views; LP20 Green Infrastructure Network; LP21 Biodiversity and Geodiversity; LP25 The Historic Environment; LP26 Design and Amenity and; LP27 Main Town Centre Uses - Frontages and Advertisements.

4 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 4.1 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 Local Plan)
- 4.2 **Option 2:** To have no local policy and rely on national policy. This option has not been taken forward, as the NPPF requires Local Plans to develop robust and comprehensive

policies that respond to local character and history, and which reflect the identity of local surroundings. Relying on national policy would not allow local circumstances to be taken into account.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 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 the earlier consultations, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.