

# **Policy LP39 Gainsborough Sustainable Urban Extensions Evidence Report**

(Policy criteria for the Gainsborough Sustainable Urban Extensions  
formerly contained in Policies LP38 and LP39  
of the Further Draft Local Plan)

## **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 LP39, which relates to the Gainsborough Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs).

## 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 Paragraph 52 of the NPPF is particularly relevant to SUEs, stating that "*the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities*".
- 1.5 The above NPPF policy has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP39 in particular.
- 1.6 At the time of writing this report, the NPPG did not include any specific guidance on urban extensions.

# 2 Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to LP39

- 2.1 A need has been identified for 36,960 homes across Central Lincolnshire over the plan period. In order to deliver this growth, the Local Plan is allocating various sites for residential development, including two urban extensions to Gainsborough.
- 2.2 Major urban extensions offer a solution to housing growth in areas with high development pressures, namely Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford in the Central Lincolnshire area.
- 2.3 Urban extensions present an opportunity to deliver sustainable development whereby residential development is served by the necessary services, facilities, infrastructure, and employment opportunities to sustain a community.

# 3 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft

- 3.1 The Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan (published for consultation in October – November 2014) included a policy, LP33 A Growing Gainsborough, which identified three candidate urban extension sites for Gainsborough.
- 3.2 The three sites were:
  - Gainsborough Southern Neighbourhood (land south of Foxby Lane): this site has outline permission for 2,500 dwellings and associated infrastructure.

- Gainsborough Northern Neighbourhood (land north of Corringham Road and the A631)
- Gainsborough Eastern Neighbourhood (land south of the A631 and north of Heapham Road).

3.3 Consultation on the Preliminary Draft Local Plan revealed support for the growth of Gainsborough and overall support for the principle and locations of the candidate SUEs. Specific comments and key issues raised included:

- Support for use of brownfield sites before greenfield sites.
- Development should be restricted to within Gainsborough's existing footprint, infilling numerous vacant spaces and empty industrial lots.
- Concerns over impact of development on areas of nature conservation importance adjacent to SUE sites: mitigation measures are needed, including buffer zones; woodland management; and provision of green infrastructure corridors and natural greenspace as part of developments.
- Past growth rates indicate further major development over and above the already consented Southern SUE are not needed.
- Ensure appropriate road structure incorporated for SUEs.

## 4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

4.1 Following careful consideration of the representations received at the Preliminary Draft stage, together with ongoing evidence collected as part of the site selection process, the Further Draft Local Plan included two policies which proposed the designation of two Gainsborough Sustainable Urban Extensions: policy LP38 Gainsborough Southern Neighbourhood SUE and LP39 Gainsborough Northern Neighbourhood SUE. In addition, Policy LP54 proposed various 'broad locations for future growth', including three sites within Gainsborough: Gainsborough Eastern SUE; remaining land at Gainsborough Southern SUE; and remaining land at Gainsborough Northern SUE.

4.2 Policy LP38 proposed the designation of the Gainsborough Southern Neighbourhood SUE to deliver 1,600 dwellings in the plan period to 2036, 2,500 dwellings in total beyond the plan period. The policy set out various criteria, specific to the development of this SUE, which reflected the consent that was already in place for the site and included:

- 15,000m<sup>2</sup> of Class B1 (business) and B2 (general industrial) uses;
- A new Local Centre;
- Two onsite primary schools.

4.3 Policy LP39 proposed the designation of the Gainsborough Northern Neighbourhood SUE to also deliver 1,600 dwellings to 2036, 2,500 in total. The criteria for this SUE included requirements for:

- 7 hectares of employment land for Class B1/ B2 /B8 uses;
- A new Local Centre;
- An onsite primary school.

4.4 There was mixed support and objection to policies LP38 and LP39 during the Further Draft Local Plan consultation. Objection was raised to the various conditions attached to each of the SUEs: there was concern that these conditions create uncertainty and could delay the delivery of SUEs. It was suggested that the Local Plan should allocate a greater range of non-SUE sites to ensure a rolling five-year land supply.

- 4.5 In relation to LP38, Gainsborough Southern Neighbourhood SUE, the following comments were made:
- Support for ambition to deliver new secondary school provision as part of the urban extension;
  - Concerns that development could impact on the nature conservation interest of Local Wildlife Sites adjacent to the site, through the development of new pathways and increased visitor pressure, and from light, noise and visual disturbance. Recommended that the policy should require protection and enhancement of existing natural environmental assets and 'design in' wildlife.
  - Regarding the status of the site, it was commented that permission was granted in July 2011 and though delivery of the SUE has been slower than anticipated (largely due to market conditions), the Estate remained committed to the delivery of the SUE.
- 4.6 In relation to LP39, Gainsborough Northern Neighbourhood SUE, the following comments were made:
- Support for ambition to deliver new secondary school provision as part of the urban extension;
  - Suggestion that the SUE boundary be extended to include adjacent land to the south west and north west;
  - Concerns raised by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust that development could impact on the nature conservation interest of woodlands adjacent to the site, through the development of new pathways and increased visitor pressure, and from light, noise and visual disturbance. Importance of protecting, enhancing and buffering areas of nature conservation emphasised.

## 5 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 5.1 Policies LP38 and LP39 of the Further Draft Local Plan have been merged into a single policy in the Proposed Submission Local Plan: policy LP39, Gainsborough Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- 5.2 The policies have been amalgamated primarily to make the Local Plan more concise, and to ensure consistency with the equivalent policies in the Lincoln and Sleaford chapters.
- 5.3 Some of the specific requirements for each of the SUEs have been revised from the requirements set out in their respective Further Draft policies. These changes have been made in response to ongoing site appraisals and dialogue with the site promoters. Further details on each site is set out in the separate Topic Paper for each site, available in our planning policy library. These topic papers further justify the detailed criteria and policy requirements for each SUE.

- 5.4 The key requirements are:

### Gainsborough Southern Neighbourhood SUE

- 1,400 dwellings expected in the plan period, 2,500 total (as opposed to the 1,600 dwellings anticipated in the Further Draft Local Plan);
- 15,000m<sup>2</sup> of Class B1 (business) and B2 (general industrial) uses;
- New local centre providing retail (Class A) uses of around 2,000m<sup>2</sup>;
- Two onsite primary schools and contribution to education provision in Gainsborough.

## Gainsborough Northern Neighbourhood SUE

- 750 dwellings expected in the plan period, 2,500 total (as opposed to the 1,600 dwellings anticipated in the Further Draft Local Plan);
- 7 hectares of employment land for Class B1 / B2/ B8 use;
- New local centre;
- Onsite primary school and contribution to education provision in Gainsborough.

## 6 Alternative Reasonable Options

6.1 The reasonable alternative options for SUEs at Gainsborough are considered in the Integrated Impact Assessment.

6.2 However, a reasonable alternative to the preferred policy approach is:

**Option 2:** have no policy setting out the detailed policy requirements for each of the Gainsborough SUEs. SUEs are allocated by policy LP48 Sustainable Urban Extensions – Allocations and the general criteria set out in policy LP28 Sustainable Urban Extensions would apply. This option has been discounted because of the large scale of the sites: it is imperative that the Local Plan sets out detailed considerations for each SUE to ensure that an appropriate mix of complementary uses is achieved on the site to deliver sustainable development. Detailed criteria will also aid developers and decision makers.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 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.